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Israeli pharma co NeuroDerma sold for $1.1bn

Israeli pharmaceuticals company NeuroDerm Ltd. (Nasdaq: NDRM) has been sold for $1.1 billion in cash ($39 per share). This is the largest ever acquisition of an Israeli healthcare company, and one of the largest acquisitions of an Israeli company of any kind. The buyer is Japanese company Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma Corporation (TSE Code:4508) (MTPC).

NeuroDerm is a clinical stage pharmaceutical company developing drug-device combinations for central nervous system (CNS) disorders. The acquisition by MTPC has received unanimous approval by NeuroDerm's board of directors. The acquisition price represents a premium of 79% percent over the unaffected price on June 9, 2017 of NeuroDerm's ordinary shares on the Nasdaq Stock Market, and a 17% premium over the closing stock price on July 21, 2017. A special meeting of shareholders to approve the transaction is expected to be held this fall. Assuming typical regulatory and shareholder approval timeframes, NeuroDerm currently anticipates the transaction will close in the fourth quarter of 2017.

The CEO of NeuroDerm is Dr. Oded Lieberman. The chairman, and one of the leading investors in the company, is Robert Taub, who founded Omrix and sold it for $458 million to Johnson & Johnson.

NeuroDerm was floated on Nasdaq in November 2014 at a valuation of $164 million after money. Since then it has made further offerings, at rising valuations.

"We believe that this transaction will yield important benefits for NeuroDerm's shareholders and the Parkinson's disease patients that urgently need new therapies," Lieberman said. "MTPC has demonstrated development and commercialization expertise

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in the field of neurology and we are confident that the combination of their resources and the robust data supporting ND0612, our Phase III Parkinson's disease product candidate, will help make this important new therapy available as broadly and rapidly as possible.
The transaction also provides our shareholders with a significant return on their investment in NeuroDerm, reflecting the value that we have created with our pipeline and technologies."

Sirin Labs unveils NIS 54,000 smartphone

The SOLARIN military grade secured smartphone is the fruit of three years research in Israel and Sweden.

Sirin Labs has unveiled its NIS 54,000 military-grade security smartphone called SOLARIN. The company was founded by Moshe Hogeg, CEO Tal Cohen and Kazakh investor Kenges Rakishev who serves as president. Last month the company closed a $72 million seed round tand he only named investor was Hogeg's Singulariteam.

The company said that following over two years of R&D in Sweden and Tel Aviv, SOLARIN is made up of over 2,500 inner components within a meticulously designed exterior to achieve fast, seamless connectivity across any continent. Delivering tomorrow's technology, today, to the toughest audience with the most exacting requirements.

The SOLARIN comes with Zimperium state-of- the-art mobile threat protection that thwarts the broadest array of advanced device, network and application mobile cyber attacks, without impairing usability or functionality of a top-of- the-range smartphone. In addition, SOLARIN incorporates the most advanced privacy technology, currently unavailable outside the agency world. SIRIN LABS partnered with KoolSpan to integrate chip-to-chip 256-bit AES encryption, the same technology that militaries around the world use to protect theircommunications, offering the strongest possible mobile privacy protection worldwide. Activated by the unique Security Switch on the back of the handset, the phone enters a shielded mode, presenting an exclusive suite for fully encrypted calls and messages

Cohen said, "Cyber-attacks are endemic across the globe. This trend is on the increase. Just one attack can severely harm reputations and finances. SOLARIN is pioneering new, uncompromising privacy measures to provide customers with greater confidence and the reassurance necessary to handle business-critical information."

He added, "Exceptional audio and vision capabilities feature highly on our target audience's wish list. SIRIN LABS' audio and vision engineers fixated on exceeding expectation, turning to experts to develop a new benchmark for smart phone speaker systems and unparalleled striking screen intensity."

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Designed by world renowned industrial designer Karim Rashid and meticulously assembled by engineers more used to making the world's finest watches. From the construction of its unique metal matrix composite chassis typically used in the aerospace industry for its absolute rigidity to incorporating titanium panels for structural strength, using tough Corning® Gorilla® Glass 4 to help protect the curved display screen as well as the camera lens and a technical leather back panel - only materials with optimal functionality made the final grade.

