Master Thesis & PhD Forum
Information Session

Chair of Business-to-Business Marketing, Sales & Pricing
Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Christian Homburg
Agenda

- Prerequisites for a Master thesis
- Requirements of a good Master thesis
- Success factors for creating a Master thesis
- Value proposition of the Chair
- Types of Master theses at our Chair
- Presentation of exemplary Master thesis
- Your contact for a Master thesis at our Chair
- The entire process - from finding a topic to the final submission
- Further development: special opportunity - position yourself for a PhD
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Prerequisites for a master thesis

For students of the MMM (begin HWS 2012 and later)

- MKT 510 (Price and Product Management)
- MKT 520 (Market Research)
- One more 500-Module
- MKT 710/720/730/740 (Seminar at one of the marketing chairs)
MKT 710 – Research seminar
Seminar concept of the Chair (1/2)

- **Design/ Structure**
  - The basis: eight to ten marketing related “key topics” (e.g. pricing, innovation management,…)
  - For each “key topic“ there are approx. three specific topics
  - Those range from around 30 current topics in marketing
  - Maximum number of participants: approx. 20; surplus applicants will definitely get a place at another marketing chair

- **Components of the seminar paper**
  - Preparation of the seminar paper ("mini-thesis") in individual work
  - Submission of work: after eight weeks
  - Presentation of the work in the context of block courses during the semester (20-minute presentation including discussion)

- **Grading**
  - Attending block courses is mandatory
  - Composition of the grade: 70% written work, 30% oral presentation
  - Receipt of the seminar certificate with at least gaining a 4.0 (german grading system)
Goals

- Learning how to interpret, structure, and present academic work in the area of Marketing
- Seminar prepares participants for writing a master thesis at our chair

Application / Admission

- Application for the course in the following semester starts at the end of each semester
- Announcement of the dates for registration in the lectures and the Internet
- Applications are made via e-mail including references of topics as well as application documents (including CV, high school diploma, bachelor's degree certificate or "Vordiplom"-certificate, transcript of records in Master program, and a letter of motivation to participate)
- Contact: Dr. Jana-Kristin Prigge

Next seminar

- FSS 19
- Please note: It makes sense to write the seminar paper and the master thesis at the same chair
- All information provided on our website
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Requirements of a good Master thesis

Requirements

Meaningful
- Clear presentation of the benefits of the thesis
- Creation of added value for research and / or practice

Scientifically sophisticated
- Identification of relevant research gaps
- Systematic and comprehensive screening and adaptation of high-profile national and international literature (conceptually and empirically)
- Clear presentation of theoretical reference points
- Terms of theoretical/ scientific knowledge in the context of the provided argument
- Critical acclaim of scientific articles
- Development of own approaches and concepts
- May involve own empirical investigation
- Representation of implications for further research and practice

Structured and clearly presented
- Informative outline
- Clear objective
- Meaningful classification of the subject
- Clear integration and processing of relevant scientific literature
- Clarity of rational and structured thinking (1 paragraph = 1 thought)
- Sound and logical argumentation
- Critical acclaim of the literature

Formally error free
- Accurate spelling and writing
- Error-free grammar
- Absence of punctuation errors
- Flawless citation
- Other formal aspects
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Success factors for creating a Master thesis

- **Personal success factors**
  - Analytical thinking
  - Enthusiasm for the selected topic
  - Motivation

- **Process-related success factors**
  - Timely and regular interaction with the supervisor
  - Professional time management
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Value proposition of the Chair

- **Topics of interest**
  - Topics of high relevance for research and practice
  - Variety of interesting questions

- **Intensive supervision**
  - Competent and “customer-oriented“ service
  - Teaching and use of the latest scientific and methodological knowledge

- **Valuable results**
  - Challenging Master thesis in terms of content
  - Opportunities for publication
Frequency distribution of graduation of Master theses

- Frequency distribution of 2015/2016 grading

- Average rating 1.51
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Types of Master theses at our Chair

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Types of Master theses at our Chair

**Research-oriented Master thesis**

- "State of the Field“ Master thesis
  - Master thesis for the systematic and comprehensive research on extraordinary national and international literature

- "Own Research“ Master thesis
  - Independent development of an own scientific research project
  - Review of scientific literature, creating a conceptual framework with subsequent empirical investigation

**Practice-oriented Master thesis**

- "Company Specific Problem Solving“ Master thesis
  - Business-related Master thesis to clarify specific practice-related issues
  - The Master thesis in cooperation with a company

- "State of Practice“ Master thesis
  - Industry-specific and cross-industry empirical work
  - Industry-specific and cross-industry theoretical and conceptual work
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- Presentation of exemplary Master thesis

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Presentation of exemplary Master thesis

Types of Master theses

Research-oriented Master thesis

- „State of the Field“ Master thesis
- „Own Research“ Master thesis

- Vanessa Meermann, M.Sc.

