

Master Thesis & PhD Forum

Information Session



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



imu | Institute for Market-Oriented Management

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

- The prerequisite for writing a master's thesis at the Area of Marketing is the successful completion of a seminar **MKT 7X0** at one of the marketing chairs (LS Homburg MKT 710, LS Stahl MKT 720, LS Kuuster MKT 730, LS Kraus MKT 740 or LS Vomberg MKT 750) and the successful completion of the courses **MKT 510 (or MKT 301) and MKT 520**
- We also recommend that students write their Master's thesis at the chair where the seminar paper was written, thus enabling early involvement in the respective research and project work of the chair

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, in total around 30 current topics in marketing
- Maximum number of participants: approx. 20; surplus applicants will 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 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)

MKT 710 – Research Seminar

Seminar Concept of the Chair (2/2)

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

- Please note that the application for the MKT 710 Seminar is centralized within the Marketing & Sales Area.

Next seminar

- **Please note:** It makes sense to write the seminar paper and the master at the same chair
- All information provided on our website

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Requirements of a Good Master Thesis

Requirements			
Meaningful	Scientifically sophisticated	Structured and clearly presented	Formally error-free
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear presentation of the benefits of the thesis • Creation of added value for research and/or practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

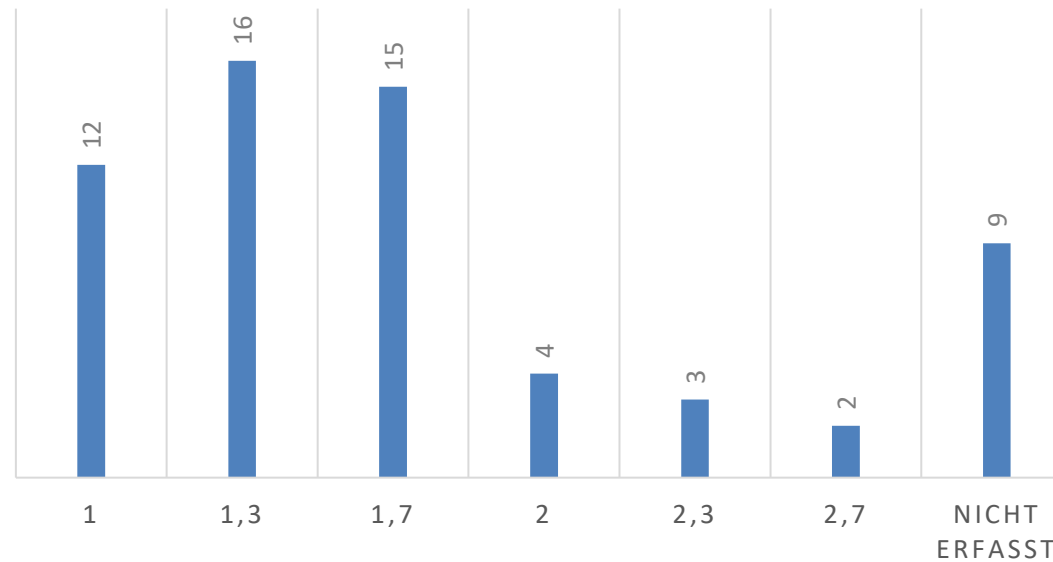
- Competent and “customer-oriented” service
- Teaching and use of the latest scientific and methodological knowledge

