

## The Role of Personal Networks in Russian MNCs' Internationalization

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### Abstract

#### Purpose

This paper examines how personal networks influence the internationalization process of Russian multinational corporations.

#### Design/methodology/approach

We identify and review 78 articles published in five International Business journals that address the role of networking and relationships in firm internationalization. We then use the network perspective to examine how Russian multinationals internationalize.

#### Findings

Combining the key conclusions of the reviewed studies with insights from the network perspective, and adding insights that we have gained both through first-hand experience and by following the Russian business media, we develop a model that links personal networking and Russian multinationals' internationalization. We outline four functions that personal networking plays – access to information and knowledge, resource commitment, development of marketing and sales capabilities, and further network expansion.

#### Originality/value

This paper challenges established views of how firm internationalization occurs. It combines two previously unrelated streams of literature, the network model of internationalization and the role of personal networking within the Russian business environment, and argues that personal networking plays a much larger role in how Russian MNCs internationalize than has the International Business literature has acknowledged.

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