

Ex-Googlers strike startup gold—again—with \$1.9 billion sale to drugs giant

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A two-man entrepreneurial team who attended an elite college together where they founded a startup they sold to Google for a reported \$81 million have just sold a second company they founded together for nearly \$2 billion.

Swiss pharmaceutical giant Roche and the cancer-technology firm Flatiron founded by Nat Turner and Zach Weinberg confirmed the \$1.9 billion deal Thursday that Roche said would speed development of new cancer treatments and help it with regulators.

Flatiron, a privately held [company](#) backed by Google Ventures (now GV), sells data management and analytics software to cancer clinics, research centers and life-science companies. It has collaborated with the Food and Drug Administration and makes software for the keeping of [electronic health records](#), a product subject to close regulatory scrutiny. Roche makes a number of leading cancer drugs.

"As part of the acquisition, Roche is committing additional resources to Flatiron so that we can continue on our mission and have an even greater impact," Flatiron CEO Turner said in a company blog post.

Flatiron will operate separately beside other Roche business units, Turner said.

Turner and Flatiron president Weinberg went through The Wharton School's undergraduate economics program together. Before graduating from the Pennsylvania business school in 2008 they began work on the advertising-technology startup, Invite Media, that they would sell to Google in 2010 for a reported \$81 million.

Mountain View search and digital-ads giant Google integrated Invite's platforms into its DoubleClick ad-tech division, and kept Turner and Weinberg on as product managers for two years before they left to start up the New York-based Flatiron.

Roche, which already owned about 13 percent of Flatiron, called its purchase "an important step" toward hurrying up development of new [cancer](#) treatments.

The acquisition was about more than software, Roche said in a statement.

"Flatiron Health has worked with industry leaders and regulators to develop new approaches for how real-world evidence may be used in regulatory decision making," Roche said.

The deal is expected to close by the end of June, Roche said.

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