

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 500: The Standards for a Good Employee Have Fallen

Monday, April 25.

Sitting in his office, Pei Qian pondered for a long time before finally fixing his gaze on the OTTO Technology department.

The day before, he had happily adopted Guo Licheng's suggestion and decided to create a dedicated reservation app for Managed Fitness.

This meant that Managed Fitness would not only be far more expensive than other gyms, but would also come with a whole host of impersonal rules.

- Customers had to purchase Moyu Delivery's fitness meals as a bundled service.
- They had to use Managed Fitness's app; otherwise, they could not make reservations to use the gym.
- They had to follow a strictly designed workout plan. While there was some room for flexibility, compared to other gyms, the system was excessively rigid and inflexible.

This was already incredibly off-putting.

Pei Qian figured that if anyone claimed a gym like this could still make money, he would suggest they go open one themselves.

Take the app requirement, for example. What gym requires customers to make reservations through an app just to work out?

Adding this extra step would surely drive away plenty of potential customers.

The question, however, was which department should be tasked with developing the app.

At present, many of the departments under Pei Qian had the capability to develop and maintain mobile apps. The game department went without saying, and there were also apps for the TPDb website, and Moyu Delivery.

Although some of these apps had very few users and only simple functions, they at least existed.

Top Student, Come Quickly was even more out of the question—it had by far the strongest mobile app development capabilities.

Besides those, OTTO Technology obviously had the ability to develop the app as well, though it felt a bit like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

Pei Qian carefully considered the options.

No matter which department handled it, the resulting app would certainly reach a basic level of usability.

However, after being stabbed in the back time and again by unexpected collaborations between departments, Pei Qian felt he absolutely had to account for interdepartmental relationships this time. He had to prevent another bizarre chemical reaction from occurring between two departments and sending things in an unpredictable direction.

His eyes swept across the list of departments one by one.

“The game department is definitely out. They're all masters of overthinking, and they're especially good at applying game design concepts to unrelated projects. Who knows what terrifying consequences might result if they get involved?”

“Terminal Chinese Web and TPDb are run by the same group of people. That doesn't seem safe either. What if TPDb gives Managed Fitness some kind of special recommendation? That would be a disaster.”

“Top Student, Come Quickly? Absolutely not. It's already so popular, especially in Jingzhou. It would be perfectly natural for them to launch some campaign like, ‘A healthy body leads to better studying,’ and then I'd really be finished.”

“As for Moyu Delivery... that's not ideal either. Those two departments are already closely connected. If their relationship grows even tighter and they even integrate their apps together, the consequences would be unimaginable...”

“Damn it. How did things become so dangerous without me even noticing...?”

After considering every department, Pei Qian realized that connecting Managed Fitness with any of them seemed likely to create some sort of unpredictable risk.

Landmines were everywhere.

In the end, his attention returned to OTTO Technology.

Having Chang You's department develop the Managed Fitness app might seem like overkill, but wasn't that exactly what he wanted?

By using the highly threatening smartphone division as a glorified outsourcing company to develop an insignificant app, he could keep them occupied and leave them with less time to work on projects that posed a greater threat to him.

Of course, considering the potential synergy that could arise between OTTO Technology and the Managed Fitness app, Pei Qian still needed to give one important instruction:

Chang You must absolutely not pre-install the Managed Fitness app on OTTO phones, nor should he promote the app through the phone's app store or any other channel.

In short, they were only responsible for building the app.

No meddling in promotion.

The app was to remain nothing more than an accessory—a simple tool attached to Managed Fitness.

"That should solve the problem, right?"

After thinking it over, Pei Qian felt this seemed to be the most reliable choice.

Once he had everything planned out, he intended to find an opportunity to inform Chang You.

Knock, knock, knock.

A knocking sound came from outside the office.

Looking up, Pei Qian saw that it was Xiao Peng, the current person in charge of Moyu Internet Café and ROF Custom PCs.

Xiao Peng had originally been the manager of Moyu Internet Café in Lin City. After taking over Zhang Yuan's position, he had already relocated to Jingzhou.

Pei Qian couldn't help frowning slightly.

What's he here for?

Whenever the head of one of these profitable departments came looking for him, Pei Qian inevitably got a headache.

It was never good news. Most likely, they had made more money again and had come to ask how they should spend it!

“What is it?” Pei Qian asked, trying his best to remain calm.

This was Xiao Peng's first time visiting President Pei's office, and he was a little nervous.

“President Pei, ROF Custom PCs has accumulated quite a large amount of funds on its books. I've been thinking that perhaps it's time to upgrade the business a bit, so I came to ask for your guidance on where ROF should go next.”

Pei Qian: “...”

See? What did I tell you!

He knew it. Whenever the heads of profitable departments showed up, it was never for anything good. Yet another case of him having to burn brain cells figuring out ways for them to spend money.

Pei Qian let out a soft sigh.

“You people really ought to show a bit more initiative. Can't you figure out how to spend the money you've earned yourselves? Don't come asking me over every little thing. Put in some effort. It's just spending money, right? How hard can that be? Spend more if you want. I won't blame you.”

