

The background image shows a construction site at sunset. A tall yellow crane is visible in the upper center. The building's steel frame is partially covered with scaffolding. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

KNOWLEDGE INFRASTRUCTURES REQUIRE SCAFFOLDING

THE ROLE OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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Knowledge infrastructures comprise robust networks of people, artifacts, and institutions that **generate, share, and maintain specific knowledge** about the human and natural worlds.

- P.N. Edwards (2010)

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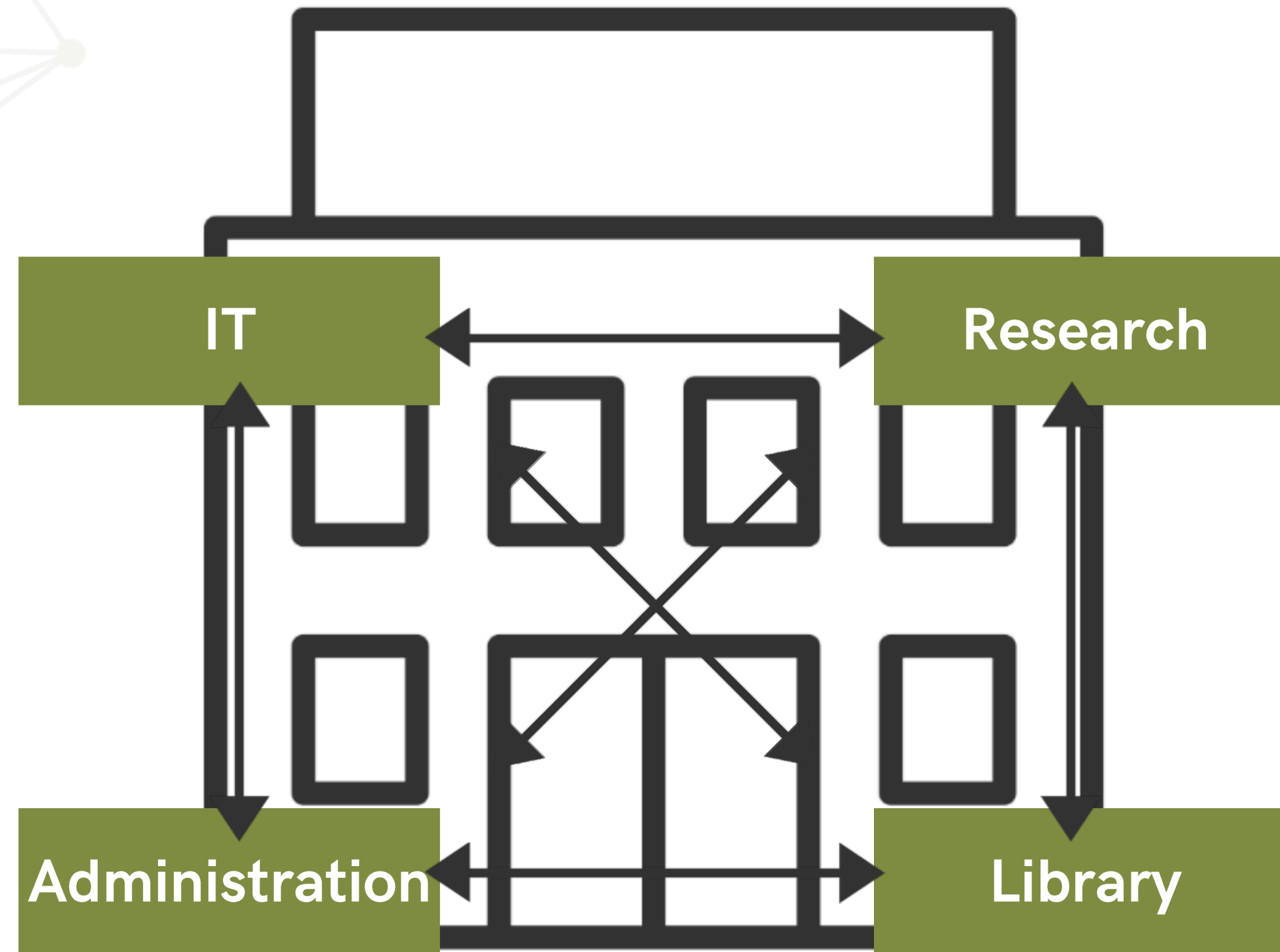
Moving Forward

