

The Practice Dilemmas and Optimization Strategies of the “Dual Mentor System” of School-Enterprise Cooperation in Marketing

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of industry-education integration in higher education, because marketing is a highly practical discipline, and for it, “dual mentor system” of school-enterprise cooperation has become an important bond to connect theory teaching with industry practice. This model aims to enhance students’ comprehensive occupational quality and practical ability through the collaborative guidance of school mentors and enterprise mentors. However, the current “dual mentor system” for marketing still faces many challenges in practice such as unclear responsibility distinction between school and enterprise mentors, insufficient motivation of enterprise mentors for engagement, divorce between teaching content and market demand, and imperfect assessment mechanism. This paper analyzes the current practice of the “dual mentor system” of school-enterprise cooperation in marketing, deeply explores the specific dilemmas it faces, and proposes targeted optimization strategies from the aspects of institutional guarantee, mentor team building, teaching content optimization, and assessment system improvement in order to provide reference for improving the quality of talent cultivation in marketing and deepening the connotation of school-enterprise cooperation.

Keywords: Marketing; School-Enterprise Cooperation; Dual Mentor System; Practice Dilemmas; Optimization Strategies

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1.Introduction

With the development of the market economy and the upgrade of consumer demand, the market has increasingly strict requirements for the practical ability, innovation ability and industry compatibility of marketing talents. The traditional theory teaching model is hard to meet the demand, and school-enterprise cooperation has become an inevitable choice for the reform of marketing in colleges and universities. As the core pathway of school-enterprise cooperation, the “dual mentor system” can integrate the resources of both sides to achieve alignment between talent cultivation and market ^[1]. However, in practice, due to superficial cooperation between schools and enterprises, missing benefit synergy, and incomplete management system, its educational effect has not been fully exerted. Therefore, analyzing its dilemmas and exploring optimization strategies are of great significance for improving the quality of talent cultivation.

2.The Practical Value of the “Dual Mentor System” of School-Enterprise Cooperation in Marketing

2.1 Enhancing Students’ Comprehensive Occupational Quality

The marketing jobs require practitioners not only to have a solid theoretical foundation, but also to master practical skills such as market research, brand planning, customer relationship management, and new media marketing. At the same time, they should have good communication and coordination skills, teamwork skills, and problem-solving ability. Under the “dual mentor system”, school mentors help students build a systematic system of marketing theories through classroom teaching, case analysis and other methods. Enterprise mentors rely on real working scenarios to integrate the latest industry dynamics, enterprise operation processes and actual project operation skills into the teaching process. By participating in practical projects such as enterprise marketing promotion and event planning, students can transform theoretical knowledge into practical ability. Meanwhile, under the guidance of enterprise mentors, they can gradually cultivate occupational quality and habits that meet industry requirements, and lay a foundation for quickly adapting to job demand after graduation ^[2].

2.2 Promoting the Professional Development of the Teaching Staff

The “dual mentor system” has built a bridge of communication and cooperation between school teachers and enterprise experts, which is conducive to achieving a “two-way improvement” of the teaching staff. On the one hand, school marketing teachers have long engaged in theory teaching and face a knowledge lag in industry practice. Through cooperation with enterprise mentors and participation in enterprise project research and development, market analysis and other work, they can grasp the development tendency of the industry, the dynamics of technological application and job requirements in time, and then integrate practical experience into classroom teaching, optimize teaching content and methods, and enhance their own practice teaching ability. On the other hand, although enterprise mentors have rich practical experience, they have disadvantages in teaching methods and theory carding. By communicating with school mentors, they can learn systematic educational and teaching philosophy and methods, make their students more professional and targeted, and achieve the transformation from “practice experts” to “double-position” mentors.

