**A Model for Collaborative Value Creation**

Herman Donner

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**Abstract**:

We outline how networks fuel creativity, and the benefits of collaboration for both organizations and individuals. Despite the benefits, individuals and organizational alike tend to fail at capturing the opportunities created from matching complimentary skills and resources. Human capital has limited value unless exposed to complementary resources, and the traditional way of bringing people with different skills together, is through a firm that sets overreaching organizational goals and creates processes to reach those goals. Consequently, many professionals have under-utilized human capital, as they lack access to complimentary ideas, skills, and resources outside of full-time employment.

We explore an organizational model for collaborative value creation, that would offer individuals access to opportunity and resources beyond their personal networks, thus offering a way for individuals to engage professionally, without the constraints of employment or the responsibility of having a firm. This could be on a full-time basis, or on the side of a full-time job, but in essence, we aim to answer the question of how to have a firm, without a firm?

Challenges associated with networks, and by extension, collaboration are outlined. Core challenges include: 1) human biases towards people who are alike themselves when building a network, 2) organizational inability to identify competency and resource gaps, and 3) the need for mutual trust for collaboration to take place.

To address these challenges, we propose an organization that can be defined as a community for value creation through collaboration, with processes in place to bring people with complementary skills, interests, and resources together. We also explore the role of trust, and how selectivity and rules of engagement can promote collaborative behavior within a group.

[**1.** **Introduction: Enabling Value Creation Through Collaboration** 3](#_Toc80033195)

[**2.** **Networks as Drivers of Innovation** 5](#_Toc80033196)

[2.1 Networks Provide Access to Information, Skills, and Influence 5](#_Toc80033197)

[2.2 Networks Determine Organizational Success 6](#_Toc80033198)

[**3** **Network Limitations and Human Biases** 8](#_Toc80033199)

[3.1 Human Biases and the Role of a Connector 8](#_Toc80033200)

[3.2 Organizational Biases and Failure to Identify Internal Competency Gaps 8](#_Toc80033201)

[3.3 The Role of Trust 9](#_Toc80033202)

[**4** **Addressing the Limitations: A Model for Collaborative Value Creation** 10](#_Toc80033203)

[4.1 Creating Trust by Shifting from Network to Community 11](#_Toc80033204)

[4.2 Connecting the Dots Through a Switchboard Operator 12](#_Toc80033205)

[4.3 Engagement with the Outside: Creating Opportunity for Individuals and Bridging the Resource Gaps of Firms 13](#_Toc80033206)

[**5.** **Concluding Comments: Matching Skills, Resources, and Ideas** 14](#_Toc80033207)

[**6.** **References** 15](#_Toc80033208)

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This paper is written on behalf of the Cortlandt Group, a selective professional network that aims to tap into the knowledge and creativity of their members to create value.Cortlandt provides services that supports exchanges within the network, by actively introducing members to opportunities, and matching skills, resources and capital. <https://www.cortlandt.com>

## **Introduction: Enabling Value Creation Through Collaboration**

The opportunity to create a whole that is larger than the sum of all parts through collaboration is an old notion, as individuals have been working together by dividing tasks since the division of labor in ancient Mesopotamia. In the knowledge intensive economy of today, the ability to identify and match specialized knowledge and resources is becoming increasingly important for both individual and organizational success. Often, the ability to access networks of individuals with different skills and resources determines if a business venture succeeds or fails, a new product gains traction in the marketplace, or if an individual researcher has a breakthrough discovery (Uzzi and Dunlap, 2005). For when people come together, opportunities arise, and new ideas come to fruition. Or, formulated in the most basic sense; *“ideas beget ideas”* (Collins, 1998). Yet, most ideas are not exposed to the right people or resources, so that they can be improved, scrapped, or executed on. Given this, there are few, if any, questions that are more powerful than that of how to enable the right people to get exposed to the right ideas and resources?

