Reseñas


Reviewed by Javier Rodríguez

Behavioral finance is a relative new area that brings together psychology and finance. There are few books that present the theory and applications of behavioral finance in an easy to follow language as Beyond Greed and Fear do. Although written with a practitioner audience in mind, this book could serve as an excellent textbook. The author, Hersh Shefrin, from Santa Clara University, is an expert on the subject and has published many academic and popular press articles.

The first four chapters of the book give the reader a good introduction to behavioral finance and three of its core themes: heuristic bias, frame dependence and market efficiency. The author first explains that heuristic bias is the action of substituting a rational decision making process for a “mental-shortcut” or “rule of thumb”. The second central theme of the book is frame dependence or how people might react differently to the same problem or situation when presented in different contexts or frames. Then the author makes a good argument on how market inefficiency could be the result of mixing the first two topics of the book and the overall stock market. Market efficiency is a sensitive subject in the finance community that, in my opinion, serves as an invisible border between those who give behavioral finance at least the benefit of the doubt and those
who don’t. The reaction from the finance community to what behavioral finance proposes is also presented.

From chapter five on the material of the book is presented in a case fashion. Each chapter considers an event, a particular market sector or a specific market participant. Then the author presents the view from a behavioral finance perspective. These almost self-contained chapters are build on the information contained on the first four chapters and supported by academic research, by direct quotes from important people from the industry as well as citations from the popular press. This format allows the reader to, not only learn about behavioral finance and its roots from psychology, but to see first hand its real world applications.

I believe this is an excellent book for those interested in a finance theory that allows for human error during the investment process as well as other financial decisions. The book is easy to read and do not require, as others books in this area do, a deep understanding of mathematics and statistics.


Reseñado por Elizabeth Robles, Ph.D. Catedrática Auxiliar, Universidad de Puerto Rico

El autor de este libro, Eric Schlosser, es un periodista investigador que tardó dos años en estudiar la industria de los “fast foods,” o negocios de comida servida al instante. En 1998, Schlosser publicó su primer artículo de “fast foods” en la revista *Rolling Stone* que generó miles de cartas. Ha escrito para el *New Yorker*, y desde 1996 es corresponsal de la revista mensual *Atlantic*. Éste ha ganado varios