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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **The Analysis of China's Marketing Consultant Work from the Perspective of Knowledge**

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**| ABSTRACT**

With the continuous development and improvement of China's market economic system, the traditional common marketing mode has been impacted and deconstructed. In the process of resisting the extrusion of competitive companies and adapting to the selection of consumer audiences, enterprises have gradually built a new consulting marketing mode. Based on the author's past real work experience and later field research, this paper expounds the differences between the consultant analysis and the traditional sales in the modern Chinese market from four aspects: market dimensionality, information service value, communication subjectivity and work composition, and it comes to a series of conclusions that, compared with traditional sales, the consultant demand analyst mainly faces the oriented market and semi non oriented market, can provide customers with professional information services that form a knowledge system, gives the customer a sense of subjectivity in the communication on the surface but actually holds the dominant power in the dialogue, and its work content is mainly to maintain the stickiness between users and enterprise products; Then, it discusses the practical path for consultants to better carry out business from two aspects of personal skills and platform activities, and points out that consultants can increase the transaction rate of products by amplifying the customer's demand points, strengthening the customer's anxiety, and taking advantage of the limited time and discount during the platform activity period; Finally, it reveals the essence of the work of consultants and demand analysts and the development trend of the allocation and reconstruction of the functions of modern posts.

**| KEYWORDS**

Knowledge practice, Consultants demand analysts, Working mode

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### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Research Background**

In the era of the knowledge economy, the competitiveness of enterprises in the market has changed from a single product orientation to a comprehensive capabilities competition around product-oriented. In the field of marketing, this change is mainly manifested in the change from traditional direct marketing to knowledge embedded consulting and demand analysis. The author once worked as a course consultant, also called a course demand analyst, in the marketing department of large online education and training institution, and has his own practical experience and understanding of the working mode of the education industry consultant. In order to further enrich and expand the cognitive system of consulting work in different industries, the author has sneaked into the fields of clothing retail, automobile real estate, and personal skills improvement as a buyer and a candidate many times to investigate and summarize the professional skills of consultants and demand analysts in this field.

#### **1.2 The Problems and Methods of Research**

Based on such historical background and practical experience, focusing on the marketing field, we have to consider the differences between consultant analysts and traditional sales in terms of substantive functions in addition to the changes of titles. In the process of communicating with customers, how should the consultant analysts improve their performance and promote the company's profitability for better? Looking at the whole era, what kind of market recruitment standard does the transformation

from traditional sales to consultant marketing reflect? In this era of employment, what challenges and opportunities do it mean for individuals? These are the questions to be explored in this paper.

To better answer the above questions, this paper adopts two research methods: literature research and field research. First of all, the author has a systematic understanding of the origin, development, and present situation of the marketing consultant industry by reading a large number of domestic and foreign related literature so as to better analyze the causes of the problems in the research. It can be said that this literature lays a theoretical foundation for this research. Secondly, on the one hand, the author really participates in the work of curriculum consultants and understands the mode of consulting work in social practice. On the other hand, the author also conducts participatory observation on consulting work in other fields, which provides first-hand information for this paper.

### **1.3 Purpose and Significance**

Through searching a large number of documents and reading, the author finds that the current research on consultant marketing is mostly from the perspective of enterprise development at the theoretical level and rarely from the perspective of practice and individual development, which is the innovation of this paper. It is hoped that this paper can further enrich the theoretical research of consultant marketing and enable more consultants and demand analysts to better understand the new functions of this job in the era of the knowledge service economy in a practical sense so as to better implement business development.

## **2. Consultant Analysis and Traditional Sales**

### **2.1 Literature Review**

The concept of consulting marketing originated in the 1990s. It was only after the marketing reform initiated by the American life insurance company in the 1970s that it was defined and brought up by the academic community. Xue (2000) expressed her understanding of insurance consultants: insurance consultants should not only have insurance professional knowledge but also have knowledge of marketing, corporate governance, law, financial management, and other aspects, as well as provide policyholders with tools to hedge risks. Consultants are mainly helping customers solve problems. Kotler et al. (2002) also pointed out that customers are the center of enterprise marketing activities, and customer-centered is the core idea of consultant marketing. This idea coincides with Xue (2000). Professor Qi Laiping said in *Forbes Asia Research* in 2016 that only when the life insurance consultant is "trusted" by the client can he truly understand the client's current financial situation, family status, and even his family dream, and the two sides can truly realize the cooperative relationship that lasts for years or even decades (Sina Heilongjiang, 2019). Based on this, this paper proposes that one of the important functions of consultants for enterprises is to maintain the stickiness between customers and enterprise products, so these documents provide a theoretical basis for this study.

