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INSIGHT AND AMUSEMENT FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES SALES AND MARKETING PROFESSIONALS



TRENDS

Behind closed doors

With all the volatility and complexity of public markets, emerging companies—like Facebook, LinkedIn and eHarmony—are choosing to raise capital somewhere else entirely: in private.

Facebook started 2011 with a \$500 million infusion of cash from Goldman Sachs and other investors, and a market value estimated at \$50 billion. Except, unlike legions of red-hot tech companies that have gone before, Facebook achieved this massive balance sheet and market cap without an IPO.

The money was raised privately, allowing founder Mark Zuckerberg to maintain almost complete control over the company, while avoiding the volatility of public markets, the pressure of shareholders and analysts, and the onerous red tape of regulators.

Not only that, Facebook is able to dictate the terms of the deal in a way no public company ever could: it's rumored that the hand-picked investors brought in by Goldman had to commit a minimum \$2 million to the table and would be prohibited from selling their shares until 2013.

Wall Street 2.0

Facebook—along with other social media sites, such as Digg, LinkedIn and Twitter—have helped transform the Internet from a static, one-way “information dump” to a dynamic, two-way dialogue. As conventional capital markets >>

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- > **TRENDS: Behind closed doors.**
Today's hottest stocks are trading in private. We asked an expert.
- > **CREATIVE: Three tips for a mobile world.** Video feature with our Digital Director, Russell Vance.
- > **PERSPECTIVE: The man behind the mic.** You may not know his name, but there's a good chance you know his voice.
- > **DIGEST: Quick hits on money and marketing.** Wacky bonds, nature boys and girls, and questionable trademarks.
- > **UPDATE: Industry and agency news.**
Join us at PAICR to connect, learn and succeed in 2011.

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become increasingly daunting, it should come as no surprise that these social media firms are using the very technology they helped popularize to raise capital directly from private investors.

For example, cruise over to sharepost.com and you can obtain research reports, make an investment, and trade your shares of privately held companies seeking venture capital, ranging from obscure start-ups to household names. The site says it has \$1-billion-plus in shares wanted to buy or sell at any given time, and claims its 45,000 members manage more than \$125 billion in capital.

Credit un-crunched

Another interesting player in the online private market is secondmarket.com, which launched in February 2008 to enable investors in illiquid debt securities, such as long-term bonds and preferred shares, to auction off their holdings to willing buyers in the wake of the credit crunch.

The concept of an auction-rate market is nothing new—broker-dealers have held such auctions regularly since 1984. But as these auctions began to fail, with sellers drastically outweighing buyers, broker-dealers found themselves unable to support auction prices by taking the securities on their balance sheets.

In just a few years, secondmarket.com says they have become the leading secondary market for the approximately \$150 billion in auction-rate securities on the market today.

Our view

We tend to support innovations that bring capital and ideas together. While it seems unlikely that traditional investment bankers will ever be out of work, Internet-enabled private markets can certainly fund ventures and fill gaps in the market that will help great businesses flourish.

Based on a recent valuation of \$70 billion, would you invest in Facebook? [Take our latest poll.](#)



CREATIVE: VIDEO FEATURE

Three tips for a mobile world

Seventy-seven million smartphones shipped in the fall of 2010 alone. Digital Director Russell Vance shares three tips to get your firm ready for a mobile world.

[Click to watch video](#)



PERSPECTIVE

The man behind the mic

You may not know the name Alan Varner, but there's a good chance you know his voice. We caught up with the popular voice actor to learn about his cool career providing the voice for brands such as the Weather Channel, Shell, Hershey's and the World Bank.

How did you become interested in voice acting?

I was a recording engineer and producer for many years. I did all kinds of work in New York, from rock, pop and jazz records to movie scores and ads for TV and radio. I got to work with all kinds of amazing voice acting talent—names that most people wouldn't know, but who were at the top of the game. Along the way, people would tell me, "Gee, you could do that," and after a while, I decided to give it a try.

