The Return of Nokia: Appeal for Craftsmanship Spirit in the Internet Age

Xinyu Zhai and Lei Zhao

ABSTRACT

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INTRODUCTION

At the 4th China Listed Company Leader’s Summit hosted by National Business Daily, the guest speaker Xiaoguang Zhao’s judgment about the smart phone industry drew a burst of exclamation on the spot. Zhao has been tracking the electronics industry, and has been honored as The New Fortune Best Analyst repeatedly. Moreover, success in mining the investment subjects including the Apple industry line has fixed his position in the industry. According to him, the high wave of smart phones has disappeared, as 80% people in the world own a smart phone nowadays.

There is a prevailing view in the electronics industry that popularity of an electronic product would usually last for a period of 5 years. For example, PCs were popular between 1994 and 1999, feature phones popular between 1999 and 2004, LCD TVs between 2004 and 2009, and smart phones nowadays. According to the rule, the wave of smart phones has come to an end. What people feel in real life seems to coincide with the rule. As the benchmark of the smart phone industry,
Apple released the epoch-making iPhone 4 on Jun., 7, 2010 and sold as many as 1,700,000 units in the first week; then, on Oct., 4, 2011, it released iPhone 4s, whose Siri became the most promising attraction; to meet customers’ need for a big screen, it launched the 4-inch iPhone 5 in Sep., 2012 and sold 5 million units in the first week; in 2014, it launched the new-generation product iPhone 6, whose screen size had been upgraded from 4 inches to 5.5 inches. Another striking attraction of iPhone 6 is the 2.5D curved edge tempered glass which makes the phone look smooth; on Sep., 10, 2015, iPhone 6s was released, but its sales were flat. Then, innovation with smart phones seemed to come to its bottleneck, and little impressive functions have been created again. Consumers seem not to be sensitive about the functions any more. It has been the top priority for enterprises to dig out the new pain points and itchy points of customers.

WHAT IS CRAFTSMANSHIP SPIRIT

Nokia’s ever-perfecting demand on quality is one manifestation of the enterprise’s craftsmanship spirit. Exactly because of such craftsmanship spirit, the old king has staged a comeback. So, what is craftsmanship spirit? Zhiyong Dong, the professor from the School of Economics of Peking University, gave his explanation, “Craftsmanship spirit comprises four aspects: the ever-perfecting spirit, persistence, dedication and preservation & innovation.” The ever-perfecting spirit deserves the most compliments. A man with the spirit has the persistent pursuit of technical quality and finishes every job strictly in the standard way. Persistence is the most touching part in craftsmanship spirit, as a persistent man is willing to devote all of himself to a skill. Dedication is the power source of craftsmanship spirit. “A clear river comes from the clear sources”. It is just the spirit of dedication that encourages craftsmen to realize their dreams. Preservation and innovation demonstrate craftsmanship spirit’s feature of pace-keeping. Craftsmanship spirit is not stagnated and blind efforts. Instead, with craftsmanship spirit, one through the continuous study keeps improving and innovating the existing skills to realize breakthroughs in both product functions and quality[1].

Dong has proposed the definition of craftsmanship spirit basically to individuals, but it is applicable to an enterprise as well, as an enterprise is made up of numerous individuals. Only if all of them are provided with craftsmanship spirit, can the ever-perfecting demand of products and services be implemented to meet consumers’ needs for products better? To carry forward craftsmanship spirit would push China forcefully from a manufacture giant towards a manufacture power. If the technological innovation level and information integration level are deemed as the software for transformation and upgrading of China’s manufacturing industry, craftsmanship spirit will be the hardware supporting operation of the software. Undoubtedly, innovation is important, but sensations that break away from the products’ basic attribute and pursue blindly the functions would never be accepted. Craftsmanship spirit should be one of the basic codes to be followed in China’s
manufacturing industry. Only provided with craftsmanship spirit, would our innovation find its foundation?

