

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in Management (MIM)
Student:	Anastasiia Korshunova
Title of thesis:	BUILDING CUSTOMER-CENTERED COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK FOR HI-TECH COMPANIES DURING MARKET ENTRY PHASE

<p>Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis.</p> <p>Formulation of the decision-making framework for choosing communication channels with prospective customers during market entry phase is of great strategic importance for every hi-tech company, especially for hi-tech start-up. Taking into account this problem, the master thesis of Anastasia Korshunova appears to be really topical.</p>
<p>Structure and logic of the text flow.</p> <p>The study is organized as follows. Following the introduction, Chapter 1 describes current state of the art in the communication of the hi-tech companies with the market, discovers potential research gaps, study objectives and limitations of the study. Anastasia formulates such main research questions: 1) are how a hi-tech company may choose appropriate communication practices for the certain customer groups during market entry and 2) how does technology readiness level and market readiness level affect the communication channels to be used?</p> <p>Next, in the Chapter 2 the methodology is set up, involving the conceptual framework of the case study and actual methods of the research, data collection and data analysis.</p> <p>The Chapter 3 describes the empirical results found and summarized them into an analytical framework of hi-tech company's ways to engage into communication with their customer, based on the customer insights. The Chapter 4 presents findings of the paper. List of references completes the thesis. The overall text is presented in a logical manner.</p>
<p>Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives.</p> <p>The review of the existing literature sufficiently covers main key terms and concepts addressed in the thesis, including the most recent latest trends in relevant research. The author of the thesis demonstrates analytical thinking, being able to analyse critically various approaches. The analysis of the empirical data is also done in satisfactory manner.</p> <p>At the same time some important aspects of contemporary strategic decisions are missing. Anastasia had not used knowledge from Silicon Valley how to reduce potential barriers to entry company's products, and to deal with network effects, or network externalities, in the hi-tech industry (midrange storage systems). A network effect is present when the value of a good depends on how many other consumers use the good. From payment processing to software/hardware systems and social media, the value of many networked products depends on the number of users. Although some forms of network externalities will forever be present, firms can overcome and internalize network externalities by owning and subsidizing parts of a network to increase the number of users. A network effect is present when the value of a good depends on how many other consumers use the good. The "hardware-software paradigm" theory in economics describes how a hardware (or software) producer that receives spillover benefits from complementary software (or hardware) on its network may want to subsidize the production of the complementary product or vertically integrate to produce both. For example, Katz and Shapiro explain that the hardware-software paradigm applies to many markets including "durable equipment and repair services (the equipment is the hardware, the repair the software)" and any network of products that "have little or no value in isolation, but generate value when combined with others." Michael Katz and Carl Shapiro, "Systems Competition and Network Effects," <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>, 8/2 (Spring 1994): 93-115.</p>
<p>Quality of data gathering and description.</p> <p>Data for the research was collected mostly via semi-structured problem-oriented interviews with company's representatives and their prospective customers.</p> <p>The selection of methods for empirical research is argued in the Chapter 3. Strangely key figures (pages 64,</p>

65) are not numbered, have no figure captions below the figures, and are not referred in the text by Figure N1, Figure N2 and so on. The case companies are not visually related with these figures as well. That makes difficult the interpretation of frameworks for given companies and contradicts with author's comments "This allows to reformulate existing framework of the marketing testbed assessment of the market and technology risks to entry and arrive to the framework, depicted below"

The Chapter 4 (pages 68-70) provides discussion of the findings, theoretical and managerial implications in a very concise and too general manner.

Scientific aspect of the thesis.

Analysis of the literature and selection of the research model has been done by Anastasia herself, as well as refining research methodology that would fit her research goals.

Still, some critical scientific remarks could be raised regarding this thesis:

- There are limitations of the data fullness and volume;
- There is some fuzziness of representing and discussing of the main results.
- Summary of empirical findings should be more concrete.

Practical/applied nature of research.

The thesis is to provide managers some guidelines on how a hi-tech company should choose appropriate communication practices for the certain customer groups during market entry.

Quality of thesis layout.

Layout mostly fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence.

Originality of the text.

The thesis text is original and does not contain elements of plagiarism.

The Master thesis of Anastasiia Korshunova meets the requirements for master thesis of Master in Management (MIM) program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

03.06.2016

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