On the whole, there is abundant research on advisory marketing at home and abroad, but from the perspective of research objects, most of the research focus on Banking and insurance, and lack of research on advisory marketing in other industries; From the perspective of research content, most of the current research is based on the perspective of corporate profits or customer value. This paper is not limited to the banking and insurance industries. It takes the curriculum consultant career in the education industry as the benchmark and takes into account the working mode of marketing consultants in other fields from a macro perspective. It is an innovation in the previous research object of consultant marketing. In addition, this paper is based on the perspective of consultants' personal career development, emphasizing the mode of consulting work and how to improve work ability, which is a rich study of marketing consultants from the perspective of knowledge practice.

### **2.2 Differences of Market Dimensionalization**

According to multi-party research, the author divides the customer group market into the targeted market, semi-targeted market, and non-targeted market according to whether the individual marketer has been pre screened by the big data of the enterprise platform when conducting marketing activities.

The so-called targeted market means that marketing staff does not need to recruit customers in the open market. The customers they need to communicate with have been pre screened by enterprise big data marketing, and the demand matching degree between customer groups and enterprise products is relatively high. At present, almost all marketing staff of online knowledge and skills teaching education platforms are facing the targeted market. Specifically, the enterprise will use a few yuan or free trial class mode to widely launch low-cost courses to all kinds of people through various mass media platforms. People will fill in the information application according to their actual needs and self wishes and add the WeChat of the consultant demand analysis teacher according to the requirements of the application. In this situation, the clients connected by the consultants and demand analysts have been screened by the market and have certain needs and selection tendencies. The consultants do not need to recruit themselves, and their work is more to establish a cohesive relationship between the client and the company's brand (Yu, 2017).

The so-called semi-directional market means that the enterprise will provide certain customer resources to the marketing staff through the platform traffic, but it still needs the personnel of the marketing department to find additional performance. In life, the clothing collocation division and the housing purchase and lease consultant in the shopping mall are actually oriented to the semi-directional market. Physical stores and online enterprise account platforms are natural drainage channels, but at the same time, excellent marketers often start to explore and develop their own potential customer groups in the interpersonal circle.

For most marketers without interpersonal resources, it is the most difficult to develop the non-targeted market because the groups encountered in the process of market development are not specific, and it is not reliable to measure and evaluate a customer's purchase intention based on their own feelings. At present, some enterprises still retain the marketing mode of non-oriented markets. In particular, many small enterprises want to develop the market for new products under the condition of limited capital flow. In the initial stage, the marketing department needs to open a small gap in the non-oriented market.

To sum up, in the market dimension, consultants and demand analysts mainly face the oriented market and semi-oriented market, while traditional sales are more likely to explore potential users in the mixture of semi-oriented market and non-oriented market.

### **2.3 Differences in Information Service Value**

There are many differences between consultants and traditional sales in terms of the content scope and feedback experience of providing information services.

First of all, in terms of the content of information services, the consultant mainly provides front-end information popularization and information consultation. No matter whether the customer purchases the relevant products of the enterprise or not, the series of information provided by the consultant is valuable to the customer. This kind of additional and valuable information can weaken the psychological vigilance of the customer and weaken the sales attribute of the consultant to a certain extent. While traditional sales also provide information in their work, almost all of this information is about products, and sometimes it is mixed with some chat for getting acquainted and getting closer. Such information is a supplementary reference for customers who intend to buy, but it is actually a nuisance of useless information for customers who do not intend to buy (Xie, 2017).

Secondly, the feedback brought by information services is two-way. For the client, the consultant's consulting service provides valuable knowledge and information, and the client obtains information service experience; For consultants, the provision of such information services is positive feedback to their work, and the gratitude of customers after receiving the information will also enhance the consultants' sense of work achievement and self-satisfaction (Xue, 2015). However, in the past, the service value provided by direct sales to the company also included its original social network to a large extent. The strong mobility of sales posts in the past also lies in this because the essence is that the company can squeeze the social network of different people at different levels. It can be said that the transformation of consultancy work has greatly improved this phenomenon. The marketing strategy with knowledge and service as the medium reduces the customers' rejection of sales promotion to a certain extent and reduces the communication threshold between sales and customers.

