

Russell Ellis



Russ grew up in Virginia where he attended Virginia Western Community College and earned an AS in data processing, graduating in 1980. After beginning his career as a computer programmer and IT Manager, he started his first company, Data Systems Consulting, Inc., in 1991. There he created an electronic forms automation platform for the life insurance and financial services industries, growing into a multi-million-dollar business and merging with InSystems Technologies in 1998. In 1999, he spun out a separate internet based startup, NextHR.com, which was an internet-based benefits portal to connect small employers and insurers. In 2002, InSystems Technologies was purchased by a publicly traded company, and in 2004 he founded Rusty's Best Corporation where he created and produced a unique line of Bloody Mary Mixes and grew the distribution to span seven states.

In early 2015 Russ became Managing Director of a London based startup for Interactive Achievement, LLC, a US based K-12 online testing and assessment software company. Returning to Roanoke in May 2016 after a successful sale of the company, Russ became the president of Common Wealth Growth, a private equity investment group where he is responsible for deal flow and overall company management. Russ has served his community by serving on numerous boards including the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council, VWCC Educational Foundation, the Foundation for Roanoke Valley, the Taubman Museum of Art, and numerous other non-profit organizations. Russ currently serves on the Board of Directors for MOVA Technologies, Inc.