

HOW TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR

Elliott Yuen
Hartmut Esslinger
Luigi T. Peccenini

创业家是怎样炼成的

他们将创业视为自己的宿命，用想象力反抗庸常，用心灵自由反抗世俗禁锢。

他们用创意和进取精神，把自己的名字刻在全球商业创新史上。

李文昊将华尔街英语扶植为高端英语培训机构的领头羊；

哈姆特·艾斯林格的青蛙设计重新定义了现代消费美学观念；

国际顶级奢侈品中的第一个中国品牌上海滩在阮伟权手上诞生。

如今，在中国经济从“资本驱动”迈向“创新驱动”的道路上，在从“中国制造”到“中国设计”的蜕变中，这些创业老手通过讲述自己的故事，与中国觉醒的创新意识互相激励、相伴演进。

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我

是谁？生活的意义是什么？我在这地球上能做什么？”年逾七旬的李文昊（Luigi T. Peccenini）重提他18岁那一年的自我拷问，有一瞬间，台下所有人都陷入了回忆。

就在站上讲台之前，李文昊刚和他的中国学生踢了一场足球赛，并连进4个球，帮助他的队伍赢得了比赛。

“我回来了。”这位自认为拥有“中国灵魂”的意大利人带着不可思议的活力宣告他冒险人生的新旅程——在将自己一手创办的华尔街英语培育为行业领头羊后，他以四处演讲、帮助中国创业者前进作为自己的新工作。“在你的词汇里抹去‘退休’这个词。创业精神充斥在我的生命之中。”他，以此回答他18岁时的疑问。

台下那一张张面孔透露着饥渴与极度不安全感。他们中有很多是痛苦挣扎的中小企业主，作为中国经济快速转型中的领军人物，他们本已完成了从追梦少年到

成熟创业者的转变，然而全球性经济危机戳破了昔日的繁华梦，他们才惊觉，自己在生意场上只是初出茅庐的新手。那么在经济变动的惊涛骇浪里，何处才是成功的彼岸？

哈姆特·艾斯林格（Hartmut Esslinger）用另一种方式做出了回答。在上海郊区的交大校园，这位改写了现代设计史的青蛙设计创始人宛若新生，展示着当年为乔布斯设计“白雪公主”电脑时的激情，“设计在全世界范围内正处于一个危机时代，因为人们过度关注审美。”通过与德稻教育共同打造了一个教学设计工作室，满头银发的艾斯林格继续扮演着设计业“永远的反抗者”角色。

“我年纪一大把了，但还想做些不一样的事情，比如教会中国设计师如何创新，如何与商业、文化相融合。”

来自于硅谷的创业潮使人们深信，创业就像流行音乐，是年轻人的事。但这些顶着耀眼光环的老家伙们却试图证明：创业是一种终身生活方式。他们也在年轻

时就拥有了自己的公司，并凭着自身的才智和远见卓识，在幸运女神的眷顾之下笑到了最后。但他们在巅峰之后活力依旧，从未停歇过脚步，并将传递创新精神视为自己最后的使命。

“我们擦出了火花。”奢侈品上海滩的联合创始人阮伟权（Elliott Yuen）这样形容他与年轻一代的互动，他享受自己交大EMBA客座教授的身份：“这并不是单向的教与学，大部分学生都有丰富的市场经验，我从他们那里也学到了很多。”凭借对中国内地市场的深刻洞察，这个喜欢从零开始的香港人再次出山，成为意大利最大珠宝零售集团Stroili Oro的中国地区总经理。他对自己的挑战，是将这个中国内地市场的新品牌扶植为业内领袖。

某种意义上，这些已经达到成功彼岸的创业老手与中国觉醒的创新意识正互相激励、相伴演进，就像是DNA的双螺旋结构。

P 听从内心召唤

PASSION

中

国非比寻常地崛起始于30多年前。1985年，市场经济刚显露出威力，人们从四面八方洪水般涌入了特区深圳，他们充斥在生产线以及缝纫机旁，制造从耐克到MP3的一切商品，新的公司仿佛一夜之间冒了出来。急于赚钱的创业者匆忙地贩卖一切，来不及想更多。

遥远的意大利，李文昊破产了。他不得不关闭50家华尔街英语中心，由于意识过于超前，他所创立的多媒体语言教学程序“英语在线”未被市场认可。与破产相伴而行的，是健康极度恶化。他躺在病床上，连动一动手指都困难，但不管做多少检查，医生都找不到病因。

今天说起这段往事，李文昊钢铁一般坚硬的神情里依然会透出一丝孤独和惶惑，“我想按自己的游戏规则做事，但好像失去了所有东西，”但他随即说，“即便如此，我也仍然相信我的梦想。”机智、自信，某种时候相当独断专行，这个酷老头的身上充满了一种神秘的驱动力，一种反抗庸常的野性，越是深入了解，你越想知道，这种能够扭转一切的强大意志力来自于何方。

没有人天生就是商人，但体内秘密流淌的叛逆血液使创业成为他们的惟一选择。

19岁那年，李文昊在报纸上登出了一则超越常规的广告——寻找雇主。有8家公司看到广告后，愿意给这个高中生提供职位，他挑选了最具挑战性的图书推销工作。接下来的6年时间里，他从一名普通推销员干到了公司的销售经理，收入是同年龄的两倍。

但作为一个“活在正装里的懒洋洋的可怜虫”，李文昊并不快乐，“那不是我自己的地盘”。29岁那年，他建立了Computex公司，成为意大利第一家给人提供计算机培训的机构。人们嘲笑他要么疯了要么傻了，因为那时的计算机还像橱柜一样笨重。但他生存了下来，计算机应用飞速发展，4年后他以100万美元的价格出售了这个公司。“32岁时，我已经初尝了我想要的成功。”李文昊说，但这还不够，“我创立了以学生为核心的教学方法，我希望能将它应用于帮助人们学习语言。”1972年，他创立了华尔街英语，发明了当时最先进的多媒体语言教学方法。

