If You Read One Thing



Ihsan Beezer

Decisions begin before we decide.

I am Ihsan Beezer. I write, study decisions, build ventures, and advise on consequential choices.

Most consequential choices are shaped before anyone chooses. A situation gets named, some options become visible, others fall outside the frame, and assumptions harden into facts. That stage is the one I work on. My doctoral work looks at how people and organizations interpret complex situations before judgment becomes strategy, action or commitment. One question runs through all of it: what are we not seeing because of the way the situation has already been framed?

HOW I THINK

- **The decision in front of you is rarely the whole decision.** The first question is what is shaping how it is being understood.
- **Interpretation comes before strategy.** A strong plan can still answer the wrong question.
- **The environment comes first.** Before the plan, the execution, the dashboards, there is the decision environment: the reality you are actually in, the assumptions you carry, the options already ruled out. It exists whether anyone examines it or not.
- **Examine, then stop.** Examination is kept separate from strategy and implementation. That separation is what makes it independent.
- **Say what is known and what is not.** My work is research-informed. It does not claim certainty it has not earned.
- **Watch what is doing the shaping.** Framing, assumptions, incentives, language, institutions and technology shape judgment long before a choice is made.

WHAT I DO

Advising

For institutions, IHSAN Advisory offers independent Decision Examination before commitment. For individuals, The Quiet Advisory offers private counsel. I work with a limited number of people. I examine; I do not formulate strategy, and I do not implement.

Writing and speaking

A weekly essay on IhsanBeezer.com, the book Before You Decide, and a keynote, What If It Wasn't?, offered in person and virtually. New essays and weekly thought experiments appear on the site first.

Research

Ph.D. research on how people and organizations are categorized, interpreted, and granted or denied legitimacy, including how investors judge the people behind companies. I am in the final stages of my Ph.D. at Rutgers Business School, and the research page follows the work.

Building

Ventures and public projects, including the sport Fortalen and Save Your Thinking Day.

CURRENTLY THINKING ABOUT

Decision environments - the conditions around a person, from incentives to language, that quietly shape a decision before it is made. Artificial intelligence and interpretation - what changes when machines interpret first, and what remains ours. Global mobility - what moving across borders does to identity, work, and belonging.

WHO THIS IS FOR

Through IHSAN Advisory: institutions, organizations and nations facing commitments that are hard to take back - markets entered, restructurings announced, public promises made. Through The Quiet Advisory: individuals whose lives and businesses are intertwined - founders, athletes, public figures - where the personal decision and the business decision are the same decision. In both rooms the standard is the same: the bigger the commitment, the more an unexamined environment costs.

THE EXAMINATION

I do one thing: the Decision Examination. Before you invest in answering the question, examine whether you are asking the right one - and what it costs if you are not. A leadership team preparing to answer "how do we expand into this market?" can produce an excellent expansion plan that still answers the wrong question, if what needed examining was the leadership itself. Rigorous about the decision, easy on the client: no gotchas, no theater. You bring the choice; I bring the examination.

Why the boundary serves the work. The examination has one purpose: the question, and its value is its boundary. I do not formulate strategy, and I do not implement; that separation is deliberate, and it is the basis of my independence. No strategy or implementation project is waiting behind the examination. When it ends, the question stands in the open, and what you do next is yours. If more questions of consequence follow, the work can continue - always examination, always separate, always at your request. I will not pretend your choice is smaller than it is, and I will not soften what the examination finds.

THE PATH

Investment banking at Credit Suisse First Boston in New York, then consulting in Goldman Sachs' investment banking division. Teaching English at Shanghai University. A decade leading 7Wmedia, a strategy and marketing firm for small businesses. Four years as an Administrative Fellow at Princeton University. Now doctoral research in strategy and entrepreneurship at Rutgers Business School.

THE WORK IN THE OPEN

- **The book.** Before You Decide, on the decisions that shape the rest.
- **The weekly essay.** One essay every week at IhsanBeezer.com/essays.
- **Thought experiments.** A weekly public exercise in better questions at IhsanBeezer.com/thought-experiments.
- **The keynote.** What If It Wasn't?, offered in person and virtually.
- **The research.** Ongoing Ph.D. scholarship, followed at IhsanBeezer.com/research.
- **The ventures.** The sport Fortalen and Save Your Thinking Day, a public project for protecting time to think.

SHORT BIO (FOR PRESS USE)

Ihsan Beezer is a writer, researcher and advisor on consequential choices. His doctoral work examines how people and organizations interpret complex situations before judgment becomes strategy, action or commitment, and he is in the final stages of his Ph.D. at Rutgers Business School. His earlier career spans investment banking at Credit Suisse First Boston, consulting in Goldman Sachs' investment banking division, a decade leading the strategy and marketing firm 7Wmedia, and four years as an Administrative Fellow at Princeton University. He is the author of Before You Decide and writes a weekly essay at IhsanBeezer.com.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

Advising IHSANadvisory.com **Essays** IhsanBeezer.com/essays **Research** IhsanBeezer.com/research
Speaking IhsanBeezer.com/speaking **Press** IhsanBeezer.com/press **Contact** ihsan@ihsanbeezer.com
Thought experiments IhsanBeezer.com/thought-experiments

The work is public: the research, the writing, the judgment. Read it, then decide.