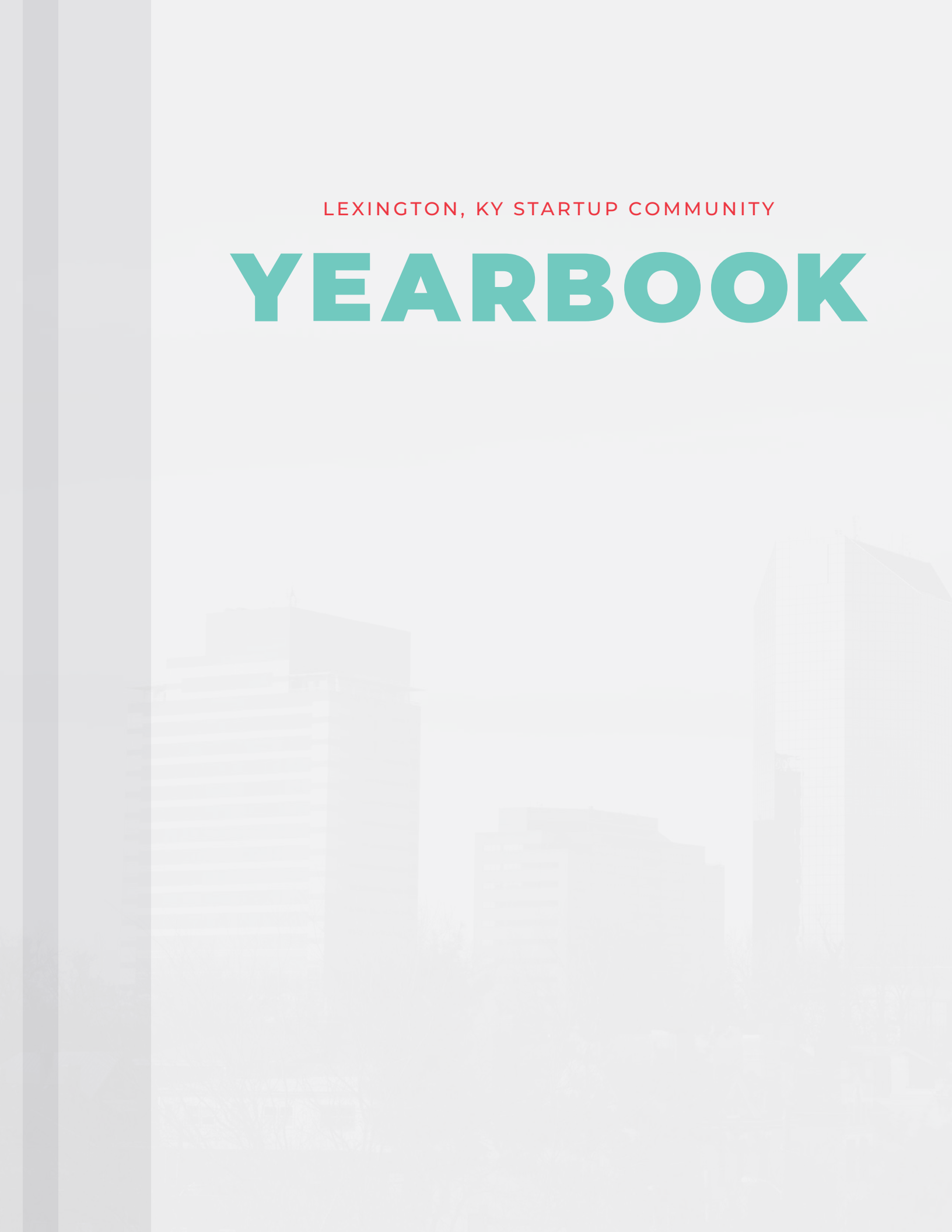


LEXINGTON, KY STARTUP COMMUNITY

YEARBOOK



MEET OUR COMMUNITY

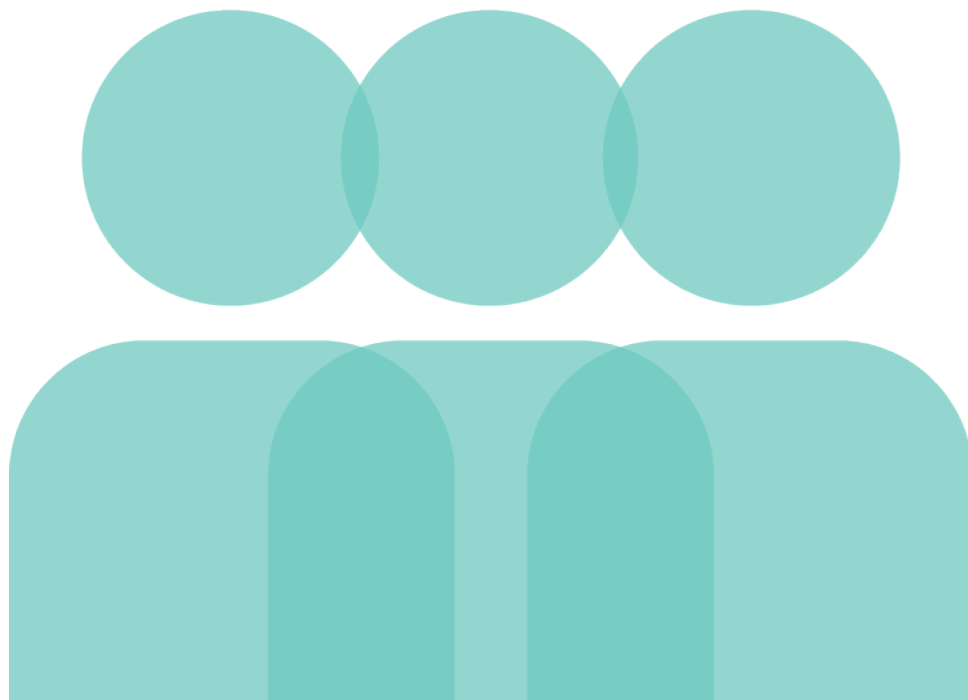


Welcome to the directory of players in the Lexington startup community. Lexingtonians have a lot to offer - find someone who's offering what you're looking for.

To note - this is the first version of this directory. We know we've missed people and we're asking our community to help us add everyone who should be here!

The only two qualifications we have are:
They are in the Lexington region.
They are able and willing to add value to entrepreneurs.

Please send your suggestions using the Google Form linked here and we will reach out to them.