Israeli drones are about to take over the world's skies

Israel is by far the largest exporter of military drones in the world. Take the AirMule from UrbanAero. It could have flown right off the pages of a Batman comic book.

Designed to take off and land vertically with up to 1,400 pounds of cargo and zip through the air at over 100mph, this drone is set to transport injured soldiers from urban war zones where standard helicopters simply cannot fly.

When it comes to military drones like the AirMule, Israel is by far the largest exporter in the world, shipping over 61% of worldwide volumes, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri).

But Israeli startups account for less than 1% of the $1.1 billion invested in commercial drone startups worldwide. Still, angel backed Israeli startups like Flytrex, Dronomy and Percepto are punching above their weight to tackle distinct segments of the drone market. (Disclosure: I am not an investor in any of the companies mentioned in this article, nor is my company, Genesis Partners.)

Drones that deliver

Flytrex for instance, is a delivery drone startup getting ready to take on UPS, Fedex and DHL. The company is led by Yariv Bash, best known as the co-founder of SpaceIL – Israel's entry for the Google XPrize to put a spacecraft on the moon.

Backed by Joey Low, the angel behind WeWork and Taboola, Flytrex has already sold $700,000 worth of connected devices for drones to track flight paths, weather conditions and statistics like speed and distance over the cloud.

Flytrex will use the data it collects from these connected devices to build routes for autonomous drone deliveries, Bash says. Think of this like Waze maps for drones.

Flytrex is preparing to deliver everything from consumer goods to vaccines at a fraction of the time and cost of traditional ground delivery, and is currently in talks with design partners in emerging markets.

Drones that can 'see'

For drones to make the leap from gimmicks to mainstream services, experts agree the key is autonomy – or the ability for drones to fly beyond our direct line of sight and perform tasks automatically.

Just as Google is investing heavily in autonomous capabilities for self driving cars, Dronomy is bringing similar obstacle detection and avoidance capabilities to drones.

Dronomy, backed by executives from Skype, offers an operating system that functions as a drone's eyes and ears. It uses sensors to help drones avoid dangerous collisions with everything from birds to projectiles.

Founders Ori Afek and Guy Raz previously developed missile detection systems and advanced vision sensors for the Israel Defense Forces so they are well accustomed to any conditions a drone may encounter midair.

Another startup, Percepto, is using similar computer vision and sensor fusion technology to offer drones for the alternative energy sector.

US army may soon use Israeli-designed 'suicide drones'

Israeli and American companies offer US military new loitering munitions.

Will the United States start using Israeli suicide drones?

It might, after Israeli defense company UVision teamed up with US defense giant Raytheon, to adapt the Israeli-designed Hero-30 remotely-operated loitering munition to US military requirements.

Now, both companies are jointly offering it to American infantry forces for use on future battlefields.

Unlike larger suicide drones, the Hero 30 is designed for individual soldier use. Each soldier can carry up to three.

The Hero 30 is the lightest member of its loitering munition family, and weighs just three kilograms. It carries a half kilogram warhead.

Launched from a canister using air pressure alone, it can fly on its electrical engine and wings for up to 30 minutes, before attacking a target like a missile.

During its launch, the munition does not leave behind a thermal or acoustic signature, Dubester said, adding that it sounds "like a champagne bottle being opened."

The US realized the need for such weapons in Afghanistan and Iraq, Dubester said. "They concluded that without this, they don't go to war," he said.

Past products looked more like planes, and attacked at relatively shallow angles. They served American special forces.

Now, the US army is about to open a tender for Lethal Miniature Aerial Missile Systems (LMAMS), Dubester said, as part of a plan to make such weapons, small, extremely accurate to avoid friendly fire, and accessible to all infantry soldiers.

