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等待戈恩

低迷的市场、冲天的油价以及天翻地覆的游戏规则，却可能帮助这位昔日传奇的缔造者成为当今令人绝望的汽车业的精神领袖

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Pulse Diagnosis of Chinese Healthcare Industry

Standing among a group of Chinese doctors, a westerner in smart suit greeted the audience with a “Good afternoon” in Chinese with his foreign accent. He is Sheldon Dorenfest, an American with over thirty-year of H.I.T consultation experience. Although his Chinese is not authentic enough, he was full of confidence with his presentation on the Chinese healthcare industry and its use of I.T..

His understanding of the Chinese healthcare industry was a result of over 100 visits to Chinese hospitals over the past three years. When Sheldon was doing his first presentation in Beijing Tongren Hospital, he knew little about China and could only talk about the history of I.T. use in U.S. hospitals. But now, he knows a lot and he didn’t give his reply in a hurry when confronted with lots of questions from Chinese doctors. Three years of working experience in China taught him to be patient. The Dorenfest China Healthcare Group in Shanghai founded by him is also developing steadily. At present, he has five clients in China. Among them, two projects have been completed and the other three projects are in process.

Unexpected Achievement

A research trip 16 years ago led Sheldon to develop his business in China. In 2004, when Sheldon came to China second time, the country’s tremendous change during the past 12 years shocked him. Beijing was full of vehicles, where only several cars passed by on the roads downtown in 1992. At that time, Sheldon was planning to sell The Dorenfest Group, to which he has contributed his whole-life effort, and would like to enjoy his retirement just like his friends in Florida enjoying sunshine and playing golf. Sheldon knew that China existed great opportunities for H.I.T. development.

In the following year of 2005, Sheldon made another research trip in China with his Chinese assistant – Ms. Yu Zhiyuan, a PhD candidate of medical sociology from the University of Chicago. Since then, they have visited 100 hospitals and health bureau in 17 cities. Sheldon commented on Chinese hospitals after those visits and said that: “Hospitals in China are crowded with people, and the work processes are not very smoothly. Doctors’ service attitude is rough and patients are not very satisfied.” When chatted with his Chinese friends, Sheldon found China’s emerging middle class still have no access to relatively high-quality medical service. Consequently, the idea of establishing “model hospitals” came to Sheldon’s mind. One of the important components of the model hospitals is the good use of I.T. to make the hospital work process more efficient.

Actually, the current status of H.I.T. development in China is similar to the U.S. in 1980s. Before Sheldon come to China, he once went to India to do a comparative research. Compared with the Chinese healthcare industry, Sheldon found that market differentiation in India was very clear. The government established cheap public medical institutions to guarantee the basic healthcare of the

poor, and meanwhile, the middle class and wealthy people went to private hospitals with high quality medical service. India's advantage is its English language while China's advantage is in its manufacturing industry. The advantage in manufacturing shall be the solid foundation of China's economic sustainable development. Sheldon told Ms. Yu in excitement that: "I think I can help China to make its healthcare system a little better."

Hence, Sheldon adjusted his retirement plan to a new business start up plan. In 2006, he founded The Dorenfest China Healthcare Group and appointed Ms. Yu Zhiyuan as the Chinese project manager.

Sheldon's original business plan is to invest in Chinese hospitals and make them better, but three things slowed down his strategic plan. Firstly, the 2005 Report of National Development and Reform Committee stated that the medical and healthcare reform of the past 20 years was not successful and the future healthcare policies haven't been finalized yet. Secondly, language and cultural differences are two major barriers. Sheldon has been approached by some local health bureaus who wanted him to invest in their hospitals during his early investigation in China. Every time after Sheldon got off a plane, he was warmly welcomed by beautiful bouquets. And when he received the commercial agreement on the second day, he always found that directors of such health departments just wanted to sell the hospital with a high price but the actual situations could not meet Sheldon's requirements. "What they interest in is my money, not my skills for improvement." Sheldon complains.

It is definitely not realistic to totally transfer his successful experience in U.S. to China quickly, and hence, Sheldon decided to adjust his business plan and developed a two-phase plan: The first phase is to provide consultation service and training program to Chinese hospitals, through which extensive relationship would be established and he could improve his understanding of Chinese healthcare industry as well as Chinese hospitals. When the time is right, the company will enter into the second phase of "model hospital" plan. The selection criteria of pilot hospitals will include a friendly and supportive local government, a capable hospital management team, and doctors and staff who can fully understand and support the project.

Solid Development

Sheldon grew up in a Jewish family, and his father had a small business shortly after he had migrated to America. Sheldon's childhood memory helps him to find out that in terms of way of doing business, Chinese people are similar with Jewish people to some extent. For example, both of them put great importance to relationship. His family background facilitates his understanding of China's business. For example, most clients asked questions about the method and objectives of the consulting project before they negotiate project price. And they always prefer some free-of-charge services to try when negotiating price. Before, Sheldon just refused this requirement anyway. But gradually, he regards it as a positive signal that clients begin to actually become interested in the project when they start to talk about the project price.

The first client of The Dorenfest China Healthcare Group is Shenzhen Health Bureau. Shenzhen would like to develop digital hospitals and create a regional health network for sharing patient information and engaged The Dorenfest China Healthcare Group as its consultant. Since then, the Dorenfest has already got five clients from Hong Kong, Shanghai, Chongqing and Beijing.

With time goes by, Sheldon has obtained an in-depth understanding of H.I.T. situation in China. He found that many hospitals use engineering personnel to take charge of IT system. In addition, doctors and staff, who actually use the systems, are not well trained and not fully involved in the software design and purchase, which led to poor results after the system is implemented. Consequently, doctors are not unable to take the full advantage of the IT system. And the poorly designed and implemented system has created redundant work processes for doctors and staff. Moreover, some hospitals is lack of system integration and work processes improvement skill , which makes the system more complicated and less efficient.

After Sheldon pointed out the above problems one by one, the original doubt that “whether foreign experts can solve problems in China” has been gradually eliminated among Chinese doctors. He once joked that his understanding of China is of primary school level but he is the Ph D level of H.I.T.. He gained trust of doctors and technicians through working and solving problems with them.

However, Sheldon knows that personal relationship in hospitals is complicated and many so-called technical problems are caused by humans. Patience is the key to success. Just as many other countries, hospital presidents of China will wait for acceptance and support of the whole team before making final decision. It takes a long time to get the consensus of all doctors of the project. Negotiation process with Peking University Third Hospital lasted for one year in total.

Finally, the project of Peking University Third Hospital was signed in May this year. On the day of signing the contract, the president of the hospital hold Sheldon’s hand and told him that he was so glad to cooperate with him. The Dorenfest China Healthcare Group has gained credibility and high reputation in China. However, as for Sheldon’s original plan, this is just the beginning.