Job Description: Senior Research Associate

The Forum for Growth and Innovation seeks two exceptional graduates of the BSSE course to join as Senior Research Associates (SRA) for a one-year fellowship starting in the summer of 2016. Fellowship recipients are selected not only for their intellectual horsepower, but also for their character and their potential to spread the impact of causal theory and to use this experience to accelerate their career.

SRAs will work closely with Professor Christensen and Forum Director Professor van Bever on emerging research that develops new BSSE theory or extends the application of existing theory into new areas; current topic of interest is the Capitalist’s Dilemma. We are looking for candidates who will take ownership over previously completed early research, lead the effort to build on this foundation, and work to share what we learn with a wider audience. To that end, SRAs are expected to produce or contribute to a wide range of products including regular blog posts, presentations, BSSE course materials, and journal articles. Past fellowship recipients have co-authored articles with Professors Christensen and van Bever in Harvard Business Review, Stanford Social Innovation Review, and Foreign Affairs, and books such as the bestselling How Will You Measure Your Life? and Disrupting Class. Research efforts may include conference or workshop planning for executives as well as travel.

Fellowship recipients will also have the opportunity to support Professor Christensen as a problem-solving partner on ad hoc projects with distinguished alumni and/or visiting executives; these projects typically also require writing for publication. In addition, SRAs will contribute to collaborative projects within the Forum, including helping to grow the Forum’s public presence through social media and in-person events.

Although the Forum was established six years ago, the transient nature of the fellowship and emergent nature of scholarship has led to a culture akin to a fast-moving start-up that is mission-driven and results oriented. We strongly encourage you to apply if you have latched onto a concept in BSSE and are excited by the prospect of spending a year to study, think, and—most importantly—write prolifically through the lens of causal theory. Our most successful alumni have used this opportunity to develop their personal brand and platform, many becoming thought leaders in their fields.

A short video about the Forum can be found here: bit.ly/FGIpromo

Please note: SRAs must be based in Boston and on campus approximately 75% of the time. All Forum positions are term appointments through 6/30/17 with potential for reappointment.

Application Process

Please submit a cover letter, CV, and writing sample to FGI@hbs.edu by February 22 2016.

Your cover letter should explain why you are applying to the Forum and how the position would fit into your longer-term career trajectory. The writing sample should demonstrate your intellectual horsepower and writing style.

We will conduct interviews at the end of February into early March and plan to make offers by March 14 2016.

If you have any questions, please contact Alyson Wurtzbacher at awurtzbacher@hbs.edu or at 617.495.6521.
For the writing sample, please pick one of the following three topics. Citations permitted but not required.

In the last couple of years, Clay has published a few pieces on what he calls “the Capitalist’s Dilemma” in the New York Times, CNN, and HBR.

1. Have you experienced or observed the Capitalist’s Dilemma first-hand? Is there a piece of this problem that is of particular interest to you that you want to tell us about? Bonus: comment on one (or all) of the following three related questions:
   a. How do different types of innovation influence economic growth at the macro and micro levels?
   b. Do the metrics we have historically used to measure a company’s quarter-to-quarter success create constraints around a company’s ability to innovate in the long term?
   c. What kinds of policies and/or metrics could influence companies to invest for long-term growth and job creation?

2. Pulled from the news: J.P. Morgan Using Online Lender for Small Business Loans. What does this partnership suggest about the future of the banking industry? Is fintech a threat or opportunity for the incumbent banks?

3. General Motors Salvages Ride-Hailing Company Sidecar for Parts. Which theories have an opinion on how GM can capture the most value out of these recent acquisitions and what do they say?

A few tips:

- 1,000 words should be sufficient length; we aren’t going to word count your submission, but try to stick to this guideline.
- Of utmost interest to us is learning, from your point of view, what theory’s opinion is on these issues. Once you have explained this, if you have extra word count, we are also interested in learning what your opinion is on these issues and why.
- It is not a waste of time to spend a couple of paragraphs defining the problem and—if/when applicable, why conventional explanations are not adequate.
- If helpful, here are a couple of examples of theory-based writing of comparable length by former students of Clay who used BSSE theory(ies) to frame a problem:
   o What the Media Industry Can Teach Us About Digital Business Models (Scott Anthony, MBA 2002), Whole Foods’ Misguided Play for Millennials (Robyn Bolton, MBA 2005), How Amplify Broke All the Rules for Innovators (Michael Horn, MBA 2006), Why Tesla Won’t Be Able To Scale (Thomas Bartman, MBA 2014), Making The Case For Market Creating Innovations- A Look At The Ford Model T (Efosa Ojomo, MBA 2015)

About The Forum for Growth and Innovation

The Forum for Growth and Innovation is a research project funded by the Harvard Business School and guided by Professor Clayton Christensen, the Kim B. Clark Professor of Business Administration and one of the world’s top experts on growth and innovation. The goal of the Forum is to discover, develop, and disseminate robust, accessible theory in the areas of innovation and general management.

For more information, contact:
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