

Sifted \ Reports



Rising 100

The ultimate
B2B SaaS startup list

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The Rising 100 is a 2023 report from Sifted Intelligence that recognises the most promising privately held companies in Europe and Israel building businesses out of software. We believe these business-to-business, or B2B, companies are “soonicorn”, a few steps away from someday joining the ranks of the \$1bn-plus unicorns. Our cohort — a mix of companies at different stages of maturity, product development and funding — are working on diverse apps, sites and platforms designed to kill repetitive tasks, train artificial intelligence, improve automation, combat cybersecurity threats to businesses and more.

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Foreword

It's fair to say that when you bring up B2B SaaS companies people's eyes don't always light up. They're typically less flashy than their B2C cousins and aren't as easily understood when compared to their neighbours in healthtech or ecommerce. As a rule, their market propositions are often harder to distil into a pithy sentence or simple analogy that anyone can grasp. That's why the Rising 100: The ultimate B2B SaaS startup list is so important. It's a spotlight on just how impactful, scalable and exciting the B2B SaaS ecosystem across Europe and Israel truly is.

We believe the startups on this list represent an immense amount of potential, and reflect the shifting macroeconomic landscape. Some are already what we would consider emerging "companies of consequence", while others are deftly navigating the earlier stages of growth. Crucially, all are building products that are solving critical problems and offering real-world value to their customers. We believe the common themes that bind them are strong go-to-market fit, resilient business models, and their status as critical software products powering our daily work and personal lives, often behind the scenes.

The past 18 months have been challenging for much of the technology sector. Many promising startups have struggled to maintain growth. To adapt, there's been a renewed focus on doing more with less, which means lean operations, an emphasis on productivity, and a laser-like focus on revenue. The result? Startups sharpening their processes and evolving their goals. While reaching unicorn-status continues to be laudable, startup ambitions have become more nuanced. A successful startup now must show stable or upward moving ARR [annual recurring revenue] growth, customer stickiness, sustainability, and above all else, resilience.

The Rising 100 companies reflect this new landscape. The prominence of AI-startups on this list, and their relative maturity in a quickly evolving space, is reflective of the trailblazing nature of B2B SaaS. Just over a third

of those ranked are operating in the broader enterprise software space, with fintech and security also strongly represented, underscoring the momentum behind these impactful sectors, which continue to innovate at pace. The rise of "no" or "low code" solutions, as well as those built specifically for the chief financial officer, are a testament to how B2B startups are able to address the emerging needs of growing markets.

This year's Rising 100 also extends its gaze beyond Europe to Israel. With long-standing ties to the European ecosystem, Israel is a true powerplayer when it comes to B2B SaaS innovation. This can be particularly seen in cybersecurity, where the military experience of Israel's founders often offers the expertise and insight needed to consistently develop world-leading products.

When looking at this year's cohort compared to last year's Europe's Rising 100: The ultimate B2B list, we're pleased to see so many (45!) familiar names. Among them are Pigment, Wandelbots, Tines, Fonoa, Pitch and YuLife, which were at the very top of this year's list. It's also exciting to see some SaaS players from last year's Rising 100 go on to become unicorns, including Factorial, Synthesia and Quantexa. Others went on to raise substantial rounds, such as Lokalise, Peppy and PennyLane (all of which are featured on this year's list), or get acquired such as Instadeep, which was purchased by BioNTech for £562m.

We believe this year's rising B2B SaaS stars show how they will stand the test of time, delivering innovative products and solutions and bringing thoughtful ideas to the table that can result in meaningful and sustainable growth — particularly in tough climates. Together, these 100 startups show that the future remains very bright for the Europe and Israeli startup ecosystem.



Andreas Weiskam
Sapphire Ventures partner and cofounder



Annalise Dragic
Sapphire Ventures partner

Introduction

2023 has been hard for startups.

Everyone's cutting back — the money that was flowing during the frankly bananas 2020-2021 period has slowed to a trickle — and expenses are rising. Difficult decisions are mounting, with startups cutting staff, putting expansion plans on hold and taking investments at lower valuations. Exits are scarce, with many CEOs patiently waiting for an IPO opening.

Many — if not most — investors have stopped chasing crazy things, like AI-run lettuce farms. Okay, not really — we're still seeing plenty of flutters on companies with ".ai" in their names — but VCs, in the main, have gone back to being interested in businesses that are actually going to make money soon.

And anyone chasing unicorns in this part of the world will know that enterprise technology and fintech make up the lion's share of the billion-dollar companies. So it's little surprise to see that the two industries feature so prominently in our list of 100 business-to-business (B2B) software as a service (SaaS) companies on the rise. The vast majority of our 100 are currently valued at over \$100m and we believe they could someday join Europe's and Israel's ranks of \$1bn-plus startups.

After years of bubbly — and if we're all honest, in a lot of cases overly generous — valuations, this list provides a clear-eyed look at which software startups are showing resilience and promise in a hard economy. Collectively, the companies on the list, all of which are less than seven years old, have received €8.49bn in funding.

The list reflects the times. The number one spot? Taken by a company that provides tools for the chief financial officer; a job that has rarely been more important for a startup's survival. Then there's a flock of startups that have taken advantage of the investor frenzy around generative AI (Gen AI) — tech that produces convincing text, images and voice from a human prompt — to assemble already-sizable businesses. And what about crypto? The industry's steep downturn continues: we've got only one crypto startup in our list (and even this one's more crypto-adjacent than pure crypto).

Rising 100 highlights



French business planning software maker **PIGMENT** takes the top spot, followed by German “no-code” robotics tool **WANDELBOTS** and French online gaming lab **HOMA GAMES**.



Just over a third (36) of our listed companies are creating **ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE**. The next most represented industry is **FINTECH** (34 companies) and **SECURITY** (14).



The list reflects how we’re seemingly on the cusp of a new era: one **DOMINATED BY AI**. In all, 38 companies claim AI is central to their businesses.



Prominent angels include US billionaires **BILL GATES** and **JEFF BEZOS**, both investors in WageStream (#46).



The one that got away: London-based AI startup **SYNTHESIA**, which for a time was #1 on the list, was cut after it was announced as a unicorn in early June.



Startups on the list represent 17 different European countries, led by the **UK** (30), **GERMANY** (19) and **FRANCE** (16).



ALLICA BANK (#73), a lender to SME businesses in the UK, is the most well-funded company among the 100, having raised €450m. **COACHHUB** (#61), a coaching tool for companies, follows with €331m in funding. And then **POLLINATE** (#87), a platform focused on merchant-acquiring for banks, with €199m.



About half (51) the companies are at the **SERIES B** level of fundraising, versus 23 **SERIES A** startups and 18 **SERIES C**. Only two — Jit (#59) and Guard.io (#81) — are **SEED** startups.



VC firm **INSIGHT PARTNERS**, with HQs in New York City and offices in London and Tel Aviv, is the most active investor in this year’s 100, having invested in 17 companies. North American VC **TIGER GLOBAL MANAGEMENT** is close behind with investments in 13 companies.



LONDON is headquarters to the greatest number of companies on our list (26), followed by **TEL AVIV** (14), **BERLIN** and **PARIS** (12 each).



Only four entries on our list are **VERY YOUNG STARTUPS**, founded in 2021 or 2022.



850 **INVESTORS**, **ANGELS** and **ACCELERATORS** have backed our 2023 cohort.



Payment company Alma, #41 in our cohort, and employee banking app Wagestream (#46) have the most **“STRONG INVESTORS”** — meaning VC firms with a track record of breeding unicorns — backing them, with six apiece, including Bpifrance, Northzone and Balderton Capital.