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

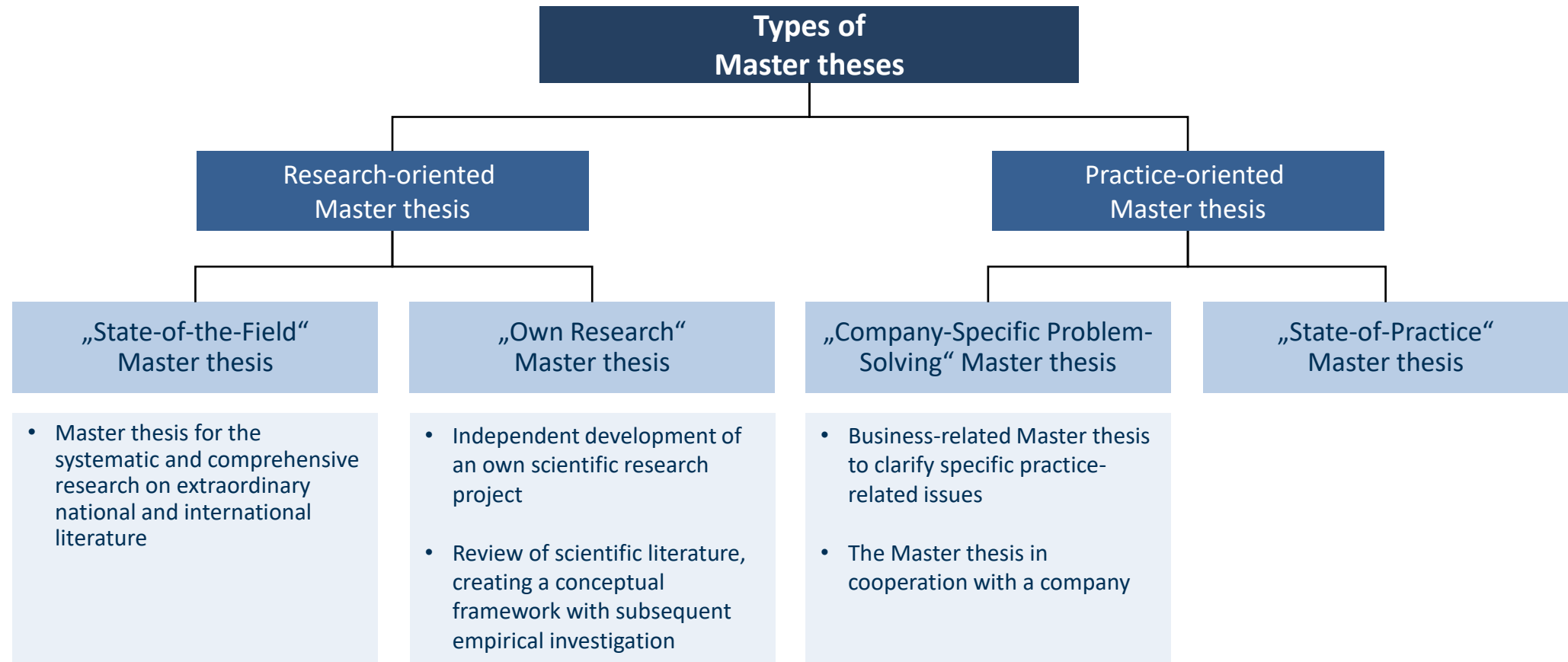


→ Average rating: 1.51