How did you hone your skills?

Something I knew from being on the other side of the glass in the studio is that you can practice all day by yourself, and you'll never know what's working and what isn't the same as if you work with a professional coach. So I started

studying with Wendy Dillon, who is a fantastic voice actor and teacher. I did one-on-one sessions with her and I still go to a weekly workshop where I get to go on the microphone and try different things.

What makes a great voice actor?

You have to really understand the script and give it the life the client is looking for—dramatic, conversational, funny or whatever it might be. It's acting with just your voice, which I think can be tougher than acting with your whole body. One of the busiest guys I ever worked with, Peter Thomas, did not have a particularly distinctive voice, but he could read the phonebook and make it sound like a bedtime story. He's one of my idols for being able to make anything sound interesting. >>

Where do you find work?

In New York, there are meet 'n' greets called "seminars" for people who are looking for agents and casting directors. I had no idea about this when I was working as an engineer, but you basically go to these seminars and talk to them and read for them a little bit. It took a little while to find an agent, but now I have two or three who call me for jobs. But times are changing—these days, about 60% of my work comes through the Internet, and I do the recording in my home studio.

What are the best and worst aspects of your job?

I love the challenge. I've been a voice actor for more than 14 years, but I certainly don't feel like I have it totally figured out. I'm always doing different products for TV or different subjects for narration, and I always find it fascinating. The thing I hate is the weeks when the phone doesn't ring. Having come from a studio where I'd go to work every day and always have things to do and collect a paycheck, this is a totally different experience. Fortunately, I'm not a young would-be actor who has to get a job as a waiter.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to pursue a career in voice acting?

The most important thing is to find someone to learn from. Find a coach. Talk to other people. It's definitely the most important thing you can do.

Our view

We recently produced an interactive presentation with Alan, and the results were very well-received. Just keep in mind that a great voice is only part of the equation—you also need to write effectively for spoken dialogue, which is not the same as writing for the printed page.

Want to hear Alan? [Click here](#) for a quick sample of his range of styles, and visit alanvarner.com for more.

DIGEST

Quick hits on money and marketing



Three wacky types of bonds

- 1. Death bonds** are created when an investment fund buys up life insurance policies from living policy holders and bundles them together. The profit comes when the policy holders die and the investment fund, as the designated beneficiary, collects the payouts.
- 2. 100-year bonds** were recently issued by US railroad Norfolk Southern (\$250 million) and the government of Mexico (\$1 billion). Although these bonds are rare, Walt Disney Company and Coca-Cola have also issued 100-year bonds in the past.
- 3. Lottery bonds** use a lottery-style draw to reward certain investors with a higher interest payout or a redemption price above face value. Although bonds of this style have been implicated in outright scams, they have also been issued by the governments of France and Belgium.



Nature boys and girls

Norway has created the world's first index that attempts to measure the "natural capital" within GDP. The "Nature Index of Norway" uses 309 indicators to judge the state of a country's ecosystems and shows that Norway's seas, coastal waters, freshwater and mountains are in a good state, but forests and lowlands are suffering. Officials said the new index may be a first step towards valuing "free" services such as insect pollination or forest growth.

