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Strategic Positioning of Corporate Think Tanks: Post-print

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Abstract

[Objective/Significance] This study provides a strategic positioning framework for the development of corporate think tanks in China, which can help existing Chinese corporate think tanks conduct strategic adjustment and repositioning, and assist Chinese enterprises that are establishing think tanks in designing strategic plans. [Method/Process] This paper adopts the case analysis method to systematically analyze the strategic positioning of domestic and foreign corporate think tanks, and summarizes a strategic positioning framework for corporate think tanks. [Result/Conclusion] The three elements of strategic positioning for corporate think tanks are: (1) target service objects, which can be categorized as founding enterprises and related enterprises, media and the general public, government decision-making departments, and international organizations; (2) primary functions, which can be divided into decision support, industrial innovation, policy consultation and recommendation, and public diplomacy; (3) research areas, which can be described from three dimensions: theme, time, and space. These three questions and their answers constitute a strategic positioning matrix. Based on this strategic positioning matrix, the value proposition of corporate think tanks can be summarized and refined, or conversely, the strategic positioning matrix can be designed according to the value proposition.

Full Text

Strategic Positioning of Enterprise Think Tanks

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This paper provides a strategic positioning framework for the construction of Chinese enterprise think tanks, which can help existing Chinese enterprise think tanks conduct strategic adjustments and reorientation, and assist Chinese enterprises that are establishing think tanks in designing strategic plans. **[Method/Process]** Through case analysis, this paper systematically examines the strategic positioning of Chinese and foreign enterprise think tanks and summarizes a conceptual framework for strategic positioning. **[Result/Conclusion]** The three elements of strategic positioning for enterprise think tanks are: (1) target service objects, which can be categorized as the founding enterprise and related enterprises, media and the general public, government decision-making departments, and international organizations; (2) main functions, including decision support, industry innovation, policy consultation and advice, and public diplomacy; and (3) research areas, which can be described along three dimensions: theme, time, and space. These three elements and their corresponding answers constitute a strategic positioning matrix. Based on this matrix, the value proposition of an enterprise think tank can be summarized and refined, or conversely, the strategic positioning matrix can be designed according to a predetermined value proposition.

Keywords: enterprise think tank; strategic positioning; theoretical research on think tanks

Enterprise think tanks refer to non-profit research and consulting institutions established by enterprises that possess think tank functions, typically bearing the enterprise's name as their own designation regardless of their legal form. Specifically, three dimensions determine whether a research and consulting institution qualifies as an enterprise think tank: (1) It must be founded by an enterprise, though not all research institutions established by enterprises are think tanks (e.g., R&D departments), and think tanks registered as corporate entities but not founded by enterprises do not qualify either. (2) It must possess think tank functions, which means meeting national strategic and public policy decision-making needs, primarily including policy consultation and advice, theoretical innovation, public opinion guidance, social services, and public diplomacy. Research institutions established by enterprises that serve only the founding enterprise without these functions are not enterprise think tanks. For example, most securities companies have research departments that focus on industry, market, corporate, and project research for securities investment businesses, serving only the securities company and its clients without the aforementioned think tank functions, and thus do not qualify as enterprise think tanks. (3) They must be non-profit; for-profit research and consulting institutions are not enterprise think tanks, though enterprise think tanks may generate revenue through research contracts, consulting and training services, and publication sales.

The strategic positioning of an enterprise think tank involves selecting and determining its strategy, primarily addressing four questions [1]: (1) Who are the target service objects (clients)? As a think tank, serving government decision-making departments and/or the general public is mandatory, while other service objects are optional. (2) What are the main functions? This refers to which aspects of the target service objects' needs are met, determined autonomously by the enterprise think tank based on its resources and capabilities. (3) What are the research areas? The *Opinion on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics* [2] defines enterprise think tank research areas as focusing on industry sectors, conducting decision-making consultation research on state-owned enterprise reform, industrial restructuring, industrial development planning, industrial technology direction, industrial policy formulation, and major engineering projects. In practice, enterprise think tank research areas are broader, depending on their target service objects and functions. (4) What is the value proposition? The external expression of answers to these four questions forms the value proposition, primarily concerning vision, mission, and core values: vision describes what the think tank aims to become in the coming years and represents its strategic goal statement; mission explains the reason for its existence; and core values are the value principles that must be upheld to regulate and constrain the think tank' s systems and behaviors.