由热情而非金钱所驱使，这是所有成功创业者的共识。穿着褪色粉红T恤，胡子乱蓬蓬的艾斯林格把自己形容为一只关不住的鸟儿，徘徊在主流之外，任凭现实在身边编造出如何坚固的牢笼，他却终究能听见内心深处呼唤，拍拍翅膀飞向更高处。艾斯林格曾经沉醉在音乐的婉转中，差点成为一名乐手——事实上他确实组建过一支乐队。按照父母的要求，他也可以做一名工程师，但和许多青春期的男孩一样，他觉得学校教育压抑、无聊。他的反抗并非完全是荷尔蒙作祟，更多地来自于他内心深处的激情，当同学们在画机械图纸时，他的笔记本里填满了汽车、摩托车、轮船的素描——都是他自己设计的。

创造而非遵从，这种自我觉醒改变了艾斯林格的人生。在一个设计竞赛中，他所设计的无线电表受到了恶毒攻击，裁判甚至拿起模型将它摔碎——今天，无线电表已成为一个行业标准。“这种短视而残酷的拒绝比任何奖品都更加激励我成为一名成功的设计师。”在回家的路上，年轻人发誓要改变设计界僵硬、死板的限制，而唯一的办法是开创自己的事业。1969年，艾斯林格在德国黑森林创立了青蛙事务所。

从履历上看，阮伟权最“正常”不过。大学毕业后，他在怡和洋行踏实工作，其后分别掌管了宜家、谢瑞麟、亮视点、彪马的地区运营，是个不折不扣的职业经理人，浑身上下也流露着大公司的自制与优雅。但仔细研究，你会发现，在阮伟权管理的阶段，它们都是在某个地区从零开始的新品牌。他改变了宜家在中国市场的销售模式，帮助谢瑞麟、亮视点在内地打开销路。当他成为彪马中国区总裁时，这个运动品牌开始尝试将生活态度放在第一位。“我进入一个行业全凭冲动，但必须要有挑战性，我对于执行类的工作不感兴趣。”这种对挑战的渴求使他成为上海滩的联合创始人。

只有当危机来临时，精神的力量才能显示强大的威力。破产后的李文昊独居在瑞士，颇有点自生自灭的意味。他极度虚弱，一顿饭只能吃一片薄薄的面包，走10米路就会满身大汗。时隔30年后，他把自己的神奇痊愈归功于偶然接触到的《道德经》。“它教我如何进行生机饮食和调整心情。两周后差不多痊愈一半，可以恢复工作了。之后我就再没病重过，现在我觉得比30年前还要健康。”这位意大利人坚信自己的祖先是中国人。

或许岁月使这个故事沾染了宿命的色彩，但毫无疑问，精神的力量战胜了一切。《道德经》使李文昊重新思索人生，对教学事业的热爱治愈了因失败带来的痛苦。“还有很多人英语不行，我相信这个市场永远不会结束。”1986年，李文昊用口袋里仅剩下的2000美元再次刊登了一则广告，寻求一个能投资15万美元的合作伙伴，3个月后，他得到了投资，重新获得了华尔街英语在意大利的经营权。

2000年，李文昊在北京建立了中国第一家华尔街英语培训中心。此时，创业在中国仍是相当新颖的概念，但不少人已开始承受失败的打击，年轻人不断思考、阅读，学着如何成功，了解这场新游戏的规则。李文昊告诉他们，内心的热爱远比金钱诱惑之下的创业动力更深远更持久，“赚钱和成功并不是创业的优选项，利润只是一个结果，你必须感受到快乐和自由。”



Luigi T. Peccenini
华尔街英语创始人

1968年
Computex

放弃工作，决定创办意大利第一家向大众提供计算机技术培训的公司Computex。

1972年
华尔街英语

一家瑞士公司愿意以100万美元的价格收购Computex。李文昊使用这笔钱创立了“华尔街英语”。

从他们身上学到什么？

- ① 内心的热爱远比金钱诱惑之下的创业动力更深远更持久，赚钱和成功并不是创业的优选项，利润只是一个结果，你必须感受到快乐和自由。
- ② 只有敢于冒险和开创新模式的策略才有望在残酷的竞争中脱颖而出。
- ③ 创业就像骑马，会遇到重重障碍，必须不断设定新的创新目标，否则便会被淘汰。

S 创新因势而变 SUBVERSION

华

尔街英语迎合了中国高速增长的时代需求，美国技术、商业与流行文化在中国大行其道，英语亦如此。李文昊把他的培训中心开在一线城市最繁华的街道上。

然而，哈姆特·艾斯林格直言不讳地抨击了这繁荣外表下的内在推动力——世界工厂。这是中国在全球产业链中的位置，以iPhone为例，它在美国设计，在日本制造关键零部件，由韩国生产最核心的芯片和显示屏，最后在深圳和苏州的工厂里组装。“从全球角度，这并不是一个聪明的生态模式。”艾斯林格说，“依靠削减成本和扩充规模，高科技产品价格越来越低，同时产生了肮脏的副产品——人性和文化语境的缺失。这个模式也破坏了制造国家的工业文明。”

作为青蛙设计的创始人，20年前，艾斯林格帮助苹果制定了主导消费电子业的游戏规则。20年后，他成为扁平世界里一股逆流，嚷嚷着要发动一场“文化与商品”的全球战争。他最为关注全球产业链的最末端——渴望进行创新革命的中国市场。

