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# Exploiting the business opportunities in biotech connections: The power of social networks

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worked for several years as a manufacturing engineer before earning his PhD in operations strategy from the University of Sheffield in Britain. His current research focusses on the design and operational performance of organisations; in particular, he is interested in operational complexity, mass customisation and new product development. He is also a specialist in classification, using methods from evolutionary theory to classify and represent different operational and technology strategies as an evolutionary tree.

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## Abstract

Networks have a well-established importance in business. Here network analysis, grounded in social network theory, is used to analyse two international biotech business-to-business environments. Of additional value, the methodology employed is described for the benefit of academics and practitioners alike. Swedish and Australian biotech firms are analysed through the examination of internet networks. Once gathered and analysed following the described methodology, several features of the networks can be determined. Most critically, identification of important actors and structural holes within networks allows valuable entrepreneurial opportunities to be unearthed. Biotech firms and suppliers, particularly those with a global reach, are best positioned to take advantage of such information.

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## WORTH IN THE NETWORK: THE VALUE OF SOCIAL TIES

The study of social networks has its origins in social psychology and sociology. The ‘small world phenomenon’ is the hypothesis that everyone in the world can be reached