Evolve
Capital Partners

Weekly Deals Update

Week Ending 02/16/18

SPECIALIZED INVESTMENT BANKERS AT THE INTERSECTION OF FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Key Deals

M&A

Date	Target	Acquirer(s)	Sector	Amount ($mm)
2/12/18	eTech	CoreLogic	Bank Technology Solutions	NA
2/7/18	KINDERSLEY INSURANCE	HUB	Insurance	NA

Financing

Date	Target	Lead Investor	Sector	Amount ($mm)
2/14/18	FastSpring	AKKR	Financial Management Solutions	NA
2/13/18	YAPSTONE POWERING PAYMENTS	PREMJI INVEST	Payments	$71
2/12/18	STASH	USV Union Square Ventures	Securities	$37
1/22/18	influxdata	SAPPHIRE VENTURES	Data & Analytics / IoT	$35

Preface

Each week, Evolve Capital Partners compiles select M&A and financing transactions across the finance and technology sectors. We analyze multiples sources of publicly available information and source each transaction. We also release a weekly news update of relevant news and press releases across the sector.

Evolve Capital Partners is a specialized investment bank focused on businesses serving industries at the intersection of finance and technology. We are a dedicated, creative, and fully independent investment bank that advises private and public companies on merger, divestiture and acquisition transactions, and capital raising through private placements. Founded in 2012, we are based in New York.

You can learn more about us at www.evolve-capital.com. We post past weekly transaction and news updates on our website, plus in-depth industry research reports.

To contact us, please email admin@evolve-capital.com or call (646) 688-2792.

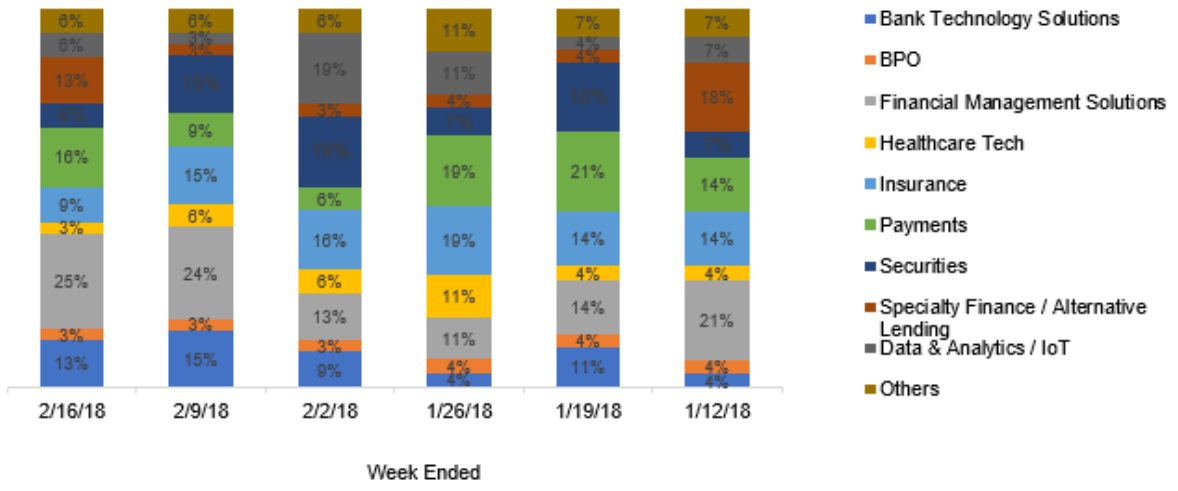
Sectors we cover at the intersection of finance and technology include:

Bank Technology Solutions	Healthcare Tech	Securities
BPO	Insurance	Specialty Finance / Alternate Lending
Financial Management Solutions	Payments	Data & Analytics / IoT

Deals Count

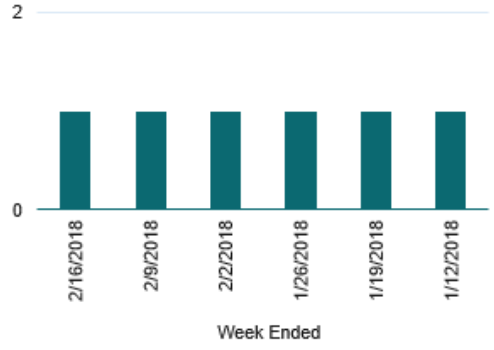
Sector	Number of Deals	% of Total
Bank Technology Solutions	4	13%
BPO	1	3%
Financial Management Solutions	8	27%
Healthcare Tech	1	3%
Insurance	3	10%
Payments	5	17%
Securities	2	7%
Specialty Finance / Alternative Lending	4	13%
Data & Analytics / IoT	1	3%
Others	1	3%
Total	**30**	**100%**

Sector-Wise Deals Breakdown



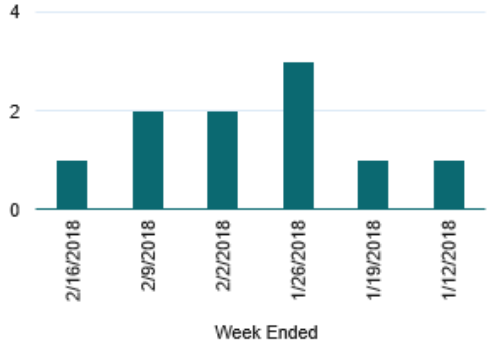
Bank Technology Solutions

BPO



Financial Management Solutions

Healthcare Tech

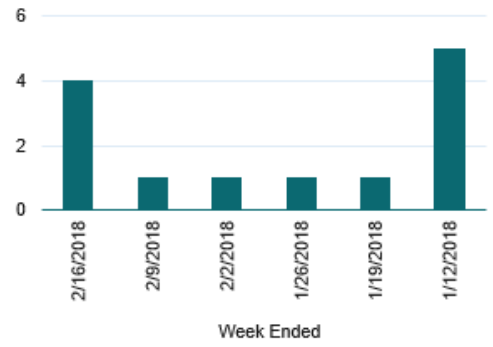


Insurance

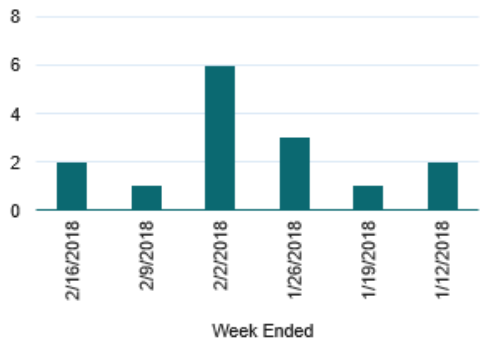
Payments

Securities

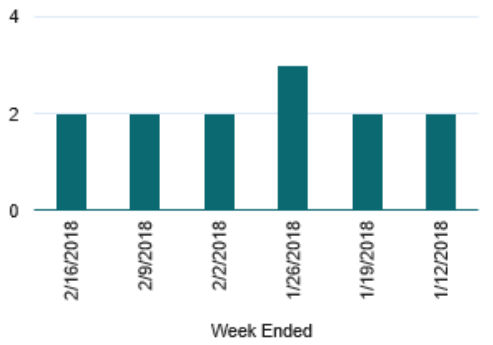
Speciality Finance / Alternative Lending



Data & Analytics / IoT



Others



BANK TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Fintech group TruFin raises £70 million

Bank Technology Solutions

2/13/18

TruFin, a British fintech and banking business with fingers in various niche lending pies, has raised £70 million through a listing on the LSE's AIM market.

TruFin was created through a series of acquisitions made over the last three years by a hedge fund called Arrowgrass, which was set up by former Deutsche Bank staffers.

One of those staffers, Henry Kenner, is now running TruFin, which owns three businesses: supply chain outfit Distribution Finance Capital (DFC); a specialist in providing early payments to the UK public sector called Oxygen Fiance; and working capital finance unit Satago.

In addition, thanks to a 2014 investment, TruFin owns a 15% stake in Europe's largest P2P lending platform, Zopa.

Kenner, who has a 30-year history in financial services, including at Swiss Re Capital Management and ABN Amro as well as his stint as a managing director at Deutsche Bank, now leads a 100-strong team at TruFin.

