

Session Guide.

The UK's national forum for the founders, investors, operators, advisors and policymakers building, scaling, funding and shaping businesses.

15 – 17 June 2027 • Royal Armouries • Leeds



Why Promising Start-Ups Fail to Scale

And how founders prevent it early.

What Actually Determines a Good Exit

The decisions that shape outcomes years before a sale.

Leading Through Uncertainty

How leaders decide when the data is incomplete.

Decision-Making Under Pressure

Scaling without breaking execution, capital or confidence.

From Technology to Capability

Why leadership and execution matter more than the tools.

Timing is Leverage

When to move, when to wait and when to say no.

Opening keynotes on every stage, every day. And on Day Three, a closing keynote.

**Most events end with
inspiration.
This one ends with
responsibility.**

Start-Up Stage.

DAY ONE 15 June

- 10:40–11:30** **WHY PROMISING START-UPS FAIL TO SCALE:**
And How Founders Prevent It Early
- 11:40–12:30** **PROVING YOUR BUSINESS IS READY TO SCALE:**
How Founders Demonstrate Real Demand, Paying Customers and a Team That Can Actually Deliver
- 13:40–14:30** **WHEN EARLY WAYS OF WORKING STOP WORKING:**
The Inflection Point Founders Miss Before Problems Surface
- 14:40–15:30** **WHEN START-UPS THINK THEY ARE READY TO SCALE (BUT AREN'T):**
The Signals Strong Founders Trust Before They Accelerate
- 15:40–16:30** **WHAT MUST BE IN PLACE BEFORE YOU SCALE:**
The Decisions Founders Must Lock In Before Build & Scale

DAY TWO 16 June

- 10:10–11:00** **LEADING A START-UP AS IT GROWS:**
How Founder Behaviour Must Change as Complexity Increases
- 11:10–12:00** **RUNNING THE BUSINESS, NOT JUST BUILDING IT:**
Operating Cadence, Focus and Clarity as Start-Ups Grow
- 12:10–13:00** **BUILDING FOUNDATIONS THAT SCALE:**
Systems, Capability and Infrastructure That Support Growth
- 14:10–15:00** **CAPITAL CONFIDENCE:**
What Investors Look for Before They Back Growth
- 15:10–16:00** **TURNING EARLY SALES INTO A REAL BUSINESS:**
Customers, Revenue and Repeatability

DAY THREE 17 June

- 10:10–11:00** **BUILDING A BUSINESS THAT LASTS:**
Durability, Standards and Founder Judgement Over Time
- 11:10–12:00** **HOW VALUE IS REALLY CREATED IN START-UPS:**
The Decisions That Shape Outcomes Long Before Exit
- 12:10–13:00** **WHAT SCRUTINY REALLY LOOKS LIKE:**
How Investors and Buyers Assess Start-Ups Up Close
- 14:00–15:00** **STAYING IN CONTROL AS THE BUSINESS SCALES**
How Founders Avoid Losing Direction or Being Forced Into the Wrong Outcome

Build & Scale Stage.

DAY ONE 15 June

- 10:40–11:30** **DECISION-MAKING UNDER PRESSURE**
How Operators Scale Without Breaking Execution, Focus or Confidence
- 11:40–12:30** **RUNNING THE BUSINESS AS IT SCALES**
How Operating Cadence, Clarity and Accountability Enable Sustainable Growth
- 13:40–14:30** **WHEN SCALE STARTS TO STRAIN**
How Leaders Identify Pressure Early and Protect Performance
- 14:40–15:30** **WHY GROWTH STALLS AFTER EARLY SUCCESS**
The Operating Decisions That Quietly Cap Scale
- 15:40–16:30** **TURNING GROWTH STRATEGY INTO REAL TRACTION**
How Leaders Align People, Process and Execution to Sustain Momentum

