

## SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

<b>Program:</b>	MIB
<b>Student:</b>	Ilya Rassalov
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	Factors of relationship quality for companies on foreign B2B markets: The case study of Finnish companies in the Russian market

<p><b>Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis.</b> 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>The scope and goals of the study are clearly defined, and the research gap is well demonstrated. The research setting has apparent potential for a theoretical contribution, as demonstrated by the large number of scientific articles about strategic account management in the leading academic journals of industrial marketing discipline.</p>
<p><b>Structure and logic of the text flow.</b> Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.</p> <p>The study is well-structured and can be divided into theoretical and empirical part. The theoretical part is based on literature review and conceptual analysis. The empirical part is represented by a quantitative research, based on a survey. More than 600 Finnish companies were invited to participate. Basically the author demonstrates good understanding of the research topic, ability to select data and literature as well as to benefit from prior research.</p>
<p><b>Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives.</b> 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>One of the most valuable parts of the research is literature review with the potential for a theoretical contribution. The author has reviewed the articles from scientific journals on the topic of the research – relationship quality. The choice of appropriate metrics has been crucial for reliable relationship evaluation. The offered solutions could be both valuable for scientific research development and managerial implications.</p>
<p><b>Quality of data gathering and description.</b> 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>The author analyses the impact of three variables on relationships quality: cultural sensitivity, asset specificity and role performance. The study is well-structured, and selected research tools and methods are clearly defined. Moreover, the research gap is proved by comprehensive existing literature analysis.</p>
<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>It should be recorded that the thesis study is highly sufficient and the research it describes is of an</p>

international standard.

Objectives, methodology, research delimitations and basic definitions are provided in the paper, making research problem and main research questions clear. The literature is carefully referenced and a comprehensive bibliography contains all the key papers. Based on existing theory, the author develops and tests an empirical model, contributing to the research field.

**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 study is practically – oriented: the authors approach includes several practical contributions: managerial frameworks are being developed with respect to the changed theoretical definitions and concepts.

**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 paper has a correct layout, providing a good quality tables, figures and references. Thus, it absolutely fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence.

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

June, 17, 2011

Head of Marketing Department  
Professor  
Sergei P. Kouchtch

