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Actionable Market Insights Are Critical in Making Changes in the Home Service Industry

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In 2012, I joined the Chinese Provincial Government, as a Provincial Development Analyst and worked with 14 district coordinators to kick off a home service industry development program. It started as an industry survey but had the potential to expand as a long term program. I was in charge of the research and planning of the program. Quickly I found that many stakeholders were reluctant to contribute to the program. The district coordinators did not understand how this program, and additional work, could benefit them.

The home service companies (nanny and cleaning companies) considered the industry as a low-profit and low-skilled labor market. They were trapped in the price battle and focused on stealing good nannies from competitors. Moreover, there was no co-ordination relationship between industry associations and the government. I recognized that the traditional attitude of the market was the main challenge for the program. Therefore, I decided to use actionable market insight to attract supporters and sponsors for the program.

Guided by the theory which I learnt from my previous employer TBWA, an International Advertising Agency, actionable insights rest in the disconnections between companies (service providers) and consumers. To identify insights, I collected and analyzed crucial data and found 58% of urban 4-2-1 structure families in the province were craving for nannies. The 4-2-1 family structure is a result of China's one-child policy since 1979, where almost every couple reaching their 30s or 40s has to take care of one child and four older parents. This is a huge burden with a lot of unsolved problems, but actually creates a big growing market for home service companies.

However, through market visits and interviews I found that nanny companies gave hollow promises, discounted the service and kept a long list of unemployed nannies. The market

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disconnection was the following: Companies were selling low-price inexperienced service time, while the families were shopping for guaranteed solutions to a family problem.



I invited owners of nanny companies, industry associations and district coordinators to participate in a Disconnection-Insight-Vision Workshop. The purpose was to identify market insights and define industry vision by diagnosing the market disconnections. The two-day workshop was a success. Participants concluded by sharing the same industry vision. Furthermore, the following insight was found: Families need trained home service experts to guarantee the work quality.

Based on the insight, I developed and executed a plan to start the industry development program. As a first step, in December of 2012, training sessions were held for district coordinators to carry out a comprehensive survey on training and service quality with 95 service industry companies. Secondly, I built relationship co-ordinations with 3 industry associations by supporting association seminars to train home service workers. Thirdly, through industry associations, I built co-ordinations with the home services training schools in all districts.

With support from companies, schools, associations and coordinators the survey ranked top three among 31 industry surveys in the country. In 2013, the program got the equivalent of CAD \$3.75 million funding and was praised by the industry and service providers. In 2014, 40 companies and training schools were supported by the program training over 5,000 home service workers and laid-off factory workers as certificated nannies and infant babysitters. Two industry seminars were held every year.

The program is now in its fifth year. A further 150 companies registered with the program, over 10,000 workers were trained by this program and 92% of them got well-paying home service work. It was the market insights that helped the industry to take a new look at the low-profit conventional market. Currently, they consider the home service industry as a valuable high-demand thriving market.

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Career Accomplishments

2014 Excellence Commerce Officer Award winner. Recognized for planning and setting up the Service Trade Data Monitoring System of Inner Mongolia Department of Commerce. Helped to reduce monthly report delivering time by more than 20%.

At TBWA , conducted market researches and developed Young Chinese Attitude and Behavior Monitoring Program. This program was utilized by TBWA \ clients Adidas, McDonald's and Mars. Insights generated by this program inspired 4 advertising campaigns launched during 2008 Beijing Olympic Game.

Developed Young Audience Internet Habit Database covering 14 cities across China.

TBWA, Young Tiger Award for consolidating China youth market insight and trend for Apple iPod and Apple iTunes China marketing campaigns.