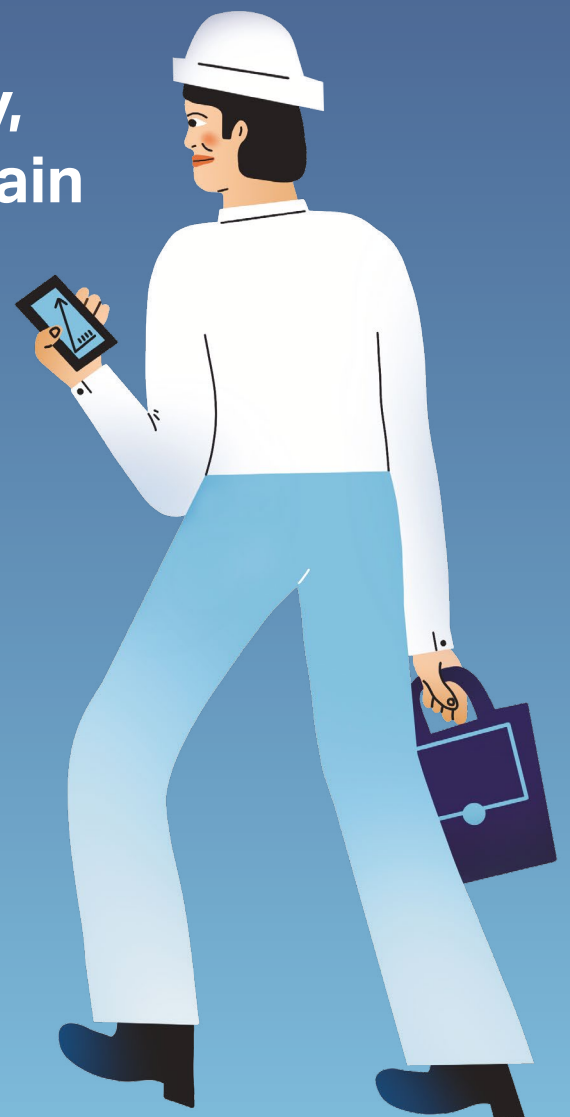


Only 17 of our 100 companies are founded or co-founded by **WOMEN**. And only one of those women co-founded an Israeli company (Ermetic, #71) reflecting the striking underrepresentation of women in European and Israeli tech.

Rising 100

Meet the B2B SaaS 100

Our cohort are tackling some of the biggest challenges, from healthcare to cybersecurity, the supply chain and finance



Companies marked with an (*) are Sapphire portfolio companies

Pigment

1

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Business planning platform for finance teams

Paris, France
2019
200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€225M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2023**



PIGMENT
FOUNDERS

Wandelbots

2

ROBOTICS



An app to teach industrial robots new processes

Dresden, Germany
2017
50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€111M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**

HOMA

3

GAMING



Digital "gaming lab" that helps developers build low-cost mobile games

Paris, France
2018
50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€148.8M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **October 2022**

tines

4

SECURITY



"No-code" software that automates company security tasks

Dublin, Ireland
2018
50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€84.8M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **October 2022**

fonoa

5

FINTECH



Tool to help companies manage their taxes

Zagreb, Croatia
2019
50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€85M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **July 2023**

Weaviate

6

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



AI-powered tool to help companies make sense of unstructured data

Amsterdam, Netherlands
2019
10-50




TOTAL FUNDING: **€61.6M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2023**



run:ai 7

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE 

Tool to help computing processors run machine learning models more efficiently




 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
 2018
 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€107.3M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2022**

yu life 8

FINTECH 

Life insurance provider-cum-wellbeing platform




 London, United Kingdom
 2016
 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€188.3M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **July 2022**

V7 9

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE 

Turns images into training data for AI




 London, United Kingdom
 2018
 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€39.1M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **November 2022**

Pitch 10

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE 

Makers of collaborative presentation software




 Berlin, Germany
 2018
 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€123M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2021**

lifebit 11

HEALTH 

Tools to help make biomedical data more accessible and usable




 London, United Kingdom
 2017
 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€64.1M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **September 2022**

ALEPH ALPHA 12

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE 

Bespoke Gen AI chatbot maker




 Heidelberg, Germany
 2019
 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€28.3M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **July 2022**

Proximie 13

HEALTH 

Surgeon-founded platform to gather the best clinical practice in one place

 London, United Kingdom
 2016
 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€135M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2022**





Agreena 14

FOOD



Sells carbon certificates that reward farmers that shift to regenerative agriculture

- 📍 Copenhagen, Denmark
- 📅 2018
- 👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€73.7M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2023**

Peppy 15

HEALTH



Employee healthcare app that helps to treat menopause and fertility issues

- 📍 London, United Kingdom
- 📅 2018
- 👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€52.4M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **November 2022**

Qogita 16

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Wholesale marketplace for branded products

- 📍 Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 📅 2021
- 👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€85.2M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2022**

Enode 17

ENERGY



Builds APIs that connect EVs, solar, batteries and heating to energy apps

- 📍 Oslo, Norway
- 📅 2020
- 👤 10-50

TOTAL FUNDING: **€16M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **September 2022**

DESCARTES 18

FINTECH



Insurtech specialised in climate risk modelling

- 📍 Paris, France
- 📅 2018
- 👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€127.9M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**

kevin. 19

FINTECH



ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE

Open banking infrastructure provider

- 📍 Vilnius, Lithuania
- 📅 2017
- 👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€71.9M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2022**

moss 20

FINTECH



Software to help companies keep tabs on their spending

- 📍 Berlin, Germany
- 📅 2019
- 👤 500-1000

TOTAL FUNDING: **€126.4M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**

JUNI

21

FINTECH



Neobank for ecommerce and online marketing sites

📍 Gothenburg, Sweden
📅 2020
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€159.8M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2022**

TWAICE

22

ENERGY

TRANSPORTATION



Battery analytics software

📍 Munich, Germany
📅 2018
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€64.9M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2022**

MEDWING

23

HEALTH

JOBS RECRUITMENT



Recruitment marketplace for healthcare workers

📍 Berlin, Germany
📅 2017
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€87M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2023**

SEON

24

SECURITY

FINTECH



Provides "fraud-fighting" tools to help verify customers' digital identities

📍 Budapest, Hungary
📅 2017
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€98M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2022**

PlayPlay

25

GAMING

MEDIA



Video-making tool that promises to be superfast ("15 minutes tops") and intuitive

📍 Paris, France
📅 2017
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€58.5M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **October 2021**

lokalise

26

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Helps companies manage translations for apps, games, websites

📍 Riga, Latvia
📅 2016
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€107M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **February 2023**



SEON TEAM

TestGorilla 27

JOBS RECRUITMENT



Offers skills-based tests for candidates that are meant to be used in place of CVs

📍 Amsterdam, Netherlands
📅 2020
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€73.8M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2022**

GitGuardian* 28

SECURITY



Helps companies keep secret info (like passwords) out of their source code

📍 Paris, France
📅 2017
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€51.2M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **November 2021**



PolyAI 29

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Creates "voice assistants" for automating customer services

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2017
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€62M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2022**

SWEEP 30

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Software to help companies track their carbon-reduction targets

📍 Montpellier, France
📅 2020
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€90.9M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2023**

zencargo 31

TRANSPORTATION



Freight booking and management platform

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2017
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€65M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2021**

Matera 32

FINTECH

REAL ESTATE



Property management software

📍 Paris, France
📅 2017
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€46.6M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2021**

maze 33

MARKETING



Platform for software product research

📍 Paris, France
📅 2018
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€52.2M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2022**