The firm claims that its units and investments are poised for significant growth, with both DFC and Zopa pursuing UK banking licenses, and Oxygen expanding within the corporate sector.

The company will start trading on AIM next week having conditionally raised £70 million through a placing and subscription to institutional and professional investors.

Says Kenner: "Listing on AIM will allow us to provide further capital to our subsidiaries and scale faster, and take advantage of any developments in the current financial services market.

"The highly experienced management team at TruFin and our group companies, are passionate about the opportunities to grow our niche lending businesses. Many borrowers are neglected by banks and still face expensive funding and capital.

"We intend to deliver value by taking advantage of current market disruptions and new financial technologies, while keeping a focus on the distribution of niche lending products."

https://www.finextra.com/newsarticle/31671/fintech-group-trufin-raises-70m

Dwolla secures $12 million round of funding, will nearly double workforce

Bank Technology Solutions
2/13/18

Dwolla's changing focus has brought with it a renewed emphasis on the Midwest. A fresh round of investments totaling $6.85 million that were announced in January is prompting the company to hire about 20 more people here. Wochit

Dwolla, a darling of the Iowa startup scene, just wrapped up a $12 million round of funding that will help the tech firm nearly double its workforce.

"The funds will be used to meet our growing capital requirements as a financial platform," Dwolla founder and CEO Ben Milne wrote on the company blog. "We'll also continue expanding our team to service customers. We have more than 40 openings to fill this year."

Dwolla spokeswoman Stephanie Atkin said the company employs about 50 people now.

"We have received generous support from the Midwest and Iowa as a whole," she said. "We're excited to continue to give back and create value here in Des Moines."

Atkin would not say how much the company has raised since its 2010 inception. Last February, before this new round of funding, Dwolla leaders said the company had raised about $42 million in total investments.

In recent years, Dwolla has pivoted its focus: It frontiered mobile payments when it launched in 2010, empowering consumers to easily and affordably transfer money from their bank accounts to friends or family. But nowadays, such technology is widely available from multiple providers.

Dwolla instead makes its application programming interface, or API, available to other businesses and developers to build into their own native applications. The change also brought Dwolla's focus entirely back to Iowa: It closed a San Francisco office, as Milne said his team "really built this company for the second time."

"It's kind of... you innovate, or you die," Milne said last February. "You adapt or you die. You evolve or you die."

Dwolla's latest round of funding was led by Foundry Group with additional investment from Union Square Ventures, Next Level Ventures, Ludlow Ventures, High Alpha and Firebrand.

Next Level Ventures, an Iowa-based venture capital fund, has been a repeat funder of the tech firm. Managing Partner Craig Ibsen said he couldn't' "be happier to see Dwolla build and grow its innovative team in Des Moines."

"Ben and the entire employee base have been a key part of Iowa's push to develop a startup ecosystem," Ibsen said. "Dwolla has been an outstanding partner of Next Level Ventures over the last couple of years. We have seen Dwolla become the fastest growing business in our Iowa portfolio because its team has been creating innovative new solutions for moving money."

https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/money/business/2018/02/13/dwolla-secures-12-million-round-funding-nearly-double-workforce/330080002/

Ant Financial's $100 billion valuation would put it in the same league as the world's biggest banks

Bank Technology Solutions
2/12/18

Ant Financial Services Group, the Chinese fintech giant, is planning a funding round that could fetch a valuation similar to the world's biggest and oldest banks: The digital payment company is raising as much as $5 billion in equity that may value it at more than $100 billion, according to Reuters.

Comparing market capitalizations of public companies with a private company's valuation is an imperfect exercise. But in the broadest sense, and accepting these limitations, it shows investors think prospects for next-generation companies like Ant Financial are comparable to top-tier institutions like Goldman Sachs, which had a $94 billion market cap at the time of writing.

There are several reasons investors are betting big on fintech upstarts. Chinese firms like Ant Financial and Tencent are unencumbered by the legacy of bank branches and aging technology that older banks elsewhere are trying to streamline. These younger companies also benefit from lower regulatory hurdles and have demographics on their side, thanks to mobile-friendly, millennial-heavy home markets; China has some 520 million mobile payment users.

Ant's latest fundraising could help position it for an initial public offering. The company was set up in 2004 (as Alipay) to provide PayPal-style payment services for online shopping. It was spun off (pdf) from Jack Ma's Alibaba about a decade later (as Ant Financial). Alibaba recently said it will take a 33% stake in Ant, replacing the current system in which Alibaba receives royalties from Ant.

Ant's Alipay unit is now China's biggest online payment platform. It also has stakes in Indian mobile-payment firm Paytm (paywall) and Thailand's Ascend Money.

While payments aren't necessarily a cash cow (paywall), the service is a way to acquire customers and then sell them a range of more lucrative services: Ant provides services such as wealth management, lending, credit scoring, and insurance. If investors are right, Ant Financial could soon become a major force in the world of finance.

https://qz.com/1204717/chinas-ant-financial-plans-to-raise-5-billion-reportedly-at-a-valuation-of-100-billion/

CoreLogic acquires eTech Solutions

Bank Technology Solutions

2/12/18

CoreLogic® (NYSE:CLGX), a leading global property information, analytics and data-enabled solutions provider, today announced the completion of the Company's acquisition of eTech Solutions Limited (eTech). Founded in 2005, eTech is the UK's leading provider of innovative mobile surveying and workflow management software that enhances productivity and mitigates risk for participants in the UK property market.

With more than 50 percent of UK property appraisals running through the eTech platform in 2017, the company provides an end-to-end property valuation workflow management platform and mobile appraiser solution. eTech clients include UK appraisers, appraisal management companies and lenders. eTech also serves the energy market with mobile and desktop solutions that automate the collection, analysis and provisioning of data and reports.

"The acquisition of eTech expands our UK footprint and augments our valuation solutions offerings," said Frank Martell, CoreLogic president and CEO. "The eTech team has established a great track record of building innovative solutions that helped transform the UK appraisal industry. We believe that over time, we can potentially leverage benefits from a number of eTech's innovative solutions to fuel automation and reduce cycle times in our U.S. operations."

https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180212005434/en/CoreLogic-Acquires-eTech-Solutions

BPO

Medical Solutions to acquire PPR

Healthcare Tech

2/9/18

Medical Solutions, a leading provider of healthcare staffing solutions for hospitals across the United States, today announced it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire PPR, a provider of travel nurse staffing and interim leadership for acute and post-acute markets. As part of the transaction, PPR will continue to operate as its own brand and will keep its offices in both Jacksonville and Tampa, Fla. Medical Solutions acquired PPR from Trivest Partners, who partnered with the company in 2016. The transaction is subject to standard conditions, including regulatory clearance, and is expected to close in the first quarter of 2018. Additional terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Medical Solutions offers a range of dynamic staffing solutions aimed to address hospitals' specific and ever-changing needs. The company provides more than 1,600 hospitals around the country with highly skilled and qualified travel nurses. It also operates as a Managed Service Provider (MSP), helping to streamline and simplify workforce operations by exclusively managing a hospital's entire travel nurse staffing process.

"In partnering with PPR, we are combing two great businesses with a shared vision and commitment to delivering an exceptional experience for employees and clients," said Craig Meier, CEO of Medical Solutions. "With industry-leading talent retention, PPR is aligned with our focus on creating a positive and supportive environment that gives employees the opportunity to grow, both personally and professionally. As demand for travel nurses continues to outgrow supply, this combination gives us the depth and resources to serve even more patients across the country."

Founded in 1996, PPR is one of the fastest growing healthcare staffing companies in the country. The company operates through two distinct businesses: PPR, the travel nurse staffing solution that manages 13-week nursing assignments, and 360 Healthcare Staffing, which focuses on the post-acute market. Known for its focus on employee experience, PPR has been named to the national list of America's "Best Places to Work" for 13 years.