HOW TO BREED CRAFTSMANSHIP SPIRIT

How to breed craftsmanship spirit has become an emphasis in academic research. To create the favorable market environment and to uphold the market economic system that pays high respect to labor are the top priority[2]. Presently, the labor incentives are not connected with the economic development in China. The workers provided with craftsmanship spirit finish their assignments with more initiative and consciousness and try their best to work to perfection. They suffer anything that is impossible to others, and complete the jobs that others are unwilling to or have not the courage to do. Usually, they affect people around with their speeches and actions and help build an enthusiastic and vigorous team. They are never satisfied with their abilities acquired. Instead, they use their intelligence to innovate and reform, so as to increase the enterprises’ productivity greatly. Their great contributions to the enterprises are well seen, so the enterprises should care much about them either materially or spiritually, and satisfy their needs as possible. Only in this way, can the workers with craftsmanship spirit feel they are cared about and accepted and can their progressive and creative spirit be motivated? In addition, it is also necessary to create the favorable social and cultural atmosphere. First, we should pay respect to labor. Nowadays, craftsmanship spirit is lost largely because the workers at the production line are despised. It’s believed that it is the inferior people that do such a job. Such a wrong concept leads exactly to loss of due care about the workers, which reduces their enthusiasm about work and is unfavorable for an organization’s healthy development. Thus, to pay respect to their work is the fist step to realize the complete craftsmanship spirit. Second, pay respect to skills. The employees provided with craftsmanship spirit always spend all their energy on a certain skill, so they always make the better performance. For this sake, the enterprises should recognize their labor achievements by giving them the graceful status, salary and bonus. Third, pay respect to innovation. Craftsmanship spirit is not blind efforts. Instead, a man with craftsmanship spirit keeps innovating through massive practice and integrating labor with wisdom to realize higher leaps. Fourth, pay respect to persistence. As the saying goes, a good gain takes long pain. Success is never accomplished easily. It is based on the repeated failures and experience. Only those who stay concentrated are able to seek the truth, and only those who are devoted are able to acquire joy from persistence.
Craftsmanship spirit without innovation is blind efforts, while innovation without craftsmanship spirit is a castle in the air. Only if both of them are integrated in an organic way, can we achieve greater results with less work? Internet thinking is the source of enterprises’ innovative inspirations[3]. It refers to the thinking mode under which the market, customers and products are reviewed again against the background of the ongoing development of Internet, big data and cloud computing, etc. There are three key points when Internet thinking and craftsmanship spirit are integrated:

First, an enterprise should target the users’ needs through Internet thinking. The Internet is an equal and open virtual network platform. Compared with the traditional mode, information uncertainty is healed here. Users can feed information back to the enterprises timely, while enterprises can build related forecast models based on the accumulated data. These modes would reflect the core needs of users quite well. After understanding them well, the enterprises can turn these needs into products or services. Of courses, after the products or services are launched into the market, the enterprises would carry out a series of monitoring and tracing so as to evaluate the new products or services. Then, based on the feedback information from the users, corresponding improvement would be made continuously to optimize the user experience and provide the individualized and differentiated services.

Second, craftsmanship spirit should be implemented in every link. After an enterprise decides on the products and service based on consumers’ needs, the production process would be the top priority. For this sake, all employees involved in the design and production are required to face up to their duties, devote themselves into their own work, and try their best to perfect every skill and every detail. Only in this way, can the production capacity and the R&D technology be synchronized to produce the fine products satisfying the consumers? In addition to the production process that demands much on craftsmanship spirit, the R&D process and the marketing process also need craftsmanship spirit, as craftsmanship spirit means not only the precision and reliable production, but also, more importantly, the devotion of all employees in the process of R&D, production and marketing to their work. Only if craftsmanship spirit is carried out completely, can an enterprise stay unbeatable in the fierce market competition?

Finally, Internet thinking and craftsmanship spirit promote each other in harmony. Internet thinking gets enterprises out of confusion and helps them find consumers’ pain points and itchy points. With Internet thinking, enterprises find their way of advancement. Craftsmanship spirit provides sheltering for the product quality. It turns theories into reality, satisfies customers’ needs with physical products and services, and creates values for enterprises. Internet thinking provides
power to craftsmanship spirit, while craftsmanship spirit provides support to Internet thinking. They promote and restrain each other.

The new product, Nokia 6 runs Android 7.0. Inside it is Qualcomm’s 430 SoC accompanied by a 4GB RAM as well as 64GB of internal flash memory (with further expansion capabilities). Judging from the mainstream configuration, the old king has eventually bowed to innovation. It abandoned the philosophy of self-centeredness, and starts to embrace all that are superior. Maybe only those that have experienced the loneliness at the downturns would really feel the joy of being reborn. It’s well believed that Nokia provided with craftsmanship spirit and guided by Internet thinking would re-rally and get back its past glories.

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REFERENCES