



## August 21, 2020

Friday! [Throws floor lamp out window.]

Before we jump into things: if you're trying to figure out if you should invest in one of these SPACs that are popping up everywhere or if you should perhaps even launch one of your own, definitely check out this week's [newly minted podcast](#), featuring **Kevin Hartz**, the cofounder of Eventbrite and angel investor in Uber, Airbnb, and Pinterest, among other startups.

Hartz joined us this week with his partner, Troy Steckenrider, to talk about their newly raised \$200 million SPAC -- and to make the case that we're likely to see many [more of these out of Silicon Valley](#).

Giant thanks, too, to Alfred Vanderlaan of Orrick and Chris Weekes of Cowen who also helped get us up to speed this week on why SPACs are suddenly ubiquitous. (See story below.)

More Monday.:)

## Top News

In news you knew was coming: According to Reuters, **TikTok** is preparing to mount a legal challenge as early as Monday to Donald Trump's executive order prohibiting transactions with the popular short video app and its Chinese parent ByteDance. [More here](#).

**Apple** swatted back at Epic Games today, saying in a legal response to being accused of anticompetitive behavior that the "Fortnite" maker asked for an individual arrangement

with Apple and producing three emails from Epic CEO Tim Sweeney that bolster its claim. CNBC has [more here](#).

TechCrunch today obtained some leaked **Palantir** financials and they [don't look great](#) for a 17-year-old company. Perhaps relatedly, Palantir, which is reportedly pursuing a direct listing to become publicly traded, intends to [have a lockup period on its shares](#) unlike other companies to host direct listings, including Slack. Did we mention the offering plans to give founders 49.999999% control in [perpetuity](#)?

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## Almost Everything You Need to Know About SPACs

Feeling as if you should better understand special purpose acquisition vehicles – or SPACs – than you do? You aren't alone.

Like most casual observers, you're probably already aware that Paul Ryan now has a SPAC, as does baseball executive Billy Beane and Silicon Valley stalwart Kevin Hartz. You probably know, too, that brash entrepreneur Chamath Palihapitiya seemed to kick off the craze around SPACs – blank-check companies that are formed for the purpose of merging or acquiring other companies – in 2017 when he raised \$600 million for a SPAC. Called Social Capital Hedosophia Holdings, it was ultimately used to take a 49% stake in the British spaceflight company Virgin Galactic.

But how do SPACs come together in the first place, how they work exactly, and should *you* be thinking of launching one? We talked this week with a number of people who are right now focused on almost nothing but SPACs to get our questions – and maybe yours, too – answered.

[More here.](#)

## Massive Fundings

**Drizly**, an eight-year-old, Boston-based alcohol e-commerce and delivery service, has raised \$50 million in Series C funding. **Avenir** led the round, joined by **Tiger Global Management**. [More here.](#)

**Lambda School**, a four-year-old, San Ramon, Ca.-based coding school that runs virtual 9- and 18-month part-time computer science courses and collects

tuition after its students land jobs, has raised \$74 million in Series C funding. **Gigafund**, the VC started by former Founders Fund partners in 2017, led the round, joined by **Tandem Fund** and **Y Combinator**. TechCrunch has [more here](#).

## Big-But-Not-Crazy-Big Fundings

**Quoppa**, an eight-year-old, Espoo, Finland-based developer of real-time locating systems that are used across a number of industries, including manufacturing and health care, has raised €20 million from **Bocap** and **Tech Consulting Group**. [More here](#).

**RoboticWares**, an 11-year-old, Odisha (India)-based company that runs the logistics management startup **FarEye**, has raised an additional \$13 million as part of the company's extended Series D funding round. **Fundamentum Partnership** and South Korean investment firm **KB Global** are the company's new backers, it says. VC Circle has [more here](#).

## Smaller Fundings

**Shef**, a year-old, San Francisco-based homemade food marketplace that enables cooks to sell meals in their local communities, has raised \$8.8 million in seed funding from **Craft Ventures**, **M13**, and **YC**, along with numerous individual investors. Forbes has [more here](#).

## People

Facebook Chief Marketing Officer **Antonio Lucio** is leaving the company. His last day on the job will be Sept. 18. In a Facebook post, he writes that it has been a reflective year for him and that he has "decided to dedicate 100% of my time to diversity, inclusion and equity." [More here](#).

Vista Equity Partners's billionaire founder **Robert Smith** is reportedly under investigation for potential tax crimes. According to Bloomberg, the U.S. Justice Department and Internal Revenue Service agents have been looking into alleged improprieties relating to early Vista proceeds that Smith directed to his charitable foundation. No charges have been filed. [More here](#).

Another of Amazon's most senior and longest-serving executives, e-commerce chief **Jeff Wilke**, is leaving the company. Once seen as a possible successor to Bezos, he's now planning to retire next year, according to the company. CNN has [more here](#).

## Tweet of the Day

"Every Zoom call should have an announcer introducing each participant paired with their favorite intro music - like an NBA game. Missed opportunity." --@jnj

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## Essential Reads

Why antibody tests [won't help you much](#).

An [exodus](#) in San Francisco.

## Detours

"The [Life](#) of Death."

"[Wandaland](#)."

What [critics are saying](#) about Christopher Nolan's new movie *Tenet*.

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