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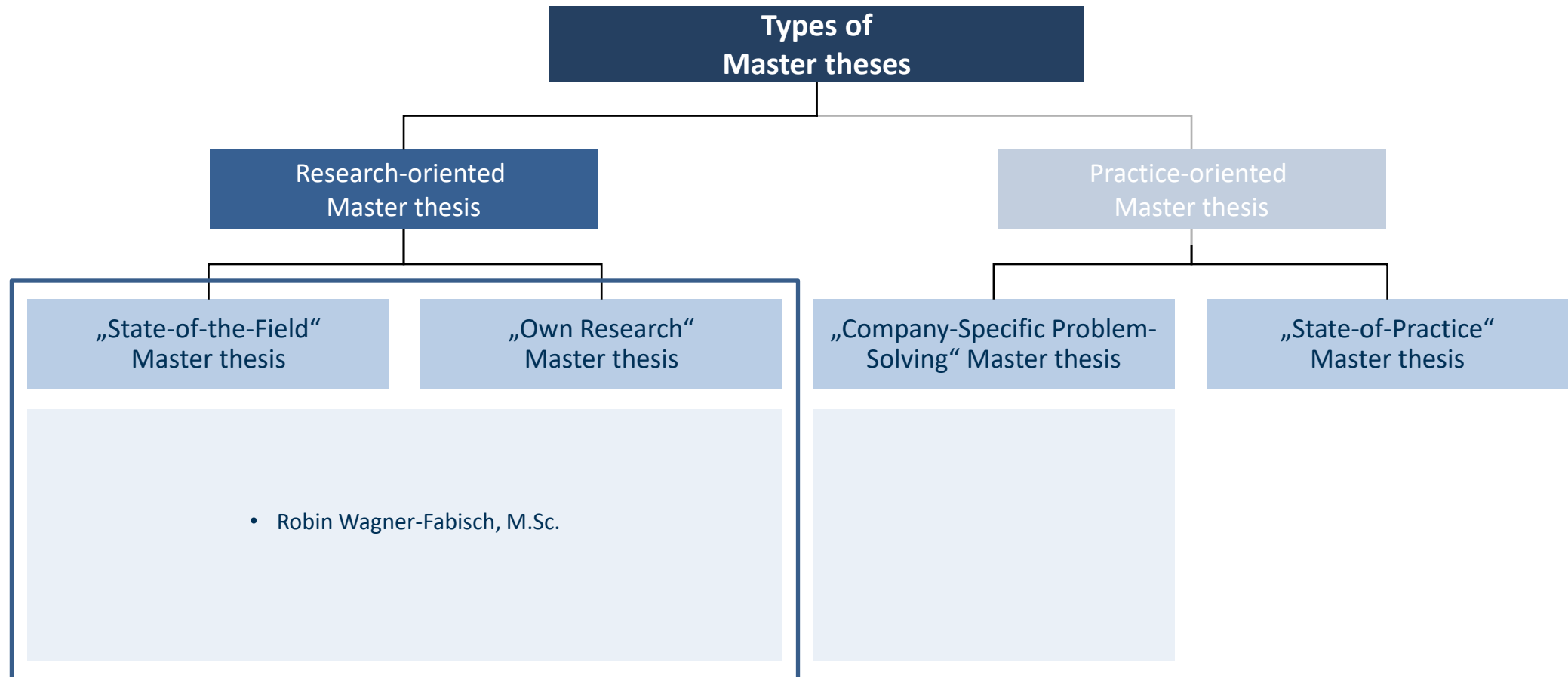
Types of Master Theses at our Chair