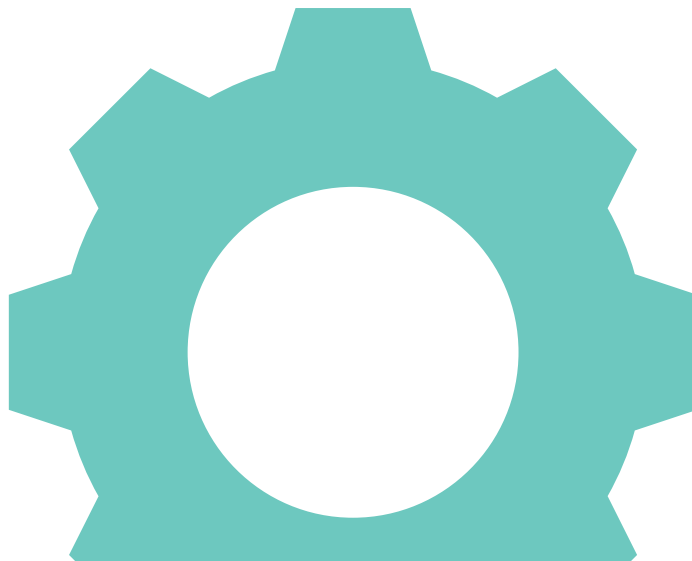
HOW TO USE THE YEARBOOK



All names and LinkedIn icons are hyperlinked,
just click and go!

Need to find something specific?
Use command+f to search.

Utilize our tags and categories on each profile
to see what that player's strengths are.



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Tony Bonner

Tony Schmidt

Warren Nash





Amanda Murray

Amanda Murray is Account Director at APAX Software, Awesome Inc's sister company. Originally from Lexington, she went to ECU to receive her B.A. in Elementary Education and Teaching. She is responsible for getting Awesome Inc's web developer bootcamp off the ground and she also plays a big part in the sales cycle for APAX software.

When she's not working, Amanda enjoys spending time with her husband, Nathaniel, and their newborn daughter.

ORGANIZATIONS

APAX Software - Account Director

STRENGTHS

Community Builder
Connector
Software
Marketing
Sales

INTERESTS

Hosting Cookouts
Hosting Gamenights
Camping
Cooking
Learning New Things
Scuba Diving





Ben Self

Ben Self is a pioneer in the Lexington community as he was one of the first to establish a craft brewery in the area - West Sixth Brewing. Originally from Lexington, Ben was an experienced entrepreneur before starting West Sixth. For 6 years, he built and ran a digital strategy and technology company called Blue State Digital that worked for Barack Obama's 2008 and 2012 election campaigns among other clients. Currently, Ben is serving as the Chairman of the Kentucky Democratic Party and works hard to make Kentucky a better place to live and work.

When he's not working, Ben enjoys traveling with his family and spending time with his children.

ORGANIZATIONS

West 6th Brewery - Founder
Democratic Party - Chairman
Blue State Digital - Founder
Blue Grass Angels - Fund Manager

STRENGTHS

Beer
Brewery
Alcohol
Entertainment
Entrepreneur
Politics
Founder
Bar

INTERESTS

Travel
Family





Brian Evans

Brian Evans is a best-selling author, small business owner, and entrepreneur located in Lexington, KY. During his career, he has started multiple successful businesses and provided value to a multitude of clients through his marketing expertise. Brian also is an avid real estate investor and enjoys finding new investment opportunities around Lexington.

When he's not working, Brian enjoys spending time with his wife and kids.

ORGANIZATIONS

BT Web Group - President
BT Investments Group - President

STRENGTHS

Founder
Entrepreneur
Investor
Digital Marketing
Real Estate
Author

INTERESTS

Family
Free Masons





Brian Lawless

Brian Lawless is the Brand Manager for Alltech's North America operations and serves as a liaison between Alltech and the Lexington Startup Community. Alltech is a supporter of the entrepreneurial community because they realize that the state as a whole will benefit from the businesses that Kentucky entrepreneurs start.

When Brian is not working, he enjoys playing soccer and listening to EDM music.

ORGANIZATIONS

AllTech - Brand Manager for North America

STRENGTHS

Agriculture
Innovation

INTERESTS

Playing soccer
Going to EDM festivals





Brian Luftman

Brian is a Lexington native and as Kentucky of an entrepreneur as there is. After starting a successful options trading company in Chicago, Brian returned to Lexington and started American Farm Investors, a full-service farmland investment company that produces corn and wheat for the Kentucky Bourbon Industry. He is also part of the Bluegrass Angels investment group and sits on the board for multiple Kentucky startups, ranging from the bourbon industry to management software.

Brian's vision for Lexington is for the city to become synonymous with startups and entrepreneurship. He would also like to see a big corporation come to Lexington and give more opportunities to recent graduates to start a career in Lexington. Brian believes that the startup community in Lexington is one of its biggest assets and he stays very involved in all aspects.

ORGANIZATIONS

American Farm Investors - Founder, President
Bluegrass Angels - Member
Gryphon Environmental - Chairman of Board
Hippo Management Software - Board member
Thynk Health - Board member
Never Say Die Bourbon
Luftrade - Founder

STRENGTHS

Investor
Agriculture
Entrepreneur
Bourbon
Board Member

INTERESTS

Skiing
Golf
Lake
Coaching his kids





Brian Raney

Brian Raney has been an advocate for the Lexington startup community since stepping foot on campus at UK. While in college, Brian started several companies and organizations with varying degrees of success. One of his first companies was a company called BookExchange which provided a solution for the monopoly that the campus bookstore had to buy and sell textbooks. Brian started the “comany” at UK and was able to expand it to several different campuses. After graduating with a degree in Computer Science, Brian went on to start APAX Software, a custom software development company. This company recently became an INC 5000 company. He later started Awesome Inc with several of his college friends and has used Awesome Inc as a means to impact countless lives in the Lexington community and beyond. Brian also launched the Cherub Fund to invest in early stage companies.

When Brian is not working, he enjoys snowboarding, surfing, playing soccer, and traveling with his friends and family.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Founder & CEO

APAX Software - Founder & CEO

University of Kentucky - Entrepreneur in Residence

Techstars, Startup Weekend - Lexington Organizer

STRENGTHS

Founder
Entrepreneur
CEO
Community Builder
Father
Mentor
Management
Real Estate Investing
Business Planning
Technology
Investment

INTERESTS

Family
Hiking
Surfing
Skiing/Snowboarding
Travel





Bryce Anderson

Bryce Anderson is a successful Lexington entrepreneur who is responsible for recognizable local brands such as Vinaigrette and Breakout Games. Originally from Lexington, he started his entrepreneurial journey by starting a car detailing business while he was in high school. After going to college in Washington D.C. for IT Consulting, Bryce returned to Kentucky to open the first Orange Leaf franchise in Lexington with his friends. He believes that Lexington's culture of common success and willingness to help others succeed are what makes Lexington special. Bryce stays involved in the community through Awesome Inc and staying involved at his church, Hope Presbyterian. When not working, he enjoys playing tennis, biking, and exploring Lexington's art and music scene.

ORGANIZATIONS

Breakout Games - Owner
Viniagrette Salad Kitchen - Owner
Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt - Franchisee
Commerce Lex - Board Member
TechStars, Startup Weekend - Lexington Organizer

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Social Entrepreneur
Arts
Real Estate
Restaurateur
Entertainment
Ecommerce

INTERESTS

Tennis
Volunteering with Church
Art/Music
Biking





Chase Fairchild

Chase Fairchild is a Lexington native that has worked hard to make Lexington a better place to live and work. As a Lexington native, Chase has been involved with several groups and businesses across the city. He's worked in non-profits, launched successful retail business, and helped scale start-ups into successful businesses. His most recent projects are dedicated to cultivating creativity in Lexington, KY. Currently, he is cofounder of Bolt Marketing and Manchester Coffee Co.