1970年的德国设计界像极了今天的中国，庞杂、混乱，小公司之多远超所需。艾斯林格说，要生存就必须非常出众。他为青蛙设计制订了三条战略：一、尽可能发现问题；二、不重复别人做的事情；三、选对合作者。

于是，乔布斯成为他选择的合作对象。1982年，青蛙设计跳出千篇一律的灰色电脑，为后来被称为“白雪公主”的Apple IIc模型设计了一种白色、干净和简约的外观，重新定义了现代消费美学观念。后来，“白雪公主”成为苹果独有的设计语言，青蛙设计获得了乔布斯的长期合约，迈出了成长为全球知名设计咨询公司的关键一步。

更重要的是，青蛙设计开创了形式追随情感的设计理念。不像许多商业领袖，艾斯林格认为世界并不是平的，就像“白雪公主”漂亮的圆角那样，它是包含着复杂文化的圆弧形，每个角度都透着消费者独特的需求和期望。怀着这种理念，他为索尼缔造了特丽珑电视的辉煌，为LV制定了稳固其市场定位的奢侈品牌战略，为迪士尼设计了船票已预订到5年之后的豪华游轮。

然而艾斯林格没办法阻止跨国资本和互联网的力量。想法和创意无障碍地在全球流通，甚至复制。差异性，似乎在这一切中消失。地球，似乎真的可以是平

Apple IIc模型——白色、干净、简约的外观，既保持了德国设计的严谨和简洁，更带有加州风味的叛逆和性感。

的。然而，那些源于关注差异性的创新却因此在某些地区不见踪影——比如中国。一位知名天使投资人一语中的：

“中国的创业环境最大的问题不是缺资本，而是缺好项目。一些创业项目完全是山寨品。”

可复制的，还有那些LV等国际品牌的包包。阮伟权看不惯这一切，也像艾斯林格那样寻找消费者独特的需求。18年前，他创立了中国本土奢侈品品牌上海滩，率先把中国元素融入国际时尚。这个品牌生来仿佛就是要憋一口气。那一年阮伟权与好友戴维·唐在香港一家俱乐部聊天，戴维一上来就问这样的问题：“你能不能给我列出3个中国品牌，它们已经到达了德国奔驰或者是法国迪奥那样的水平？”阮伟权想了3分钟，憋出了一句不确定的话：“可能是青岛啤酒吧。”

两人当即萌动了创建新品牌的念头。他们在一张皱巴巴的纸上写下了品牌宣言：“我们要做一件革命性的事情，我们要打造一个中国品牌，把它变成世界级的国际品牌，这是我们的使命。”现在，上海滩被公认为“国际顶级奢侈品中的第一个中国品牌”。

只有那些敢于开创新和冒险、愿意给人惊喜和启发的策略才有希望在残酷的经济中脱颖而出。这是阮伟权的经验之谈。当然，一个企业要永葆优秀，还应因势而变。

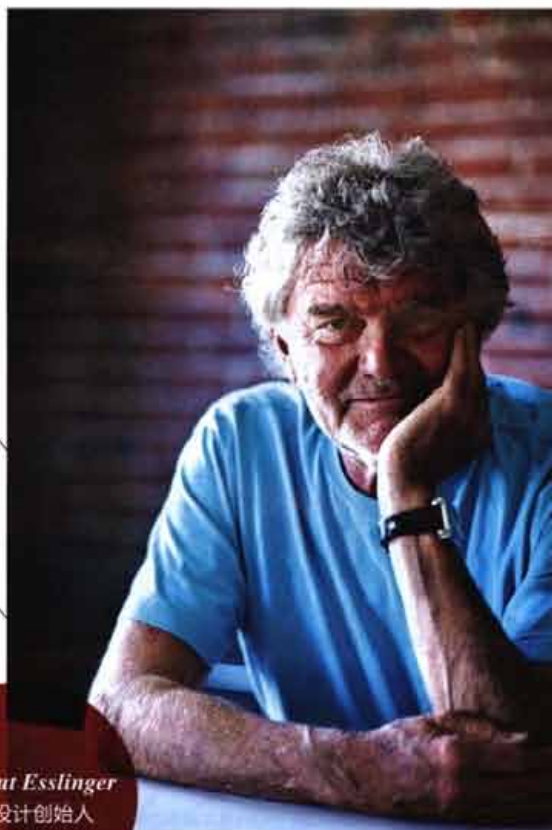
“你必须做好应变准备，保持竞争力的一点就是不断地创新，不断地领先于人。”李文昊深有感触。从2000年以来，华尔街英语就引入了革命性的培训和学习方法，比如让学员们看美国肥皂剧、音乐会，并设置

1969年
青蛙设计

在德国黑森州创立了自己的设计事务所，这便是青蛙设计公司的前身。1982年，艾斯林格为维佳(Wega)公司设计了一种亮绿色的电视机，命名为青蛙，获得了很大的成功。

2012年
设计工作室

与德国教育合作在中国成立了设计工作室。



Hartmut Esslinger
青蛙设计创始人

了沟通和社交课程，使英语学习不再是生搬硬套。然而在中国极速发展了没几年，李文昊又险遭灭顶之灾。

2004年的SARS恐慌使人们足不出户，更别提提到一个教室跟别人一起学习了。华尔街英语一下子招不到任何生源，李文昊开始想办法如何生存下去。“既然学生不上门来，那我就主动去找学生。”当时笔记本电脑在中国仍属昂贵物品，他一下子跟供应商租了6000台笔记本电脑，承诺3个月内付清租金。他让人将华尔街英语教程编写成软件，安装进每一台电脑，然后打出这样的广告：你不需要支付租金，就可将一台装有英语软件的电脑带回家，你可以使用18个月，惟一的条件是向华尔街英语预付1000美元学费。一个月后，华尔街英语的财务缺口便被填上，周围的竞争对手纷纷倒闭，李文昊则加快了在中国开设培训中心的步伐。

