

InnoVenture

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It wasn't that long ago- in the late 1990s- that the landscape of support for entrepreneurs in South Carolina was relatively barren.

Recognizing this, a group of loosely affiliated investment bankers, lawyers, venture capitalists, accountants, entrepreneurs and angel investors decided to meet regularly to network and cultivate an entrepreneur-friendly culture. Nexsen Pruet was a founding member of that group, called the South Carolina Investor Network, which became part of the "primordial soup" that helped bring about the conditions for an innovation and entrepreneurial awakening across South Carolina.

As a result of those kinds of efforts, events and groups like ThinkTech and Dig South in Charleston, Engenuity and CETi in Columbia, and NEXT and InnoVenture in Greenville sprung to life.

InnoVenture is an annual networking conference for businesses, entrepreneurs, and investors, and more broadly, InnoVenture.com is a portal to exchange and support ideas. Nexsen Pruet was instrumental in launching InnoVenture in Greenville. Having a long relationship with John Warner, the founder of InnoVenture, our firm saw and believed in the potential for InnoVenture. We affiliated ourselves with the organization as legal counsel, a sponsor, an active participant, and ultimately, the presenting sponsor of InnoVenture's prestigious Przirembel Prize for collaborative innovation.

Mark Knight, Chair of the Firm's corporate team, explained: "Being involved with InnoVenture gives us contacts with new client prospects, certainly. But the bigger benefit is it makes us more valuable to our current clients. It expands our network of contacts that can benefit our clients and it expands our horizons of available technology, services, and ideas. As an active participant in InnoVenture, we get to work with private equity, investment bankers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and major R&D leaders in a meaningful way, and in the course of doing that we gain perspectives that are helpful to our clients."

"We become a better, richer and more robust clearinghouse for our clients because of who and

what we know from our InnoVenture activity.”

-Mark Knight