In his spare time, Chase loves spending time with his wife Emily, enjoying the city of Lexington, live music, traveling, food, wine, and film.

ORGANIZATIONS

Manchester Coffee Co. - Cofounder
Bolt Marketing - Cofounder

STRENGTHS

Founder
Marketing
Coffee
Connector
Social Media
Founder
Entrepreneur
Community Builder

INTERESTS

Music
Art
Theater
Coffee
People





Craig Avery

Craig Avery is President of Avery Consulting, Founder of 210 Leaders, and an Elder at Southland Christian Church. Craig got his start at the Fuller, Mossbarger, Scott, & May Engineering Firm, where he quickly became a partner after joining the firm as a new graduate of UK. After the firm was successfully sold, Craig began to pursue his true passion of missionary work through teaching business & entrepreneurship in underdeveloped countries.

When Craig is not pursuing one of his passion projects, he enjoys cycling, mentoring the next generation of business leaders, and creating community within the church.

ORGANIZATIONS

Avery Consulting - President
210 Leaders - Leader
Southland Christian Church - Elder
Fuller, Mossbarger, Scott, & May - President
Stantec - VP

STRENGTHS

Engineering
Community Builder
Leader
Mentor
Missionary

INTERESTS

Cycling
Church
Entrepreneurship
Travel
Golf





Dan Beldy

Dan Beldy is a Venture Capitalist with 22 years of experience in the industry. After starting his own fund, Dan worked his way to becoming the Managing Director of Disney's venture capital affiliate, Steamboat Ventures. Through his work as a venture capitalist in Lexington, Dan has a large network and enjoys connecting people to each other and to resources. His current fund, Airwing Ventures, is headquartered in Lexington and focuses on finding high growth companies that are working on digital services.

When Dan is not working, he enjoys traveling and engaging with the Lexington startup community.

ORGANIZATIONS

Airwing Venture
Steamboat Ventures (Disney's Venture Fund)

STRENGTHS

Venture Capital
Investor
Advisor
Finance
Founder
Entrepreneur

INTERESTS

Travel
Sports





David Goodnight

David Goodnight is a fund manager for the Bluegrass Angels group and has a background in finance. He graduated from the University of Texas in Austin and was the only externally hired executive at Lexmark. From there, he went on to join Jacob's Automation to guide them through a successful exit. He enjoys running on the Legacy Trail in Lexington, playing golf at Griffin Gate, and attending all UK Sporting events from football to women's soccer. He is an adjunct professor at UK and is also an advisor for MEP Equine Solutions - Parasight. David is highly involved in the startup and entrepreneurial ecosystem in Lexington and frequently attends events hosted by UK, Base110, and Awesome Inc.

When meeting, he prefers Cup of Commonwealth for coffee meetings and Saul Good for business lunch meetings.

ORGANIZATIONS

Bluegrass Angles - Fund Manager
University of Kentucky - Professor Adjunct
MEP Parasight - Advisor

STRENGTHS

Investor
Professor
Executive
Finance
Running
Advisor
Entrepreneur
Consultant
Business Development
Father

INTERESTS

<<Interests>>





Don Skaggs

Don Skaggs is a passionate entrepreneur & inventor that has a long history of successful ventures. Through his work with The Fulson Group & Inventors Network KY, he has helped guide many inventors through the process of turning an invention idea into an actual product. Through his work in the invention industry, he has developed an extensive knowledge about intellectual property and how to protect it.

During his free time, Don enjoys examining and dissecting businesses for fun.

ORGANIZATIONS

The Fulson Group - President
Inventors Network KY - President
Blink Technologies - CEO
3Gen Scientific - Founder & CEO
US Biotex Corporation - Cofounder, VP of Marketing

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Founder
CEO
Inventor
Innovation
Intellectual Property

INTERESTS

Dissecting Businesses





Doug Van Pelt

Doug was born and raised in New Jersey and has lived in Texas, Michigan, and as of 3 years ago became a Kentuckian with his wonderful wife, Kate Van Pelt. He has a PhD in exercise physiology from the University of Michigan and currently performs research at the University of Kentucky. Most of his days you can find him embracing the journey of building Synaptek, practicing jiu-jitsu, or hanging out with his wife and their dog, Buddy.

ORGANIZATIONS

University of Kentucky - Researcher

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Organization
Presentations
Scientific Thought-Process
Exericse Physiology

INTERESTS

Jiu-jitsu
Homebrewing Beer
Fishing
Dallas Cowboys



Doyle Friskney

Doyle Friskney is the former CTO of the University of Kentucky, where he also served as Director of Communications and Network Systems as well as a professor. Dr. Friskney played a large role in bringing technological advances to UK before the internet was widespread. After his time as CTO, Dr. Friskney spent time as a professor teaching courses in the entrepreneurial certificate program at UK.

When Dr. Friskney is not working, he enjoys spending time with his family and traveling.>>

ORGANIZATIONS

Kentucky Council for Postsecondary Education - Senior Fellow of Innovation
UK - CTO Emeritus

STRENGTHS

Education
Technology
Mentorship
Professor

INTERESTS

Education
Travel





Drura Parrish

Drura Parrish successfully started and sold his company, MakeTime, to Xometry in 2018. MakeTime was a platform that matched consumers that had manufacturing needs with manufacturers that had spare production time. After Xometry acquired MakeTime, Drura came on as the Executive VP of Platform and helped guide them through the acquisition transition. Drura is now a Partner of RVLP Ventures.

During his free time, Drura enjoys traveling and spending time with his family.

ORGANIZATIONS

RVLP Ventures - Partner
Xometry - Executive Vice President of Platform
MakeTime - Founder & CEO

STRENGTHS

Manufacturing
Investor
Founder
Entrepreneur
Architecture

INTERESTS

Travel





Drew Curtis

Drew Curtis is founder & CEO of Fark, a news aggregator and an edited social networking news site. As a successful entrepreneur and investor, Drew has a knack for solving “impossible” problems and making things work. A fun fact about Fark; the creators of Reddit got the idea for Reddit because of Fark, and Drew works closely with the founders to improve the Reddit platform and implement new ideas.

When Drew is not working, he enjoys playing soccer and cycling.

ORGANIZATIONS

Fark - CEO
Retirely - Partner
Countable - investor
Vator - Investor
Gun - Board Member

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Founder
Technology
News

INTERESTS

Reading
Cycling
Travling
Soccer





Drew Sutton

Drew is a dedicated and engaged member of Lexington's startup community and can often be found providing business strategy coaching via his company, Barksdale Rutherford. One of Drew's biggest strengths is real world business strategy and how to implement it for real companies. Drew's day job is Senior Engineer at Lockheed Martin, where he has assisted in developing 33 patents. He sees Lexington's community and cost of living as being it's biggest assets, and the lack of young talent as it's biggest drawback.

