

GRIP: Matching movers, shakers

Continued from page 1

have obviously been scouring the papers for the kind of vehicle we're offering. We did not expect an immediate critical acclaim for the service."

The electronic service makes matches between investors and golf/recreation industry entrepreneurs who have joined GRIP looking for finances.

More than 70 entrepreneurs and 1,520 investors are listed in GRIP, and Forecast aims to add another 1,000 investors by the end of the year.

From apparel to golf courses, to backing a touring pro — opportunities abound, according to Marlowe.

He said: "We are building up the number of investors who are interested in things other than golf facility projects. A lot of people are interested in the rack business. Finding an investor who is specifically interested in backing a Tour player might not be so easy. But there are people out there who are interested in that type of thing."

"We are also getting individuals — architects and landowners — calling. Some say, 'I'll dedicate land if you'll find a developer.' Every golf course development company in the country has deals like that. Whether they are viable or not, we can't say. But they are there."

Saying GRIP is micro-market focused, Marlowe added: "It is important to us that every business gets a fair shake. It's important that no business goes out of business because it can't get what it needs."

"We are trying to continue industry growth as a result of this service, because there is nobody out there watchdogging the small business, which is where ... innovations come from."

Lamenting that obtaining a patent today is difficult and costly, Marlowe said: "Without an angel to help these guys, a lot of patents and ideas will never see the light of day. And yet, they have the impact of potentially revolutionizing the industry and contributing to a big growth spurt in golf again."

"GRIP could conceivably become a major clearinghouse for the industry, if we can empanel the board we envision for it ... and if we ultimately create the Center for Entrepreneurial Study we intend."

"It's easy for (a major 'name' developer) to get out and say I need \$5 million or \$10 million to build a course. Merrill Lynch will chomp at the bit to do it for them. But who does the average guy go to? And yet, the backbone of this industry has always been small business."

Stressing that GRIP does not compete with the National Golf Foundation, which is "macro-oriented," Marlowe added: "We saw a void and we intend to fill that void. That means we have to cooperate, complement and supplement all the existing organizations. And that's all we have in mind."

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GRIP system computer-driven, but user-friendly

Golf & Recreation Investment Program may be computer-driven, but it works simply.

This is how:

- An entrepreneur seeking funding presents a profile of their business and what they are going to do with the funds they are soliciting.
- GRIP matches that profile against all the investors' investment profiles.
- When there is a match, the investment opportunity profile is sent to the investor, or investors.

If an investor gets back to GRIP and expresses interest, GRIP tells them how to contact the entrepreneur.

GRIP membership costs \$100 for a six-month listing for entrepreneurs; \$200 a year for individual investors; and \$500 a year for corporate investors. Investors must be "accredited" under the U.S. Exchange and Securities Commission because GRIP cannot supply any counseling as to the potential success of the deal.

"We don't get any fees at all that have anything to do with the successful completion of the project. We are not a broker," said Scott Marlowe of

GRIP's operator, Forecast Golf Marketing and Financial Systems, Inc. in Richmond, Va. "Our only revenues from GRIP are subscription fees. Those fees are set up to cover only our operating costs. We are only trying to provide a service to the industry designed to keep it growing."

Marlowe said he wants to add more entrepreneurs and investors to join the program. More members should translate into more matches being made.

"We now have 70-plus entrepreneurs and 1,520 investors," he said.

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