

附 录：

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Faulty Laptop with Less Than Faulty Service

I had a bad experience last May. One Monday, the expensive American laptop computer that my company had ordered for me finally arrived. I wanted a reliable, quality laptop so they bought me a state-of-the-art model. I had been waiting for it for three months. I wanted to use it to read and write my emails when I was in Europe. But first I wanted to install the necessary software so I could read my Hong Kong emails anywhere in Europe. I travel a lot there on business.

Early on the Friday morning, the day before I was to fly to London, I finished installing the software. But it wouldn't work. I couldn't get a connection to the Internet. You can imagine how frustrating that was so I took the laptop and the software into the office and the technician tried to fix it. He worked for seven hours on that Friday and it still didn't work. I didn't have time to take the laptop to the Computer Suppliers, the shop that had sold us the computer, as I was flying the next morning.

While I was in London, the technician phoned me from Hong Kong the following Monday. He said he would send me new software by courier. It arrived two days later on Wednesday. I tried to install the software but again, no luck. My English colleague tried. He was also unsuccessful.

I was in Europe for three months and during that time I had no email contact with my family, friends or colleagues except when I logged in from an Internet café or from one of the customers I was visiting.

When I finally returned to Hong Kong one of the first things I did was to send the laptop back to the Computer Suppliers and explain the problem. They immediately sent me a temporary replacement by return of post to use while they looked into the problem with a letter of apology.

They discovered that the trouble was a faulty modem that had been installed on a brand-new laptop. Fortunately as soon as they had exchanged the modem for another one, it worked perfectly. The Computer Suppliers were so apologetic and offered to service the laptop for three years at no charge. I must admit that being without Internet for three months was extremely annoying but the Computer Suppliers more than compensated for the problem after. I will certainly be going back to them for my next computer.

(419 words)

Shopping Mall or Cyber-mall?

The Internet is part of everyday life for most young Americans: about three-quarters of 18-24-year-olds regularly go online. Many have now added Internet shopping to email and other activities. Since the mid-1990s, shopping online has grown from almost nothing to about five per cent of all US retailing. Sales have been increasing by over 25% per year, and last year goods and services worth \$93 billion were bought online.

In the beginning, many predicted the end of traditional shopping, but will this really happen? Are ordinary shops and even shopping malls about to close? Could millions of sales staff lose their jobs?

Well, Internet shopping certainly has big advantages. Travel websites can quickly find the cheapest flights, for example, and fares cost less than they do from a travel agent. In fact, most Internet prices are lower than shop prices. It can also be very convenient to do your shopping from home, day or night. (Internet sales always rise rapidly at Christmas because many people don't like the crowded shops and the cold weather.)

However, there are problems. Orders can take two weeks or more to arrive and have to be returned if something is wrong. Many people worry about the security of their credit card details. Some also miss the fun of shopping with friends.

Online retailing has brought different levels of success to different types of business. Amazon.com is a very successful online retailer, but many others have failed. They spent too much, sold too little, had delivery problems and finally went bankrupt.

But, perhaps surprisingly, some traditional retailers have also done well. The Internet can offer a bigger market to small, specialist shops, for example. Bill Ross, owner of a farm shop, says, "Using the Net is like opening shops all over Britain."

Big traditional retailers have introduced their customers to "multichannel shopping" even more successfully. Online orders are simply supplied from their stores or warehouses. Walmart, the world's largest supermarket chain, also cleverly mixes offline and online channels. For example, you can leave a film at a Walmart store and then collect digital images from the company's website.

Multichannel shopping's biggest winner is often the customer. Look at American car buyers: 75% now research everything from cost to colour on the Internet before they go to the car dealer with the best offer.

It now seems clear that Internet shopping is not going to replace traditional retailing. Rather, it is making traditional retailing more flexible, efficient and competitive. This is great news for the consumer.