Drew enjoys helping his kids build custom 3D printed Nerf guns in his free time.

ORGANIZATIONS

Barksdale Rutherford - Founder
Lockheed Martin -Chief Engineer
Awesome Inc - Business Coach

STRENGTHS

Management
engineer
innovation
agile
disruptive
3D Printing
Father

INTERESTS

Spending time with kids
3D Printing
Business Coaching





El Hoffman

El is a survivor of sexual assault and intimate partner violence as well as someone who overcame 11 years of a sexual pain disorder that resulted from her assault. Through her journey she developed a deep passion for disrupting the sexual wellness industry. Her mission is to break the taboo that prevents voices, healing and innovation. By founding Luv Health Co in 2019, she is working to change the sexual wellness landscape allowing individuals to access trusted and compassionate professionals and begin to thrive into their health, bodies and sexuality. Entrepreneurship and sexual health are El's driving force to change the game in some of our most pressing issues around the world.

ORGANIZATIONS

Luv Health Co. - Founder and CEO
Virago Nation - Founder and Executive Director
KEENStart - Program Director for KY Pitch
Mortar - Business Coach

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Communication
Startup Development
Event Coordination
Fundraising
Community Outreach
Health & Wellness

INTERESTS

Running
Dogs
Sexual Health & Wellness





Emily Wehrle

Emily Wehrle is Director of Operations at Awesome Inc. She came to Lexington for college when she attended Asbury University to play volleyball and has lived here ever since. Emily is dedicated to growing the startup ecosystem in Lexington through her work at Awesome Inc and serves as a connector and community builder.

When she is not working, Emily enjoys spending time with her husband, Evan. Together they spend their time with an organization called Serve the City, where they work with underprivileged families to improve their quality of life.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Director of Operations
TechStars, Startup Weekend - Lexington Organizer

STRENGTHS

Connector
Community Builder
Operations

INTERESTS

Movies
Family
Service projects





Emmanuel Smith

Emmanuel Smith is a New Ventures Manager at UK's Office of Technology Commercialization and is also a Field Artillery Officer at the Kentucky Army National Guard. Emmanuel utilizes his position at UKOTC to help guide startups through providing resources and implementing lean startup methodology and has also endeavored in multiple entrepreneurial ventures of his own. Originally from Detroit, Emmanuel made his way to Kentucky via a business degree from Kentucky State University and fell in love with the state.

When Emmanuel is not working, he enjoys playing the piano, competing in any form of competitive sports, hanging out with his kids and mentoring at-risk youth.

ORGANIZATIONS

UKOTC - New Ventures Manager
Kentucky Army National Guard - Field Artillery Officer

STRENGTHS

Community Builder
Connector
Innovation
Commercialization

INTERESTS

Hanging with his kids
Playing piano
Competitive sports
Vounteering
Mentoring at risk youth





Eric Hartman

Eric is the associate director, New Ventures, for the Office of Technology Commercialization (OTC), where works with startups and entrepreneurs. Prior to joining the University of Kentucky, Eric served as program director for the Kentucky SBIR/STTR Matching Funds Program at Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation. Eric graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1997 with a BS in Electrical and Electronics Engineering and in 2000 with a MS in Biomedical Engineering. He co-founded customKYnetics, Inc. in 2000, a medical device startup company developing novel rehabilitation technologies for the physical therapy market.

Eric is working diligently to build the startup community in Lexington. He works daily with entrepreneurs and investors and serves as one of the top connectors in the city. Eric helps organize events such as SPARK meetups, Startup Breakfast, Lexington Entrepreneurship Day, and Global Entrepreneurship Week. He also works with the Bluegrass Angels and helps prepare companies for pitches to angel investors within the group.

Eric is from Columbus, OH and believes that if you're not 10 minutes early then you are (most likely) late.

ORGANIZATIONS

University of Kentucky
customKYnetics, Inc.

STRENGTHS

Community Builder
Mentor
Entrepreneur
Medical Devices
Biomedical
Engineering
Investment

INTERESTS

Medical Devices
Networking





Eric Pahl

Eric Pahl is a healthcare tech entrepreneur that moved his company from Iowa to Kentucky in 2019. He cofounded OmniLife, a healthcare software that vastly improves the process of matching donated organs with those who need them. Eric considers successfully navigating OmniLife through the \$1.5 million SBIR Phase II Grant as his first success in Lexington. He enjoys running, biking, and hanging out with his dog when he is not working.

ORGANIZATIONS

Omni Life - Founder, CEO

STRENGTHS

entrepreneur
HIPPA
remote working
SBIR
Grants
fundraising
BGA

INTERESTS

Biking
Running
Hanging with dog





Evan Knowles

Evan Knowles is one of the more connected people in the Lexington community and is considered a thought leader for technology in the startup community as well. When Evan was just 20 years old, he was hired as Fooji's first employee and helped build the company's sales team from scratch. After realizing that he had plateaued at Fooji, he left to join another local startup in town, Avail. During his time working for startups, Evan started a podcast focusing on business and technology in Kentucky called Middle Tech Podcast. Evan also enjoys real estate investing, researching technology companies, and networking.

When he's not working, Evan enjoys working on side projects and exploring Lexington's nightlife scene.

ORGANIZATIONS

Avail - Enterprise Account Executive
Middle Tech - Cohost & Cofounder
Defiant Capital - Founding Partner
Fooji - Senior Client Partner
Finance U - VP, Community Engagement

STRENGTHS

Real Estate Investor
Technology
Sales
Podcast

INTERESTS

Technology
Podcasts
Travel
Sports
Music





Garrett Fahrbach

Garrett Fahrbach is a community builder with a passion for people. He serves as the Creative and Relationship Director at Awesome Inc, where he works to maintain an ongoing relationship with members of the Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame. In addition to that, he also hosts and produces the Awesome Inc Podcast that highlights people pursuing their definition of AWESOME and partners with colleges to educate students on thinking like an entrepreneur. Garrett's charisma and extrovertedness make him a perfect fit for these rolls and his passion for his work is palpable.

When Garrett isn't working, he enjoys creating and directing music for his church, crushing his daily Apple watch fitness challenges, playing ultimate frisbee, and making memories with his friends.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Creative & Relationship Specialist
Awesome Rentals, LLC - COO

STRENGTHS

Connector
Community Builder
Podcast
Music
Networking

INTERESTS

Music
Videography
Photography
Mediterranean food





George Dustin Bell

George (Dustin) Bell is a student entrepreneur with a passion for business and marketing. Currently a student at UK, George started his first company - Life Off U - right after his sophomore year of college and quickly learned the processes and best practices for building a business. Because of his reputation for networking and business on campus, George went on to become President of the Entrepreneurship Club and grew the club to one of the most recognized clubs at UK. Currently, George is serving as CEO of his new startup, Synerjii, a company that exists to manage app and web development.

When George is not working, he enjoys meeting new people and engaging with the entrepreneurial community.