SPIRIT OF INNOVATION

来自于硅谷的创业潮使人们深信，创业就像流行音乐，是年轻人的事。但这些戴着耀眼光环的老家伙们却试图证明：创业是一种终身生活方式。他们也在年轻时就拥有了自己的公司，并凭着自身的才智和远见卓识，在幸运女神的眷顾之下笑到了最后。但他们在巅峰之后活力依旧，从未停歇过脚步，并将传递创新精神视为自己最后的使命。

Q & A

1 你为什么要参与中国的创新教育?

- **李文昊**: 我用四处演讲的方式告诉人们我又回到了这个市场, 对我来说, 荣誉也是一种责任, 我用我自己的故事告诉大家创业的经验, 教育是使人健康的重要方式。
- **艾斯林格**: 我年纪一把了, 设计过上千种产品, 现在想做些不一样的事情, 中国应该有积极的、高质量的、原创性的设计。现在的设计界在世界范围内对于艺术关注得过多, 而不关注人性化和人文的设计, 我希望年轻的中国设计师能改变这一切。
- **阮伟权**: 教课很有意思, 能够与年轻一代分享自己的经验。由于大部分学生是在职的, 这就不是单向的教授, 通过互动, 我从他们那里也学到很多, 双方很容易擦出火花。

2 你对中国年轻的创业者有什么建议?

- **李文昊**: 创业者应该去改变现在社会的潮流, 应该把价值观、人文关怀作为更加优先的选项, 同时他们应该选择自己热爱的事业来进行创业, 而不是说因为这个行业能赚更多的钱, 快乐也是很重要的一点, 快乐可以包含成功, 但是很多成功的人未必快乐。当然, 创新商业模式也很重要。
- **艾斯林格**: 中国有很多设计者, 我们并不需要那么多, 你必须非常出众, 要记住你是在为生活而设计。
- **阮伟权**: 消费者越来越成熟, 要求很多, 竞争对手也多, 中国市场也变得很快, 全球没有变得这么快的市场。你要找到自己拥有的特点和定位, 这些特点起码在一段时间不会被复制。

3 你如何看待领导力对创业者的重要性?

- **李文昊**: 我要充分了解我的员工, 好好利用他们的才华, 我还经常问他们有什么梦想, 只要帮助你的员工实现梦想, 他们就不会离你而去。同时我也坚持做好自己的工作, 我认为, 以身作则是最低的管理成本。
- **艾斯林格**: 一个公司就像一个交响乐团, 每个人都会发挥作用, 如果有人不能发挥作用, 就不能演奏出好的乐曲, 而运营过程也很重要, 要有正确的流程, 如果说创新想法是火种, 流程就是火焰, 流程正确了, 火种才会有燎原之效。
- **阮伟权**: 避免一言堂, 必须通过专业团队, 共同打造品牌管理能力和技能。作为领导者, 你必须要有高瞻远瞩的眼光, 明确自己往哪里走。

D 选择时机退出
DESTINATION

Elliott Yuen

“上海滩”联合创始人

在

艾斯林格眼里, 未来的产品将不再是美国设计、中国制造, 而后贩卖到全球各地的模式。“更好的模式, 是让产品的整个生命周期, 它的设计、生产以及利润、成本、用户体验都与特定的文化环境紧密相连。每个区域应该有属于自己的设计创新。”

怀着这样的使命感, 艾斯林格开始一年8次飞来中国, 在他的大师工作室里, 他汗流浹背地传授着梦想和设计理念, 教中国设计师如何为消费者的体验和感觉进行创新。作为一个古稀老人, 他本该在沙滩上悠闲地散步, 或是坐在阳光下弹奏他擅长的吉他, 和孩子们共享天伦之乐。他完全有能力这样做——7年前, 艾斯林格和太太把青蛙设计出售给了技术和服务公司爱瑞森特(Ari-cent), 为一个创业故事画上了完满的句号。

1994年
上海滩 (Shanghai Tang)

与香港名流郑永裕联合创立中国本土奢侈品品牌上海滩 (Shanghai Tang)。2000年, 该品牌被全球第二大奢侈品集团历峰集团收购。

选择时机退出, 这同样是一门

艺术。在互联网泡沫最大的那几年, “退出”二字, 甚至曾经是年轻人创业的主要目的, 他们希望把草创的公司卖个好价钱。但在老创业者眼里, 退出是为了更好地延续自己的理念。李文昊表示, “在进入中国之后, 我也是一直在思考, 华尔街英语如何能够从员工和学员利益的角度更好地生存。”思考的结果, 是他在2009年将华尔街英语出售给了培生朗文, 后者有足够的资本和经验, 在中国更多的城市投资开办学习中心。上海滩则在天使基金用得差不多时, 被历峰集团收购, “我们希望品牌走得快点, 历峰拥有多个奢

侈品牌的运作经验, 它能够一步步提升上海滩的品牌价值。”阮伟权说, 现在, 上海滩已经成为历峰旗下第三大盈利品牌。青蛙设计与爱瑞森特的合并, 则开创了一种全新的商业模式, 后者1000多名软件架构师、开发师和质检师与青蛙的设计部门合在一起, 既能敏锐洞察市场先机, 又能更好地将新兴技术转化为商业影响力。

当然, 老创业者们的故事远远没有结束, 他们还拥有另一种宝藏——智慧。硅谷作家埃里克·里斯说, 创业精神是一种可教授的品质。为了创新精神的流传, 这些老家伙愿意以一种全新的姿态, 帮助年轻创业者编织未来。而他们共同选择中国作为自己的美丽新世界, “中国是未来之国, 我打算在这里度过我的余生。”李文昊说。

中国又何尝不是一种全新的挑战? 它那强烈的进取精神后掩藏着怎样的困惑?

