

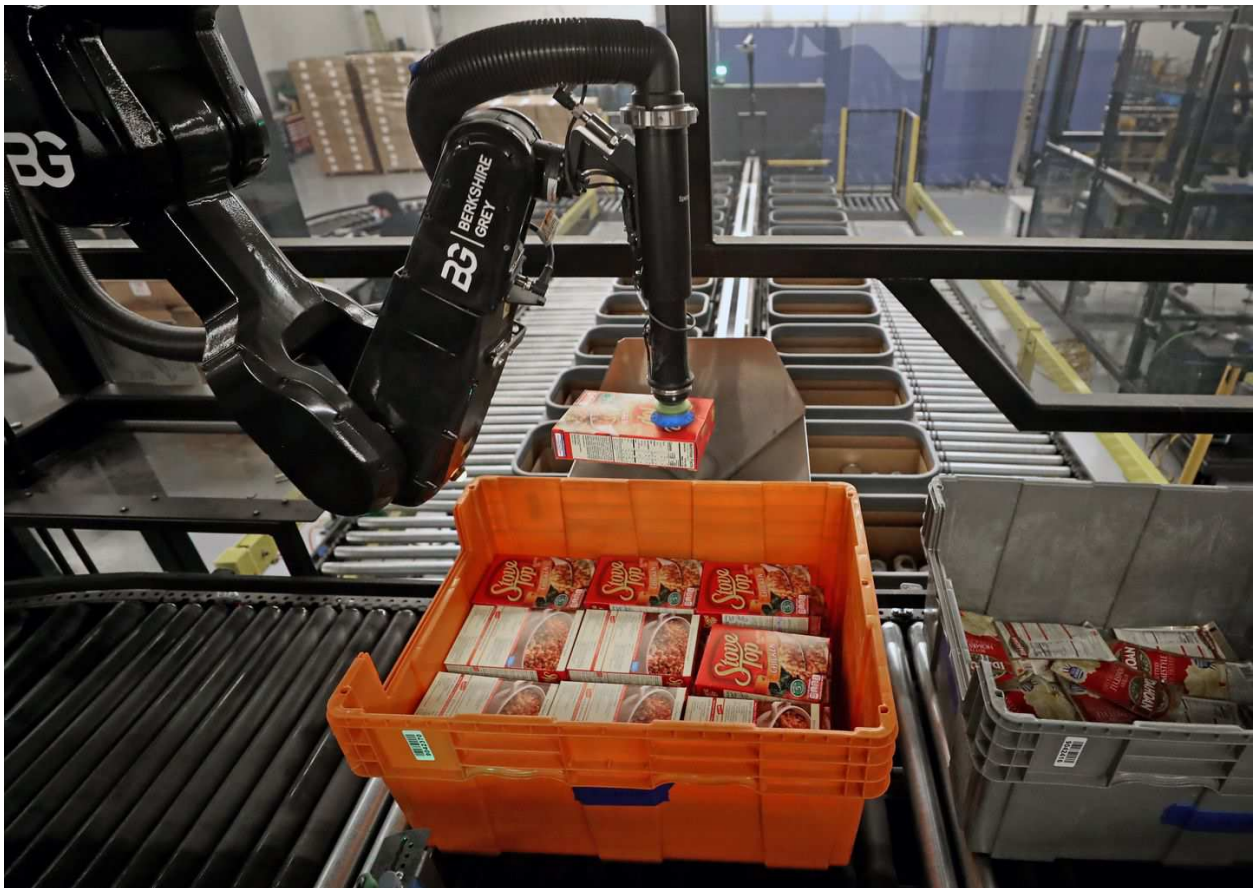
The Boston Globe

‘We’re very bullish on Boston’: Three questions with Berkshire Grey CEO

Tom Wagner

The robotics startup began trading Thursday on the Nasdaq after SPAC deal

By [Aaron Pressman](#) Globe Staff, Updated July 22, 2021, 8:08 a.m.

