

New venture to fund iPad app development

By ANTONIO PEREZ
Epoch Times Staff

NEW YORK—Apple Inc. unveiled the long-awaited iPad last month to unusually tepid response. But most analysts agree that for the tablet computer to take off, it would need applications developed especially for the device.

Enter AppFund, a new venture capital firm that will provide funding to iPad application developers worldwide. AppFund, founded by CNET and E! founder Kevin Wendle and MusicNation co-founder Daniel Klaus, will invest in developers and software houses that specialize in tablet and iPad applications.

The fund will invest \$5,000 to \$500,000 in each developer, depending on the complexity of the application and the project's potential user base.

"We believe that the iPad is a revolutionary device with the ability to transform everything from the way consumers experience content, media, and social networking to the way businesses can use applications to revolutionize their operations," said Wendle and Klaus in a statement.

So far, AppFund has not disclosed how much money is in the fund. The company is looking for candidates currently and targets summer 2010 for its first application launch.

"The possibilities for this device given its size and functionality could eclipse the application market for the smaller iPhone. A whole new category of developers and entrepreneurs is going to emerge around the iPad and build applications that can be even more interactive and dynamic."

COMPETITION HEATS UP



TABLET COMPUTER: Event guests play with the new Apple iPad during an Apple event on Jan. 27, 2010, in San Francisco. RYAN ANSON/AFF/GETTY IMAGES

If Apple wants to put a dent in Amazon.com's Kindle sales, it would have to woo consumers away much like how the iPhone became a leader—by building up its application database.

But as an e-book reader, the iPad has stiff competition.

Sony Corp. has upgraded its Sony Reader with Reader Daily Edition and signed an agreement with The Wall Street Journal and The New York Post to sell digital subscriptions.

U.K. company X2 launched a competing tablet computer, dubbed iTablet, which runs on Windows 7 and

Linux. It has the specifications similar to those of netbooks currently on the market.

Barnes & Noble last Friday released a software update to its Nook e-book reader, the second update since the product's launch last December.

INTEREST WANES

A new survey released by Retrovo showed that iPad has lost appeal among consumers quickly after launch.

Prior to iPad's launch on Jan. 27, 26 percent of the survey respondents said that they were not interested in

purchasing Apple's tablet computer. That figure rose to 52 percent after the launch.

Retrovo also found that most consumers who were willing to consider the iPad would opt for the cheaper, Wi-Fi only models. Consumers also cited the lack of a camera, Adobe Flash support, and multi-tasking as possible turnoffs.

A separate report by Computerworld unveiled last week that the cost to produce the standard-configuration \$499 iPad is only \$290. And higher priced models have even bigger profit margins.



Offer people a free telephone consultation before they order your product. When they get to know you personally, it could convert to more sales. FREEDIGITALPHOTOS.NET

Ten great ways to keep your sales soaring on the internet

By SCOTT GELD

Maximize the effectiveness of your banner ads. Don't just use the same ad on every banner, use a variety to attract the greatest number of clickers.

Make your Web site load much faster by cutting down on banner ads and start using more buttons. Button ads are also smaller and take up less space.

Offer free advertising space to well-known and respected companies on your Web site. Sometimes people link their business credibility to yours.

People have been taught all their lives to respect people in authority. Tell your visitors that you are the president or CEO of your business.

Offer people a free telephone consultation before they order your product. When they get to know you personally, it could convert to more sales.

Test the "bill me later option" on your Web site. Most people are

honest and will pay you. It is a powerful little niche and could increase your sales.

Find a charity your target audience would likely support. Tell people on your ad copy that you will give a percentage of the profits to that charity.

Hold a "buy the most wins contest" on your Web site. Tell people each monthly winner will get their entire purchase refunded.

Attract visitors to your Web site by offering them a free course. You could package the course on a follow-up autoresponder and send lessons daily.

Interview people related to your industry and get their legal permission to convert it to an article. Promote your Web site by submitting it to e-zines.

Scott F. Geld is the Director of Marketing for MarketingBlaster.com, a company providing targeted traffic and direct text links. For more information, please visit: www.MarketingBlaster.com.

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Job satisfaction? Depends on who you talk to

Workers under the age of 25 were the most disgruntled

By HEIDE B. MALHOTRA
Epoch Times Staff

WASHINGTON—While recent headlines have focused on the unemployed, a little-known fact is that Americans who are currently employed are growing increasingly dissatisfied with their jobs.