REVEAL 34

MARKETING



Allows companies to sync CRMs to see overlapping customers and new leads

📍 Paris, France
📅 2020
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€49.2M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2022**

WorkMotion 35

JOBS RECRUITMENT

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



HR platform enabling companies to hire and onboard employees

📍 Berlin, Germany
📅 2020
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€65M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2022**

Pecan 36

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Predictive analytics software

📍 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
📅 2016
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€101.8M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **February 2022**

codat 37

FINTECH



Provides accounting data to simplify lending for small businesses

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2017
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€150M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2022**

Synapse^{MED} 38

HEALTH



Tool to help healthcare professionals get reliable drug information

📍 Bordeaux, France
📅 2017
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€35.2M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2022**

Juro 39

LEGAL



Contract automation platform

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2016
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€25.7M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**

HUNTERS 40

SECURITY



Software to help security teams see and stop cyberattacks

📍 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
📅 2018
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€107.6M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**

Alma 41

FINTECH



Tool that lets customers pay for goods and services in instalments

📍 Paris, France
📅 2018
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€179.8M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**

fintechOS 42

FINTECH

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



"Low code" software to help banks launch digital products more easily

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2017
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€73.9M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**

pennylane 43

FINTECH

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Offers automated processes for accounting

📍 Paris, France
📅 2020
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€84M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**



mondu 44

FINTECH



"Buy now, pay later" lending service for small businesses

📍 Berlin, Germany
📅 2021
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€63.6M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2023**

ActiveFence 45

TELECOM



Analytics platform that tracks malicious content online

📍 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
📅 2018
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€90.9M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2021**

WAGESTREAM 46

FINTECH



App that provides a range of banking services to workers, built around more flexible pay cycles

📍 Stroud, United Kingdom
📅 2018
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€98.1M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2022**

amenitiz 47

TRAVEL



HOSTING

All-in-one hotel management software

📍 Barcelona, Spain
📅 2017
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€34.3M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2022**

Laminar 48

SECURITY



ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE

Cybersecurity service for cloud data

📍 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
📅 2020
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€61.4M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2022**

Leapsome 49

JOBS RECRUITMENT



Performance management tool to help leaders manage their teams

📍 Berlin, Germany
📅 2016
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€54.6M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2022**

BRYTER 50

LEGAL



ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE


No-code company helping businesses automate responses to recurring requests

📍 Berlin, Germany
📅 2018
👤 50-200




TOTAL FUNDING: **€80.8M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2021**



INFOGRID 51


REAL ESTATE ENERGY 

Analyses IoT data to improve building efficiency and sustainability




 London, United Kingdom
 2018
 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€95.9M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2023**

Billie 52


FINTECH 

Offers small “buy now, pay later”-style loans to businesses




 Berlin, Germany
 2016
 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€134.4M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **October 2021**

cobee 53


FINTECH ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE 

Employee management tool for benefits like meal vouchers, health insurance and training courses




 Madrid, Spain
 2019
 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€56.3M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **November 2022**

Ledgy 54


FINTECH 

Tool to help companies manage employee shares and options




 Zürich, Switzerland
 2017
 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€32.1M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **August 2021**

Primer 55

FINTECH 

Payment automation platform that hooks merchants up with multiple pay options



 London, United Kingdom
 2019
 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€65M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **October 2021**

explorium 56

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE 

Software to help businesses hone their sales and prospecting

 Tel-Aviv, Israel
 2017
 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€127.7M**
 LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2021**

SILVERFORT

57

SECURITY



Identity management software

Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel

2016

50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€96.8M**LAST FUNDING DATE: **February 2022**

weavr

58

FINTECH



A tool that helps businesses manage payments or “digital gifting” to customers

London, United Kingdom

2018

50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€48.4M**LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**

COACHHUB FOUNDERS

Jit

59

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Helps developers automate product security

Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel

2021

10-50

TOTAL FUNDING: **€35M**LAST FUNDING DATE: **February 2022**

attio

60

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



CRM software to rival Salesforce and other competitors

London, United Kingdom

2017

10-50

TOTAL FUNDING: **€28.6M**LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2023**

CoachHub

61

JOBS RECRUITMENT



Offers coaching programmes for companies

Berlin, Germany

2018

500-1000

TOTAL FUNDING: **€331M**LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2022**

sourceful

62

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Helps companies locate more environmentally-friendly packaging

Manchester, United Kingdom

2020

50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€30M**LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2022**

spacefill

63

REAL ESTATE



Tool helping companies manage their supply chains

Paris, France

2018

50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€26M**LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2022**

SOURCEFUL FOUNDERS

EasySend

64

FINTECH



ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE

No-code site helping companies build online interactions with customers

📍 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
📅 2016
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€65.5M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **November 2021**

COGNIGY

65

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



No-code tool to help companies automate responses to customer queries

📍 Düsseldorf, Germany
📅 2016
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€61.1M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **February 2022**

Hive

66

TRANSPORTATION



Helps direct-to-customer companies manage their operations

📍 Berlin, Germany
📅 2020
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€37.5M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **November 2023**

IMMERSIVELABS

67

SECURITY



A platform to analyse employee cyber defence skills

📍 Bristol, United Kingdom
📅 2017
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€172M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **October 2022**

yokoy

68

FINTECH



Automates spend management for medium and large companies

📍 Zurich, Switzerland
📅 2019
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€97.8M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2022**

Better Stack

69

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



System that helps developers monitor performance of their backend system

📍 Prague, Czech Republic
📅 2021
👤 10-50

TOTAL FUNDING: **€16.9M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **July 2022**

sosafe

70

SECURITY



Provides cybersecurity training for employees

📍 Cologne, Germany
📅 2018
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **Undisclosed**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **December 2022**

ermetic

71

SECURITY



Helps prevent breaches to companies' cloud infrastructure

📍 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
📅 2019
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€88.4M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **December 2021**

identiq

72

SOFTWARE



Identity verification tool for companies

📍 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
📅 2018
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€47.3M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2021**

Allica Bank

73

FINTECH



Lender to SME businesses in the UK

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2019
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€450M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **November 2022**

Sylvera

74

FINTECH

ENERGY



Data company that analyses and rates carbon-offset projects

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2020
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€36.7M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**

Unmind*

75

HEALTH



Workplace mental health platform

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2016
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€57.1M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2021**

strapi

76

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Content management system and Wordpress competitor

📍 Paris, France
📅 2016
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€40.9M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2022**

deci.

77

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Tech to build better AI models

📍 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
📅 2019
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€50.1M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **July 2022**

komodor

78

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Troubleshooting tool for developers

📍 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
📅 2019
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€65M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2022**



STRAPI TEAM

AGICAP

79

FINTECH



Cashflow management tool that promises to replace laborious Excel work

📍 Lyon, France
📅 2016
👤 500-1000

TOTAL FUNDING: **€108.3M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2021**



FORM3

80

FINTECH



Promises “highly secure” payment tech and applications

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2016
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€197.6M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **November 2022**

Guardio

81

SECURITY



Browser protection tool

📍 Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
📅 2018
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€42.7M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **December 2022**

ably

82

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Developer platform to help companies create features like live chat or GPS delivery updates

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2016
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€78M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **June 2021**

ALASCO

83

REAL ESTATE



Digitises the financial management of construction projects

📍 Munich, Germany
📅 2018
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€44.5M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **December 2021**

YAPILY*

84

FINTECH



Open banking infrastructure that allows users to share data with other parties

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2017
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€63M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **July 2021**

envelop

85

SECURITY

FINTECH



Specialty cyber and emerging risk underwriting firm

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2016
👤 10-50

TOTAL FUNDING: **€123.6M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **September 2021**

omnipresent 86

JOBS RECRUITMENT



Helps companies pay and support their remote teams

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2019
👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: **€125.3M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **April 2022**

pollinate 87

FINTECH



Cloud-based platform focused on merchant-acquiring for banks

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2017
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€199.1M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **March 2021**

causaLens 88

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Promises AI-level predictive analytics for businesses