DAY TWO 16 June

- 10:10–11:00** **WHEN THE ORGANISATION OUTGROWS THE FOUNDER**
How Leadership Must Evolve as Scale Changes the Business
- 11:10–12:00** **BUILDING TEAMS THAT SCALE**
How Leaders Create Accountability, Capability and High Performance as Organisations Grow
- 12:10–13:00** **WHEN COMPLEXITY STARTS TO WIN**
How High-Growth Businesses Simplify Decisions, Processes and Priorities
- 14:10–15:00** **SCALING WITHOUT LOSING CULTURE**
How Organisations Protect Performance, Values and Trust as They Grow
- 15:10–16:00** **BUILDING AN ORGANISATION THAT DOESN'T DEPEND ON ONE PERSON**
How Leaders Create Capability That Lasts Beyond the Founder

DAY THREE 17 June

- 10:10–11:00** **WHAT HIGH-PERFORMING BUSINESSES KEEP DOING**
Why Sustainable Growth Depends on Discipline, Standards and Continuous Improvement
- 11:10–12:00** **WHEN PERFORMANCE STARTS TO SLIP**
The Warning Signs Leaders Miss Before Organisations Lose Momentum
- 12:10–13:00** **BUILDING RESILIENCE INTO THE BUSINESS**
How Organisations Adapt, Recover and Continue Growing Through Change
- 14:00–15:00** **STAYING IN CONTROL AS THE BUSINESS CONTINUES TO GROW**
How Leaders Preserve Clarity, Agility and Performance as Complexity Increases

Investment Stage.

DAY ONE 15 June

- 10:40–11:30** **WHAT MAKES A BUSINESS INVESTABLE?**
The Decisions That Build Investor Confidence Long Before Funding Is Needed
- 11:40–12:30** **WHAT INVESTORS REALLY LOOK FOR**
The Leadership, Capability and Commercial Signals That Separate Opportunity from Risk
- 13:40–14:30** **CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAPITAL**
How Founders Decide Between Angels, Venture Capital, Private Equity, Debt and Strategic Investment
- 14:40–15:30** **THE FIRST MEETING THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING**
How Investors Assess Businesses Before Due Diligence Even Begins
- 15:40–16:30** **WHEN TO RAISE AND WHEN TO WAIT**
The Timing Decisions That Can Accelerate Growth or Destroy Value

DAY TWO 16 June

- 10:10–11:00** **TURNING INVESTMENT INTO GROWTH**
How Businesses Convert Capital Into Sustainable Performance
- 11:10–12:00** **WHAT INVESTORS EXPECT AFTER THE DEAL**
How Leadership, Governance and Delivery Build Long-Term Confidence
- 12:10–13:00** **WHEN INVESTMENT DOESN'T DELIVER**
Why Well-Funded Businesses Still Fail to Scale
- 14:10–15:00** **INVESTING IN REGIONAL GROWTH**
How Public and Private Capital Work Together to Build Stronger Business Communities
- 15:10–16:00** **BUILDING AN INVESTMENT ECOSYSTEM**
How Founders, Investors, Corporates and Public Sector Partners Create Long-Term Economic Growth

DAY THREE 17 June

- 10:10–11:00** **WHAT CREATES LONG-TERM VALUE?**
Why Sustainable Businesses Attract Better Investment, Better Buyers and Better Opportunities
- 11:10–12:00** **WHEN INVESTORS STAY COMMITTED**
How Leadership, Performance and Trust Shape Long-Term Relationships
- 12:10–13:00** **THE FUTURE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INVESTMENT**
Where Capital Is Moving, What Investors Want Next and How Businesses Should Prepare
- 14:00–15:00** **INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP**
How Founders, Investors, Corporates and Government Can Build a Stronger UK Economy Together

Leadership Stage.