"This transaction brings together two highly-reputable brands in the healthcare staffing sector that, together, are well positioned to tackle the tremendous and growing need for contingent labor in healthcare across the United States," said Shamik Patel of TPG Growth. "The addition of PPR will enable Medical Solutions to diversify into new care settings, expand its MSP efforts, and continue recruiting best-in-class talent across the business. This partnership creates more jobs and opportunities for new and existing travel nurses across both organizations. We are pleased to support Craig and the team in this exciting next chapter."

In 2017, Medical Solutions partnered with TPG Growth, the middle market and growth equity platform of alternative asset firm TPG. TPG Growth helped facilitate the transaction, and will continue to be an active partner to Medical Solutions and PPR. Kirkland & Ellis and Greenberg

Traurig served as legal advisors to TPG and the sellers, respectively. Piper Jaffray served as financial advisor to PPR. Additionally, UBS, Morgan Stanley and SunTrust provided financing support to TPG Growth and Medical Solutions.

https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180209005321/en/Medical-Solutions-Acquire-PPR

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

IdentityMind closes $10 million Series C

Financial Management Solutions

2/15/18

IdentityMind Global, the leader in Digital Identities You Can Trust, today announced that it has closed a $10 million Series C round of financing. In addition to all existing investors, the round was co-led by Benhamou Global Ventures and Eastern Link Capital and included Hanna Ventures, Overstock.com, and Zanadu Capital Partners.

IdentityMind provides a SaaS RegTech platform that builds, maintains and analyzes digital identities worldwide, allowing companies to perform identity proofing, risk-based authentication, regulatory identification, and to detect and prevent identity fraud.

According to Garrett Gafke, President and CEO, IdentityMind Global, the new funds will be used to drive expansion within international markets (Asia, Latin America and Europe), sales, marketing, and the company's new business unit specifically dedicated to providing know your customer (KYC) and anti-money laundering (AML) solutions to address the regulatory and compliance requirements of the rapidly growing Initial Coin Offering (ICO) and cryptocurrency markets.

"We feel privileged to be working with an elite group of high quality investors who have a proven track record of success," said Gafke. "The market demand for digital identity-based solutions in today's global digital economy is booming. IdentityMind, the pioneer in digital identities, with hundreds of customers spanning six continents, is uniquely positioned to meet growing global market demand."

Market research firm Frost & Sullivan estimates the global RegTech market could reach $6.45 billion by 2020. IdentityMind's platform - uniquely built upon digital identities - provides AML, including KYC, transaction monitoring, sanctions screening and fraud prevention solutions. Further accelerating RegTech growth in financial services and virtually every industry in 2018 is the May 25, 2018 EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which dictates how companies address data privacy and protection in Europe. IdentityMind fully complies with GDPR and supports customers looking for a GDPR compliant RegTech solution.

Eastern Link Capital, a China focused private equity fund and new addition to the IdentityMind investment team, provides deep domain experience and knowledge of the Chinese and Asian markets. IdentityMInd recently opened an office in Beijing, China to capitalize on these opportunities.

"We're excited to join the IdentityMind investment team and see the indispensable value they deliver to any company conducting digital business," said Yudong Hou, Managing Partner, Eastern Link Capital. "The ongoing growth of synthetic or stolen identities requires digital identity-based solutions to prevent identity fraud and maintain the integrity of the global digital economy.

IdentityMind has been identified as a 'go to' partner for those companies needing to implement an effective defense to identity thieves, online fraudsters, and money launderers worldwide."

Demand for identity-based solutions is exploding given that global identity theft, associated with non-stop data breaches and the corresponding loss of personally identifiable information (PII), continues to grow. According to the 2017 Norton Cyber Security Insights Report, cyber-criminals were responsible for incurring $172 billion worth of damages to 978 million consumers in 20 countries in 2017.

"IdentityMind has been at the forefront of helping companies navigate the regulatory compliance waters of the fast-growing, multi-billion dollar cryptocurrency and ICO industry," said Patrick Byrne, CEO, Overstock.com, and an investor in IdentityMind. "ICOs and cryptocurrencies are going mainstream and IdentityMind is one of the key players in helping ensure transparency, legitimacy, security and compliance which will only lead to faster and greater marketplace adoption." In the last six months, IdentityMind has worked with over 40 ICO customers, evaluating more than 150,000 users around the world who contributed almost a billion dollars in digital currency.

"We're excited to continue to invest in IdentityMind," said Eric Buatois, Managing Partner, Benhamou Global Ventures. "Our investment confidence is based on IdentityMind's continued dynamic growth, global expansion, penetration of new and exciting markets, and increasing customer demand for the company's identity-based solutions."

https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/72654/identitymind-closes-10-million-series-c?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2018-2-16&member=93489

DailyPay raises $9 million in Series B funding

Financial Management Solutions

2/15/18

DailyPay, a NYC-based provider of a platform for employees to access earned wages in real time, raised $9m in Series B funding.

The round, which brings total capital raised to $16m, was led by Intercept Ventures with participation from existing investors RPM Ventures, Inspiration Ventures and Draper Frontier.

The company intends to use the funds to accelerate the deployment of its financial wellness support and services among mid-cap and enterprise companies in several industries.

Led by Jason Lee, CEO and co-founder, DailyPay provides employees at companies in a wide range of industries, including cleaning, healthcare, retail, transportation, and more with real-time access to earned wages and pay bills on time and avoid late fees.

http://www.finsmes.com/2018/02/dailypay-raises-9m-in-series-b-funding.html

Uncommon.co picks up $18 million Series A

Financial Management Solutions

2/15/18

Today, Uncommon.co announces Uncommon IQ, the industry's first qualifications-based talent marketplace that connects job seekers, employers, and job sites in a fully-automated, transparent and objective way.

Using a proprietary AI algorithm to analyze career paths, experience, skill level and job interest, Uncommon IQ gives recruiters on-demand access to applicants that meet or exceed every job requirement and are ready to be interviewed, eliminating the costly and manual inefficiencies of traditional sourcing.

Uncommon IQ also puts job seekers on the fast track to employment by allowing them to apply with confidence for jobs for which they know they are qualified.

Uncommon.co candidates are 12 times more likely to be invited to an interview as they appear in a short list of pre-qualified candidates. For job sites who service both job seekers and employers, this enables them to provide a better experience and maximize revenue.

For decades, the recruiting industry has been operating in the dark with no easy or effective way of connecting the right candidates to the right job positions. With the growth in online job boards and marketing sites, job seekers can easily apply to dozens of positions with a single click, but rarely hear anything back about their application. Employers blindly pay the outdated Cost Per Click (CPC) fee for every submission, then spend hours screening hundreds of resumes only to find a few that are actually qualified and interested in the job position.

"When I was hiring for my previous companies, I was stunned at how finding talent was based on a 'needle in a haystack' approach," said Teg Grenager, CEO of Uncommon.co. "Now, we're creating what I wish I had then: a simple and effective way to connect with only qualified applicants who are ready to be interviewed, allowing recruiters to spend less time sourcing and more time hiring great talent."

Using AI technology trained on over 50 million career paths, Uncommon IQ analyzes applicant resumes for hard skills, like expertise in data science or kinesiology, by looking for factors like degrees attained or years in a role; soft skills, like creativity and entrepreneurship, are found by extrapolating skills necessary for success in past jobs.

With Uncommon IQ's first-of-its-kind Cost Per Interested & Qualified (CPIQ) pricing model, customers are only charged when a fully qualified candidate applies for a specified open position, and can even challenge irrelevant resumes for an immediate refund.

"My recruiting efforts typically consisted of posting positions on various job sites and then sifting through hundreds of applicants — with most of them being unqualified," said beta customer Galia Schwarz, VP Business Development at Resonai. "With Uncommon.co, I am able to post my position in one place and know that they will take care of all the sourcing and screening for me. It's centralized and easy to use!"

"Uncommon's technology is unleashing a much-needed transformation in the job market."explained Amir Ashkenazi, Founder, President and Chairman of Uncommon.co. "The job market has not changed much since the classified ads era — basically a black box for those on both sides of the hiring equation. At Uncommon.co, we're using best-in-class technology to fix the unfair, broken recruiting system and empower job seekers to find meaningful opportunities suited to their skill sets, while helping employers level the playing field for applicants and find the best talent. It's a win-win."

