

Robotics startup creation could be volatile during downturn

Article

The trend: Robotic deployments are rising in a wide range of sectors, igniting an appetite for startup creation.

- Although tracking behind last year's showing, VC investment is still steadily flowing to robotics startups, [per](#) Crunchbase.

- **Amazon**'s bullishness on warehouse bots is helping fuel robotics startup creation aimed at the ecommerce sector, [per](#) TechCrunch.
- However, broader tech turmoil has triggered layoffs at **Starship**, **Pudu Robotics**, and **Nuro**. Also, **Doordash** is shutting down **Chowbotics**, the food robotics startup it recently acquired.

Top startups to watch: Technological advances in recent years have provided startups with a solid foundation to build a more diverse army of bots for deployment across industries. Here are some getting attention.

Apptroik: This Austin-based startup is working on a **commercially viable humanoid robot** that can work alongside humans. It raised **\$14.6 million** in seed money to accelerate its collaborative robotics systems that enable adaptable robots to safely operate in unstructured environments.

Xpeng Robotics: In a bid to fulfill the quintessential childhood dream of owning a pony, this startup—backed by **Tesla** rival Xpeng—raised **\$100 million** in a Series A round to build a **rideable robot unicorn for children**. It can also reportedly function as a service robot, transporting snacks in offices.

Indoor Robotics: In keeping with rising interest in corporate surveillance, this startup pulled in **\$15 million** in a Series A round. The funding will help Indoor move forward on production of its **indoor security robotic Tando, which can map and navigate indoor spaces like offices or malls to detect threats**. When not roaming, it can dock on ceilings as a security camera.

FORT Robotics: Working to make robots in industrial settings safer, this startup raised **\$25 million** in a Series B funding. It plans to use the funds to advance development of its FORT Platform, a **machine communications system that allows critical messages to be sent between bots in chaotic environments like construction sites**.

iCOBOTS: This startup is part of a larger development of **soft robotics** in response to demand for bots that can handle delicate applications. It equipped a line of collaborative robots with a **soft-gripping system that reduces the need for advanced vision systems and calculated movements**.

What's next? Because the subsector is capital-intensive and requires extensive R&D, specialized talent, and suitable lab space to get off the ground, robotics startup creation is vulnerable to market fluctuations.

- However, the labor shortage and recent moves by companies to cut overhead costs means the push for more robotics and **automation** deployment will likely remain strong.
- More investment in robotics incubators by universities and other organizations could help give budding entrepreneurs a boost.
- We'll likely see continued demand for collaborative robots that can safely work around humans, especially in ecommerce and manufacturing facilities.



Xpeng Robotics' unicorn pony robot. (Source: Business Wire)