



The Designate

Changing the American Evening

Monday, November 12, 2007

Business plan

On-call drivers aim for national sites

Karen Dybis / The Detroit News

The company: The Designate is a professional chauffeur service that provides customers with an on-call driver for their personal vehicle. Drivers, who work in teams, are available through a reservation or as needed. Possible users include people who are heading to Metro Detroit entertainment venues and want a safe ride home in their own vehicles if they have consumed adult beverages, said owner and founder Tom Proctor.

Corporate customers: The Birmingham company provides an alternative in a region with limited public transportation or cab services, Proctor said. That is why The Designate is seeking long-term relationship with corporate or business clients, who could provide the service to their employees when needed. This would both assist employees who are entertaining clients but also reduce the number of alcohol-related work losses, Proctor said.

Going national: Proctor said he wants The Designate to go national after fully testing it in the Detroit market. He said the company is considering franchising the concept while keeping Detroit as the central hub. "I'd love to see it in every major city in America at some point," said Proctor, former owner of Proctor Financial in Troy, the largest privately held insurance underwriter in the region.

On the Web: www.thedesignate.com

Final word: "Our drivers are at your beck and call," Proctor said. "We want people to enjoy themselves safely, live life responsibly and know we're available to them."

Karen Dybis