ORGANIZATIONS

Entrepreneurship Club, UK - President
Synerjii - CEO
Life Off U - CEO

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Founder
Networking
Student
Leadership

INTERESTS

Networking





Gina Greathouse

Gina is a native of Franklin County and has been working in the field of economic development for over 30 years. Doing economic development for the Bluegrass since April of 1995, she is currently the Executive Vice President for Economic Development and is responsible for Commerce Lexington's economic development mission. Prior to her current appointment, she was employed by the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development from 1990 to 1995. She has traveled throughout the state, country and internationally working to recruit companies to Kentucky and the Bluegrass Region. A resident of Fayette County, Gina graduated from the University of Kentucky's College of Business and Economics with high departmental honors in 1988. Gina has served the community in several capacities throughout her career. Most notably, she is co-chair for Central Kentucky's Bluegrass Alliance. She currently sits on the boards of LexArts, the Business and Education Network and the World Trade Center of Kentucky, and the Kentucky Association for Economic Development. She is a member of the Kentucky Association for Economic Development; Member of the Japan America Society of Kentucky; member of the International Economic Development Council. She is an avid horse racing fan and owner. She and her two dogs, Buddy and Chillie Dawg reside in the heart of downtown Lexington.

ORGANIZATIONS

Commerce Lexington - Executive VP of Economic Development

STRENGTHS

Community Builder
Economic Development
Connector

INTERESTS

Horse Racing





Ian McClure

Ian McClure is a KY native that has significant experience in the fields of innovation, intellectual property, and entrepreneurship. As Executive Director of the Office of Technology Commercialization at UK, Ian has done great things for Lexington and the university in relation to encouraging and executing on commercialization of university research. He sees Lexington's cohesiveness as a community as one of it's biggest strengths, and the lack of innovation focused wealth as one of the area's weaknesses. Ian enjoys spending time with his family, golfing, and watching college sports in his free time.

ORGANIZATIONS

University of Kentucky, Office of Technology Commercialization - Executive Director
Commonwealth Commercialization Center - Cofounder
Crimson Mission Inc. - Board Member
AUTM - Board Member
Chicago Kent College of Law - Adjunct Professor of IP Management
Gatton College of Business - Adjunct Professor

STRENGTHS

Board Member
Founder
Entrepreneur
Commercialization
Intellectual Property

INTERESTS

Kids
Golf
College sports





Jacqueline Benson

Jacqueline Benson is the Lead Designer at Awesome Inc and also an entrepreneur herself. Anything aesthetically pleasing in the Awesome Inc office can probably be credited to Jacqueline. Aside from making Awesome Inc look good, she also assists the Awesome Inc Fellowship companies with design and branding help. Outside of her work at Awesome Inc, Jacqueline also owns her own design company that provides her clients with creative and appealing design work.

When she's not working, Jacqueline enjoys spending time with her dogs and her husband, Brandon.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Lead Designer
Lexington Design Co. - Founder + Designer
Lexington Coffee Week - Cofounder
Lexington Coffee Trail - Founder
Eastern Kentucky University - Alumni

STRENGTHS

Design
Graphic Design
Entrepreneur
Freelance
Web Design
Branding

INTERESTS

Crafting
Dogs
Teaching
Baking
Coffee + Tea





James McCollum

James is from Lexington and has been in the tech scene here for just over 10 years. Currently, he's working as a product developer/product manager for a local startup. He spends his free time with his daughter, girlfriend, and their 4 dogs, working on Synaptek, on a jiu-jitsu mat, and has recently picked fishing back up after a long hiatus.

ORGANIZATIONS

BCTC's Information Management and Design Department - Advisory Board

STRENGTHS

- Entrepreneur
- User Research
- Product Design
- Product Development
- Product Management
- Flutter

INTERESTS

- Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu
- Fishing
- Camping
- Hiking
- Video Games
- Sports





Jason Jacobson

Jason Jacobson is Founder and CEO of Precari Capital, aa investment company that he started after successfully selling Netgain to a private equity firm. After graduating from UK with degrees in Finance & Management, Jason worked for his family's company, Netgain, where he worked his way to CEO. AS CEO, he successfully grew the business and navigated Netgain through aquiring multiple companies.

When Jason is not working, he enjoys playing golf, traveling, and spending time with his kids.

ORGANIZATIONS

Precari Capital - Founder & CEO
NetGain - CEO

STRENGTHS

Investor
Founder
Entrepreneur
Connector
Real Estate

INTERESTS

Golf
Travel
Hanging with his kids





Josh Lau

Josh Lau is a Lexington native that has found a way to give back to Lexington by starting and growing a successful startup here. He is founder and CEO of Nymb! Systems, a patient management platform used by clinics to keep better records on their patients. Josh came up with the idea for Nymb! Systems after experiencing the headache that patient management caused clinics.

When Josh is not working, he enjoys playing golf, videogames, and traveling.

ORGANIZATIONS

Nymb! Systems - Founder & CEO

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Founder
CEO
Software

INTERESTS

Golf
Video games
Travel





Justin Hall

Born in Pikeville, KY in 1974 Justin grew up in the hills of eastern Kentucky. He graduated from Elkhorn City High School in 1993 and Pikeville College (now UPike) in the summer of 1997. Shortly after graduating from UPike, Hall discovered an interest in technology, specifically web related technologies and programming. In 2000, while recovering from back surgery and unemployed, Hall taught himself how to code.

For the next 19 years Hall worked with Fortune 500 companies, non-for-profit organizations, consulting firms, Ad agencies, and small to medium sized businesses throughout the United States, Canada, and Sweden. He worked with companies associated with kitchen and bath, coal, health and wellness, and sports industries, as well as, military and government sectors. He continues to work in the field of software development. In 2017, Hall was one of Fast Company's 100 Most Creative People in Business for helping start Bit Source, a company located in eastern Kentucky that employs former coal miners as coders.

Justin is the Lead Instructor for Awesome Inc's Web Developer Bootcamp.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Lead Instructor
Bit Source - CTO

STRENGTHS

Developer
Coding
Appalachia
Coal
Teacher
Instructor
Education
Bootcamp

INTERESTS

Family
Coding
Teaching





Kate Van Pelt

Born in Pikeville, KY in 1974 Justin grew up in the hills of eastern Kentucky. He graduated from Elkhorn City High School in 1993 and Pikeville College (now UPike) in the summer of 1997. Shortly after graduating from UPike, Hall discovered an interest in technology, specifically web related technologies and programming. In 2000, while recovering from back surgery and unemployed, Hall taught himself how to code.

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Justin is the Lead Instructor for Awesome Inc's Web Developer Bootcamp.

ORGANIZATIONS

University of Kentucky - Researcher studying Alzheimer's Disease

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Brain Nerd
Statistics
Data Science
Machine Learning
Community Outreach
Health & Wellness

INTERESTS

Ice Hockey
Boston Sports
Running
Cooking
Baking
Learning to Paint and Play Guitar



Keith Kurzendoerfer

Keith Kurzendoerfer is President at APAX Software where he oversees and manages their web and app development projects. As a member of the Awesome Inc community, he has years of experience in turning ideas into reality. Aside from APAX Software, he also has experience working with local companies such as Netgain and Accenture.