它那飞速膨胀的消费群体催生了什么潮流? 阮伟权带着痴迷的神情谈起了这一切, 这个自称一直紧跟时代走的香港人拥有远小于真实年龄的外表, 除了当一个客座教授, 他最近又给自己找到了新的游戏——意大利最大珠宝零售集团Stroili Oro的中国区总代理, 并认为它带来的挑战不亚于另一次创业。意大利时尚, 另类风格, 18k金, 这些品牌特征合在一起, 意味着中国市场的一个空白点, 阮伟权无法听任这个机会落到别人手上。从产品定位、店面分布、内部陈设到款式设计, 他正在为Stroili Oro确定一个适合于中国的商业模式。谈到未来, 他谦虚地用了“摸索”二字。

谁能说, 这不是一个适合老人生活的地方? 谁又能说, 中国机遇只是年轻人的特权? ■

HOW TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR

They deem entrepreneurship as their destiny, they fight mediocrity with imagination, and they fight worldly fetters with the freedom of the spirit.

With originality and enterprise, they inscribe their names on the global history of innovation.

Luigi T. Peccenini cultivated Wall Street English into the leader of high-end English training institutions;

Hartmut Esslinger's Frog Design redefined modern aesthetics of consumption;

Elliott Yuen created the first Chinese brand of top international luxury, Shanghai Tang.

Now, when Chinese economy is shifting from "capital-driven" to "innovation-driven", from "made in China" to "designed in China", these senior entrepreneurs share their stories to encourage and advance with the awoken Chinese innovative force.

Interview Text / Zhang Guyue Editor / Chen Xiuyue Photographer / Peng Hui

"Who am I? What is the point of life? What can I do on this planet?" Luigi T. Peccenini who is over 70 years old repeated his questions that came to him when he was 18. For a moment, the entire audience sank back into their memories.

Right before getting on the stage, Luigi T. Peccenini was playing a football match with his Chinese students. He scored four times and won the match for his team. "I am back." This Italian who thinks he has a Chinese soul announced his new life adventure with his amazing energy—after making WSE, which he founded single-handedly, the leader of English-training institutions—he takes a new job that carries him around giving speeches and helping Chinese entrepreneurs advance. "Take out the word 'retirement' from your dictionary. Entrepreneurship pervades my life." With this, he answers his teenage questions.

Faces under the stage all bear hunger and extreme sense of insecurity. Many of them are struggling owners of middle and small enterprises, and, as leading characters in the swift transformation of Chinese economy, they should have finished the metamorphosis from dream-pursuing teenagers to mature entrepreneurs but only have recently come to be aware, with shock, that they are merely freshmen in the business world due to the global economic crisis. In the surging and roaring waves of economic upheaval, where, then, is the hope of success?

Hartmut Esslinger answered the question in a different way. In the Jiaotong University campus located in the suburb of Shanghai, the founder of Frog Design who had rewritten the history of modern design manifests the passion he had when designing "Snow White" computer for Jobs years ago, as if he were born again: "Design worldwide is going through a critical age due to overemphasis on aesthetic

experience.” Through building a teaching design studio with Te Dao Group, grey-haired Esslinger continues to play the role of a “forever rebel” in the design industry, “I am very old, but I still want to make a difference, such as teaching Chinese designers how to innovate, and how to fuse with commerce and culture.”

The tide of entrepreneurship that comes from the Silicon Valley convinces people that entrepreneurship is like pop music, belong to the young only. But these old guys who wear brilliant halos are trying to prove that entrepreneurship is a lifelong lifestyle. They also came to own their own companies when young and laughed last with their wisdom and great vision as well as the favor of the goddess of fate. But they stay energetic after their peak is gone, they never stop and they take passing on the spirit of innovation as their last mission.

“We made sparkles.” Elliott Yuen, joint founder of a luxury brand, Shanghai Tang, thus describes the interaction between him and the younger generation. He enjoys his status as a visiting professor in Jiaotong University: “This is not a one-way teaching and learning. Most students are rich in market experiences, and I learn a lot from them, too.” With his profound insight into the mainland market of China, this Hong Kong man who likes to start from zero comes back into the field one more time as the China Region Manager of Stroili Oro, the largest jewelry retailer in Italy. His challenge to himself is to cultivate this brand which is new to mainland China, into a leader of the industry.

In a sense, these senior entrepreneurs who have already “did it” are encouraging and being encouraged, advancing and being pushed forward, by the awakening awareness of innovation in China, resembling just the double spiral structure of DNA.

Follow Your Heart/PASSION

China’s unprecedented rise began over thirty years ago. In 1985, people from all over China rushed into Shenzhen, which is a special economic zone, when market economy was merely manifesting its power. These people flooded production lines and stood by sewing machines, making all commodities ranging from Nike to MP3. New companies sprang up overnight, and entrepreneurs who were busy making money simply traded everything for they did not have much time to think.

In Italy, which is far away from China, Luigi T. Peccenini’s business failed and he went bankrupt. He had to shut down 50 WSE centers. Due to the brilliance of his vision, which was too far-seeing for that time, the multimedia language teaching program, “English Online”, was not approved by the market. What comes with bankruptcy is the extreme deterioration of health. He lay in the sick bed and found it hard to move even one of his fingers. No matter how many examinations he had, the doctors couldn’t identify the cause of his illness.

