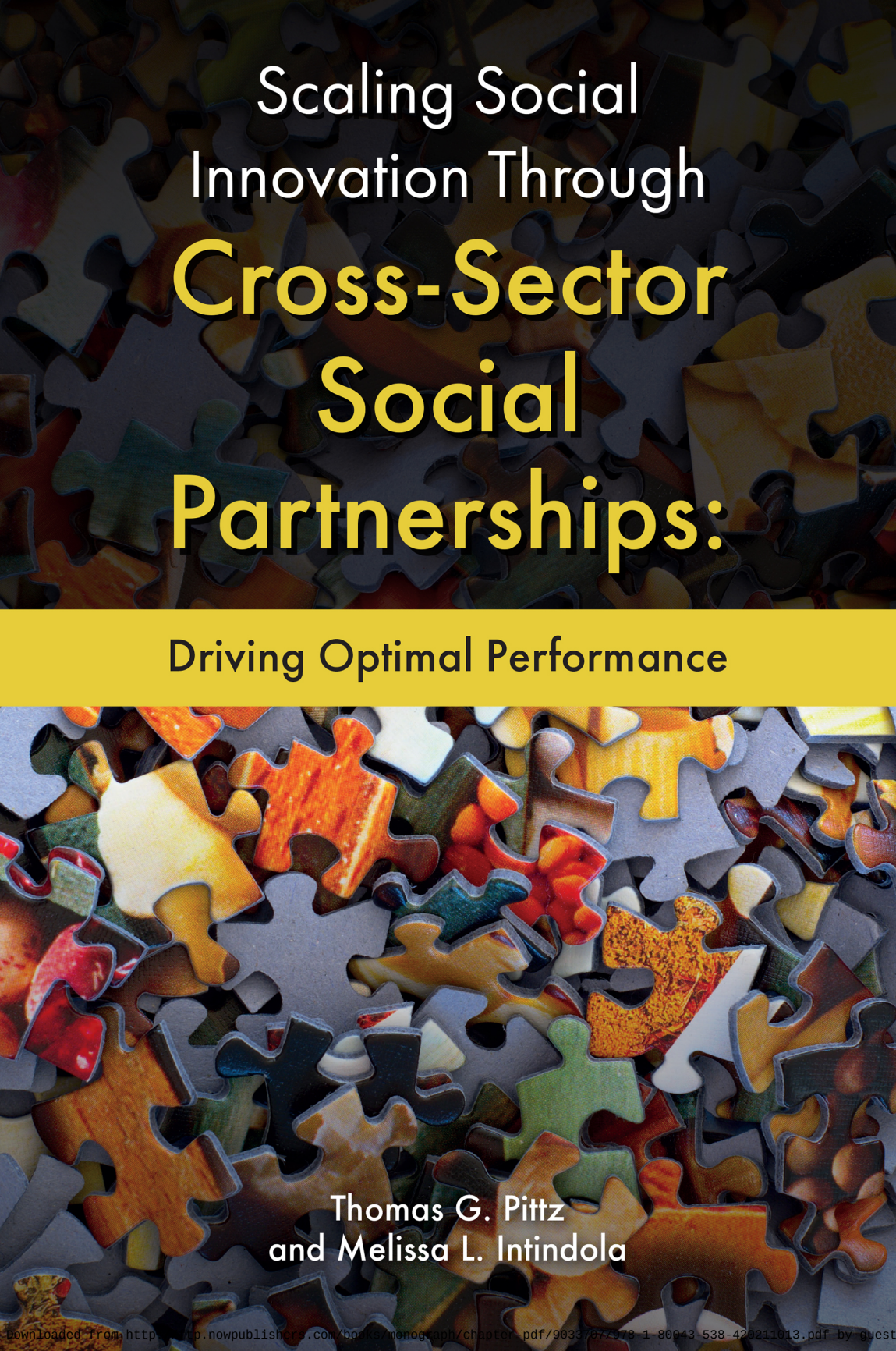




Scaling Social Innovation Through **Cross-Sector Social Partnerships:**

Driving Optimal Performance

Thomas G. Pittz
and Melissa L. Intindola

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Thomas G. Pittz received his Ph.D. from New Mexico State University after two decades of industry experience, including the launch of two entrepreneurial ventures, and has taught undergraduate, graduate, and executive level students in entrepreneurship, strategy, and innovation in the Lowth Entrepreneurship Center of the Sykes College of Business at the University of Tampa. He conducts research that is broadly focused on external knowledge exploration and exploitation, strategic openness, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and collaboration across market sectors where diverse knowledge structures can coalesce to produce novel solutions and systemic change. He has published over 25 peer-reviewed journal articles in outlets such as the *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Small Business Economics*, the *Journal of Small Business Management*, *Studies in Higher Education*, and the *International Journal of Project Management*, to name a few. He maintains an active consulting practice, serves on the board of directors for several Tampa-based companies, and is actively involved in the United States Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship.