Practice-oriented Master thesis

- „Company Specific Problem Solving“ Master thesis
- „State of Practice“ Master thesis
Example of a research-oriented "State of the Field" – Thesis (1/2)

- Overview

**Topic**

Incentivizing Sales Force – The role of group incentives

**Content**

Answer the following research questions
- What are group incentives?
- How can group incentives be operationalized?
- Which desired effect on performance measures can group incentives have?
- Which undesired effects may group incentives trigger?
- In how far does the relational structure within the group influence the performance outcomes of group incentives?
- In how far can group incentives be framed to influence performance outcome?

**Findings**

- Group incentives can have both desired and undesired performance outcomes
  
  ➔ A simple perspective on the effectiveness of incentives is not enough to evaluate its net outcomes and effects
- Certain structural measures of groups have influence on group performance
- Framed incentives have an effect on performance and productivity, however, companies hardly use them
Example of a research-oriented "State of the Field" – Thesis (2/2)

- Temporal and procedural flow of the Diploma / Master thesis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search Topics and derivation of research questions</td>
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<td>Review of the literature on the relevant fields</td>
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<td>Development of frameworks to structure the research field</td>
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<td>Derivation of the Conceptual Model and Propositions</td>
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Legend: ⬤ Submission
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For questions regarding Master:

• Moritz Tischer
  • Office Hours: Please make an appointment
  • Office: L5,1 – 2nd floor, room 209
  • Tel. 0621 / 181-3552
  • E-Mail: moritz.tischer@bwl.uni-mannheim.de
Contact for Master Theses

Suggested topics of the chair
(See list of topics on the Website)

Suggested topics regarding
- “State of the Field”,
- “Own Research” and
Master thesis

Proposals regarding
"Company Specific
Problem Solving" and
“State of Practice“
Master thesis

Proposals regarding
- „State of the Field“,,
- „Own Research“ and
Master thesis

Moritz Tischer

Research Assistants / Assistants

Moritz Tischer

Moritz Tischer

Topic suggestions by students

Proposals regarding
"Company Specific
Problem Solving" and
“State of Practice“
Master thesis

Moritz Tischer

Moritz Tischer

Proposals regarding
- „State of the Field“,,
- „Own Research“ and
Master thesis

Moritz Tischer

Moritz Tischer
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- The process - from finding a topic to the final submission

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The process of finding a topic until handing in the thesis - Notes on scheduling

- **Start time** fully flexible (once all conditions are met by students)

- **Individual schedules** are arranged directly with the respective supervisor

- **Time required:**
  - 2-6 weeks for finding the topic  → care early about your topic
  - 1-2 months preparation phase  → first reading, drawing the outline, where necessary, preparing own investigations
  - 4 months official processing time
The process of finding a topic until handing in the thesis - General information

✓ Specific preparation for the Master thesis by attending the seminar

✓ Choose from a variety of topics (Price management, product management, customer relationship management, B2B marketing ...)
  ⇒ see list of topics on the Internet

✓ Opportunity to propose own topics

✓ Ability to write different types of Master theses
  (research-oriented vs. practice-oriented)

✓ Opportunity to submit work in German or English

✓ For empirical work opportunity to submit in the form of a scientific paper, allowing publishing opportunities where applicable

✓ Given opportunity to access old theses
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PhD in marketing – why should I think about it?

A PhD is a great opportunity to learn:

- Independent & creative idea development
- Conceptual & logical reasoning
- Statistical & textual analyses
- Writing & results presentation
- Project & time management

Major goal of a PhD is to prepare oneself for an academic career (i.e., „Habilitation“), but PhDs are also valued in business practice.

