

Research on the Challenges and Countermeasures Faced by Multinational Enterprises in the Post-epidemic Period

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Abstract: It is well known that the global economy has suffered an unprecedented blow in recent years due to the epidemic. Recently, the global epidemic situation is stabilizing and we are entering the post-epidemic period. The return to work for multinational companies will also be a new challenge. The purpose of this study is to provide more information and experience on return-to-work methods and experiences for companies in similar situations. This study will analyze the return-to-work policies and difficulties encountered by companies in different countries. This paper draws a conclusion that small and medium-sized enterprises in the post-epidemic era should deepen their development in the digital field on the basis of the original "Internet +" transformation.

Keywords: post-epidemic period, multinational enterprises, challenges

1. Introduction

The current epidemic is not only endangering the lives and health of people around the world, but also seriously affecting the world economy. Economic globalization is facing headwinds, and unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise. With the gradual improvement of the "epidemic" situation, people will soon usher in the "post-epidemic period". On the one hand, the epidemic has brought great impact on our society; On the other hand, it has brought about changes in many fields. Almost all countries and companies in the world have policies in place to deal with them, and this article will analyze these policies. China's large-scale absorption of foreign direct investment is the most effective aspect since China's opening to the outside world. The entry of multinational companies has played an important role in accelerating China's economic development. This study will allow companies to better choose and implement their return-to-work policies and allow other companies to refer to and learn from them if they encounter similar outbreaks in the future.

2. Challenges Faced by Multinational Enterprises in the Post-epidemic Period

2.1. Challenges Faced by Multinational Enterprises

By 18:00 on December 21, 2020, affected by the British mutant virus, the stock markets of France and Germany had fallen by more than 3%, and the international oil price had fallen by nearly 6%. With the spread of the new coronavirus, the world economy is facing a serious recession, which undoubtedly brings unexpected blows to China's small and medium-sized enterprises.

Through the most difficult times, stood the test. At present, the epidemic in China has been effectively controlled, but the rapid spread of the epidemic abroad still involves more economies in the epidemic storm around the world. However, multinational corporations are hindered by many obstacles in their actual operation, such as the postponement of multinational logistics, the rise of logistics prices, the increase of export tariffs, the doubling of epidemic prevention pressure of enterprises themselves, the continuous increase of production costs, and so on. These problems have been staged all over the world. A war against the epidemic has also begun in the economic world. In the context of global economic integration, no enterprise can be left alone, but the degree of impact varies, and so does the ability of each enterprise to reduce risk. In this regard, multinational companies are paying close attention to the development of the global epidemic situation and minimizing the impact of enterprise operations. However, in response to the epidemic, the government also needs to urgently introduce relevant policies or support measures, such as tax reduction policy, bank loan or renewal policy, industrial subsidy policy, etc.

With the implementation of the "going out" strategy, the continuous appreciation of the RMB, the strong support of the government and the stable development of China's economy in recent years, China's small and medium-sized enterprises have received more opportunities for foreign direct investment. In 2019, China's foreign direct investment reached 136.91 billion US dollars, ranking second in the world [1]. Due to the rapid spread of COVID-19 worldwide, leading to a significant decline in cross-border trade and investment, the IMF predicts that the global economic growth rate will be negative 3% in 2020. On January 31, 2020, it announced that COVID-19 constituted a pandemic (international public health emergency), and some countries began to implement control measures against China's import and export of goods, making it difficult for China's small and medium-sized enterprises to make a foreign direct investment.

2.2. Some American Enterprises Oppose Resumption of Work

Apple employees are resisting a new policy that requires them to return to the office three days a week from early September. The letter shows that the current policy is not enough to meet the needs of Apple employees. They hope that the company can adopt a more flexible way to let those employees who want to work remotely continue to work remotely.

Apple's (newly proposed) telecommuting and flexible work system, as well as related communication, have forced some colleagues to resign. Without the inclusiveness brought by flexibility, the policy will only make employees face a dilemma. Because they can't give consideration to family, health and full-time work, they may have to choose to leave apple. This is a decision that Apple employees are unwilling to make easily, but it is also a decision that many people worry about having to make in the future.

For Apple employees, the epidemic has made them realize the benefits of telecommuting and a flexible working system. They found that they can not only complete their work well but also take care of their families without being limited by the challenges of commuting and face-to-face office every day. Many people feel that they have maintained good contact with colleagues around the world and their relationship is even better than ever before.

For a long time, the proportion and scale of credit financing for small and medium-sized enterprises have been low, and it is difficult for high-tech small and medium-sized enterprises with talents and technology as their main assets to obtain financing from traditional financial institutions such as banks. The epidemic has reduced the risk appetite of banks and other financial institutions, making the above situation more prominent. Direct equity investment is an effective way to solve the problem of innovation capital in small and medium-sized technology enterprises. Affected by the epidemic, a number of innovation and entrepreneurship projects are facing serious financial pressure in 2020. The epidemic will accelerate the burst of the valuation foam of entrepreneurial projects,

leading to the decline of the overall valuation of the industry. In the short term, the financing cost of small and medium-sized enterprises rises and the financing process slows down. COVID-19 not only has a significant impact on the capital chain and supply chain of small and medium-sized enterprises but also poses a challenge to the liquidity and risk control of financial institutions [2]. Its impact on the financial machine reacts on enterprises, and puts more emphasis on the capital chain difficulties of enterprises, especially the asset-light technology-based small and medium-sized enterpriseshard.