Melissa L. Intindola received her Ph.D. from New Mexico State University after working in the nonprofit sector as a volunteer manager and fund development coordinator and has taught undergraduate and graduate level students in organizational behavior, human resource management, and leadership in the Haworth College of Business at Western Michigan University. She conducts research that is broadly focused on the success of cross-sector partnerships via topics such as partner selection, absorptive capacity, strategic decision-making, and bricolage. She has published over 20 peer-reviewed journal articles in outlets such as the *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, *The International Journal of Management Education*, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, and the *Journal of Small Business Management*, to name a few. In addition, she has given invited presentations on cross-sector collaborations at both academic and practitioner-focused conferences. She has won several awards for teaching, research, and her dedication to the employment readiness of students. She also serves the nonprofit community by providing pro bono consulting work through her classes, and serving on boards of directors.



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Foreword

When we began writing this book, we had no idea what was about to happen to the world. The onset of Covid-19 and the resulting health and economic concerns have created a time of uncertainty the likes of which have not been known during our lifetimes. However, this global pandemic has also shined a light on the importance of the kinds of partnerships we are writing about to sustain our communities during the toughest of times. National Institute of Health Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., and Johnson & Johnson Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee and Chief Scientific Officer Paul Stoffels, M.D., declared that response to the Covid-19 pandemic will require “a swift, coordinated effort across many sectors of society.” We have seen competing city hospitals coordinate to ensure patient care, state and local governments partnering with non-profit organizations and private business to provide Covid-19 testing and ensure the continuance of K-12 and higher education, and pharmaceutical companies working together with universities to develop a vaccine as quickly as possible. Among the most unique partnerships is between St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children in Philadelphia and Gate Gourmet, an airline food service provider. When the Covid-19 pandemic began, St. Christopher’s worried about how its families, already vulnerable from the illnesses suffered by their youngest members, would obtain meals during stay-at-home orders. Gate Gourmet was suffering from the massive downturn in air travel. Together, the two began working to distribute boxed meals to the hospital’s patient families. This initial partnership has grown as St. Christopher’s has introduced Gate Gourmet to additional distribution sites around the city. But the story doesn’t end there. Deemed “Project Isaiah,” the partnership garnered the attention of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. With players lending their support financially and acting as on-site volunteers, Project Isaiah was able to exist under the Hall of Fame’s existing 501(c)(3) status. Since launching in April 2020, Project Isaiah has provided more than 350,000 boxed meals in 11 US cities. In Philadelphia alone, Gate Gourmet has provided more than 25,000 meals each week. In addition, Gate Gourmet has been able to preserve more than 500 jobs that may otherwise have been lost to the pandemic.

Ron Dreskin, Principal-in-Charge of Eisner Amper’s Health Care consulting Group, says that “Covid-19 has made it abundantly clear that none of us lives in a vacuum, and it will take unique partnerships to help us get through this.” In Florida, a pilot program involving a team of South Florida farmers will distribute more than 380,000 pounds of fresh produce directly to 87,000 inmates across 35 correctional facilities in the state. This partnership helps buffer the blow to Florida agriculture

caused by a decrease in produce demand as restaurants close to reduce Covid-19 cases. It also ensures that inmates will have access to produce despite disruptions in local and national supply chains. The New York State Department of Labor and State Office of Information Technology Services partnered with Google Cloud, Deloitte, and Verizon to upgrade the reliability of the state's unemployment application systems. The goal of this partnership is to make it easier for New Yorkers to apply for unemployment benefits by increasing capacity of the system to accept and process applications, a partnership created by a 16,000% increase in phone applications and a 1,600% increase in online traffic during peak weeks as stay-at-home orders led to unprecedented layoffs.

Across the United States (and indeed, the globe), we continue to witness innovative partnerships designed to ease some burden caused by Covid-19. While the context may be unique to our present day, the suggestions offered in this book still apply. During this time of heightened unrest and concern, we hope the drivers of optimal collaboration performance discussed here will provide a sense of pragmatism and security for those facing new partnerships, unprecedented challenges to a current partnership, and even current higher education students with a desire to change the world through cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs). The need for these insights is heightened against the backdrop of Covid-19, as new work from Pereira Temouri, Patnaik, and Mellahi (2020) suggest that there is "new urgency on understanding the complexities of public-private partnerships" (https://aom.org/about-aom/aom-news/blog-detail_news/insights-videos/2020/06/20/partnering-to-speed-covid-19-medications) given our current health crisis. However, the importance of understanding CSSPs is no less important after this pandemic ends. Lest we forget, there are a myriad of complex social problems remaining that would benefit from a CSSP framework – let's begin!

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