

Angel Den wrap-up and my Top 3 pitch picks



I recently had the opportunity to help facilitate an Angel Den event here in my hometown of Moncton and what a hit it was! The event was organized by Moncton Connect and we had over 100 startup enthusiasts attend the sold-out Moncton Press Club for an afternoon of pitches.

10 great New Brunswick-based companies were selected and came out to give their best pitch to angel investors from the [New Brunswick Innovation Foundation](#), the [First Angel Network](#), and the [Wallace McCain Institute](#), among others. Of notable mention was the attendance and keynote address by none other than [Mr. Gerry Pond](#), Chairman at [Mariner Partners](#) also widely recognized as a chairman of [Radian6](#). (Which in case you've been living under a rock - recently [was acquired](#) by [Salesforce.com](#) for approximately 326M.)

Highlights for me included:

- Learning about a few start-ups that were completely off my radar, including [CyberPsyc](#) (they help cure phobias using mobile applications), [Twofowzand](#) (they've created a digital highlighter - so many applications for this one), and [Naughty Lamda](#) (event planning software.)
- Meeting Sean Fahey from [VidCruiter](#) in person for the first time, despite the fact we have dozens of people in common. (Check them out: they are taking recruiting to the next level.)
- Chatting with the team from [ZapTap](#) - currently up for entry into GrowConf's launch contest, these guys have created a technology that allows consumers to access rich product information using their NFC enabled smartphones. They've got a ton of competition (Augmented Reality, QR Codes, other Scan Tags) but if they can differentiate themselves from the market - they'll stand a good shot at an acquisition.
- Reconnecting with the fine folk from [Tech South East](#), [Propel ICT](#), and of course my colleagues at [Moncton Connect](#).
- Touching base with Jason Richard from [Prop2Go](#) - a company I'm watching carefully, anticipating big news from them soon.

While all of the companies gave it their all, a few stood out. Here are my top three.

The award for "holy crap I didn't know you did all that" goes to:

Atwood Technology. While I thought this company was all about the dating game (Kipici Dating), turns out it's shame on me. Theresa Williams joined us to explain that Atwood Technology is less about finding love and more about semantic matchmaking - and it's applicable far beyond dating. She's realized that finding a perfect match extends to Human

Resources & Employment, Specialty Services, Social Networking Sites and to prove I wasn't completely wrong: love. There is massive potential to licence this technology far beyond the confines of online dating - I say why not LinkedIn? This company was a finalist for the 2011 KIRA award for most-promising start-up and a company I'll be watching closely. Check them out at atwoodtechnology.com.

The award for "best product name" goes to:

The Vump. Eric Fisher from the Thunder Progress Group pitched us on a pump that never wears out. He's got a lengthy career in pumping technologies (pumping technology?) and has been successful in selling his revolutionary vump (vaccum + pump) to companies like McCain foods. He's got a ton of potential if he can start producing these things quickly enough and can mobilize a sales force to get out there and start selling. My biggest concern for them at this stage is that it's time to start selling. An injection of cash is necessary to hire the bodies they need, followed by a swift hustle to hit the pavement running. With the folks at McCain's backing the product, it should surely speed up what could otherwise be a slow sales cycle. Impressive product, and an even more fun name. The Vump.

And finally, my pick for most innovative product goes to:

SmartSkin Technologies. I didn't manage to get him on camera, however [they have developed a basic prototype using nanotechnology to create a skin for a phone that can interpret touch commands on the back of the device](#). With the steady rise in popularity of smartphones, game consoles, and the demand for adding additional dimensions to gaming and other simulated experiences - this one just sounds like a sure thing. The company got its start conceptualizing SmartSkin for prosthetics - still a huge opportunity market for them. I do feel like it's time these guys start exposing themselves to the big players and leveraging their exciting strategic partnerships to the fullest extent - establishing their spot on in the ICT landscape both in Canada and in Silicon Valley. If they don't, they risk not being recognized for the innovative strides they are taking. Note: This company was the 2011 KIRA award recipient for most-promising start-up.

I'd love to work with any of these companies and am completely energized at all of the good stuff coming out of New Brunswick. Keep up the good work, guys.

For more video from the event, check out our [YouTube Channel](#).