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Presentation of Exemplary Master Thesis



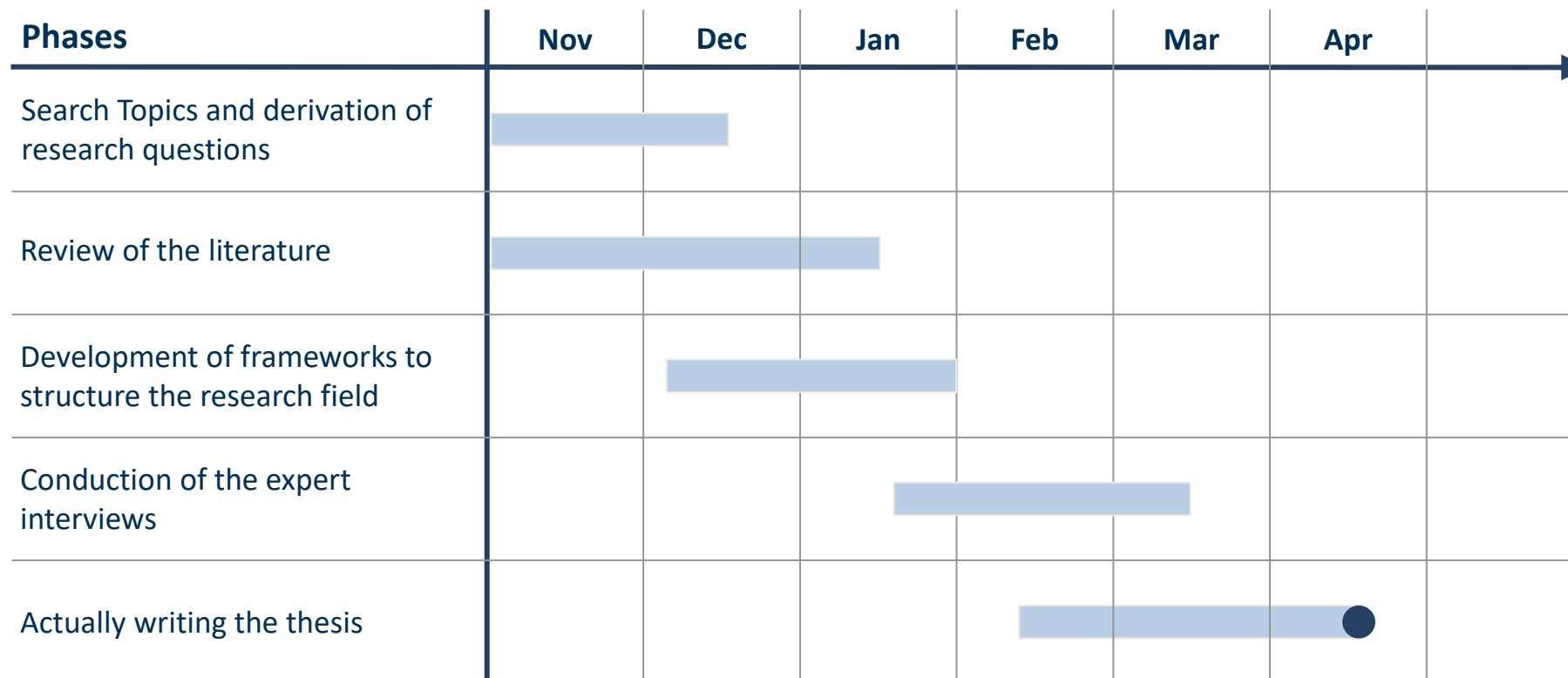


Example of a Research-oriented Thesis (1/2)

Overview		
Topic	Content	Findings
The Changing Role of B2B Salespeople in Today's Highly Digitized World	<p>Answer the following research questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are business-to-business buyer-seller interactions changing due to advances in technology?• Are new technologies making interactions more transactional, consultative, or collaborative?• What salesperson-performed tasks as well as knowledge, skills, and abilities will change in importance, emerge, or disappear as communication and analytical technologies evolve?• Which salesperson-performed tasks as well as knowledge, skills, and abilities will differentiate firms? <p>Identify promising trends in B2B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fundamental shift from transactional to relationship selling is omnipresent: usage of digital sales tools facilitates the daily work of the sales force; hence, more temporal as well as financial resources remain for building personal relationships• Cold calls and formerly omnipresent persuasion activities almost disappeared; to assess the customer lifetime value and to early recognize arising needs became the imperative for today's sales force• Promising Trends in B2B sales: Predictive Maintenance, Consultancy Services in Return for Payment, Danger of Information Overload, Academization of Sales Force, Right Degree of Pricing Authority



Example of a Research-oriented Thesis (2/2)



Legend: ● Submission

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Contact for Master Theses (1/2)



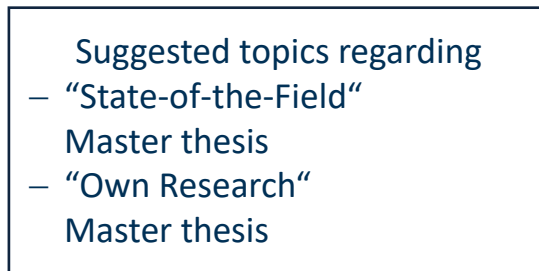
For questions regarding Master theses:

Florian Holz

- *Office Hours: Please make an appointment*
- *Office: L5,1 – 2nd floor, room 210*
- *Tel.: 0621 / 181-1549*
- *E-Mail: florian.holz@uni-mannheim.de*

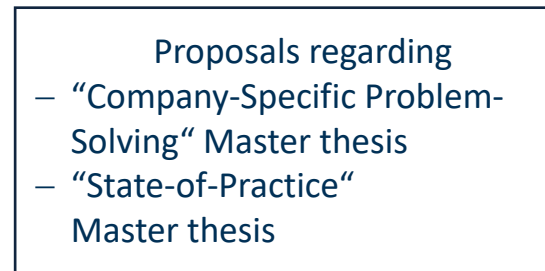
Contact for Master Theses (2/2)

Suggested topics of the chair (see list of topics on our website)



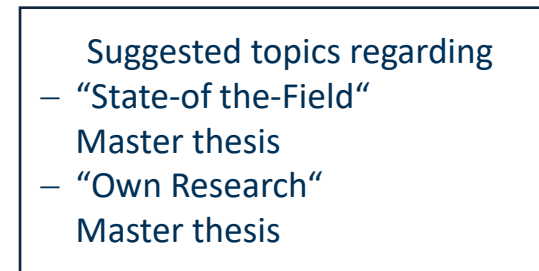
Florian Holz:
General inquiries
about a Master
thesis

