



Wednesday June 17, 2026 Halifax, Nova Scotia

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07:30 - 08:30 **Check-in and Networking Breakfast**

08:30 - 08:40 **Emcee Intro & Welcoming Remarks**



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08:40 - 09:00 **2026 Venture Capital Outlook**



Benjamin Bergen
CEO



As we navigate through 2026, the landscape of venture capital continues to evolve amidst challenges such as global conflicts, fluctuating interest rates, and persistent inflation. Despite these hurdles, venture investing has demonstrated resilience, setting new benchmarks and adapting strategies to navigate the shifting market dynamics. We invite you to join us in exploring the venture capital outlook for 2026.

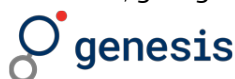
09:00 - 09:45 **The New Reality: How Investors and Emerging Companies Are Navigating the Next 12 Months**
The venture environment has entered a more disciplined phase, but capital is still being deployed where conviction is strong. This candid opening session brings together active investors to share how their priorities, timelines, and risk frameworks are evolving in the year ahead. Panelists will discuss where they are leaning in, what is giving them pause, and how founders should position themselves in today's market. Expect practical insight on fundraising strategy, valuation expectations, and the signals that separate fundable companies from the rest.



09:45 - 10:30 **Under the Radar: Breakout Companies to Watch**

Discover a curated group of emerging companies flying just below the mainstream radar. This fast-paced showcase highlights early but highly promising ventures gaining momentum across Atlantic Canada and beyond. Designed for energy and exposure, companies deliver concise pitches followed by rapid investor feedback, giving the audience a real-time look at how investors assess early opportunities.

Panelists:



Companies:



10:30 - 11:15 **Networking Break**

11:15 - 11:45

Rejected to Acquired: The Fundraising Playbook That Changed Everything



Bobbie Racette
Founder of Virtual Gurus
(acquired)



In the startup world, “no” can be a founder’s most valuable feedback—if used well. Join Bobbie Racette, Founder of Virtual Gurus (acquired), for a candid fireside chat on her journey from early company building through the realities of raising capital in a highly competitive market. After repeated investor rejections, Bobbie chose to listen, refine her strategy, and ultimately re-engage the very investors who once passed. Bobbie will share

how her fundraising approach evolved from early setbacks through Series A preparation and growing acquisition interest, offering practical insight into the resilience, judgment, and clarity required to scale and choose the right path forward.

11:45 - 12:30

Rising Leaders: Female Founders Pitch Showcase

A fast-paced showcase featuring some of the most promising female founders in the region. Selected companies will present their ventures live, offering investors a direct look at emerging opportunities across sectors. With focused pitches and investor-led Q&A, this session is designed to surface bold ideas, strong execution, and the next generation of venture-backable companies. Hosted in collaboration with Startup Atlantic.

Panelists:



Companies:



HomeschoolToGo



AGROGENE SOLUTIONS



12:30 - 13:30

Networking Lunch

13:30 - 14:00

From Momentum to Market Leadership: The Scaleup Journey with NBIF

Scaling a technology company requires more than capital, it demands the right timing, partnerships, and strategic discipline. In this focused session, NBIF joins Versos AI to unpack what it really takes to move from early traction to sustained market leadership. Through a candid conversation, NBIF leadership and Versos AI CEO, Chris Keevill, will share lessons from the scaleup journey, including navigating growth inflection points, aligning investors and operators, and building the foundations for long term value creation.



14:00 - 14:45

Startup Showcase: Venture-Ready Companies

A curated group of venture-ready startups take the stage to present their solutions, traction, and growth plans to an audience of active investors and strategic partners. Keep an eye on companies demonstrating early commercial validation, strong market positioning, and clear pathways to scale.

Panelists:



Companies:



14:45 - 15:30

Networking Break

15:30 - 16:00

AI's Shift to Infrastructure: From Emerging Novelty to Core Competitive Lever

AI is rapidly moving beyond experimentation into core business infrastructure. But where is durable value actually being created? This session cuts through the noise to examine how AI is maturing across the continuum, from early novelty to embedded, mission-critical systems. Industry leaders will explore what separates real AI companies from feature plays, how buyers are evaluating solutions, and what the roadmap looks like as AI becomes foundational across sectors.



16:00 - 16:30

From Elite Performance to Company Building: Lessons from Sport and Scale

What does it take to perform at the highest level — in sport or in business? In this fireside chat, former Olympian Michael Tayler is joined by a founder to explore the shared mindset, discipline, and leadership required to scale a company in competitive environments. Through parallels between elite athletics and entrepreneurship, they'll discuss resilience, goal setting, team building, and the habits that drive high performance — offering practical insights for founders, investors, and leaders navigating growth and scale.



16:30 - 18:30

Legendary Taste of Nova Scotia Lobster Bash Networking Reception



Thursday June 18, 2026

Halifax, Nova Scotia

08:00 - 09:00

Hot Networking Breakfast

09:00 - 09:30

Closing the Gap: Building a Capital Ecosystem That Works



Claudio Rojas
CEO



Canada has the talent, the research base, and the ambition to compete globally, but the early stage of the capital pipeline remains a critical leverage point that continues to be constrained. This keynote examines the structural gaps at the front end of the funding continuum, what a coordinated end-to-end strategy looks like, and how strengthening the foundation creates an economic engine for the next generation of builders.

09:30 - 10:15

Inside the Investor Mindset: What Gets a Deal Done in 2026

Go deeper with active investors on how deals are really getting across the line in today's environment. This session focuses on the practical mechanics of closing rounds, from internal partner dynamics to diligence triggers and timing realities.



10:15 - 11:00

Scaleup Showcase: Companies Ready for Growth Capital

Featuring later-stage companies with meaningful traction, this showcase highlights ventures preparing for significant growth capital, strategic partnerships, or market expansion. These companies represent some of the region's most investable opportunities, with proven demand signals and clear scaling strategies.

Panelists:



Companies:



11:00 - 11:45 **Networking Break**

11:45 - 12:15 **Dual-Use Momentum: Where Commercial Innovation Meets Defence Demand**

Defence and dual-use technologies are rapidly moving into the venture mainstream as governments and allies accelerate modernization efforts. This session examines where commercial innovation is intersecting with defence priorities and what founders and investors need to understand to navigate this increasingly strategic market. Panelists will discuss procurement realities, partnership pathways, and the unique scaling considerations facing dual-use companies.



ONE9

GALAXIA

12:15 - 13:15 **Networking Lunch**

12:35 - 13:15 **Punching Above Our Weight: How Remote Tech Regions Win with Capital-Efficient Models and Modern Digital Go-to-Market Strategies**



Owen Matthews
Founder & Chair of the Board



Silicon Valley's high-burn playbook isn't the only path to success. Across emerging and distributed tech ecosystems, the startups that outperform are disciplined, customer-focused, and revenue-driven from the start. This session explores how modern founders are using capital-efficient strategies and digital go-to-market tactics to validate demand early, acquire customers cost-effectively, and build momentum before heavy product investment, while optimizing visibility in an AI-driven discovery landscape.

Reserve your spot for this outstanding program today!

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Partial Lineup of Alumni