Through case analysis and literature review of Chinese and foreign enterprise think tanks, this paper summarizes a strategic positioning framework to guide existing Chinese enterprise think tanks in strategic adjustment and reorientation, and to provide reference for Chinese enterprises establishing think tanks in designing their strategic plans.

1. Service Objects: Enterprises, Media and the Public, Government Departments, and International Organizations

New-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics must “serve the purpose of scientific, democratic, and law-based decision-making for the Party and government,” while state-owned and state-controlled enterprise think tanks should “focus primarily on industry sectors.” For a specific enterprise think tank, determining which decision-making departments to serve is the primary strategic positioning question.

Overall, enterprise think tanks have numerous service objects that can be classified along two dimensions: scope (internal vs. external or domestic vs. international) and function (consulting vs. think tank functions) (see Table 1). However, a specific enterprise think tank can select its target service objects from these categories, with think tank functions being mandatory but specific objects being optional.

1.1 Enterprises

Regarding enterprises as service objects, researchers hold two views: one believes enterprise think tanks should naturally serve the founding enterprise and even advocate for its interests; the other argues they should not serve the founding enterprise because individual corporate interests are private, while think tanks must serve public interests. What is the reality? Based on observation and analysis, enterprise service objects mainly fall into four categories:

First, the headquarters of the founding enterprise itself. Some enterprise think tanks position themselves as the “headquarters’ staff department,” directly providing intellectual support for strategic decision-making, such as the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) Economics and Technology Research Institute and China Minsheng Bank Research Institute. Others do not participate in the founding enterprise’ s strategic decision-making process, such as VINCI’ s corporate think tank—La Fabrique de la Cité—and Alibaba’ s AliResearch.

Second, branches or member enterprises of the founding enterprise. For example, Samsung Economic Research Institute provides knowledge management services to Samsung Group member companies, China Minsheng Bank Research Institute offers operational diagnosis and consulting services to Minsheng Bank branches, and some AliResearch findings provide intellectual support for Alibaba Group’ s business operations.

Third, important clients of the founding enterprise. There are two service approaches: specific services, where think tanks provide intellectual support to particular clients—common among banking enterprise think tanks implementing “financing + intelligence” services, such as China Development Bank Research Institute and Bank of China International Finance Research Institute; and non-specific services, where think tanks publicly release research reports to serve non-specific or potential clients—common among consulting enterprise think tanks, assisting the founding enterprise in expanding new businesses and acquiring new clients, such as IBM Institute for Business Value and McKinsey Global Institute.

Fourth, other enterprises in the same industry as the founding enterprise. This is a necessary condition for most enterprise think tanks, as required by the *Opinion on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics*, which states that Chinese enterprise think tanks should focus on “key industry sectors.” Most research findings from enterprise think tanks focus on “industry development,” serving the entire industry’ s development while consolidating the founding enterprise’ s leading position. 极少数例外 include CITIC Reform and Development Research Foundation/Institute established by CITIC Group.

Notably, when serving these enterprises, enterprise think tanks face competition from external consulting firms. They should leverage their industry knowledge advantages while also collaborating with consulting companies to jointly provide

intellectual products that meet enterprise needs.

1.2 Media and the Public

Realizing the functions of “public opinion guidance and social service” requires think tanks to serve media and the public. Think tanks are content producers and suppliers, disseminating their research findings to the public through media (self-media, mass media, new media, etc.).