When Keith is not working, he enjoys playing with his dogs and hanging out with his family.

ORGANIZATIONS

APAX Software - President

STRENGTHS

Software
Community Builder
Project Manager

INTERESTS

Dogs
Family





Keith McMunn

Keith is the Director of Awesome Inc's Fellowship program that provides guidance and support to eight Kentucky based startups each year. The Fellowship has assisted startups in creating over 275 jobs and raising more than \$42 million in investments to date. Along with the Fellowship program, Keith is also MC for Awesome Inc's pitch competition, 5 Across, as well as Organizer/Facilitator for Lexington's Startup Weekend. Keith graduated from the University of Kentucky with a degree in Accounting and was involved with Christian Student Fellowship (CSF) at UK.

Keith enjoys spending time with his wife, Melody, and their boy, Maxwell Jude McMunn (Wells for short).

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Director of Fellowship Program
Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame
5 Across - Emcee
Whyoo - Advisor
TechStars, Startup Weekend - Lexington Organizer

STRENGTHS

Community builder
Mentor
Pitch Competition
Father

INTERESTS

Wells (his son)
Hockey
Electric Skateboard
Biking
Coffee





Koby Hastings

Koby Hastings is a developer in Lexington with experience in multiple startups. After receiving a degree in Computer Science from ECU, Koby dove right into the startup scene, gaining experience with multiple technology startup companies. After getting a taste of startups, Koby decided to give entrepreneurship a shot and start his first company - Tech29. After running Tech29 for two years, he had the idea for his second company, Leadrilla. Leadrilla is a lead generation and management platform that is currently Koby's main focus.

When Koby is not working, he enjoys playing golf and hanging out with his wife and daughter.

ORGANIZATIONS

Leadrilla - Founder & CEO

Tech29 - Founder & CEO

Masterworks.io - Senior Blockchain Engineer

Hijro - Lead Software Engineer

Software Masters, Inc. - Lead Software Engineer

STRENGTHS

Developer

Coding

Blockchain

Founder

Entrepreneur

CEO

INTERESTS

Golf

Family





Kyle Raney

Kyle Raney is a developer and project manager at Awesome Inc, where he primarily works with Awesome Inc's coding education programs. With entrepreneurial experience himself, he utilizes his knowledge to provide the students with the knowledge they will need to succeed in the real world. Kyle graduated from the University of Kentucky with a degree in computer science in 2016 and is an avid Kentucky Wildcats fan.

During his free time, he enjoys skiing, playing/watching soccer, and hanging out with his wife, Kayla.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Project Manager
Spinny Top - Cofounder

STRENGTHS

Developer
Coding
Entrepreneur
Education

INTERESTS

Skiing
Soccer
Surfing
Travel





Laura Halligan

Laura Halligan is a New Ventures Manager at UK's Office of Technology Commercialization and is an involved supporter of the entrepreneurial community in Lexington. Through her position, she has a large network in Lexington and enjoys connecting people in the community to resources.

When she's not working, Laura enjoys hiking (specifically, to lighthouses) and playing with her dogs.

ORGANIZATIONS

UKOTC - New Ventures Manager

STRENGTHS

Community Builder
Connector
Innovation
Commercialization

INTERESTS

Hiking (to lighthouses)
Playing with her dogs





Liz Brown Evans

Liz Brown Evans is one of the most engaged networkers in Lexington and is constantly working to meet and connect with people. After going to Wheaton College in Chicago, she moved to New York City to pursue a career in sales and found her place working for OshKosh B'gosh. After a couple years in New York, she was asked to join Old World Timber to help build their sales processes. She currently fills the roles of both Marketing Director for Awesome Inc and Account Executive for Old World Timber, while also staying involved in her church, as well as the boards for both the Builders Industry Association and the Jobs Fund.

When she's not working, Liz enjoys running, hiking, and spending time with her Husband, Eric, and their dog, Titus.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Marketing Director
Old World Timber - Account Executive
Builders Industry Association - Board Member
Jobs Fund - Board Member
Embrace Church - Congregation Member

STRENGTHS

Community Builder
Connector
Networking
Sales
Marketing

INTERESTS

Running
Hiking





Logan Jones

Logan Jones is originally from Ashland, Kentucky and has a passion for seeing the Commonwealth excel and grow. After graduating with a degree in Finance and Marketing at UK, he joined the Awesome Inc team as Project Coordinator, working to grow the startup community while also taking on various process and space improvement projects. During his time at UK, Logan started KY Elevated Drone Imaging to teach himself the processes that go into starting a business and he still serves as the President and Head Pilot of his company. As a result of his passion for entrepreneurship and Kentucky, Logan joined the Middle Tech Podcast to help highlight the stories and people that make up the vibrant startup community of Kentucky and surrounding areas.

When Logan isn't working, he enjoys spending time at Cave Run Lake, skiing, playing guitar, and enjoying the Lexington nightlife scene with his friends.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Project Coordinator
Middle Tech Podcast - Cohost
Flywheel Productions - Account Executive
KY Elevated Drone Imaging - Founder & CEO
University of Kentucky - Alumni

STRENGTHS

Community Building
Drone
Podcast
Technology
Entrepreneur

INTERESTS

Boating
College Sports
Hiking
Travel
Skiing
Wakeboarding





Luke Murray

Luke Murray is a man that is known to wear many different hats. From cofounder of Awesome Inc, to doctor, to pilot, he keeps himself busy by going and doing. While attending college at UK, Luke became close friends with Brian Raney through BookExchange, and the two went on to build Awesome Inc together. Today, most of Luke's time is spent in Pikeville, Kentucky where he serves as a Hospitalist for the Pikeville Medical Center. Recently, he decided to get his pilot's license to make his commute from Lexington to Pikeville a bit easier.

On top of Luke's many professions, he also has many hobbies and interests including snowboarding, wakeboarding, playing guitar, surfing, and traveling.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Cofounder
Murray Medical - Physician

STRENGTHS

Doctor
Entrepreneur
Founder
Pilot
Investor

INTERESTS

Travel
Flying
Relationship building
Surfing
Snowboarding
Wakeboarding
Guitar





Madison Hartung

Madison Hartung is an Operations Consultant for Windstream, and founder of both Enhanced Innovation Consulting & Smart Rotation. After getting her Master's Degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, she dove into the startup scene via Startup Weekend, where she officially launched Smart Rotation - a gymnastics scheduling software. Madison is passionate about networking and promoting the women entrepreneurs that are making a difference in the Lexington community.

When Madison is not working, she enjoys competing horses, hiking with her dogs, and traveling.

ORGANIZATIONS

Windstream - Operations Consultant
Enhanced Innovation Consulting - Founder
Smart Rotation - Founder

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Founder
Innovation
Networking

INTERESTS

Riding horses
Hiking with her dogs





Maggie Collofello

Maggie Collofello is one of the newer members of Lexington's startup scene and brings a new and fresh perspective after moving to Lexington from Chicago. In Chicago, she served as Community Manager for a large coworking space called MakeOffices. Currently, Maggie serves as Awesome Inc's Director of Workspace and Events where she deals with everything from the logistics of the many events hosted from the space, to creating and maintaining the welcoming and collaborative coworking culture that Awesome Inc is known for.