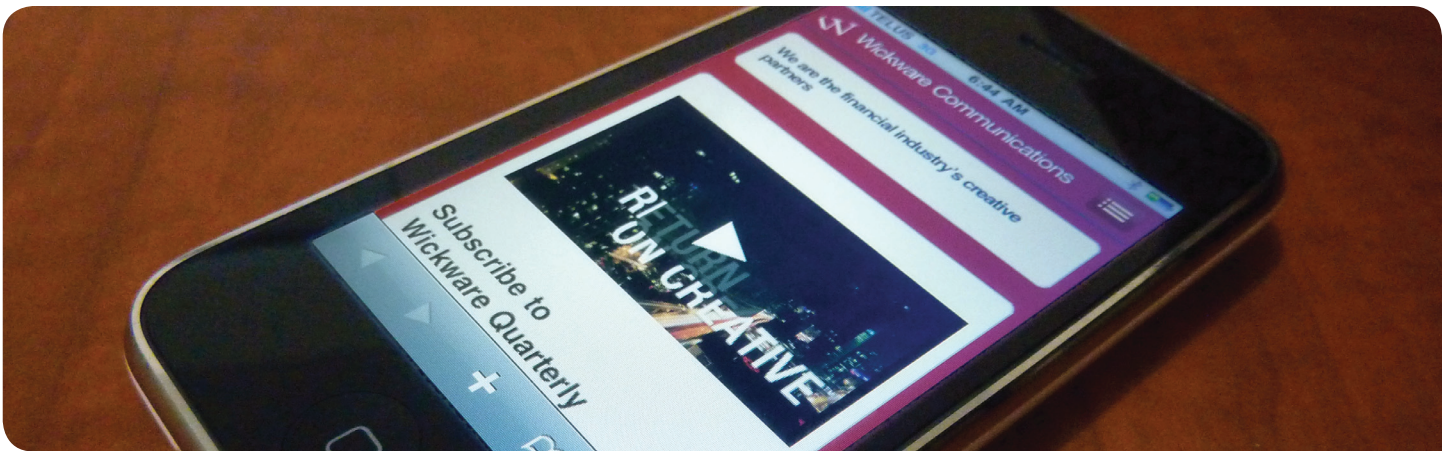
Source: reuters.com

Does this seem overly litigious™ to you?

Here are five trademarked phrases you better avoid using unless you're ready to pay.

Phrase	Trademark owner	The story
"That's hot"	Media sensation Paris Hilton	Sued Hallmark for using the phrase in a greeting card, but settled out of court.
"BAM!"	Celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse	Catch-phrase used to sell cookbooks and the BAM! Machine food processor, blender and juicer.
"They are who we thought they were"	Arizona Cardinals coach Dennis Green	Press conference lament following a heartbreaking loss turned into apparel line and Coors Light commercial.
"Three-peat"	NBA coach Pat Riley	Although Riley's teams never pulled off a three-peat, he prints the slogan on merch when other teams do.
"Let's get ready to rumble!"	Boxing announcer Michael Buffer	Since registering the phrase in 1992, Buffer is estimated to have grossed \$400 million in licensing fees.

Source: modernman.com



UPDATE

Industry and agency news

The new mobile wickware.com

We are pleased to announce that wickware.com has a new and improved mobile counterpart. You can access it with just about any mobile device, watch our short (but exciting) homepage video, learn about our services, or request the executive summary of our latest whitepaper, which delivers insights, rankings and best practices from over 900 websites in the investment industry. Try it out today!

Join us at PAICR this year!

Do you want to connect with other marketing professionals, learn from experts and business leaders, and have another avenue to increase your personal and professional success? If so, you need to check out the Professional Association for Investment Communication Resources—better known as PAICR.

At Wickware Communications, we are actively involved with PAICR at the board and committee levels, and invite all like-minded professionals to get involved as members and volunteers so we can deliver more great opportunities to connect, learn and succeed in 2011. **Please drop us a line if you'd like more information.**



Are you on Twitter?

Twitter. On one hand, it seems crazy to ignore it. On the other hand, the perceived risks and resource requirements lead many financial services firms to do just that. Our view? Twitter may never be considered a business necessity, but it can certainly help you increase your visibility in the marketplace. You don't need a complex "social media strategy" either—just a commitment to post content on a regular basis (even if most of that content is repurposed from other channels). We use Twitter to share a mix of original and found content about marketing and financial services, and people tell us it's pretty interesting. Check it out by **following us** today!

WISE WORDS

“One of the funny things about the stock market is that every time one person buys, another sells, and both think they are astute.”

William A. Feather

We are the financial industry's creative partner

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