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## New Faces Set for Financo Forum

By DAVID MOIN

Don't expect the usual suspects at the next Financo Forum.

Financo chairman Gilbert Harrison, who knows a thing or two about restructuring, has reloaded the 22-year-old event with executives spearheading emerging businesses, and who rarely, if ever, participate in panel discussions. "We went after people who haven't been overexposed. But don't worry. We'll have a few surprises to get the group charged up," Harrison said Tuesday, in an interview with Colin Welch, Financo's chief executive officer and president.

Harrison wouldn't tip his hand on what's in store, but Financo forums have a reputation for stirring the pot. Harrison notoriously stacks the panels with outspoken veteran executives with strong, opposing opinions. That's not necessarily the case for Monday's forum though there's still an impressive speaker lineup including Nathan Yao, general manager of 360Buy.com, a billion-dollar China-based general merchandiser online that's become like the Amazon of Asia.

There's also Christopher Burch, founder and ceo of C. Wonder and a Tory Burch investor; Kevin Plank, ceo and founder of Under Armour, and Walter Robb, co-ceo of Whole Foods. Susan Lyne, chairman of Gilt Groupe, who unlike the others has been very visible on the speakers' circuit, will also be on the panel.

Held at the Harmonie Club, 4 East 60th Street, the by-invitation-only event starts with the panel and then becomes a cocktail hour for an industry crowd of nearly 300.

"The panel we've compiled proves that in this tough economic climate, the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in the retail sector and new concepts can grow and become major players," Harrison said.

He noted that with Burch, "The big issue is how does he make his startups work? With Gilt, it's about a changing business model. With 360, it's how the company continues to maintain share across all of its categories. It's a real classic general merchandiser that covers everything."

At Whole Foods, Harrison added, "the quality is excellent and they are excellent operators. So how do they take it to the next level?" And at Under Armour, "Kevin Plank is transforming the business into the next Nike, particularly with its growth in footwear and accessories."

Each executive will speak about their company, then take questions from Harrison, Welch and Margaret Brennan, a Bloomberg Television anchor who will serve as moderator.