

Tutor Comment Form – Final Dissertation

Section One To be completed by the student

Please tick as appropriate

Name PETER VAN CAUWENBERGH

MBA

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Qualification
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Please indicate if applicable

Date registered on MBA Programme

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BELGIUMIBMTitle of Dissertation An investigation into the impact of company culture on the performance of IBM's Outsourcing department in Belgium.

I hereby declare that the attached Dissertation is my own work and understand that if I am suspected of plagiarism or other form of cheating, my work will be referred to the Board of Examiners which may result in my being expelled from the College.

Signature

Date

March 28th 2001**Section Two** To be completed by the tutor

Note below your comments on content, structure and presentation. Use continuation sheet if necessary.

Supervising tutor comments attached.

Grade

A-

Pass



Fail



Tutor

David Rees

Tutor's signature



Date

4 April 2001**Section Three** To be completed by the moderator

Grade

A

Pass



Fail



Moderator

Prof C. Carnall

Moderator's signature



Date

Peter Van Cauwenbergh – Final Submission Tutor Comments (David Rees)

The research proposition – investigating the impact of company culture on performance – was an adventurous and brave attempt to tackle a highly contentious aspect of organisational behaviour. It came as no surprise, therefore, to find that no clear relationship between cultural characteristics and performance could be established. This was openly declared by the candidate. Many researchers would view this outcome as a disappointment, but this Dissertation has contributed positively to the debate on corporate culture and performance through a robust analysis and scientific investigation.

More important to evaluate, then, is the quality of the research approach and methodology.

The literature review provided a well-balanced discussion of 'culture', drawing together the main threads of research history into the topic. Writers and models were appropriately selected and critiqued with reasoned conclusions drawn. Goffee and Jones Double S Model was justified as an appropriate fieldwork tool derived from the literature. A good case was made for undertaking cultural fit assessment, with the IBM Outsourcing Department in Belgium taken as a relevant example. Other situations such as Mergers, Acquisitions and Partnerships where such assessments are relevant were identified. Initiative was demonstrated in transferring knowledge and understanding of models - the Sears Employee/Customer/Profit Chain a case in point – to derive tailored models for the purpose of this specific Dissertation research. It was clear that this candidate had mastered the subject area and was capable of applying passive knowledge to business situations.

The fieldwork provided a showcase for the undoubted prime research skills of the writer. The statistical analysis was performed to an extremely high standard. So intense did this analysis become, the opportunities for qualitative interpretation of results became limited by the constraints of the word allowance for the work. The candidate chose to focus on a complex data analysis to reach conclusions on the hypothesis and there is no doubt that conclusions reached were valid based upon this approach. By way of contrast many candidates researching this field would place far more emphasis on the qualitative interpretation. So this turned out to be a bold piece of social science research using a credible quantitative approach and the candidate met the research objectives.

One aspect of this work that could be improved is the significance not only to the organisation but also to the candidate as an individual. Considering this work as a learning opportunity, greater emphasis needed to be placed upon the benefits such research would bring to the individual's managerial performance. In particular, what key learning points were derived from undertaking such a major project for the Henley/IBM MBA programme? This deserved a little more attention and could be dealt with as a short section at the end, the candidate reflecting back on the learning process as much as the technical research process. Nevertheless, this criticism should not detract from what is clearly a scholarly piece of work that has real value to the business.

The work was written in appropriate style. From a readability perspective the text was broken into appropriate sub-sections but could be improved further by incorporating some of the diagrammatic representations contained in the Appendices (eg the Cultural Iceberg). Structurally, this submission was developed coherently and systematically, taking the reader along a clear research path.

A diligent piece of work and worthy of a high grade, the candidate should feel real satisfaction from this submission.