But you won't find that by reading the average business publication. One recent example is Fortune Magazine's annual "Best Companies to Work For" list.

SAS Institute Inc., a software and services firm, was named for the 13th consecutive year on the "Best Companies to Work For" list and ranked number one in 2010. The company has been listed seven times among the top ten and five times among the top five on the list.

"For 2010, I make the same promise that I did last year—SAS will have no layoffs. Too many companies worldwide sacrificed employees and benefits to cut costs in 2009. SAS took the opposite stance, and we have been rewarded in employee loyalty and overall success of the business," promised Jim Goodnight, CEO at SAS, in a statement.

Despite turbulent economic times, employee satisfaction and good business practices at SAS achieved a 2.2 percent increase in 2009 revenues to \$2.3 billion, and the company added 1,389 new clients.

Second on the list was Edward Jones, an investment adviser, which kept open all 12,615 offices worldwide without laying off a single worker. This is the 11th year for Edward Jones on the list.

"This honor is especially gratifying in the face of adversity and challenges the financial-services industry has faced the last two years," said Jim Weddle, managing partner at Edward Jones.

The popular grocery chain Wegmans Food Markets Inc. ranked third on the list and second on the list of large companies. Wegmans, just like SAS, has been on the list since its inception in 1998.

Separately, in a January survey,

Gallup Inc., a human behavior research center based in Washington, D.C., reported that 35 percent of American workers hope to work for U.S. local or federal governments.

Gallup qualifies its findings by making a distinction between times of economic turmoil and more peaceful times. The results may differ greatly when the economy has stabilized, as government salaries are often not comparable to those in the private sector.

Lists such as the "Top 100 Best Companies to Work For" paint a rather rosy picture of the U.S. employment environment by promoting those companies that have solid reputations for workplace management.

HATING YOUR JOB:

But the "Top 100 Best Companies to Work For" seems to be quite at odds with a job satisfaction survey undertaken by The Conference Board Inc.

Apparently, job dissatisfaction has grown to almost unmanageable proportions. More than half of all American workers are frustrated and disgruntled in their jobs, the highest rate in 22 years. In 1987, roughly 39 percent of American workers didn't particularly like their job versus 54.7 percent in 2009.

There wasn't a single job category that was spared. Job structure, environment, and benefits were just a few of the areas that have deteriorated over the years and fueled employee discontent. After that, manager attributes, abilities, attitudes, and bonus systems—unless one works in the financial sector—were mixed into the dissatisfaction concoction and contributed to a more than stressful situation for workers.

Workers under the age of 25 were the most disgruntled, although the margin differed only by roughly 10 percent for other age groups.

"The downward trend in job satisfaction could spell trouble for the overall engagement of U.S. employees and ultimately employee productivity," said Lynn Franco, director at The Conference Board's Consumer Research Center, in a recent statement.

But some statisticians and survey

takers interviewed for this article questioned the validity of The Conference Board's annual job satisfaction survey.

"Although the survey population is from many different backgrounds, it appears that it was not chosen at random," said an unnamed statistician, a remark echoed by all the others, suggesting that the outcome of the survey shouldn't only be taken at face value.

JUST BIDDING THEIR TIME

"One point of interest is how the external environment drives satisfaction," said Ken Pinnock from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). "The items that most directly affect employees in the 'here and now,' such as job security or benefits, are paramount over such longer-term initiatives."

Fear of being laid off due to outsourcing American jobs to China, India, Guatemala, Mexico, and other countries has been going on for years and affects job satisfaction, said a latest report by SHRM.

It doesn't help that American outsourcing firms are still calling for outsourcing of American jobs. This suggests that the economic slump threw many highly skilled workers into the pool of available workers globally, helping companies get skilled labor for cheap.

"The amount of highly skilled labour currently unemployed around the world has made staffing a shared service centre or centre of excellence somewhat easier," states the International Outsourcing Forum on its Web site.

As layoffs continue, managers pile more and more work on those left behind, requiring employees to work longer hours, while refusing to compensate for overtime, cutting time for lunch, and reducing salaries. All those factors contribute to a stressful workplace environment.

The threat of layoffs and outsourcing does not only affect the worker, but also management, especially now as many highly skilled workers are bidding their time and will go on a job hunt the minute the economy bounces back.

"According to a SHRM survey, 31% of employees indicated that they will be somewhat or very likely to begin or increase their job search once the economy and job market improve," concluded the SHRM researchers.

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