LIGHTHOUSE
PARTNERS

# Building a Hub of Innovation

The Austin Blockchain Collective:
A Blueprint for Validated Purpose

Austin Blockchain Collective
#AustinBlockchain
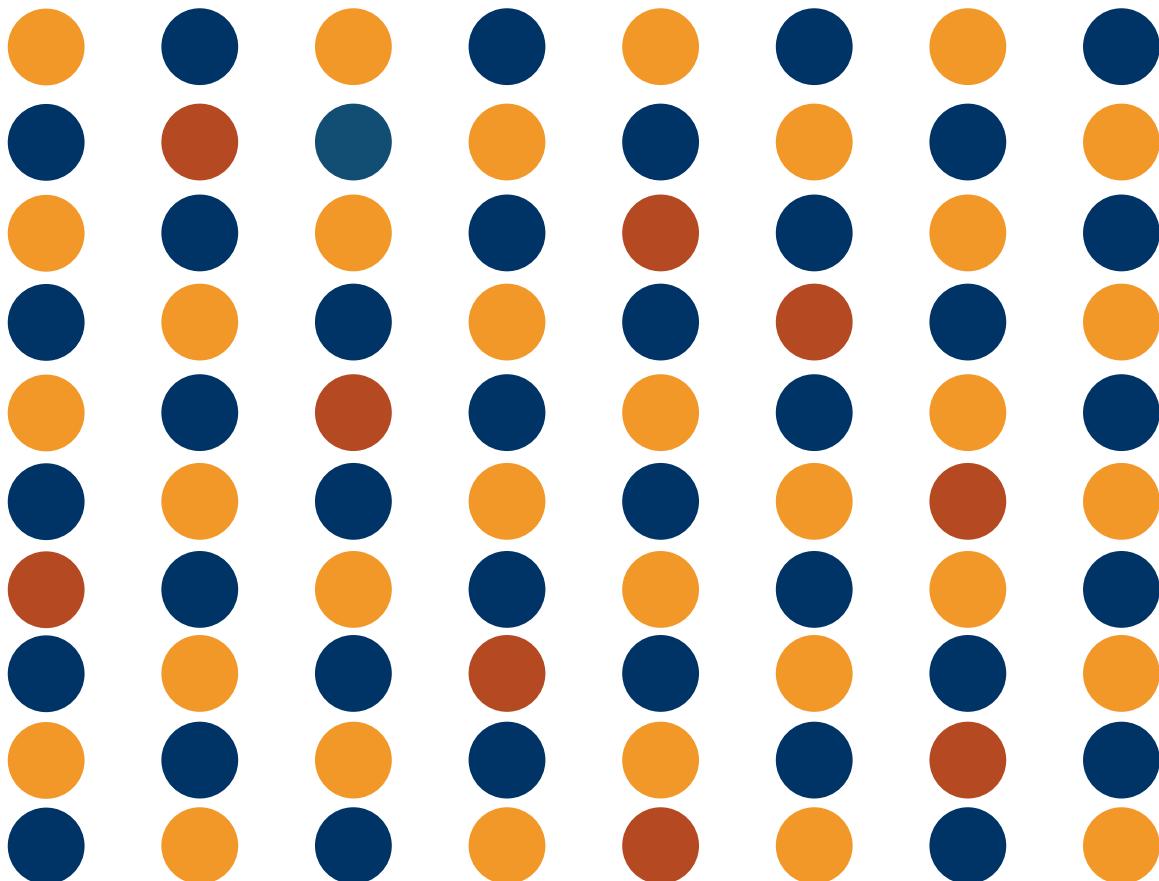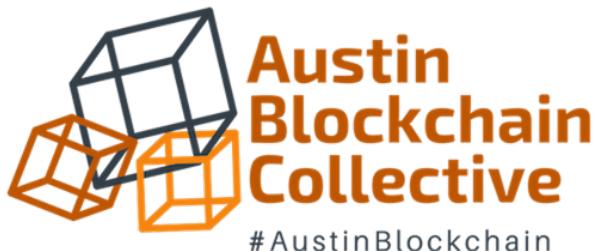
CASE STUDY

massing **PR**
the agency alternative

LIGHTHOUSE PARTNERS

massing PR
the agency alternative

Building a Hub of Innovation — The Strategic Nexus of Community and Impact

The Austin Blockchain Collective (2017-2021)

Executive Summary & Partner Section

In late 2017, Austin, Texas, hosted an emerging but diffuse blockchain and cryptocurrency ecosystem that needed a cohesive advocacy organization to define its purpose, attract investment, and engage with key civic and academic partners.