Hiring, orienting and socializing employees for maximum benefit

Organization



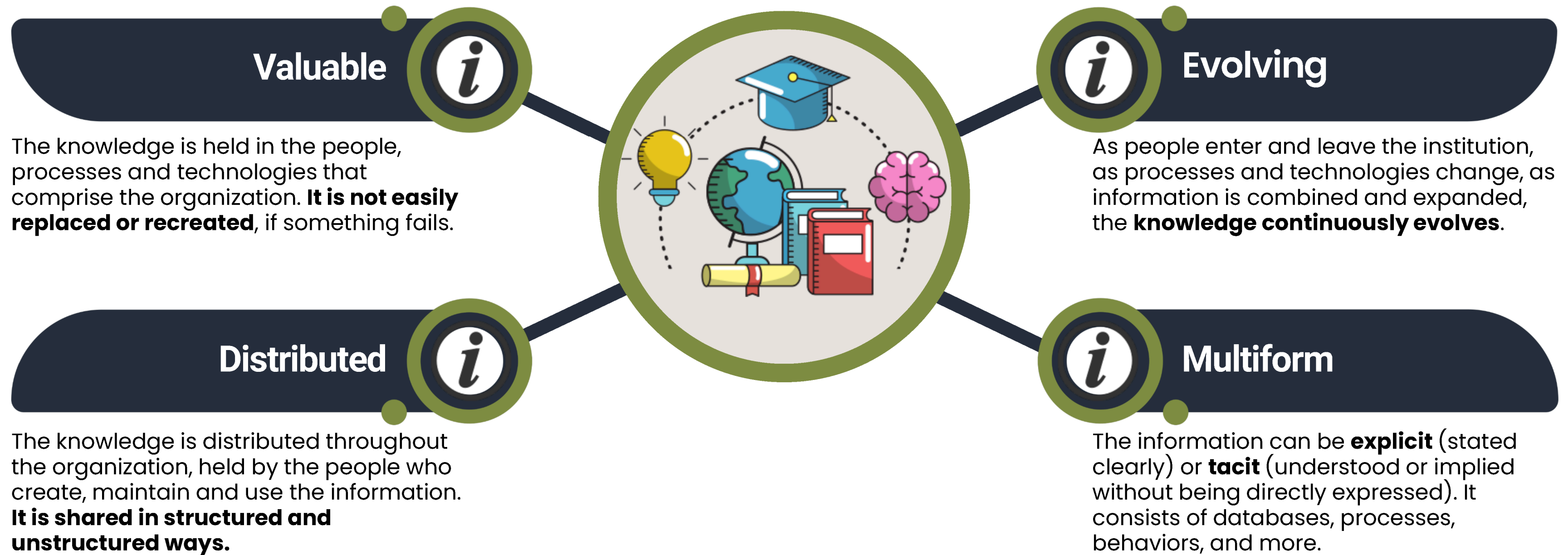
KNOWLEDGE INFRASTRUCTURE



KNOWLEDGE INFRASTRUCTURE



ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE



SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



01