2.3 Realizing the Collaborative Sharing of Resources Between Schools and Enterprises

The core of school-enterprise cooperation lies in resource sharing and complementary advantages. As a specific carrier of school-enterprise cooperation, the “dual mentor system” can effectively integrate the educational resources of schools and enterprises. Schools provide theoretical support, talent reserve and scientific research service for enterprises, help them solve theoretical problems and talent shortages encountered in the process of development. Enterprises provide schools with practice teaching bases, training equipment and real-project resources to make up for deficiencies in practice teaching in schools. Through the implementation of the “dual mentor system”, a stable cooperation mechanism has been formed between schools and enterprises. This not only enhances the utilization efficiency of educational resources, but also promotes the in-depth integration of industry, university and research, and achieves a win-win goal “that schools educate people, while enterprises employ people”.

3.The Practice Dilemmas of the “Dual Mentor System” of School-Enterprise Cooperation in Marketing

3.1 Ambiguous Division of Authority and Responsibility Between School and Enterprise Mentors, and Low Efficiency of Collaborative Guidance

A clearly defined division of authority and responsibility is the prerequisite for the effective implementation of the “dual mentor system”. However, in the current “dual mentor system” of marketing in most universities, the responsibilities of school-enterprise mentors are rather ambiguous, and there is a lack of specific guide specifications and task allocation standards. On the one hand, school mentors often undertake multiple tasks such as course teaching, thesis supervision, and class management, and do not attach sufficient importance to the “dual mentor system”. They are in a passive position in communication and collaboration with enterprise mentors and fail to fully play their role in overall coordination. On the other hand, most enterprise mentors are middle-level managers or business backbones in enterprises. They are busy with daily work and have an unclear understanding of their responsibilities in guiding students. Their guidance practice is frequently confined to internship placement or skill training, neglecting application of theory, career planning, and other aspects. Due to a lack of clearly defined task allocation and effective communication mechanisms between school and enterprise mentors, there is a duplication or disconnection in the teaching content, resulting in low efficiency of collaborative guidance and difficulty in forming a joint force for education [3].

3.2 Insufficient Motivation of Enterprise Mentors for Engagement, and Low Enthusiasm for Guidance

The active engagement of enterprise mentors is the key to the smooth implementation of the “dual mentor system”. However, at present, the motivation of enterprise mentors is generally insufficient to participate in the “dual mentor system” of marketing. The main reasons lie in the following two aspects. The first is the absence of a benefit-driven mechanism. Enterprises need to devote a large amount of time, manpower and material resources to

engage in the “dual-mentor system”. However, it is difficult for them to obtain direct economic returns and to see obvious long-term benefits such as talent reserves and technological innovation, resulting in a lack of initiative of enterprises for engagement. The second is the imperfect incentive mechanism. Most universities have not established an incentive system for enterprise mentors, and lack material rewards, honors and awards or career development support for enterprise mentors, making it difficult to motivate their enthusiasm for guidance.

3.3 Divorce Between Teaching Content and Market Demand, and Weak Pertinence of Practice Teaching

With the rapid development of the marketing industry, emerging fields, such as new media marketing, live streaming e-commerce, and digital marketing have constantly emerged, and job requirements have also been updated accordingly. However, there is a divorce between the current teaching content of the “dual mentor system” and market demand, mainly manifested in the following two aspects. On the one hand, the teaching content of school mentors lags behind in update, is still mainly based on traditional marketing theories, and does not integrate in all the cutting-edge industry knowledge and emerging marketing technologies, resulting in that the theoretical knowledge that students have mastered is hard to match with market changes. On the other hand, the guidance provided by enterprise mentors is mostly confined to the specific business processes of their own enterprises, neglecting the integral development tendency of the industry and general job capabilities. As a result, students’ practice learning is “fragmented”, making it difficult for them to form a comprehensive practical ability system. Furthermore, some school-enterprise cooperation projects become formalistic, and mainly focus on field trips or visit and short-term internships. It is hard for students to participate in core tasks such as market planning and marketing implementation, resulting in that practice teaching is weak in pertinence, and effectiveness.