3. Countermeasures for Multinational Enterprises to Resume Work

Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said in a memo to employees on Monday that the company would let the directors of each team decide how often employees work in the office. Amazon declined to disclose the number of employees at the supervisor level of its team. This means that Amazon has made changes to its earlier plan to return to work. Amazon has previously said that it is expected that most enterprise employees will return to the office from January 3, 2022. At that time, the company set the benchmark of working in the office three days a week, that is, employees can choose to work remotely up to two days a week.



Figure 1: Amazon's building logo.

Jasi said that Amazon found that it could not use a "one size fits all" approach to determine the frequency of home office at the company level [3]. Amazon currently has 1.3 million employees worldwide, of which hundreds of thousands are enterprise employees.

As part of this policy change, Amazon will also allow enterprise employees the option to work entirely remotely for four weeks a year, regardless of which city they're based in.

While Amazon will provide more space for employees to work from home, Jassy said most employees want to stay close enough to their teams so "they can meet in the office during the day.

In addition to Amazon, other technology giants have also begun to support telecommuting more [4]. In September this year, Microsoft indefinitely postponed the plan for employees to return to the office, and Facebook and Google also predicted that some employees will continue to work at home, provided that their work can be completed remotely.

What is more, Twitter told its employees last year that they could work from home "forever" if they wanted.

First, business digital transformation and upgrading.

This epidemic has made the government, enterprises and individuals further fully feel the huge energy contained in digitalization, and the digitalization and upgrading of enterprise-related businesses have become an important direction of development. "We expect that some teams will continue to adopt the mode of mainly telecommuting, others will adopt the combination of telecommuting and office work, and others will think that it is most beneficial for customers to let

team members work mainly in the office." Jasi wrote in the memo. "We deliberately don't specify how many days or which days (telecommuting is allowed) - this will be decided by the team leader together with his senior leaders and team."

Second, comprehensive transformation and upgrading of marketing work.

While the COVID-19 epidemic has dealt a heavy blow to offline marketing, it has also forced enterprises to accelerate the transformation and upgrading of marketing models.

China can refer to the foreign exchange system of Singapore, Japan, the United States and other developed regions to set up special funds for foreign exchange reserves. We will use funds directly for foreign direct investment, alleviate the lack of capital supply caused by China's backward financial system, help small and medium-sized enterprises cope with emergencies, and improve China's international solvency.

Third, the industrial chain has ushered in historic upgrading and remodeling [5].

The relatively stable state of the original industrial chain has been broken, and there is also an opportunity for further transformation and upgrading in the later stage. China's role in the global industrial chain is likely to be further enhanced.

3.1. Reward and Punishment System

On February 11, Premier Li Keqiang hosted an executive meeting of the State Council to further deploy comprehensive prevention and control of the epidemic while strengthening the regulation of economic operation and better protection of supply. The meeting required that all departments around the world to establish a special help mechanism for enterprises to deal with the epidemic, and effectively alleviate the difficulties of enterprises, especially private small and micro enterprises. We will implement temporary support measures by reducing the rent of state-owned property, lowering the loan interest rate, delaying the repayment of principal and interest, and improving tax relief policies [6].

The implementation of such a strict reward and punishment system is intended to improve the quality of employees' resumption of production. Being lazy on the job is not a new thing, and the more flexible remote working system provides a good environment for being lazy. Since such bad habits cannot be eliminated, the management has introduced a stricter and more effective management mechanism to minimize the harm of this situation.

Because some employees at home have very flexible online office hours, in order to prevent employees from being too relaxed when working overtime, which will have a negative impact on the work quality, the company will clearly announce in the internal system: that when accepting work results, the fault tolerance rate will be appropriately reduced according to the work task, and a more strict punishment mechanism will be introduced, as mentioned in Article 1 - reward and punishment [7].

3.2. Regular Administration

In addition, due to the change of working mode under the epidemic, the company will add anonymous message boards in its internal system: in this way, employees can put suggestions on the new mode and any other innovative ideas on it. [8] So as to promote the interaction between employees and their superiors, fully understand the physical and mental health and working status of employees, and further improve the new work system under the epidemic [9].

3.3. Medical Privacy

The basic medical insurance for employees is a social medical insurance that protects the basic medical rights of employees in accordance with the law, and its purpose is to provide medical security for employees [10].

3.4. Potential Risk

In the post-epidemic era, uncertainty is one of the challenges facing companies [8]. The most urgent task is to continuously adjust and innovate, develop continuously in the process of change, and do a good job in customer value marketing [11]. People do not know when the current epidemic will end, but what is certain is that in the face of various sudden changes, enterprises need to formulate corresponding marketing models in a timely manner, make full use of information technology to complete transformation and upgrading, and optimize original marketing measures. Get more economic benefits [12].

4. Conclusion

The successful reopening of businesses is vital to the global economy. The implementation of China's "opening-up" policy and the "going out" initiative has pushed the development of foreign investment by China's small and medium-sized enterprises to a new height. Small and medium-sized enterprises in the post epidemic era should deepen their development in the digital field on the basis of the original "Internet +" transformation. At the same time, we should closely follow the development opportunities brought by the "going out" initiative and the policy guidance of preferential policies of various countries after the epidemic to China's foreign investment, implement the foreign investment, stimulate the potential of small and medium-sized enterprises, open the brand effect of small and medium-sized enterprises, and then help China's sustained and healthy economic development and help the global economy recover as soon as possible in the post epidemic era. Due to the limitation of data, this paper cannot conduct an in-depth discussion on the situation of resumption of work in various industries. Future research can evaluate and analyze the situation of resumption of work of each industry.

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