"Through past sales, which I can't detail, we recognized their awareness to these products. Raytheon then linked up with us," Dubester said. The Hero 30 "take off like a missile and flies like a drone. It can carry out day and night surveillance like a drone. When it finds a target, it can attack from above, or behind," Dubester said. "The hard part was teaching a missile to fly like a plane," he added, referring to the system's wings, which enable it to loiter and search for targets.

Should the US buy the munition, it would represent the closing of a long circle, which began when the US purchased Israel Aerospace Industry's Pioneer and Hunter drones in the 1980s and 1990s, before producing American-made platforms.

"The systems they use today still have Israeli DNA," Dubester said, adding that IAI was linked to the development of the infamous predator drone.

In a statement released in recent days, Raytheon said that "the adapted system will meet the U.S. Army's requirement for Lethal Miniature Aerial Missile Systems."

Microsoft Launches New Early-stage Venture Capital Arm in 3 U.S. Cities - and Tel Aviv

Dubbed Microsoft Ventures, it will complement the sizable operations that the company already has in Israel.

In further evidence of Israel's power as a high-tech innovator, Microsoft announced that it is establishing a new venture capital unit that will invest in early stage high-tech startups and will initially have what it calls "a presence" in three U.S. cities - San Francisco, Seattle and New York - and Tel Aviv, according to a company blog post.

The creation of the unit, Microsoft Ventures, was announced Monday in a blog post from Nagraj Kashyap, corporate VP of the new unit, which the TechCrunch website says in practice means that he is heading the division. "The bigger idea, it seems, is to give Microsoft an earlier look at companies that it might at some point acquire or at least help influence in the larger ecosystem, to follow routes that are more Microsoft-friendly," TechCrunch added.

Another Microsoft division that had previously gone by the name Microsoft Ventures has now been named Microsoft Accelerator, and it too has a Tel Aviv office.

Microsoft has a major presence in Israel, which includes research and development centers in erzliya and Haifa employing a workforce of about 1,000. In March it announced the opening of an R&D center in the northern Israeli Arab town of Nazareth.

Fortissimo buys medical equipment company Tuttnauer for $100m

The Israeli company is a global leader in sterilization systems for laboratories, hospitals, and medical clinics.

Fortissimo Capital has signed an agreement to acquire 100% of sterilization equipment company Tuttnauer for $100 million. Managed by Yuval Cohen, Fortissim is a private equity fund that has raised four funds totaling $1 billion to date.

Tuttnauer is a global leader in sterilization systems for laboratories, hospitals, and medical clinics. The company, whose turnover is in the tens of millions of dollars, markets its products in many countries, mainly through regular veteran distributors.

Founded by Zeev Tuttnauer in 1950, the company was managed for many years by his son, Joshua Tuttnauer, and in recent years by his grandson, Ran Tuttnauer, who was also esponsible for developing the company's business in the US in the 1980s and 1990s, thereby making the Tuttnauer name a leading international brand.

The company held its IPO on the TASE in 1993, and was listed on it for 16 years. In its most recent annual financial statements, the company reported NIS 213 million in revenue, 95% of which came from exports, and a NIS 7.6 million profit.

Tuttnauer was hit hard by the 2009 economic crisis in the US and other countries that bought its equipment in dollars, which were worth less in shekels. In addition, hospitals suffering from the crisis were slower to replace their equipment. The Tuttnauer family made an offer to purchase for the public's shares in the company in 2009 at a value of NIS 166 million ($43 million at the exchange rate prevailing at the time), a 46% premium on the market price. Today, when the company is being sold, it is ully owned by the family (Ran Tuttnauer, his mother Chava, and his sisters, Lior and Shirley).

Following Joshua's death in 2011, his children began looking for a buyer for the company. There were a number of interesting offers, before Fortissimo agreed to pay the right price.

Tuttnauer is a good fit for the nature of Fortissimo's activity: it has a strong brand name in medical sterilization products (which can range from a small microwave sterilizer to a large sterilizer the size of an entire room divided into trays, which can sterilize the medical equipment of an entire hospital), including the use of steam. On the other hand, the company, the company has been very conservative for years, as befits a family-owned industrial business, after trying and failing to acquire a chain of electrical products in the US in 1993. The company subsequently adhered to its core sterilization business.

