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LP

I grew up in Queensland, in Australia. I always liked the idea of building something and creating something. I think when I was young, probably because of my father being a **property** developer, I thought I'd be an architect or a developer. But as life happened, I ended up in the technology game.

I was nearly finished with university when I took off to London on a work visa. I just thought I'd come back and finish the degree, but I ended up being a little more fortunate and successful than I expected. I distinctly remember the day I went to the interview with Bankers Trust. I must have been 22 years of age. I saw the trading floor and thought, "Whatever I need to do to get in the door here, I'll do." I ended up working on project teams. We worked on the conversion of the banking systems for the euro currency when they abolished the various currencies. I then worked on big trading systems that Deutsche Bank developed. So I sort of fell into IT.

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After 21/2 years in London, I went home because my visa was up. I ended up getting a job with a big management consulting **firm**. I worked in Indonesia, **Hong Kong** and Singapore designing e-business platforms and solutions. I suppose once I'd had a foundation in big banking and I had a foundation in management consulting, where you learn a lot about various industries very quickly, I felt I knew enough to have a crack at being an entrepreneur and doing it myself.

It was great. We ended up building all the software, systems and engineering to run those big gaming-type stuff on television. And then I **sold** that **company** to another **company**. I was only in my mid- to late 20s then, so I called it the MBA of hard knocks.

I spent a couple years doing consulting work after I **sold** the business, and then I had that urge again to start another **company**. I was doing some work in big banks around security consulting and saw the opportunity and started Covata, and that was eight years ago. About two and a half years ago, we'd been successful in Australia and realized we really needed to get into the U.S. market.

When we decided to launch in the District, it didn't make sense for an Australian guy to come over and set it all up because we were largely entering the intel communities and federal space. The best thing was for me to stay on the **board** and monitor things as a founder and director. Over time, we grew more into the **commercial** sector, and the investors and the clients all said, "Well, you're the natural guy," and it was the right time with my wife and kids to be able to move, so it all worked out well.

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