

# Study on the catch-up process of latecomers from the perspective of management learning-- Based on the case study of SF Express

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**Abstract:** Taking SF Express as a case, this paper focuses on the problems of management constraints faced by latecomers by constructing theoretical models and using the three-step coding method of grounded theory, and explores the process of catch-up of China's latecomers from the perspective of management learning. The research finds that, first, late-developing enterprises in the start-up stage face multiple challenges in their development process, including the shortage of resources and capital in the initial stage, the lack of market cognition and the lag of technological innovation. Second, after entering the catch-up stage, the improvement of management ability has become the core, especially the in-depth study in operation management, information system management and organizational model, which lays the foundation for building talent advantages and surpassing competitors. Third, the key is to maintain an open learning mentality, actively absorb advanced management concepts from inside and outside the industry, flexibly apply them to practice, and continuously optimize the management structure to ensure that we maintain a leading position in the highly competitive market. Latecomer enterprises should pay attention to the systematic improvement of management ability and regard learning as an important source of sustainable competitiveness. Through the effective integration and innovative application of internal and external resources, building a learning organization that ADAPTS to market changes is the key path to achieve leapfrog development. Meanwhile, flexibility and rapid iterative management strategies are the only way to ensure that enterprises remain competitive in a complex and changing environment.

**Key words:** latecomer enterprise, management learning, catch-up process, SF Express.

## 1. Quote

Since the reform and opening up, Chinese enterprises have shown unprecedented enthusiasm for learning and innovation (Chen and Zhang, 2023). They have not only actively absorbed advanced Western science and technology, successfully broken through a series of core "stuck neck" technical bottlenecks, but also made solid steps in the field of enterprise management. Haier Group has greatly improved product quality and production efficiency by introducing advanced management models such as Six Sigma management and lean production (Li et al., 2013). Alibaba has set a new model for Internet enterprise management. Its management learning model focuses on technological innovation, ecosystem construction and data-driven decision making, deeply reflecting and flexibly applying advanced management concepts (Tan and Zhang, 2024). These cases fully demonstrate the critical role that management learning plays on the way for Chinese enterprises to catch up with the world's advanced levels. However, previous studies tend to focus on the catch-up mechanism of latecomers at the technical level, while the factors at the management level, especially the role of management learning in the catch-up process of latecomers, are not fully explored.

As one of the leading enterprises in China's express logistics industry, SF Express, with its significant position of more than 20% in the domestic market share, has become a model for latecomers to successfully catch up and surpass (Wu and Xu, 2024). In the rapidly changing market environment, SF Express has a keen insight into industry trends, accurately grasped market opportunities, and built an intelligent logistics system based on advanced technologies such as big data and cloud computing through in-depth management learning and practice (Zhou, 2024). Through specific and in-depth management learning and practice, SF Express has successfully realized the catch-up and surpassing

of its competitors, and its successful experience has important reference significance and enlightening value for latecomers, especially those in the tertiary industry.

Based on this, this paper uses the case study method to carry out research on the following questions: "How can China's latecomer enterprises achieve catch-up through management learning?"

## 2. Literature Review

Managerial Learning refers to a process of enterprises, especially those in developing countries, taking the initiative to learn advanced management knowledge, practice norms, operation methods and efficient management procedures from developed countries or leading enterprises in the industry (Mol and Birkinshaw, 2009). This process includes many management fields such as strategic planning, organizational design, human resource management, and operation management, and emphasizes the transformation of these theoretical knowledge into management practices in the actual operation of enterprises (Zhang et al., 2023). The process of management learning usually includes the following four stages: clear orientation, seeking teachers, integrating learning into application, and solidifying practice (Xie, 2008).

Late catch-up refers to accelerating catch-up according to a fixed trajectory (Xu, 2021). They are often relatively backward in terms of technology and management, and in order to narrow the gap with leading enterprises, they usually adopt the strategy of paying equal attention to technology learning and management learning (Tsang, 2016). In terms of technology catch-up, latecomers are committed to introducing, absorbing and innovating advanced technologies to improve product competitiveness and production efficiency (Makarius et al., 2020). In terms of management learning, they take the international advanced management concepts, tools and methods as the learning objects, and deeply understand and learn from the management experience of successful enterprises through systematic training, management consulting, benchmarking learning and other ways (Stuedy, 2004). In the learning process, latecomers pay attention to localization transformation to ensure that the management knowledge learned can be integrated with the actual situation of the enterprise to form a management system with its own characteristics (Yuan, 2015).