Partner	Role	Core Activity
Lighthouse Partners, Inc.	Business Acceleration & Growth Strategy	Community Building, Advocacy, and Thought Leadership **(as founder)**
Massing PR, LLC	Brand Execution & Publicity	Converting strategic assets into market credibility as the **Marketing Partner**

A Blueprint for Validated Purpose

Lighthouse Partners' Pete Harris co-created the Austin Blockchain Collective with Dustin Byington (then President of Wanchain, a Patron of the Collective) to strategically position Austin as a recognized global center of innovation. Massing PR, led by Jen Massing Harris, joined the Austin Blockchain Collective as the Marketing Partner and later co-founded and co-led the successor organization, the DecentraTech Collective, with Pete Harris. The project leveraged their joint Advocacy Engine—a strategic framework focused on Advocacy, Thought Leadership, Community Building, and Publicity—to accelerate market adoption.

Key Results and Validation:

- **Public Advocacy:** Pete Harris served as a Blockchain Expert in Residence at **Capital Factory** and as an Advisor to **SXSW**, presenting educational insights across multiple high-profile venues.
- **Social Impact Funding:** Members participated in prototyping the City's **MyPass** concept, validating its viability, which led to the **City of Austin** securing a **$409,000 RWJF grant** to aid the homeless.
- **Academic Integration:** Hosted the **Blockchain and Digital Transformation in Health Symposium**, attracting **100+ participants** and featuring speakers from IBM, UCSD Health, and Dell Medical School.
- **Civic Engagement:** Named **'Civic Engagement Initiative of the Year'** (2018).
- **Ecosystem Growth:** Grew to over **120 corporate members**.

The Operational Engine: Sustaining Community and Influence

The partnership created a robust operational framework that delivered continuous value and amplified the Collective's mission.

Sustained Community Management

The Austin Blockchain Collective grew quickly, hosting regular monthly meetups and two Town Halls at Capital Factory, which served as its permanent presence and key partner. Massing PR provided the branding, operational, and promotional support that sustained this schedule. The Collective's ongoing outreach included a Website Education Portal and **#AustinBlockchain** Twitter amplification.

Public Advocacy: Pete Harris's Role in Education and Influence

As a leader of the Austin Blockchain Collective, Pete Harris leveraged the organization's platform for extensive public speaking and advisory roles, directly contributing to industry and academic education:

- **Academic Engagement:** He served as a Guest Lecturer on three occasions (2018 and 2019) for the UT Austin Undergraduate FinTech Class and was a Panelist at the first McCombs Blockchain Conference (April 2018). He also presented at the Texas Blockchain Summit (October 2018) and participated in briefing meetings with the UT Austin Supply Chain Center of Excellence (2019).

- **Industry Influence:** He presented on the Austin Blockchain Collective at Capital Factory's Innovation Council

Summit (2019) and served as Blockchain Expert in Residence (2019-2021), advising members on decentralized technologies.

- **SXSW Advisory:** He was instrumental in linking the Collective to SXSW, overseeing the Official Launch of the Austin Blockchain Collective at the festival in 2018. He acted as a Mentor in 2019, an Advisor on incorporating Web3 technologies into the program in 2021, and continued as an Advisor on program content related to blockchain, AI, and healthcare from 2022 to 2025.
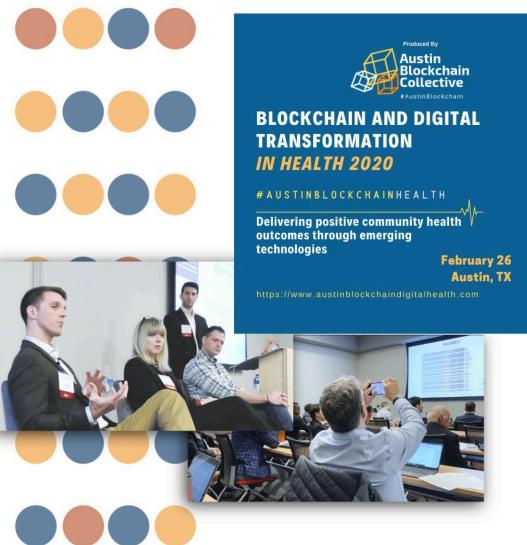
Pillars of Purpose and Impact

