

Baker Tilly Business Angels

This past June saw the continued success of the Baker Tilly Business Angel Programme as hopeful entrepreneurs once again came to The Hong Kong Club looking to impress the angels with new and innovative business opportunities. Organised by The British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and Baker Tilly Hong Kong, the programme is intended to give budding entrepreneurs a chance to acquire the much needed capital to implement their innovative business ideas. After a rigorous screening process, four candidates from various industries each provided their ten minute pitch to an expert panel of potential business investors. The event once again garnered a positive response from the candidates, emphasising the value the programme is providing for our city's young businesses. By Ivan Victor Cruz

Richard Grainger, GMF

In trying to maintain a steady cash flow in their businesses, many small merchants and enterprises often find it hard to qualify for bank loans. **Global Merchant Funding Limited (GMF)** is a cash advance provider, offering a new and manageable funding product to provide credit to merchants around Asia.

"The programme seemed like an excellent way to bring angel investors and entrepreneurs together in a well organised and efficient manner. They arranged an excellent panel of angels for us to present to. I cannot imagine another way for a new business to get in front of such a high calibre group of investors. In this sense, I believe this event is unique.

"It was a very straightforward experience. Most, if not all of the committee are entrepreneurs themselves, so they gave us good feedback and advice about how to improve our presentations, which areas to focus on, etc. The committee's advice helped us to refine and prepare for our presentation to the angels a month later.

"The critical thing for angel investors is that they are not just investing in your business, but they are also investing in you, the entrepreneur, so it is really important to stand out from the crowd. This means not only demonstrating a clear understanding of your business, but also the ability to present it in an interesting and engaging way."



Hanif Kanji, Sinophi

Sinophi is a healthcare provider currently focusing on acquiring hospitals in China, with intentions to implement operational changes that will eventually improve profitability, while providing a better quality of healthcare to their patients.

"I'm a believer that you can always learn from something, so I entered the Business Angel Programme with a view to sharpen my skills, and clearly it was going to open up some avenues to areas of funding that I hadn't necessarily had access to.

"Preparation is absolutely key, not just for this, but for your business. You've got to be able to encapsulate what you do and what you want, and make it sound really attractive for someone in that ten minutes.

"Connect Communication offered their company's resources and each of us got an hour and a half one on one with one of their top people. I don't know how much that costs but it's difficult to put a value on because it was pretty invaluable. Presentation is definitely an enormous skill, and we were very lucky to have had that and I think that will stay with me forever."



Tom Vincent, Purple Mountain Limited

Purple Mountain Limited is the distributor of Powerlock, a U.S. developed, theft proof, vehicle immobilizer. Using technology which eliminates any possibility of a vehicle being "hot wired", Purple Mountain Limited offers consumers a product with a new level of vehicle security where other security systems such as alarms, smartkeys, and tracking devices fail.

"The programme gave us a platform to put across ideas to various people, and it did everything it said it would.

Everything was well thought out, and there were no real hidden troubles. You don't encounter anything that you can't overcome. The stages of the screening to get to the final presentation are very user friendly, and the people at the screening were very good with constructive criticism, and points to make the presentation better.

"The angels themselves are very good. I had a nice chat with them afterwards. We are following up with two of them, and another said our product was not really something that he would be interested in investing but he had a friend who would, and we're talking to him this week."

Richard Scottford, Asia Safety Management Limited

Asia Safety Management Limited is a provider of first aid products and services, and is currently looking to become the leading distributor of out-of-hospital Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in Asia. The devices will be placed in locations of high human traffic, to restart the heart in the case of cardiac arrest.

"I'm a big believer that if you want to make money, invest in businesses, not in shares, so to actually put people who are trying to do business in touch with people who have got money is a really good idea. There are plenty of fund managers and share managers willing to spend people's money – and lose it. What's really hard is a small company trying to get people's money.

"Just to have taken part in it was very worth while. It sharpened us up and refined our ideas of what we wanted and where we were going. From the notes that the Britcham committee gave us, we were able to refine our finished product. There were a few individuals in that group that gave us really sharp advice that helped us." ■

If you would like to participate in the Baker Tilly Hong Kong Business Angel Programme, please register your interest by contacting:

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