

Alpha Funds Highlights the New Orbital Economy, AI, and Spaceflight Leadership at The 2026 Helix Mastermind Event

How in orbit capabilities are reshaping the timelines, partnerships, and business models required to scale commercial space activity

SAN FRANCISCO , CA, UNITED STATES, February 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Alpha Funds](#) announced its participation in The Helix Mastermind Winter 2026 event, held at Cavallo Point Lodge in Sausalito, California, in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The private, operator led gathering convened leaders from government, commercial space, and aerospace media to discuss commercialization pathways, national security innovation, and the next decade of space enabled capabilities. Alpha Funds was represented by [J.D. Russell](#), Founder and CEO of Alpha Funds and [Alpha Aerospace](#).



Dominic Gallelo of DARPA asks questions to J.D. Russell, Jameel Janjua, and Ron Rosano

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J.D. Russell

During the event, J.D. Russell participated in a forum focused on the new orbital economy, including how space research and development is evolving, and how in orbit capabilities are reshaping the timelines, partnerships, and business models required to scale commercial space activity.

“The new orbital economy is moving from occasional missions to everyday infrastructure, it will touch daily life through better connectivity, resilient navigation and timing, faster disaster response, climate and environmental monitoring, and a new layer of logistics and data services that people benefit from without even seeing it,” said Russell. “What is changing is not only the technology, it is the operating model, space research

and development is becoming more iterative, more commercial, and more integrated with terrestrial markets.”

The forum was moderated by Dominic Gallelo, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Commercial Strategy leadership. J.D. was joined by Jameel Janjua, Virgin Galactic, commercial spaceflight, and Ron Rosano, Suborbital Flight Journal. The discussion emphasized how leadership developed through spaceflight, including disciplined execution, clear decision making under uncertainty, and mission focused teamwork, translates directly into high performing business operations. Ron Rosano and Jameel Janjua underscored that these leadership attributes are increasingly important as the space sector matures from breakthrough demonstrations into repeatable, scalable operations.

“AI and space are the two defining investment categories of this decade, AI turns data into decisions at scale, space changes what data we can collect and where we can operate,” Russell added. “The most durable opportunities will sit at the intersection, where AI enables autonomy, planning, and productivity, and space provides the platform, the vantage point, and the distribution.”

During the forum, participants also referenced SpaceX’s announced acquisition of xAI, which SpaceX. Russell responded with an extemporaneous observation about the convergence of frontier industries and operator led execution at scale.

“Elon Musk has dominated multiple categories of business that are now coming together to form super mega companies combining AI and space,” said Russell. “In the long arc, I believe robotics



Blair Lacort, Dominic Gallelo, Jameel Janjua, Ron Rosano, and J.D. Russell



J.D. Russell (Astronaut and Founder & CEO of Alpha) answering a question from Dominic Gallelo, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)

and autonomy will prepare early off world infrastructure, including cultivating food systems and assembling shelters, long before large human crews arrive.”

The Helix Mastermind

J.D. Russell commends the work of Blair LaCorte, the founder and host of The Helix Mastermind. Through Helix, Blair convenes senior operators across multiple sectors of business to foster candid peer learning, strengthen collaboration across the ecosystem, and accelerate practical progress on complex, mission driven initiatives.

About Alpha Funds

Alpha Funds is an investment firm focused on backing exceptional operators and acquiring, building, and scaling businesses across aerospace and adjacent industrial markets.

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