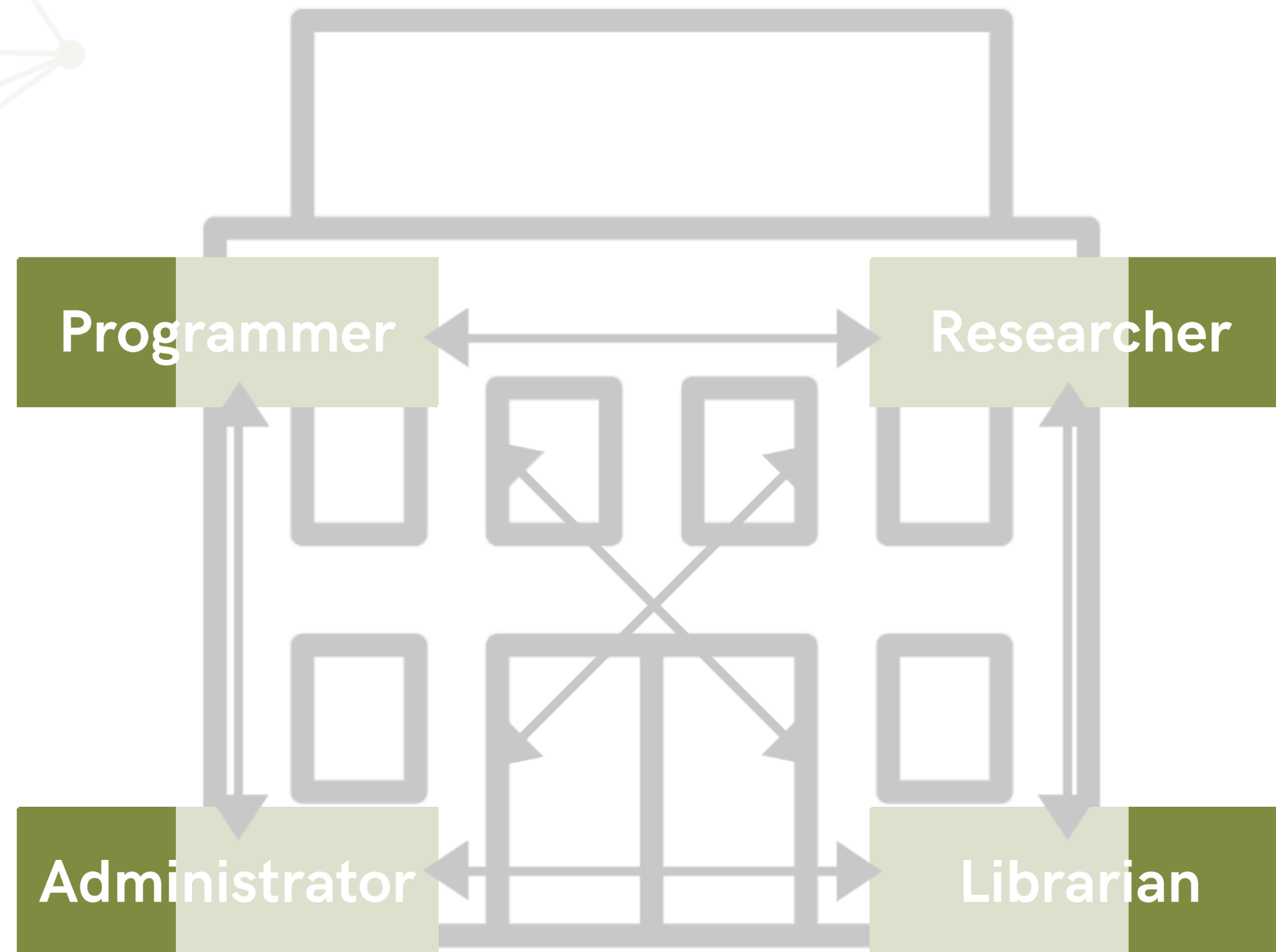
We don't know what we don't know. That is, we can't ask for information if we don't know it exists.

02

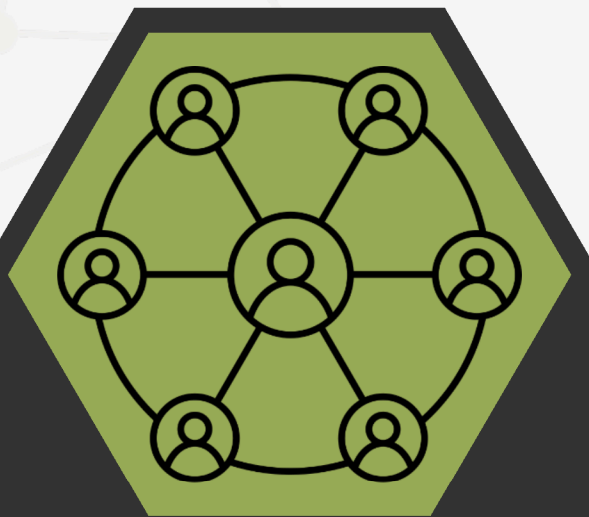
We have limited time, energy and motivation to seek information or to help others outside of our formal responsibilities.