Speaking of this, the iron-like look of Luigi T. Peccenini would still register a tinge of solitude and confusion, “I wish I could work according to my own rules, but it seemed that I lost everything”, but he immediately added, “but I still believe in my dreams.” Witty, confident and sometimes even tyrannous, this cool old man has a mysterious drive in him and a wildness that defies mediocrity. The more you know

about him, the more you would crave for where does this power of the will that turns all difficulties around stem from.

No one is born to be a businessman, but the rebellious blood in them makes entrepreneurship their only choice.

When he was 19 years old, Luigi T. Peccenini published an ad on a newspaper, which was anything but usual: Hiring Employer. Eight companies offered him, who was still a student in senior high school, a position, and he chose the most challenging: selling books. In the six years that follow, he rose from an ordinary salesman to the sale manager of the company, and his income was twice as much as that of his peers.

However, as “a lazy wretch living in a suit”, Luigi T. Peccenini was not happy, “that is not my place.” At the age of 29, he established Computex Company and became the first institution to offer computer training in Italy. People called him fool or crazy, for computer at that time was as dumb as a cupboard. But he managed to survive. Computer application developed by leaps and bounds, and four years later he sold this company at the price of 1 million US dollars. “I had my first taste of the success I wanted at the age of 32,” Luigi T. Peccenini said, though this is not good enough for him, “I created the teaching method that centers on students, and I wish it could help people learn languages.” In 1972, he established WSE and invented the most advanced multimedia language teaching method at that time.

Driven by passion rather than money is a common experience of all successful entrepreneurs. Esslinger who is wearing a pink T-shirt and messy beard compares himself to a bird that no cage could imprison. He stays in the margin and follows always his heart and flaps his wings toward a higher place no matter how tough the cage created by reality could be. Esslinger once was charmed by music and was very close to becoming a singer—the fact is that he did have a band. According to requirements of his parents, he could also become an engineer. But like any other teenage boys, he felt school boring and depressive. His rebellion was not entirely due to hormone, but more because of the passion inside of him. When his classmates were busy with mechanical drawings, his notebook was filled with sketches of cars, motors and ships—all of his own design.

Creation over obedience changed the course of Esslinger’s life. In a design contest, the radio watch he designed was attacked vehemently, and the referee even smashed the model—but today, radio watch is an industry standard. “This short-sighted and cruel rejection stimulates me more than any prize to become a successful designer.” On his way home, the young man swore to change the rigid and lifeless limitations in the world of design, and the only way to do it is to start his own business. In 1969, Esslinger started Frog Office in Black Forest, Germany.

As far as resume is concerned, Elliot Yuen is most “normal”. After graduation from his university, he worked in Jardin Matheson with diligence, and later he came to control the regional operations of IKEA, TSL, Lens Crafter and Puma. He is a genuine professional manager, and self-control and elegance that are peculiar to big companies are oozing from him all over. Upon careful observation, however, you will find that during the management of Elliot Yuen, these brands are new to those regions and had to start from nothing. He changed the sale mode of IKEA in the

market of China, and he opened up sale for TSL and Lens Crafter in mainland China. When he became the China Region CEO of Puma, this sport brand started trying to prioritize the attitude toward life. "It is impulsive of me to enter an industry, but the job must be challenging. I am not interested in executive work." This thirst for challenge makes him a joint founder of Shanghai Tang.

Only when crisis is staring you in the face, the power of the spirit will manifest itself. Luigi T. Peccenini lived alone in Switzerland after bankruptcy, seemingly withering away. He was extremely weak, and could have only a thin slice of bread for one meal. Walking ten meters would bathe him in sweat. Thirty years later, he attributes this miraculous healing to his accidental contact with *Tao Te Ching*. "It teaches me organic diet and adjustment of mood. I got half-cured after about two weeks and was ready for work. Then I never fell seriously ill. Now I feel I am in better health than thirty years ago." This Italian is convinced that he was a Chinese in his past life.

Maybe time has tainted this story with fatalism, but there should be no doubt that the power of the spirit conquered all. *Tao Te Ching* makes Luigi T. Peccenini think about life once again, and his passion for the cause of teaching cured his pains caused by failure, "there are still so many people who are poor at English, so I believe this market will never fail." In 1986, with the only 2000 US dollars left in his pocket, Luigi T. Peccenini published another ad seeking a partner who is willing to invest 150,000 US dollars. Three months later, he got the investment and regained the business right of WSE in Italy.

In 2000, Luigi T. Peccenini built the first WSE English-training Center in Beijing, China. At this time, entrepreneurship was still very new, but a lot of people were taking the hit of failures. The young was constantly thinking, reading and learning how to be successful and understanding the rule of this new game. Luigi T. Peccenini told them that inner passion is a much more powerful drive than the temptation of money when it comes to entrepreneurship, "making money and success are not the priorities of entrepreneurship, profit is but a result, what you must have is joy and freedom."

Founder of Wall Street English

1968 Computex - Quit job, decided to create the first computer technology training company, known as Computex, for the mass.

1972 Wall Street English - A Switzerland Company offered one million for Computex, so Luigi T. Peccenini used the money to create "Wall Street English".

What can we learn from them?

1. Inner passion is much more powerful than the temptation of money when it comes to entrepreneurship; making money and success are not priorities of entrepreneurship, profit is but a result, what you must have is joy and freedom.
2. Only the strategy that would venture and create new modes can win in cruel

competition.

3. Entrepreneurship is like riding a horse. You will have multiple troubles, and you have to reset your goals of innovation constantly, or you will be out.

