

**ANALYSIS OF WHATSAPP MARKETING COMMUNICATION
STRATEGIES THROUGH AN INTERPERSONAL APPROACH IN
INCREASE SALES**

Mira Apriani¹, Rahma Santhi Zinaida²

^{1,2}Universitas Bina Darma

1arimira63075@gmail.com ; 2rahmasanthi@binadarma.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Marketing communication is defined as an effort to increase sales so that the main objectives of business companies can be achieved and marketing communication can build a system of business activities designed to plan, determine prices, promotions, distribute goods, advertising, public relations, personal selling, direct marketing, and online marketing. The concept of WhatsApp marketing communication that will be used in this research is by planning and implementing IMC strategies and the AISAS Model, then how communication through WhatsApp emphasizes more on an emotional approach by entering information into the customer's logic and continuing with the strategy of touching the customer's heart to make customers need and believe in the products we offer. This research on WhatsApp Marketing Communication was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach, to explain and describe the phenomena that occur. The results of this study are, by using an interpersonal approach in promotion, making customers feel more comfortable in communicating. So that the communication that occurs is more interactive and the customer feels closer to the seller. The presence of WhatsApp marketing communication combined with promotion through an interpersonal approach can naturally increase sales.

Keywords: Whatsapp, marketing, interpersonal communication, sales.

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication has always been an integral part of social interaction. Social interaction can be in the form of economic interaction, political interaction, or educational interaction (Iriantara,2013) (Isnawijayani et al.

2022). In the economic field, marketing communication is one of the media used in building interactions with customers.

Marketing communication is defined as an effort to increase sales so that the main objectives of business companies can be achieved and marketing communication can build a system of business activities designed to plan, determine prices, promotions, distribute goods (Wijayanti, n.d.), advertising, public relations, personal selling, direct marketing, and online marketing (Nadzira, Setiyawan, and Wiyarni 2020). In the world of business, marketing strategy plays such an important role to inform and understand customers in sustainability in all fields of economic activity. To increase sales figures, entrepreneurs actively promote their products through advertising, direct marketing, personal selling or promotion, and other marketing communication tools (Aulya,Zinaida 2022).

Marketing will change over time and the information revolution will be one of the biggest changes (Passos and From 2017). With the rapid development of technology and the internet, marketing is able to penetrate time and space and integrate several electronic media, especially the internet network.

Through the spread of the internet and digital marketing, it has brought changes to the economy. As well as with the rapid advancement of technology has allowed internet users to use technology for useful purposes, and one of its most remarkable achievements is that technology acts as a useful medium for companies to expand marketing and business communication (Rohayah, Kahar. Hadina 2021).

Companies build planning strategies in adapting to current technology. The guidance of communication management and planning to achieve goals is also called a communication strategy. Communication strategies must be carried out in a focused manner with steps that have been prepared and depending on the situation and conditions. Communication strategy has the function of disseminating informative, persuasive, and instructive messages systematically to the target to obtain optimal results (Priantoro 2019).

In line with the field of business communication and marketing, online business and digital marketing has emerged as a very important approach. Social networking sites in digitalization, provide a broad platform for conducting business activities. Social media and other sites offer diverse opportunities for marketers to engage with their target audiences (Jamil and Jamil 2022). So that several marketing strategies need to be used to achieve the marketing goals of a company. Integrated marketing strategy (IMC) and the AISAS Model are two strategy options that can be used for the marketing communication process in the digital era.

Integrated communication is the process of delivering the same core message in several communication channels, each message through detailed identification in producing effective information to be implemented in any communication medium (Brannan 2005). In Digital Integrated Marketing Communication research (Wisataone 2020), integrated marketing communication is managing and coordinating the entire communication process, where some of the most commonly used marketing communication activities are advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing (Noveriyanto 2021).

While the AISAS Model illustrates that in today's world, customers are more active and can get information from anywhere, such as searching online (Search) and continuing by sharing the information obtained with people around them or to the public (Share). In that process, word of mouth will be realized. In the principle of word of mouth, it is believed that personal sources of information will be more positively received, because if it is personal, it means that the information obtained comes from people who are known, so it is more guaranteed. With the collaboration of the AISAS Model and IMC Strategy, which is the general basis for obtaining a more targeted database, a media is needed that can gather customers in a more in-depth personal information center.

