

REFEREE'S REVIEW

Program:	Master in International Business Program
Student:	Ekaterina Bukhanova
Title of thesis:	PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES OF RUSSIAN OUTSOURCING COMPANIES ON SWEDISH MARKET (CASE OF REKSOFT COMPANY)

Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis. Justification of the topic choice; accuracy in defining the aim and tasks of the thesis; originality of the topic and the extent to which it was covered; alignment of the thesis' topic, aim and objectives.	5	4	3	2
Structure and logic of the text flow. Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.	5	4	3	2
Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives. Adequacy of objectives coverage; ability to formulate and convey the research problem; ability to offer options for its solution; application of the latest trends in relevant research are for the set objectives.	5	4	3	2
Quality of data gathering and description. Quality of selecting research tools and methods; data validity adequacy; adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods; completeness and relevance of the list of references.	5	4	3	2
Scientific aspect of the thesis. Independent scientific thinking in solving the set problem/objectives; the extent to which the student contributed to selecting and justifying the research model (conceptual and/or quantitative), developing methodology/approach to set objectives.	5	4	3	2
Practical/applied nature of research. Extent to which the theoretical background is related to the international or Russian managerial practice; development of applied recommendations; justification and interpretation of the empirical/applied results.	5	4	3	2
Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense, correct layout of tables, figures, references.	5	4	3	2

Each item above is evaluated on the following scale, as applicable: 5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = satisfactory, 2 = poor.

Additional comments:

The author has selected for her study a topic which is *actual*. This paper focuses on Reksoft company, a St Petersburg-based IT company which is currently present on the Swedish market. The case study approach enables exploration and understanding of complex issues such as determinants (both economic and psychological) which have impact on the choice of service provider.

Topicality of the research paper is correctly formulated by the author. This thesis explores the promotional strategies of Russian IT outsourcing companies abroad, namely in Sweden. The internationalization of the Russian outsourcing companies is under-studied phenomenon.

The author has successfully *achieved the goal* of the paper. The goal of the research is to critically assess current marketing efforts the company carries out on the observed market and develop recommendations for further promotion. The case study as a research approach was chosen since the holistic and in-depth explanations

of the behavioral problem in question are only possible if they are limited to the particular company (Reksoft) and their promotional efforts on the particular geography.

The *objectives* of the paper are realized in a proper way.

Case study approach was chosen from the array of different possibilities since this method is appropriate in situations when an investigations of the contemporary phenomenon is involved.

The interviews and survey's answers are summarized and used to compliment with earlier findings from literature review. Based on the final results, an overview of the current situation regarding service provider selection is provided. Then, based on the discrepancy between the Swedish companies' expectations and Russian company's current promotional efforts, the recommendations for the latter are developed.

The theoretical and practical material that is presented in the work is *well structured*; the logic of material representation is kept and it is consistent to the stated content.

Among the *limitations of this research* are small sample and the fact that mental mapping was integrated in the interview process so that it could potentially biased by interviewer's precedent questions even though the questions were designed to let the respondent voice his thoughts freely.

As for the *bibliography list*, it looks representative as it includes various sources of publications. The articles and monographs were picked up in accordance with the topic and helped the author to make an theoretical overview of the current problem. As the result the master thesis has neat appearance and makes a positive overall impression.

Regarding the *drawbacks* of the paper, the referee should mention that the author should pay more attention the models of positioning that underlie the strategy of promotion. The second, in order to improve the marketing research aspects it is required to consider promotion tools in a more complex way, i.e. to consider them in terms of integrated marketing communications. The third, it is necessary to strengthen the conclusion of the paper, make it more structured.

The thesis has a *practical value*. The practical value of this paper is to arm the Russian outsourcing companies stepping on the Swedish market with the knowledge about promotional strategies particularly chosen to fit Swedish customers' expectations. This study explored the vectors for promotional strategies of Russian outsourcing companies in Sweden based on the market orientation approach requiring the necessity to study the customer- and competitor-related information in order to create and offer additional value to the client.

The study has identified the potential of generalizing the results of the research to other post-Soviet countries, such as Ukraine and Belarus. The further researchers could provide more detailed information on the perception of these geographies by Swedish customers to check whether our recommendations might be applied by the organizations from these countries as well.

Master thesis of Ekaterina Bukhanova **meets** the requirements of Master in International Business Program, and deserves an "**excellent**" grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

Date 15.06.2012

Referee:
Associate Professor



Starov S.A.