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Ai Xu

International Business Faculty, Beijing Normal University Zhuhai, China

Shi Tang

International Business Faculty, Beijing Normal University Zhuhai, China

Yijia Gao

Business School, Chung Yuan Christian University, China

Zongqing Zhou

College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, USA

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The Business Talents Cultivation of Cross-border E-commerce under “the Belt and Road Initiative”

Ai Xu^{1}, Shi Tang², Yijia Gao³, Zongqing Zhou⁴*

^{1,2}International Business Faculty, Beijing Normal University Zhuhai, China

³Business School, Chung Yuan Christian University, China

⁴College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, USA

Abstract: Along with “the Belt and Road Initiative”, China’s cross-border e-commerce has been developed rapidly, which will certainly bring new challenges for talents cultivation in the Higher Education. The paper analyzes the new requirements for business talents under cross-border e-commerce. And then a cultivation system was proposed by examining the five major programs in our university. The cultivation objectives, the curriculum and the practical module are elaborated. Finally, some suggestions on the implementation of this cultivation system are put forward.

Keywords: talent cultivation, cross-border e-commerce, business talents, curriculum module

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, cross-border e-commerce has become the focus of all walks of life, and has shown an explosive growth momentum. In order to ensure the steady growth of foreign trade and provide advice and guarantee for the development of cross-border trade of e-commerce, the Office of State Council announced "the implementation of policies to support cross-border e-commerce retail outlet" in August, 2013. Two years later, the Political Bureau of CPC Central Committee approved the overall scheme of Guangdong Pilot Free Trade Zone, Tianjin Free Trade Zone and Fujian Free Trade Zone to further deepen the reform of Shanghai Free Trade Testing Zone. These policies have promoted the development of cross-border e-commerce greatly. Along with “the Belt and Road Initiative”, China’s cross-border e-commerce entered a new era. The total transaction of cross-border e-commerce is estimated to be 8 trillion RMB by the end of 2018 and will reach 12 trillion RMB in 2020. The speed of growth will remain at an average of 20% for the further few years. The cross-border e-commerce will become an “Online Silk Road” that cannot be ignored. This not only has a great meaning to the nation’s economy and international trade, but also addresses a new challenge of cultivation of related talents.

The management and transactions of cross-border e-commerce involve knowledge and skills in many fields, such as economics, management, accounting, e-commerce and so on. However, this industry is still short of the talent and personnel who have the knowledge and skill^[1]. This is the problem that universities, especially those with related majors, have to solve. Therefore, universities need to design new curriculum modules based on the perspective of cross-border e-commerce. This will also strengthen the construction of related majors in universities and promote the transformation and development of cross-border e-commerce for both universities and enterprises under the background of “internet plus”.

2. NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR BUSINESS TALENTS UNDER CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE

The development of cross-border e-commerce rapidly transforms the traditional trade modes^[2]. These transformations not only put new requests to the traditional international trade professionals, but also challenge other personnel within the trading activities. The business talents need to have new knowledge and competency in the new cross-border e-commerce environment.

* Corresponding author. Email: gdxuai@163.com (Ai Xu)

2.1 Capabilities to execute e-marketing function

Traditional enterprises usually build foreign marketing channels through international exhibitions or agents^[3]. This model is unsuitable for miniaturized businesses that directly serve the consumers due to the high cost. Instead, using internet to launch a low cost marketing model to overseas consumers is more feasible. Compared with the traditional way, the internet model requires cross-border e-commerce practitioners to master the basic knowledge of e-marketing, understand the consumer behavior through analysis of the overseas markets and refined products selling points and promotion according to consumer demand. At the same time, they are also required to effectively use target countries' search engines to carry out promotional activities, such as SEM, SNS and foreign medium PR, on the internet.

2.2 Capabilities to operate cross-border e-commerce platforms

The use of cross-border platform, such as Alibaba and DHgate, to carry out e-commerce activities is a convenient way for small and medium-sized enterprises to expand overseas market. Therefore, cross-border e-commerce requires personnel to operate business platforms, such as export portal of Alibaba and Aliexpress, to implement the practices of import and export, which include inquiry management and transformation, customer relationship and product management. The business personnel also need to develop foreign markets by using global search engines and e-marketing strategies. On the other hand, personnel in other business areas, such as finance, accounting and business administration, also need to master the financial management, auditing, accounting and process management on the platform to deal with cross-border e-commerce related businesses.

2.3 Capabilities to run cross-border e-commerce websites

In addition to using the existing cross-border e-commerce platform, some competent enterprises also need to build their own e-commerce websites for overseas market and providing services for overseas consumers^[4]. This requires the relevant personnel to have the experience of coordinating supply chain, logistics, website promotion, order processing and after sale service. They need to improve brand awareness in the network environment through effective website operation and management.

