**LINK-IS: Linking Israeli Startups to Relevant Startup Professionals**

 April 2024

**Link-IS** is an initiative that was developed to support the continuity of Israel’s startup ecosystem during the challenging times following the October 7th Hamas attack and the war that followed, with many startups now facing new challenges in obtaining new clients, hiring employees, and raising funds.

Link-IS involves US professionals who will help selected startups identify viable opportunities in the US market, and help create a work plan that will facilitate these opportunities, which include potential clients, design partners, joint venture partners, sales channels, and other connections, based on the given company’s vertical and stage.

Link-IS is a joint project by EFI (Entrepreneurship Forum of Israel, since 1994) and Mark Cohen, Justin Potter Professor of American Competitive Enterprise, Emeritus, Vanderbilt University.

**The Process:**

***Expert Advisors***

Link-IS has developed a list of seasoned business professionals who are willing to volunteer their time to help Israeli startups by sharing know-how, connections, and insights.

The Link-IS steering committee will match select startup companies with project Expert Advisors who will guide them as they strive to reach potential partners, clients or sales agents, helping with process, resources, human resources, and other relevant needs. An initial meeting of the startup’s primary contact, proposed expert advisor, and member of Link-IS Advisory Board will help identify potential fit and expectations. Depending upon the startup’s needs, experts may help them better understand potential markets for their product or service – in the US or globally. They may assist in developing a research agenda focused on a competitive analysis, product pricing, marketing plan, or other strategic business issues, as well assisting the startup in identifying potential clients, funders, etc.

Although the decision about whether or not to be matched with any particular expert advisor will be at the complete discretion of the startup company – any commitment to move forward will include an expectation that the startup company is available for at least one weekly video conference with their “expert advisor” for 3 months; although longer-term commitments are encouraged as the relationship develops and is mutually beneficial. The expectation is that the startup company representative[s] to the project will spend additional time as needed in following up on the meeting results and suggestions, and spend at least 3-4 more weekly hours in preparing for the next meeting with its expert advisor.

***Entrepreneurs***

Participation in Link-IS is open to any Israeli startup who seeks expert advice on key aspects of their business development process. **Although companies at all stages will be considered, priority will be given to early-stage companies with well-developed products and staffing – and those who have been impacted by recent events.** The first round of applications are due May 15, 2024. Applications received after that date will be considered on a rolling basis.

**How to** [**Apply**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1HWBVFPUSKt5WPrcwyHBNKz_xcmwVIPM6mztKX5ekLEY/edit)

1. Startup One Pager
2. Startup Stage: under development, working prototype, ready to market, currently being marketed, etc.
3. Funding stage: bootstrapped/pre-seed, seed funding, Series A, etc.
4. Website address and listing of key staff.
5. Project Goals. This should identify the most critical need the startup seeks assistance on, for us to locate the appropriate expertise. Over time, project goals might evolve and expand.
6. Contact person’s name, title, email, LinkedIn or other brief biographic information, and contact details for follow-up questions
7. Brief 3–4 minute English-language video presentation by main contact person.

NOTE: This should not be a commercially produced video. Instead, we are asking for a simple ‘smartphone’ video of the key contact person who will be working with Link-IS’ expert advisor explaining the company and goals for this engagement.