



## Probe into the Talent Cultivation Based on Learning Enterprises

Jianping Gu

School of Business

Nanjing Normal University

Nanjing 210097, China

E-mail: friendgjp@126.com

Xinfang Wu

China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation

Puyang 457001, China

E-mail: xuwensh@tom.com

*This thesis is a research result of Jiansu Education Science "Eleventh Five-Year Plan" project.*

### Abstract

In the severer market competition, the learning character of enterprises tends to be the most important resource of enterprises winning and maintaining market competence. By analyzing problems in talent cultivation based on learning enterprises at present in China, this thesis advances that enterprises can make efforts from these aspects: updating thoughts and opinions, improving enterprise qualities, enhancing internal cooperation, and constructing human-oriented corporate culture.

**Keywords:** Learning enterprise, Talent cultivation, Core competence

The theory of learning enterprises has always wined attentions from domestic and foreign scholars and enterprises since its appearance. The Royal Dutch Shell thinks: Enterprises in 21<sup>st</sup> century are learning enterprises. The only sustainable competitive advantage of an enterprise is to learn faster than competitors. The ultimate reason for Chinese enterprises' "short life cycle" is the weak learning ability of Chinese enterprises. In general, the construction of learning enterprises is still at a lower level. Considering Chinese enterprises' shortcomings, China should construct learning enterprises to improve enterprises' market competence.

### 1. To construct learning enterprises is an urgent task for improving qualities of enterprise talents

Along with the coming of knowledge economic times, the competition between enterprises is equal to the competition of employees' qualities. Only with high-quality employees, can it be a high-quality enterprise. Employees' qualities, to a great degree, are determined by their learning abilities. In a sense, the essence of enterprise competition is the competition of learning abilities at the new era. The only competitive advantage of an enterprise is from the faster learning ability than competitors. Therefore, constructing a learning enterprise, encouraging employees to learn and update their knowledge structure continuously, and helping them to make best use of intelligence are inevitable options for an enterprise participating in the competition in knowledge economic times, and also important guaranties for an enterprise stabilizing its position in market and wining the competition.

Learning is the origin of enterprise life. In future the real excellent enterprise should be a learning enterprise. Therefore, for all enterprises the strategic objective is to construct the learning character of enterprises. Enterprise managers should liberate their traditional thoughts, pursue for innovations, realize the decisive effect of founding learning enterprises on enterprises' fate in future, improve the business ideology, enhance the exploration and management of human resources, and increase the intellectual and financial investments in continuous education. Build up a continuously learning theory and mechanism, create a favorable environment for learning, and improve employees' autonomous learning consciousness and competence. Then, learning knowledge and pursuing for development and self perfection will become the inner needs of employees. In enterprises, a thick phenomenon for team learning will come into being. Besides, encourage students to turn learning ability into creativity, achieving the common development of employees and enterprise.

## **2. Problems in talents cultivation based on learning enterprise in China at present**

Compared with foreign learning enterprises, Chinese enterprises lag far behind in many aspects, such as learning, organization, and knowledge management, which is resulted from Chinese enterprises' defects in thoughts and ideas, enterprise strengths, and corporate culture. This thesis will analyze the problems of Chinese learning enterprises in thoughts and ideas, enterprise strengths, and corporate culture.

### *2.1 Insufficient recognition to the construction of learning enterprises*

In China, many domestic enterprises step into a wrong path because of insufficient recognition to the construction of "learning enterprises". In detail, the first is a misunderstanding to "learning enterprise". Some enterprises equalize the "learning enterprise" with learning. To absorb information and knowledge does not mean real learning. The real learning is to adjust behaviors and change activities. The second is the "dynamic" construction. For traditional enterprises, without organizational reform, the so-called learning means nothing but a catchword. The "learning enterprise" is a product of modern enterprise system, which is built in an organic, flexible, and human-oriented organization that can realize the sustainable development, based on a flat organization structure.

### *2.2 Enterprises' weak ability of knowledge transformation*

In China, the serious problem in enterprises at present is the weak ability of knowledge transformation. In general, Chinese enterprises are not good at transforming knowledge into productivity and learning new technologies. Although some excellent enterprises, such as Haier, Huawei, and Lenovo, can transform knowledge into productivity relatively faster in knowledge application, establishment, and consumption aspect, and begin to emphasize on developing independent intellectual property and avoid infringing others' intellectual property, lots of enterprises could not transform knowledge into productivity effectively. These enterprises possess amounts of rich customer information, but they merely store them in present system instead of applying them to production decision. Meanwhile, they are busy with collecting more information. Finally, they get into a sea of information.

### *2.3 Enterprises' mental model needs to be changed*

Many domestic enterprises still maintain the former mental model, insisting on traditional thoughts and refusing to adapt themselves to changes of times. It mainly focuses on three aspects: Firstly, many domestic enterprises fail to think over problems systematically and do not form a global vision. Although some enterprises have already emphasized on internationalization and have gained certain achievements by production and sales abroad, most enterprises do not possess an internationally operational thinking mode. They just copy what they have done in domestic market as they operate internationally. In fact, these enterprises take their domestic development, special history period, and Chinese special conditions into consideration. Meanwhile, as they learn from excellent enterprises, they merely notice others' successful operating mode. Secondly, enterprise operations rely on entrepreneurs' individual thoughts and philosophy. Because enterprise operations depend on entrepreneurs' individual decisions for a long period, employees are in a habit of accepting orders instead of making innovations. In employees' eyes, entrepreneurs are the "God" in a sense. It reflects a closed mental model of employees and enterprises.