In the existing research, although in the field of technology catch-up, especially in the new energy automobile industry such as GAC Group, BYD and other latecomers' technology catch-up path (Zheng and Lan, 2024), and the latecomer's technology catch-up strategy from the perspective of resource patchwork and arrangement, such as the case of CRRC Zhuzhou and Hisense Group (Han et al., 2024), It has received extensive attention and in-depth discussion, but the focus of this perspective is often limited to the technological progress and strategic adjustment within the enterprise. With the intensification of global market competition and the increasing complexity of enterprise management, latecomer enterprises are faced with more new challenges and opportunities in management learning. Management learning plays an increasingly important role in the catch-up process of latecomer enterprises. However, there are relatively few discussions on management learning in current academic circles. In particular, in-depth analysis of the management learning practices of latecomers in developing countries is lacking (Xie and Zhang, 2017). Therefore, it is urgent to strengthen the research on the learning mechanism, path and effect of the late enterprise management, so as to reveal the deep law behind it.

Based on this, this paper will further focus on the case study of SF Express, a leading enterprise in China's express delivery industry, and deeply analyze how it achieves catch-up through efficient management learning in the fierce market competition.

### **3. Research Design**

#### **3.1. Research Methods**

This paper adopts the longitudinal study method of a single case. Case study method refers to the method that researchers explore the relationship between the phenomenon and the essence of a case through observation, collection and analysis of one or more cases (Zhang and Xie, 2014). Case study method is suitable for answering such questions as "how" and "why" (Sun and Zhu, 2004). The use of case study method helps researchers to sort out and explore the relationship between each case event, and then reveal the nature of events and phenomena.

The guiding question of this case study is: How can Chinese latecomers catch up through management learning? It's the "how?" question. In addition, this paper also focuses on exploring the process of enterprise management catch-up, which belongs to exploratory research. Therefore, it is feasible to use case study method in this study.

##### **3.1.1 Sample selection and introduction**

In order to make the study more rigorous, this paper follows theoretical sampling and selects representative cases of China's latecomer enterprises. According to the purpose of the study, the selected cases need to meet the following requirements: (1) late-comer enterprises established and listed in China; (2) Leading enterprises in the industry; (3) The catch-up process shows a lot of management learning practice. According to the above requirements, this study finally chooses China SF Express (Group) Co., Ltd. as the case study.

##### **3.1.2 Introduction to the Enterprise**

Founded in 1993, SF Express is a private enterprise with logistics as its starting point. At the beginning of its establishment, it was a follower of the industry, and EMS was the dominant player in China's express delivery market. However, SF Express has become the largest express logistics integrated service provider in China and the fourth largest in the world. In 2023, SF Express achieved a total operating income of 258.409 billion yuan. In the process of catching up, SF Express not only actively absorbed advanced international management concepts and technologies, but also built an efficient and flexible management system through continuous localization innovation, so as to stand out in the fierce market competition. Therefore, the study on the process of late catch-up can provide reference and guidance for Chinese logistics enterprises to carry out late catch-up.

#### **3.2. Data Sources**

This study follows the insights of Glaser and Strauss (2017) on diverse data collection channels, while adopting the "triangulation" approach advocated by Yin (2009). By widely introducing interviewees with different backgrounds and diverse data sources, we conducted in-depth cross-comparison and comprehensive review, which effectively reduced the bias caused by a single information source, significantly improved the reliability and validity of the study, and thus ensured the robustness and wider applicability of the research conclusions.

#### **3.3. Data analysis methods**

In this paper, a coding method based on the rooted theory is adopted, that is, the case data is coded and analyzed step by step through three steps: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Gu and Li, 2024), so as to gradually rise from surface phenomenon to essence, and abstract into theory.