Finally, the author believes that compared with direct sales, the consulting work is to open the window of contact and communication with customers through the initial information service, and promote a marketing concept of "service first, experience first, and then purchase". Although a large number of retail food industries have adopted this concept for a long time, there are still great differences between the two. Modern consultants will break the marketing field with limited time and space by adding social accounts such as WeChat, which is equivalent to anchoring this potential customer for a long time. However, traditional sales are very limited in this respect.

### **2.4 Differences in Communication Subjectivity**

The essence of the discourse communication between the two sides is the circulation of the discourse rights of the two sides. It is the main body in the communication that grasps and guides the direction of the conversation, while the one in the traction position is in the object position in the whole communication (Ma et al., 2017).

First of all, in the traditional sales and consulting marketing mode, the customer's sense of subjectivity must be different. In the process of traditional sales, from the initial sales to the final transaction, the communication core is built around the products, and the purpose of the whole conversation will be very strong, which has led many customers to feel that they are wronged after the end of the transaction. They feel that they bought a product with low cost performance under the impulse consumption of the merchants. Therefore, traditional sales actually give customers the potential impression that they are the requestors of money. The first step of the consultant's work is information supply. The embedding of this knowledge makes the consultant become a valuable output and capable provider and also makes the client feel that he is the guide of the whole conversation and the consultant has been serving his own questions (Snapp, 2019). At the same time, the consultants will not test the customers' opinions on the

company's products until the middle and late stages of communication. These differences also make most customers have different attitudes towards the consultants and traditional sales. The status evaluation of the two jobs with the same marketing essence in the minds of the public will also be slightly different.

Secondly, the subjective sense of sales is not the same. Although it seems that the whole consulting service is built around the customer's needs, in fact, the consultants can deliberately highlight the advantages of their own products and guide the customers to ask for product information in the process of providing information. Therefore, the consultant demand analyst, who is the hidden subject in the whole dialogue, invisibly amplifies the customer's sense of demand (Zhuang, 2004) and has full discourse guidance. This characteristic of the gold consultant will be more prominent. In contrast, traditional sales are very passive in communication. For example, in many cases, sales of clothing and beauty products will force customers to look at clothes and try on clothes, but ask customers for their opinions and directly apply their beauty products to their skin. Although they belong to the active party in communication, their marketing methods often make them fall into the dilemma of passive choice.

To sum up, when communicating with a consultant demand analyst, usually, customers enjoy the feeling of being treated as subjects, while the consultant has the actual subject guidance right of the whole dialogue, and even many customers will select suitable products under the advice of the consultant; When communicating with a traditional sales person, the sales person is in the main position when the behavior and dialogue are initiated, but the customer has the right to terminate the main dialogue and the complete decision on how to choose and whether to purchase.

### **2.5 Differences in Work Composition**

Based on the above, the consultants are more oriented to the targeted market, while the traditional sales are more semi targeted market. According to the author's practice and research, some enterprises set up a front-end market operation Department to be responsible for the sales of non targeted and semi targeted markets, and the main work is customer orientation; The consultant analysts responsible for the targeted market also set up a consulting service department, whose main work is to maintain the viscous relationship between the customers and the company's series of products. Therefore, in practice, many small and medium-sized enterprises in China have mixed job responsibilities when recruiting for sales posts. Sales in the non oriented and semi oriented markets share some of the functions of drainage. However, the responsibilities of consultants are usually limited and only involve maintaining the stability of customers after drainage. From this perspective, it can be said that the sales function is more complicated than the consultant.

Of course, it is worth mentioning that the updating iteration of the consultant's knowledge system is also absent from the sales work. On the whole, the knowledge system required by the consultant can be divided into three parts: product knowledge, customer information, competitive product analysis, and marketing discourse. Why does the author emphasize knowledge system rather than knowledge here? Because these things actually need to be learned in sales, but they do not need to be strengthened to become a system. However, it is necessary to accept a complete set of consultant knowledge systems from sales to become a consultant, which is the professional threshold for becoming a consultant. In the eyes of many customers, the consultant has mastered a lot of professional knowledge in this field, so some customers will disclose their own situation and ask the consultant for products suitable for their situation when purchasing products, and even many customers will refer to the advice given by the consultant to a great extent. However, if the reason given by the consultant when giving the purchase proposal is too simple or too professional, the image of the consultant in the customer's mind will directly fall into that of a salesperson. It can be said that a considerable part of the respect that a consultant can win is due to the value of knowledge he can provide.