📍 London, United Kingdom
📅 2017
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€46M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2022**

HOXHUNT 89

SECURITY

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



"Gamified" platform trains employees against phishing

📍 Helsinki, Finland
📅 2016
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€39.2M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2022**

HACKTHEBOX 90

SECURITY

EDUCATION



Training platform to help IT professionals advance their ethical hacking skills

📍 Folkestone, United Kingdom
📅 2017
👤 1000-5000

TOTAL FUNDING: **€63.5M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **January 2023**

BVNK 91

FINTECH



Enables transactions from fiat currencies into crypto

📍 Madrid, Spain
📅 2016
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€36.4M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2022**

Sana 92

EDUCATION

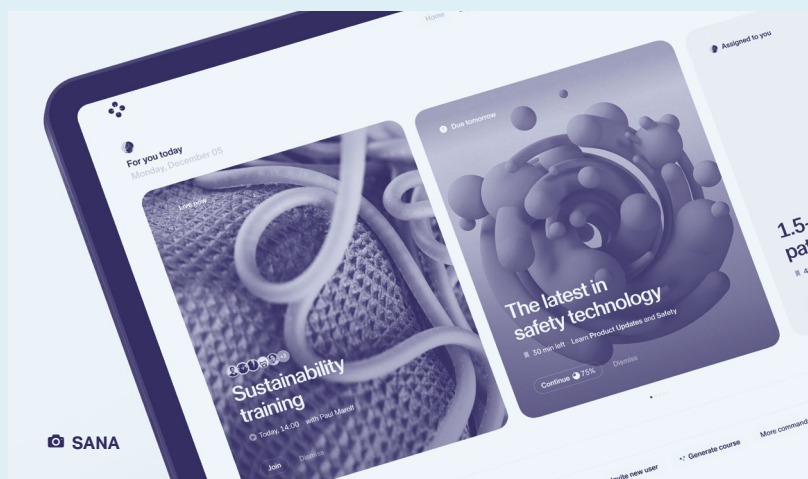
ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Tool to personalise online training for professionals

📍 Stockholm, Sweden
📅 2016
👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: **€82M**
LAST FUNDING DATE: **May 2023**



DataGuard

93

SECURITY



Tool to help companies stay compliant with GDPR rules

- 📍 Munich, Germany
- 📅 2017
- 👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: €74M
LAST FUNDING DATE: August 2022

VIC.AI

94

FINTECH



Tool to help companies automate accounting

- 📍 Oslo, Norway
- 📅 2016
- 👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: €104.3M
LAST FUNDING DATE: December 2022



Ben

95

FINTECH



ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE

All-in-one employee benefits platform

- 📍 London, United Kingdom
- 📅 2020
- 👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: €17.7M
LAST FUNDING DATE: August 2022

symmetrical

96

FINTECH



Software to manage payroll and HR

- 📍 Warsaw, Poland
- 📅 2019
- 👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: €24.1M
LAST FUNDING DATE: March 2022

upvest

97

FINTECH



Platform helping companies build online investment features

- 📍 Berlin, Germany
- 📅 2017
- 👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: €54.6M
LAST FUNDING DATE: June 2022

mooncard

98

FINTECH



ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE

Tool to help CFOs keep tabs on expenses

- 📍 Paris, France
- 📅 2016
- 👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: €62M
LAST FUNDING DATE: April 2023

ROSSUM

99

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE



Automation tool to extract key data from work invoices and contracts

- 📍 London, United Kingdom
- 📅 2017
- 👤 200-500

TOTAL FUNDING: €96M
LAST FUNDING DATE: October 2021

charles

100

MARKETING



ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE

Helps companies chat with customers on WhatsApp and other messenger apps

- 📍 Berlin, Germany
- 📅 2019
- 👤 50-200

TOTAL FUNDING: €27M
LAST FUNDING DATE: July 2022

Selecting our 100

A closer look at the
methodology



Rising 100

The list was created after a multi-stage procedure.

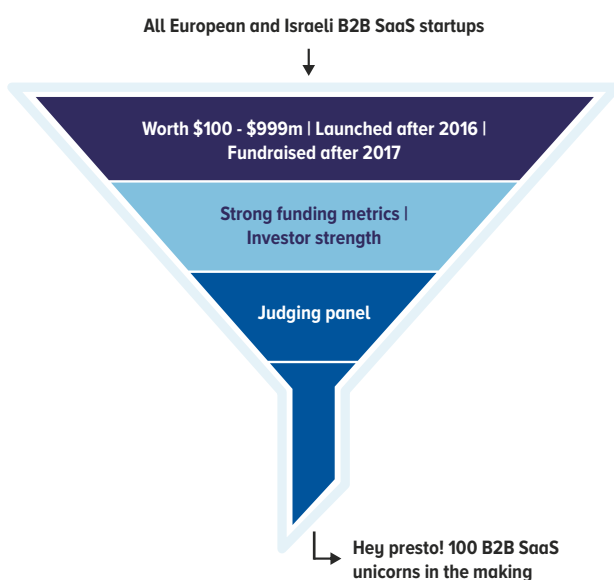
THE LONG LIST

In March of 2023 we began to dig through the Dealroom and Pitchbook databases to identify thousands of B2B SaaS startups in Europe and Israel as potential candidates. Each startup had to meet the following criteria for the long list:

- Launched in 2016 or later
- Estimated minimum valuation of \$100m
- Maximum valuation of \$999m
- Fundraised in or after 2017
- Could include any funding round
- Independent, business-focused company (which is not a subsidiary or branch office of any kind)

Companies from Israel and these 32 European countries were eligible: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

Although the search was extensive, the list does not claim to be complete.



WHY ISRAEL?

Europe is our bread and butter at Sifted. So why did we include Israel? Well, the country's tech scene — which keeps on growing — is just too interesting to ignore. Most years, with the current downturn excluded, the country has reported new highs in investment and exit valuations, as well as the number of unicorns. Software companies have been major leaders in all these trends.

Israeli and European VCs have also drastically increased interest in each others' markets. Foreign VCs are eyeing both. In Israel, cybersecurity, fintech, IoT and, lately, AI startups are drawing the greatest funding. Naturally, in the list, Israeli cybersecurity bubbled to the top of the selection, while European names mainly feature fintech and enterprise software.

THE MID-LIST

We filtered our long list to get a tighter selection of companies that are on the high-growth path to unicorn status. An important consideration here was the quality of investors. We prioritised investor pedigree by matching with each company's cap table, i.e. against Dealroom's 2022 EMEA Investors ranking — which takes into account past success in backing unicorns and activity in the past 12 months — and sorted companies by the "strongest" investors.

All companies that had the same number of strong investors were grouped together and sorted by highest-to-lowest total funding. We kept companies that lacked strong investors but still had promising financials.

JUDGING PANEL — A SUBJECTIVE LOOK

Only the top ranked 175 European companies and 25 Israeli companies on our mid-list were passed on to our Sifted judging panel for consideration.

The three-person panel each scored a randomised list of the 200 companies on three criteria: market opportunity, market differentiation and momentum. Their votes for each company were added and the results tallied to get our top 100.

The judges

John Thornhill

Sifted founder/editorial director



Besides founding Sifted, John is also the innovation editor of the Financial Times, where he writes a weekly award-winning column on the impact of technology and hosts the Tech Tonic podcast.