#### **3.4. Data coding and analysis**

Wang and Duan (2024) propose a systematic data analysis framework, which provides a theoretical basis for the data processing in this paper.

Step 1 Based on the preliminary screening of the original data, we carried out detailed refining work, using the first-level coding technology, successfully extracted the initial category from the complex information, this process ensures the initial structure of the data and the depth of understanding. Subsequently, through the in-depth collation and analysis of the case enterprise data, we carefully extracted a total of 108 key initial categories, including the advantages of direct management system and market expansion strategies. These categories not only reflect the core elements of business operations, but also lay a solid foundation for subsequent research.

Step 2: Axial coding stage, as the core link of data analysis, mainly focuses on in-depth sorting, generalization and summary of the initial category of preliminary extraction (Wang et al., 2024). The goal of this stage is to further extract more general and explanatory subcategories and main categories. Taking the two sub-categories of "scientific management of employees" and "direct management system" as examples, through careful logical sorting out, we find that SF Express has realized the optimization and exploration of organizational management through the two-way development of scientific management of employees and strengthening of direct management system. This discovery not only reveals the intrinsic connection between the two, but also clearly depicts SF Express's active practice path in the field of organizational management. Based on this, we extract the "exploration of organizational management optimization" as the main category, which highly summarizes the core strategy and effectiveness of SF Express in this field. Through similar grounded theoretical analysis methods, this paper finally integrates 11 main categories and 24 sub-categories, which together constitute the framework for in-depth understanding of the research problem and lay a solid foundation for subsequent theoretical construction and empirical analysis.

Step 3: In-depth profiling of the selective coding phase

In the selective coding stage, the core task is to systematically integrate the complicated initial categories and extract the core categories with high generality and explanatory power (Cui and Zu, 2024).

### **3.4.1 Analysis of sub-categories of cross-border diversification**

By further analyzing the initial scope and the original data, we found that SF Express showed significant cross-border diversification in business development. By engaging in a number of non-traditional logistics fields such as "electronic payment and e-commerce platform", "financial management and capital operation" and "retail and collection services", SF Express not only broadens its business boundaries, but also realizes the diversified construction of business ecology. Taking SF Finance as an example, its launch not only greatly enriched SF's business territory, but also provided solid financial support for the upgrading and expansion of logistics network through efficient capital operation means, fully demonstrating SF's strategic wisdom in seeking new growth points and enhancing overall competitiveness in cross-border integration. From this, we summarize the sub-category of "cross-border diversification" to summarize SF Express's unique path in business innovation.

### **3.4.2 Discussion on sub-categories of dynamic adaptation of administrative law**

In the face of constantly changing administrative and legal environment, SF Express has shown excellent adaptability and awareness of legal compliance. Especially in the context of frequent adjustment of cross-border e-commerce policies, SF Express can quickly capture policy dynamics, flexibly adjust business strategies, and ensure compliance and efficiency of business activities by optimizing customs clearance processes, improving cross-border logistics efficiency and other measures. This series of initiatives not only reflects SF Express's keen insight and positive response to the policy environment, but also highlights its ability to operate steadily within a complex legal framework. Accordingly, we refined the sub-category of "dynamic adaptation of administrative laws" to describe SF Express's excellent performance in legal compliance and business adjustment.

### 3.4.3 Dynamic strategy subcategory of market expansion

In the two dimensions of "domestic market expansion" and "international market expansion", SF Express has adopted a flexible and changeable market expansion strategy. In the domestic market, SF Express has continuously broadened its service scope and improved service quality through precise layout of the sinking market and construction of intelligent logistics network. In the international market, SF Express has quickly entered new markets through mergers and acquisitions, cooperation and other ways to achieve a global business layout. These measures not only reflect SF Express's dynamic adjustment ability and forward-looking layout vision in market expansion, but also win an early opportunity for its competition in the global logistics market. Therefore, we summarize the category of "dynamic strategy of market expansion" to sum up SF Express's successful experience in market expansion.