The traditional way of grouping together individuals with different skills, is through a firm, that sets overreaching organizational goals and creates processes to reach those goals. But what if the individual wishes to engage professionally outside of a large organization? The main challenge such individuals face is that their human capital has limited value unless it is exposed to other resources – and this is why even the smartest and most educated people seldom make money from their skillsets outside of a full-time job. Consequently, many professionals have under-utilized skills and experiences. However, if such individuals had a way to effectively be exposed to opportunities and gain access to the complementary skills and resources of others, it would effectively make it possible for them to monetize their human capital outside of full-time employment.

The aim of this paper is to solve for how to put human capital to its highest and best use, by outlining a new organizational model that enables a group of individuals to engage professionally without the constraints of employment, or the obligations of managing their own firm. In a sense, we address the question of how to have a firm, without a firm?

We explore if a model for collaborative value creation can create opportunities for the individual, and potentially exceed the performance of traditional firms. As organizations face challenges that are increasingly interdisciplinary, while individual skills become increasingly specialized (Camarinha-Matos et al., 2017), more fluent organizational structures that allow for customized teams to be formed for specific tasks, have a competitive advantage. Similarly, the ability for large organizations to succeed, is in large part dependent on their ability to identify internal competency and resources gaps, and effectively transcend organizational capabilities through partnering (van Gelderen and Monk, 2019).

The explored model for collaboration is one where processes exist, to identify complimentary skills, resources, or interests among a group of individuals – so that activities and introductions are developed to not only generate ideas, but also make the necessary resources for execution available within the group. By providing a structure, we can address the limitations of personal networks, caused by human biases towards people that are like themselves. As innovation is driven by bringing disparate sets of people together, mechanisms that ensure a complementary mix of people and resources can substantially impact the number of opportunities that emerge, and the performance of teams within the group. In essence, the logic is similar to the process applied by selective universities when determining the optimal mix of students with interests in business, engineering, and literature.

A key challenge associated with enabling collaborative behavior, stems from the need to develop processes that promotes mutual trust. While employees of a firm work together for a common goal, by virtue of hierarchies, job roles, and defined tasks, collaboration outside of a firm requires nudging through incentives, and trust that contributions are compensated in a fair manner. The importance of trust means that a collaborative network should be selective, so that it not only includes a complimentary mix of people, but also those who will adhere to a common set of rules.

In this context, there is reason to make a distinction between a network – that can be very loosely defined – and a distinct group of people with shared norms and values. Collaboration often requires a sense of community, defined as a group of people who know and judge each other, and can be persuaded to act as a whole on behalf of a part (Mintzberg, 2015). So even if new communications technology has been theoreticized to result in a “global village” (McLuhan, 1962), and enable new models for collaborative engagement that potentially replaces the role of a firm (Gloor, 2006), collaboration requires more than a way to connect. Notably, it is important to balance the individualistic nature of people that seek the ability to pick and choose what to work on, while realizing the limitations of individualism, and that collaborative behavior often requires a social glue that binds people together for a greater good (Mintzberg, 2009).

The remainder of this paper is structured as following; section 2 outlines the argument for a new model for professional engagement through an overview of research on the relationship between networks, innovation, and competitive advantages. Section 3 covers the main challenges that individuals face when trying to work through a professional network. Section 4 outlines a potential solution for a collaborative community that in essence functions as an exchange of human capital, intellectual capital, and financial capital. Section 5 concludes.

## **Networks as Drivers of Innovation**

To set the proposed model for a collaborative community into context, a summary of research that investigates how networks, and by extension, collaboration, creates value is provided below. This research can take the perspective of nations, organizations, or individuals. For just as global trade creates wealth when countries focus on their comparative advantages, as formalized by David Ricardo in 1817 and extended by Eli Heckscher and Bertil Ohlin (who later won a Nobel prize for the theory in 1977), companies benefit by collaborating to bridge gaps in both competencies and resources (van Gelderen and Monk, 2019), and people benefit dividing tasks based on *who’s* good at doing *what*.

