



SHIYANG FAN'S PERSONAL BRANDING PROPOSAL

A2. Brand "I" Assignment



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Why I compose this proposal

Personal or self branding could be defined as a rush from products to people. The term, branding, used to be for marketing process. But today it could be something ordinary people do to themselves.

My mission en route is to pursue an expertise in game theory applied in behavioral science and micro financial industry. Does such a nerd need a branding process? The answer is surely yes.

Branding of self concept is not merely a sufficient condition to career success, but also a necessary condition. Human history witnesses a lot of cases that academic tragedies as a result of poor branding.

Niccolò Tartaglia, the Italian genius, was the first guy who found out the solution to cubic equations. But he was indifferent to protect his intellectual property. Unfortunately, Gerolamo Cardano stole his works and named them "Cardano Formula". Mr. Cardano had well managed this plagiarized brand and spread it widely across the world. Modern mathematicians still call this general solution to cubic equations "Cardano Formula". *

The French Mathematician, Baron Cauchy, had a talented student named Bernard Bolzano. Bolzano presented a new concept of limit called "limit avoidance". But this unlucky guy disliked publishing his ideas. His teacher, Cauchy put Bolzano's work into his Cours d'Analyse of 1821 without mention having been inspired by anyone else. Cauchy seems like a very productive mathematician, but his publications are well organized hence the brand of Cauchy has eventually influenced the modern mathematics. †

Good reputation a brand means trust and positive signal. In service industry, i.e. education, finance, consulting, etc., this means a low cost or no entry barrier. In the modern days, to stand out against the big brand like Gauss, Euler, or Newton, young mathematicians began to join as a

* Wikipedia, <<http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Tartaglia.html>> .

† H. Freudenthal, Did Cauchy Plagiarize Bolzano?. Archive for History of Exact Sciences, Vol. 7, No. 5 (18.XI.1971), pp. 375-392, <<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/41133332?uid=3739832&uid=2&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21102668159881>> .



group when conducting researches or publishing theories. Their papers are all published under a name, Nicolas Bourbaki, which is not a real person but a collective pseudonym for those young geniuses in 20th century.[‡]

Way back in the 19th century, the vital pioneer quality of American self-reliance had become a preoccupation with "self-help". This process made America renaissance in the modern theories of advertising and public relations. In U.S., Claude C. Hopkins's marketing manual "Scientific Advertising" (1923) brought scientific measurement into marketing research. Edward Bernays, Freud's nephew, published "Propaganda" (1928) claiming marketing approach as a psychological behavior. During the Great Depression in 1930s, Dale Carnegie published "How to Win Friends and Influence People" (1936), teaching every American become a self brand architect and self image manager. Tom Wolfe pointed out a narcissistic notion in "The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening" (1976), reflecting the 19th century self-help culture in U.S. as well as an early 20th-century advertising and PR business that was taken seriously by MBAs. Since 1980s, self branding has become a business obsession. Self-branding is now a recognized discipline widely across the modern world. Thanks to the development of information technology, the individual branding realizes in deed.[§]

Position and mission statement

Shiyang Fan sounds like a word of "Swan" in Hindu language, easy to remember for both Chinese and English-speaking people. Fan, my surname, dated back to my family history nearly a thousand years ago. I got this label as well as the expectation from my parents.

What I should contribute to this name and enrich itself? Cogito, ego sum. After contemplating my academic performance, personal traits, merits and shortfalls, I set up a plan to devote years to research.

[‡] Wikipedia, < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolas_Bourbaki >.

[§] HOW MARKETING HAS GOT UNDER OUR SKIN, The Economist Article, <<http://moreintelligentlife.com/print/content/peter-york/big-sell>>.



I am addicted into Game Theory. But before I apply it to research, I have to answer these questions: In which field of modern science can Game theory be viewed as a mainstream rather than a minority or even heresy? Which field develops a minority into a mainstream in less than thirty years?

Surely it is the Economics academia. This is my target field therefore.

Which specific field of study in Economics would be my niche? Whether I read articles on journals, book-reviews on Economist magazine, or comments on daily newspapers, almost everywhere across continents, investors and investees, regulators and speculators have entered into a holy alliance to clamor that "A spectre is haunting Markets, the spectre of irrational, abnormal, heterogeneous human behavior." To this end, researchers and professionals establish a momentum in manifesto. The momentum of financial research into behavioral economics, experimental economics has shown the trend of interdisciplinary paradigm in economics and management subjects. Game-theoretic model has developed to adapt to this momentum.

I find that Game Theory can be a universal language for all behavioral sciences. Therefore, behavioral economics, and experimental economics, ought to be chosen as an intended niche. And I have deep insight in micro finance industry, i.e. finance against poverty. Those behavioral economics study and research refer specifically to micro finance.