It can be said that the work composition of front-end sales is a part of market diversion plus product sales performance indicators, while the work composition of consultants and analysts is to increase the stickiness and trust between users and the company's products and brands and then undertake a part of sales performance. Because many companies have realized the important benefits and value that repeat customers can bring in the process of expanding the market, some of the company's consultants and analysts are only responsible for the learning of their knowledge system and customer consultation, and the follow-up of the order is still left to the sales department. This is actually a very good change. With the presence of consultants and analysts, the settlement and delivery of an order does not immediately terminate the subsequent communication between the two sides but is the beginning of more interaction. Moreover, the sales department is responsible for the front-end market and the rear settlement, and the consultant is responsible for the promotion and stability maintenance of the middle end market, which is a very complete market entry route.

## **3. Key Points of Consultant's Work from the Perspective of Practice**

### **3.1 Key Points of Personal Skills**

As mentioned above, the consultants usually face the targeted market, which is a customer group that has been screened by the platform and has a relatively high degree of matching with the enterprise's products. In the process of communicating with these

customers, consultants and demand analysts should pay attention to two points: first, they should pay attention to amplifying the customers' sense of demand and anxiety; Second, identify the explicit and implicit information provided by customers.

First of all, the customer groups matched by big data media usually have relevant demand intention, even if it is only temporary interest. However, not all customers' needs are urgent and urgent, and not all customers with urgent needs can afford to consume the corresponding products, even if the products are beneficial to the current customers. The consultant needs to judge the customer's actual purchasing ability and the reasons for choosing products. For the customers who have the intention of demand and are able to pay, the consultant needs to appropriately amplify their demand points and anxiety and enhance the sense of subjective service experience given to the customers in the whole communication dialogue. After all the preparations are made, the consultant still needs to skillfully return the right of choice to the customers. To illustrate with a real scenario, a customer added to the WeChat contact information of the consultant (the scenario here is set as the middle school English Course Consultant) through the big data flow of the enterprise:

Customer: “Hello, after reading the articles on the WeChat platform, I am interested in learning more about your English courses.”

Consultant: “Hello ~” (it should be noted that if you are communicating with customers on social media, you must add appropriate emoticons and mood words, which can increase the customer's pleasure of the service experience. If not, the whole communication will be stiff)

Consultant: “may I ask if you are the parent of the child? Whether it convenient to know the current English learning situation of your child? I will match the courses suitable for your child according to the specific situation of your child so that the child can make better progress.” (there are two exploratory questions in this paragraph. The first is to confirm the identity of the customer, to confirm whether it is the child's parent or the child himself; the second is to clarify which parent is the real person in charge of the child's learning in the process of understanding the child's learning.)

Customer: “I am a mother with two children. My daughter's English scores are usually stable in the range of grade B, but this time she only took grade C at the end of the term.” (if the customer in the dialogue is very familiar with the specific scores of the students at different stages, then he is very likely to be the real person in charge of the student's learning, and he attaches great importance to and understands education and often has the final decision-making power on whether to purchase products. However, if the customer's expression of the students' scores is very vague, he only generally says “very good” and “very bad.”, which means that either the customer doesn't care about the student's performance at ordinary times or the customers have limited cultural level and don't know how to improve the students.)

Consultant: “according to the students I have contacted, your child's academic performance is at a medium level. It may show a certain downward trend as the difficulty of the course increases.” (the purpose of this sentence is to spread anxiety on the basis of the real situation, implying that parents are now showing signs of declining grades, and the courses will be more difficult in the future, so they should pay more attention to it. In fact, it is not only education but many commodities that take advantage of people's desires. For example, the desire to remain young will lead to age anxiety, the desire to be handsome and beautiful will lead to appearance anxiety, and the desire to compete for first place will lead to competitive anxiety. The spread of anxiety can catalyze customers in need to place orders as soon as possible. As to whether the use of this anxiety is in line with business ethics, this situation is complex and will involve other research topics, which are not within the scope of this article.)

Of course, this is only a simple dialogue example in practice. Not all customers are honest about their personal situation and real information in the communication process. More often, the truth and the false are mixed. At this time, it is extremely necessary for the consultant to accurately judge the real needs of the customers. The case mentioned that in the exploratory inquiry process, it is necessary to confirm the identity of the direct docking customer and the person behind the customer who can really make decisions on product purchase, which involves identifying the explicit and implicit information provided by the customer.