This sector has kept the company's growth rate steady at under 10% (except for the crisis years), because the need to sterilize medical equipment is continuously rising, but the company has not substantially expanded its line of products, made acquisitions, or thoroughly overhauled its technology.

Fortissimo is likely to add new geographic areas, new products, and product innovation to the company, perhaps also through acquisitions. The company's profit margin is liable to slip during this period (for the sake of a future increase), so it is better for it not to be a listed company, but also not a family-owned company.

Fortissimo is one of Israel's leading private funds. It invests in industrial companies, most of which sell products, not services, in many and diverse sectors. Its holdings range from large minority stakes to fully ownership. Among other things, the fund invested in Cadent Holdings (a dental companies sold to Align for $190 million), Kornit Digital (Nasdaq:KRNT) (in which Fortissimo had a $200 million exit from a $19 million investment, and still holds shares in the company worth $70 million), RadView, Telit Communications plc (AIM:TCM), Sodastream International Ltd. (Nasdaq: SODA; TASE: SODA), Phoenicia America-Israel (Flat Glass), Afimilk, Origene Seeds, Priority Software, MotoRad, and others. In addition to Cohen, Fortissimo's partners include Eli Blatt, Shmoulik Barashi, Marc Lesnick, Yochai Hacohen, and Yoav Hineman.

Intel's Israel procurement worth NIS 5.76b in 2016

75% of the procurement was from small and medium-sized suppliers says Intel Israel's corporate responsibility report.

Intel Israel today published its corporate responsibility report for 2016, which states that procurement by Israel's largest high-tech company totaled NIS 5.76 billion, 75% of it from small and medium-sized suppliers.

"Once again, we have made a substantial contribution to the country's economy through exports and local procurement of goods and services," said Intel Israel CEO Yaniv Garty. "Revenue from Intel's exports of goods and services totaled $3.5 billion last year, 8% of all Israel high-tech exports."

This was down from 11% of Intel Israel's exports in 2015 totalling $4.1 billion but the amount is expected to rise sharply this year as the Fab at Intel's Kiryat Gat plant begin full operations.

Intel continued its recruitment of employees in Israel, and currently has 10,200 employees in the country. 67% of Intel Israel's employees work in development, and the rest in production. 21% are women, who constitute 30% of Intel Israel's management. The number of women recruited rose 7.5% in 2016, and 28% of the new employees who have joined the company are women. The global Intel company has allocated $300 million up until 2020 to accelerate diversity among its staff.

The report places great emphasis on environmental matters. Intel says that recycling of chemical waste at Intel Israel increased from 83% in 2015 to 93% in 2016. The 270,000 cubic meters of water recycled in production processes is the equivalent of 87 Olympic-sized pools. Intel saved 14 million kilowatt hours of electricity last year, equal to the energy

consumed by 900 homes in a year.
The company reduced its production of greenhouse gasses by 16,000 tons, equivalent to the emission value of 5,500 average cars.

Israeli high-tech exits hit 5-year low

Israeli high-tech exits totaled $1.95 billion in 57 deals in the first half of 2017, according to IVC-Meitar. IPOs rose.

In the first half of 2017, Israeli high-tech exits totaled $1.95 billion in 57 deals, according to the Exits Report published today by IVC and law firm Meitar Liquornik Geva Leshem Tal.

There were 46 merger and acquisition (M&A) deals in the first half of 2017, seven initial public offerings (IPOs) and four buyouts, totaling $1.51 billion, $227 million, and $218 million, respectively. The average exit deal in the first half of 2017 was only $34 million, much lower than the annual exit average of $87 million in 2016. Exits in the first half of 2017 were at a five-year low, both in terms of deal number and total amount.