The **Austin Blockchain Collective** strategically engaged with key industry

leaders and sectors, using its joint **Advocacy Engine** to position the **City of Austin** at the forefront of technological transformation.

Academic & Industry Focus: The Flagship Health Symposium

The collaboration between the **Austin Blockchain Collective** and **Dell Medical School** culminated in the **Blockchain & Digital Transformation in Health Symposium** (2020).

- The symposium attracted **over 100 participants** with healthcare and population health backgrounds.

- It featured a prestigious faculty, including leaders and technologists from **IBM, UCSD Health, Dell Medical School, City of Austin, ConsenSys, and Valkyrie Intelligence**.

- The forward-looking program covered critical topics such as **Health 3.0 (or Ownership Health)**, health data ownership and monetization, decentralized healthcare networks, and **AI's convergence with blockchain** in healthcare.

Civic Advocacy: The City of Austin's

MyPass Initiative and Grant Success

The **Austin Blockchain Collective** created a high-impact civic initiative focused on the City of Austin's **MyPass** digital identity project, aimed at aiding the city's homeless population.

- Members of the **Austin Blockchain Collective** actively **participated in the prototyping and testing of the MyPass concept** in 2018.

- This proven technical viability was a critical factor in the City of Austin's Innovation Office securing a **$409,000 grant** from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) in 2019.

Specialized Industry Focus

The **Austin Blockchain Collective** established working groups to accelerate adoption in other high-value verticals:

- **Supply Chain:** Focused on enabling **Traceability, Authentication, and Inventory Optimization**.

- **Interoperability:** Focused on contributing to technical standards and defining business requirements for **blockchain interoperability**.

Media Validation: The Tangible Return

The **Advocacy Engine's** sustained focus on civic and academic impact resulted in high-quality, authentic media coverage that reinforced the **Austin Blockchain Collective**'s reputation and validated the collective's mission.

Initiative/Achievement	Publication/Source	Recognition/Article Title
Civic Engagement	*Smart Cities Dive Awards 2018*	'Civic Engagement Initiative of the Year'
Austin Blockchain Collective & **City of Austin (MyPass)**	*KXAN*	"Can blockchain prevent homelessness? City of Austin will try to find out"
Austin Blockchain Collective & **Dell Medical School**	*Becker's HEALTH IT*	"Dell Medical School explores blockchain use in healthcare"
Austin Blockchain Collective & **Dell Medical School**	*Austin Monitor*	"Dell Medical looks into blockchain"
Austin Blockchain Collective **Advocacy**	*PYMNTS*	"How Collectives Aim To Make Cities Into Blockchain Centers"
Austin Blockchain Collective **Launch**	*Austin Inno*	"Austin Blockchain Collective to Advocate for Local Crypto Startups"

Conclusion and Legacy

The **Austin Blockchain Collective** is a definitive example of the power of the Lighthouse Partners and Massing PR **Advocacy Engine**. By prioritizing Purpose over sheer Publicity, the partnership built a self-sustaining entity that delivered tangible results in civic engagement, academic collaboration, and economic development.

This strategic incubation led to its natural evolution into the **DecentraTech Collective**. Pete Harris and Jen Massing Harris co-founded and co-led the successor organization, broadening its global mandate to accelerate Decentralization Technologies as foundational building blocks for emerging fields like Decentralized AI (DeAI). The Austin Blockchain Collective model provided a powerful, documented blueprint for repeatable, high-value, and media-validated market acceleration.