



068. I MAY BE AN ANGEL, BUT I AIN'T NO SAINT

Rick Gibson shares his “big three” picks from November’s Arizona Angel Investment Conference. Who will come out with the next great mousetrap?

I AM AN ANGEL INVESTOR, and it has been 43 days since my last drink, er, investment. Experts say that fessing up to being an angel is the first step in an effective five-step program. (Don’t tell them I really don’t plan to quit.) I love getting involved with growing companies, and those in the know always expect the Arizona Angel Investment Conference (AAIC) to be a delight for us diehards.

My friends say I sure can pick ‘em. As a screener for the conference, I started looking at the 53 company applications back in August of 2005. After extensive reviews, I had to submit my list of top choices. The entire group then met, justified its picks, and whammy, we had a top ten list! At this point,

MousePrint Inc: Move the mouse to create a personal ID more descriptive than a fingerprint. Okay, now let’s settle this, mouse to mouse.

RCP Diagnostics: Diagnostic blood test for uterine, ovarian, breast and cervical cancers. I hope it works.


Usuggest LLC: Online marketplace that uses “word-of-mouse” to offer suggestions, reviews and ratings. Finally we get to make decisions based on what everyone else thinks.

WildCharge Inc.: Charge your cellular phones, laptop computers, PDAs and MP3s via a portable power pad.

and the disorganized mess of X-rays, films and CDs. There’s no good way yet to network and protect these immensely personal and confidential images that often come in such awkward sizes. Unknown are products that competitors might come out with in the meantime. DG should be thinking about how to tip-toe around big data companies like General Electric and Philips. A reasonable objective would be to make themselves a low-risk acquisition target for one of these biggies.

RCP Diagnostics has a molecular-level, blood-diagnostic test for the early detection of multiple, estrogen-sensitive/driven cancers in women. I like RCP since uterine, ovarian, breast and cervical cancers are huge and terrible diseases and any test that makes diagnosis faster, easier and more definite would be a godsend. It is especially familiar to me, since I am involved in an unrelated company offering a diagnostic for another awful disease, multiple sclerosis. (A not-so subtle reminder that you should look for investors that are specific to your field.) I know CEO Will Gartner, and expect he knows what he has to deal with ... a noble but uphill battle for large acceptance by the medical community. The question is: Should RCP do a distribution deal with an established company or do it themselves?

WildCharge delivers power without wires. Power is delivered from a portable power pad to mobile devices and consumer electronics as if plugged directly into the wall. I see the market opportunity and want one of these today. The question is can they get through production without hiccups? I’ve not yet seen a prototype, manufacturing plans or a costing analysis. Thus, I would ask a lot more tough questions before I’d advise anyone to write a check.

Alas, this is probably my last article for *bizAZ* for a while. Magazine formats can change, though writers can’t stop writing. If you miss my columns, or if you want to chat with me, feel free to e-mail me. Good night and good luck. 

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We both like to see management with **unbeatable domain expertise** and a superior **solution to a problem** that people really want fixed.

the top ten presenting companies have been revealed, and are posted on the AAIC Web site (the event was held Nov. 30, 2005). Here’s what they are selling:

Affordable Medicine Solutions LLC: Consumer rebates on both prescription and non-prescription products.

Ardent Sound-AZ: Making ultrasound imaging devices as handy in the doctor’s office as the common stethoscope.

Bumkins Finer Baby Products: For the brand-conscious infant, bibs and diapers with the Dr. Seuss logo.

Dicom Grid Inc.: Now your doctor can zap your MRIs, X-rays and CT scans to your specialist or hospital. No more lugging around those big brown envelopes.

IdealHire: Recruiters, associations and employers dramatically reduce the time and resources required for finding top talent.

Kinetic Muscles Inc.: Biofeedback training devices that help stroke patients perform part of their neurological rehabilitation program at home.

OK, so why wouldn’t we invest in all these companies? There are many reasons why investors shy from a deal; different investors look for different things. Personally, I look for companies that have an incredible asset of some kind. My friend, Harry George of the much respected Tucson venture capital firm, Solstice Capital, calls it “an unfair competitive advantage.” We both like to see management with unbeatable domain expertise and a superior solution to a problem that people really want fixed. I say, “Not just a better mousetrap, but one that convinces the mouse to go elsewhere.”

Companies that didn’t make it into “Rick’s Picks” big three list, either would have had too much of an uphill battle against competitors, found it too hard to complete development, or would not have gotten consumers to line up in droves to buy. I would now like to present Rick’s Picks and some words of wisdom for each.

Dicom Grid aims to solve a real problem: eliminating the constant influx of couriers