3.4 Imperfect Assessment Mechanisms, and Noneffective Process Supervision

A scientific and sound assessment mechanism is an important means to ensure the quality of education under the “dual mentor system”. However, there are still many problems in the current assessment mechanism of the “dual mentor system” in marketing. Firstly, the assessment subjects are monolithic. The assessment mechanism is mostly dominated by schools, and enterprise mentors do not have sufficient discourse power in assessment, making it difficult to comprehensively reflect students’ practice performance and job compatibility. Secondly, the assessment content is one-sided, overly emphasizes students’ theoretical exam results and internship reports, while paying less attention to their practical ability, innovation ability, teamwork skills and other quality that are difficult to quantify. Thirdly, the assessment methods are rigid, mostly employing summative assessment, and lacking process assessment to dynamic monitor students’ learning process and mentors’ guidance process. Fourthly, there is a lack of assessment and incentive for mentors. Most colleges and universities have not established an assessment system for school and enterprise mentors, and their guidance attitude and effect are not given effective supervision and feedback, which results in that mentors’ guidance work is not restrained and stimulated effectively, and affects the implementation quality of the “dual mentor system”.

3.5 Superficial Cooperation Between Schools and Enterprises, and Unformed Long-Term Cooperation Mechanisms

The effective implementation of the “dual mentor system” relies on stable and deep school-enterprise cooperation relationship. However, at present, the school-enterprise cooperation in marketing of most universities is still confined to at the superficial level, and a long-term cooperation mechanism has not yet been formed. On the one hand, most school-enterprise cooperation is short-term project cooperation, lack long-term strategic cooperative plannings based on talent cultivation, scientific research innovation and industrial development. The stability of cooperation is poor. Once the enterprises’ business strategies are adjusted or the projects end, the cooperative relationship is difficult to maintain. On the other hand, the benefit synergy mechanism of school-enterprise cooperation is not sound. There are differences between schools and enterprises in terms of talent cultivation objectives, teaching arrangement, and resource input, and they do not have a common benefit demand and

responsibility sharing mechanism, which leads to low enthusiasm of enterprises in cooperation and significant resistance for schools in promoting the deepening of cooperation.

4. Optimization Strategies for the “Dual Mentor System” of School-Enterprise Cooperation in Marketing

4.1 Defining the Division of Authority and Responsibility Between School and Enterprise Mentors and Establishing a Collaborative Guidance Mechanism

Clearly defined division of authority and responsibility and effective cooperation mechanisms are the keys to enhancing the guidance efficiency of the “dual mentor system”. Firstly, colleges and universities should jointly formulate the *Detailed Rules for the Implementation of the ‘Dual Mentor System’ for Marketing* with their cooperative enterprises to clearly define the specific responsibilities of school mentors and enterprise mentors. School mentors are mainly responsible for students’ theory teaching, academic guidance, professional ethics education, and communicating and coordinating with enterprise mentors. They help students build a systematic system of theory and guide them to combine theoretical knowledge with practice. Enterprise mentors are mainly responsible for students’ practical skills training, job cognition guidance, project practice guidance and career planning. They provide students with real work environment and operation opportunities by relying on enterprise resources [4]. Secondly, colleges and universities should establish a regular communication mechanism for school and enterprise mentors to strengthen cooperation of the two in the formulation of teaching programs, the connection of teaching content, the resolution of students’ problems, and other aspects through online meetings, offline discussions, and joint lesson preparation, and other methods, and form joint forces of “theory + practice”.

