

# Record-high deal, layoffs, robust fundraising, and product tease show robotics sector volatility

Article

**Robotics news roundup:** Market uncertainty has created a mixed landscape for the robotics sector, evidenced by large deals and strong funding rounds alongside layoffs and startup

pivots.

- In reportedly the world's largest humanoid robotics deal, **SELF Labs** has agreed to [purchase](#) at least 1,000 of **Beyond Imagination's Beomni Omni-Purpose AI** robot over the next five years. The deal is part of partnership between the two companies to **train the bots to tend to off-the-grid agricultural "grow boxes,"** which could mean future displacement for ag workers.
- Ahead of a planned unveiling on September 30, **Tesla** [released](#) a partial image of its **Optimus** humanoid robot. CEO **Elon Musk** said that the company is **making the bot development a priority over other products and that it will be more valuable than EVs.** Production could start in 2023.
- On the same day **Amazon** [announced](#) plans to acquire **iRobot, the robotic vacuum maker also [announced](#) plans to cut 140 jobs, or 10% of its workforce.** Although the company said that the cuts aren't a direct result of the acquisition, the timing indicates a possible connection between the events.
- Capitalizing on the high demand for warehouse robots, **Geek+** [raised](#) **\$100 million** in a Series E1 round. The startup offers several products, including a **"Kiva-style" wheeled bot that can move inventory shelves.** The company, currently valued at about **\$2 billion**, has earned over **\$300 million** in orders, giving it a strong foothold in a crowded warehouse robotics market.
- **Tortoise** wants to [bring](#) vending machines back into everyday life. The robotics startup is **testing mobile vending machines in a Walmart parking lot, selling products like beef jerky and chocolate eggs** as part of a "15-second commerce," "you get what you want and go" bet. The startup had originally envisioned its remote-controlled robots for grocery delivery, but with that market contracting, it pivoted to the vending machine idea, illustrating the need for startups to be flexible given economic uncertainty.

**What's next?** Interest in [robotics](#) is unlikely to wane even during a potential recession. Gaining momentum during the pandemic amid [labor shortages](#), the sector is fueled by heightened demand for automation to lower costs in industries like construction, agriculture, [ecommerce](#), manufacturing, and delivery.

- Advances in AI, sensing, and dexterity are making robotics more practical and helping the sector make significant strides in making sci-fi dreams a reality.
- As robotics become interwoven in the workplace and daily life, ethical questions about [retraining](#) displaced human workers and how bots affect human interactions will come to the forefront.



Beomni bot showcases dexterity in the kitchen. (Source: Beyond Imagination)

*This article originally appeared in Insider Intelligence's **Connectivity & Tech Briefing**—a daily recap of top stories reshaping the technology industry. Subscribe to have more hard-hitting takeaways delivered to your inbox daily.*

- Are you a client? [Click here to subscribe.](#)
- Want to learn more about how you can benefit from our expert analysis? [Click here.](#)