Focusing on the perspective of the individual, the section below provides a short overview of how networks bring people together to not just work more efficiently together, but spurs innovation when ideas are shared and developed.

### Networks Provide Access to Information, Skills, and Influence

A basic premise of networks is that knowledge spreads, so that innovation amplifies and individuals within the network become smarter. A great illustration of this notion are the findings by Collins (1998), who conducted a massive analysis of intellectual networks among scholars in science, art, and philosophy, finding that over the course of history, breakthroughs spanning psychology to mathematics were a consequence of personal networks that fueled creativity. In fact, Collins makes the case that almost all great thinkers have been a product of intellectual networks, illustrating that one set of ideas leads to another, and that ideas should be treated in terms of anything but themselves. Defining intellectual life as a process of conflict and disagreement, humans tend to form alliances into groups with diverging thoughts, resulting in networks of likeminded people sparring ideas and working to prove a specific idea (Collins, 1998).

One could make the case that just as how the retroactive founders of almost every social science, from Hobbes and Smith to Freud branched off major philosophical networks (Collins, 1998), technological innovation of today occurs within fairly small circles of researchers, technology companies and venture capitalists in Silicon Valley, who can meet and engage on new ideas and find the necessary resources to execute on them – all within a few degrees of separation of each other. An illustrative example of how genius is a product of environment is provided by Linus Pauling, who won the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1954, and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1962, and attributed his success not to his intelligence, but to being surrounded by brilliant people, stating what today is known as the Pauling Principle; “*The best way to have a good idea is to have a lot of ideas.”.*

The advantages of networks can be broken down into several categories, as they enable new ideas through engagement, make people smarter through knowledge spillovers, and provide access to resources otherwise not available. Looking at the workings of professional networks, Uzzi and Dunlap (2005) define a couple of key advantages that they provide:

1. *Private information,* which is increasingly valuable as public information is pervasive through the internet and increasingly efficient search engines that creates context from data. Having access to private information, such as knowledge of a new product or service, or change of corporate strategy, can provide considerable competitive edge – but since it is not verifiable like public information, trust between the parties is essential for the information to have value.
2. *Access to skills* that complement one’s own, which is increasingly important as the skills of individuals become more specialized, while challenges relating to marketing, product development and organizational success become increasingly interdisciplinary. Consequently, personal success is often determined by the ability to transcend individual limitations in skill by working with others.
3. *Influence[[1]](#footnote-1),* and notably influence outside of formal hierarchies that is developed when a person can connect knowledgeable and trustworthy people to create opportunities and enable execution of projects.

The above advantages can provide value for an individual in different ways; information that might result in an opportunity – such as a job, or investment – or spur an idea that evolves when multiple people share thoughts and concepts. There are also benefits of networks when no tangible opportunity emerges, as the individual becomes smarter by virtue of being close to other smart people. In fact, knowledge spillovers are main drivers for why firms in certain industries tend to be in the same geography, and why cities attract so many skilled individuals, that earn more because they interact and learn from each other. Or, as stated by Glaeser and Maré (2001): “*Even if cities are no better educated than the hinterland, urban density will increase interactions and intellectual spillovers.”*.

### Networks Determine Organizational Success

Both personal, and organizational, success is determined by the ability to connect the right people and resources with each other. From the perspective of a firm, collaboration allows organizations to; a) fill their own internal competency and resource gaps, and b) benefit from knowledge spillovers, both between firms, and between the individuals that work with each other (Piermartini and Rubínová, 2014; Zhou et al., 2020). Notably, partnering between organizations has been found to increase overall innovation, both for the individual firm, and across an overall supply chain of collaborating firms (Blankenburg Holm et al. 1999; Isaksson et al., 2016; Piermartini and Rubínová, 2014; Zhou et al., 2020).