2.4 Capabilities to manage the logistics and supply chain

Logistics play an important role in the development of cross-border e-commerce. Unlike ordinary international trade, the logistics of cross-border e-commerce is mostly done by direct mail, express, aviation special line, various entrainment and shipping bulk cabinets, which is different from liner shipping or ship booking. There have been great changes in commodity inspection, transportation insurance, which are closely related to logistics. All these require the business personnel in cross-border e-commerce environment to handle the issues of internal and external logistics of bulk commodities and effectively coordinate all aspects of supply chain under the situation of small batch and multi batches.

3. CULTIVATION SYSTEM OF BUSINESS TALENTS FOR CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE

A cultivation system is proposed here by examining the five major programs in our university in order to make our students adapt the requirements of the cross-border e-commerce environments. We set up cultivation objectives according to the analysis of the requirements for business talents under cross-border e-commerce, and then design curriculum module and practice module respectively. Students could select corresponding courses in the module after completing the study of core courses of their own major so as to obtain and improve their capabilities to cross-border e-commerce. (Figure1)

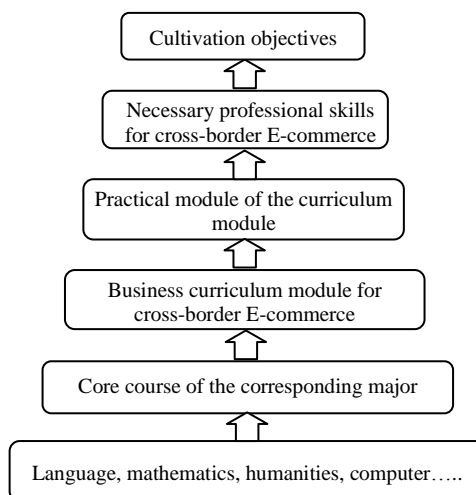


Figure 1. Structure of Business Talents Cultivation for Cross-border e-commerce

3.1 Cultivation objectives

The cultivation objectives for cross-border e-commerce business talents, must meet the needs of economic and social development of cross-border business environment as well as enterprises to business professionals^[5]. In general, these talents should have a certain structure of knowledge, competency and quality. They should include following elements:

3.1.1 Knowledge structure

- Master English and knowledge of computer application.
- Master the completed knowledge of the principal of modern management and economics.
- Master basic theories, knowledge and skills of their own major.
- Master the basic theories and knowledge of cross-border e-commerce, such as trade, business management, international settlement, accounting, financial management and logistics management.
 - Have certain knowledge of business law.
 - Master the qualitative and quantitative analysis methods required by the major.
 - Be familiar with the principles, policies, regulations and international custom and rules.
 - Understand the theoretical frontiers and trends of this subject.

3.1.2 Competency structure

- Master the basic skills of practical operation in this field.
- Master computer skills and be able to use information equipment, network tools and business management application.
 - Master the skills to deal with related business in the field of cross-border e-commerce.
 - Have a strong ability to listen, speak, write, translate and read of a foreign language.
 - Develop their own analytical, innovative and decision-making abilities through lectures, class discussions, writing papers, participating in seminars and practical activities.
- Have strong abilities of oral and written language expression, communication, analysis and problem solving.
 - Understand the basic methods of information retrieval and have the abilities for preliminary scientific research and practical work.

3.1.3 Quality structure

- Have good moral and ethical quality.

- Have Good physical and mental health.
- Have enterprising spirit, responsibility and dedication.
- Have a positive attitude and ability to face difficulties.
- Have a certain sense of innovation and creative potential.
- Have teamwork spirit, tolerance and affinity.

3.2 A business curriculum module for cross-border E-commerce

According to the current requirements for business talents in cross-border electric business development, a curriculum module was proposed by examining the five major programs in our university, i.e. e-commerce, international economics and trade, finance, accounting and business administration^[6]. Individual majors need to create knowledge for cross-border e-commerce development through related elective courses in addition to the original teaching plans. The module should include such courses as Introduction of E-Commerce, E-Marketing, Online Payment, Mobile Commerce, ERP Simulation, Supply Chain Practices, International Logistics, Practice of Financial and Business Integration, International Settlement, Theory and Practice of International Trade, International Business Communication, Import and Export Trade, Simulation of International Cargo Transportation and Operation, Insurance, Business Negotiation, Online Retail, Customer Relationship Management and Comprehensive Training of Cross-Border E-Commerce.

Each major in our university needs to build corresponding system according to the requirements of cross-border e-commerce. Students who study in these majors should have the ability to work in cross-border e-commerce environment through proper practice and training.

3.3 The practical module of the curriculum module

Practices are critical in the curriculum module, because business talents need to have the ability to operate on the e-business platform in the environment of cross-border e-commerce. These practices could be divided into three types, i.e. single practice, comprehensive practice of the course and the comprehensive training.