4.2 Improving the Incentive Mechanism for Enterprise Mentors to Enhance Their Enthusiasm for Engagement

Stimulating the motivation of enterprise mentors is the core of effective implementation of the “dual mentor system”. Colleges and universities should join hands with the government and enterprises to establish a multi-dimensional incentive mechanism, and mobilize the enthusiasm of enterprise mentors for guidance from benefits, honors, development and other aspects. The first is to establish a benefit-driven mechanism. Colleges and universities can provide customized talent cultivation service for cooperative enterprises, give priority to sending outstanding graduates to enterprises, and at the same time, rely on schools’ research teams to provide enterprises with technical support, such as market research and brand planning, help enterprises solve development problems, and achieve benefit sharing between schools and enterprises. The second is to improve material and honor incentive mechanism. Colleges and universities can provide certain guidance allowances to enterprise mentors, and work together with government departments or industry associations to issue certificates of “Excellent Enterprise Mentor” to outstanding enterprise mentors to enhance their social recognition.

4.3 Optimizing the Teaching Content System and Enhancing the Pertinence of Practice Teaching

Optimizing the teaching content system is the key to achieving precise alignment with market demand. It is necessary for colleges and universities to jointly build a dynamic and practical system with enterprises. School mentors should communicate regularly with enterprise mentors to grasp industry dynamics and job requirements, integrate new media marketing and big data analysis and other emerging content into the classroom, and update courses and cases. Enterprise mentors need to rely on real projects to design practice content to allow students to participate in the entire marketing process to enhance their practical skills, and introduce industry approval standards to guide students to obtain relevant certificates to enhance their employment competitiveness. A regular discussion mechanism between schools and enterprises is also established to dynamically adjust the content based on market and enterprise demand to ensure that it is cutting-edge and practical.

4.4 Building a Diversified Assessment System and Strengthening Process Supervision

Building a diversified assessment system is the key to ensuring the quality of education under the “dual mentor

system". It is necessary to clearly define the multiple assessment subjects of "school mentors + enterprise mentors + students + industry experts" to comprehensively manifest the learning effect and guidance quality. In addition to theoretical exam results and internship reports, the assessment content should also cover practical operation, innovation, teamwork skills, occupational quality, etc., and specific indexes such as the quality of project completion. At the same time, the assessment methods should be innovated, and combine process assessment and summative assessment to realize dynamic monitoring through various forms. In addition, the assessment and incentive mechanism should be improved to offer rewards to excellent ones, and strengthen guidance to those unqualified ones, thus forming closed-loop management.

4.5 Deepening the Connotation of School-Enterprise Cooperation and Establishing a Long-Term Cooperation Mechanism

Deep and stable cooperation between schools and enterprises is the foundation for the sustainable development of the "dual mentor system". The first is to build a strategic partnership between schools and enterprises. Colleges and universities should sign long-term cooperation agreements with influential enterprises in the industry, formulate strategic cooperative plans around talent cultivation, scientific research innovation, industrial service and other aspects, define the authority and responsibility of both parties, and realize stable and long-term cooperation. The second is to establish a benefit synergy mechanism. Through jointly building practical teaching bases, jointly cultivating talents, and collaborating on scientific research projects, schools and enterprises achieve resource sharing and win-win benefits. For instance, colleges and universities, and enterprises can jointly set up "Marketing Innovation Laboratories" to jointly develop marketing technologies and plans, and transform scientific research achievements into teaching resources and enterprise productivity.

5. Conclusion

As an important model for cultivating marketing professionals, the "dual mentor system" of school-enterprise cooperation is of great significance for enhancing students' comprehensive occupational quality, promoting the construction of the teaching staff, and achieving resource sharing between schools and enterprises. However, at present, this model still faces several dilemmas in practice such as ambiguous division of authority and responsibility between school and enterprise mentors, insufficient motivation of enterprise mentors for engagement, divorce between teaching content and the market, imperfect assessment mechanisms, and superficial school-enterprise cooperation. To this end, it is necessary to solve practical problems through strategies such as defining the division of authority and responsibility, improving the incentive mechanism, optimizing the teaching content, building a diversified assessment system, and deepening school-enterprise cooperation so as to give full play to the educational efficacy of the "dual mentor system".

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