Enterprise think tanks serving media and the public: According to Professor Zhu Yan, a senior researcher at Japanese enterprise think tanks, Japanese corporate think tanks attach great importance to media dissemination, encouraging researchers to publish articles and participate in television programs to serve the public with their professional knowledge. They believe this not only helps brand communication for the founding enterprise (which typically shares the same name as the think tank) but also represents a way for the founding enterprise to fulfill its social responsibilities.

Chinese enterprise think tanks have substantial room for improvement in this regard. Preliminary investigations show that Chinese enterprise think tanks' communication activities are weaker compared to their research and exchange activities. In terms of self-media, traditional journal dissemination is adequate, but online media performance is poor. Nearly half of enterprise think tanks (mainly state-owned enterprise think tanks) lack official websites, and their WeChat and Weibo influence lags behind other think tank types. In mass media, inadequate dissemination of research findings has led Chinese think tank researchers to largely overlook the existence of enterprise think tanks.

1.3 Government Departments

Providing intellectual support to government decision-making departments is a common task for all think tank types. The differences lie in: (1) which level and department of government serves as the target object—central or local government, comprehensive or industry-specific departments; (2) which stage of the government policy decision-making process is emphasized—pre-decision, decision-making, or post-decision; and (3) what methods are used to provide support—direct or indirect.

Enterprise think tanks primarily target government industry supervisory and economic management departments. Central state-owned enterprises and 极少数 private enterprises' think tanks target the central government, while local state-owned enterprises and most private enterprises' think tanks target local governments.

Which policy process stage to emphasize depends on the think tank' s research capacity and preferences. Generally, participation in the pre-decision stage is more appropriate and effective.

Enterprise think tanks can support government through various methods. Direct methods mainly include undertaking government research contracts, providing suggestions and proposals to government departments, participating in government decision-making consultation institutions or meetings, and government procurement of think tank intellectual products. Indirect methods primarily involve disseminating research findings through media to attract government officials' attention.

Taking the central government' s five-year development plan formulation as an example, the National Development and Reform Commission typically assigns research topics to relevant think tanks and research institutions, whose findings form the basis for plan formulation. Enterprise think tanks also undertake such topics, such as China Development Bank Research Institute and AliResearch. Interview with Professor Zhu Yan, March 7, 2016, Beijing. Zhu Yan served as a researcher at Fuji Research Institute and Fujitsu Research Institute for 19 years and is currently a professor at the Faculty of Political Science and Economics, Takushoku University, Japan.

1.4 International Organizations

This is a service object category that Chinese enterprise think tanks currently underemphasize but whose importance is increasingly rising. International organizations include intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations, with international professional/standard organizations being key service objects for enterprise think tanks.

The *Opinion on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics* clearly states that new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics are important components of national governance system and capacity modernization and constitute a crucial part of national soft power. This requires Chinese think tanks to target international organizations as service objects, because international organizations and the rules they formulate are core elements of global governance, and international organizations serve as important platforms for national soft power to exert influence.

Chinese enterprise think tanks should prioritize international professional/standard organizations as key service objects. International professional organizations are rule-makers for industries, while international standard organizations are formulators of technical standards. Enterprise think tanks can represent their founding enterprises by participating in international professional/standard organizations, proposing their own rule/standard proposals, holding relevant positions, fulfilling duties, and dominating rule/standard formulation processes to transform Chinese rules/standards into international ones, thereby gaining institutional discourse power and participating in global economic governance.

