

ISRAEL TODAY

Hi-Tech Supplement

**A Look at Israel's
Tech Revolution
Past, Present & Future**

The Israel Conference Brings Israel Hi-Tech Across the Sea to LA

By Sue Liberman



Sharona Justman and Yossi Vardi, co-chairs of the Israel Conference

LOS ANGELES — Every May, for the past five years, Sharona Justman and Yossi Vardi have offered the American public an opportunity to experience the incredible and varied inventiveness of a little country - surrounded by enemies - which has brought entrepreneurship and technological advances to humanity across the globe with the 2-day Israel Conference.

Sharona, co-founder and co-chair of the Israel Conference acts as the host-moderator, while Yossi - a two-time recipient of the Israel's Prime Minister Hi-Tech Award for Life Achievement - focuses on collecting the partici-

pants and moderating some of the panels. Yossi co-pioneered instant messaging, and a number of his investments have IPOs such as Answers.com and other technologies, which were acquired by Microsoft, Cisco and Yahoo.

Subtitled "Expanding Opportunities between Israel and the U.S." the conference brings together entrepreneurs and companies with investors looking for the "next best thing" in technologies.

This year, the program offered expert speakers and panels, presentations by new start-ups, and an Exhibition Pavilion of companies, and a screening of the series

"Tales of Silicon Wadi" - the Israeli "reality TV" series focused on the experiences of real-life entrepreneurs seeking financing for their applications - inventions the world can not do without.

The opening address was delivered by David Siegel, the Consul General of Israel in Los Angeles, who recently served as Chief of Staff of Israel's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and was involved in policy formulation and decision-making at the senior levels of Israel's foreign policy establishment.

This year's speakers included Dov Moran, inventor of the flash drive, Robert LaCascio, founder and CEO of LivePerson - a cloud-based platform which enables businesses to proactively connect with customers in real-time via chat, voice, and provides content delivery at the right time through the right channel including websites, social media and mobile devices.

Other speakers included Jeff Pulver, chairman of Zula, and an internet pioneer who helped accelerate VOIP; Ynon Kriez, Executive Chairman of Maker Studios, a media company founded by YouTube artists which is the only network providing partners with a full range of integrated



Israel's Consul General David Siegel opens the conference

services including development, production, promotion, distribution, sales and marketing. Yonah Lloyd, President of SodaStream, which also had a booth at the Pavillion, spoke about the product, and the global expansion through unique marketing devices.

Howard Rosenman, Gil Rimon, Co-Founder of "Stevie" - a platform which automatically creates TV out of what is posted on Facebook and Twitter; and Amanda Kogan, William Morris Endeavor agent who represents Israel's "Keshet" production company,



Reps from Walkme.com at the exhibition pavillion.

Author and branding expert Bill Schley spoke about his book, "The Unstoppables, - Tapping Your Entrepreneurial Powers" with a Forward from Graham Weston, Chairman and Co-Founder of Rockspace Hosting. A book signing followed the speech, which was inspiring and informational.

Some of the panels included one on "Smarter Cities" with sponsors like IBM's Jay Ennesser, VP of IBM's Smart-City Partnerships (one of which is Beverly Hills!), Air-Base Systems' Raviv Yotam, and Mer Systems' Sam Buechler. Parko's Andrea Kru-chik Krell, CMO, spoke about a smart city's approach to solving parking problems using the company's hi-tech applications.

Other panels included "Mobile Everywhere" and "That's Entertainment" - which included Israel's own Noa Tishby, producer

and who is also a cantor!

There were also panels on Big Data, Gaming, Fund Me, and Cyber Security, and more.

There was also a "FutureFest" session, wherein new start-ups had an opportunity to present their products in front of a panel of investors!

All of this packed into two days, there were also opportunities for networking, "general schmoozing"- and one-on-one discussions.

A huge "Thanks" should go out to Sharona Justman and Yossi Vardi!...and while now things are left to the imagination, I can not even dream of what will be happening at next year's Israel Conference.

For more information, and to register for next year's events, visit the website at www.theisraelconference.org.

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