DAY ONE 15 June

- 10:00–10:30** **OPENING KEYNOTE (ALL STAGES) THE STATE OF UK ENTREPRENEURSHIP:**
Where Growth, Capital and Opportunity Will Actually Come From
- 10:40–11:30** **LEADING THROUGH UNCERTAINTY:**
How Leaders Make Decisions When the Data Is Incomplete
- 11:40–12:30** **LEADERSHIP UNDER PRESSURE:**
How Leaders Make Decisions When the Stakes Are High
- 13:40–14:30** **WHEN LEADERS BUILD THE TEAM THAT SCALE REQUIRES:**
How Leadership Capability Determines Whether Businesses Grow or Stall
- 14:40–15:30** **COMPETING AT PACE:**
The Strategic Trade Offs Leaders Make When Speed Matters
- 15:40–16:30** **FROM INSIGHT TO INTENT:**
What Changes Next and Who Is Ready to Act

DAY TWO 16 June

- 09:30–10:00** **OPENING KEYNOTE (ALL STAGES) FROM AMBITION TO EXECUTION:**
Why Most Strategies Fail and How Leaders Deliver Results
- 10:10–11:00** **WHERE EXECUTION DRIFTS:**
What Leaders Tolerate Too Long and How Control Is Regained
- 11:10–12:00** **DECISION-MAKING UNDER PRESSURE:**
How Leaders Act When Time, Data and Certainty Collapse
- 12:10–13:00** **WHEN LEADERS STEP IN AND STEP BACK:**
Where Judgement Strengthens or Destroys Execution
- 14:10–15:00** **WHEN STRATEGY MUST SHIFT:**
How Leaders Reposition Without Losing Authority, Trust or Control
- 15:10–16:00** **AFTER EXECUTION:**
How Leaders Hold Standards When Pressure Eases

DAY THREE 17 June

- 09:30–10:00** **OPENING KEYNOTE (ALL STAGES) WHAT ENDURES:**
Leadership, Standards and Decisions After the Moment Has Passed
- 10:10–11:00** **WHEN AUTHORITY QUIETLY ERODES:**
What Leaders Miss Until It Is Too Late
- 11:10–12:00** **WHEN DECISIONS STOP HOLDING:**
Why Authority Weakens After Leaders Commit
- 12:10–13:00** **WHEN AUTHORITY IS TESTED:**
How Leaders Hold the Line When Pressure Pushes Back
- 14:00–15:00** **THE WEIGHT OF THE ROLE:**
What Leadership Costs Over Time
- 15:10–15:30** **CLOSING KEYNOTE (ALL STAGES) MOST EVENTS END WITH INSPIRATION. THIS ONE ENDS WITH RESPONSIBILITY. WHAT HOLDS WHEN THE ROOM IS EMPTY**

Exit Stage.

DAY ONE 15 June

- 10:40–11:30** **WHAT ACTUALLY DETERMINES A GOOD EXIT:**
The Decisions That Shape Exit Outcomes Years Before a Sale
- 11:40–12:30** **HOW BUYERS REALLY JUDGE YOUR BUSINESS:**
What Increases Value and What Quietly Destroys It
- 13:40–14:30** **WHAT SCRUTINY ACTUALLY EXPOSES:**
The Risks, Gaps and Weaknesses That Undermine Exit Outcomes
- 14:40–15:30** **TIMING IS LEVERAGE:**
When to Move, When to Wait and When to Say No
- 15:40–16:30** **PROTECTING CONTROL IN EXIT NEGOTIATIONS:**
How Founders and Boards Maintain Leverage

DAY TWO 16 June

- 10:10–11:00** **PREPARING FOR EXIT WITHOUT LOSING MOMENTUM:**
How Leaders Strengthen the Business While Exit Is in View
- 11:10–12:00** **WHY THE TERMS MATTER MORE THAN THE PRICE:**
How Control, Risk and Value Are Actually Allocated at Exit
- 12:10–13:00** **WHY DEALS STALL OR FALL APART IN DUE DILIGENCE:**
What Actually Gets Tested Before a Deal Proceeds
- 14:10–15:00** **WHAT FOUNDERS ACTUALLY WALK AWAY WITH:**
How Personal Outcomes, Alignment and Structure Shape Life After Exit
- 15:10–16:00** **THE POINT OF NO RETURN IN A DEAL:**
What Changes Once You Commit to Exit

DAY THREE 17 June

- 10:10–11:00** **IS THE BUSINESS READY FOR EXIT:**
What Leaders Test Before Engaging Buyers
- 11:10–12:00** **CHOOSING THE RIGHT EXIT:**
How Founders Define Success Before They Commit
- 12:10–13:00** **FROM INTEREST TO DEAL**
How Buyers Engage and How Founders Position Themselves
- 14:00–15:00** **LIFE AFTER EXIT:**
What Founders Get Right and Wrong After the Deal

AI Stage.