Xiao Peng hurriedly nodded.

“Ah, understood, President Pei. Then I'll... proceed according to my own plan?”

Pei Qian fell silent for a moment.

“Forget it. Since you're already here, tell me your plan anyway.”

At first, he had thought it might be best to let Xiao Peng spend the money however he wanted, without interfering at all.

Surely it wasn't possible for every employee under him to be a business genius who only knew how to make money and never lose any?

But then he reconsidered.

Judging from past experience, that possibility wasn't entirely impossible.

Better ask.

As long as the proposal wasn't too outrageous, he'd let them do as they pleased.

Xiao Peng said, "President Pei, I think ROF Custom PCs has already become a very popular prebuilt PC brand. However, our appearance and aesthetics seem a bit lacking, and they don't really highlight the added value of our brand."

"I think we could spend some money working with PC case manufacturers to produce a batch of custom-designed cases with really cool appearances. We could also customize some attractive fans or liquid-cooling systems to improve the overall look."

After thinking for a moment, Pei Qian nodded.

"Fine."

No matter what, spending money on that would probably improve the ROF brand to some degree. It couldn't possibly have zero effect.

Compared to dangerous options like advertising campaigns or burning money on promotions, improving the appearance of the products seemed like the least harmful choice.

Besides, Pei Qian neither had nor dared to come up with a less profitable alternative. He was afraid that if inspiration struck and he offered some guidance, ROF might somehow make another huge profit.

Receiving President Pei's approval, Xiao Peng was delighted.

“President Pei, there's one more thing. Moyu Internet Café is also doing extremely well at the moment, and it has plenty of funds available. So... should we continue opening new branches?”

Pei Qian: “...”

Why are you talking in installments?

Can't you just say everything at once?

You've split two pieces of bad news into separate announcements. What, are you giving me time to catch my breath?

Pei Qian really wanted to say no.

But he genuinely couldn't think of a suitable reason to reject Xiao Peng's request.

The Moyu Internet Cafés in Jingzhou and Lin City had all become huge successes and were frequently packed to capacity. Why *wouldn't* they open more branches? There was simply no convincing argument against it.

If he forced them to wait any longer, the employees at those internet cafés would definitely start getting suspicious.

The problem was that this business model had already been proven successful twice.

If they opened more branches, they would almost certainly make even more money.

Wasn't this just creating additional burdens for himself?

The last time, Pei Qian had stubbornly refused to accept reality. He convinced himself that the success of Moyu Internet Café in Jingzhou had been a fluke, so he decided to open a branch in the much poorer Lin City as a test.

The result?

He had accidentally pioneered an entire strategy of “expanding into lower-tier markets.”

What if we try Beijing or Shanghai next?

Absolutely not!

Moyu Internet Café was positioned as a high-end internet café. Those ultra-first-tier cities had much higher spending power. Opening branches there would practically be delivering customers to the business on a silver platter.

Since none of those options would work, there was only one solution left.

After some thought, Pei Qian said somewhat helplessly:

“Go ahead and open new branches. You can choose the locations yourself, but they can only be in Jingzhou or places with a lower level of economic development than Jingzhou.”

“And this time, make it the Moyu Internet Café 3.0 model. Fewer seats, more space, higher prices, and better locations.”

Pei Qian reasoned that a budget internet café was out of the question. The system imposed price restrictions, and if he combined a low-price strategy with the Moyu brand, the business would probably take off instantly.

The only option was to keep battling in the high-end market.

Anyway, he would just keep finding ways to raise prices. Sooner or later, customers' spending power would fail to keep up, right?

There couldn't possibly be that many rich people in the world.

“Understood,” Xiao Peng replied without asking further questions.

Since President Pei had already given instructions, his job was to study them carefully, execute them faithfully, and avoid unnecessary questions.

That was a basic virtue every member of Tengda Group was expected to possess.

After thinking for a moment, Pei Qian added, “If this new branch somehow makes money again...”

“Then figure out a way to spend every single cent of the profit yourselves. Open more branches, renovate existing ones, buy computers—whatever. Just spend it all. Leave not a single cent unspent!”

Pei Qian felt he needed a contingency plan.

What if Moyu Internet Café somehow became profitable again?

Then he would strategically give up.

Let Xiao Peng use the money to open more branches. It didn't matter how many stores he opened, how many computers he bought, or how many employees he hired.

As long as there was no cash left sitting on the books—and as long as Xiao Peng stopped bothering him about it—that was enough.

At this point, President Pei's definition of a *good employee* had begun to slide downhill.

In the past, he believed that only employees who could help him lose money qualified as good employees.

But now he had realized that standard was simply too high.

Nobody could meet it.

So he had no choice but to lower the bar.

His new definition of a good employee was:

Any employee who could spend all the money they earned without affecting the settlement was a good employee.

As for what they spent the money on...

He couldn't care less.

Do whatever you want.

Xiao Peng nodded vigorously.

“Understood, President Pei! I will definitely accomplish the mission perfectly!”