

# **СТАНОВИЩЕ**

## **STANDPOINT**

**by Prof. Dr. Mariya Petrova Vidolova,  
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of the materials, presented for the participation in the competition to occupy the academic position "Associate Professor" in scientific field 3.8 "Economics" (Marketing and Digital Business), announced for the needs of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (SG, issue 30/15.04.2022)

The participant in the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" is one – Mihaela Metodieva Mihaylova, Doctor, Part-time lecturer in the Higher School of Insurance and Finances

### **1. General description of the procedure and of the candidate**

By order № 172/29.07.2022 of the Rector of Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF University) – Prof. Dr. jur. Boris Veltchev, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to form a procedure related to the announced competition to occupy the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, in scientific field 3.8 "Economics" /Marketing and Digital Business/, where the one candidate is Dr. Mihaela Mihaylova, Part-time lecturer in the Higher School of Insurance and Finances.

The materials submitted by the candidate include the following documents : resume, copy of the PhD Degree Diploma, one monograph along its resume, list of the publication after the defense of the doctoral thesis, resumes of the publications in Bulgarian and English languages, health certification, certificate showing no previous conviction, length of service certificate, proofs of participation in scientific projects and other types of researches, reference for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor", reference for the original scientific contributions within the works and the citations, consent to data processing related to the competition participation. In the relation to the competition, the candidate submitted 1 monograph, 1 book based on the dissertation research, 3 articles and 10 papers part of collections of scientific papers from national and international scientific conferences, published in non-refereed journals or published in edited collective volumes.

## **2. Short biographical data for the candidate**

Doctor M. Mihaylova graduated with a master's degree in "Marketing" in the University of National and World Economy. In 2019 she defended a doctoral thesis "Market orientation of companies applying direct marketing in Bulgaria". Since 2021 she currently works as a Digitalization Project Manager in Bulstrad Life Vienna Insurance Group. The candidate meets the minimum national requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor" according to the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria and respectively to the Regulation for its implementation in the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF University).

## **3. General Assessment of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of candidate's research works submitted for the competition**

The monograph presented in the competition, is dedicated to an actual problem within the digitalization context – in particular, it represents the adoption of Bulgarian websites as an immutable part of the online presence and of the company's communication, as a prerequisite for the formation of customers' preferences in a very competitive and turbulent environment. The author makes a profound study about the role, the nature, and the main characteristics of the company's websites, including their legal protection, the dimensions and the indications influencing theirs' usability and interactivity for implementing the digital marketing instruments and the perspectives and possibilities for the intensification the online presence of the Bulgarian companies, especially in pandemic conditions as part of the entire process related to increasing and improving company's presence, their online identity and the interactive dialogue in social media.

The empirical study of the characteristics of Bulgarian websites and customers' preferences derives the conception of a "good" website, it confirms the positive impact of the website and social media presence on the company business, also on the adaptivity of Bulgarian companies within changing environmental conditions.

The published book of Dr. Mihaylova based on the defended doctoral thesis – "Direct marketing and market orientation of the Bulgarian companies", stands second by significance level in this competition. This publication outlines again to a great extent the digitalization as a motive power for establishing new company's approaches including the direct marketing approach which enlists the personalization, forming long-term relationships leading to customer's loyalty – which results in forming sustainable competitive advantages and offering additional value to the client. The publication puts an accent on several actual questions related to the need of market orientation of companies applying direct marketing approach also on harmonizing direct marketing approaches with market orientation conception.

Significant part of the questions raised in the monographs are subject of analysis within the submitted articles and papers where the author throws light on applying and manifestation of direct marketing in Bulgaria, on perspectives of online education when studying marketing products, also on forming company's online identity during a pandemic, on several empirical manifestations related innovations within companies which use direct marketing, also on direct marketing approaches in the Internet.

#### **4. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions**

The accepted publications in regard to the competition correspond to the minimum national requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor".

The main contributions that could be outlined based on the publications submitted in the competition are:

Study of websites of Bulgarian companies with a view to their successful position in the context of increasing digitalization.

- The author analyses successfully company's web presence proving its' role and place when customers' intentions are formed especially when this is related to the expansion of all the tools of digital marketing in all sectors
- The conducted empirical research is oriented towards the improvement of efficacy and effectiveness of Bulgarian company by increasing their competitive advantages and improving their online identity
- The author demonstrates skills for analyzing and systematization of the problems related to the intensification of companies' web presence in different platforms by submitting the conclusions and generalization in a comprehensible manner.

#### **5. Critical remarks and recommendations**

As a recommendation toward the author, I would indicate the necessity of a more profound analysis of the vision and the digitalized websites/mobile applications of Bulgaria companies in the context of an extremely competitive environment which has never been such before. The expectations toward a monograph are to describe a picture about the advantages of the offered products by different companies when commenting their scope and their complexity. The time after 2021 is critical for the whole industry. Consequently, during the next decade enormous changes in doing business will be observed. Companies which accept the digital change will have a better future and this depends to a great extent on the visibility and on a strong domain, meaning that by the incorporation of correct websites the respective companies could be easily positioned among relevantly more significant players in the digital business era.

In her next work it would be useful for the author to outline several main requirements to which the contemporary Bulgarian websites should correspond taking into consideration the significant national and multinational competition – and more precisely – parameters related to a correct XML format, website map, navigation path which improves the internal website structure and which is one of the tools for improving the website usability, well structured and descriptive url addresses, redirects showing to the main page, self-referencing tags to every static website page, synonyms optimization, additional key words for website's ranking, image alt texts, Google Tag Manager, improving page loading time, Open Graph Protocol, implementing of structured data for sharing in social media, Responsive web design – creating of website which could be adapted to the size of the user's window – which allows fast loading with lower costs, more mobile traffic, higher conversion rates, easier analytical reporting and improved SEO activity.

These recommendations do not undervalue at all the worthiness of the work submitted for the competition, they outline future guidelines for the scientific activity of Dr. Mihaylova.

## **CONCLUSION**

Dr. Mihaylova participates in the competition to occupy the academic position "Associate Professor" with a sufficient scientific production in regard to its volume and quality. The professional and the lecturer's experience of the candidate and the mentioned scientific and scientific-applied contributions correspond to the requirements to occupy the academic position "Associate Professor" in the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF). The submitted materials for the competition contain scientific-applied results which are important for the science and practice in the examined domain and correspond the minimum national requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor" according to the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria and respectively to the Regulation for its implementation in the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF University). The author possesses profound theoretical knowledge and professional skills of scientific field 3.8 "Economics" by demonstrating qualities and skills for conducting individually scientific research.

Due to the aforementioned statements, I am confidently giving my positive assessment of the presented materials in relation to the competition, the results achieved and contributions, I propose the honorable scientific jury to award the academic position "Associate Professor" to Dr. Mihaela Mihaylova, in the Field of Higher Education 3. Social, business and legal sciences; Professional direction 3. 8. Economics.

22.08. 2022 г.

**Member of Jury:** .....

**Prof. Dr. Mariya Petrova Vidolova**