When she's not working, she enjoys watching movies, walking with her dog, Charlie, and hiking with her husband, Brandon.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Director of Workspace and Events
i.d.9.16 - Member
Christ the King Church - Congregation Member
State Farm - Sales and Marketing Specialist
MakeOffices - Community Director

STRENGTHS

Coworking
Connector
Community Builder

INTERESTS

Walking with dog
Spending time with husband





Meredith Moore

Meredith Moore is the Community Manager at Base110, as well as Co-Founder of Women Innovators and Founders of Lexington (WIFL), Owner of Cultivated Creature, and Founder of Shift Lexington. Through all these positions, Meredith plays a big role in creating the community-feel that makes the Lexington Startup Community special.

When Meredith is not working, she enjoys teaching fitness classes, working on freelance design projects, playing with her dogs, and gardening.

ORGANIZATIONS

Base110 - Community Manager
WIFL - Co-Founder
Cultivated Creature - Owner
Shift Lexington - Founder

STRENGTHS

Community Builder
Connector
Entrepreneur
Design

INTERESTS

Teaching fitness classes
Freelance design
Playing with her dogs
Gardening





Michael Hartman

Michael is president and CEO of an online video game company called Frogdice that has been in operation since 1996. In addition to Frogdice, he is on the Advisory Board for ECU in the Computer Science Dept, Adjunct Professor for University of Cincinnati, and President of Virtual Keystone.

Michael graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and University of Georgia's College of Law.

Michael also frequently serves as a judge for the Lexington pitch competition, 5 Across, and has a reputation of being one of the more intense judges.

Michael is married with two daughters, is an avid reader, and is a big fan of college football.

ORGANIZATIONS

Frog Dice - Founder, CEO

ECU - Advisory Board Member

University of Cincinnati - Professor Adjunct

Virtual Keystone - President

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur

Professor

Gaming

Mentor

Father

INTERESTS

Reading

College Football

Video Games





Michael Lewis

Michael Lewis is a veteran entrepreneur with a strong understanding of startup finance. Michael's most notable accomplishments consist of starting and navigating a successful exit for his company, FA Guide, serving as Head of Finance for Fooji, serving as a fractional CFO at VentureFirst, and most recently, starting an business education company called BusinessU. Among those accomplishments, Michael is also a successful real estate investor and a great mentor to people wanting to start their own companies.

When Michael isn't working, he enjoys playing music at his church and spending time with his friends.

ORGANIZATIONS

Business U - President
Collabra Music - Director of Sales
Rock Hill Equity - Founding Partner
Defiant Capital - Founding Partner
Venture First - Financial Analyst
Fooji - Head of Finance
FA Guide - Founder
Finance U - Founder & CEO

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Founder
Sales
Connector
Finance
Venture Capital
Real Estate
Investor
Leadership

INTERESTS

Music
Business





Mike Hilton

Mike Hilton is a passionate advocate for the startup community and is a part of the Awesome Inc team to focus on corporate engagement through a program called "Venture Labs". Venture Labs serves as a way to bring innovation and intrapreneurship to a corporate environment where you might not find it otherwise. Prior to joining Awesome Inc, Mike started his own consulting company called SparkBase, a company that he still runs today. When Mike is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife and their two children.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc
Venture Labs - Director
SparkBase Consulting - President

STRENGTHS

Connector
Entrepreneur
Community Builder
Father

INTERESTS

Music
Business





Morgan Franklin

Morgan is one of the most engaged members in Lexington's startup community. While his primary profession is real estate, he chose to put his company's office in Awesome Inc in order to stay involved in the startup scene. Originally from Lexington, Morgan attended the University of Kentucky, moved away to pursue a career in finance, and then came back to Lexington once he was ready to start a family. His current company is Atlas Trust Real Estate, and Morgan himself is in the top 1% of realtors in the country. Morgan specializes in social media marketing and is an expert at navigating the ins and outs of Facebook ads. He enjoys spending time with his kids, golfing, boating, and working on his side hustles in his free time.

ORGANIZATIONS

Atlas Trust Real Estate - Founder
Awesome Inc - Community Member, Tenant

STRENGTHS

Real Estate
Entrepreneur
Video
Marketing
Social Media
Business Planning
Business Coaching
Facebook Ads
Investor
Ideation

INTERESTS

Boating
Golf
Family
Swimming
Fitness
Side Hustles
Music





Nick Such

Nick Such is a cofounder of Awesome Inc where he works closely with early stage startups and is the Director of Awesome Inc's Coding School. He has been involved in several different entrepreneurial ventures, ranging from indoor mapping software to early touchscreen technology. Nick enjoys engaging with the entrepreneurial community through events such as 5 Across and Startup Weekend. He considers his time as a driver for UK's solar car racing team as his first success in Lexington and views the approachability of people in Lexington's startup community as one of its biggest assets. When he's not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Mollie, and their children, John Paul and Eloise. He also enjoys cycling, gardening, and dominating the ping pong table at Awesome Inc.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Co-founder
Awesome Inc U - Director

STRENGTHS

Community Builder
Code
Developer
Education
Entrepreneur
Founder

INTERESTS

Family
Cycling
Ping Pong
Gardening





Peter Briggs

Peter Briggs is currently a student at UK pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering with a passion for entrepreneurship. Peter's first taste of entrepreneurship came when he came up with a 3D printed product that turns your smartphone into a spinning top, called SpinnyTop. Peter has been a member of Awesome Inc's team since he was in high school and is the videographer for their Startup Incubator. He has also held multiple internships at different engineering firms such as GE Appliances and Big Ass Fans.

When Peter isn't working, he enjoys playing music with his friends and working on projects.

ORGANIZATIONS

Awesome Inc - Videographer
Ransford Engineering - Project Engineer
Spinny Top - Cofounder
GE - Product Development Engineer
Big Ass Fans - Engineering Intern

STRENGTHS

Video
Photography
Video editing
Founder
Entrepreneur

INTERESTS

Travel
Music
Craftsmanship





Randall Stevens

Randall is a serial entrepreneur that has started numerous successful companies in Lexington, KY. He graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1991 with a BA in Architecture. In 1991 he founded his first company, Archvision, a software development firm specializing in 3D graphics and content management technology for the design industry. Randall is a software development veteran with 25 years of experience in the industry.

Randall also serves as a part time instructor of entrepreneurship at the University of Kentucky. He was selected as an Emerging Entrepreneur into the Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame in 2010. He often serves as a judge to Lexington's pitch contest, 5 Across.

Randall is from Pikeville, KY.