Research
Assistants/
Assistants

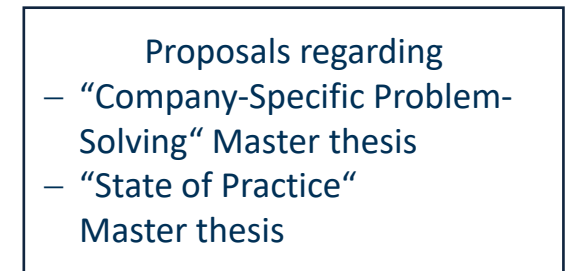


Florian Holz

Topic suggestions by students



Florian Holz



Florian Holz

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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 our website
- ✓ 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 | – Pharmaceuticals |
| – Machinery | – Banks/Insurance Companies |
| – Automotive | – Consultancy |

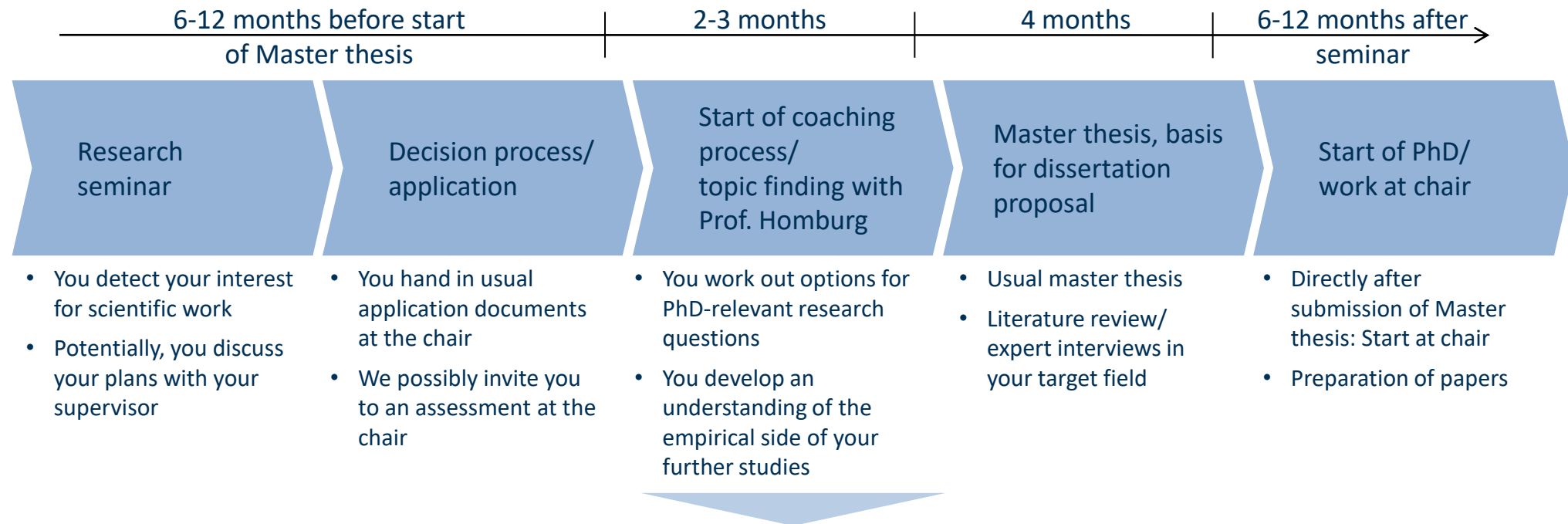
PhD @ the Chair of Prof. Homburg – What's It all About?

- A PhD at our chair lasts about **3 – 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
 - Event organization
 - Strategy projects with firms
- Dissertation projects in cooperation with industry partners possible
- You are employed at a **75% position** (EG 13 TV-L)
- **Side jobs are encouraged**, i.e., teaching at other institutions or consulting jobs
- Our alumni are placed within major industrial and consulting firms

Special opportunity:
You can outline your
PhD topic in your
master thesis!



