

# The Year Of The Pivot: 14 Israeli Startups That Thrived During COVID-19

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By Ayelet Slasky, NoCamels December 28, 2020



## Technology News

The Flytrex drone carries its delivery across the sky. Courtesy

If for most of us 2020 has been a year of hunkering down and altering the way we lead our social interactions, work, leisure and education; for many startups too, 2020 has been the year of the pivot. While startups are generally known for their regular pivoting, or changing of direction, this was a new kind of pivot – one that was based on developing new technologies at record speed to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus or adapt to the rapidly changing tech landscape.

According to a Startup Snapshot report, which surveyed over 200 startups, 55 percent of startups have pivoted their products, while 26 percent of companies are re-hauling their product offering entirely.

“There is a big trend of companies repurposing their tech for the coronavirus or pivoting because of financial strain,” says Hillel Fuld, a tech blogger and startup advisor for more than 30 companies in Israel.

“But we’re not seeing a slowdown in Israel,” Fuld tells NoCamels. “In fact, we’re seeing record numbers, whether it’s investments or existing companies going public or reaching unicorn status. Israel seems to be, as always, flourishing under less than ideal circumstances. When the pressure starts increasing, innovation follows.”

As 2020 comes to a close, NoCamels highlights 14 startups that have repurposed their technology, offered new products and features, and pivoted creatively due to adapting to a world whose technology needs have drastically changed in record time.



Hillel Fuld, tech blogger and startup advisor.

1. **JoyTunes**, a company that developed music learning software available on mobile apps to teach users to play musical instruments, created a “Pay What You Can” initiative for its most recognized app, “Simply Piano.” This makes the teaching app free for remote learning. Proceeds from the initiative are donated to health organizations.



JoyTunes. Courtesy

2. **Bizzabo**, an event success platform, offers companies the tools necessary to create rewarding events, following up with important insights to help companies grow. When the pandemic hit and large-scale events were essentially obliterated, Bizzabo continued with a virtual experience solution and are working on implementing a hybrid strategy.

“that blends together the best parts of virtual and in-person experiences,” according to Bizzabo CEO and Co-Founder Eran Ben-Shusan. The company recently raised a whopping \$138 million in a Series E round to develop this project and others.

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3. **Personetics** is a fintech company that utilizes AI to analyze customer data to provide personalized financial management information. In 2020, the company created custom insights and recommendations to better optimize finances during the global health crisis. For example, if a person had their salary cut and the system noticed insufficient funds to pay the mortgage, their bank could offer immediate mortgage relief.

4. **Percepto** revolutionizes the way assets and industries are monitored by deploying autonomous drone technology for surveillance and inspection. In 2020, the company pledged support for critical industries, such as power plants, by flying autonomous drones for security and inspection, from home.



Percepto's Sparrow drone flies above Boston Dynamics' Spot robot. Courtesy

5. **Ligtico**, a company that streamlines and digitizes online processes like forms, documents, payments, and ID verification through a mobile platform, offered its services to businesses like banks, insurers, and telcos so they could quickly go digital and serve their customers remotely in just 72 hours.

