

Gilbert software firm gets \$2.2M boost

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BY [Adam Kress](#)

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A Gilbert software company landed \$2.2 million in funding from a group led by Arizona investors.

[CopperKey Inc.](#) is the maker of BizFusion, a software program that analyzes a firm's customer or prospect databases in order to rank predictive sales leads.

HOTventures, a Tucson angel/venture capital hybrid is the lead investor in a group that includes Tucson's [Desert Angels](#) and the Phoenix-based [Wasatch Venture Fund](#).

HOTventures Managing Partner Rick Gibson said the company has potential for quick growth. "The technology is proven, but they haven't had enough money for sales and marketing," he said. "Now they are going after a lot of new customers."

CopperKey Executive Vice President Peter Vanderlee said the 15-employee company has about 40 customers -- both locally and nationally -- but has been limited in the marketing department. The financial infusion will allow the company to hire a handful of new sales associates, he said.

"We're going to be more aggressive in marketing," Vanderlee said.

CopperKey's software allows companies to analyze their customers and identify high-quality prospects that are ranked by their level of interest and likelihood to purchase.

"It's an automated tool to get customer intelligence fresh, fast and easy," Vanderlee said. "It does what a human analyst would do by looking at all the data."

For example, a company can use BizFusion to predict and rank customers most likely to repurchase within the next three months and map those customers by region. Up to 300 characteristics are used to profile customers.

Gibson said he was drawn to the investment because the software easily can be adapted to various kinds of businesses.

"There are a lot of general software products out there that are similar, but this one has much more sensitivity," he said.

Vanderlee said the private equity market has improved of late, and it took the company nearly a year to find financing.

"A lot of people said we'd never get money in Arizona, but I think this proves that Arizona investors will support innovation," he said.

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, there were 15 Arizona equity investments through June 2006 totaling \$94 million, compared with 17 deals worth \$87 million during the same period a year ago.

As CopperKey builds its sales team and possibly its customer base, the company already is looking toward its next funding opportunity.

"Our plans for the next round would be to secure at least \$10 million," Vanderlee said. "We're getting a lot of interest already, but we have to prove that we can scale the business up."

COPPERKEY INC.

Headquarters: Gilbert.

Founded: 1997.

Employees: 15.

CEO: David Castillo.

Customers: Avnet, Apple Computers, Cabela's, Grainger and TiVO.
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