Through the above coding and research process, this study extracts five core categories, which are start-up obstacles and basic capacity construction, management learning and operation optimization under catch-up preparation, flexible application and evaluation of management mode under catch-up implementation, dynamic capacity cultivation and environment adaptation, establishment and innovation of leadership management knowledge system, and finally the phenomenon is raised layer by layer to theory. (The specific data encoding process and results are shown in Figure 1).

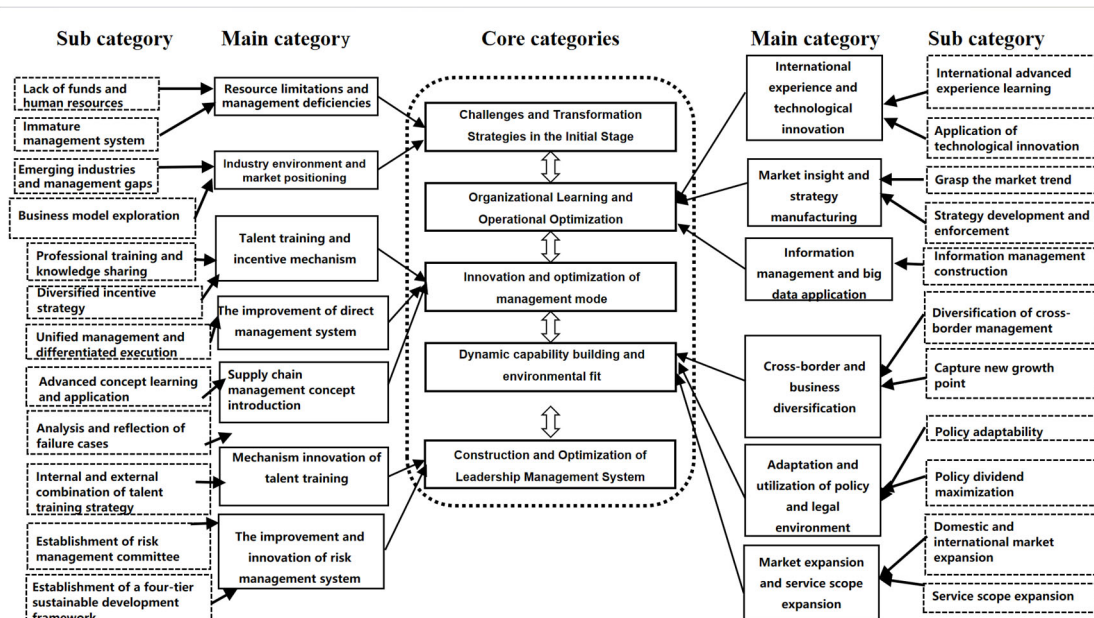


Figure 1. The specific data encoding process and results

## 4. Research findings and theoretical models

Through the analysis of coding, this paper finds that the catch-up of latecomers can be mainly divided into five aspects: initial development obstacles and basic capacity construction in the initial stage, organizational learning and operational optimization in the preparation for catch-up, flexible application and evaluation of management in the implementation of catch-up, dynamic capability cultivation and environment adaptation, and establishment and innovation of leader-oriented management system.

### 4.1 Obstacles to initial development and basic capacity building

Core areas: Start-up challenges and transformation strategies

In the early stage of SF Express, its core areas clearly reflect the challenges faced by the company and the transformation strategy it has adopted. These challenges and strategies are intertwined, and together they outline the early development of SF Express and provide favorable conditions for its future development as an industry leader.

Main category 1: Resource limitation and management failure

Sub-category: Lack of financial and human resources

When SF Express was founded, the shortage of funds became the primary bottleneck restricting its development. The company is still small in scale and has limited financing channels. It mainly relies on the founder's personal funds to maintain its operation, and it is difficult to support large-scale investment in infrastructure construction and technology research and development. At the same time, the lack of human resources has also greatly limited SF Express's expansion pace. Recruitment is difficult, and the turnover rate of key positions is high, which is difficult to meet the needs of rapid business growth.

