

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in International Business
Student:	Elena Uspasskaya
Title of thesis:	Gaining and Sustaining First Mover Advantage in the Growing Market (a Case of International Companies Operating in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region)

<p>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.</p> <p>This research is devoted to very interesting and complicated problem – the comprehensive analysis of factors responsible for gaining and sustaining of FMA in a growing market, namely the automobile and tobacco market of Russia. Despite the large number of scientific and practical literature on the FMA topic, there is no research devoted to the experience of international companies, who were first to enter Russian market. So far the goal set by the author was rather new and ambitious.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>The author starts with the literature review where presents major conceptual basics and definitions of first mover and first mover advantages. Much attention in the literature review is paid to the defining and classification of the factors, which are crucial for first mover success and its long-term leadership. Special part of the literature review is devoted to the analysis of the opportunities and challenges for first movers in growing markets.</p> <p>The empirical part is based on deep analysis of secondary data and presented in the form of two case-studies.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>Objectives set by the author are relevant to the title and the aim of the research. During the research process the author proved the ability to search, choose and analyse relevant modern scientific and practical literature on the topic. The author developed integrative framework for the analysis of factors, responsible for gaining and sustaining of FMA and applied it in empirical part of the thesis. Thus selected analytical solution, namely the developed framework, is commendable.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>It is worth emphasizing the difficulty of access to primary information on two cases especially in the JTI case as it dated back to early 90-s. Therefore the author has made a huge work on gathering secondary data on Ford and JTI cases. The representation and the analysis of found data are logically and clear structured, illustrating the analytical framework developed in theoretical part.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>The topic of the thesis as well as research method was suggested by the student and can be considered as being innovative. The research methods are relevant and appropriate for set research goal and objectives.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>The integrative framework, combining factors responsible for gaining and sustaining FMA, was illustrated by two cases and therefore proved to be relevant and applicable. General recommendations of the author can be used by international companies.</p>
<p>Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of</p>

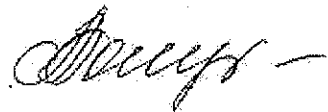
tables, figures, references.

Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense

The Master thesis of Elena Uspasskaya meets the requirements for master thesis of MIB program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Date 25.09.2011

Scientific Advisor: *Senior Lecturer Anastasia A. Golubeva*

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anastasia", followed by a horizontal line.