The largest deals in the first half of 2017 were the $340 million acquisition of Valtech by Edwards Lifescience (US) and $200 million acquistion of Juno LAB by Gett (Israel), followed by the $170 million acquisition of Servotronix by Midea (China). The top three deals accounted for more than $700 million, nearly 36% of total exit deals in the first half of 2017.

IPOs showed a relative recovery in the first half of 2017, with seven IPOs grossing $227 million. Both the number of IPOs and amounts of money were higher than last year's figures, which reached a mere $22 million in five IPO transactions.

Meitar Liquornik Geva Leshem Tal partner Adv. Alon Sahar said that global changes, such as those related to a possible fundamental change in the US taxation regime, or regulatory changes in China related to the right of businesses to spend capital outside the country, partially explain the slowdown.

He said, "The current report, covering the first half of 2017, alongside the second half of 2016, indicate a clear trend - a decrease in the number of merger and acquisition deals, which requires an explanation. We believe that the possible change in taxation regime in United States forces American acquirers to rethink their capital management strategies, which greatly affects modelling the deals in process. The regulatory boundaries in China suspended significant activity by Chinese acquirers, or discouraged Israeli companies from negotiating with potential Chinese acquirers." Sahar added: "It is important to remember that a large portion of companies which were very active in the local acquisitions arena underwent significant organizational changes related to their core activities. Naturally, changes delay decision making on M&A deals, regardless of the Israeli market. When a corporate strategy matures, corporations implement it, usually through acquisitions. Sometimes the acquired company is at the core of the strategic change. A case in point is the Mobileye acquisition by Intel, which is expected to be closed by the end of this year. Sometimes, however, acquisitions are the missing piece in the puzzle."

According to Sahar, in recent years, that same Microsoft performed a series of cyber security acquisitions locally after having frozen virtually all M&A activity in Israel, becoming an active acquirer locally.

Meitar Liquornik Geva Leshem Tal partner Adv. Dan Shamgar suggests an additional xplanation for the decrease in the number of M&As. "We should take into account the noticeable growth in the volume of investments and the availability of capital for growth stages. The number of deals in which companies raise tens of millions in dollars in proceeds has never been higher. The increasing variety of investors supporting late stage companies and the capital volume which has been available to companies for growth purposes - are the largest ever."

Shamgar mentions often-heard suggestions, according to which private company valuations re too high, which creates an unbridgeable gap between ask and bid prices. "Some claim this is the industry's way to support more significant companies, and that the value creation will occur later. Although we took part in a number of significant M&A deal negotiations that were not carried out due to price gaps, we believe that there are more mature companies in Israel than ever. We may only hope that this fact will be translated into deals with higher prices than we have seen in the past."

IVC Research Center CEO Koby Simana believes there are two sides to this coin. "A healthy industry needs the right mix, including growth-stage technology companies - which strengthen the industry, but also the ability to realize investments and return money to investors, with exits being one option. It is possible that investment trends in growth companies created an overshooting of growth investments, resulting in investor and entrepreneur reluctance to sell companies and realize their investments at current market value, in hope of possible better returns in the future. However, I believe that the first half-year has not seen enough company acquisitions, and among the ones that were acquired, we did not see enough medium to large deals, of the type the venture capital industry is after. We hope that the industry will regain a healthier balance in the second half of 2017."

Israeli companies continued their local shopping spree in the first half of 2017, though at lower volumes than in previous years. Two-sided Israeli M&A deals captured 40% of dollar volume in acquisition made by Israeli companies in 2017 so far, both in Israel and abroad. The most prominent Israeli through and through deal was with Gett acquiring Juno LAB for $200 million (the second largest deal closed in 2017 so far). A total of 15 such deals were recorded since the beginning of the year, garnering $256 million, which represents a 79% year-on-year decrease: in 2016, 34 deals involving Israeli companies on the both sides accounted for $1.2 billion in total. In the first half of 2017, Israeli companies spent $389 million on acquisitions of foreign companies, in 16 deals.

Symantec buys Israeli co Fireglass for $250m

The Tel Aviv based company has developed a solution that eliminates ransomware, malware and phishing threats in real-time.