Sub-category: immature management system

Initial categories and raw data: Due to the lack of a complete and systematic management system and operation process, the internal management of enterprises in daily operation, the flow of information is not smooth, the task allocation and execution of the lack of clear standards and processes, resulting in frequent misallocation and waste of resources, but also make enterprises in the face of important decisions, often rely on the subjective judgment of individual leaders, the decision-making process is not scientific and transparent. At the same time, the corporate culture is still in its infancy and fails to form a strong spiritual bond. The lack of common values and codes of conduct among employees makes it difficult to effectively align personal goals with organizational vision in team cooperation, and team cohesion and execution are greatly reduced.

Main category 2: Industry environment and market positioning

Sub-category: industry emerging and management gaps

Initial categories and raw data:

As the express industry is an emerging field, the relevant regulatory policies are still in continuous improvement. Frequent adjustment of policies may lead to increased uncertainty of enterprise operating costs, such as the improvement of environmental protection standards and the strengthening of safety regulations, which may have an impact on the operation of SF Express and other enterprises. At the same time, the price war and service war in the express delivery market have emerged one after another, making the entire industry show a state of disorderly competition.

Sub-category: Business model exploration and adjustment

Initial scope and original data: SF Express tried to adopt simple contracting and "big contracting" business models in its initial stage. Although this model promoted the rapid development of the enterprise to a certain extent, it also brought hidden risks such as loose management and inconsistent service quality. In order to fundamentally solve these problems, SF Express decisively adjusted its strategy, abandoned the franchise model, and comprehensively turned to the direct operation model. This decision not only strengthens the headquarters' direct management of the outlets, but also significantly improves the quality of service and customer satisfaction.

## **4.2 Organizational learning and operational optimization under catch-up preparation**

Core areas: Organizational learning and operational optimization

In the pursuit of industry leadership, SF Express takes organizational learning and operational optimization as its core category, constantly draws outside wisdom and optimizes internal processes to enhance market competitiveness and operational efficiency.

Main category 1: International experience and technological innovation

Sub-category: International advanced experience learning

Sf Express is actively committed to expanding its international vision, actively seeking to establish in-depth dialogue and strategic partnerships with global air logistics leaders such as FedEx and United

Parcel Service (UPS). SF Express expects to grasp the latest trends in international air logistics through exchanges and cooperation, including but not limited to the optimization of intelligent warehousing systems, the innovation of automated sorting technology, the application of big data analysis in logistics forecasting and scheduling, and the promotion of green logistics solutions. At the same time, SF Express also looks forward to learning from the successful strategies of these international giants in cross-border logistics network construction, customs clearance process optimization, and coping with complex international logistics challenges, in order to further enhance the competitiveness and response speed of its international logistics services. In addition, SF Express also plans to accelerate its technological upgrading and innovation capability through various ways such as cooperative research and development, technology introduction and talent training, to ensure that it maintains a leading position in the global air logistics market, and to provide customers with a safer, faster and more efficient international logistics service experience.

Sub-category: Application of technological innovation

SF Express uses big data and artificial intelligence technology to conduct in-depth analysis of air transportation data accumulated over the years, which covers multiple dimensions such as route utilization rate, weather impact, and ground operation efficiency. Through accurate market demand forecasting models, SF Express can predict cargo flow and traffic peaks in advance, so as to flexibly adjust its vast route network layout. In terms of route optimization, SF Express has implemented a refined management strategy to dynamically adjust flight plans according to the transportation needs of different regions and different periods, reduce the empty load rate, and improve the on-time flight rate to the industry-leading level. At the same time, through the introduction of advanced flight scheduling system, the optimal allocation of flight resources is realized to ensure that every aircraft can complete the transportation task with the highest efficiency. In terms of service quality and customer experience, SF Express has established a sound customer service system, provided 24-hour customer service support, and launched a number of value-added services, such as limited time delivery and next day delivery, to meet the personalized needs of different customers. Through continuous optimization of service process and improvement of service quality, SF Express has won the trust and praise of our customers.