My long-term plan is to return to SWUFE as an entrepreneurial researcher and expert in micro or rural finance field.

The goal, my mission en route, would be take a PhD program in Economics. The momentum of economics research is dynamic from day to day. The best way to update my knowledge base and to catch up with innovative ideas would be to get involved in the academia and to be guided by research pioneers in the economics field. Furthermore, I hope to do advanced research in the application of mathematics in game-theoretic models, game theory as



explanations for behavioral science and the application of game theory in understanding probability and forecasting. Thus, my preparation must be thorough and profound.

My objective at this moment is PhD application. A PhD program in Economics would provide me with a broad foresight as well as a deep insight in Economics research. It could enable me to learn how to study and analyze a specific subject, to know the paradigms, methods, philosophy of empirical research, to network and group work with people of the same goals and interests, to practice research skills and public speech skills.

I am determined to devote years to economics research. During the first year in the program, I plan to logically enrich my knowledge structure of Economics and its mathematical fundamentals, and I would prepare myself to be a qualified researcher with empirical knowledge and theories. Then, in the second or third year, I plan to focus on a topic over a specific field, to learn by literature review and fast reading, to communicate by seminar discussing and lecturing, to feedback by dialectical reasoning and critical thinking. The mission en route would surely be my thesis composition, which could help me with systematic research paradigms and enable me to be an expert in a specific field of study.

In modern world, there is a trend in personal branding. That is to say, visibility is the key to success. So I am to establish a personal website, where I can put my works and publications.

Analysis for the "I" brand

I believe in finance against poverty, so I redefine the career path for a graduate of finance major. I have done internship in two micro finance originations. I found out the threats and opportunities they face.

Micro finance is a financial channel for the low income. I would play a role as a coordinator and consultant for a micro financial organization. I am to utilize my expertise in financial vehicle design, risk management, supervision and education.



In U.S., many micro financial organizations are non-profit, funded by charity and donations. The majority of them started from small credit unions in 1990s. However, most of them cannot make ends meet.

In China, micro financial industry is underground, which means they are informal financial institutions. Until 1995, rural credit unions are not open to the private sector. Since 2008, micro financial institutions have become national issue across mainland China.

The first threat is not the rivals in micro financial industry, but the threat from new entrants, i.e. the speculative arbitrage entering local community. China witnessed the legalization for small credit companies in March 28, 2012. Many speculators also regarded this as a chance of make fortune. They might charge borrowers lower rate and evolve as mature financial companies.

However, the threat from the subsidies also challenges the researchers in the industry. This is because micro finance cares about the fairness and equity, but seldom counts the efficiency.

Accounting PhD may not find it reasonable to get into this business based on current accounting rule of costs and fair value. But I would like to set up an ideal mechanism valuing the externality in this group lending process.

My suppliers are data sources companies like Prima Inc. They will charge a high rate for data exploitation. Chances are I could conduct my own survey and utilize the local interviews. And this also provides a creditworthy about the empirical research.

My clients would be consulting firms, educational institutes, training center for financial sophistication and local government. Researchers usually raise fund from their clients at the cost of providing pioneer reports and data to them.

The points of parity are the professional skill base that all PhD graduates have: trust, ethics, awareness of humanity, specific expertise in my own study field. On the other hand, I have some points of difference.



My uniqueness rooted in Game Theoretic Modeling relies less upon the panel data, but more sensitive to the market condition. This would become a competitive advantage for me when I become a consultant or a researcher. Moreover, I have work experience in U.S. local micro financial institutions, which helps me to build up a systematic management system in mind and to view this industry as a whole across the globe. My cultural recognition in home city Chengdu would help me understand tradition and how small entrepreneurs build up trust. This would make me competitive in networking with local researchers and professionals as well.

I would develop my brand as an entrepreneurial spirit, educating my fellow citizens to alleviate poverty. Perhaps my brand would link to the rural places and poor people, but this is what I am proud of. My brand is expected to change the prevailing concept of finance and financial professions. In fact, finance can also be associated with and practiced by the low income people and small entrepreneurs.

Albeit Academia is one of the most conservative places in United States, researchers can still breathe freely and speak out freely to the audiences. Compared with U.S., China is with high-context culture. Self branding might not be spoken highly of; instead, collective contribution and group achievement would always be the top consideration for a Chinese researcher. To maintain an individual brand in academic field is relatively an action at one's own perils. Furthermore, should a researcher conduct a research based on original data, one has to be very sensitive to political factors and other environment factors. Chances are your original data and your intellectual property rights are very fragile to attack or abuse. Chinese researchers live upon social network to maintain their position of class in a society, whence the relationship with bureaucratic or business people will provide a robust position for a Chinese researcher or professor. Those factors are essentially hygiene factors to support one's intellectual achievement and safety to process on your further research.