In terms of international organization engagement, Alibaba Group and AliResearch have demonstrated outstanding performance. On March 23, 2016, Jack

Ma proposed the Electronic World Trade Platform (eWTP) initiative at the Boao Forum for Asia. On September 4-5, this initiative was formally written into the G20 Leaders' Summit communiqué as the most important policy recommendation from the B20 (Business 20). On September 27-29, the WTO held its annual Public Forum in Geneva, where Ouyang Cheng, Director of AliResearch's Cross-Border E-commerce Research Center, participated in sub-forums and seminars on digital economy and e-commerce development. On October 11-13, the 16th World Export Development Forum hosted by the United Nations was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where Gao Hongbing, Vice President of Alibaba Group and Dean of AliResearch, jointly released the research report *China's E-commerce: Opportunities for Asian Enterprises* with Arancha González, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the International Trade Centre. On December 9, the WTO held a seminar on "eCommerce for Development" in Geneva, where Jack Ma delivered a video speech and Ouyang Cheng presented on opportunities Alibaba's e-commerce practices bring to global SMEs. The ultimate goal of these engagements is to transform the eWTP initiative into international trade rules.

2. Main Functions: Decision Support, Industry Innovation, Policy Consultation and Advice, Public Diplomacy

New-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics must possess "important functions such as policy consultation and advice, theoretical innovation, public opinion guidance, social services, and public diplomacy." From another perspective, think tank functions represent the needs of target service objects that they satisfy. "Policy consultation and advice" meets government decision-making departments' needs for professional knowledge and methods; "theoretical innovation" meets academic circles' needs for new theories and knowledge; "public opinion guidance" meets media's needs for content and agenda-setting; "social services" meets the public's needs for public policy information; and "public diplomacy" meets foreign institutions and individuals' needs for authentic, comprehensive understanding of China. Therefore, think tank functions and the needs they satisfy are "two sides of the same coin" –neither can be discussed in isolation from the other.

Specifically for enterprise think tanks, which of these five functions are primary? What is their order of importance and specific content? Which functions can be omitted? What additional functions are needed? These are practical questions whose selection and determination constitute part of enterprise think tank strategic positioning.

Based on case investigations and content analysis of enterprise think tanks, we characterize their main functions as: decision support, industry innovation, policy consultation and advice, and public diplomacy.

2.1 Decision Support

Decision support refers to enterprise think tanks meeting enterprises' needs for professional knowledge and methods in strategic and operational decision-making. Such decisions mainly include: formulation of overall strategy, determination of new business and technology development directions, feasibility assessment of major investment or merger and acquisition projects, and design of transformation and change programs.

The main approaches for enterprise think tanks to provide decision support include: (1) independently completing decision plan research and design; (2) jointly completing plans with relevant enterprise departments and/or external consulting firms; (3) participating only in decision plan discussion and evaluation without directly participating in formulation; and (4) providing relevant research findings for enterprise decision-makers' reference. The specific approach depends on the relationship design between the founding enterprise and the think tank, the think tank's research capacity, and the operating rules of the industry.

2.2 Industry Innovation

Theoretical innovation is a primary function of university think tanks but may not be necessary for enterprise think tanks. We argue that enterprise think tanks should prioritize "industry innovation" as a main function. First, the *Opinion on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics* positions Chinese enterprise think tanks to "conduct decision-making consultation research on state-owned enterprise reform, industrial restructuring, industrial development planning, industrial technology direction, industrial policy formulation, and major engineering projects," most of which can be summarized as "industry innovation." Second, examining Chinese and foreign enterprise think tank practices reveals that many value-creating activities (research, exchange, and dissemination) revolve around the theme of "industry innovation" (though they may not use this exact term), with differences only in: (1) which industries are covered; (2) whether the focus is on industrial technology or industrial policy; and (3) which industrial rules and business models serve as breakthrough points. Moreover, in today's era of the fourth industrial revolution, industry innovation is the most important topic in the global business community and a key area for corporate competition and cooperation.

Industry innovation can satisfy the needs of all enterprise think tank service objects. For enterprise service objects, decision-making plans formulated under industry innovation thinking and principles will have significantly enhanced forward-looking content. For media and the public, research findings based on industry innovation will play a greater and better role in public opinion guidance and social services. For government decision-making departments, industrial public policies and economic governance rules guided by industry innovation can better promote economic development and social progress. For

international organizations, especially international professional/standard organizations, they continuously absorb national industrial and technological innovation achievements to promote and popularize them worldwide for the benefit of human society.

