

## REFEREE'S REVIEW

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|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Program:</b>         | MIB   |
| <b>Student:</b>         | Ekaterina Chizhova  |
| <b>Title of thesis:</b> | <b>LOYALTY PROGRAMS ELABORATION: THE CASE OF MARIINSKY THEATREBASED ON INTERNATIONAL ARTS MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE</b> |

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|---|----------|---|---|---|
| <b>Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis.</b> 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.    | <b>5</b> | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| <b>Structure and logic of the text flow.</b> Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.  | <b>5</b> | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| <b>Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives.</b> 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. | <b>5</b> | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| <b>Quality of data gathering and description.</b> 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.   | <b>5</b> | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| <b>Scientific aspect of the thesis.</b> 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 |
| <b>Practical/applied nature of research.</b> 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.  | <b>5</b> | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| <b>Quality of thesis layout.</b> Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense, correct layout of tables, figures, references.   | <b>5</b> | 4 | 3 | 2 |

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

### Additional comments:

*Please, elaborate on the above mentioned criteria (about 500 words)*

The thesis is addressing an issue that has attracted substantial attention in the field of marketing since 1980-s. Still, despite in-depth elaboration and multiple models and approaches developed during this time, the question of achieving customer loyalty and developing effective loyalty program is still an open issue both for researchers and practitioners. Specifically, changing trends in consumer behavior, technological developments and increasing competition on a global scale provide additional constraints for effective loyalty management. There is hence even higher motivation for development of models or approaches which would consider industry specifics, particular consumer behavior patterns, specifics of technology use, etc. Current study is focused on particular field – theater marketing (on specific example of Mariinsky theater) and particular group of consumers (young consumers).

The thesis is very well structured and organized.

Empirical part of the thesis is based on a combination of data collection and analysis techniques, including both qualitative and quantitative parts. The aim of the empirical part is to develop loyalty program for Mariinsky theater, that would both consider the best practices of leading international market players and the results of insights/survey answers analysis stemming from a sample of Russian consumers. Author is applying some advanced approaches like critical incident technique in order to identify some key points in addressing the target group of the research – young population.

A strong point of developed model is not only being grounded in existing research and results of empirical study, but as well provides a multidimensional perspective on managing customer loyalty. Thus author provides three dimensions of the factors which should be considered by Mariinsky theater when developing the program.

Among the critical remarks I would mention the following:

- It would be beneficial to have a more detailed description of the interview results in the text and a deeper interpretation of how interviews have contributed to the next steps.
- There might be additional recommendations included in the thesis, which would guide the Mariinsky theater when implementing the suggested program. But still these recommendations can be considered as optional, since the aim of the thesis has been to develop the model itself.

Master thesis of Ekaterina Chizhova meets the requirements of MIB program, and deserves an “excellent” grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

Date June, 17<sup>th</sup> 2012

Referee: *Associate Professor, Maria M. Smirnova*