

INNOVATIVE VENTURE CAPITALIST OF THE YEAR - US

# JACQUES BENKOSKI

## U.S. VENTURE PARTNERS

*Jacques Benkoski is a Partner with U.S. Venture Partners.*

U.S. Venture Partners is a leading Silicon Valley venture capital firm, helping entrepreneurs build world-class companies since 1981. The firm focuses on early stage opportunities in sectors where the partners have the domain expertise, operating experience and network relationships to contribute to the success of an enterprise.



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*"We believe that our role is to help entrepreneurs build great companies in sectors where innovation leads to market disruption," said Jacques Benkoski, PhD. "The returns get created naturally when significant value is built by the companies we invested in. Our experience and hands-on partnership with the entrepreneurs are unique and our CEOs are our best marketing weapon."*

Mr Benkoski was thrilled to receive the award and see recognition for setting up and executing on a highly differentiated strategy to invest internationally and specifically in Israel. *"The strategy has obviously been working well but it is great to see it recognised with this award,"* he added.

Discussing the challenging current conditions, Mr Benkoski stated that the firm's strategy has always been very much independent of the environment. The firm focuses on the key sectors in IT and healthcare where disruptive innovation has and continues to take place.

*"Our investments are sector diversified but also time diversified and we invest in good as in bad times at the same pace as the value of the companies we help build is demonstrated many years after we invest and often in different environments,"* he explained.



sculpture in Silicon Valley

In 2012, several of the firm's portfolio companies experienced tremendous growth, which Mr Benkoski described as *"very gratifying to participate in"*. *"We try to help with strategic directions, with executive hiring and with business development in addition to the board-level guidance and the day-to-day discussions with our CEOs. I also invested in three new companies, which I hope will do very well,"* he enthused.

Mr Benkoski believes that the end of the consolidation cycle has been reached, and the firms that have made it through are significantly more resilient and experienced. He noted that the trend is actually back to the fundamentals which he believes made the industry successful: hard core innovation that goes after large markets ripe for disruption.

*"This bodes very well for us and firms like us that have always been focused on this approach. It requires rigor and patience but in the long run it is the way to create value for entrepreneurs, shareholders and society at large,"* he observed.

Commenting on the environment within the firm, Mr Benkoski stated that U.S. Venture Partners focuses very much on team culture. The firm's decision process involves participation by all, even those who are not necessarily versed in the field of the proposed investment. *"Over thirty years of investment success has taught us that everyone actually contributes and having to explain to the wide distribution of investment professionals leads to better diligence and better decision-making,"* he commented.

Looking to the future, Mr Benkoski stated that the firm is continuing to go about its business in the same consistent way. It would be *"another pleasant surprise"* if this leads to another award next year.

*"We think the next few years will demonstrate the importance of hard-core technology investing,"* he predicted. *"The IT industry has never faced such a multi-faceted change – each component of the stack from the highest level of software all the way to the data-centre hardware components is simultaneously undergoing a revolution. We have been in this space and believe we uniquely understand it. The next three years will prove that more than ever."*

While Mr Benkoski believes it would be *"very presumptuous"* to offer advice to the other nominees for the award, he would recommend that anybody in this business focuses on the long term and expects to be recognised sooner or later.

*"I really do believe that professionally, karma works,"* he opined.

In conclusion, Mr Benkoski stated that he is thrilled to receive the award: *"I am very thankful and it just further motivates me to continue doing what I love to do."*

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