



*Interview with  
Ami Daniel  
Co-founder and CEO  
Windward*

***Greetings, Mr Daniel. Can you give us some information about your company?***

Windward is a maritime data and analytics company that offers specialized data and services to government agencies and private corporations. We collect and analyze over 200 million data points per day. We convert this massive amount of data into information that our clients can act on, in real time. The Windward team, 75 and growing, is comprised of data scientists and shipping experts who work together to shed light on what's really happening at sea.

It's important to mention that Windward has an outstanding support network. Some of our investors include Aleph Ventures, Li Ka-Shing's Horizons Ventures, Retired General David Petraeus (former Director of the CIA), Lord John Browne (the former CEO of BP), Tom Glocer (the former CEO of Thomson Reuters), and Dan Senor (co-author of the book 'Start-up Nation').

***Well, can you tell us now what led you to invest in Israel and start a business in this Country in 2010? Did you have some previous customers or did you start from scratch?***

I served in the Israeli navy as an officer for a number of years with Matan Peled, our Co-founder and VP of Product. We identified the opportunity to combine our maritime expertise with big data analytics. The oceans, as we know from first hand experience, have been a Wild West. Nobody knew what was going on at sea. We created Windward to solve this problem.

We chose Israel for a number of reasons. First, Israel has an amazing tech scene; the best in the world outside of the Silicon Valley. Second, Matan and I had built a strong network over the years with great people in technology, government, the military, etc. It seemed like a natural choice to stay here while we built our company.

***Yours is a very particular sector. Can you tell us something more about your main products/services.***

Initially, we focused almost exclusively on the security and defense sector. Over time we started to offer our technology to non-government clients with different needs. Windward has developed a cloud-based software platform, Windward Intelligence, which provides immediate access to all current and historical vessel activities, behaviour patterns, and trends. Clients can see everything a ship is doing, or has ever done, up to seven years back. The system can notify clients about particular activity that interests them and identify risks through our risk profiling algorithms.

***What are your main (Public and private) clients? In which Countries do you export more your products/services? What are the Countries where the demand for your products is growing more?***

Windward's typical client is an intelligence or security agency creating strategic and tactical intelligence by leveraging Windward data. We have clients in five continents. Security agencies worldwide use the Windward Intelligence System to combat maritime challenges ranging from smuggling to sovereignty issues. In addition, fishing authorities use the System to combat illegal fishing and commercial players access Windward's information to better understand their maritime stakes.

***So one of your major client-sector is maritime industry. How much does it account on your turnover? What are the main benefits for a shipping company which uses your products/services?***

Windward's customers know that our data is the best in world in terms of accuracy, coverage, and reliability – and it's been that way since 2010. Customers approach us because they can rely on our powerful SaaS platform from day one to face pressing challenges, and it doesn't make sense for them to engage in costly and high-risk IT projects that take years to materialize. It is not uncommon for our clients to start realizing benefits from our system as early as the product training stage.

***As a service-provider of shipping companies, do you see good or bad prospects for the maritime sector? In particular, what is your view on the maritime sector in Israel?***

The maritime sector is one of the oldest industries in the world, and technology can have a big impact on it. The world is facing many threats, and the oceans are one arena in which many challenges are being faced. I am confident that countries can better deal with these problems with the help of technology like Windward's.

While Israel is not a significant maritime hub like London or Singapore, we punch above our weight with big players like ZIM and innovative startups like Freightos (also backed by our VC Aleph).

***You have been operating in Israel for 7 years. What are the main advantages and disadvantages/obstacles met by companies in this Country?***

Tel Aviv has the second best tech scene in the world outside of the Silicon Valley. We have access to amazing engineers and brilliant coders. That being said, the Israeli market is small and our customers are spread over 5 continents; we travel a lot.

***Let's give a closer look to the competitive context which a company wanting to operate in Israel is going to face. What is the competition level in Israel?***

A lot of tech companies are born here every year, and many big international players set up R&D centers in Israel. Competition for the best talent is fierce, but the community is really collaborative, which is important. People are on good terms and we want our friends to succeed.

***Let's now give a look at the potential of the territory. How do you consider the quality of the workforce in Israel? How about the supply of value added services?***

Israel has an abundance of great tech talent. Israelis who graduate from prestigious military intelligence units are well prepared to enter the tech sector and make an impact from day one. Support services here are as strong as anywhere. There's a reason so many tech companies from Israel become as successful as they do.

***In conclusion, are you planning to increase your investments in Israel and around the world? Why?***

Global threats from criminal elements and terror organizations are very real. Governments are scrambling to find good solutions. Windward has been helping clients for years, and we plan to keep expanding our business globally on our journey to build a billion dollar company.