Main Area 2: Market insight and strategy development

Sub-category: Market trend grasp

SF Express has carefully constructed a comprehensive and efficient market information collection and analysis system, which integrates online and offline multi-channel resources, including multi-dimensional data sources such as customer feedback platform, industry reports, partner exchanges, logistics tracking data and economic index analysis, to ensure that SF Express can capture market dynamics in real time. Gain insight into key information such as consumer preferences, industry trends, competitor strategies, and changes in the policy environment. Through big data analysis technology, SF Express has conducted in-depth mining and processing of massive market data, and analyzed the special needs such as timeliness requirements, service scenarios (such as fresh distribution, cross-border logistics, etc.) diversified and personalized customer needs, as well as social responsibility needs such as green environmental protection.

Subcategory: Strategy development and execution

Based on in-depth market insight, SF Express has developed a more scientific and reasonable operation strategy. Through refined management, intelligent scheduling and other means, SF Express has effectively improved transportation efficiency and safety, and reduced operating costs.

Main category 3: Information management and big data application

Sub-category: information management construction

At the operational level, SF Express uses intelligent scheduling system to optimize transportation routes and distribution network, realizing accurate allocation and efficient utilization of logistics

resources, and significantly improving transportation timelines and customer satisfaction. In terms of internal management, SF Express has built a comprehensive information management platform to realize the automation and intelligence of various links from order processing, warehousing management to financial settlement, and improve management efficiency and decision-making speed. In addition, through the introduction of employee performance management system and online training platform, SF Express has also promoted the improvement of staff skills and the strengthening of team cooperation, which has injected new vitality into the long-term development of the enterprise.

### **4.3 Flexible application and evaluation of management mode**

Core category: innovation and optimization of management model

In the rapidly changing business environment, SF Express always regards the innovation and optimization of management mode as an important driving force to promote the sustainable development of the company. This core category reflects SF Express's keen insight into market dynamics, and also highlights its determination to continuously explore and break through in internal management. Through flexible adjustment and optimization of management strategies, SF Express has achieved the dual goals of efficient operation and sustainable growth.

Main category One: talent training and incentive mechanism

Sub-area: Professional training and knowledge sharing

Sf Express knows that talent is the core resource of enterprise development, so it has established a perfect training system. The company regularly holds "professional skills improvement class", once a quarter, to deepen the professional skills of employees; At the same time, the monthly "excellent case sharing meeting" provides valuable knowledge exchange opportunities for employees, and effectively improves the overall quality of the team.

Sub-category: Diversified incentive strategies

In order to fully stimulate the enthusiasm and creativity of employees, SF Express has implemented a diversified incentive mechanism. This subcategory includes performance bonuses, equity incentives and abundant career development opportunities. For example, the establishment of awards such as the "Best Employee of the Year Award" and "Innovative Contribution Award" not only recognizes the excellent performance of outstanding employees, but also creates a positive working atmosphere; The provision of training opportunities and promotion opportunities at home and abroad further stimulates the career enthusiasm and development potential of employees.

Main category two: the improvement of direct management system

Sub-category: unified management and differentiated execution

Sf Express's direct management system not only maintains the consistency of national service standards, but also gives local branches a certain degree of autonomy. Through the establishment of regional management center, the company realized the unified management of each network; At the same time, according to the local market characteristics and customer needs, flexibly adjust the operation strategy and resource allocation, such as adding intelligent express cabinets, optimizing distribution routes, etc., effectively improve the quality of service and customer satisfaction.

Main category three: the introduction and integration of supply chain management concepts

Sub-category: Learning and application of advanced ideas

Sf Express actively embraces the trend of globalization and constantly introduces advanced supply chain management concepts at home and abroad. The company organized senior management teams to Japan, Germany and other leading countries in supply chain management to study, and successfully introduced lean management and other advanced tools and methods, such as JIT (just-in-time production) and VSM (value stream map). These advanced concepts have been widely applied and

promoted in the actual operation of SF Express, significantly improving the efficiency and efficiency of supply chain management.

Sub-category: Analysis and reflection of failure cases

Sf attaches great importance to the in-depth analysis and reflection on the failure cases in supply chain management. The company regularly holds a "Supply chain Management review meeting", inviting internal and external experts to discuss and summarize the recent major supply chain events. Through in-depth analysis of the causes of failure, learning lessons and proposing improvement measures, SF Express continuously optimizes and improves its supply chain management system to ensure that it can avoid repeating the past mistakes in future development.