How to Get Started: Envision Your PhD as Early as Possible

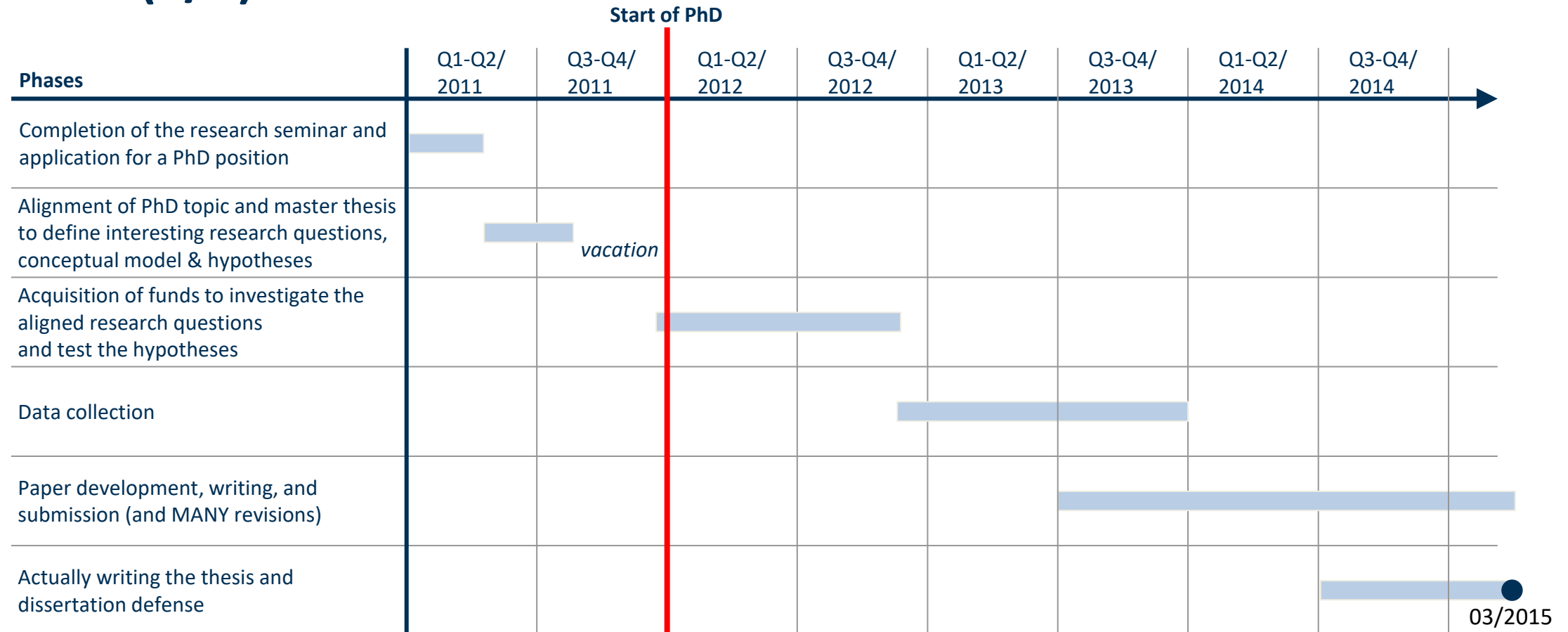


- + Early career planning: we can offer positions about one year in advance**
- + Smooth transition between master thesis and PhD assures time synergies for your dissertation**
- + We integrate prospective PhD students in our team, i.e., at our chair events**

Example of a Dissertation Project at Our Chair (1/3)

Overview		
Topic	Paper 1	Paper 2
Motivating Sales Reps for Innovation Selling	<p>Motivating Sales Reps for Innovation Selling in Different Cultures. Journal of Marketing: March 2016, Vol. 80, No. 2, pp. 101-120.</p> <p>Research questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which financial steering instruments are appropriate in different cultures? • Which nonfinancial steering instruments are appropriate in different cultures? 	<p>Which Steering Instrument for Whom? Motivating Different Types of Sales Reps for Innovation Selling</p> <p>Research questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which types of sales reps are most likely to succeed at innovation selling? • Which steering instruments are appropriate for which type of sales rep?

Example of a Dissertation Project at Our Chair (2/3)



Legend: ● Submission

Example of a Dissertation Project at Our Chair (3/3)

How does the “non-scientific part” look like? An example...

- 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? An example...

- 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!



Interested in a PhD? Further questions? Please contact:

Stefan Hartmann

- *Office Hours: Please make an appointment*
- *Office: L5,1 – 2nd floor, room 209*
- *Tel.: 0621 / 181-1834*
- *E-Mail: stefan.hartmann@uni-mannheim.de*

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- We wish you all the best with your Master thesis!
- For further questions related to your Master thesis, please contact **Florian Holz**