Eleanor Warnock

Sifted deputy editor



Eleanor has more than a decade of experience in journalism and communications. She started her career as a correspondent in the Wall Street Journal's Tokyo bureau and was communications manager at one of Europe's largest VC firms, Atomico, before joining Sifted.

Federico Scolari

Sifted intelligence analyst



Federico leads on mapping the European startup ecosystem across Sifted's editorial and intelligence teams, working with data and analysis for briefings, rankings and reports.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Data reported in Dealroom and Pitchbook was checked. Missing data entries were researched in detail. Companies that, upon closer inspection, did not fulfil the criteria for inclusion in the list were removed and replaced by runner-ups.

For example, in some instances companies tagged as B2B in databases had evolved their business strategy to be better defined as B2C, or B2G ("business-to-government"), and were therefore removed from the list.

Because these fast-growing companies are all privately owned and do not publicly disclose detailed financial data, a list such as this can never claim to be complete. However, selected companies were all offered the chance to verify key data points and answer a few questions. In the end, 53 companies provided answers in full. The remaining were thoroughly checked by Sifted analysts. Finally, a disclaimer on currency. Some of our companies raised in US dollars, but we standardised all figures to euros for consistency.

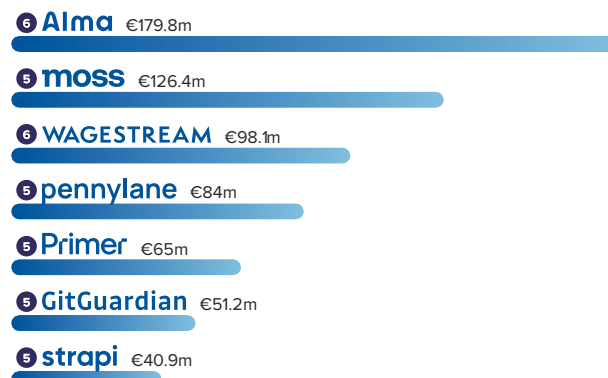
UNICORN RACE: THE ONES WE CUT

Unicorn breeding changed the makeup of the list a few times. Some companies originally on our list announced new funding and officially joined the \$1bn+ club. Because they then ceased being eligible "sooncorns", they dropped off the list, and were replaced.

London-based Synthesia — which uses Gen AI to let users automatically create videos for company training — was our original #1 and the list's main casualty. It was nerve wracking: the rumour mill had been spinning out reports that unicorn status had already been reached, but nothing was official. Finally, on June 13, it was publically announced that it had raised \$90m in a Series C led by Accel, valuing the company at \$1bn and making it Europe's third unicorn of 2023.

Companies with the most 'strong investors' on cap table

These companies, arranged by total funding, stand out for having five or more investors with a recent history of backing unicorns



Source: Dealroom's 2022 EMEA Investors ranking

Rising 100 headquarters



Market forces shaping and shaking the top 100

Key trends
impacting the list



Looking at our soonicorn stable, several trends we saw playing out in the wider tech market were also evident in the makeup of our final 100.

SAAS: (SLIGHTLY) DOWN BUT NOT OUT

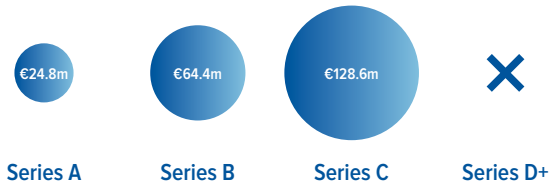
We're in an investment slowdown. Layoffs, the collapse of crypto and the sudden failure this year of Silicon Valley Bank, a US/UK startup cornerstone, have all pricked tech's golden balloon. In a recent analysis, VC firm Atomico — one of the strong investors of two companies on the list, TestGorilla (#27) and Ben (#95) — reckons total investment volumes in Europe will reach around \$50bn+ for 2023: in other words, a 50% drop compared to the record highs of 2021, and around 38% down on 2022 (though almost 40% ahead of what we saw in 2020 and 2019).

Are there any safe havens left in tech? Business software, the core focus of this list, is considered a reliable money spinner for investors and remains a mainstay, even if the return on investment is no longer as predictable. According to Atomico, "median enterprise value to revenue multiples" for the largest SaaS companies have come down to 5x, below the long-term pre-covid average of 7.8x.

But the beauty of this sector is that customers become utterly reliant on SaaS tools. Once a really clever piece of software goes into a company, it's unlikely to come out. The core functions of recruiting, engaging and developing the best employees, and providing the latest tools to help them collaborate, are not about to become less important. Downturn or not, keeping up with the competition, and all the tech that goes with that, is something companies can't ignore.

Average cheque size per round

Where's the money at?



Source: Dealroom, Pitchbook

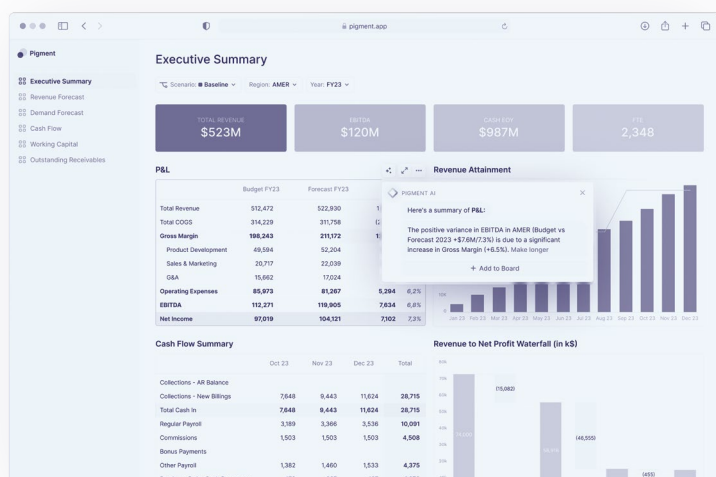
COINING IT IN

Wanted by companies all over: a steady hand on the tiller. With European tech investment falling to its lowest level in years and layoffs running into the hundreds of thousands globally, startups are fighting for survival. As a result, the number crunchers have rarely been so in-demand. The chief financial officer (CFO) is a hot hire in 2023 and an increasingly important voice in the boardroom.

As the demands of the CFO have risen, startups selling knacky finance tools have surged. Balancing the books used to be the bread and butter of CFOs, but with more and more data at their disposal they're now asked to give advice on anything from growth strategies to planning cashflow. However, the tools available to the average CFO haven't kept pace with their growing remits. Most of a coin keeper's time is still taken up by manually stitching together information from disparate sources and making sense of it in a spreadsheet.

A new fleet of startups — arriving when they're most needed — are lending a helping hand. Whether it's automating financial analyses or providing software that enables finance teams to collaborate more easily with other departments, the aim is to free up more of CFOs' time for strategic inputs.

Our list's topper Pigment (#1) — which in June raised \$88m in a Series C, to go with the \$138m already in the bank — is focused on the future aspects of a CFO's work: business scenario planning. It helps companies with business forecasting, budget planning and revenue forecasting — all wrapped up in a convenient dashboard, as is the case with all these startups. CFOs are served up charts, simulations and continuous modelling on Pigment's dashboard, rather than having to wade through formulae on Excel.



WE'VE ALL GONE AI MAD

Market pullback is not something the AI industry has to worry about in 2023. Investors are wowed by ChatGPT and its imitators, which have captured the zeitgeist this year in a way that new tech rarely does.

VCs are shovelling money into Gen AI companies, which have pulled in 35% of all funding going to European AI/ machine learning in 2023 — the highest share ever, having previously expanded from 1% in 2019 to 5% in 2022, according to Atomico.