ORGANIZATIONS

Base 110 - Cofounder
Archvision - Founder, CEO
Avail - Founder, CEO
Mersive Technologies

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Investor
Coworking
Architecture
BIM
Mentor

INTERESTS

Technology
Video
Bourbon





Ryan Kaffenberger

Ryan Kaffenberger is Project Manager at Commerce Lexington. Through his position, Ryan loves to connect companies to the resources that they need to be successful in Kentucky and also enjoys diving into research for economic impacts of the initiatives that the Chamber is behind. Ryan sees Lexington as having an advantage because of its “just right” size and the lower cost of doing business as compared to bigger cities.

When Ryan is not working, he enjoys playing board games, soccer, golf, and visiting new restaurants.

ORGANIZATIONS

Commerce Lexington - Project Manager

STRENGTHS

Connector
Community Builder
Research

INTERESTS

Board Games
Soccer
Golf
Visiting new restaurants





Sean O'Leary

Sean O'Leary is a business veteran who has worked with some of the more recognizable startups in Lexington. After getting his start in Venture Capital, he moved to Lexington to raise a family and was able to fill important roles in multiple local companies. Sean currently advises companies through his company, Rose Cottage Advisors, and continues to contribute knowledge and expertise to the startup community in Lexington.

When Sean is not working, he enjoys reading and spending time with his family.

ORGANIZATIONS

Rose Cottage Advisors - Managing Partner
Thynk Health - VP of Operations
Make Time - VP of Operations

STRENGTHS

Investor
Finance
Operations
Startups

INTERESTS

Reading
Family





Shane Hadden

Shane is a FinTech entrepreneur and professor with a passion for finance, technology and startups. Born in KY, Shane spent twelve years in New York structuring complex financial transactions on Wall Street, including seven years at Credit Suisse. He left Wall Street to pursue his interests in fintech innovation, including Float, a Lexington based pro-consumer lending company. He's currently building Seats, a revenue-based funding platform for start-ups. Shane is a Lecturer at the University of Kentucky where he teaches Venture Finance, Financial Technology and Advanced Corporate Finance in the MSF, MBA and undergraduate programs. Shane is interested in many areas of fintech including identity, cryptocurrency and the ethics of AI. In his free time, Shane enjoys spending time with his family and traveling.

ORGANIZATIONS

Seats Captial - Cofounder & CEO

STRENGTHS

Cryptocurrency
bitcoin
professor
entrepreneur
finance
identity
'fintech

INTERESTS

Travel
Coding
Spending time with family





Tasha Sams

Tasha Sams is the Executive Director of the Kentucky Governor's School for Entrepreneurs and plays an important role in molding the next generation of entrepreneurs. Through her work, high school students in Kentucky are able to gain real experience turning an idea into a business over a summer. Throughout the life of GSE, many of the students have gone on to run successful businesses and acquire patents for their ideas.

When Tasha is not working, she enjoys traveling and meeting new people.

ORGANIZATIONS

Governor's School for Entrepreneurs - Executive Director

STRENGTHS

Education
Leadership
Youth

INTERESTS

Traveling





Terry Samuel

Terry Samuel is President of the Kentucky Science & Technology Corporation. Through his role, he works to ensure that companies pursuing advances in science & technology in Kentucky have the resources that they need to be successful. Before KSTC, Terry worked at LexMark where he gained valuable experience from working in a corporate setting.

When Terry is not working, he enjoys traveling and spending time with his family.

ORGANIZATIONS

KSTC - President

STRENGTHS

Technology
Innovation
Grants
Science
Engineering
Finance

INTERESTS

Traveling





Tim Guthrie

Tim is an entrepreneur actively supporting entrepreneurs. As co-founder of Base 110, he is constantly interacting with local startups and staying updated on the successes and struggles that companies growing in Lexington face. Before Base 110, Tim started CFO Services Group, and still operates it as President to provide financial services to local companies.

ORGANIZATIONS

Base 110 - Cofounder

Nest Board

Lexington Forum

CFO Services Group - Founder & President

Members Heritage Federal Credit Union - Board and Supervisory Committee

STRENGTHS

Coworking

Finance

Board Member

Community Builder

INTERESTS

Running





Tony Bonner

Tony Bonner works with Dinsmore & Shohl in their IP Department to help entrepreneurs and businesses ensure that they are navigating the patent process effectively and efficiently. On top of his work with Dinsmore, Tony is also a successful entrepreneur himself and knows first hand the struggles that founders face while starting a business. Originally from Lexington, he went to law school at the University of Kentucky before moving to Atlanta for work. Tony is excited to see Lexington growing and a new generation of entrepreneurs call Kentucky home. Although it's better now than it was, he would like to see some more investment dollars deployed in this area for ventures outside of equine and bourbon. In his free time, Tony enjoys spending time with his young daughter and golfing with friends.

ORGANIZATIONS

Dinsmore & Shohl LLP, IP Department - Partner
Newport Cleaners - Owner

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Intellectual Property
IP
Law
Patent
Engineer

INTERESTS

Family
Golf





Tony Schmidt

Tony is founder and CEO of GreekTrack, a chapter management software for fraternities and sororities. He was born and raised in Lexington, Kentucky. Tony's expertise is in web development and he has worked for companies such as APAX software and Microsoft. He graduated from University of Kentucky in 2010 with a B.S in Computer Science and a B.S in Computer Engineering and then went on to get his Masters in Engineering Management at Case Western Reserve University. After graduating, Tony went on to become a project manager at Microsoft in Seattle, Wa. He decided to move back to Lexington and go all in on GreekTrack when him and his wife decided that they were ready to start a family. Tony loves all the green spaces in Lexington and enjoys rock climbing, scuba diving (ask about diving in Hawaii), and travel. Although he cooks most of his own meals, his favorite restaurant in Lexington is Blue Door BBQ. He doesn't drink coffee so opt for a different meeting spot other than a coffee shop.

Tony has been involved in the startup community for many years and even pitched GreekTrack at 5 Across where he was the first ever winner.

ORGANIZATIONS

Greek Track - Founder & CEO
University of Kentucky - Alumni
Awesome Inc - Venture Labs Facilitator
Microsoft - Project Manager (former)

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
Software
Developer
Community Builder
Technology

INTERESTS

Rock Climbing
Travel
Scuba Diving
Founder
Farm Owner
Outdoors





Warren Nash

Warren Nash is one of Lexington's advocates for entrepreneurs. Through his position as Executive Director of the Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship at UK, Warren not only encourages entrepreneurship in Lexington, he actively facilitates relationships between founders and resources that can help their companies grow. He recognizes the people and community in Lexington as it's biggest strength, and works hard to make sure it stays that way. He believes that Lexington should tout its small successes a bit more and give some recognition to those who are making those successes possible.

As one of the main reasons for the start of Global Entrepreneurship Week in Kentucky, Warren brings a passion to the Lexington community that dominos into more opportunities for all involved.

ORGANIZATIONS

University of Kentucky, Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship - Executive Director

STRENGTHS

Entrepreneur
capital
investment
coaching
mentor
business modeling

INTERESTS

Walking
Networking





AWESOME INC

CREATING A COMMUNITY
FOR ENTREPRENEURS

AWESOMEINC.ORG