International cyber security giant Symantec Corp. (Nasdaq: SYMC) today announced that it is acquiring Israeli cyber security company Fireglass. No financial details about the deal were disclosed but media reports in Israel say that Symantec will pay $250 million for the Tel Aviv based company.

Fireglass was founded in 2014 by CEO Guy Guzner, formerly of Check Point and CTO Dan Amiga, formerly of Schneider Electric. The company raised $20 million last year from Norwest Venture Partners, Lightspeed Venture Partners, Singtel Innov8, co-founder of Imperva and Trusteer Mickey Boodaei and co-founder of Trusteer, Rakesh Loonkar. Fireglass has 40 employees

The company has developed an agentless isolation solution that eliminates ransomware, malware and phishing threats in real-time by preventing potentially harmful content from ever reaching user endpoints or the corporate network. Symantec sees the acquisition as strengthening its Integrated Cyber Defense Platform and extending its capabilities in Secure Web Gateway and Email protection delivered both on premises and in the cloud.

Symantec CRO Greg Clark said, Integrating Fireglass" isolation technology with Symantec's existing endpoint, email and secure web gateway solutions could reduce security events by as much as 70%, while virtually eliminating advanced threats spread by web browsing or email content. Isolation will become a core component in the design of cyber defense architectures for the cloud generation who face the reality of an encrypted Internet and the crisis inherent in email and web-delivered attacks. The ability for the security team to take an aggressive stance on unknown websites and questionable attachments without causing chaos for a company's users and IT help desk is now a reality. Isolation is a key element of securing the cloud generation and is even a productivity gain for both the end user and security operations center." Guzner said, "We've long admired Symantec for their leadership in protecting customers' critical information. Fireglass' industry-leading isolation technology helps customers battle zero-day attacks and other serious vulnerabilities, making it an essential element for protecting email, messaging and web browsing. It easily integrates with existing security solutions and across all forms of the endpoint including Windows, Mac, Android, iOS and all others including browser- enabled IoT devices.
With Symantec's global scale, we're excited to bring this groundbreaking technology into the hands of more customers".

State to grant large high-tech cos NIS 70m for crazy R&D

The Israel Innovation Authority aims to encourage high-risk investment in developing technologies.

The Israeli Innovation Authority is developing a new track for supporting high-risk research and development ventures led by large high-tech companies, defined as companies with annual turnover of over $100 million.

The Innovation Authority plans to allocate NIS 70 million for supporting long-term ventures for developing innovative generic technologies on which future lines of products in various sectors can be based.

The track is intended for the 20 Israeli high-tech companies with sales turnover of over $100 million a year and R&D investment of at least $20 million, or which employ at least 200 workers directly in R&D.

Companies that fulfill the requirements set by the Innovation Authority can submit a request for financing and receive up to 50% of the proposed venture's expenses. The Innovation Authority made it clear that a company receiving such support will not be obligated to pay the state royalties on any new technology developed in the plan, and can develop a product from the technology. At the same time, the law requires that the know-how obtained from this program be registered in Israel, so that the state can profit in the long term from the resulting tax revenues.

Innovation Authority growth division acting director Sagi Dagan told "Globes" that the new program reflected the Innovation Authority's wish to encourage the continued growth of Israeli high-tech companies. She said, "In contrast to the assistance tracks granted by the Innovation Authority to small high-tech companies or startups, this program focuses on ventures that are smaller, but which have very high risk, and we know that a large proportion of them will fail, despite the assistance. Were ventures with no possibility of failure involved, the companies would not need us. This type of R&D is therefore called "crazy R&D." Even if a venture is unsuccessful, know-how will be accumulated and will stay within the company, which will apply it in the future."

Innovation Authority CEO Aharon Aharon said, "The maturing of the industry and the growing aspiration towards independent growth are increasing the need for a change in the paradigm for financing high-tech activity in Israel. We are now providing new financing tools designed to solicit technologies likely to bring us tomorrow's products. Cooperation between government and the high-tech industry at this stage is essential in order to fully utilize the assets accumulated by the industry, expedite its maturation trends, and leverage the benefits for the good of the Israeli economy."