NETWORK

KNOWLEDGE INFRASTRUCTURE



NETWORK RELATIONSHIPS



Formal Networks

...prescribed networks that consist of formally defined relationships between supervisors and subordinates and people from different functional departments interacting to perform a particular task.

- Chen + Krauskopf, 2013



Informal Networks

...more discretionary patterns of interactions, where the content of relationships may be social, work-related or a combination of both.

- Ibarra , 1993

NETWORK RELATIONSHIPS



Formal Networks

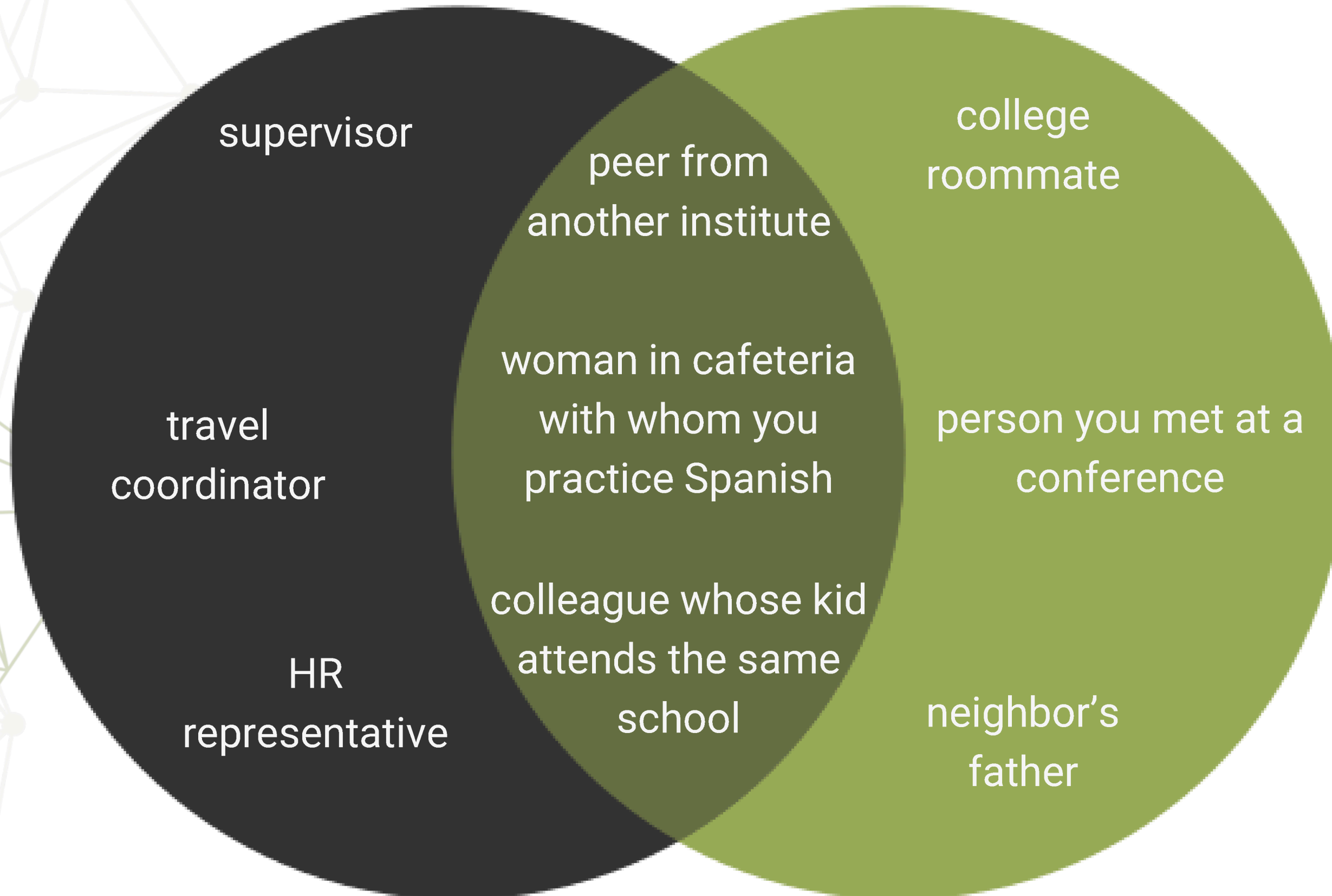
Goal-oriented



Informal Networks

Not goal-oriented...unless you want it to be.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL NETWORKS