DAY ONE 15 June

DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH

- 10:40–11:30** **WHERE AI CREATES BUSINESS VALUE, AND WHERE IT DOESN'T**
How Business Leaders Identify Opportunities That Deliver Measurable Commercial Impact
- 11:40–12:30** **WINNING MORE CUSTOMERS WITH AI**
How Businesses Improve Customer Acquisition, Sales Performance and Revenue Growth
- 13:40–14:30** **TURNING AI INTO COMMERCIAL PERFORMANCE**
How Businesses Move Beyond Experimentation to Deliver Measurable Results
- 14:40–15:30** **CREATING BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES WITH AI**
How Businesses Improve Service, Personalisation, Loyalty and Customer Lifetime Value
- 15:40–16:30** **WHAT HIGH-PERFORMING AI ADOPTION LOOKS LIKE**
The Leadership Decisions, Capability and Behaviours That Separate Business Success from AI Hype

DAY TWO 16 June

BUILDING BUSINESS CAPABILITY

- 10:10–11:00** **FROM EXPERIMENTATION TO EVERYDAY BUSINESS**
How Businesses Successfully Embed AI Across the Organisation
- 11:10–12:00** **BUILDING A BUSINESS READY FOR AI**
How Leaders Develop Skills, Culture and Capability That Enable Long-Term Success
- 12:10–13:00** **USING AI TO IMPROVE HOW THE BUSINESS OPERATES**
How Businesses Increase Productivity, Reduce Complexity and Improve Operational Performance
- 14:10–15:00** **BUILDING TRUST IN AI**
How Businesses Govern AI, Manage Risk and Build Confidence Without Slowing Progress
- 15:10–16:00** **MEASURING WHAT REALLY MATTERS**
How Businesses Measure Productivity, Performance, Return on Investment and Business Value

DAY THREE 17 June

CREATING LONG-TERM BUSINESS VALUE

- 10:10–11:00** **LEADING AN AI-ENABLED BUSINESS**
How Leadership, Culture and Decision-Making Evolve as AI Becomes Part of Everyday Business
- 11:10–12:00** **HOW AI INFLUENCES BUSINESS VALUE**
What Investors, Boards and Buyers Look for as AI Becomes Part of Business Performance
- 12:10–13:00** **BUILDING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE WITH AI**
How Businesses Create Sustainable Advantage Through Better Decisions, Faster Execution and Continuous Improvement
- 14:00–15:00** **TURNING AI INTO LONG-TERM BUSINESS VALUE**
How Businesses Use AI to Strengthen Growth, Increase Enterprise Value and Prepare for the Future

Confirmed Speakers.

Alana Macfarlane Kempner Co-founder + CEO (now MD) THE GUT STUFF	Alexandra Livesey Ex-COO / Co-Founder CLOCKWISE OFFICES / LITTLE RED DONKEY	Andrew Raphaely Executive Vice Chairman (Former CEO) 365 FINANCE
Bob Lewis MBE Director & Co-Founder ELEMENTARYB	Callum Murray Founder & CEO AMIQUS	Catalina Valentino Group CEO & Co-Founder ELIXR
Charlotte Ransom Co-Founder & CEO NETWEALTH	Chris Forbes Co-founder THE CHEEKY PANDA LTD	Dan Silverston Founder / NED SOHO SANDWICH COMPANY
Daniel Sako Co-Founder & CEO HERMES INTELLIGENCE	Darina Garland Co-founder OONI	Dave Knibbs CEO/Director (founded other companies) THE TOFOO COMPANY
Debbie Zaman CEO WITH	Emily Fenton Founder OPNPLAY	Freddie Monk Co-Founder and CEO AYA DATA
Gary Dolman Co-Founder & Former CFO (exited) MONZO BANK	Geeta Sidhu-Robb CEO & Founder W CORP	Giorgia Longobardi Co-Founder & CMO CAMBRIDGE GAN DEVICES

Confirmed Speakers.