(424 words)

Body Matters

It's Monday morning. You're walking upstairs to your first lesson. Two of your friends start talking about a good Clint Eastwood film they saw on TV last night and you take part in the conversation. But when you've climbed the stairs to the second storey, you're out of breath and have to stop talking. You're so glad to reach your classroom on the third floor.

What's going on?

You don't smoke, you don't drink alcohol and you're not really overweight – well, you're certainly not fat. In fact, you always thought you were fit and healthy. But one thing's certain: you're kidding yourself. Why? Recent research in the UK shows that it's probably because you're not getting enough vigorous “aerobic exercise”, especially if you're a girl. (By the way, the average 50-year-old British man is fitter than the average 15-year-old British girl.)

But what is “aerobic exercise”? It's any activity that increases your heart rate and the amount of oxygen that your muscles burn. Fitness experts say that just twenty minutes of aerobic exercise a day is enough to improve your health, keep your weight down, reduce stress and make you sleep better – if, of course, that you are eating the right amount of the right food.

Now, please don't think that this means that you must become a fitness fanatic and give up everything you enjoy in life. You don't have to do a sport like long-distance running or mountaineering and nor do you have to buy an expensive fitness machine. You don't even need to go to a leisure centre for a workout.

Instead of these “extreme solutions”, here are three simple activities that anybody can do.

Firstly, cycle to school. If this is not possible, then at least use your bike to get around whenever you can. Secondly, if you go to school by bus, why not get off the bus two or three stops early and walk the rest of the way? And, finally, never use elevators and moving staircases; climb the stairs instead.

The alternative – minimal activity – is not good. Although teens think they'll live for ever, experts say that young people who are unfit may have serious health problems like a bad heart in later life.

So ... when are you going to get active? Today?

(445 words)

Wanted: Blue-Collar Workers

To many, America's industrial heartland is a place that has too little work to offer its residents. But things look very different to Karen Wright, the CEO of Ariel Corporation in Ohio. Wright's biggest problem isn't a lack of work; it's a lack of skilled workers. "We have a very skilled workforce, but they are getting older," says Wright. "I don't know where we are going to find replacements."

That may sound surprising, given that the state has suffered from lack of jobs for a generation. Yet across the heartland, one can almost find the same problem: a shortage of skilled workers. That shortage is surely a problem for manufacturers like Wright.

The skilled-labor shortage shows a remarkable recovery in American manufacturing. Since 2009, the number of job opportunities in manufacturing has been rising, with average annual earnings of \$73,000, well above the average earnings in education, medical care, and many other fields.

The industrial recovery comes with a price: a quickly rising demand for skilled workers. The shortage of industrial skills points to a wide gap between the American education system and the demands of the world economy. For many years, Americans have been told that the future lies in high-end services, such as law, and "creative" professions, such as software-writing and systems design. This has led many bright students to think that the only real way to improve opportunities for the country's middle class is to increase its chances to get higher education.

Some manufacturers think the shortage of skilled workers results from the decline of vocational education. Today's young people often do not regard craft work – plumbing, masonry, and carpentry, for instance – as popular, because they've been instructed to enter college. "People go to college not because they want to but because their parents tell them that's the thing to do," says Jeff Kirk, manager of human relations at a company in Ohio. "Kids need to better know that much of what they learn in school is not really needed in the workplace. They don't realize a pipefitter makes three times as much as a social worker."

Fortunately, more and more schools are coming to understand that message and passing it along to their students. One of these schools, Central Ohio Technical College, has recently expanded by 70 welding students and

50 machinists per year. Many of the college's certificate programs are planned and partly supported by companies, which think that they're making a wise investment. "You have a lot of people sitting in the city doing nothing. They did not succeed in college. But this way, they can find a way up," says Kelly Wallace, head of the college's Career and Technology Education Center.

