

Brain Corp. raises another \$36M for mobile robots that clean during pandemic

April 29 2020, by Mike Freeman

Brain Corp.'s autonomous driving software doesn't power sexy machines. Its mobile operating system instead controls squat, floor scrubbing robots used in supermarkets, malls and airports.

Though it lacks sizzle, the BrainOS self-driving platform has turned out to be a good business for the San Diego company—with more than 10,000 mobile autonomous robots worldwide running on its software.

And that helped the 340-employee company land another \$36 million in [venture capital funding](#) to meet growing demand for its autonomous robots, in part due to ramped-up sanitation efforts during the coronavirus pandemic.

The new funding announced Monday brings the total amount raised by Brain Corp. to more than \$160 million. SoftBank Vision Fund 1 led the round, with new investors Satwik Ventures and ClearBridge Investments joining in. Qualcomm Ventures, an existing investor, also participated.

"Every company that's tried to build a sexy [robot](#) failed," said Eugene Izhikevich, a computational neuroscientist and chief executive of Brain Corp., "We have these boring robots that do a routine job, but it is something that is helping essential workers to keep the stores clean."

Self-driving robots powered by Brain Corp.'s software are used by Walmart and Kroger, as well as Giant Eagle, C&W Services, Simon Property Group and several other big box stores, as well as educational

institutions. The additional funding will be used to support expansion, including possibly overseas.

Industrial equipment makers including Tennant Co., Minuteman International, Dane Technologies, UniCarriers Americas license BrainOS software to transform their manual floor cleaners into autonomous robots.

Retailers, in particular, have increased robotic floor cleaning with the COVID-19 outbreak, according to Brain Corp. Usage of BrainOS-powered machines in retail locations in the U.S. grew nearly 14% in March compared with the same month last year.

Last week, the company announced it is donating about two dozen floor-scrubbing robots for use in essential businesses at no charge for the next 90 days through its Robot Relief program.

Brain Corp is expanding its applications beyond floor care. They include delivery robots that bring merchandise from storage in the back of the store to shelves for restocking, as well as scan shelves to monitor inventory levels and identify misplaced products.

"World events have brought the value of automation sharply into focus, and we see Brain Corp playing an integral role as market adoption for robotics accelerates," said Aram Green, managing director of ClearBridge Investments.

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