Industries where business PhDs are valued highly:

- Chemistry
- Machinery
- Automotive
- Pharmaceuticals
- Banks/Insurance Companies

Industries where business PhDs are lesser valued:

- Fast Moving Consumer Goods
- Retailing
PhD @ the chair of Prof. Homburg – what’s it all about?

- A PhD at our chair lasts about 3.5 years in total
- We offer a diverse set of tasks at our chair
  - Teaching of students
  - IMU-related activities
  - Communications with the press
  - Strategy projects with firms
  - Event organization
- Dissertation projects in cooperation with industry partners possible
- You are employed at a 75% position (net ~1.700€, full social insurance benefits)
- Side jobs are encouraged, i.e. teaching at other institutions (up to 2.400 € tax free per year) or consulting jobs at Homburg & Partner (400 €/day)
- Our alumni are placed within major industrial and consulting firms

**Hubert Burda Media**  **McKinsey&Company**

**arvato**  **DAIMLER**  **BASF**

**AT Kearney**  **Lufthansa**  **SIEMENS**

**BCG**
How to get started: envision your PhD as early as possible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6-12 months before start of Master thesis</th>
<th>2-3 months</th>
<th>4 months</th>
<th>6-12 months after seminar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research seminar</td>
<td>Decision process/ application</td>
<td>Start of coaching process/ topic finding with Prof. Homburg</td>
<td>Master thesis, basis for dissertation proposal</td>
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- You detect your interest for scientific work
- Potentially, you discuss your plans with your supervisor
- You hand in usual application documents at the chair
- We possibly invite you to an assessment at the chair
- You work out options for PhD-relevant research questions
- You develop an understanding of the empirical side of your further studies
- Usual master thesis
- Literature review/expert interviews in your target field
- Directly after submission of Master thesis: start at chair
- Preparation of papers

### Early career planning: we can offer positions about one year in advance

### Smooth transition between master thesis and PhD assures time synergies for your dissertation

### We integrate prospective PhD students in our team, i.e. at our chair events
Example of a dissertation project at our chair (1/3)

Overview

Topic

Motivating Sales Reps for Innovation Selling

Motivating Sales Reps for Innovation Selling in Different Cultures.

Research questions:
• Which financial steering instruments are appropriate in different cultures?
• Which nonfinancial steering instruments are appropriate in different cultures?

Paper 1

Which Steering Instrument for Whom? Motivating Different Types of Sales Reps for Innovation Selling

Research questions:
• Which types of sales reps are most likely to succeed at innovation selling?
• Which steering instruments are appropriate for which type of sales rep?
### Temporal and procedural flow of the dissertation process

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<td>Completion of the research seminar and application for a PhD position</td>
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<td>Alignment of PhD topic and master thesis to define interesting research questions, conceptual model &amp; hypotheses</td>
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<td>Acquisition of funds to investigate the aligned research questions and test the hypotheses</td>
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<td>Data collection</td>
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<td>Paper development, writing, and submission (and MANY revisions)</td>
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**Legend:** ○ Submission
Example of a dissertation project at our chair (3/3)

- **How does the “non-scientific part“ look like? My experiences…**
  - Consultancy projects: BOSCH (Business Modelizer, ~6 months); Homburg & Partner (Marketing Excellence, ~ 4 months)
  - Company contacts and project acquisitions
  - Teaching: lecture “Marketing for Minors“
  - HR representative
  - Books, e.g., “Customer Retention Management”

- **Why doing a PhD at the chair of Professor Homburg? My experiences…**
  - Close supervision by Professor Homburg and “the coach“ (e.g., an assistant professor at the Marketing Department)
  - Steep learning curves (e.g., through scientific projects and consultancy projects)
  - Flexible working environment
  - Variety of tasks (e.g., teaching, consultancy projects, data analysis, paper writing)
  - Very high autonomy (the PhD student is the driving force of his/her project)
  - …
Feel free to contact us!

Further questions? Please contact: Dominik Wielgos
Office: L5, 1 – 1st floor, room 101
Tel. 0621 / 181-1384
E-Mail: dominik.wielgos@bwl.uni-mannheim.de
 We wish you all the best with your Master thesis!

 For further questions please contact Moritz Tischer.

 Slides will be uploaded on our website.