Because of an increased understanding of how internal capabilities drive firm performance, the prevailing way of analyzing firms has shifted from the traditional approach of matching internal strengths and weaknesses with external threats and opportunities (Porter,1985), towards a resource-based view that captures how well firm resources meet external threats (Newbert, 2007). Of all the resources a firm possesses, knowledge is increasingly important – and perhaps the most important in knowledge-intensive industries – as is what allows for best-use of all other resources (Das and Teng, 2000). Consequently, in an analysis of investment managers, van Gelderen and Monk (2019), defined knowledge as the intangible capital of a firm that drives performance.

In a broader sense, knowledge is most often defined as a set of justified, true beliefs. Nonaka (1995) builds on this definition, stating that the willingness to act is central, as knowledge is about forming beliefs and making commitments based on those beliefs. van Gelderen and Monk (2019) stresses the importance of making distinctions between data, information, and knowledge, as they are distinct, yet closely related concepts. As data is chosen and processed to deliver information, knowledge refers to the ability of knowing what information to look for and how to effectively apply it. Also worth noting is that the process of collecting data and processing it to create knowledge is tightly intertwined with technology, as new technologies such as machine learning and natural language processing supports the process of turning data into knowledge (Clark, 2014; van Gelderen and Monk, 2019).

For an organization to reap the full benefits of networks, and by extension, collaboration, the ability to accurately assess internal knowledge-gaps is essential (van Gelderen and Monk, 2019). This process is referred to as “knowledge management” and is defined as organizational efforts and processes designed to; 1) capture and code knowledge within an organization, 2) convert individual knowledge to organizational knowledge, and 3) create new knowledge by connecting people to other people and knowledge and connecting knowledge to complementary knowledge (O’Leary 2002). Even as networks are essential drivers of firm performance in settings that require deep knowledge across a broad range of topics, most firms lack processes and resources to manage their internal competency gaps, and develop partnerships (van Gelderen and Monk, 2005).

## **Network Limitations and Human Biases**

In this section, we outline a few of the major reasons why individuals, and organizations, fail at connecting with the right people and resources, and therefore do not realize the value of collaboration.

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### Human Biases and the Role of a Connector

As noted above, most people face the challenge of not knowing the right people, as they are biased towards people that are: a) like themselves, and b) in their own proximity, either in terms of industry, geography, or network (Uzzi and Dunlap, 2005). These biases result in a lack of opportunity, as ideas emerge by connecting with people from different contexts, with skills and perspectives different from their own (Collins, 1998; Gladwell, 2000).

Our own limitations are also what makes certain people within a network so valuable. Notably, the role of a *connector,* which Gladwell (2000) defines as a person who connects disparate groups of people with different experiences and skills, that in effect makes them information brokers that allow for information to spread widely and quickly by connecting with other information brokers (Gloor, 2006; Gladwell, 2000). In effect, connectors function as nodes within a network, that connect with each other, so that information spreads much faster compared to if someone without the connector mindset were to be exposed to it.

Throughout history, connectors have played a crucial role within networks, having an outsize influence on whether an organization or endeavor succeeds or fails. For if information reaches the right person it can result in a breakthrough, and if it does not, the idea or opportunity is likely to die (Uzzi and Dunlap, 2005).

Below, we outline how firms address the process of identifying areas where they lack competency or resources, and how to best fill those gaps through partnering, which in effect is a formalized process of what a connector informally does within a personal network.

### Organizational Biases and Failure to Identify Internal Competency Gaps

As noted above, most firms lack effective knowledge management, and this is often attributed to behavioral challenges and absence of leadership focus (Donate and Sanchez de Pablo, 2014; Von Krogh, 2012; Monk and van Gelderen, 2019). Despite evidence that demonstrates that knowledge drives performance – especially in industries where competitive advantage is determined by access to information – C-level executives seldom focus on knowledge-related issues such as identification of internal competency gaps,

As organizations typically fail at identifying competency and resource gaps, they also fail at developing partnerships that could have allowed them to fill those gaps and miss out on the advantages of partnering – notably the knowledge spillovers arise when relationships between people and organizations deepen.

