Sales and Scale

An Interview with
Vikas Datt, Managing Director, CerraCap Ventures

Vikas Datt

EDITORS' NOTE *Vikas Datt has over 15 years of cross functional experience in leading digital strategy, business transformation, business planning, analytics, and technology projects. He has held senior positions at a leading IT services company and one of the largest private life insurance companies.*

Will you share your approach to identifying and selecting portfolio companies?

Our focus is on enterprise products in cyber security, healthcare IT, and advanced analytics. Within these areas, we do constant calibration of our approach, while working closely with enterprise buyers to understand the market demands.

We have a good stream of start-up companies from the U.S. and Israel, through our global relationships, renowned advisory board members, technology companies, and educational institutions.

We run the companies through our proprietary evaluation model. We believe that one of the most important criteria is the "Teams" evaluation. Getting to know the team, understanding its passion, vision and its alignment to the market is critical for our investment decision making process. The final selection is based on companies that are best fit for our model of "Sales and Scale," where we actively advocate to acquire enterprise customers and guide for execution delivery. As engaged investors, we support our companies with "Value Beyond Capital" for them to reach full potential.

How and why are you significantly better?

Thank you for asking me such a great question, as it goes back to the genesis of CerraCap Ventures. On one hand, innovation is a matter of survival for some of the largest enterprises but they have had limitations with identification and adoption. On the other hand, we saw investors investing but offering no to little value to some great start-up companies, most eventually end up failing. We identified this as a significant gap in the market. Our differentiation model is based on bridging this gap effectively.

We differentiate ourselves in three areas. First, our team is built with C-suite executives with over two decades of experience with large technology companies. Our deep understanding of the enterprise market and the core technology provides us with an edge with our portfolio companies.

Second, principals worked together for an average of 10 years perfecting the unique "Sales & Scale" model that significantly increases the value of portfolio companies. It provides early stage companies with large enterprise customers.

Finally, we have created a comprehensive ecosystem of renowned investors and advisors who provide for strong mentoring and global access for our portfolio companies.

How are you reacting and better prepared as business and market conditions are changing?

We believe that preparation and dynamic adjustments to the market demands are key. Scenario planning across multiple levels of uncertainty, progressive decision making, and adaptive strategies are required for a business to be successful. While we can't predict the market conditions, we can certainly design and equip our businesses to navigate the market uncertainty.

Therefore, we keep a sharp focus on the fundamentals of our businesses; self-sustaining cash flow, path of breaking even, and eventual profitability. These fundamentals keep us on the path to sustain the market volatility. At CerraCap, we invest in the right capabilities and teams to build economic and political IQ. You will identify this as you speak to some of our portfolio companies as part of this interview segment. ●

Preventing Cyber-Attacks

An Interview with
**Guy Caspi, Chief Executive Officer, Deep Instinct
and Chief Executive Officer, Fifth Dimension**

Guy Caspi

EDITORS' NOTE *Guy Caspi is a leading mathematician and a data scientist global expert. He has 15 years of extensive experience in applying mathematics and machine learning in a technology elite unit of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), financial institutions, and intelligence organizations around the world. Caspi holds B.Sc., M.Sc., and M.B.A. degrees in Mathematics, Machine Learning, and Business from leading universities in Israel and the U.S.*

Would you discuss your vision and mission for creating Deep Instinct?

Deep Instinct was established for two main reasons: First, we noticed a gap in the market, as many existing cybersecurity companies have data security in their DNA but they only offer alerts on attacks rather than the ability to block them. Beyond the issue of false alerts, being inundated by alerts and threats does not solve the problem. It might have been sufficient in the past, but it can no longer meet the bottom-line needs of organizations, which are now focused on blocking attacks.

Threat prevention that focuses on sandboxing and behavioral analysis does not necessarily solve the problem either because the degree of sophistication of the malware continues to increase. Deep Instinct was established to prevent cyber-attacks before any harm can happen.

Second, we wanted to create a product that would protect the most vulnerable areas of an organization: unknown threats and attacks that are most difficult to block in real time. In today's cybersecurity landscape, it is clear that an organization cannot be protected just by locking the door, especially when there is no longer a defined perimeter to secure. Deep Instinct protects the endpoints, the servers, and the mobile devices: the last line of defense that is most important to the organization. The fence, door, and window will always be broken into, but the safe must be unbreakable. We protect the safe against any attackers, especially new and sophisticated ones.

Furthermore, our objective is not just to bring a minor improvement in detection, but to substantially increase the protection rate. To deliver proper protection, a cybersecurity solution must be able to handle threats and attacks that have never been seen before. This is our core competence as deep learning enables this capability. We train our neural networks in a unique way, leveraging our deep learning expertise and our elite research team that hails from the top research military units.

In terms of our positioning in today's crowded cybersecurity landscape, we see great potential in partnering with EDR/AV vendors mainly because our go-to-market is based on augmentation rather than replacement of other solutions that protect the end points from known threats.

Would you provide an overview of the services and solutions you offer?

The exponential growth of zero-day threats on a daily basis and the absence of a comprehensive solution to handle APT (advanced persistent threat) attacks has caused companies to follow a "not if but when" approach to breaches.

Deep Instinct focuses on unknown and APT attacks: instead of waiting for the next unexpected attack, the next unknown attack is identified and blocked in real time before any harm can occur. Deep learning's capabilities of identifying malware from any data source results in comprehensive protection on any device, platform, and operating system, filling in gaps of niche solutions. ●