INFORMAL COMMUNICATION



Building trust



Learning about their skills, interests, expertise, character



Learning about their network connections



Taking a mental break from our work

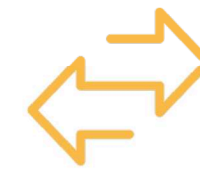


Enjoying ourselves...hopefully

COST OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

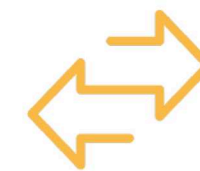


Knowledge transfer costs **time** and **energy**



The cost is higher when:

- the knowledge is distinct
- the person is unfamiliar



We are more willing to pay that cost for:

- people we like
- people who might be able to help us

“FRIENDS AND FAMILY DISCOUNT”



The cost is reduced when we **trust** and **understand** each other.



Sources of trust and understanding:

- frequent communication
- similar background
- shared experience

INFORMAL NETWORKS = SCAFFOLDING



1

External to infrastructure

2

Tailored to the issue

3

Temporary

INFORMAL NETWORK ADVANTAGES



Draw attention to weaknesses in infrastructure.



Address issues before they become crises.



Identify desirable features before they are requested.

INFORMAL NETWORK DISADVANTAGES

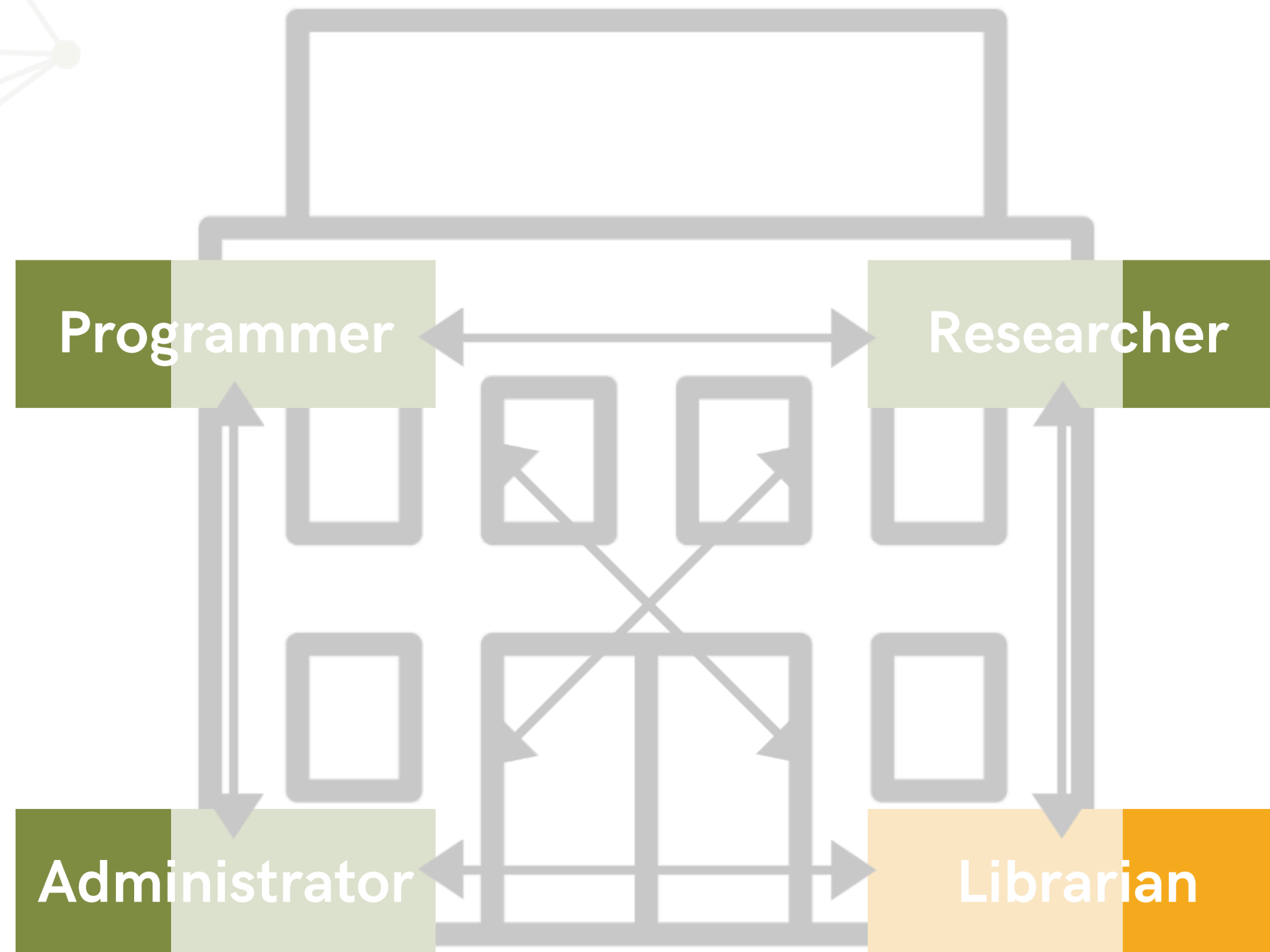


They depend on people.



INDIVIDUAL

KNOWLEDGE INFRASTRUCTURE



INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIPS



Informal networks depend upon the **skills, interests, experiences**, etc. of the individuals involved.



Some connections are wide (e.g., boundary spanners):

- These provide **more novel information** by pulling insight from other work units or external alliances.



Some connections are deep:

- These lead to **more efficient teamwork** by allowing colleagues with shared experiences to collaborate with less effort.

INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIPS



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POSITION-DEPENDENT NEEDS



Integration needs depend on the role.

- Not all roles require a boundary-spanning network
- No need for every employee to cultivate external ties



Having a single point of contact has benefits:

- Trustworthy source of information
- One-stop shop for information
- Filter information in both directions

RELEVANT SKILLS

- 
- A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a complex network of interconnected nodes and lines, resembling a web or a molecular structure. The nodes are small circles, and the lines are thin, creating a dense, interconnected pattern.
- Maintaining a robust, diverse network
 - Taking multiple perspectives
 - Framing issues effectively
 - Connecting people across roles, departments, locations