### The Role of Trust

As noted above, collaboration at all levels requires mutual trust; for individuals to share information about endeavors, competencies, and resources, but also to trust the private information that they receive.

Trust between individuals is typically built through shared experiences over time, limiting the number of people that are trusted, and contributes to making most networks focused on individuals in close proximity. Trust, and the development of shared norms within an organization, function as key facilitators of coordination, even in large firms with hierarchies and processes aimed at coordinating organizational efforts (Putnam, 2000). Within a firm, networks can provide the kind of insight and “soft” power that determine success for a specific project (Uzzi and Dunlap, 2005).

Similarly, trust is essential for successful partnering between firms as the knowledge spillovers amplify when intra-firm relationships deepen (Zhou et al., 2020). Similarly, information sharing between organizations – that spur innovation (Zhou et al, 2020) – increases as firm interdependence increases (Blankenburg Holm et al., 1999). Consequently, it takes time, effort, and skill, for a firm to build valuable networks.

## **Addressing the Limitations: A Model for Collaborative Value Creation**

Organizations face challenges associated with knowledge management, and notably identifying and filling resource gaps to create competitive advantage. This while individuals also seek ways to profit from the resources that they possess, notably their under-utilized human capital. We explore if a more fluent organization can solve for both challenges.

As professionals seek flexibility in terms of how, when, and where to work – and firms seek access to specialized skills – new organizational models are likely to emerge (Vellante, 2021). The importance of being able to match specific skills with specific challenges is supported by research stating that collaborative networks will be a key enabler of what is known as the “4th industrial revolution” driven by sensor data, artificial intelligence, and the impact of smart products on manufacturing and business processes (Camarinha-Matos et al. 2017).

The organization explored in this paper can be thought of as a group of individuals that seek access to professional opportunity, that has the following, more specific, characteristics:

1. membership that is selective and curated, so that members have complimentary resources, skills, and interests,
2. processes that connect members to create opportunities (i.e., a centralized function that connects the dots between people and projects),
3. promotes trust and collaboration through rules of engagement that are agreed upon within the group and are enforced by a trusted party. This makes members confident sharing information with each other and promotes trust towards the information they receive.

If one analyzed means of engaging professionally on a continuum of structure and predictability of outcomes, full-time employment in a firm is one extreme, while freelance work through opportunities that arise from informal connections as another extreme. While employment is characterized by defined obligations and compensation, freelance work offers no defined obligations or processes – the freedom that freelancers often seek – at the cost of a lack of resources and uncertain outcomes.

An organization that lies somewhere in-between these two extremes can offer members a way to engage either on a full-time or part-time basis, by contribution of:

1. *effort*, when an individual with a skill seeks a project to engage on,
2. *ideas,* when an individual with a project seeks resources (e.g., financial capital) to execute it,
3. *capital,* when an individual with financial capital seeks investment opportunities,
4. *access to resources,* when an individual provides introductions to organizations and individuals that possess resources sought by someone else,
5. *curation,* when individuals improve each other’s ideas and projects by sharing experiences and perspectives.

To enable the above, we propose processes aimed at amplifying opportunity which are defined in the sections below.

### Creating Trust by Shifting from Network to Community

The proposed model is in several ways distinct from network of individuals or firms. Notably, we propose clearly defined boundaries – someone is either part of the organization, or not – and that the organization not only brings together individuals that have complimentary skills and resources, but also promotes shared norms and values in relation to how to engage with each other.

We propose a model that can be defined as a *community for value creation through collaboration*. As noted in the initial section of this paper, collaboration often requires more than simply connecting with others, and this has also been noted by those who have proposed new models for professional engagement (Gloor, 2006; Mintzberg, 2009). Analyzing groups of individuals that connect online to share ideas, information, and effort in what is defined as “collaborative innovation networks” Gloor (2006), notes that successful collaboration requires common understanding on which community is built, much like the functioning of religious organizations or hippie communes.