China's education market is quite special. Since ancient times, Chinese people have highly praised “education changes destiny”. Many Chinese parents are very willing to invest in students' achievements and regard the investment in achievements as an investment in the whole future of their children. However, at the same time, the internal structure model of Chinese families is also quite special in the world. Many young people are tired of participating in social work and leave their children's upbringing to their parents. In addition, many Chinese children grow up in the absence of their father's company for a long time. Therefore, from the perspective of education, the real decision-makers who can decide whether children participate in educational activities outside school are very complex. However, according to the author's actual experience, more than 70% of them are mothers who are

responsible for education. A few parents will respect their children's right to make their own choices, and a few parents will make decisions on behalf of their grandparents. Whether it is consultants or sales, what really needs to be leveraged is the judgment of those with greater decision-making power. In addition to the identification of decision-makers, many personal background information of customers who come to consult may be fabricated temporarily, and the excuse of hesitation to buy is a disaster area of lies. But there is one point, those who have needs will not lie about their core demands. Therefore, for the vast majority of people, the hesitation lies in: first, the demand is not extremely urgent, and they always consider the plan B; Second, they hesitate about the cost-effectiveness. Therefore, the two cores that the consultant should do are: first, appropriately exaggerate the anxiety and urge the client to make a quick decision; The second is competitive product analysis, try to analyze why this is the best product that can be selected in the current market and within the customer's ability.

### **3.2 Promotion Activities of Platform**

The previous section has pointed out the importance of properly creating anxiety for customers. However, in addition to the anxiety caused by objective facts, time limited activities on enterprise platforms can also bring anxiety. The essential principle is the same. It needs to be based on the customer's sense of demand and then let the customer make a decision within a specific time limit, which will double the transaction rate. Of course, in addition to creating such anxiety, the platform will also launch additional purchase benefits during the activity period. Generally speaking, during the activity marketing of the platform, the performance of each marketer in the current month will rise to varying degrees. From the perspective of consultants, platform activities are undoubtedly a good means of marketing assistance, but in the final analysis, building up one's own solid business knowledge and business ability is the longer-term development way.

## **4. Conclusion and Prospect**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

By comparing with traditional sales in four aspects of market dimensionality, information service value, communication subjectivity, and work composition, this paper highlights the characteristics of the consultant's work mode of orienting the market, providing knowledge services, guiding communication and dialogue, and maintaining customer stickiness. It is concluded that consultants and demand analysts are only a microcosm of the transformation of many posts in the era of the knowledge-based service economy, and their work essence is a comprehensive skilled post integrating information knowledge and targeted marketing, which reflects the trend of demand for talents with theoretical knowledge and market practice. In addition, from the two aspects of individual communication skills and the marketing atmosphere during the platform activity period, this paper concludes that consultants need to appropriately limit the time limit for consideration to increase the anxiety of customers in order to let customers place orders as soon as possible.

### **4.2 Prospect**

In the full text, the author does not fully place the perspective of the enterprise to explain the development of the consulting work because the author has deeply realized in practice that the development path of the interests of enterprises is often affected by many factors, especially small and medium-sized enterprises. Sometimes, the development vision and pattern planning of many enterprise bosses ignore the malpractice of short-term fishing and only pursue short-term benefit effects. Therefore, many research and suggestions for SMEs can only stay on paper, which is difficult to implement. Therefore, what I want to do more is to first pry the change of individual consciousness and individual ability so that individuals can see the evolution and transformation of the industry under the macro view of the market first than bosses.

In fact, looking at the current market, the posts in the pure service industry or pure skill supply have almost disappeared. Almost every post has the nature of sales embedded in it to varying degrees, but the proportion of main business and sales function tends to be different. Therefore, in the era of knowledge and service economy, consulting analysis is not so much a transformation of the direct sales model of enterprises in the past, but rather all posts are facing a flat allocation and reconstruction of functions. The R & D side (R & D personnel of products), the display (professional commentators, knowledge and skills imparters), and the market side (consulting, front-end sales) are not completely functional independent. In many enterprises, workers at the R & D end are also assisting in product display and knowledge transfer. The functions of the display port and the market side can also be combined. Embedding knowledge and information in traditional low threshold posts is not a bad thing for individuals. At least, more people can use knowledge to find out the rules and panorama of the corresponding industry as much as possible, and can also use knowledge to voice the real situation of the industry in more academic topics. This society has never lacked the imagination of overlooking academic research from top to bottom, but it needs the reality under the collision of long-term practice and written reflection. This road is a long and arduous one; I would like to encourage myself with this article first.

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