

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in International Business Program
Student:	Svetlana Komulainen
Title of thesis:	The Application of Buzz Marketing Tools in Repositioning the Brand: Cases of Launching Automotive Brands in the International Markets

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.

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.

The overall impression of the work is that it is structured and complete. The thesis consists of 4 chapters that are sequential and consistent as they follow the objectives stated in the introductions.

In the first chapter the theoretical foundation for further elements of the study is built. The author starts with analysis of repositioning, determines its types and reasons for it is. Then, marketing communication tools are observed and assessed. The logic of the chapter is general-to-specific. The specific assessment is made for viral and buzz marketing communication tools. The chapter finishes with observation of buzz marketing tools in automotive market.

In the second chapter the author investigates two case studies: one historical, Skoda repositioning in the UK market in the beginning of 2000s, and one ongoing, BMW buzz in Russia. The materials of the case studies are discussed, the critical assessment is made and conclusions delivered.

The third chapter provides empirical study, which was made in order to support the second case study. The design, objectives and methods are provided and explained.

In the final chapter the results of the thesis were discussed in detail and considered in terms of previous theory and research. Also the theoretical and managerial implications were presented and finally the chapter concludes by considering the limitations of the research and suggests directions for the future research.

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.

The *objectives* stated in the thesis *are fully covered* by the represented analysis. The articles and monographs were picked up in accordance with the topic and helped the author to make deep theoretical overview of the current problem.

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.

Quality of selecting research tools and methods is *rather high*.

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.

The *objectives* stated in the paper *are fully covered* by the represented analysis. Due to the theory

overview the student came up to some specifications and problems that exist nowadays.

The revision of the work showed the *individual approach* of the student to the stated problem. It is shown by the literature that was chosen and analyzed, methodology of the research and the practical application.

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.

Thesis produces impression as a creative, practice-oriented work, aimed at achieving practical concrete results.

Design, methodology and results of an empirical study can be used for estimating the influence of buzz on important product and brand attributes for a given product category, if it is buzz-driven. Buzz, though basically being just a set of discussions surrounding the brand or product, could be turned into a real brand asset because it has the power to create right perceptions and perception is a building material for brand equity.

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

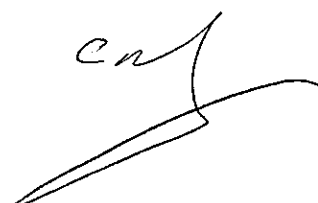
Master thesis has neat appearance and makes a positive overall impression. All the figures and tables of the thesis have sources and references.

The practical importance of the thesis is doubtless. The topic is of paramount importance for the latest marketing research. The theoretical part of the work can be considered a branch study for theoretical implications of acknowledged researchers. The case studies selected are not only relevant, but also can be considered among the most interesting cases from the point of buzz marketing view. Moreover, the author has used critical approach for case studies analysis, which is a definite advantage of the scientific paper. The design of the empirical study is based on neuromarketing principles, which let the author assess the unbiased opinions and thus not only meet the objectives of the study, but also to get the results of particular relevance and interest to other researchers and professionals of automotive industry.

The Master thesis of *Svetlana Komulainen «The Application of Buzz Marketing Tools in Repositioning the Brand: Cases of Launching Automotive Brands in the International Markets»* meets the requirements for master thesis of MIB program, thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

17/06/2013

Scientific Advisor:
Associate Professor



Starov S.A.