

Member Spotlight:

MORTAR

Allen Woods

Co-Founder and Executive Director



Tell me a little about your agency, yourself, your career, and your current position.

My name is Allen Woods, and I am Co-Founder and Executive Director of MORTAR. I started as an entrepreneur during childhood, as a kid with a camera. Everything I learned about entrepreneurship was trial and error, as I didn't have a mentor or any system of guidance to get started. As an adult, building MORTAR allowed us to create a system that provides entrepreneurs with all of the resources I didn't have. In 2014, I along with Derrick Braziel and William Thomas started MORTAR to serve the OTR community. Since then, we've expanded to 5 additional neighborhoods across Cincinnati and 4 additional cities throughout the Midwest.



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How long have you been a LC member and what prompted you to join?

We have been members for 1 year and we were looking for camaraderie and additional educational tools provided by Leadership Council. This has allowed us to continue to grow our knowledge base.

How has membership in Leadership Council been of value to you?

I recently went through the Leadership Challenge and several of our staff members have participated in other workshops and virtual panels. One of our staff members also completed the BOLD program and is now equipped to serve our community in a board leadership role.

What is the best leadership advice you have received or given?

Always keep the main thing the main thing. When thinking about building entrepreneurial ecosystems that are equitable, there are a lot of adjacent issues that our participants are facing. Sometimes it can be difficult to not get pulled in multiple directions to make sure that we're serving them. It's been beneficial to partner with other agencies specializing in those areas, so we can focus on what we're good at.

Has your agency developed any notable partnerships, initiatives, and/or collaborations with other organizations (for profit or not for profit) to further your agencies work?

Yes. Pro Bono Partnerships has offered countless hours of free legal support for our organization. SCORE has provided incredibly valuable support to our students in business mentorship. Social Venture Partners has provided holistic support and has been specifically integral in building out our expansion strategy.

Please feel free to share any additional information, announcements, or news with the Leadership Council community.

Join us as we celebrate our latest cohort during our 2nd Virtual Pitch Night! 24 students will pitch their businesses, and you can join us online for the big event, [RSVP here!](#)

Another thing that would be really helpful for our community of entrepreneurs would be access to Subject Matter Experts to help them take their business to the next level. If there are any Business, Finance, Real Estate, or other professionals who would be willing to serve as a resource to our entrepreneurs, please let us know at wearemortar@gmail.com.