Suddenly, the big tech companies are rushing to emphasise the importance of AI to their business models. Healthtech startups are looking to the technology to streamline, automate and ultimately improve medical care, cybersecurity teams lean on the intelligence to bolster digital protection and for techbio companies, it could increase the potential for novel and life-changing drug discovery.

Some of the big winners of AI hype have made it onto the list. In our top 20, there's V7 (#9 on the list), which turns images into training data for AI, and Aleph Alpha (#12), which is aiming to be Europe's answer to ChatGPT maker OpenAI. Weaviate (#6) is using AI to help companies find deeper meaning from their data by going beyond simple keyword searches, to find what users actually mean by a query. An insurance company might turn to Weaviate to help draw out new insights from its massive database of policies, for example. Weaviate's founder and CEO, Bob van Luijt, says that thousands are using the company's services each day. "We're an infrastructure company — one of the picks and shovels you need to work with Gen AI," he explains.

RISE OF THE ROBOTS

Turning our focus to factories, greenhouses, warehouses and operating theatres, we discover a tech purple patch worth keeping tabs on. Robots have been building cars for ages, but there's growing demand for them to sort our Amazon packages, pick our fruit and help surgeons open us up.

You might not read about them everyday, but European robot makers are making steady progress. Factory

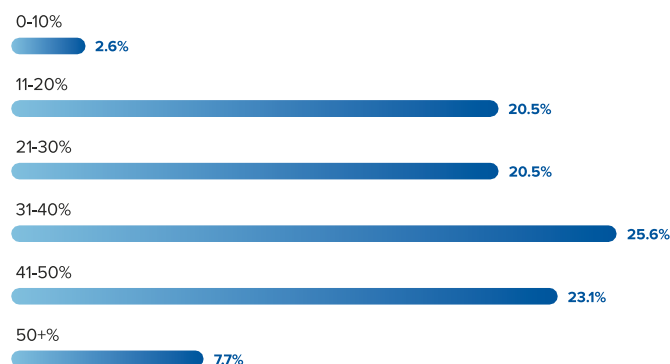
automation has always looked like the future and Wandelbots — #2 on the list — is coming of age in a lively robotics market, where a few European companies — Exotec in France, CMR Surgical in the UK and Distalmotion in Switzerland among them — are pulling in large sums. Spurring this growth is a clutch of universities across Europe, including TU Munich in Germany, ETH Zurich in Switzerland, Imperial College and Oxford University in the UK and KTH in Sweden.

Wandelbots' play is software that lets "anyone interact and work with robots". The company has created a handheld device, which an instructor uses to mimic a task like welding or glueing, training the robot in the process. The motion can then be fine-tuned on software without coding. While the robot gets to it, all the workers have to do is stand over it with an iPad to make sure it's following instructions.

Robots won't replace us overnight: most businesses suffering labour shortages today also operate in highly competitive, low-margin sectors — and struggle to find the cash to invest in technology. The cost of robots is falling but they're unlikely to be cheap any time soon. What Wandelbots' design shows us, at least, is that you don't need a robotics degree, or advanced computer skills, to figure out how to operate one of these things.

What % of your senior leadership team identifies as female?

39 of our 100 ranked startups gave us their take




Source: Sifted proprietary data


Honourable mentions

Not all industries readily produce unicorns, even in the best of times. We pulled out some rising stars — noticeable for the top spot in our mid-list and love from our judging panel — that didn't crack the top 100, but nevertheless deserve recognition.


skello

Paris-based workforce management company that's making it easier for stores and restaurants to plan and manage staff — from scheduling to payroll — with just a few clicks. 


nexite

A Tel-Aviv-based platform targeting retailers. It provides real-time item tracking and inventory transparency, from manufacturing to the customer. 

vivenu

This Dusseldorf-based ticketing platform has been one of many event companies cashing in on the post-pandemic boom on ticketing sales. 

INFOSUM

A UK-based collaborative security solution. Its platform allows companies to connect to other organisations' customer records without moving or sharing their data. 

SECURITY BONANZA

Companies making security products face a bigger market and mission than ever, and their strong showing on the list gives an indication of how much money is tied up in cyber resilience.

We've seen audacious and scary breaches in recent years. Since 2020, cyber attacks around the world have taken down operations at gas pipelines and hospitals. Attackers breached The Guardian newspaper's internal systems earlier this year, and forced the UK's Royal Mail to temporarily suspend its international postal services. Last November, the European Parliament was attacked after a vote to declare Russia a state sponsor of terrorism.

The breaches have fuelled concerns, leading to increased demand for companies with ideas to streamline and strengthen security processes.

Our list features a number of security players. There's Dublin-based Tines (#4) — no-code software that automates company security tasks — and German-based SoSafe (#70), which provides cybersecurity training for employees. Most of the listed Israeli companies, meanwhile, have a cybersecurity bent: the country's a world leader in the field, drawing on expertise and experience gleaned from its military intelligence forces.



WHERE THE ACTION IS HAPPENING: HOTSPOTS IN FAMILIAR PLACES

The tech slowdown is visible pretty much everywhere: the UK has seen a 57% investment drop, France 55% and Germany 44%. And still, the three countries dominate the list. Of the 30 UK companies on the list, 26 are London-based. Germany claims 19 — of which 12 are in Berlin. Twelve of France’s 16 companies on our list, meanwhile, are based in Paris.

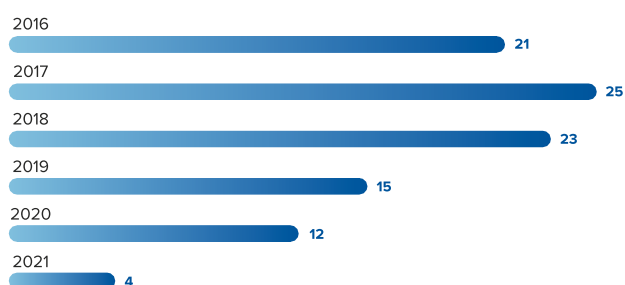
Despite combing 32 European countries during our research, only 18 countries are represented. That the majority of companies are concentrated in the big three European capitals is expected due to their strong financial and cultural clout. It’s where many prominent VCs have set up shop.

Similarly, all 14 Israeli companies are headquartered in Tel Aviv, home of advanced infrastructure, top universities and research centres. It’s also chock-full of VCs, angel investors and investment banks. Jerusalem — the country’s second largest startup scene — still trails far behind. It only raised \$27m so far in 2023 and funding has been declining every year since 2020.

Remote work may have bloomed in the last three years but the importance of location remains strong for budding businesses. Besides the usual benefits of infrastructure and networks, being headquartered in a well-known startup hub can enhance a startup’s brand perception, lending it legitimacy and prestige.

Launch year

Age breakdown of the Rising 100



Source: Dealroom, Pitchbook

We found that countries with more challenging landscapes barely made it onto the list. Poland, for instance, has only one representative on the Rising 100: Warsaw-based Symmetrical.ai. Helsinki-based HoxHunt is Finland’s sole representative; Latvia has Riga-based Lokalise.

There are no Austrian, Greek or Italian companies on the list, or even on the shortlist, despite having startup scenes that have grown over recent years. Serbia is not on the 100 either, although one of its companies, Tenderly, which helps companies monitor their smart contracts, based in the capital city of Belgrade, made the shortlist.

