

9/24/2009 Newport Beach, Calif. -- Despite the downturn in the global economic markets, wealth management is still a growth business - at least in the judgement of Bessemer Venture Partners, which has provided UNITED CAPITAL Financial Partners LLC with \$15 million in new venture financing.

United Capital, which targets individuals with a net worth of \$500,000 to \$10 million with its wealth management services, is profitable and does not foresee raising future venture capital funding, according to Joe Duran, chief executive of United Capital.

The economic downturn has caused people to seek help with their finances even more in recent months, Duran said.

"The end-client demand for what we do is really exploding...No one can really count on 10% (return) in the market anymore," Duran said.

The company focuses on providing not just advice on what particular investments to choose but rather a comprehensive plan for career, family, retirement and the like, Duran said.

The firm also has seen increasing interest among wealth advisors that want to join United Capital, Duran said. Fixed costs of running such businesses for smaller advisors are growing, while revenue has been down for those with fees that are linked to the size of accounts they manage.

UNITED CAPITAL offers resources and can spread costs across its 21 offices nationwide. The company has 150 employees.

UNITED CAPITAL has been on an acquisition hunt, having acquired 25 firms in this space. The new funding from Bessemer will allow the company to expand to several new cities in the next few months, Duran said.

Founded in 2005, UNITED CAPITAL originally raised \$5 million from management and board members. The firm later raised \$16 million from Grail Partners.

Duran previously was president of Centurion Capital Management, which was acquired by GE Financial Assurance Holdings Inc., a subsidiary of GE Capital, in 2001.

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