The company is also announcing $18 million in Series A funding from Canaan Partners, Spark Capital and Zeev Ventures.

"Today's recruitment system is broken—the process is slow and rife with bias and it's stagnating growth for companies of all sizes, across industries," said Santo Politi from Spark Capital. "That's why I'm excited about what the team at Uncommon.co has created: a guaranteed solution for finding qualified talent on demand. They have created a system that will soon become the status quo and will disrupt the $428 billion global staffing industry."

"I've known Amir for almost 20 years, since our days at Shopping.com and I worked with both Amir and Teg on their prior startup Adap.tv. Together, we all experienced directly just how awful the recruiting experience can be, " said Dan Ciporin, General Partner at Canaan. "I am thrilled to back Amir and Teg again with Uncommon, as they transform recruiting with a solution that finally gives companies only the candidates they want and gives job-seekers exactly the role they are looking for – at a company that wants to hire them."

Uncommon.co is led by Amir Ashkenazi and Teg Grenager, veteran entrepreneurs with extensive experience creating market-ready B2B products that eliminate marketplace inefficiencies. The team previously worked together to start programmatic video advertising startup

Adap.tv, acquired by AOL for $405 million, the company's largest acquisition at the time. Ashkenazi also founded Shopping.com, which was acquired by eBay for $634 million.

https://www.pehub.com/2018/02/uncommon-co-picks-18-mln-series/

FastSpring receives majority equity investment from Accel-KKR

Financial Management Solutions

2/14/18

FastSpring, an innovative subscription-based platform for powering digital commerce, announced today it has received a majority equity investment from Accel-KKR, a leading technology-focused private equity firm. The new partnership will provide capital and resources to make continued investments in technology and go-to-market initiatives to better serve existing customers and drive continued growth in the digital commerce market.

FastSpring provides a subscription-based platform for powering digital commerce connecting buyers and sellers across the globe and offers payment processing, recurring billing and other value-added modules to enable more efficient global commerce of digital products. Founded in 2005, FastSpring is headquartered in Santa Barbara, CA.

“The FastSpring team has built an impressive customer base and a strong platform for enabling digital commerce,” said Dean Jacobson, Managing Director at Accel-KKR. “We look forward to working with them as they continue to rapidly innovate and drive value for their customers.”

“FastSpring has exhibited strong growth over the last several years by building an end-to-end platform that makes it easy for our customers to sell digital products around the world. We are excited about the opportunity ahead, and we believe Accel-KKR’s experience partnering with software businesses will be valuable to us as we enter our next stage of growth,” said Chris Lueck, CEO of FastSpring.

Tom Barnds, Managing Director at Accel-KKR. “We have known the company for many years, and are excited to be able to partner with the FastSpring team to support and help foster the company’s continued growth.”

Raymond James served as exclusive financial advisor to FastSpring in this transaction.

https://www.accel-kkr.com/fastspring-receives-majority-equity-investment-from-accel-kkr/

ENGAGE Talent raises $3 million to accelerate innovation of AI-powered recruiting

Financial Management Solutions

2/14/18

ENGAGE Talent, an AI software company that helps companies identify and effectively engage with passive candidates, has raised $3 million in new funding. Participating investors include Revolution's Rise of the Rest® Seed Fund, Refinery Ventures and Grand Ventures. ENGAGE will use the new funds to further develop its predictive recruiting technologies and to expand its science/R&D and success teams.

"ENGAGE is a great example of the type of company we are looking to invest in—it's in an emerging ecosystem and using innovative technology to solve a pressing, real-world problem," said JD Vance, Rise of the Rest® managing partner and bestselling author of Hillbilly Elegy. "Its technology has tremendous potential for helping employers recruit and hire more successfully."

"We're excited by ENGAGE's ability to use deep data-driven insights to reveal highly in-demand candidates that would otherwise be undiscoverable," said Tim Schigel, Refinery Ventures partner. "Their technology enables companies to acquire talent more effectively and quickly. This is critical as we enter the Fourth Industrial Wave, during which innovative companies are expected to compete based on their ability to recruit the best talent."

Surveys show that talent concerns are already top-of-mind for many executives. According to the Conference Board's C-Suite Challenge 2018 survey, attracting and retaining talent is the foremost concern for CEOs, as well as the rest of the C-Suite, including CHROs and CFOs.

"We decided to invest in ENGAGE because we believe in the value of their technology and the quality and expertise of their people," said Tim Streit, Grand Ventures partner. "They have a tremendous commitment to using data science and artificial intelligence to help companies be smarter and more effective with their recruiting and workforce planning."

Among ENGAGE's customers are Dell, Hilton, Allstate, Transamerica, Yoh, and Hudson RPO. ENGAGE has announced a number of innovations over the last year, most recently ENGAGE ME!, a groundbreaking recruiting Marketing Engine. ENGAGE ME! not only automatically identifies the best candidates to target based on a recruiter's specifications, but also the most effective ways to nurture them.

"While we're proud of what we've accomplished, we're eager to use this new funding to accelerate our progress in enhancing and refining our AI recruiting technology," ENGAGE CEO Joseph Hanna said.

https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/engage-talent-raises-3-million-to-accelerate-innovation-of-ai-powered-recruiting-300598261.html

Alera Group acquires Wilson Albers in Alaska

Financial Management Solutions

2/13/18

Alera Group has acquired Wilson Albers & Company LLC located in Anchorage, Alaska. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Wilson Albers & Company, LLC, parent company of The Wilson Agency, LLC, Albers & Company Inc. in Tacoma, Wash., and ConnectHR, LLC headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska, provides a variety of employment resources in the areas of insurance, retirement and human resources.

Wilson Albers has operated The Wilson Agency in Alaska for more than 50 years and Albers & Company in Washington for more than 30 years.

Deerfield, Ill.-based Alera Group provides employee benefits, property and casualty, risk management and wealth management.

https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/west/2018/02/13/480389.htm

Cardlytics announces pricing of IPO

Financial Management Solutions

2/8/18

Cardlytics, Inc., a purchase intelligence platform that helps make marketing more relevant and measurable, today announced the pricing of its initial public offering of 5,400,000 shares of common stock at a price to the public of $13.00 per share, before underwriting discounts and commissions. All of the shares of common stock are being offered by Cardlytics. In addition, Cardlytics has granted the underwriters a 30-day option to purchase up to an additional 810,000 shares of common stock. Cardlytics' common stock is expected to begin trading on the Nasdaq Global Market under the ticker symbol "CDLX" on February 9, 2018. The offering is expected to close on February 13, 2018, subject to the satisfaction of customary closing conditions.

BofA Merrill Lynch and J.P. Morgan are acting as joint book-running managers and representatives of the underwriters for the offering. Wells Fargo Securities and SunTrust Robinson Humphrey are also acting as book-runners for the offering. Raymond James and KeyBanc Capital Markets are acting as co-managers for the offering.

A registration statement relating to the securities being sold in this offering was declared effective by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. This offering is being made only by means of a prospectus. When available, copies of the final prospectus relating to this offering may be obtained by contacting: BofA Merrill Lynch, NC1-004-03-43, 200 North College Street, 3rd floor, Charlotte, NC 28255-0001, Attention: Prospectus Department or by email at dg.prospectus_requests@baml.com or J.P. Morgan Securities LLC, c/o Broadridge Financial Solutions, 1155 Long Island Avenue, Edgewood, New York 11717, telephone: 866-803-9204.

https://www.cnbc.com/2018/02/08/globe-newswire-cardlytics-announces-pricing-of-initial-public-offering.html

Acquisition of Nectar from Aimia

Financial Management Solutions

2/1/18

Sainsbury's has today, through the acquisition of the shares of Aimia Inc's UK business, acquired all assets, colleagues, systems and licences required for the full and independent operation of the Nectar loyalty programme in the UK.

Sainsbury's has paid £60m for the Nectar business and assets. The transaction will be immediately cash positive and earnings accretive. We expect goodwill to be generated as a result of the acquisition and the alignment of accounting policies.