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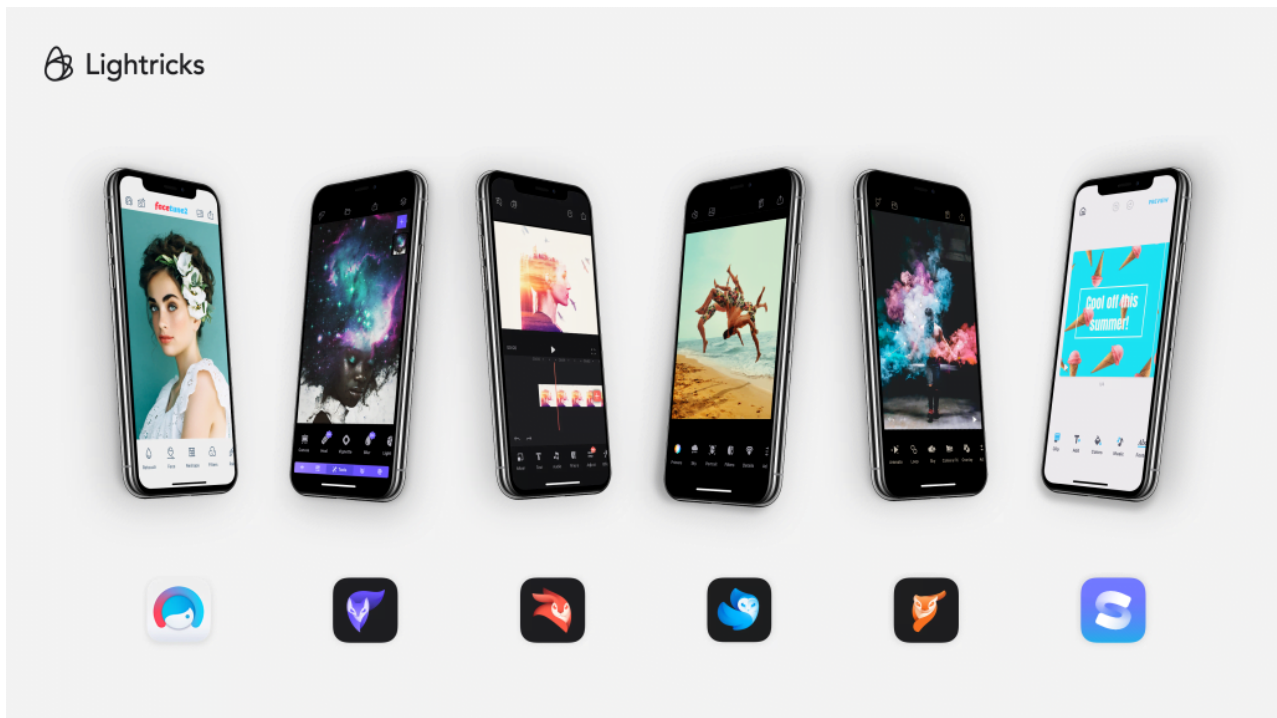
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6. **Lightricks**, a startup that develops video and image editing mobile apps, built an entire campaign around its employees working from home, turning them into celebrities. The company also assigned its maintenance staff tasks they can perform from home, in a



surprising transition to their role.



Lightricks products. Courtesy

7. **Bond**, the post-purchase company, offers NY business owners impacted by COVID-19 the opportunity to turn their shop into a pop-up storage space, allowing businesses to continue earning money even while their shop is shut.

8. **IceCure Medical**, a biotech company that utilizes liquid nitrogen-based technology to freeze tumors and treat cancer, created a dedicated Remote Installation and Clinical Training Program to support their users during COVID-19 in an attempt in order to maintain continuity in cancer treatments worldwide during the pandemic.



The IceCure Medical cryoblation system in action. Courtesy.

9. **Sonovia** creates textiles with active built-in protection against viruses and bacteria. During the pandemic, Sonovia developed novel technology masks infused with anti-pathogen fabric. and distributed them to the local population at large including police officers, medical workers, and even the Israeli cycling team.



Israel Start-Up Nation, the Israeli cycling team will wear masks from Sonovia at the Tour de France race. Courtesy

10. **Flytrex**, which specializes in food and consumer goods deliveries via drone systems, has launched a delivery service for “shelter-in-place” shoppers in Grand Forks, North Dakota.



Flytrex controls the logistics behind these drones so that consumers in remote locations will be able to receive deliveries efficiently. Courtesy.

11. **Bringg**, an Israeli delivery logistics solutions company, recently launched a new, free service aimed at helping small-and-medium-sized businesses (SMBs) quickly launch and scale delivery operations amid the coronavirus pandemic.



An illustrative photo provided by Bringg

12. **Via**, an Israeli-founded ride-sharing and public transport company now valued at over \$2 billion, has responded to the crisis by helping cities and municipalities launch effective on-demand transportation for essential staff, emergency services, food deliveries, and medical goods and services. In Tel Aviv, Via's Bubble Dan ride-sharing vehicle was repurposed as a transportation engine for essential healthcare workers.





Bubble marks Via's first deployment in Israel. Photo via Via's website.

13. **Verbit**, an AI-powered automatic speech and transcription platform, is now being used by universities, including Harvard, to transcribe classes for students who are getting used to remote learning environments amid the pandemic.

14. **Kaltura**, a video platform that provides live and on-demand video software solutions to thousands of organizations around the world, partnered with Bizzabo, an events management company, to provide brands with video features for future digital events.