

REFEREE'S REVIEW

Program:	MCF
Student:	Tatiana Sokolova
Title of thesis:	VALUATION OF BRAND LINE EXTENSION EFFECTIVENESS: UBISOFT FLAGSHIP BRAND ASSASSIN'S CREED CASE

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			
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.		4		
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.		4		
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			
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.		4		
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.		4		
Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense, correct layout of tables, figures, references.		4		

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

Additional comments:

The topic of brand management including the issue of brand extension is currently a typical field of real option analysis (ROA) applications. The problem of extension of a line related to a branded computer or console games is not covered in existing academic literature. So an attempt to study the case of a particular company, Ubisoft, is quite as welcome. The author describes many specific features related to the industry verbally but, unfortunately, the models used are universal and do not capture specifics of the problem. So, the success of this paper is just partial.

What is really good in this paper? The author describes three branded products of the company and provides analysis of specific cash flows. This is the basis for all calculations. The author has used many different ROA techniques to treat the issue. Everything including also scenario and sensitivity analysis is done in appropriate way. A practical recommendation has been derived.

Nevertheless, the models in use are too basic and, in my opinion, do not capture the problem in two very important aspects.

The author repeats many times the term of "brands portfolio". But she treats it only in verbal marketing perspective. In finance the notion of "real options portfolio" is under discussion for a decade at least. Any Internet search will provide a number of available sources. The author neither uses nor mentions this modelling technique. Since the paper is devoted to analysis of three branded games from Ubisoft then it is a drawback to consider them as standalone projects.

Another issue is in the treatment of brand line extension. It is obviously similar to well-known model for sequels in the movie industry. In this case follow-up option is considered as main technique. The material

can be found in many places starting from introductory textbook of "Finance" by Bodie&Merton (see Chapter 17).


Of course, these drawbacks are essential but the paper is still good.

As another flaw I would like to mention the layout of Chapter 3 devoted to modelling. The exposition would greatly benefit from a figure describing the logic of many models proposed.

Master thesis of Tatiana Sokolova meets the requirements of MCF program, and deserves a **good** grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

Date: June 14, 2013

Referee:
Professor

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