Innovation Adapts to Reality/ SUBVERSION

WSE caters to the need of China in a swift economic growth. US technology, commerce and pop culture became prevalent in China, so was English. Luigi T. Peccenini set up his training center on the busiest streets of top cities in China.

However, Hartmut Esslinger attacked the inner drive under this prosperous look without any euphemism—factory of the world. This is the position of China in global chain of industry. Take iPhone for example, it is designed in USA, its key parts are built in Japan, its most important chip and display screen are produced in Korea, and then it is assembled in the factories located in Shenzhen and Suzhou. “Seeing from a global perspective, this is not a really smart ecologic mode.” Esslinger said, “With cost reduction and scale expansion, the price of high-tech products is lower and lower, causing dirty by-products—the absence of humanity and cultural context. This mode also destroys the industrial civilization of the manufacturing country.”

As the founder of Frog Design, Esslinger helped Apple Inc. make the rules of the game that dominate the electronic industry twenty years ago. Now, twenty years later, he became a countercurrent in this flat world and was urging for a global war of “culture and commerce”. He was very attentive to the very end of global industry chain—Chinese market that craves for innovation and evolution.

German design world in 1970 resembles that of China today in that it was complicated and chaotic, and the number of small companies far exceeded what was needed. Esslinger said that it took extraordinary performance to survive. He made three strategies for Frog Design: 1) identify problems as much as possible; 2) never repeat what others do; 3) choose the right partner.

Jobs, therefore, became his partner. In 1982, Frog Design threw away the universally grey computer and designed a computer that has white, clean and brief appearance for the Apple LLC model, which was later called “Snow White”. In doing so, he redefined the concept of modern consumption aesthetics. “Snow White” later became a unique language of design for Apple, and Frog Design won the long-term contract of Jobs, taking a crucial step toward becoming a world-famous design consultancy company.

More importantly, Frog Design opened the concept of subjecting form to emotions. Unlike many business leaders, Esslinger does not think the world is flat. Instead, like the beautiful round corners of “Snow White”, it is an arc that contains comprehensive culture. With this idea in his mind, he created the brilliance of Trinitron for SONY, made the luxury brand strategy that stabilizes the market orientation of LV, and designed the luxurious cruise ship, whose tickets in five years to come have been booked, for Disney.

However, Esslinger has no way to stop the advancement of cross-country capital and

the Internet. Ideas and originality are communicated freely in the world, and even imitated. Difference seems to be lost amidst the trend of globalization, and the earth, it seemed, could really be flat. However, those innovations originating from attention to difference vanished because of this in some regions—such as China. A reputed Angel investor said it right: “The greatest problem in the environment in China for entrepreneurship is not lack of capital, but good projects. Some entrepreneurship is totally an imposter of famous brand.”

What is replicable also includes international brands such as bags of LV. Elliot Yuen hated it all and was looking for the unique need of consumers like Esslinger did. 18 years ago, he created Shanghai Tang, a luxury brand native to China, and led others in fusing Chinese elements with international fashion. It is as if this brand were born to earn him some “face”. In that year, Elliot Yuen and his good friend David Tang were chatting in a club in Hong Kong, and David asked him at the beginning of their conversation, “Can you list three Chinese brands that have attained the international recognition of Benz from Germany or Dior from France?” Elliot Yuen thought for three minutes and eventually had to say something he was not sure of: “Maybe Tsingtao Beer.” The two of them at that time had the idea of making a new brand. On a wrinkled note they wrote down their brand slogan: “We are going to do something revolutionary; we are going to make a Chinese brand and make it world-famous. This is our mission.” Now, Shanghai Tang is publicly recognized as “the first Chinese brand among international top luxuries”.

Only those strategies that dare to innovate and to risk, that are willing to surprise and inspire people, can hopefully stand out in fierce economy. This remark is based on the experiences of Elliot Yuen. At the same time, an enterprise must adapt to reality to retain its excellence.

“You must be ready to adapt. The secret to keep your competitive edge is to innovate constantly and to be a leader in your industry.” This is an actual experience of Luigi T. Peccenini. Since 2000, WSE introduced a revolutionary training and learning method, such as having trainees watch American soap operas attend concerts; also it set up courses for communication and social intercourse so that English-learning no longer is a mechanic practice. However, Luigi T. Peccenini almost went bankruptcy again after a few years of swift development in China.

The SARS panic in 2004 confined people to home, not even to mention learning with anyone in a classroom. WSE all of a sudden lost all of its trainees, and Luigi T. Peccenini had to think about how to survive. “Since students don’t come, then we go to them.” Laptop computer at that time in China was still a luxury, but he rented 6000 of them at one time and promised to pay the rent within three months. He had people program WSE courses into a software and installed it onto every computer before advertising like this: You don’t have to pay any rent to bring a computer installed with English-learning software home. You can use it for 18 months under the only condition that you pay 1000 US dollars as tuition fee to WSE. A month later, financial gap of WSE was filled up, and his competitors went down one after another, allowing Luigi T. Peccenini to accelerate the speed of building training centers in China.

1969 Frog Design

Created his own design office in Hessen State of Germany, which is the predecessor of Frog Design. 1982, Esslinger designed a bright green TV for Wega Company and named it frog, which was very successful (in the market).

2012 Design Studio

Cooperated with De Tao Group to establish a design studio in China.

Hartmut Esslinger

Founder of Frog Design

Apple LLC Model—white, clean and brief appearance retains the rigor and brevity of German design and features the rebellion and sexiness of California in America.

SPIRIT OF INNOVATION

The tide of entrepreneurship that comes from the Silicon Valley convinces people that entrepreneurship is like pop music, belong to the young only. But these old guys who wear brilliant halos are trying to prove that entrepreneurship is a lifelong lifestyle. They also came to own their own companies when young and laughed last with their wisdom and great vision as well as the favor of the goddess of fate. But they stay energetic after their peak is gone, they never stop and they take passing on the spirit of innovation as their last mission.