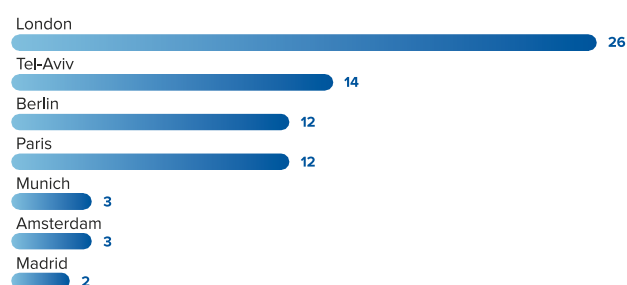
FEMALE FOUNDERS REMAIN UNDERREPRESENTED, BUT TOP THE LIST

In almost all industries, male founders dominate the scene. The Rising 100 startups are no exception. In those companies that replied to our request for data verification, 35% of the senior leadership team on average are female. Only 17 companies in our list have a female founder or cofounder. Proximie (#14) is the only company purely founded by a woman and only one Israeli company, Ermetic (#71), has a female cofounder.

But it is worth noting that the majority (11) of our ranked companies with at least one female founder are in the top 50, and seven are in the top 20. Pigment (#1) and Wandelbots (#3) each have one female cofounders. Pitch (#10) has two.

Where are our 100 companies based?

London is home to about a quarter of the Rising 100



Source: Dealroom, Pitchbook

Meet the founders

You don't build a major company overnight. We spoke with six of the top companies on the list about their respective journeys



Rising 100

Pigment

Business planning is big business

Pigment wants to be at the heart of all the big decisions your company makes.

“Before us, 99% of business leaders were making decisions based on incomplete data. Our idea was to put people, processes and data together to eliminate silos in companies,” says Pigment cofounder and co-CEO Eléonore Crespo.

The software helps leaders plan for the future. CFOs — probably Pigment’s main users — can use it to forecast revenue, and game out “what if” scenarios to estimate how certain moves might affect the business. Sales team leaders can use it to track quotas. HR teams can see how they should scale the workforce.

“You need to be agile, you need to adapt, business leaders have to make decisions in days, not months,” Crespo says. “For a CFO, you need to know how every decision is going to impact your margin and sales. It’s mission critical for any business out there. You can go into our tool and ask it to slice up the data in so many ways.”

“Before us, 99% of business leaders were making decisions based on incomplete data.”

The company grew its customer base 6x in 2022. Clients include some of the biggest names in tech like Klarna, Figma and Deliveroo. “They wanted to be able to make critical decisions in a difficult environment, so they chose us,” Crespo says.

Customer stories have fueled investor appetite, and the company announced a \$88m Series C raise in June 2023. It was largely unplanned, says Crespo. “We still



had the money from the last raise sitting in the bank. Our customers did a big word of mouth campaign and investors came to us in April and said, ‘we want to invest now’. We weren’t sure we wanted to but in the end having the biggest security cushion is the best thing we can do,” she says.

The plan now is to expand globally. “Today there’s 250 people in the company; we don’t want to do something crazy, we want to be efficient and lean; we only added 80 people from last year,” she explains.

Helping Crespo lead the company is her cofounder, Romain Niccoli. What’s it like having co-CEOs anyway? “Romain does tech, product and HR; I do everything else. Not being alone is critical for me.”

And what would she tell founders coming behind her; what are some tips for making it? “The only secret you need to remember is that the first 100 people you hire have to be the best of the best. Hiring is going to be the most important thing. You also need to have created relationships early on with investors,” she says (Crespo likes to do a big sit down with VCs once a year).

“Another tip: pay attention to your product. Never launch unless your product is going to be world class.”

Of course, people at Pigment use Pigment everyday. “It’s our cockpit,” says Crespo.

Aleph Alpha

The OpenAI challenger

It can't be easy competing with what's become the fastest-growing internet product in history, but that hasn't dissuaded Aleph Alpha, a German competitor of Microsoft-backed OpenAI, which placed at #12.

While OpenAI has raised a cool \$11bn, Aleph Alpha has raised only \$31.1m. In terms of data, however, Aleph Alpha's largest model is trained on 300bn parameters; OpenAI's is trained on 175bn.

Founder and CEO Jonas Andrulis says there are advantages to not being a Microsoft or Google. "There are a lot of strong enterprises and phenomenal people who don't want to be dependent on Microsoft or Google," he says, adding that Europe must not try and win "the battles of the past, but the battles of the future".

Aleph Alpha wants to make Gen AI work for businesses, instead of making better search engines for consumers. The fact that Aleph Alpha isn't building a mass-market consumer product is part of the reason it doesn't need the same level of capital as OpenAI. It's estimated that ChatGPT's huge popularity has led to running costs of around \$100k a day.

The German startup has built a chatbot called Lumi on top of a large language model (LLM) called Luminous — much like ChatGPT on top of GPT-3.

Microsoft will, of course, increasingly sell GPT-powered services to businesses, but Andrulis says that Aleph Alpha's independence from big tech means it can offer a much more bespoke and streamlined service to clients. "We are able to deploy in any environment," he argues. "It's our independence and the fact that we allow an on-premises installation; that we allow an installation in any cloud environment. We are basically the only team that can give you that."

And, while OpenAI is pretty transparent about gathering its users' data, Aleph Alpha is "not logging any user data", according to Andrulis.

"It's a different mindset. We are not monetising community... we're monetising the R&D," he adds.

Aleph Alpha is targeting what Andrulis calls "critical enterprises" — organisations like law firms, healthcare providers and banks, which rely heavily on trustable, accurate information. So not exactly the kinds of customers who are going to be turning to ChatGPT — famous for getting everything from linear equations to programming questions wrong — for answers. Aleph Alpha also provides sources and citations for where an answer has come from.

Aleph says it can't talk openly about all of its clients yet, but does say it's working with the German government, the City of Heidelberg, several German universities and that it is "live in a large bank".

OpenAI has already teased that sourcing and citation will be doable in GPT-4, as part of the integration with Microsoft's Bing search engine, but Aleph Alpha still believes that it can take advantage of its proximity to large European corporations.

"Europe is in a very strong position for industry — there are strong engineering companies, there are strong trade companies," says Andrulis. "If we succeed in helping European enterprises transform their businesses, this will give all European industries a phenomenal advantage."





V7

How AI will create 'octopus employees'

London-based V7 is a platform that turns images into training data, which can then be used to create AI. It's become a popular destination for engineers to develop their computer vision projects.

The site, which raised a \$33m Series A in November 2022, helps you build low-code workflows for solving tasks and improving your AI's knowledge. The company sees over 100 use cases for its product so far. "Farmers are using AI to detect insects in fields, which helps them predict when locusts or other pests are coming. People are creating crazy robots to pick strawberries and grapes," says V7's cofounder and CEO Alberto Rizzoli.

If the task is especially complex and sensitive — like scanning an X-ray for tumours — then multiple models and humans have to be involved.

Rizzoli says the company wants to be number one in AI-powered life sciences. "We want to get to a place where we're putting so many resources and so much expertise into this, that maybe no one else should try," he says. The founder estimates that two-thirds of companies that have produced FDA-approved medical device software in the last two years used V7.

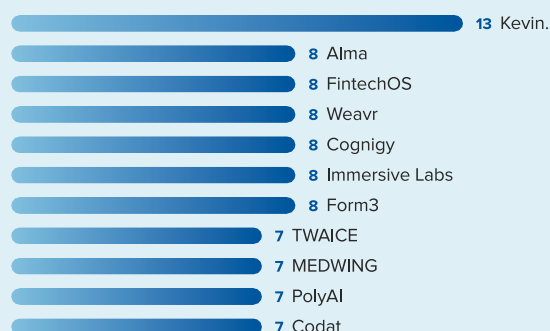
“We need to make sure AI is getting the right knowledge fed into it — and that’s where we come in.”