(450 words)

Understanding Chinese Parents

What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you're good at it. To get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work, which is why it is crucial to override their preferences. This often requires a strong will on the part of the parents because the child will resist; things are always hardest at the beginning, which is where Western parents tend to give up. But if done properly, the Chinese strategy produces a virtuous circle. Practice, practice, practice is crucial for excellence; rote repetition is not welcome in America. Once a child starts to excel at something – whether it's math, piano or ballet – he or she gets praise, admiration and satisfaction. This builds confidence and makes the once not-fun activity fun. This in turn makes it easier for the parents to get the child to work even more.

I think there are three big differences between the Chinese and Western parents.

First, I've noticed that Western parents are extremely anxious about their children's self-esteem. They worry about how their children will feel if they fail at something, and they constantly try to reassure their children about how good they are despite a mediocre performance on a test. In other words, Western parents are concerned about their children's feelings. Chinese parents aren't. They assume strength, not fragility, and as a result they behave very differently.

Second, Chinese parents believe that their kids owe them everything. The reason for this is a little unclear, but it's probably a combination of Confucian filial piety and the fact that the parents have sacrificed and done so much for their children. Anyway, the understanding is that Chinese children must spend their lives repaying their parents by obeying them and making them proud.

Third, Chinese parents believe that they know what is best for their children and therefore do not respect all of their children's own desires and preferences. That's why Chinese daughters can't have boyfriends in high school and why Chinese kids often can't go camping.

Don't get me wrong: It's not that Chinese parents don't care about their children. Just the opposite. They would give up anything for their children.

Western parents try to respect their children's individuality, encouraging them to pursue their true passions, supporting their choices, and providing a favorable environment. By contrast, the Chinese believe that the best way to protect their children is by preparing them for the future, letting them see what they're capable of, and arming them with skills, work habits and inner confidence that no one can ever take away.

(434 words)

Teenager Committed Suicide When His Computer Broke Down

Jason's problems started just five months ago when he asked his parents to buy him a computer. All his friends already had one and, like many teenagers, Jason did not want to be an outsider. His mom and dad agreed.

At first, Jason's parents were proud of him: "During the first few weeks, Jason spent a lot of time in front of his computer because he had to learn how it worked and how to use the various programs. He was really interested in learning all about it and he even started writing computer programs himself. Although Jason spent a lot of time alone in his room with his computer, we didn't worry too much as he still met his friends and hung out with them, too. The computer wasn't the only thing in his life."

But then everything changed and things got out of hand. Jason found a website where he could play chess either against the computer or against other people from all over the world. From then on, Jason seemed to have just one interest in life, his computer. He began to withdraw from the real world and live in a virtual one. Whenever his parents told him that he was spending too much time with his computer or when they talked about computer addiction, Jason went into denial. He simply refused to admit that he had a problem at all. Like all addicts, he was sure that he could stop his addictive activity, in this case online chess, whenever he wanted to.

But then the unthinkable happened: Jason's computer broke down. But his parents decided not to replace it with a new one.

At first, Jason couldn't believe it. He pleaded with his parents to buy him a new computer. He said that he needed it for school, he promised that he'd spend less time with it and so on. But his parents refused to give in. Jason even admitted that he could have a problem, and agreed to see a therapist, but in the end he didn't have enough determination or courage to do so.

Finally, Jason became so desperate that he took the only way out and killed himself.

But how is it possible that a machine can play such a decisive role in someone's life?

Robert Johnson, a psychologist and an expert on the subject, sees computer addiction as a serious illness. "Computer addiction is an obsession. It is an illness that can affect any one of us. Nowadays, computers can be found

in nearly every household and they're becoming easier and easier to use. Increasing numbers of people are spending more and more time working with computers, either for business or private reasons. While this isn't a problem for most users, some people, particularly teenage males, use the computer to escape from the real world. That's when the problems start and the computer becomes essential to life itself. They literally can't live without it."

Research shows that this is especially true of shy, introverted people. For them, meeting people online is a way of hiding their true selves: their appearance, their education, their real personality and so on. In cyberspace, they can be whoever they want to be and create their own virtual world.

But what happens – as in Jason's case – when they can no longer access their virtual world? Life as they know it ceases to exist.

(573 words)