

WHY WE INVESTED: Elio



Reimagining mortgage origination: why we invested in Elio Mortgage

Independent mortgage brokers now originate close to 20% of the roughly \$2.6 trillion in US home loans written each year¹, up from about 10% a decade ago², but the infrastructure supporting them hasn't kept pace. There are more than 47,000 independent mortgage brokerage firms³ still running on standalone loan origination systems, disconnected CRMs, and manual document review. A typical file passes through multiple stakeholders and systems, with data re-keyed by hand at nearly every handoff. The result is thin brokerage margins, slower closings, and loan officers who spend more time on paperwork than on clients. The real estate brokerage market saw the same pattern before technology-first operators like Compass and Real Brokerage rebuilt the operating model from the inside, rather than just selling software into it. In our view, no comparable player has done that in mortgage brokerage, until now.

This is why our Venture team led the pre-seed round in Elio Mortgage.

Elio Mortgage, an AI-native mortgage company redesigning how home loans are originated, today emerged from stealth with \$5.1 million in pre-seed funding led by Motive Partners and Social Leverage, with Jeff Horing, co-founder and managing director of Insight Partners, participating as an angel investor.

WHO THEY ARE

Elio was founded by Oren Michaely (CEO) and Arad Lev Ari (COO), childhood friends who have known each other for more than 20 years. Oren spent several years as a software engineer and applied scientist at Microsoft, working on reinforcement learning and early integrations of large language models, before joining Motive Partners as Director of AI, where he helped portfolio companies evaluate and deploy AI. Arad served as a Commanding Sergeant in the Israel Defense Forces, ultimately leading a unit of 24 soldiers, then began his career as an investment banker at Deutsche Bank covering real estate, gaming, and lodging before moving into private equity at KKR.

They are joined by Steven Carey, Chief Brokerage Officer, who founded Hightide Mortgage, the licensed brokerage that now operates as Elio's brokerage arm.

WHAT THEY DO

Elio operates across two channels. Its brokerage business gives loan officers a dedicated AI agent designed to handle the administrative work of pre-qualification, document processing, and closing, with the goal of freeing loan officers to spend more time originating and serving clients. Its embedded channel brings mortgage capability directly into the workflows of registered investment advisors, single-family rental operators, and homebuilders who already own the borrower relationship.

Both channels run on the same underlying platform: a unified data model and a growing set of AI agents that handle income calculation, conditions resolution, and borrower communication, with every step intended to be auditable back to the source documents. Rather



than sell this platform as standalone software, Elio operates it inside a real, licensed mortgage brokerage – originating the same loan products available everywhere else, but with what we believe is a meaningfully different cost structure and borrower experience.

WHY WE INVESTED

Founders who pair AI depth with real operating experience. Oren's background building and deploying AI inside a large enterprise and across Motive's portfolio, combined with Arad's finance and real estate grounding from Deutsche Bank and KKR, gives the team a rare mix: they can build the technology and run the regulated business it sits inside.

A large, fragmented, under-digitized market. Independent mortgage brokers are the fastest-growing origination channel in the country⁴, yet the market remains highly fragmented and few firms have more than a handful of loan officers. That combination – scale, growth, and a lack of modern infrastructure – is exactly the setup where we believe a technology-first operator can win.

Owning the operation, not just selling into it. Rather than build point software and sell it into thousands of tech-resistant brokerages, Elio bought and operates a licensed brokerage outright. Every loan and every loan officer interaction runs through its own platform, creating a feedback loop that a software vendor selling from the outside could never replicate.

"The next generation of financial services are being built around AI, with intelligence systems coordinating and executing work across the business rather than automating isolated tasks. In truly AI-native companies, the technology largely disappears into the operating model, while customers and employees experience a fundamentally faster and improved service. We believe Elio represents that shift in mortgage, an industry where we see enormous opportunity to redesign operations and economics." **Harsh Govil, Partner, Venture at Motive Partners.**

We're proud to support Oren, Arad, Steven, and the Elio Mortgage team as they build the AI-native mortgage brokerage the industry has been missing.

1. LendingTree, U.S. Mortgage Market Statistics.
2. Inside Mortgage Finance, "Correspondent, Broker Share of Originations Up in 2024."
3. National Association of Mortgage Brokers
4. Inside Mortgage Finance, "Broker Channel Gains Market Share in First Quarter"

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