Rizzoli can see AI — and specifically Gen AI — developing to the point where a very well built LLM is running a hospital. "AI could notify doctors about critical patients and book operating rooms; it's going to do excellent business administration."

Gen AI will create "very important 'octopus employees' that do a little bit of everything in your workplace. But first, we need to make sure AI is getting the right knowledge fed into it — and that's where we come in."

Who's making the rounds?

On average, listed companies had 4.4 funding rounds. These companies had the most.



Source: Dealroom, Pitchbook

Fonoa

Death, taxes and SaaS

Fonoa, a tax automation platform used by companies such as Uber and Zoom, remains in demand during the downturn, even if sales are taking longer, says the company's founder and CEO Davor Tremac.

"Death and taxes: they never go away. Companies are looking for efficiencies; they're looking to reduce spending. It's all good news for us," says Tremac.

“There are too many opportunities and we have to pick the best ones.”

After raising \$60m in a Series B round in July 2022, the company is growing and taking on more staff. Tremac says he likes the challenge of integrating new people while keeping the company's startup spirit alive: "We're

a scale-up, we have to reinvent ourselves every six months. But we need to focus: there are too many opportunities and we have to pick the best ones."

“You can't hallucinate if you're talking about taxes.”

The company likes to bring its scattered employees together at least once during the year in Split, Croatia. "They do more deep work here in a week than in two or three months on Zoom," says Tremac.

Asked about the key lesson he's learned from running the business, Tremac says his "main regret is all the times I didn't make decisions fast enough". But one thing he's not diving headfirst into is Gen AI. The goal of quickening internal processes sees many companies adopting a version of ChatGPT into their systems. But there's still limits to how useful the tech can be.

"It's tricky, you can't hallucinate if you're talking about taxes. Everything has to be double-checked by a human. Sometimes it actually takes more time to use it," Tremac says.





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Tines

Software engineering for the people

To help understand what Tines does, cofounder Eoin Hinchy suggests imagining that you work in a company with 10k employees, but there's just one small team who are Microsoft Excel experts. No one else in the company understands Excel. If you want a spreadsheet built, you give the Excel team your specifications and they come back to you six weeks later with the spreadsheet.

"That seems bonkers," says Hinchy, "because everyone knows how to use Excel now, but that's still how we're running a lot of processes in companies."

Excel is the original no-code platform, he says. It's a platform that enables anyone to create a spreadsheet, with no coding or software development knowledge required. No code is about developing similar platforms for other functions, so more people can build things without having to learn to code.

Tines is doing this for security analysts. Hinchy used to work in tech security himself — for companies like eBay, Docusign and PayPal — where he says he realised that 80% of his team's time was spent on repetitive tasks.

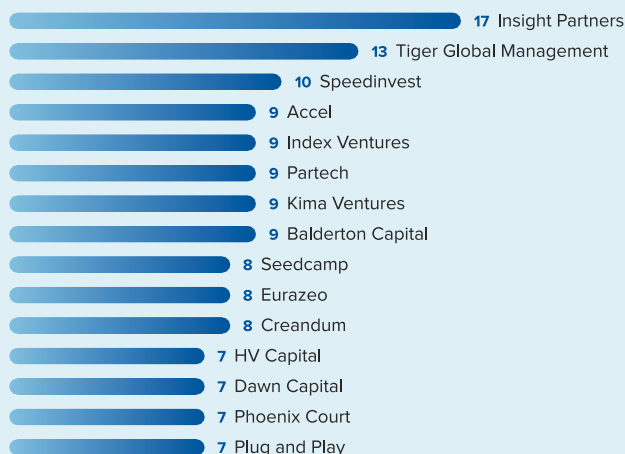
"It takes six months to hire a security analyst, then you've got them doing the same menial tasks over and over again," he says. "And because they're security experts not software engineers, they can't write the code to get themselves off the treadmill."

“ Anyone, no matter their technology background, will be as effective as a senior software engineer after three hours.”

Tines aims to help those security experts create their own automated solutions. The platform has broken down automation into actions, which he says take three hours to learn how to use and, from there, people can automate any process themselves. "Anyone, no matter their technology background, will be as effective as a senior software engineer after three hours," Hinchy says. The platform aims to automate 99% of menial tasks, be it things like sending responses to phishing emails, onboarding new employees, sending emails, updating systems or modifying incoming events.

Most active "strong investors"

15 strong investors backed seven or more names on the list



Source: Dealroom, Pitchbook



Pecan AI

AI with purpose

Zohar Bronfman, cofounder and CEO of Pecan AI, says companies should have higher aspirations than just “doing AI” for the sake of it.

“We believe in helping companies to [actually] get things done with AI. We just don’t hand our customers the keys to AI and wish them luck — we make sure they see meaningful results,” he says.

“When the economy improves, the strongest performers will be those who invested in innovation, even during the downturn.”

The Tel-Aviv-based company — which has raised over \$100m for its AI-powered predictive analytics tool since 2021, from investors including New York-based private equity firm Insight Partners and GV (formerly Google Ventures) — is in hot demand.

“We help companies see into the future and understand what will happen,” Bronfman explains.

Specifically, Pecan AI’s software helps companies anticipate customer demand and churn. Bronfman mentions Kenvue, the consumer health spinoff from Johnson & Johnson, which Pecan AI helped to forecast demand for its products, which then informed planning for everything from manufacturing to marketing to distribution.

How does Bronfman view the wobbly economy? As an opportunity. He says: “Companies need to retain their customers, get more efficient in their marketing, and make the most of their teams’ skills and data during this time. When the economy improves, the strongest performers will be those who invested in innovation, even during the downturn.”

Do you feel forced to look beyond Europe for later-stage capital?

53 of our 100 ranked startups gave us their take

Yes 19



No 25



I don't know 9



Source: Sifted proprietary data

In conclusion...

Are we still bound for the moon?

Legendary investor Warren Buffet once said: "Only when the tide goes out do you learn who has been swimming naked." Well, the water has receded but the good news for our 100 companies is that they've still got their bathing suits on. In fact, compared with the wider tech world, SaaS has emerged from this period of economic pressure rather well.

None of this is to say that our 100 companies will sail through the next few months (and years). The downturn drags on. More tech layoffs look certain. Some fear the worst is yet to come.

For companies that haven't raised since 2021, they should buckle up. Runways will be coming to an end soon, and when they go back to investors to raise more money, many will need to consider taking lower valuations.

So making any firm predictions about the future of our soonicorns now would be foolish.

As the companies on our list are so young, most of their founders and VCs have never been through a down market. One year in, they'll have learned that being a really good company is no longer a certainty of more funding or success. And while some of the companies on our list will probably go on to great highs; others may sadly run out of cash.

That's the slightly gloomy outlook. The positive case, however, is that there are still lots of growing companies that are buying up office software. There's also new, cutting-edge enterprise AI hitting the virtual shelves, which nearly everyone is afraid to lose out on. Gen AI is the fad that's putting a new flock of startups on a to-the-moon trajectory.

Technology developed by the startups featured in this report has, on the whole, had an amazing impact on company efficiency, freeing people up for more high-level work.

Time will truly tell where they go next.

Acknowledgements

Sifted would like to thank the following people interviewed for this report:

JONAS ANDRULIS, founder and CEO, Aleph Alpha

ZOHAR BRONFMAN, cofounder and CEO, Pecan AI

ELÉONORE CRESPO, cofounder and co-CEO, Pigment

EOIN HINCHY, cofounder and CEO, Tines

ALBERTO RIZZOLI, cofounder and CEO, V7

DAVOR TREMAC, CEO, Fonoa

BOB VAN LUIJT, founder and CEO, Weaviate

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