

BEER & PARTNERS



Beer & Partners 25th Investment Fair Attracts Over 100 Investors

It may have been a cold and drizzly day in the City, but well over 100 UK Business Angels appeared in St James' Street on Tuesday 8th November. Beer & Partners' 25th London Investment Fair provided yet another chance to meet an exciting collection of over 30 companies.

Gathered in a single room for 6 hours, this informal tri-annual event is designed to place entrepreneur and angel face-to-face. Each exhibiting business was seeking between £100,000 and £2.5million, at varying stages of development with competent management teams and high-growth potential. Beer's registered angels have been known to invest anything between £10,000 and £1m. The feedback from investors was positive; one even acknowledged the atmosphere in the room as being "*extraordinarily buoyant for such troubled times*".

David Cameron recently announced a business growth package, directing £95million to SMEs through the Regional Growth Fund. Administered by high street banks, the fund is designed to enterprise and growth. George Osborne made the following comment in October:

"There are billions of pounds waiting in banks and in other investment funds. The money is there now."

However, Beer & Partners and their expanding angel community recognise that in order for companies to get off the ground, they need help and support, as well as finance. They need this without fuss, with maximum discretion and at a reasonable cost. Beer has maintained their position at the forefront of encouraging innovation and development and the Fair is just one example of this.

Ian Mackenzie of **Genesis Technical Systems** was in attendance at the Beer November Fair as an exhibitor. He agreed that the Fair was a "*very effective way of meeting prospective investors*". Genesis represents a major breakthrough in internet delivery equipment and welcomed consistent interest and meetings throughout the day with several angels. The format of the Fair is a simple, no-frills marketplace; attending investors are handed a catalogue which outlines the companies who are exhibiting. The investors are free to sit down with any companies of interest and speak to them for as long as they like with no obligation and no pressure. The companies themselves are assisted and supported by Beer & Partners before, during and after the event has taken place, thus maximizing the impact of the company's approach and following up on any enquiries. Ian was keen to acknowledge Beer's efforts:

"... a professional outfit... very well put together and run."

The Fair appeals to many due to its informal and relaxed method. All too often, Beer is associated with the infamous Dragons' Den, but they choose to operate very differently. For one thing, there's no humiliation. PJ Darling is a Fair veteran, having returned to attempt an additional round of funding for **Spark Energy** after exhibiting originally two years ago. Beer has helped to raise a considerable amount of finance for them over the last 24 months and Spark, a utility company, now find themselves seeking funding for expansion. PJ comments on their latest experience:

"We had quite a good response, more so than a couple of years ago... the quality of the investor and risen substantially over the last two years, as Beer & Partners has grown itself."

Beer & Partners also presented their two specialist divisions at the Fair; Life Sciences and Property. The Property team are now observing rejuvenated activity after a quieter couple of years and

enjoyed a steady stream of interest from investors throughout the day. Life Sciences continues to be one of the strongest and most successful areas of investment within Beer & Partners. Beer has also managed to raise funding for a previously untouched sector, since their last Fair in June 2011. An exhibiting West End theatre production company attracted considerable interest from Beer investors and has recently completed a deal totalling in excess of £400,000.

Beer recognises the importance of face-to-face contact between entrepreneur and investor when it comes to building a relationship. The Fair provides this in the first instance in an informal environment. Luke Johnson, serial entrepreneur and Beer's largest single shareholder, comments on the Fair:

"With so much pessimism around, the Beer investment fair refreshingly proves that angel investing is still very much alive. The 100+ astute business angels in attendance were certainly spoilt for choice, with a wide selection of high calibre entrepreneurs running innovative companies."

Typically, a third of exhibiting companies successfully raise capital from the day. Discussions and follow-up meetings are already taking place, and Beer is hopeful that this Fair will prove to be helpful and effective for the majority of exhibitors. Since their 2010 November Fair, four companies in particular from sectors including Life Sciences, Energy and Leisure, have successfully attracted £1.7m in funding.

Beer & Partners are now very keen to hear from fund-seeking companies who wish to exhibit at the next Fair on Thursday 8th March 2012. Competition is always extremely tight. Further information on the Fair can be found on their website www.beerandpartners.com, otherwise please contact Roderick Beer to discuss your requirements on 0207 329 4884, or email him: beer@beerandpartners.com.

About Beer & Partners Limited

Business angel network Beer & Partners is the leading source of venture capital and business angel investment for growing SME business in the UK. Since 1991, Beer has managed to secure over £120m for their clients. They seek to match quality investors to businesses looking to raise funds, from start-up through to floatation. With a completion rate at five times the industry standard, they see over 3,000 proposals annually and will accept only the best of these as clients. Headquartered in London, Beer & Partners extends its reach nationwide with a comprehensive network of skilled associates, many with over 20 years' experience in industry, commerce and corporate finance.

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