3.3.1 Single practice in one course

Single practice mainly refers to the practical projects within the courses. It can be conducted by such manners as case studies, enterprise field visits, industry experts' presentation, software demonstration, and group design. Teachers need to clearly identify the type and length of projects. For operational practice projects, in order to receive better results, it is recommended that teachers make their own practical guidance books that students can follow. At the same time, students can also complete these practice items on their own, if the open laboratory is possible. This would help to design reasonable and feasible single practices as well as strengthen the supervision, management and assessment of the courses in the module^[7]. Therefore, it can reduce the randomness of implementation process and ensure the effectiveness of practice.

3.3.2 Comprehensive practice of one course

The comprehensive practice of the course is aim to make the entire course a workshop of the practices. Teachers should write detailed syllabus and guidance books to fulfill students' practical tasks and achieve the goal of practice. The courses of ERP Simulation, Supply Chain Practice, Practice of Financial Business Integration, Import and Export Trade Simulation are this kind of practices.

3.3.3 Comprehensive Training for the module

In order to enable students to obtain practical operation ability under the cross-border e-commerce platform, a comprehensive training is necessary. Faculties also need to design the knowledge framework and training content on the base of the major domestic cross-border e-commerce platform. The knowledge framework should include the product selections, commodity presentation, commodity promotion, online payment and settlement, distribution and logistics, customer service and communication, cross-border business rules and intellectual

property rights, job and career development, innovation and entrepreneurship contest^[8].

It is necessary to use Aliexpress, Amazon, DHgate, Wish and other major cross-border electronic business platforms to design learning modules. So that students can practice on registration and certification, platform operations, the use of marketing tools, order processing and data analysis. They also can understand operational method and basic business process of these platforms through the modules.

4. SUGGESTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYSTEM PROPOSED

In order to better implement the cultivation system of business talents for cross-border e-commerce, the following suggestions could be very helpful.

4.1 Integrating the cultivation program with the cross-border e-commerce curriculum module

It is planned to embody this module in the teaching plans of five majors of our university when the talent cultivation program is revised in 2018. The curriculum guidance and syllabuses need to be improved by compiling instruction documents for practical teaching. Provide instructions of course selection for students according to their majors. Encourage students to select courses according to the module.

4.2 Strengthening teacher training to improve teachers' comprehensive quality and ability

Teachers will play variety of roles, such as reviewers, guides, analytical commentators and business advisers, in the teaching of cross-border e-commerce modules^[9]. That addresses high requirements for teachers to meet. Firstly, teachers are required to have excellent knowledge structure and good knowledge of economic management, especially the knowledge in the aspect of cross border e-commerce. Secondly, teachers should have good organizational and coordinating ability, class control ability and strain capacity. They need to master various teaching tools and software and have experience to answer the questions that students ask and solve the problems encountered. Thirdly, teachers are required to have good personality. They need to encourage students to be creative and enterprising. They should be patient and loving in order to educate students to be good people. Finally, the teachers who are engaged in the comprehensive training course must have spirit of dedication, because there is often no concept of time in practical training courses. Workshops often cannot be finished on time as students have different personal characteristics and groups have different speed of finishing tasks. Therefore, teachers must have responsibility to be able to undertake such courses and ensure teaching quality.

We should fully use the resources of enterprises along with strengthening the construction of teaching staff. We can invite business professionals to make reports for students, so that students can better understand the reality of enterprises and deepen their understanding of practical courses. Enterprise personnel can also be the instructor of the courses and guide the students' complete training practice.

4.3 Improving the teaching method and introducing modern information technologies

Teachers should be encouraged to actively adopt advanced teaching methods and means. Students can use the resources from the uniformed comprehensive training platform of cross-border e-commerce in the university for autonomous learning and training.

4.4 Increase investment in teaching funds and strengthen the construction of practical training base and practical teaching base outside school.

We need to quickly build our cross border e-commerce training platform. We should strive for further financial support from the university in addition to the existing laboratory resources to build a simulation training base, so that students can simulate the main business processes of cross-border e-commerce on campus. At the same time, we must continuously build off-campus practice teaching base to strive for more internship

opportunities for students and enhance their competitiveness.

4.5 Innovating the teaching management and introducing the incentive mechanism

The teaching management needs to be further developed to make the module work as soon as possible. The academic affair office sets the standard requirements while the faculty is responsible for monitoring and assessment. We also notice that teachers need to spend extra time and effort to add practical contents into courses and develop corresponding experimental projects. Therefore, the incentive mechanism must be introduced. Teachers with outstanding effect should be rewarded. We need to promote their teaching experience for demonstration and inspiration.

5. CONCLUSION

In short, along with the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce, having the related professional skills and application ability is critical to business talent cultivation. The design of the curriculum system is a complex work that needs to integrate with professional practice and student characteristics. We have already begun to deploy the curriculum modules in our university and keep improving it during the practice.

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