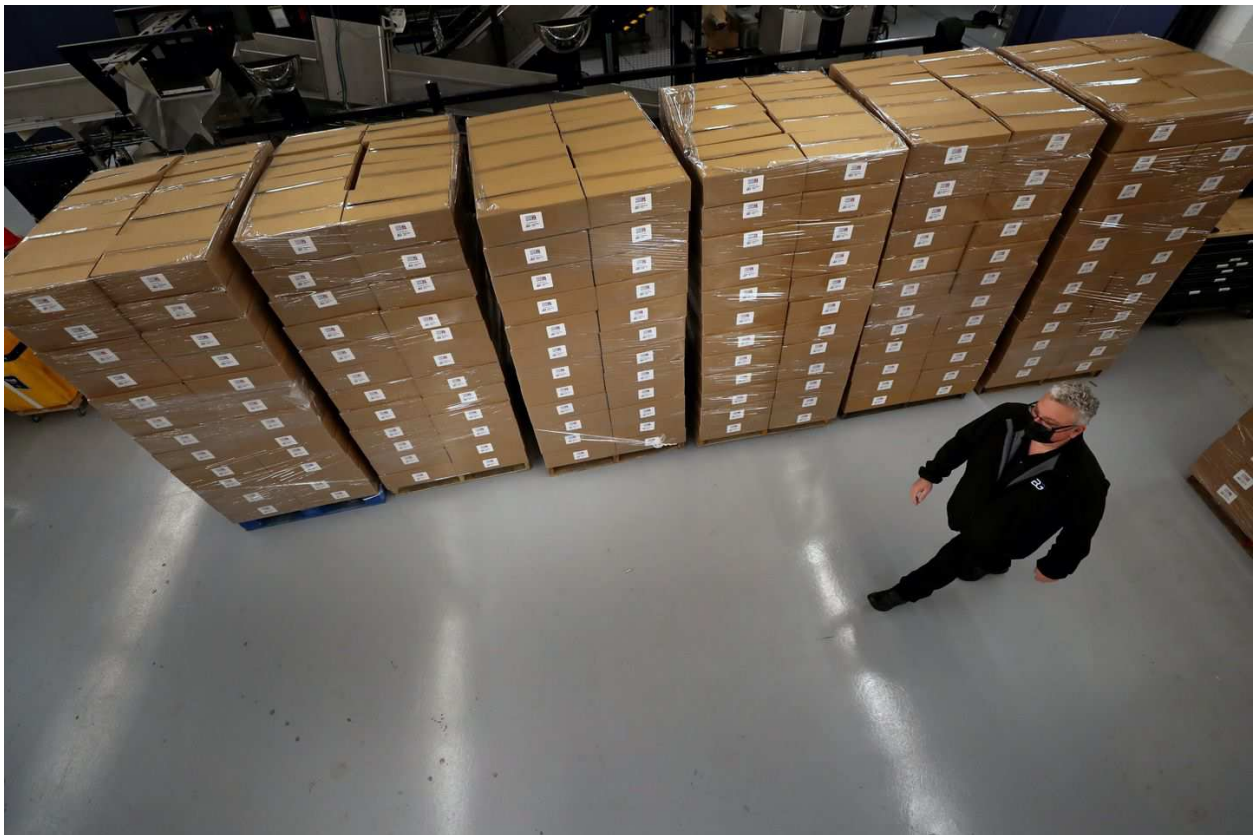


Berkshire Grey's robot sorted and packed food into boxes in November 2020. DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

The latest Boston startup to go public is warehouse robotics developer [Berkshire Grey](#).

The Bedford-based company has [merged with a special purpose acquisition company](#) called Revolution Acceleration Acquisition Corp. and started trading Thursday on the Nasdaq under the symbol BGRY.

Chief executive Tom Wagner, who founded the company in 2013 after working at iRobot as chief technology officer, spoke with the Globe about timing, new markets, and expanding locally.



Berkshire Grey chief executive Tom Wagner walked past boxes of food packed by the company's robots in Bedford. DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

Why did you decide to merge with a SPAC and go public now?

We have always told customers that our intention was to go public, that we would be here for them and stand here for them. It's because some customers have concerns about early stage companies being acquired, or taken off the table.

The opportunity with [Revolution Acquisition], when that presented itself, that was an opportunity to put actions with words for our customers: We're here for you, we're going to be here for you today, we're here for you into the future. So that was an entirely positive thing. And the growth capital that comes with the SPAC is also coming in at a really good time. Our commercial momentum is significant.

Talking about momentum, lately you've been looking beyond just moving things in warehouses. Where do robots fit at the supermarket, for example?

The operational challenge that you have as a grocer is that you want to utilize your locations, your physical locations, to enable rapid fulfillment of online grocery orders. But you need your folks in the store to pay attention to the customers in the store.

So, with automation, that enables grocers to have a stream of work that's being done in that location where it's highly automated, so that the store folks can pay attention to the store customers, and they can now still serve both streams of work.

With iRobot, Boston Dynamics, Amazon Robotics, and others, it seems like Boston has a strong robotics sector. How do you see the area developing locally?

We have recently announced a new innovation center in Bedford. We have 75,000 square feet of additional space that we will use for development, as well as for interactions with customers. And we continue to hire and invest in the Boston area.

This year, I believe we will have added over 100 technology jobs to the Boston ecosystem. We're very bullish on Boston. We're deliberately here with anchor companies in the region like iRobot. You know, this is a tremendous place to build a robotics company that uses AI.

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