Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Business Administration with an emphasis in Strategic Management

R. Scott Morris

Master of Business Administration, December 2000, Indiana University
Bachelor of Arts, December 1991, DePauw University

Successfully Scaling Digital Technology Ventures:
An Empirical Study of the Strategic Choices that Maximize Firm Value

Date: August 22, 2023
Time: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Place: Room 106 Anheuser-Busch Hall

Abstract
Our study aims to understand the choices managers working for digital ventures must make at arguably the most critical juncture of their firm’s lifecycle. With few slack resources to repair mistakes, managers at these scaling firms must make decisions that are larger in scope and scale than in the start-up phase. Tradeoffs are often required as decision-makers face choices such as investing more resources in sales and marketing to drive growth or in product development to improve quality and add new products or features. In many instances, the question is whether to forego some growth opportunities to maximize profitability or pursue growth even if the result is profit losses. Prioritization must be given to a few limited resources while consciously allowing others to remain underfunded. Further complicating matters, these initial investments are often inefficient. For example, a new sales team does not instantly create value. Due to this inefficiency, evaluating the success of a manager’s use of resources may take time. Managers making poor choices with minimal financial slack heighten a scaling firm’s risk of setback or failure. With the firm’s future hanging in the balance, scrutiny of managers’ use of resources often increases during scaling. Using resource orchestration as the theoretical framework, we empirically study the question of what resource configuration strategies managers can implement to positively impact the firm valuation of scaling digital ventures.

Keywords: Digital Ventures, Scaling, Resource Orchestration, Valuation, Econometrics

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Bindu Arya, Ph.D. Chairperson
Vivek Singh, Ph.D.
Yiumen Tse, Ph.D.