Acquiring Nectar supports Sainsbury's strategy of knowing its customers better than anyone else. There is no change for customers as a result of the acquisition and they should continue to collect and redeem their Nectar points as normal.

https://markets.ft.com/data/announce/detail?dockey=1323-13518094-77T2C68CCKRCAL6098F83II3BC

HEALTHCARE TECH

Dialogue raises $12 million to push employee healthcare service across Canada

Healthcare Tech

2/13/18

Montreal-based Dialogue has closed $12 million in Series A funding as it looks to fuel its growth.

White Star Capital led the oversubscribed funding round, with participation from HV Holtzbrinck Ventures, Portag3 Ventures, National Bank, and Walter Financial. This is the first Canadian investment for Munich and Berlin-based HV Holtzbrinck Ventures.

“We are thrilled to have earned the trust of such a respected and diverse group of investors as we write our next chapter,” said Cherif Habib, co-founder and CEO of Dialogue. “These funds will be strategically invested to continue our expansion and to launch new services to our clients.”

Over the last year, close to 150 employers across a wide range of industries have started offering Dialogue.

Dialogue’s platform allows the employers to offer employees access to healthcare services through their phone. Employees can chat with physicians and nurses and receive mental health therapy, free medication delivery, specialist referrals, and help navigating the healthcare system. In March 2017, the company raised a $4 million seed round led by Diagram Ventures, which is backed by Power Financial, the company behind the Portag3 FinTech fund.

In July, Dialogue partnered with League to power its Health Concierge in Ontario and British Columbia. Dialogue has also secured distribution agreements with partners in the insurance ecosystem like Great-West Lifeco and SSQ Insurance.

Over the last year, close to 150 employers across a wide range of industries have started offering Dialogue as a benefit to their employees and their families, which the company says marks a 1,500 percent growth in Dialogue’s user base. The company currently counts Cossette, Industrial Alliance, Osler, Ubisoft, and Wealthsimple among its clients.

“We believe we are on the verge of an important transformation in the way people consume health services,” said Jean-François Marcoux, managing partner of White Star Capital. “Virtual healthcare is becoming mainstream and Dialogue is ideally positioned to lead this shift.”

https://betakit.com/dialogue-raises-12-million-to-push-employee-healthcare-service-across-canada/

INSURANCE

Nexus acquires D&O and financial institutions MGA Apsley Specialty

Insurance

2/13/18

Independent specialty managing general agent Nexus Group announced it has completed the acquisition of Apsley Specialty Ltd., a registered Lloyd's coverholder. Financial details of the transaction were not disclosed.

Established in 2012, Apsley Specialty is a London-based specialist directors & officers and financial institutions (DOFI) MGA headed by James Lawrie. As part of the acquisition, Lawrie will join the board of Nexus Underwriting Ltd. and both brands will continue to operate separately as usual.

Prior to founding Apsley, Lawrie spent several years specializing in alternative investments at Towers Watson and Caliburn Capital, where he allocated multi-billion-dollar portfolios across hundreds of hedge funds.

Following the completion of the transaction, Lawrie will become managing director and lead the combined DOFI business, while Jamie Ricketts will become chief underwriting officer, DOFI. Both will join the board of Nexus Underwriting Ltd. Joanne Edgley, already a director of Nexus Underwriting Ltd., will lead Nexus' commercial professional indemnity (PI) division as managing director of PI.

Apsley Specialty focuses on the asset management sector, particularly alternative asset managers. Apsley has successfully established itself as a prominent DOFI MGA and received U.S. capacity from its underwriting partners in 2016, which now sits alongside its core UK and international offering.

Nexus said it already has significant capabilities in the DOFI class of business, with this being the first class of business the group underwrote at Nexus' launch in 2008. Since then, Nexus expanded into a wide range of proprietary products and has a particular specialty in the middle market investment funds sector, the company said.

"Apsley Specialty is a fast-growing, high-quality MGA that will complement our existing DOFI capabilities, especially in terms of geography with Apsley's US capacity," commented Colin Thompson, founder and executive chairman of Nexus.

"In a competitive market, Apsley grew its [gross written premiums] 64 percent from 2016 to 2017, whilst still maintaining excellent underwriting discipline and strong loss ratio performance. This is testament to the high caliber individuals within the business," he said.

“This acquisition will allow us to build on our established position in a historically highly profitable class of business. As we continue to provide innovative DOFI underwriting solutions to both clients and underwriting partners, we will look to grow the combined DOFI offering to GWP of £35 million [$48.4 million] by 2020,” Thompson added.

“As a group, we are targeting three acquisitions per annum, and this is just the sort of niche business with an auditable profitable underwriting track record that we can seamlessly bring into the business alongside some larger transformational deals,” he went on to say.

“This is a strategic acquisition that will augment our business model in an important year where we are preparing for a shareholder liquidity event in Q3 / Q4,” Thompson continued. (The company said the “shareholder liquidity event” could take many forms, ranging from new investors to a stock market listing. Details have yet to be confirmed).

https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/international/2018/02/13/480340.htm

Hub International acquires Canadian broker Kindersley Insurance

Insurance

2/12/18

Hub International Limited (Hub), a Chicago-based insurance broker, announced it has acquired the shares of Canadian broker Kindersley Insurance Ltd.

Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

Headquartered in Kindersley, Saskatchewan, with an office in Dodsland, Kindersley Insurance Ltd. is a full-service, independent personal and commercial insurance brokerage that specializes in insurance solutions for the agriculture, oil field and trucking industries.

Principals Mark Stockford and Barry Andrew will join Hub Manitoba and report to Doug Trapp, vice president of Hub's Saskatchewan Region.

Hub International Ltd. is committed to growing organically and through acquisitions to expand its geographic footprint and strengthen industry and product expertise, the company said in a statement.

https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/international/2018/02/12/480266.htm

NSM Insurance Group acquires TranSpec of Tennessee

Insurance

2/9/18

NSM Insurance Group, the national leader of industry-specific insurance program administration, announced Tuesday that it has acquired TranSpec, a highly specialized transportation insurance broker located in Nashville.

TranSpec specializes in designing and implementing insurance programs for trucking firms that utilize owner operators. The program coverages include, non-trucking liability, physical damage and occupational accident for owner-operators.

According to Bill McKernan, president of NSM Insurance Group, NSM has provided motor carriers and owner operators insurance programs for more than 20 years and the addition of TranSpec and its team will bring NSM new growth opportunities in this business.

NSM Insurance Group focuses on the development, implementation, marketing and underwriting of industry-specific insurance programs with more than $500 million in annual premium. The company's insurance programs include social services and behavioral health; CAT driven property; collector cars; workers' compensation; sports and fitness; microbreweries; and professional liability for architects and engineers. NSM Insurance Group is aggressively seeking to acquire additional niche specific insurance businesses and program managers.

https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/southeast/2018/02/09/480081.htm

PAYMENTS

Ebix completes acquisition of inward international remittance business from Transcorp International Limited

Payments

2/14/18

Ebix, Inc. (NASDAQ:EBIX), a leading international supplier of On-Demand software and E-commerce services to the insurance, financial, e-governance and healthcare industries, today announced that it has completed the acquisition of the Inward International Remittance Business from Transcorp International Limited. The Transcorp International Inward Remittance acquisition encompasses 7,500 Distribution Outlets, 40 Branches, processing approximately 1.7 Million Transactions per Annum. The acquisition was announced through a press release dated January 4th 2018.

With a market share of almost 10% percent of Western Union's inward remittance flows in India, Transcorp International was one of the Top 5 largest international remittance (MTSS) players in India. This is Ebix's fourth remittance related acquisition, following the announcement of the acquisition of YouFirst Money Express Private Limited and the asset purchases of Paul Merchants Limited and Wall Street Finance Limited. Ebix has consolidated all these acquisitions into its EbixCash Financial Exchange operations bringing significant synergies to the combined operation.

