

Google plans growth in Michigan

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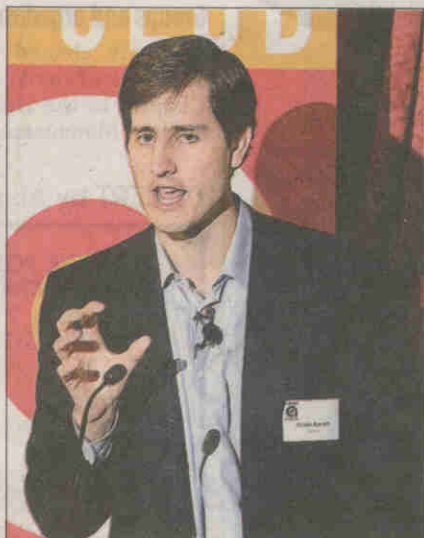
Head of online sales and operations for AdWords says move to Ann Arbor is 'vote of confidence' for state

BY ROB KIRKBRIDE
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

GRAND RAPIDS — Google's commitment to Michigan will increase as it continues to hire employees to fill its Ann Arbor office, according to the head of online sales and operations for Google's new office in Ann Arbor.

Grady Burnett told a packed Ad Club of West Michigan meeting Wednesday that AdWords' move to Ann Arbor is a vote of confidence for Michigan and its workers.

With more than 180 in attendance at the B.O.B., it was the largest Ad Club lunch meeting in more than 12 years, club director Julie Metzker



PRESS PHOTO/REX LARSEN

Drawing a crowd: Grady Burnett, who heads online sales and operations for the new Google office in Ann Arbor, speaks to a packed house at the Ad Club of West Michigan meeting.

said.

Don't expect Google to open shop in Grand Rapids anytime soon, Burnett said. Growth will take place in Ann Arbor, but the company is hiring people from all over the state and across the U.S.

"What we saw from the outside, from California, was this tremendous

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breadth of people, a diverse, highly educated group of people," he said.

Google co-founder Larry Page grew up in Lansing and went to the University of Michigan.

The AdWords office opened three months ago in a temporary location in downtown Ann Arbor.

It has 40 employees with plans to grow to more than 1,000, according to Burnett.

AdWords is Google's most profitable division.

It is the company's advertising branch, creating the listings that run along the right side of the Google search results page.

"I talk to 12 people a day who say they use us 30 times a day and say they've never paid us a dime and never intend to,"

he said.

"I like that our advertising is seen as just an integrated part (of the whole product)."

AdWords works because of its ability to precisely target advertising, Burnett said. When people type in facial cream, for example, advertisements pop up for facial cream retailers.

"We want media to be accountable," he said, later adding, "We have a relentless ability to track (advertising) at a very granular level."

Google remains committed and has succeeded because of its adherence to a core principle: Focus on the user.

The company grew because "Unlike other (tech) companies in the 1990s, Google didn't spend money on marketing, the company spent it on engi-

neers," Burnett said.

He said the Ann Arbor operations are key to the company's growth and financial success.

"We are going to absolutely be growing and growing fast in Ann Arbor," Burnett said.

David Ellyatt agreed with Burnett that Michigan is a good place to grow a tech company.

The principal executive of Lizard Direct said he moved from New York to Grand Rapids to start his company that optimizes search results for companies.

"There are a lot of pure tech companies out there," Ellyatt said after the meeting. "The creative element is absolutely here."

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