

Training to Utilize Word of Mouth and Brand Image to Enhance Purchasing Decisions

Isnaini Harahap¹, Dwi Novaliani Agustin², Fadia Maisya Chairunysa³

^{1,2,3}Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Beauty products play a significant role in the lives of consumers, particularly for Generation Z, and have become a primary need in Indonesia, especially among women. The rapid growth of the beauty industry in Indonesia, coupled with increasing exports in the cosmetic market, underscores its importance. Effective marketing strategies, particularly word of mouth (WOM) and brand image, are crucial in influencing consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. This community service project utilized Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and collaboration methods to evaluate Somethinc's marketing strategies. Results from the FGDs and subsequent training indicated that Somethinc had not fully implemented effective marketing strategies, leading to limited brand recognition. The project highlighted that effective marketing strategies could expand market reach, build consumer loyalty, and support sustainable growth. Maintaining a strong and consistent brand image is essential for creating long-term consumer relationships and competing effectively in the digital age. Somethinc's use of social media platforms and engaging content, alongside loyalty programs and consistent branding, proved effective in retaining customers and enhancing brand awareness. This community service underscores the importance of understanding and applying effective marketing strategies to strengthen brand image and consumer loyalty in a competitive market.

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Corresponding Author:

Name: Isnaini Harahap

Department: Islamic Economics

Faculty: Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business

Affiliation: Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

Email: isnaini.harahap@uinsu.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Beauty products play a significant role in consumers' lives, particularly for today's Generation Z (Bara et al., 2021). Beauty products have become a primary need in Indonesia, especially for women.

The beauty industry in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth, supported by increasing exports in the cosmetic market. The supply of cosmetic products in Indonesia grew rapidly in 2022 due to the growing popularity of the beauty industry among business players and the high consumer demand for cosmetic products (Tusmawati et al., 2022). Word of mouth (WOM) communication strategies are recognized as playing a significant role in influencing and shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Research shows that WOM communication strategies have a greater impact compared to other communication sources, such as advertising (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). WOM can be an important factor influencing purchase decisions. Generation Z is known for being very active in sharing information and experiences on social media, making WOM quickly spread among them (Ismail & Spinelli, 2012).

In 2019, the beauty product sector in Indonesia experienced a 20 percent increase, which is a fourfold jump compared to 2017. One of the local cosmetic brands that successfully captured the Indonesian market is Somethinc, supported by PT. Nose Herbalindo with its "high end, high value, and high quality" value proposition for each marketed product (Media Indonesia, 2019). Somethinc is a local cosmetic brand known for its natural ingredient-based products formulated for all skin types. It is favored by consumers for its affordable prices and the undeniable quality of its skincare products. Somethinc has obtained halal certification and BPOM registration, and the numerous positive reviews have made consumers confident in purchasing Somethinc products (Tanuwijaya & Mulyandi, 2021). Brand image is one of the considerations consumers make before purchasing cosmetics. Brand image can influence purchase decisions if the brand is widely recognized and has a positive image in the eyes of consumers.

Brand image refers to the perception of a brand that reflects consumers' memories of their associations with the brand (Ferrinadewi, 2008). According to Ambarwati, Sunarti, and Mawardi (2015), a company should have a good brand image because it is an asset that can affect consumer perceptions. Brand reputation refers to consumers' perceptions of the brand's past actions, achieved results, and future expectations, which together shape consumer attitudes and behaviors (Yunaida, 2018). Components of brand image include corporate image, user image, and product image (Li et al., 2011). Based on the background described above, this article will discuss the influence of word of mouth and brand image on the purchase decision of Somethinc products. This article is expected to provide deeper insights into how consumer perceptions of the brand and recommendations from word of mouth can influence their decisions in choosing and purchasing Somethinc cosmetic products.

2. METHOD

This community service project employs Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Collaboration methods to assess whether the marketing strategies implemented by Somethinc are effective. Through FGD, insights are gained into how consumers learned about Somethinc products through marketing efforts and their perceptions of the Somethinc brand. The population for this community service consists of consumers who have purchased Somethinc products and representatives from Somethinc. The sample for this project includes 90 respondents who are consumers of Somethinc products and 2 representatives from Somethinc.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the results of the community service through FGD and training conducted with Somethinc representatives and several consumers, it was found that Somethinc had not yet implemented effective marketing strategies, leading consumers to believe that the products were not

widely known. Therefore, education for Somethinc through a training session titled “Training on Implementing Effective Marketing Strategies” was necessary to provide feedback and help Somethinc market its products more effectively.

Following the training, it was observed that Somethinc had become aware of and started implementing appropriate marketing strategies to enhance the brand image of Somethinc. Proper product marketing has led consumers to perceive that the brand image of Somethinc products is reliable in terms of quality. This positive perception is expected to have a favorable impact on Somethinc’s sales, thereby increasing profits.

The community service revealed that applying effective marketing strategies would also expand the market reach, allowing Somethinc products to become better known to a wider potential consumer base. In the long term, this will help build consumer loyalty to the Somethinc brand, which will contribute to the company’s sustainable growth. Thus, the education provided through this training is a crucial step in ensuring that Somethinc can effectively compete in the market and achieve higher sales targets.

Discussion

From this community service, it can be observed that understanding the increasingly saturated and competitive market is crucial. Brand Image does not only function as a symbol of identity but also as a primary determinant in shaping consumer perception and trust. Today’s consumers are not only looking for products that meet functional needs but also for products that hold emotional value and reflect their aspirations. Therefore, a strong and consistent branding strategy is essential for creating and maintaining long-term relationships with consumers.

A strong Brand Image can create customer loyalty, leading to increased market share and long-term profitability. When consumers feel connected to the values represented by a brand, they are more likely to become loyal supporters, even in the face of price competition or offers from other brands. In this context, Brand Image not only affects the initial purchase decision but also plays a role in driving repeat purchases, which is key to retaining customers and strengthening the brand's position in the market.

In the digital era, where information spreads rapidly, maintaining consistency in Brand Image management becomes both challenging and crucial. Brands must be able to maintain a consistent message across various communication channels, including social media, websites, advertisements, and direct consumer interactions. Every touchpoint with consumers is an opportunity to reinforce or, if not managed well, damage the Brand Image. Therefore, companies need to proactively manage every aspect of the consumer experience to ensure that all interactions reinforce the desired Brand Image.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this community service, it was found that Somethinc can retain customers and enhance brand awareness through marketing strategies that focus on an active presence on social media. By leveraging platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, Somethinc consistently posts engaging content such as product usage tutorials, customer reviews, and collaborations with influencers. This high-quality and relevant content keeps consumers continuously exposed to the latest products and the modern, trendy brand image.

Somethinc can strengthen customer loyalty by offering loyalty programs and exclusive promotions. Discounts, gifts, or special products for loyal customers create incentives for consumers to make repeat purchases. Consistency in visual branding and brand messaging also plays a crucial

role; by maintaining distinctive design elements and messaging that align with brand values, Somethinc can ensure that the brand image remains strong and memorable to consumers.

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