The addition of Transcorp International MTSS assets increases the EbixCash Financial Exchange expanse to 231,500 physical distribution outlets, with an Omni-channel online digital platform that encompasses leadership in money remittance (domestic & international), travel, pre-paid & gift cards, utility payments, etc. In addition, Ebix's recent joint venture initiative with Bombay Stock Exchange positions it strongly in India's insurance sector. EbixCash through its travel portal Via.com is also one of South East Asia's leading travel exchanges with over 110,000 distribution outlets and 8,000 corporate clients, processing over 24.5 million transactions every year.

https://www.nasdaq.com/press-release/ebix-completes-acquisition-of-inward-international-remittance-business-from-transcorp-internationa-20180214-00406

Payworks closes $14.5 million Series B financing round

Payments

2/14/18

Payment technology company, Payworks, announced today the successful completion of a $14.5M Series B Financing round.

CommerzVentures and Visa (NYSE:V), among other investors, participated in this round to help support the company's growth and innovation of the global payment infrastructure market.

The additional $14.5M funding round follows a period of strong growth for Payworks as their next generation Point of Sale technology has increasingly become an important offering for leading omnichannel payment providers. With CommerzVentures and Visa joining the Series B, existing investors, Speedinvest and Finparx also contributed to the round. The recent financing brings Payworks' total funding to $19M. FT Partners served as the exclusive strategic and financial advisor to Payworks.

Founded in 2012, Payworks has developed a next generation payment gateway technology, operated in the cloud and provided in a Software as a Service model to payment providers. Payworks' technology has simplified omnichannel card acceptance by offering a pre-certified and easily accessible gateway solution which is significantly facilitating innovation in the integrated Point of Sale space. Payworks also provides a full suite of developer tools and seamless integrations into systems such as loyalty programs and CRM, allowing merchants and payment providers to optimize the customer experience quickly and easily.

Payworks plans to use the new funds to drive global growth and scale, focusing on increasing its R&D and Product teams across offices in Munich, New York, London and Barcelona. This will enable the company to fulfill the growing demand for its solutions amongst its growing global client base.

"With the rapid evolution of how customers pay and get paid, Visa is committed to ensuring secure, fast and convenient payments at the Point of Sale," said Carleigh Jaques, SVP, global head of digital merchant products at Visa. "As a payments industry leader, Visa is excited to help the Payworks team grow and bring innovative solutions to market and enable merchants to remain at the forefront of digital-payments evolution."

"CommerzVentures invests in founders with a passion for innovation and proven ability to execute. We back businesses that can have a significant impact on the financial services industry", adds Stefan Tirtey, Managing Partner of CommerzVentures. "We believe that Payworks has both, a great team, and an offering that can have real impact in the fast-changing world of card payments."

Christian Deger, CEO & Founder of Payworks says, “We are on a great mission to build a new operating system for the Point of Sale and are very excited to have CommerzVentures and Visa join us on that journey. With the additional funding we are fully equipped to further develop our technology and product and support the demand coming from leading payment players looking to modernize their solutions.”

https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/72639/payworks-closes-145-million-series-b-financing-round

European digital invoicing start up Zervant raises €6 million

Payments

2/13/18

The e-invoice platform is hoping to capitalise on new EU legislation as it ramps up customer acquisition.

Finnish fintech Zervant has secured a €6m fundraise to bolster its online invoicing software for SMEs and entrepreneurs. The round was led by investment firm Tesi, alongside Northzone, NFT Ventures and Conor Venture Partners.

The platform is looking to lead the way in digital invoicing, after recent EU legislation coming into force this year aims to make electronic invoicing mainstream by 2020.

Already in use by 20,000 businesses across seven countries, Zervant plans to use the funding to grow the use of its software among SMEs and entrepreneurs, and to further develop its suite of premium features.

“We founded our company to ‘help entrepreneurs succeed’, and that is still what drives us day in, day out,” says Mattias Hansson, Zervant co-founder and CEO.

“This investment will help us to grow even faster across Europe, and help micro enterprises to benefit from the market shift driven by legislation.

“Regulatory changes in the financial space, along with the widespread switch to digital, present entrepreneurs with a whole new set of possibilities for running their businesses more efficiently.”

The company reports that 85 per cent of its current growth is originating in France, Germany and the UK, despite its Finnish heritage. Founded in 2010, Zervant’s current freemium model allows users to utilise its basic software for free, or purchase a subscription to its premium invoice delivery service and support network.

Jussi Sainiemi, Investment Director at Tesi, commented: “Zervant’s service is widely considered to be the technology leader in the field of digital invoicing for SMEs. We are particularly excited about the company, as it is our first investment in the fintech sector.”

http://www.altfi.com/article/4063_european_digital_invoicing_start_up_zervant_raises_eur6m

B2B fintech leader Tipalti raises $30 million to accelerate innovation in global payables automation

Payments

2/13/18

Tipalti, the leading global payables automation solution, today announced it has closed a $30 million Series C financing round led by Zeev Ventures. This brings the B2B fintech leader's total funding to over $50 million, and will help Tipalti widen its innovation edge and position as the pacesetter in the accounts payable automation space.

"Tipalti's near-perfect record of customer satisfaction and retention rates throughout our history are emblematic of how much value our service generates for our clients. By modernizing the finance operation, we typically automate 80% of an organization's AP and cross-border payments workload, freeing the finance team to focus on mission-critical initiatives, such as scaling their business globally and improving their company's competitiveness and profitability," said Chen Amit, CEO and Co-founder of Tipalti. "This funding round enables us to continue our track record of innovation to transform the entire accounts payable operation."

Tipalti's cloud-based payables automation platform helps modern CFOs scale payable operations for rapid and global growth by eliminating the risks and inefficiencies caused by complex, manual legacy accounts payable processes. Tipalti already processes over $4 billion in transactions annually across almost 2 million global suppliers. The fintech company will use the additional funding to help its fast-growing customer base modernize their AP operations: accelerating Tipalti's product innovation and leadership position, while maintaining its industry-leading customer satisfaction and retention record.

"It was a relatively easy decision to continue investing in Tipalti. It is extremely rare to have the opportunity to invest in a category leader. Tipalti is really changing the way B2B payments are being done, helping companies manage their cross-border payment, supplier, and compliance operations," said Oren Zeev, the Founding Partner of Zeev Ventures and Chairman and Co-founder of Tipalti. "When you talk to Tipalti's clients like Amazon, GoDaddy, Indeed, Roku, and Twitter, or read the company's 5-star reviews, the consensus is that businesses around the globe love using Tipalti to drive their AP transformation and support their growth."

"Tipalti's success comes from its vision and team, recognizing how financial technology can be used to solve what was once an unsolvable scalability and compliance issue," continued Oren, who was recently named one of the world's top investors by Forbes. "It is quite clear that it's time for the payables operation to take advantage of automation. Organizations should not be running finance operations manually, but rather automate this workflow to reduce short and long-term risk and costs and ultimately free resources for high value initiatives. Tipalti is extremely well positioned to take advantage of this movement. Tipalti has only scratched the surface of what we've determined to be a $90 billion global market."

Amit concluded: “As organizations mature, accelerate growth, and go global, manual payments and accounts payables processes no longer scale. There is simply no way that the CFO of the future will continue spending a huge proportion of their team’s time and resources manually managing B2B payment operations, introducing risk into their organization at every step along the way. This is the problem that Tipalti uniquely solves, and our dedication to transforming AP is what will fuel our ongoing success.”

https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180213005389/en/B2B-Fintech-Leader-Tipalti-Raises-30-Million

YapStone raises $71 million to fund expansion, M&A

Payments

2/13/18

YapStone, the online and mobile payment company, has raised $71 million in venture capital funding.

According to news from Financial Technology Partners, which advised YapStone on the Series C round of funding, Premji Invest led the round. Other participants included Mastercard and previous investors Accel and Meritech Capital Partners, a press release stated.

YapStone powers electronic payments for sharing economy marketplaces such as HomeAway and VRBO, as well as thousands of apartment and vacation rental companies, homeowners' associations, self-storage companies and other markets. The company processes more than $18 billion in payments each year. The latest round of funding will grant the company's management team more flexibility in its efforts to expand globally and engage in mergers and acquisitions (M&A). To date, YapStone has raised more than $180 million from investors that include Accel, Meritech Capital Partners and Bregal Sagemount.

In an interview with PYMNTs Karen Webster in May 2017, YapStone Chief Executive and Chairman Tom Villante said the company is still focusing on the apartment rental business and is doubling down its efforts there.