2.3 Policy Consultation and Advice

Policy consultation and advice refers to enterprise think tanks meeting government decision-making departments' needs for professional knowledge and methods, similar to other think tank types but differing in content.

From the government decision-making department perspective, since economic development is an eternal theme and enterprises are the main market economy players, policy proposals from enterprise think tanks often receive high attention. The issue to avoid is “excessive attention” –national economic policies must consider the overall situation and cannot be swayed by particular industries or even specific enterprises.

Regarding economic and social development strategies and policies, different think tank types propose different policy recommendations. While government decision-making departments should be open to diverse opinions, they must possess the ability to identify, select, and combine them in policy decision-making.

2.4 Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy is a form of international exchange in which at least one participant is a non-governmental organization, such as enterprises, universities, think tanks, media, or social organizations. Public diplomacy actors include governments, civil society organizations, social institutions and groups, social elites, and the general public. A country' s public diplomacy primarily involves “expressing its national conditions to foreign publics or governments through various means, explaining its policies, clarifying foreign misunderstandings about the country, and understanding the other party' s relevant viewpoints in international exchanges” [3].

Both enterprises and think tanks are actors in public diplomacy. Based on case studies, we categorize corporate public diplomacy into three types according to different goals [4]: internal public diplomacy aimed at achieving business strategies and carried out through transnational business activities; external public diplomacy aimed at building a good corporate brand image and carried out through transnational social responsibility activities; and typical public diplomacy aimed at enhancing national image and carried out through specialized public diplomacy projects. A fourth type should be added: high-end public diplomacy aimed at participating in global economic governance and carried out through international professional/standard organizations. Think tank public diplomacy involves the international development of think tanks (especially international affairs think tanks) [5], determined by their nature as strategic and public policy research and consulting institutions. It mainly includes: (1)

external information dissemination; (2) interpersonal exchanges; (3) co-hosting international conferences; (4) conducting international cooperative research; (5) joining international organizations; and (6) establishing overseas branches or co-building institutions.

Therefore, the core of enterprise think tank public diplomacy is the “intersection” of corporate public diplomacy and think tank public diplomacy: public diplomacy oriented toward international organizations (especially international professional/standard organizations).

3. Research Areas: Theme, Time, and Space

Service objects define whom enterprise think tanks serve, and main functions define which needs of service objects they satisfy. What intellectual products do enterprise think tanks provide to service objects to realize their functions? This concerns the selection and determination of research areas. Based on case analysis of Chinese and foreign enterprise think tanks, their research areas can be defined along three dimensions : (1) Theme refers to research objects and content, which can be categorized as international economics and politics, national economy, industry development, enterprise operations, and investment projects; (2) Time refers to the temporal scope of research objects and content, which can be categorized as historical research, current situation research, and future research; (3) Space refers to the geographical scope of research objects and content, which can be categorized as regional, national, regional (e.g., continental), and global.

3.1 Research Theme: Industry Development as the Main Line, Extending to Economic and Business Sides

Taking industry development as the main research line is common to Chinese and foreign enterprise think tanks. Which specific industries are studied? This is determined by the founding enterprise’ s business scope and service objects. Specifically, manufacturing and construction enterprises’ think tanks study the industries in which their founding enterprises operate. For example, CNPC Economics and Technology Research Institute focuses on trend analysis and strategy research in petroleum industry development, petroleum technology, petroleum economics, petroleum markets, overseas investment environments, and policies and regulations. Financial and consulting enterprises’ think tanks study the industries they serve. For example, IBM Institute for Business Value conducts research around industries and solutions, serving sectors including automotive, banking and financial markets, petrochemicals, telecommunications, consumer products, electronics, energy and utilities, government, healthcare, and life sciences.