Aharon believes that the assistance plan for high-risk generic R&D will give companies a future technological and competitive advantage that will make it easier for them to penetrate new markets.

Innovation Authority figures show that 20 high-tech companies in Israel have a sales turnover of at least $100 million, and at least 50 have turnover of $50 million or more. The Innovation Authority's new track is aimed at companies the size of Verint Systems Inc. (Nasdaq: VRNT), Mobileye(NYSE: MBLY), Wix.com Ltd. (Nasdaq: WIX), SolarEdge Technologies Inc (Nasdaq:SEDG), Taboola, Outbrain Inc., Celeno, and others. "The bottom line of such companies will not be changed by the grant they get from the Innovation Authority, Dagan says. "Nevertheless, we are allowing companies to take a big risk in a specific laboratory with a selected and focused group of researchers in order to develop future technologies that will mature, even if only after a decade. It will make it easier for high tech companies to look at a distant strategic horizon."

Israel Association of Electronics & Software Industries director general Doron Kurtz told "Globes," "Only an emphasis on innovation will maintain Israel as a real high-tech country, and this innovation can be brought about only through academic research and long-term research within the companies themselves."

WeWork raises $760m at $20b valuation

Forbes: The company issued 13.2 million shares at $57.90 a share

WeWork, which designs and manages shares work spaces all over the world, has completed a $760 million financing round at a company valuation of $20 billion. According to a Forbes report, the company issued 13.2 million shares at $57.90 a share. The name of the investor was not disclosed.

Israeli Adam Neumann and Miguel McKelvey ounded WeWork in 2010. The company divides office space into rooms, and rents it out by the room, or even by the desk, for short periods.

WeWork is active in the US, Argentina, Austra-lia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, China, and other countries. In Israel, it has sites in Beer Sheva, Herzliya, and on Ibn Gvirol Street, Dubnov Street, and the Sarona site in central Tel Aviv, and also in south Tel Aviv. WeWork also offers its tenants networking events, vacations and summer camps, health insurance at discount prices, and more.

WeWork's value has consistently risen; it raised $355 million in late 2014 at a $5 billion valua- tion, and $400 million in June 2015 at a $10 bil- lion valuation. Japanese corporation Softbank recently invested $300 million in WeWork.

Aspire Global raises $38.8m on Nasdaq Stockholm

The Israeli online gaming company's investors include soccer agent Pini Zahavi and Jerusalem Post owner Eli Azur.

Online gaming company Aspire Global plc commenced trading yesterday on Nasdaq First North Premier in Stockholm. Headquartered in Malta, it became the first Israeli owned company to be listed on Nasdaq First North.

Aspire Global and its owners raised $38.8 million at a company value of $155 million. The company's main shareholders are Barak Matalon, soccer agent Pini Zahavi and his partner at Charlton Communications sports channel, Jerusalem Post owner Eli Azur.

Aspire Global is a Business to Business (B2B) service provider for the online gaming market and offers its partners a full-service solution for launching and operating online casinos. The company has more than ten years of experience in managing casino networks and developing in-house proprietary technology, and can therefore allow its clients to focus completely on marketing their casino brand and generate traffic to the casino.

Aspire Global CEO Tsachi Maimon said, “We have met a fantastic interest from investors, including some established and renowned firms. I believe the strong demand for subscribing to Aspire Global’s shares confirms a high level of confidence in our strategy, the strength of our unique offering and the great potential of our iGaming platform within the market.”

Israeli startups raise $215m in July to date

The latest round was by Spotinst, which raised $15 million for its cloud of clouds platform.

Since the beginning of July, fifteen Israeli startups have raised an aggregate $215 million, which is in line with the current monthly rate of over $300 million. In monitoring capital raised by startups, "Globes" looks only at Israeli companies, that is, companies with a fairly clear connection to Israel expressed in the identity of the founders, the number of people employed in Israel, and so on.