"We're going at it more from a marketplace perspective than from the hand-to-hand combat from the early days, because it's a highly fragmented market," said Villante at the time. "Seventy percent of the market are smaller landlords with less than 500 units, and 50 percent of people live in buildings of four units or less. Getting to those renters and landlords is really through some of these large apartment listing marketplaces."

Villante noted in the interview that the vacation rental market is filled with more credit risk than in property management companies. "We now have 70 people in risk and the data scientists that we have — and take on 100 percent of the risk on that marketplace — which is why we are also selective and enter markets we know well."

https://www.pymnts.com/news/investment-tracker/2018/yapstone-venture-capital-mobile-pay/

SECURITIES

Robo advice app Stash raises $37.5 million Series D, releases investing for kids

Securities

2/12/18

The micro-investing app loved by millennials is widening its target market after closing its latest fundraise.

US-based micro investments app Stash has announced a $37.5m raise in Series D funding, led by Union Square Ventures. Existing investors Breyer Capital, Coatue Management, Entree Capital, as well as fintech familiars Goodwater Capital and Valar Ventures, also joined in on the round.

Stash is currently the fastest growing consumer investing app in the US, serving over 1.7m users and with approximately 40,000 new clients joining weekly. The platform also has over 5m subscribers on its various social media channels, which have become increasingly popular among younger clients for their educational finance and investment content.

In Stash, users can access over 40 curated ETFs to build personalised portfolios that reflect their investing interests as well as savings goals, starting from as little as $5. Approximately 86 per cent of its clients continue to be first-time investors, with the average age of its users falling around 29.

“The lack of financial security is a rapidly escalating issue in the U.S. Stash’s goal since day one has been to help the masses of underserved Americans jump start their journey towards building a healthy and prosperous future,” said Brandon Krieg, Co-founder and CEO, Stash.

“Through intelligent products and an emphasis on education, we’ve been able to meaningfully improve the financial lives of nearly two million clients. We’re proud of what our customers have accomplished, but we’re even more excited for what’s ahead.”

The platform has also announced it will be rolling out its new Custodial Accounts this week, which allows Stash clients to open new investing accounts for kids to give them “financial head starts” for education, retirement, or general life expenditures. The account can then be transferred into the child's name upon turning either 18 or 21, for them to start their own investing journey.

Stash will also be releasing two more new features this week. Smart-Save will automatically moves a portion of a client’s money into a Stash savings account when its algorithm determines a person has spare cash according to their spending habits. Moreover, Stash Coach will provide dynamic recommendations to help clients maintain a balanced portfolio whilst improving their financial health.

"Through customer focus and a data-driven mindset, Stash has been able to to create a powerful consumer brand, with unprecedented growth, on its journey to fix the inequities plaguing financial opportunity across the U.S. We're excited to join them on this mission to shake up the status quo," said Rebecca Kaden, Partner at Union Square Ventures.

Stash aims to use the additional funding to continue the development of its products and brand, and plans to release a new banking service later this year. The app launched support for retirement accounts in 2017 with Stash Retire, allowing users to automate investment into both Roth and Traditional IRAs starting at $15.

http://www.altfi.com/article/4059_robo_advice_app_stash_raises_375m_series_d_releases_investing_for_kids

Grove raises $2.1 million to find the sweet spot between old-school financial advisers and chatbots

Securities

2/9/18

Right now if you want financial guidance and planning help you basically have two options – shell out thousands (or more) a year for an old-school Wall Street-affiliated advisor, or test your luck with one of the free financial planning chatbot startups that have been popping up over the past few years.

Neither of these are ideal for most people; traditional advisors give good advice but are expensive and decades behind when it comes to using technology to help you track your progress – and chatbots are high-tech but rarely offer personalized advice.

So what would an alternative look like?

Launching this week, Grove wants to provide a solution that falls somewhere in between the two current options. For $600 a year the startup pairs you up with a real-life certified financial advisor to give you personalized financial advice, but also provides you with the tech to visualize and stay on top of the advice you're given.

The startup was founded by Chris Hutchins, who co-founded Milk with Kevin Rose then went on to be a partner at Google Ventures. He's raised a $2.1M seed round led by First Round with participation from Lowercase Capital, SV Angel, Box Group and others.

When users first sign up for Grove they are paired with a Certified Financial Planner who will review their situation and create goals moving forward. They also make specific recommendations about how you manage your money, like telling you if it's more cost effective to use your savings to pay off your student loans ahead of schedule.

These goals go into a dashboard where users can keep track as they complete them, like in the image above. Anytime you need a check in you can message your advisor, and the service also will send you reminders to make sure you're actually doing what you need to.

Part of the reason Grove can give such accurate advice is that it asks users to connect as many existing financial services as possible to figure out how you spend and save your money. This includes things like credit cards and investment accounts. Grove also has its own investment service (they charge .25% of AUM) so they can manage your investments automatically, but if users want to keep their existing investing portfolio they can just manually make the trades and reallocations that Grove suggests.

That being said, Grove still thinks its main revenue source will be the $600 per year subscription, meaning they don't plan on pushing users to sign up for additional services or generating referral fees by steering them towards a certain financial product.

The site is live now and users can schedule a time to have an initial consultation with an advisor before committing to a yearly plan.

https://techcrunch.com/2018/02/09/grove-raises-2-1m-to-find-the-sweet-spot-between-old-school-financial-advisors-and-chatbots/

SPECIALTY FINANCE / ALTERNATE LENDING

Santander InnoVentures joins $25 million Roostify funding round

Specialty Finance / Alternate Lending
2/15/18

San Francisco-based digital lending platform provider Roostify has closed a $25 million Series B financing round joined by Santander InnoVentures, Cota Capital and Point72 Ventures.

Existing investors JPMorgan Chase, Colchis Capital, and a subsidiary of USAA also participated in the round, the proceeds of which will be used for an aggressive expansion plan, including a deeper presence in the enterprise space, product enhancements, and moves into new markets.

Founded in 2014, Roostify is focused on bringing the process of obtaining a mortgage into the digital age, eliminating paper, improving speed and cutting costs. The startup's cloud-based, API-enabled platform promises to allow lenders to offer their clients a seamless, branded experience from searching to closing a home loan.

Recently, it has made several moves to expand its platform beyond the core loan application and processing experience, including an integration with LendingTree to let consumers shop for a loan and then get that loan with their preferred lender with a few clicks.

Rajesh Bhat, CEO, Roostify, says: "Lenders now realise the value of providing consumers with a transparent, mobile, and seamless experience to obtain a loan without needless stress-inducing delays and red tape. We have developed a solution that allows lenders of all sizes to give their teams a tool to digitally engage with clients and to bring the loan origination experience to the consumer."

Manuel Silva, head, investments, Santander InnoVentures, adds: "We have been very impressed with Roostify's vision of putting the client first, and developing technologies that support such experiences. We are excited about Roostify's growth prospects, in particular as they think about new markets beyond the US."

https://www.finextra.com/newsarticle/31684/santander-innoventures-joins-25m-roostify-funding-round?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2018-2-16&member=93489

StreamLoan secures $2 million in seed funding

Specialty Finance / Alternate Lending

2/14/18

StreamLoan, a San Francisco, CA-based fintech company, secured $2M in seed funding. Investors include (among others):

– Acorn Pacific Ventures
– Whitespace Capital, LPs include executives from Facebook and Apple
– Steve Weston, former CEO Barclays Mortgage Bank
– Rajiv Krishnarao, Director of Finance at Uber, formerly of Sequoia Capital

The company intends to use the funds to continue to develop its platform.

Led by CEO and co-founder Stephen Bulfer, StreamLoan provides a mobile-first mortgage solution that takes borrowers from point of intent, to purchase, through close, while reducing transaction time by speeding all the steps in the process. This is accomplished by streamlining manual and offline steps that exist today including the mortgage application, financial information collection, document gathering, and updating all along the way.

