

## SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

<b>Program:</b>	Master in International Technology and Innovation Management
<b>Student:</b>	Ekaterina Startseva
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	The Analysis and Mitigation of Risks in FMCG Supply Chain: The Case of BAT Eastern Europe

**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.

Master Thesis is written on the topic of "analysis and mitigation of risks in FMCG supply chain" basing on the case of leading tobacco company BAT (its Eastern European subsidiary). The main idea was to examine case company supply chain, to find the causes of negative effects and develop recommendation how to improve the situation. One of the challenges at this work was to identify bullwhip effect impact and develop solution of its mitigation. In my point of view, the paper is of a high topicality, especially for Russian market. The feedback from the case company (which now knows that the reason of many operational and strategic problems is the bullwhip effect) proves it. Most of the objectives, questions and ideas are covered in the text.

**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 paper includes three parts: literature review, research methodology and the case company analyses. I suppose, the paper is well structured and the text is coherent. However, some of the parts are hard to understand, but it basically because of complicated topic of the research. The text is written good enough; however, there are some misprints in the text.

**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.

In her paper Ekaterina used case analyses and I suppose she explained the reason of choosing this method pretty well. There might be a question, why the topic of the research is about the risks while the research method is qualitative and results are not quantified. The reason for this is different scope of Ekaterina's research. It was neither her research interest, nor practical interest of the company. The main task was to identify the bullwhip effect and its causes in the company's supply chain as well as work on practitioner recommendations. This part of the work was done.

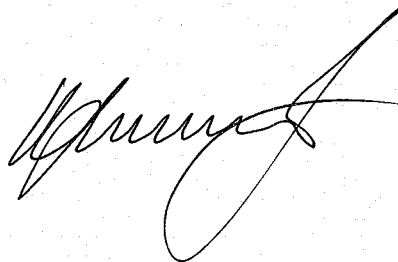
**Quality of data gathering and description.** Quality of selecting research tools and methods; data validity adequacy; adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods; completeness and relevance of the list of references.

Ekaterina did a good job, studying the BAT company, gathering and analysing the information about its processes, organisation structure, everything that might influence the bullwhip effect. Unfortunately she was not allowed to disclose all information, that she gathered and it, probably, negatively affected the results. Taking in account, that there are just few research on such complicated topic (due to difficulties in gathering the information, at most) and almost no in Russia, Ekaterina's work is especially valuable and interesting. Besides, Ekaterina was good in gathering the information during in-depth interviews and analyses of the documents of the company. It is not just valuable information, it is unique information, that only few researchers are able to get and properly analyse.

<p><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.</p> <p>As soon as the paper has practical orientation, there was no need in deep theoretical analyses, so the work that is done by the author is enough for such type of the paper. She did appropriate literature review and came out with suitable theoretical results, proving that a bullwhip might be a key driver for supply chain risks.</p>
<p><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.</p> <p>Practical nature itself and case study in particular is, without any doubts, the strength of the work. Everything – starting with case analyses and ending with practical recommendations are made on appropriate level. The best proof of it is the acceptance of the results by the company. For instance, they discovered for themselves, that out-of-stock problems might be not just because of internal factors, but because of the bullwhip effect. Besides, the strong point of Ekaterina's work is that she really understands complicated processes of BAT EE and is able to comment them, to answer any questions concerning supply chains of BAT EE.</p>
<p><b>Quality of thesis layout.</b> Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references.</p> <p>Quality of layout is, probably, weakest part of the paper: pictures and tables, reference list and appendices, as well as the text are not of a highest quality. Unfortunately, it sometimes leads to misunderstanding of the plot of the text and wrong conclusions.</p>

The Master thesis of Ekaterina Startseva meets the requirements for master thesis of MITIM program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Scientific Advisor:



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