Sf Express has achieved comprehensive innovation and optimization in the management mode from talent training and incentive mechanism, improvement of direct management system to introduction and integration of supply chain management concepts. These measures have not only significantly improved the company's operational efficiency and service quality, but also laid a favorable foundation for the company's long-term development.

#### **4.4 Dynamic capacity cultivation and environmental adaptation**

Core area: Dynamic capability building and environment fit

In the rapidly evolving logistics industry, SF Express takes its excellent dynamic capability construction and environment fit as its core driving force, constantly ADAPTS to changes in the external environment, and achieves its own sustainable development. The essence of this core category lies in how SF Express closely matches market dynamics through a series of precise strategic adjustments and business model innovation to ensure that it maintains a leading position in the highly competitive logistics field.

Main Area 1: Cross-border cooperation and business diversification

Sub-area: Diversification of cross-border management

Sf Express actively seeks cross-border cooperation and deep integration with e-commerce, retail, finance and other industries. Through the establishment of deep cooperation with a number of e-commerce platforms, SF Express not only provides customized logistics solutions, but also dabbles in the retail field, opening online shopping malls such as SF Express Priority, further broadening its business boundaries. In addition, the launch of SF Finance provides a full range of financial service support for the supply chain, showing the depth and breadth of SF's cross-border cooperation.

Sub-category: new growth point capture

Sf Express's cross-border cooperation strategy has not only brought significant growth in business volume, but also successfully explored new market growth points. These collaborations have not only brought diversified sources of income to SF Express, but also helped it build a more complete supply chain system and further consolidated its market position in the logistics industry.

Main category two: Adaptation and utilization of policy and legal environment

Subcategory: Policy adaptability

Sf Express has always maintained a keen insight into the dynamics of national policies and changes in laws and regulations. In the face of the constant adjustment of logistics industry policies and the increasing improvement of laws and regulations, SF Express has responded quickly, and ensured the compliance of enterprise operations by strengthening information security construction, optimizing transportation routes and other measures, effectively reducing business risks.

Sub-category: Policy dividend maximization

Sf Express is also good at using policy dividends to promote corporate development. In the context of the country's promotion of the development of the logistics industry, SF Express makes full use of

tax incentives, capital subsidies and other policy support measures to accelerate the pace of technology upgrading and business expansion. These measures not only promoted the rapid expansion of the enterprise scale, but also significantly improved the quality of service, and injected strong impetus into the sustainable development of SF Express.

Main category 3: Market expansion and service scope expansion

Sub-category: domestic and international market expansion

In the prosperous stage of logistics industry, SF Express actively grasped market opportunities and accelerated the pace of expansion in domestic and foreign markets. Through mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures and other ways, SF Express rapidly expanded its service network coverage in the domestic market; At the same time, we actively explore overseas markets, such as setting up branches in the United States, Europe and other places to provide cross-border logistics services, and further expand the international business territory.

Sub-area: Service scope expansion

Sf Express has always been oriented to meet customer needs and constantly expand the scope of services. In addition to traditional express delivery services, SF Express has also launched value-added service projects such as cold chain logistics, heavy cargo transportation and warehouse management. The launch of these services has not only enriched SF's product line, but also enhanced its comprehensive service capabilities. By forming a logistics service system covering the whole chain, SF Express has successfully enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty, laying a solid foundation for the long-term development of the enterprise.

Through accurate grasp of market dynamics, active cross-border cooperation, flexible adaptation to the policy and legal environment, and continuous expansion of market and service scope, SF Express has successfully built a sound dynamic capability system and achieved sustainable development in a complex and changeable market environment.

#### **4.5 Establishment and innovation of leading management system**

Core category: Construction and optimization of leadership management system

In the pursuit of excellence, SF Express focuses on the construction and optimization of leadership management system. This category deeply reflects how SF Express leads the sustainable development and innovation of the enterprise by building an efficient and forward-looking management system, ensuring that the company remains competitive in a complex and changing market environment and achieves long-term strategic goals.