Similar to how employment provides professional identity, membership in a collaborative community provides affiliation, that can give members a context to learn and develop professionally without the constraints of employment.

The importance of trust, or “social glue” is why corporate culture impacts returns, and why organizations invest in team building efforts. In the proposed model, mutual trust enables information sharing and lowers the cost of transacting. To achieve mutual trust, clearly defined rules of engagement can result in members trusting each other by virtue of membership, or stated differently, one member will trust another member, simply because they trust the processes that determines membership. Consequently, this results in exclusivity, as some individuals will have interests or values that align with the community better than others. It is also important that such processes are transparent, as it supports mutual trust by virtue of membership.

Gloor (2006), outlined the importance of re-enforcement effects within a group of collaborators, so that positive behavior yields positive outcomes, while negative behavior produces negative outcomes in a way that is counterbalancing. The re-enforcement effects of feedback – either through reputational impact or formalized consequence – are similar to how shared norms impact behavior in a community. This is key to promote collaborative behavior, as actions aimed at helping others often are defined as “paying it forward”. Thus, it is important to trust that favors are reciprocated, especially in relation to human capital, and sharing of less tangible resources (such as introductions and advice).

Rules of engagement within the group should be aimed at balancing the need for flexibility, while also ensuring that positive behaviors are re-enforced, and trust is built. The basic premise is that members trust that similar actions produce similar results – such as a baseline understanding that if a member provides another member with an introduction or advice, it is to be compensated in a fair manner. Even if members do not directly compensate each other with cash, an expectation of fairness promotes collaborative behavior when members trust that if an endeavor within the community yields a positive outcome, there is some ex-ante payoff to those who contributed to that outcome.

A way of modeling rules of engagement within a collaborative community is to determine baseline rules of engagement, that are interpreted by an independent group of members if there is conflict between members.[[2]](#footnote-2) The effect is similar to the common law logic of applying the standard of *a* *reasonable man,* so that it is assessed if compensation is reasonable, or behavior aligns with the ethos of the community.

### Connecting the Dots Through a Switchboard Operator

In the process of selecting members, a central function – an individual, or group of individuals – would have processes in place to gain insight into the interests, skills, and resources available to the individual. For not only does this play into the creation of an optimal mix of members, but it also fills the role that a *connector* informally fills in professional networks. This function can be likened to a *Switchboard Operator[[3]](#footnote-3),* thatconnects the dots between members, matching capital with ideas, skills with projects, or ideas with similar ones. The switchboard operator can make direct introductions, but also enable events and discussions to promote the kind of innovation that in a firm happens by the water cooler – taking the type of serendipitous encounters that drive much innovation within a firm and giving it a helping hand.

The switchboard operator aims to both identify knowledge and resource gaps among members, and then also identify resources that can fill those gaps. In essence, this is a process for knowledge management on both the individual and organizational level. The switchboard operator needs to gain deep levels of knowledge about each member’s:

1. *Interests*, *ideas, and projects,* in terms of activity or industry – e.g., if the member seeks to contribute effort to a project, gain or provide access to networks, seeks capital for a project.
2. *Resources,* the competencies the member possess – e.g., access to industry knowledge, access to outside organizations, personal networks, and financial capital.
3. *Ideas and projects,* so that there is an understanding of what the member is currently undertaking.
4. *Competency gaps,* in terms of both limitations in individual capabilities, and access to resources.

From the above, the aim is for the switchboard operator to identify the needs of each member, and what each member can provide to others. It takes the process of what a connector does intuitively and formalizes it. Over time, one could hypothesize that the function of a switchboard operator becomes what can be defined as a “collective brain”, with a matching process that becomes more efficient as the number of members increases, and the knowledge of each member deepens. Technology can play a key role, as increasingly competent algorithms can support the process of converting data to knowledge (Clark, 2014).