Beyond industry research, some enterprise think tanks extend into macroeconomic fields, some into enterprise business fields, and some into both. For

example, China Minsheng Bank Research Institute's four major research areas are macroeconomics, financial development, industrial development, and regional development. State Grid Energy Research Institute conducts research on energy power development and energy economics, energy systems and policies, power grid development and management decision support, and enterprise development and management decision support. AliResearch's research themes are divided into: (1) micro-level business model innovation research, such as C2B business models and future organizational models; (2) meso-level industry internetization research, such as e-commerce logistics and rural e-commerce; and (3) macro-level economic impact research, such as the internet's impact on consumption, investment, imports/exports, and employment.

3.2 Time Horizon: Future Research is Increasingly Important

People generally believe that think tanks engaged in public policy research mainly conduct current situation analysis and countermeasure research, which many do. However, this is not the whole picture—strategic issues are also think tank research themes, requiring strengthened future research. Currently, few Chinese think tanks list future research on their agendas.

Compared with other think tank types, enterprise think tanks place greater emphasis on future research. First, in industry development research, trend analysis and research constitute part of future research, mainly reflected in specific research topics. Second, some think tanks explicitly include future research in their formal agendas. For example, AliResearch's future research includes information economy, new business civilization, and DT (Data Technology) paradigm research. VINCI's corporate think tank—La Fabrique de la Cité—specializes in “creating the city of the future,” with themes including: (1) sustainable transportation; (2) urban development planning; and (3) cities as living and social spaces.

Enterprise think tanks rarely conduct dedicated historical research, generally including historical content only in specific industry development research topics. However, exceptions exist, such as Japan's Haseko Comprehensive Research Institute, which conducted specialized systematic research on housing history.

3.3 Geographic Scope: International Research as the Norm

Enterprise think tanks typically conduct research within the geographical scope of their founding enterprises' business operations. Since most founding enterprises already conduct or plan to conduct transnational business, international research should be a normal phenomenon for enterprise think tanks.

Based on case materials, international research is part of the daily agenda for foreign enterprise think tanks. For example, Fujitsu Research Institute takes “globalization progress and Japan's response” as one of its research themes, covering the future of Asian economic growth centered on China, global economic

trends, European economic trends, emerging market trends, and Japanese enterprises' global management methods. McKinsey Global Institute' s research agenda focuses on three areas: productivity, competitiveness, and growth, including the evolution of global financial markets, the impact of emerging technologies on the global economy, growth and renewal project reforms in Europe and the United States, Africa' s economic potential, and urbanization in India and China, covering more than 20 countries and over 30 industries.

Currently, Chinese enterprise think tanks focus their research geographically on domestic issues. Although specific research topics involve foreign and international content, international research is rarely included in daily agendas. In the context of globalization, transnational corporations represent the normal state of enterprise survival and development, and international research by enterprise think tanks should also become the norm.

4. Strategic Positioning Matrix: Objects, Functions, and Areas

Combining the three strategic positioning elements (service objects, main functions, and research areas) by using service objects as rows, main functions as columns, and filling research areas at the intersections, we can draw a concise strategic positioning matrix diagram for enterprise think tanks (see Table 2).

Table 2. Strategic Positioning Matrix of Enterprise Think Tanks

Service Objects	Main Functions
Founding Enterprise and Related Enterprises	Decision Support: Industry development research, industry/economic research, market trend research, consumer behavior research
Media and the Public	Industry Innovation: Industry policy innovation, industry strategy research, industry planning research
Government Decision-Making Departments	Policy Consultation and Advice: Industry policy research, industry rule research, standard internationalization research
International Organizations	Public Diplomacy: Industry rule research, economic governance research

(Note: Research areas include only important and generalized content)

Among these, providing decision support services to founding enterprises and related enterprises, providing industry innovation research findings to media and the public, offering policy consultation and advice to government decision-making departments, and conducting public diplomacy toward international organizations constitute the four main components of enterprise think tank strategic positioning.