Of the fifteen companies that have raised money in July, eight carried out a B round and five an A round. Companies carrying out A and B rounds generally fall within the category of "Early Stage".

Venture capital funding for Israeli startups in the first quarter of this year, as monitored by "Globes", totaled $960 million, which is in line with the quarterly rate in recent years.

The fund-raising round announced most recently was that of Spotinst, which raised $15 million in an A round led by Intel Capital and Vertex Ventures. Spotinst's claims that its platform enables its customers to save 50-80% of the cost of cloud computing. The platform is based on an algorithm that provides long-term use of the company's servers with 100% availability.

“When we floated the idea of virtual cloud infrastructure two years ago, many said that it could not be done,” said Spotinst founder and CEO Amiram Shachar, “But since then companies and developers voted with their workloads. We appreciate their confidence and support from our investors. The proceeds will help Spotinst grow, and take us closer to our vision of a cloud of clouds.”

Companies that have raised capital so far in July include:
- Venus Concept, cosmetic medicine equipment, $37.5 million
- Deep Instinct, cybersecurity, $32 million
- Gong.io, software for converting calls to sales, $20 million
- CellSavers, home service for mobile telephones, $20 million
- Spotinst, cloud computing, $15 million
- Intuition Robotics, robotic assistance for the aged, $14 million
- Dune Medical, cancer diagnostics, $12.3 million
- Curve, credit card consolidation, $10 million
- Rapid Medical, neurovascular medical devices, $9 million
- Applitools, app monitoring, $8 million
- OwnBackup, SaaS backup and storage, $7.5 million

- Genoox, genome analysis, $6 million
- Dbmaestro, DevSecOps solutions, $4.5 million
- UVeye, warning of explosive in vehicles, $4.5 million

LogMeIn buys Israeli chatbot co Nanorep for $45m

The Herzliya based company harnesses artificial intelligence and patented natural language processing technologies for self service solutions.

US SaaS company LogMeIn Inc. (Nasdaq: LOGM) today announced that it has agreed to acquire Israeli chatbot company Nanorep for $45 million, and a further potential $5 million in milestone payments over two years.

Headquartered in Herzliya, Nanorep is a digital self-service, chatbot and virtual assistant company, which harnesses artificial intelligence and patented natural language processing technologies to create solutions that make self-service more engaging and intuitive. Nanorep has over 200 customers including Intuit, FedEx, Toys"R"Us, Royal Bank of Scotland, IKEA and Vodafone.

Nanorep was founded in 2009 by CTO Amit Ben Shahar, Aviv Dror, Doron Herzlich and Ofer David. The company has raised $11 million with JAL Ventures owning a 23% stake. Other investors include Gigi Levy, Titanium, OurCrowd, Oryzn and iAngels. Nanorep has 50 employees.

Following LogMeIn's recent release of its new intelligent customer engagement platform, Bold360, the Nanorep acquisition represents another step forward in LogMeIn's attempts to empower companies to deliver more human, personalized and intelligent customer engagement.

LogMeIn CEO Bill Wagner said, "Artificial intelligence is changing the way we interact with our favorite brands and will play a critical role in the future of customer engagement. With Nanorep, we gain proven technology and AI expertise that expands our Bold360 offering, accelerates our customer engagement vision and provides a natural path for us to leverage these emerging technologies across our entire portfolio. We believe in the ability of technology to unlock the potential of the modern workforce and with the addition of Nanorep we are going to be able to deliver solutions that will help our customers achieve the next generation of humanized and personalized customer service."
Nanorep CEO Eli Campo said, "LogMeIn and Nanorep share a common vision for the future of customer engagement, and that is one predicated on providing personalized, human experiences that can simultaneously boost customer satisfaction while reducing costs. This is not only a natural fit, but an immediate win for our respective customers. By adding our expertise in artificial intelligence to the already strong customer engagement and support proficiency of LogMeIn, we believe that we will be able to create the tools and solutions that customer support teams will want to have in their arsenal now and in the future."