

AIMA CANADA FOUNDER INTERVIEWS

AIMA

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CEO and Chief Investment Officer

Accelerate Financial Technologies



- **Year launched firm:** 2018
- **Number of employees at launch:** 1
- **Number of employees today:** 9
- **Number of funds at launch:** 0
- **Number of funds today:** 5
- **Strategies managed:** 6
- **Investor channels covered today:** 3
- **Firm prior to launching current business:** Ross Smith Asset Management

1 Why did you decide to launch your business?

A new liquid alternatives market, with \$100 billion potential, was created as updated regulations were implemented

2 What does it take to succeed in Canada as an emerging alternative manager?

Differentiated products, intelligent content and effective marketing

3 Tell us about your growth story. Any particular early-day struggles or success stories that stand out in your mind?

Managing client capital requires one to earn their trust. Being recognized as a leader in the industry helps establish credibility and build trust.

4 What are you most proud of looking back at your entrepreneurial journey?

Inventing the hedge fund ETF, leading to the democratization of alternative investments and leveling the playing field for all investors

5 What has been the hardest part of your entrepreneurial journey?

Getting past gatekeepers who have arbitrary requirements, including AUM level and time in the market, to sell to prospective clients

6 What wisdom do you have now that you wish you knew at launch?

It's not "build it and they will come". Financial products must be marketed effectively and distribution is key.

7 What sort of talent are you looking for in your team?

Hard-working, ethical team players who are creative and entrepreneurial.

8 How do you think about diversity, equity and inclusion at your firm?

DEI is one of many key factors when hiring and building our team.

9 How do you think about innovation at your firm?

Innovation is paramount. We pride ourselves on being at the bleeding edge of innovation in the investment management industry and aim to be the category creator in every segment we participate in

10 Why is it important that Canada support local emerging alternative managers?

It is important that we foster domestic innovation and entrepreneurship to diversify Canada's resource-based economy into knowledge and IP-based sectors.

11 What makes Canada a great place to invest and start a business?

A business and regulatory regime that is innovation-friendly, along with an active amount of investors supporting startups.

12 What are your 3-5 year goals for your business as you look ahead?

Over the next 3-5 years, we aim to establish Accelerate as the default, go-to brand for alternative investment solutions

13 What headwinds do you see in Canada to grow the alternative investment management industry?

The oligopolistic nature of the big Canadian banks makes competing more difficult than it should be and stifles innovation.

14 What advice do you have for others considering launching a fund business in Canada?

Personal brand is your most highly-valued asset, so foster it and focus on growing it.

15 How can Canada better support emerging alternative managers?

Mandate government pension funds to allocate to domestic investment managers.

16 How has being an AIMA member benefited your firm's growth journey?

AIMA has helped Accelerate's brand recognition through events and content.