 - Active listening

TURNOVER RISK



- Tacit knowledge transfer requires the right person at the right place.
- Some networks revolve around a central person.
- Peripheral (not well-connected) people are more likely to leave.

TURNOVER RISK



“Understanding how [an individual’s] departure might impact connectivity and information flow is critical to ensuring network resiliency.”

- Cross, Parker, Prusak, 2002

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a group of people's arms and hands stacked together in a huddle. The individuals are wearing various casual clothing: a green button-down shirt, a blue denim shirt, a mustard yellow t-shirt, and a white button-down shirt. Several accessories are visible, including a gold watch, a black digital watch, a silver bracelet, a black band, and a silver band. Tattoos are also visible on some arms, including an anchor and a floral design. The background is a light-colored wooden floor.

MOVING FORWARD

INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

- 
- ❓ Is the position task-based or team-based?
 - ❓ Would this position benefit from inter-unit collaboration? Does this position require visibility across the organization?
 - ❓ Does this person show interest in and aptitude for expanding their network?
 - ❓ Does the person enjoy moving between groups or prefer to work with a more defined team?

NETWORK QUESTIONS

- 
- ❓ Are the procedures firmly established, or under development?
 - ❓ Are there changes on the horizon that might affect the way the position operates or the information it requires?
 - ❓ Are there known information bottlenecks?

ORGANIZATION QUESTIONS

- 
- ❓ What makes this organization unique? What would be important for someone from outside to know?
 - ❓ What does it mean for someone to “fit in” with the department and with the wider organization?
 - ❓ How do we keep the organization on a desired track?

PROMOTING INTEGRATION



Strategic staffing

Mentor program

Recognition
and reward for
network activities

Informal and
casual events
during work time

Offboarding
procedures to capture
network information

TAKE-AWAY



Knowledge Transfer:

- We become more efficient at communicating as we expand our network and interact with different people.
- We can learn more from people with whom we have less in common.

Personal Benefit: Feeling integrated is associated with better long-term outcomes, such as

- job performance
- job satisfaction
- organizational commitment

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THANK YOU



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