### Engagement with the Outside: Creating Opportunity for Individuals and Bridging the Resource Gaps of Firms

Even as a collaborative community has defined boundaries in the sense that an individual is either a member or not, the community can be viewed as an organization as any other that engages with the outside world. Members can have employment in addition to membership in the collaborative community, or engage professionally with individuals in their personal networks, without obligations in respect to the collaborative community.

As noted above, members can contribute through access to resources outside of the immediate community, which in entails that when members interact outside of the community, it benefits all members.

The function of a switchboard operator can also assist in promoting engagement with organizations and individuals outside of the community. As organizations seek access to increasingly specialized skills, a collaborative community can provide an important function, by actively identifying relevant resources within the membership, on behalf of a partnering organization. This could be members or groups of members, so that the community thereby offers members access to opportunity, and firms a way to gain access to specialized skills. This is somewhat different than ventures that offer access to experts for hire, as a collaborative community has a deep understanding about the motivations and capabilities of each member. A firm approaching the switchboard operator could be directed to curated, interdisciplinary, teams of people that would otherwise not be identified, or be inaccessible to the partnering firm.

Highly skilled individuals often lack interest in full-time employment for a specific project or have other primary engagements that make them accessible only on a part-time basis (such as academics with faculty or research positions). Thus, a collaborative community can be a partner, that offer firms access to specialized skills, and individuals’ access to opportunity outside of full-time employment.

## **Concluding Comments: Matching Skills, Resources, and Ideas**

As noted above, the proposed model for a collaborative community can provide opportunity for individuals, and potentially outperform the traditional model of full-time employment in terms of value creation. This is because firms need to match increasingly broad challenges with increasingly narrow skills. Thus, organizations that can effectively match specialized resources for a specific endeavor, will have a competitive advantage that is amplified by rapid changes that make static internal resources obsolete, and creates a need for new and highly specialized skills.

At its core, the ability to create competitive advantage and put individual human capital to its highest and best use is a challenge of search and matching. The skills, interests, and access to resources that an individual possess is not easily observable and takes time to learn through a time-consuming and fairly random process of getting to know each other. This is also why most people have human capital that is under-utilized.

The contribution of this paper lies in proposing a path towards a model that solves for the challenge of organizations seeking transient access to specialized skills for specific projects, and individuals seeking access to opportunity outside of full-time employment. We outline two main functions aimed at enabling professionals to capitalize on their human capital; 1) by curating a community of individuals with complimentary skills and resources and lowering transaction costs through processes aimed at creating a sense of community, and 2) by having a party with deep knowledge about each member actively curate introductions and activities aimed at creating opportunity.

Even the slightest efficiency improvement in how opportunities arise and knowledge spills over, has a potentially transformative impact on individuals, organizations, and society. It is likely that new organizational models, such as what is proposed in this paper, will play a key role in addressing the challenges posed by the 4th industrial revolution and the future of work, by lowering barriers for collaboration and exposing individuals to opportunities and resources otherwise not available.

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1. Uzzi and Dunlap (2005) define this category of benefit from networks as power, rather than influence. In the context of professionals that engage outside of firms and formalized hierarchies, we prefer the term influence over power, as the former entails having people contributing by virtue of wanting to do so, rather than pressure stemming from hierarchies or orders. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A baseline agreement could be like the standardized FAST agreement between advisors and startups, which was developed by the Founder Institute in 2011 (Eqvista, 2021). The Fast agreement saves time and effort by defining expectations and equity contributions during the idea, startup, and growth phases of a company, and defining how much equity various levels of engagement correspond to. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The term” Switchboard Operator” comes from the autobiography by Stephen Schwarzman, the Co-Founder and CEO of Blackstone, who in a job-interview at the early stages of his career stated that: *“I want to be a telephone switchboard, I told my interviewer, “Taking in information from countless feeds, sorting it, and sending it back out into the world.”* Schwarzman, S. 2019. What it Takes: Lessons in the Pursuit of Excellence. Simon & Schuster. New York. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)