Main category One: the improvement and innovation of risk management system

Sub-area: Establishment of the Risk Management Committee of the Board

In order to strengthen the risk management ability, SF Express has set up a risk management committee of the board of directors, which marks an important step in risk prevention and control. The committee is responsible for organizing risk assessment and audit activities on a regular basis, and through professional and systematic analysis, timely detection and response to potential risks to ensure the safety and soundness of the company's operations. For example, in response to external risk factors such as market changes and policy adjustments, the committee can respond quickly and formulate countermeasures to escort the development of the company.

Sub-area: Establishment of a four-level sustainable development management framework

Sf Express actively responds to the global sustainable development trend, integrates new development concepts, and builds a four-level sustainable development management structure. This structure, from the strategic level to the executive level, ensures the in-depth implementation and implementation of the sustainable development goals within the company. All levels of management clearly define their

responsibilities and cooperate to jointly promote the company's balanced development in environmental protection, social responsibility, economic efficiency and other aspects.

Main category 2: Innovation of talent training and leadership team building

Sub-category: internal and external combination of talent training strategy

Sf Express knows that talent is the first resource for the development of enterprises, so it adopts the talent training strategy of internal and external combination. Internally, SF Express focuses on the selection and training of potential management talents from employees, and improves their comprehensive quality and leadership ability through systematic training plans and practical exercises. At the same time, SF Express also actively introduced experts with innovative thinking and industry experience, which brought new perspectives and inspiration to the company, and promoted the diversified and professional development of the leadership team. This kind of internal and external combination not only enhances the internal cohesion of the company, but also broadens the external vision of the company, and injects strong impetus into the continuous innovation and development of the company.

Sf Express has successfully established an efficient and forward-looking leadership management system by improving its risk management system, building a sustainable development management structure and innovative talent training strategies.

## **5. Conclusions and enlightenments**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The importance of management learning: For latecomers, management learning plays a crucial role in their catch-up process. The successful case of SF Express shows that through in-depth learning and application of advanced management concepts and technologies, latecomers can overcome the problems of resource shortage, lack of market cognition and technology lag in the start-up stage.

Operation management optimization: Once entering the catch-up stage, latecomers need to focus on enhancing their management capabilities, particularly in areas such as operations management, information system management, and organizational models. By optimizing these domains, SF Express has established a talent advantage, enabling it to outperform its competitors.

Open mind and flexible response: Keeping an open mind to learn, actively absorbing advanced management concepts from inside and outside the industry, and flexibly applying them to practice are the keys for latecomers to maintain competitiveness in a complex and changing environment.

### **5.2 Enlightenment**

Attach importance to the practical application of management learning: enterprises should pay attention to the combination of management knowledge and practice, and ensure the effective transformation of management learning results through adaptive adjustment and innovation.

Build a learning organization: Through the effective integration of internal and external resources and innovative applications, build a learning organization, encourage employees to continue to learn, and constantly improve their own capabilities to adapt to market changes and customer needs.

Integration of internal and external resources: latecomer enterprises should be good at integrating internal and external resources, and accelerate the absorption and application of management knowledge through cooperation with innovative enterprises and management consulting institutions.

### **5.3 Limitations**

Case limitations: This paper studies SF Express as a single case, which may have certain limitations. Latecomers in different industries and at different stages of development may face different challenges and opportunities in the process of management learning.

Completeness of the theoretical framework: Although this paper constructs a theoretical model of the catch-up process of latecomers from the perspective of management learning, the model still needs to be further validated and perfected to reveal the mechanism of management learning in the catch-up process more comprehensively.

## 5.4 Outlook

Cross-industry and multi-case studies: Future studies will expand the comparative analysis of multi-industry and multi-case studies, and more comprehensively reveal the general laws and differences of management learning in the catch-up process of latecomers.

Dynamic tracking research: With the change of market competition environment and the evolution of enterprise development stage, the role and path of management learning may also change. Future research will also adopt the dynamic tracking method to continuously observe and analyze the management learning practices of latecomers in different development stages.

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