

## SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

<b>Program:</b>	Master of International Business (MIB)
<b>Student:</b>	Dmitry Murzin
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	Typology of Internationalization Strategies of Russian IT-companies

**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.

Recent active international expansion of Russian companies has attracted a lot of attention. However, most of these discussions are focused around very big companies from natural resources industries. Small and medium sized companies from other sectors (with IT industry among them) remain in the shadow. IT sector is especially interesting for the study of internationalization, as in many cases products / services can be sold via internet without establishing international operations. However, why Russian IT companies go abroad and how they do it, still have been barely addressed in the literature. Taking this into account, the master thesis of Dmitry Murzin, aimed to study internationalization strategies of Russian IT companies, appears to be extremely topical.

**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 introduction not only justifies the relevance of the thesis, but also clearly specifies its' focus and author's position regarding key concepts involved in it. After that, the thesis continues with the literature review (Chapter 2) that discusses existing studies in the field, as well as internationalization concepts relevant for IT industry and their implications to this particular sector. Chapter 3 introduces theoretical model that was developed by the author for the analysis of the internationalization strategies of IT companies. Chapter 4 explains the research methodology. Empirical findings are described in detail in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 7 concludes with discussion of findings and their implications. List of references and appendices with lists of secondary data sources complete the thesis.

The text in general presents a logical flow of thought. Theoretical and empirical parts are well-balanced. Some minor improvements can be made in order to link better some of the sub-chapters to each other.

**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 review of the existing literature adequately covers all of the key concepts addressed in the thesis, including the most recent theory developments. The author of the thesis demonstrates critical analytical thinking, being able to analyse critically various approaches, formulate his own position and develop his own theoretical framework for further analysis of collected data.

The analysis of the empirical data is also done in a comprehensive manner.

**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.

The selection of methods for empirical research is quite clearly argued in the chapter 4. Taking into account difficulties of first-hand data collection in Russia in general, and especially regarding the issues of strategic importance for the companies, what should involve interviews with top-management, it would have been unrealistic to expect that an independent student researcher could alone get access to the target companies for primary data collection. For this reason two complementary research strategies were chosen by Dmitry – a) to focus on secondary data but collect as much secondary information as possible, and plus to this, b) to collaborate with one of GSOM research projects dedicated to internationalization of Russian companies, hoping to get access to companies via institutional arrangements.

Strategy a) was fully performed by Dmitry independently, and he made every effort to collect all the

available data and analyse it thoroughly, so that even this data already secures validity and reliability of findings regarding the questions posed. On the top of this, Dmitry successfully collaborated with institutional research project, through which he got access to primary data from 4 companies. These interviews were negotiated and conducted by other members of research team, while Dmitry participated in development of overall project research methodology, and further transcribed and analysed the interviews. The list of references is comprehensive and covers most recent international literature in the field.

**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.

Dmitry has demonstrated himself as a researcher with critical and independent scientific thinking, inquisitive mind and skills to collect and cope with huge and unstructured sets of secondary data. Analysis of the literature, development of the research model, choice of research methodology that would fit his research all were been done by Dmitry himself. Working with vast amounts of secondary data, he was able to look beyond the surface, and see the complex web of factors that influence strategic decisions in organizations.

The main scientific contribution of this thesis is theoretical framework that was developed by the author himself based on the combination of existing generic internationalization theories with specifics of the IT sector. I believe it is an important achievement for Master thesis and has to be appreciated.

**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.

The thesis is of practical value for the managers of IT companies willing to expand abroad. The framework developed by the author in Chapter 3 and further supported by the empirical research can be used for mapping a company and thus identifying the internationalization strategy that would fit it best.

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

The thesis has proper layout through the text.

To summarize, the Master thesis of Dmitry Murzin meets the requirements for master thesis of Master of International Business (MIB) program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

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