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Author(s)	Antero Törhönen	Student number	
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Supervisor(s)	D.Sc.(Econ.) Nina Nummela		

Abstract

The goal of this study is to describe and analyse the motives of SME's to internationalise rapidly. The focus is especially on knowledge intensive high technology companies, which tend to internationalise at a faster pace than traditional companies. From the methodological point of view this is a qualitative case study. Therefore, the motives of the case company to internationalise are studied in detail.

The study first introduces findings from different internationalisation studies, on the basis of which we can identify different motives for a firm to internationalise. The motives were divided into three groups. These were factors pushing the firm abroad, factors pulling the firm abroad, as well as internal firm specific factors. The impacts of these factors to the case company were studied. Moreover, by comparing the motives of the case company to internationalise with the general success factors in internationalisation, it was possible to analyse the reasons why its internationalisation had not gone according to plans.

Data for the study was collected through interviews, observations and by going through internal documents of the case company. The most important findings of the study were that the internationalisation of the case company was not very market oriented, but rather product and technology oriented. The company had also failed to reach its objectives for internationalisation. According to this study, the main reasons for this outcome were the modest marketing and managerial experience accumulated in the company, as well as the pressure from the members of the board and venture capitalists, who maintained that the firm should internationalise fast without paying enough attention on the means of succeeding in it. The forming of the company during the IT boom in the late 90's most likely had an impact on the outcome as well.

Key words	Internationalisation, globalization, strategy, small and medium sized enterprise
Further information	