### *2.4 Corporate culture lacks of sufficient emphases on humanism*

In China, the corporate culture bears a strong eastern complex. The eastern culture emphasizes on the interests of collectivity. It advocates individual devotions. This eastern complex leads to such a result that enterprises pay more attentions on collectivity benefits but neglect the importance of humanism. At present, few domestic enterprises are human-oriented. Most traditional enterprises lay extra stresses on science and technology, which emphasize on enterprise development but neglect employees' individual growth.

## **3. Approaches for cultivating talents based on learning enterprises**

### *3.1 Change the conception and construct a positive attitude*

To construct a learning enterprise means a reform in thoughts and activities as a matter of fact. To change leaders' thoughts is the primary task of constructing a learning enterprise. Leaders should attach importance to learning. Enterprise leaders should be not only educators who understand the education, but also learners who deserve to be admired by employees. Only when use this idea to direct activities, can learning be placed at a strategic center, and be emphasized equally as work, achieving practical effects and becoming sustainable learning. Meanwhile, considering the practical conditions, enterprises should enhance and improve employees' position training, and help employees to build up an ideology that is in accordance with market economy. Enterprises must especially emphasize the importance of learning to employees, combine learning and the enterprises' objectives together, and help employees to build up an idea that focuses on the work-and-learning integration, the lifelong learning, and the continuous innovation.

### 3.2 Develop and improve enterprise quality

Only when an enterprise takes its practical conditions as the base and set up a regular and systematic learning enterprise system, can it achieve greater development. First of all, set up a common vision. A common vision is a future image hold by all employees. In simple, it refers to “what the enterprise wants to create”. The common vision supplies the focus and energy for learning. Without a vision, the learning is only for adaptation. Only when all employees devote themselves to a common business, can it generate creative learning. The common vision is not an order from the top management level. It needs employees’ common commitments, devotions, and inputs. Find out employees’ different needs and career programs. Add them to the enterprise’s common vision systematically. Then, develop the vision by combining it with specific strategies, programs, and policies and make each employee understand his or her daily work and conditions of the organization. Besides, the enterprise should attach importance to employees’ long-run development and respect their suggestions. In order to integrate the objectives of an enterprise with the organizational learning, the enterprise should construct a proper and reasonable incentive mechanism, promoting the learning effects and combining it with employees’ benefits. By this way, employees’ enthusiasm for learning will be improved. In addition, to build up a flat organizational structure can benefit the internal information exchange and share in the enterprise.

### 3.3 Be human-oriented and construct a learning corporate culture

In the modern sense, “learning” surpasses the pure traditional concept that means inheritance. It is a process in which people acquire, apply, produce, and create new knowledge. Learning enterprises takes innovations as the center. Human is the subject of innovations. So, to construct learning enterprises must cultivate a human-oriented corporate culture, focusing on learning and integrating with excellent cultures, based on inheriting and developing the essence of traditional corporate culture. Enterprises should attach importance to talents and adopt effective measures to ensure employees’ benefits, which can make employees devote themselves to work. As a result, it will change the meanings, contents, approaches, and organizational systems of enterprises’ original learning and innovations, and help enterprises to construct and cultivate the speed culture that responses fast, the innovation culture that focuses on sustainable learning, and the competition culture that suits for challenges.

### 3.4 Develop together and strengthen cooperation with exterior agencies

Enterprises should strengthen the cooperation with other interest-related parties, build up a competition and cooperation thought, and achieve a win-win result. In specific:

Firstly, balance the relationship with the media. In an information society, media is an important source for people obtaining information. It is a reliable information channel. Therefore, the relationship with the media can directly impact an enterprise’s image, reputation, and credit. On one hand, an enterprise should guarantee the quality of product and service. On the other hand, the enterprise should make best use of media in advertising, improving its image in people’s mind.

Secondly, treat other interest-related communities kindly. For any enterprise, the success is determined by the whole commercial net but not only its employees and customers, in the future commercial society. Therefore, enterprises should get rid of traditional market thinking model, kindly treating each interest-related community. To serve other interest-related communities is to serve themselves, what is a valuable asset in the future.

Thirdly, emphasize on learning from customers. Customers are experts who use the products. They can offer the latest product information, the using result of product, the feedback to product service, the advantages and disadvantages of product, and the suggestions for improvement. All these information will stimulate the improvements and innovations of product. Customers’ evaluations and attitudes to different enterprises can serve as important references for enterprises’ leaders evaluating competition conditions.

## References

- Oz Shy. (1995). *Industrial Organization: Theory and Applications*. The MIT Press.
- Wu, Xinfang. (2009). The construction of market competence based on learning enterprises. *Digest of Management Science*, No.1.