In practice, the three strategic positioning elements influence each other. The selection and determination of service objects affect main functions, while the definition of service objects and main functions determines research area selection. Conversely, adjustments and expansions in research areas affect the definition of service objects and main functions. For a specific enterprise think tank, both service objects and main functions are selectable, and selected objects and functions are often ranked by importance. This process constitutes strategic positioning, with selection and ranking principles being crucial and primarily depending on the founding enterprise's motivations and purposes, as well as the think tank's own resource and capability conditions.

5. Value Proposition: Vision, Mission, and Core Values

The answers to the three strategic positioning questions, after summarization and refinement, can form an externally expressed value proposition, primarily involving vision, mission, and core values. Vision describes what the think tank will become in the coming years and represents its strategic goal statement. Mission explains the reason for its existence—why it exists. Core values are the value principles that must be upheld to regulate and constrain the think tank's systems and behaviors.

The following introduces value proposition statements from several enterprise think tanks.

5.1 Vision

CNPC Economics and Technology Research Institute: By 2020, it will initially be built into a world-class comprehensive international energy company think tank, playing a core leading role in national energy policy formulation and CNPC's decision support system, and enjoying higher reputation and influence in the domestic and international energy industry.

Samsung Economic Research Institute China (SERIChina): Continuing to follow SERI's rigorous research methodology and mission to contribute to society, striving to become the most respected and influential think tank in China's economic and business research field.

State Grid Energy Research Institute: By 2020, build a leading domestic and internationally renowned high-end enterprise think tank; by 2025, build a world-class energy industry think tank and enterprise think tank.

AliResearch: A think tank platform in the DT (Data Technology) era. Upholding the open, sharing, and transparent spirit of the internet, based on forward-looking concepts and insights, strong data-driven capabilities, and rich case accumulation, we are committed to becoming a think tank and think tank platform in the new economy and new governance fields, including: data open platform, expert network and think tank platform.

China Minsheng Bank Research Institute: By integrating the bank's research forces and external experts, building a high-level research team, creating an "academic exchange platform," and developing into an internationally first-class new-type think tank with Chinese characteristics and Minsheng Bank features that has strong influence both domestically and internationally.

5.2 Mission

CNPC Economics and Technology Research Institute: Through 3-5 years of effort, strive to build the "headquarters' staff department" for the group and joint-stock companies to grasp internal and external environments and formulate competitive strategies and development strategies, a research center for the group and joint-stock companies to plan overall major strategic issues, a domestic and international petroleum and petrochemical information resource development center, and an external exchange and cooperation center for economic and technical information.

Samsung Economic Research Institute: Through rigorous, creative, and practical knowledge creation activities on China's economy and business, committed to becoming a leading think tank driving China's economic, social, and corporate sustainable growth.

State Grid Energy Research Institute: Conducting strategic research, policy analysis, decision support, and consulting evaluation on energy power industry and enterprise development strategies, planning, management, systems and mechanisms, and policies.

China Minsheng Bank Research Institute: Serving the scientific decision-making of China Minsheng Bank's board of directors and the scientific development of the bank's overall business, providing strong support for the bank to build a "financing + intelligence + commerce + internet financing" four-wheel-drive business model, and committed to continuously enhancing China Minsheng Bank's soft power and influence.

McKinsey Global Institute: Helping leaders in business, public, and social sectors develop deeper understanding of global economic development and providing a factual basis to aid decision-making on key management and policy issues.

5.3 Core Values

State Grid Energy Research Institute: Highlighting characteristics, innovation-driven, open cooperation, quality first, brand leadership.

China Minsheng Bank Research Institute: Diligence, inclusiveness, clear aspirations, and far-reaching vision.

Fujitsu Research Institute: Customer-centric, unique capabilities, employee respect, and social harmony.

In practice, enterprise think tanks may first form a value proposition and then conduct strategic positioning. In summary, the relationship between strategic positioning and value proposition is one of specificity and abstraction—they are inseparable. If disconnected, the value proposition becomes merely a slogan, and strategic positioning becomes rootless.

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