Questions and Answers

1. Why would you want to participate in the innovation education of China?

Luigi T. Peccenini: I make speeches around to tell people that I am back here in this market. To me, honor is also a responsibility. I share my experiences of entrepreneurship with everyone. Education is an important way to make people healthy.

Esslinger: I am very old, I designed thousands of products, and now I would like to do something different. China should have positive, quality and original designs. Current circle of design worldwide pays too much attention to art and too little to humanity and culture. I wish young Chinese designers can change it all.

Elliot Yuen: Teaching is fun in that I can share my experiences with the younger generation. Most students are in-position, therefore my classes are not simple teaching. Through interaction with them, I learn from them a lot. It is easy for us to make sparkles.

2. What is your advice for young entrepreneurs of China?

Luigi T. Peccenini: An entrepreneur should aim at changing current social trend and prioritize world values and humanistic concerns. In the meantime, they should enterprise in industries for which they have real passion, rather than from which they could make more money. Joy counts, joy means success, but success does not mean joy. Innovating business mode, it is natural, is also very important.

Esslinger: There are many designers in China, too many than we need. You have to shine to be successful, and remember you are designing for life.

Elliot Yuen: Consumers are maturing and demanding, the number of competitors is big, and the market in China changes really fast, the fastest in the world. You have to identify your own characteristics and orientate yourself properly, and these characteristics should be anti-imitation for at least a certain period of time.

3. How important is the capacity to lead to entrepreneurship?

Luigi T. Peccenini: I want to know my employees in terms of their full potentials so that I can make good use of them. I would also ask about their dreams. Helping your employees realize their dreams, you have their loyalty. In the meantime, I keep doing well my job. I think practice what I preach ensures minimal cost of management.

Esslinger: A company is like an orchestra, each member has a role to play. If any member fails, there will not be good music. The process of operation is as important and therefore a real procedure is needed. If original ideas are sparkles, the procedure is flame. With good procedure, the sparkle can grow into a real fire.

Elliot Yuen: Dictatorship must be ruled out through a professional team to build the ability and skill of brand management. As a leader, you have to be far-seeing, to know where you are heading for.

DESTINATION

In the eyes of Esslinger, future products will no longer be designed in America and made in China before sold to the world. "A better mode closely associates a product with a particular cultural environment in terms of the product's entire life cycle, its design, production, profit, cost and user experience. Each region should have its own innovative design."

With this sense of mission, Esslinger started flying to China eight times a year. In his master studio, he is busy passing on design ideals and inspirations in perspiration

to Chinese designers how to innovate for the experience and feelings of consumers. As an old man in his seventies, he should be taking a leisurely walk on the beach, or playing the guitar in sunshine, which he is good at, or enjoying the time with his children. He is fully capable of doing this—he and his wife sold Frog Design to Aricent, a technology and service company, drawing a perfect conclusion to his entrepreneurship.

Exit at the right time, likewise, is an art. In those years when Internet foam was the biggest, “exit” was even the main target of young entrepreneurs. They wished for nothing but to sell their companies at a good price. In the eyes of senior entrepreneurs, however, the purpose of exit is to better continue their ideals. Luigi T. Peccenini said, “After entering China, I have been thinking about how WSE can better grow from the perspective of employee and trainee’s interest?” The result of this thinking is that he sold WSE to Pearson Longman in 2009, which has sufficient capital and experience to invest more learning centers in Chinese cities. Shanghai Tang, on the other hand, was bought by Richemont Group when Angel Foundation was about to run out. “We wish the brand can go faster. Richemont Group has operational experiences for many luxury brands, and it can improve the brand value of Shanghai Tang step by step.” Elliot Yuen said that now Shanghai Tang has become the third large profiting brand under the flag of Richemont. The fusion of Frog Design with Aricent, on the other hand, opens up a brand-new business mode. With over 1000 software architect, developer and quality controller fused with the designing department of Frog Design, Aricent can predict market opportunities with sharpness and better change new technologies into commercial influences.

The story of these senior entrepreneurs is far from ending, for they have another treasure—wisdom. Eric Rice, a writer from the Silicon Valley, said that entrepreneurship is a teachable quality. To pass on the spirit of innovation, these old fellows are willing to help the younger generation weave the future with a totally new manner. And all of them choose China as their brave new world. “China is the future, and I plan to spend the rest of my life here.” Luigi T. Peccenini said.

Isn’t this a new challenge to China? What is the confusion clouded by its powerful enterprise?

What fashion does its swiftly growing consumption group bring into being? Elliot Yuen has a look of amazement and curiosity when talking about this. This Hong Kong man who claims to have been riding with the time looks much younger than he really is. In addition to being a visiting professor, he recently found himself a new game—General Agency in China Region of Stroilil Oro, the largest retailer of jewelry in Italy, and he believes that the challenge does not second to another entrepreneurship. Italian fashion, individual style, 18K gold: these brand features together mean a blank point in the market of China, and Elliot Yuen just cannot let it fall into other’s hands. From product orientation, shop distribution, inner display and style design, he is making a business mode that fits China for Stroili Oro. Speaking of future, he used the word “fumbling” with modesty.

Who can say that this is not a place for the senior? Who can say that only the young is fit for the opportunity of China?

1994 Shanghai Tang

Jointly created Shanghai Tang, a native brand of luxury, with Deng Yongqiang, a Hong Kong celebrity; 2000, the brand was purchased by Richemont Group, the second largest luxury goods group in the world.