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### **gener8tor Unveils “Project North” Initiative**

*Corporate group is the largest consortium of top corporate venture capital, innovation, M&A and strategy executives in the Midwest*

**MILWAUKEE** – Over the past three years, gener8tor has quietly compiled the largest corporate innovation network in the Midwest. Internally referred to as “Project North” since its inception in 2015, the formerly confidential initiative has grown from a small group of forward-thinking companies to a consortium of top corporate venture capital, innovation, M&A and strategy executives from 37 national and multinational corporations across the Midwest.

“At this point, three years in, we felt Project North was becoming an open secret,” said gener8tor co-founder Troy Vosseller. “We wanted to formally reveal Project North specifically to highlight the tremendous work being done by our members and the tremendous amount of time, effort and resources they have invested into the startup and corporate ecosystems.”

Members include: A.O. Smith Corporation, Allianz Life Insurance Company, American Family Insurance, Ameritas Life Insurance Corp, Assurant, Inc., Boston Scientific Corporation, Charter Manufacturing, Church Mutual Insurance Company, Design Concepts, GMR Marketing, Harley-Davidson, Hendricks Commercial Properties, HSA Bank, HUSCO International, Jewelers Mutual Insurance Group, Johnsonville Sausage, Kohl’s Corporation, Kohler Co., Lancaster Investments, Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company, N29 Capital Partners, National Center for Manufacturing Sciences, Navistar, Inc., Northwestern Mutual, Quarles & Brady, Rite-Hite, Rockwell Automation, Inc., SafetyNet, Sargento Foods Inc, Schneider, Total Administrative Services Corporation, Thrivent Financial, U.S. Cellular, West Bend Mutual Insurance Company, Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, and Wisconsin Medical Society.

Project North members extend across Michigan, Nebraska, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Project North is sponsored by 4490 Ventures. “Drawing corporations and startups closer has tremendous benefits,” said Greg Robinson, Managing Director of 4490 Ventures. “By helping forge relationships between startups and corporate innovation and venture capital teams, Project North is creating a fast track for startup growth while also helping legacy corporations more easily transition amid changing economic trends. It’s had a significant and measurable impact on the local ecosystem.”

“In 2015 we started getting more and more inbound interest from local corporations looking to engage with startups,” Vosseller said. “Simultaneously, these corporations were at various stages of starting and growing their own corporate venture capital and innovation departments. We created Project North as a forum for peers to share best practices around these new activities.”

“Project North has been an extremely effective platform for us to learn from peers and advance our innovation processes,” said Dan Counsell, Director of Mergers & Acquisitions at Kohler Co. “Joining Project North has accelerated our involvement, communication and learnings within the start-up community on a global basis.”

“Working with the gener8tor team and Project North colleagues has been an invaluable part of our innovation journey,” said Sarah Van Slyke, Director of Strategic Development at Thrivent Financial. “Learning from peers in multiple industries has helped us recognize shared challenges and consider new ideas. The gener8tor team has shown tremendous dedication to creating collaboration and innovation growth across the region.”

“While every large company has their unique set of circumstances and innovation opportunities, Project North is an excellent way to expand your experience set and learn from others,” said Dan Reed, VP, Managing Director of American Family Ventures.

“The gener8tor relationship has been incredibly valuable to our efforts at Allianz Life Ventures,” said Brittany Clements, Principal at Allianz Life Ventures. “Their concierge model carries over to the Project North program, where they not only do a great job of creating a community around corporate innovation but serve as a resource multiplier, adding value and helping with our specific needs.”

Project North is an exclusive, members-only network offering an intimate forum to facilitate:

- access to leading technologists, venture capitalists and startups;
- early exposure to disruptive, class-leading technologies through not only the gener8tor and gBETA accelerators, but gener8tor’s nationwide network as well;
- exchange of best practices from peer executives across U.S;
- formation and growth of corporate venture capital funds and innovation departments.

Project North is comprised of four components:

- Quarterly Roundtables:
  - Roundtables are held each quarter and include discussions with leading academics, venture capitalists and technologists on new opportunities across member industries. Discussions are followed by a members-only dinner which features presentations from participating members around their corporate venture capital and/or innovation practices.
  - Past guest presenters include current and former leaders from Proctor & Gamble, Microsoft, Touchdown Ventures, Cintrifuse, Caterpillar, Target, Lowe's, Samsung and Spectrum Health.
- Executives on a Plane:
  - Executives on a Plane is a biannual three-day, two-night trip for member executives to entrepreneurial hubs across the country to meet with leading technologists, venture capitalists, startups and peers.
  - Past trips have included Seattle, Silicon Valley and Boston with visits and presentations by Sequoia Capital, a16z, Accenture, Fidelity Labs, LinkedIn, Charles River Ventures, Bain Capital, GE Ventures, ABB Technology Ventures, Microsoft, Amazon, Starbucks, Maveron, Silicon Valley Bank, Xerox PARC and more.
- Sourcing and Retreats:
  - gener8tor provides curated reports of startups in specific industries from around the country based on the member's provided themes and interest areas. Each member also receives custom retreats and consulting from Project North's leadership team. Past custom programming has included new technology briefings, judging internal ideation contests, strategic introductions, deal sourcing, corporate venture consulting and new business model feedback.
- OnRamp Conference Series: <http://www.onrampconference.com>
  - The OnRamp Conference Series grew out of a desire to provide entrepreneurs at various stages of growth with access to high level corporate leaders and later stage investors. Started by gener8tor in 2013, OnRamp has evolved into vertical-specific events featuring conference programming and curated one-on-one pitch sessions between startups and corporate venture capital and innovation executives. OnRamp strives to be the premier gathering of corporate venture capital and innovation executives in each industry it serves.
  - Project North members receive complimentary Corporate Group Registration to all OnRamp conferences, which includes a private, box-level suite for taking one-on-one meetings with startups, the full list of startup applicants, VIP dinner and priority speaking slots.

To learn more about Project North, please visit [www.gener8tor.com/project-north](http://www.gener8tor.com/project-north).

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**About gener8tor:** <https://www.gener8tor.com>

gener8tor is a turnkey platform for the creative economy that connects startups, entrepreneurs, artists, investors, universities and corporations. The gener8tor platform includes pre-accelerators, accelerators, corporate programming, conferences and fellowships focused on entrepreneurs, artists and musicians.

gener8tor is a nationally ranked, GOLD-tier accelerator in the U.S. as ranked by the [Seed Accelerator Rankings Project](#).