



MILKEN INSTITUTE

# The Power of Ideas

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Insights for Building  
Meaningful Lives

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# Supporting Entrepreneurship That Binds Us

One of the most effective, most tangible and measurable ways to enhance people's lives is to fuel and empower the world's entrepreneurs—the individuals with imagination and power who create the next disruption in finance, technology, medicine, transportation, agriculture, and every industry that affects the lives of millions of individuals in societies around the world.

At Credit Suisse, supporting entrepreneurs underpins so much of what we do. It is part of our heritage. More than 160 years ago, Alfred Escher founded the predecessor bank of Credit Suisse, which played a key part in financing the construction of the Swiss national railway, connecting the country for the first time.

As Mike Milken himself has evangelized for years, access to capital fuels entrepreneurship and turns dreams and visions into products and services that are societal game-changers. Facebook and eBay turned the world upside down with ground-breaking

technological disruptions; today each company employs thousands of individuals, allows millions of users across the economic landscape to buy, sell, and share, and has created millions of jobs around the world.

Traditionally, credit provided by banks was the principal source of capital for most of the world's small businesses and fledgling companies, and the process by which those businesses got those loans was unchanged for more than 100 years. Yet, in the past two decades, disruptions in everything from microfinance initiatives to alternative/online lending to financial technology (or "fintech") and the growth of private equity have fundamentally altered how entrepreneurs and established companies access capital markets.

Global financial services firms like ours have an important role in bringing next-generation business leaders together with established company mentors to share ideas on business development and

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strategies for success. As a firm with businesses and clients in both developed and developing economies, we are a natural bridge, providing access to capital in underserved markets, as well as investment opportunities in developed ones.

I was born and raised in the developing world. I have seen technological advances literally save—as well as change—people’s lives. I believe in the power of technology to make the world a better, more prosperous place. And technology really has built bridges—both literal and figurative—between the world’s developed and developing economies.

However such change does not come without sacrifice and displacement, and many aspects of human connection—the personal interface, if you will—have suffered. Technology, especially in the developed world, has allowed too many people to close themselves off from their communities and has contributed to populations who feel disconnected, disenfranchised, or

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marginalized from those around them. That said, I believe technology over the long run has mostly been a force for good, and we don’t want to stop innovating and developing technologies that will ensure the wellbeing and prosperity of our children and grandchildren. While society needs fair and balanced rules, improving access to opportunity will not be solved by taking a step backward and trying to stop or slow down technological progress.

As a firm that has both private and investment banking at its core, we are acutely aware of the importance of contact and connectivity. In the “high-touch” world of banking, no individual, company, or sovereign nation entrusts any firm with their wealth without a relationship that has been built steadily and gradually over years, and sometimes decades, of personal, face-to-face collaboration.

We must find ways to use technology to bring people

together instead of driving them farther apart. We must support entrepreneurs whose visions will lead to products or services that bind us rather than divide us.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that people build technology—not the other way around—and for the vast majority of the world’s citizens, technology is there to help them raise their children, protect their health, grow their assets, and develop their communities. And that is what constitutes a meaningful life for most of the people in this world.