

Master's Thesis Evaluation by the Opponent

Title of the Master's Thesis:

Project Management and Problem Solving Methods in Management Consulting

Author of the Master's Thesis:

Richard Gábor

Goals of the Master's Thesis:

To describe, apply and analyse the suitable methods in the real life of management consulting, specifically:

Primary Objective: To provide support to the assumption that performing initiation stage correctly using right methods is key to successful project delivery.

Secondary Objective (a) - describe the role, importance and benefits of project management and problem solving methods in management consultancy.

Secondary Objective (b) - to analyse the methods applied, to look at its imperfections, limitations and possible improvements.

EVALUATION OF THE MASTERS' THESIS	
Criteria (each max 10 points)	Points awarded
1. The goals of the thesis are evident and accomplished	9
2. Demands on the knowledge	8
3. Adequacy and the way of the methods used	9
4. Depth and relevance of the analysis in relation to goals	10

5. Making use of literature/other resources, citing	10
6. The thesis is a well-organised logical whole	9
7. Linguistic and terminological level	10
8. Formal layout and formal requirements, extent	9
9. Originality, i.e. it is produced by the student	10
10. Practical/theoretical relevance/applicability	7
Total score in points (max 100)	91
<i>Final grading</i>	<i>Excellent (1)</i>

Overall evaluation, additional questions or comments:

I feel that whilst Richard was able to confirm the hypothesis associated with the primary goal, the actual context of the stated primary goal somewhat misses the point. In its current form it is essentially stating that 'performing adequate investigation prior to commencing a project leads to successful delivery'; to a reader the outcome of such a thesis objective is relatively obvious, without needing to read the full document. Perhaps Richard's primary objective could have been more insightful and attempted to address something like '*Application of management consultancy techniques for the identification of issues and possible solutions is also beneficial to non-profit, non-governmental organisations, as well as compared to corporate counterparts*'. Richard's thesis ultimately supports this hypothesis as well, but I think narrowing the remit of the main objective would lead to a more focused thesis and push the contextual boundary of the management consultancy profession.

In general the thesis is very well written and the points well articulated. I'm not sure to what extent the aggregation of techniques is taught as part of the teaching curriculum, but I was very impressed with the way that Richard was able to combine different 'tools' as in prior studies these techniques are often only addressed in isolation. The diagram on page 92 summarises this conjoined approach very effectively.

Richard was slightly dismissive on the ability to critique the various methods, but as these are well established techniques that form part of the management consultants tool-kit, such goals would be hard to achieve. To do so, would require the thesis to focus in much more detail on individual aspects to identify such areas, and actually have comparable techniques running in parallel to identify relative pro and cons associated for each for the delivery of each stage. In practice, identification of such limitations is a comparative judgment, for example method A better than method B, or if the techniques is applied to a recognised benchmark. Without comparative analysis achieving the goals (of secondary objective (b)) to the fullest extent was inherently limited.

The fact that the project team were able to identify several positive actions, one of which (concerning establishing the 'friends club') the client appeared to *jump at* is a strong indication of the commercial acumen that Richard and the other team members have developed. Applying these skills represent a solid foundation for Richard as he moves from education into the corporate environment.

Potential questions to be addressed to Richard

1. Ultimately the main action point identified in the thesis related to increasing income, which is often the primary goal if such an exercise were to be performed on a corporate entity. In what ways are the approaches of management consultancy practitioner different when investigating corporate, governmental and non-profit & non-governmental organisations?

2. For a corporate entity, perhaps the most powerful stakeholder is the shareholder and their desire to maximise the return on investment. With regards to Transparency International Czech Republic who is the most significant stakeholder in the organisation? What is their primary objective if it not to maximise monetary return on investment?

3. Transparency International Czech Republic is a small entity. Could these techniques described be applied to the umbrella organisation level i.e. international (as typically where the budget for such services is located). What does Richard see as the main challenges in performing such consultancy services at the parent level?

The name of the opponent:

Stephen Hayward

The employer of the opponent:

During the review I was an Assistant Director at Deloitte Advisory S.r.o (Corporate Finance), then moving to a CFO role at Blue Style s.r.o. (Travel Tour Operator).

I honestly declare that I am not in any allied relationship with the author of this Master's Thesis.

14 September 2011

Signature of the opponent