



Axis Innovation Case Study



Mercedes-Benz

Roland
Berger



BACKGROUND

Axis Innovation partnered with Roland Berger, a leading strategic management consultancy firm based in Germany, to arrange an Inspiration tour to Tel Aviv for the global sales and marketing team of Mercedes-Benz. The team included senior executives including Ola Kallenius, Member of the Board of Management of Daimler AG (owner of Mercedes-Benz) and other participants from Europe and the US. Tel Aviv was the third city visited, following Silicon Valley and Shanghai and was selected because of its strong reputation as a center of entrepreneurship, high tech startups, and innovation in the automotive industry. To plan the Israeli visit at the highest level, Roland Berger partnered with Axis Innovation to create, manage, and lead the Innovation Tour. Roland Berger was familiar with Axis Innovation for our previous work with Visa Europe.

CHALLENGE

Mercedes-Benz is one of the most recognizable automotive brands in the world. Yet due to the rapid pace of change in the automotive industry ranging from mobility services to autonomous vehicles, they recognized the need to find new innovations and to look globally. Our challenge was to introduce them to the most relevant startups and technologies that they could implement today and identify trends driving the mobility space as well as understand why leading international corporations have set up R&D operations in Israel.

RESULT

Axis Innovation arranged a custom 2 day “Inspiration Tour” connecting Mercedes-Benz with leading startups, growth companies, investors, and thought leaders. Our team scouted the ecosystem, spoke to many ecosystem partners, and identified over 100 relevant companies to meet with Mercedes-Benz. Through analysis and diligence with Roland Berger, we focused on the most relevant leads.

Highlights of the trip included meetings with founders or senior executives at:

- Mobileye, autonomous driving technology leader, acquired by Intel
- Waze, the traffic navigation app acquired by Google
- Ecomotion, Israel’s smart mobility accelerator
- Magma VC, a top Israeli VC firm
- Citi Innovation Lab Tel Aviv, the largest fintech accelerator in Israel
- 8 early stage startups, selected from over 50
- 6 global corporations in a custom “thought leaders” dinner



SUCSESSES

During just two days the team from Mercedes-Benz was extremely impressed by their meetings in Tel Aviv. Several key successes came out of the trip:

- Mercedes-Benz partnered with one of the startups they met and within 4 months had a commercial deal in place
- Mercedes-Benz began considering ways to be more involved and active in the Israeli ecosystem. 2 years later, in November 2017, they opened an R&D center in Tel Aviv which employs over 20 people. Ola Kallenius personally attributed our Inspiration Tour as a key factor to establishing a center in Israel.