Borrowers can share some or all of their information in the system with realtors, lenders, co-borrowers, inspectors, attorneys, appraisers, accountants, title companies, notaries, or insurance agents.

http://www.finsmes.com/2018/02/streamloan-secures-2m-in-seed-funding.html

DirectMoney secures new strategic investment from Alceon for growth & innovation initiatives

Specialty Finance / Alternative Lending

2/13/18

Australian marketplace lending platform DirectMoney announced on Tuesday it secured a strategic investment from alternative investment manager Alceon to fund growth and innovation initiatives.

According to DirectMoney, the investment will be structured through an initial placement of $600,000 at $0.042 per share (being 14,285,715 new shares), a 56% premium to the price at close of trading on February 9th and equivalent to a 3.1% shareholding. Alceon will notably be granted an equal number of call options that will enable it to increase its investment in DirectMoney by approximately $1.14 million at $0.08 per share, a 196% premium to the price at close of trading on February 9th. While sharing more details about the investment, Anthony Nantes, CEO of DirectMoney, stated:

"The investment will be used to fund a range of innovation initiatives to grow the company's personal loan business. This is also consistent with the company recently announcing a proposed name change to Wisr Limited (ASX: WZR), awaiting approval at the upcoming EGM. As a strategic investor with deep knowledge of the sector, this investment both validates and endorses the company's achievements to date along with our strategic vision, which sees us fast becoming the wiser choice in personal loans for all Australians. As we enter a period of strong growth, having support and guidance from a strategic like Alceon will be invaluable for the company."
Daniel Chersky, Executive Director of Alceon, added:

"Alceon is pleased to be partnering with DirectMoney. We believe they have the team and technology platform to be a major participant in Australia's large and fast-evolving consumer finance sector and look forward to using Alceon's experience in credit and fintech investing to add value to the company as it embarks on its next phase of growth.

https://www.crowdfundinsider.com/2018/02/128335-directmoney-secures-new-strategic-investment-alceon-growth-innovation-initiatives/

New bank secures investment from Elliott Advisors

Specialty Finance / Alternate Lending

2/13/18

Elliott Advisors has agreed to invest up to £150m in recently licensed bank Chetwood Financial. The Wrexham-based financial provider secured the banking licence from the PRA and the FCA, adding to existing authorisation for its lending business secured early last year. Chetwood plans to launch its first consumer finance product in Q1 2018 – an innovative unsecured loan – and will continue to develop and test its first savings products during its mobilisation period.

The unsecured loan product LiveLend will look to support those who are not best served by current offerings and Chetwood hopes that its low operating costs will allow it to pass on savings to its customers.

The financial provider will operate on cloud-based technology platform Yobota, which can house a range of standalone products, from lending to savings.

Chetwood and Yobota were founded by ex-HSBC banker Andy Mielczarek (pictured above) and technology strategist Mark Jenkinson in 2016.

Chetwood has since recruited a board of directors featuring a number of experienced UK financial professionals, including LV= chairman Alan Cook.

12 banking licence applications approved in 10 monthsAmicus banking licence plans stalledCivilisedBank receives banking licence
“Our starting point is a desire to do a better job for customers who aren’t being best served by existing financial providers,” said Andy.

“We are not yet another ‘challenger bank’ and we don’t plan to offer full-service banking to everyone.

“Instead, our focus is on creating standalone products that offer a better deal and experience for specific groups of customers, who we believe we can make better off.

“The support from Elliott and receipt of regulatory permissions is a huge vote of confidence in our new model for financial services and our future plans.”

Amit Sharma, portfolio manager at Elliott, added: “In an environment where there are numerous management teams seeking investment for bank start-ups, Chetwood stands out given the strength and experience of the management team, a business plan focused on asset accumulation and its credible market proposition.”

http://specialistbanking.co.uk/new-bank-secures-investment-elliott-advisors/

DATA & ANALYTICS / IoT

InfluxData scores $35 million Series C to expand time series database business

Data & Analytics / IoT

2/13/18

In a world where sensors are capturing ever-increasing amounts of data, being able to collect that high volume and measure it over time becomes increasingly important. InfluxData, the startup built on top of the open source time series database platform, announced it has received a $35 million Series C investment today led by Sapphire Ventures, the investment firm closely associated with enterprise software giant, SAP.

Existing investors Battery Ventures, Mayfield Fund and Trinity Ventures and new investor Harmony Partners also participated. Today's investment brings the total raised to almost $60 million.

Time series databases, as the name implies, allow companies to capture and measure data rapidly and see how it trends over time. Company CTO Paul Dix saw the need for time series tools and began building the underlying open source tool kit in 2014. It was immediately popular on Github, says CEO Evan Kaplan. Today there are 120,000 sites running Influx in open source and 400 enterprise customers using the platform.

While developers can build a time series application using Influx's tools, if it requires enterprise scale, security and availability; they will need to buy the commercial version of the product. "If you get serious about running Influx in large production, you have to buy the closed source [version of the product]," Kaplan said.

While the commercial product has been available for just 18 months, the company has been able to attract a who's who of enterprise brands as customers including IBM, SAP, Cisco, PayPal, Tesla and Siemens.

Sapphire partner Anders Ranum says his firm saw an emerging market opportunity and made the investment to take advantage of it. "Development teams are facing steep barriers in capturing and analyzing all the data available to them in making smart decisions for their business given new capabilities in machine learning, internet of things and artificial intelligence," Ranum said in a statement. He believes that time series tooling can help.

The company currently has 80 employees, but plans to double that number in the coming year with the help of today's investment and the growth of the product. As part of today's investment Sapphire's Ranum will be joining the Influx Board of Directors.

https://techcrunch.com/2018/02/13/influxdata-scores-35-million-series-c-to-expand-time-series-database-business/

OTHERS

Payfone raises $23 million to continue expansion of worldwide digital identity authentication network

Others

2/13/18

Payfone, the world's leading digital identity authentication network, today announced that it has raised $23 million to expand its user experience-enhancing cybersecurity services in the retail, insurance, and healthcare sectors.

The funding round was led by an institutional investor with participation by premier consumer financial services company Synchrony Financial (NYSE: SYF); MassMutual Ventures, the venture fund of leading mutual life insurance company Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual); Anil Aggarwal and Jonathan Weiner, the founders of Money20/20, Shoptalk and HLTH; and Andrew Prozes, the former global CEO of LexisNexis.

The financing reinforces Payfone's position as a new standard of digital identity authentication that enables enterprises to combat fraud, while enhancing the customer experience to accelerate revenue.

"Our research shows that by 2020, 2/3 of e-commerce sales will be conducted by adults under 40. This next wave of customers will be mobile-first and will expect transactions to be both fast and secure," said Rodger Desai, Founder and CEO of Payfone. "The days of using quizzes, questions and one-time codes to verify identity are numbered. Payfone is ushering in a new world where authentication is instant, passive and continuous using the most advanced cybersecurity. Our mission is to help clients across the financial, retail, insurance, healthcare, and technology industries use authentication to not only thwart fraud but drive revenue."

"Synchrony is committed to exploring emerging technology to better serve our partners and customers," said Michael Hensinger, SVP and Senior Managing Director, Synchrony Ventures. "Our investment in Payfone enables Synchrony to deliver innovative mobile authentication solutions that will continue to improve the customer experience. We are excited to work with the Payfone team and continue our focus on eliminating friction from the authentication process for our customers."

"A positive customer experience doesn't begin with a verbal identity challenge," said Eric Emmons, managing director at MassMutual Ventures. "Payfone enables service providers across the financial, retail, insurance, healthcare and technology sectors to offer a frictionless mobile and online experience to their customers, which substantially improves conversion rates and dramatically reduces the cost of call center operations."

Payfone's contrarian approach to delivering cybersecurity that enhances the customer experience instead of hindering it has been adopted by many of the world's largest companies, including 6 of the top 10 banks in the United States. In November, Payfone was named the #72 fastest growing

technology company in North America by Deloitte and its patented passive authentication platform is currently a Consumer Protection category finalist in the Edison Awards, which recognizes groundbreaking and innovative solutions and products in the spirit of inventor Thomas Edison.

https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/payfone-raises-23-million-to-continue-expansion-of-worldwide-digital-identity-authentication-network-300597640.html