Greg Mesch Vice Chairman CITYFIBRE	Hannah Chappatte Founder & CEO HYBR	Hazel Savage Principal / Former CEO (exited) LEEDS ANGELS / MUSIIO
Helen Cannon Founder & Director ISON TRAVEL	Jake Ardley Founder ANTE-BELLUM ANGELS	James Jackson Co-Founder & CEO BUMPER
James Smethurst Founder VELOCITY TALENT	Jane Slimming CEO ZEAL	Jimmy Muchechetere Senior Equity Analyst INVESTEC INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT
Jinny Yang Founder & Managing Director JYD GROUP / PALMA REAL ESTATE LTD	Joe Gaunt Founder HEALTH LABS HQ / UNIFY / ZENO	John Gyngell Founder NORTH BAR / NORTH BREWING
John Martinez Founder & CEO SHOCKLOGIC	Jonathan Milner Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder AIRE GLOBAL	Joseph Waller Founder AIRE LOGIC LIMITED
Karen Rudich CEO & Co-Founder SHERLOC	Kate Davis Founder MERAKI PEOPLE	Kieran Slinger Co-Founder PROPALT

Confirmed Speakers.

Lawrence Duffy Founder & CEO AURORA MEDIA WORLDWIDE	Liz Jackson Former CEO & Founder GREAT GUNS MARKETING	Logan Naidu Founder & Group CEO KERNEL GLOBAL
Lucy Buzzoni Director OFFICE FOR INVESTMENT	Maddy Alexander-Grout Founder MAD ABOUT MONEY / ENTREPRENEUR	Mark Watson-Gandy Chairman THREE STONE
Mary Bonsor Founder (exited) FLEX LEGAL	Mia Drennan Founder & CEO GLAS	Michael Maximoff Chief Growth Officer & Co-Founder BELKINS INC.
Neil Armstrong Co-Founder & CEO TRIBEPAD B CORP CERTIFIED	Nicky Bullard Founder ELEVATOR	Nicolas Cary Co-Founder BLOCKCHAIN.COM
Patrick Zally Founder ZALLY	Paul Hallett Co-Founder VET-AI	Pete Russell Chair of the Board/Co-Founder OOOBY/DECENT ALLIANCE
Peter Briffett CEO, Co-Founder WAGE STREAM	Peter Kinsella Owner and Founder LUNYA	Pierre Coombes Founder / UK Managing Director BIG WOLF MARKETING

Confirmed Speakers.

Poonam Kaur

CEO
FDS DIRECTOR SERVICES LIMITED

Projjol Banerjea

Founder & Chief Product Officer
ZEOTAP

Ramona Hazan

Founder
RAMONA'S KITCHEN

Robin Skidmore

Founder and CEO
JOURNEY FURTHER

Roy Shelton

CEO (founded other companies)
CONNECTUS BUSINESS SOLUTIONS LIMITED

Samantha Tubb

Co-Founder (exited)
SCHOLAR PACK

Sarah Louise Fairburn

Founder & CEO
IMPMAKER

Serena Kern-Libera

Co-Founder, Chief Operating Officer & General Counsel
LINKGEVITY

Simon Gray

Founder & Former MD
BOOST DRINKS

Simon Green

Founder
EDIT CLOUD

Simon Woodroffe

Founder
YO! SUSHI

Stu Macdonald

Founder
MANILIFE

Tarun Ghulati

Chairman, President, CEO
VARIOUS COMPANIES

Tim Darling

Founder, President, Laudio Insights
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Start the conversation.

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