Based on the results of a survey conducted in Singapore, 106 million of Indonesia's population of 262 million people use social media. A percentage of 62% of the highest activity of social media users in Indonesia is done using smartphones, 16% using computers, and 6% using tabs

(Takdir, Siska, and Rivandi 2022). While instant messaging applications, such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, have become important channels for personal interaction with friends, family, marketing or business communication. Through this media, interpersonal communication occurs more closely, messages can be personalized with photos and videos or voice messages (Zarouali et al. 2021).

Based on one of the German data and statistics portals, Statista summarizes the 10 countries with the most business WhatsApp users globally. The data says India is the country with the most business WhatsApp users in the world, reaching 291.58 million downloads. Meanwhile, Indonesia is the country with the second most business WhatsApp users out of 60 countries in the world. The number of business WhatsApp users in Indonesia reached 73 million downloads as of June 2022 (Statista 2022).

The interesting thing about using WhatsApp is the use of WhatsApp status which can be used unwittingly for personal promotion. WhatsApp status is a feature of the WhatsApp Messenger application which was launched on February 24, 2017 (Prihatna et al. 2019). The use of WhatsApp for advertising became very rampant on the verge of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. The use of this app increased by 40% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase went from 27% at the start of the pandemic to 41% in the middle phase. For countries that already had a high level of WhatsApp usage before the pandemic, WhatsApp usage increased to 51% (Clement 2021). So that perceived sociality, perceived security and perceived privacy are positively related to customer trust in a brand in the messaging application via WhatsApp (Zarouali et al. 2021).

This makes researchers interested in conducting research on marketing communication with an interpersonal approach through WhatsApp marketing. WhatsApp marketing communication is a communication activity in marketing carried out with WhatsApp intermediaries. Using social media as a marketing communication tool is not just like using the internet and technology, but must use communication tactics and strategies (Takdir, Siska, and Rivandi 2022). Every marketing strategy that has been carried out through IMC and

AISAS strategies, will be followed up by taking an interpersonal approach to customers through WhatsApp Story and then interacting naturally with each other through WhatsApp media.

The concept of WhatsApp marketing communication that will be used in this research is by planning and implementing IMC strategies and the AISAS Model, then how communication through WhatsApp emphasizes more on an emotional approach by entering information into the customer's logic and continuing with the strategy of touching the customer's heart to make customers need and believe in the products we offer. While in other studies, more discuss how to optimize the use of WhatsApp business features in conducting business activities (Basid, Abdul 2023), (Dani 2022), (Jannah 2023), (Wulandari 2020), (Daninzia Ramadhanti and Ikaningtyas 2023), (Asmayanti et al. 2022). The advantage of this previous research is that it is able to make business actors carry out their business processes more organized according to the features that have been prepared. For example, there are business profile facilities, catalogs, messaging tools, away messages, greeting messages, quick replies, labels, short links, account links and others.

Therefore, this research is here to help business people maximize the WhatsApp business feature that has been created as a medium for promotion with an interpersonal approach. customers are not offered direct sales, customers are not contacted about products, but customers will be given positive information about products with soft selling and educational content design through WhatsApp stories only, so that customers do not feel advertised. While interpersonal approach activities through admin comments on the customer's status which are in general about the customer's daily activities, with different customers every day, for example comments of praise, support or questions regarding the location or situation of the customer's post.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research on WhatsApp Marketing Communication was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach, to explain and describe the phenomena that occur.

The selection of informants in this study is based on considerations of several criteria that have been determined by the researcher to obtain maximum information with this purposive sampling method which is a certain consideration, for example, people who are considered to know best about what we expect, or maybe he is the ruler so that it will make it easier for researchers to explore the object or social situation under study (Sugiyono 2020).

Consists of 1 key informant and 5 supporting informants. The informants in this research are people who know the scope of digital marketing, company management and the marketing team, which in this case is the party responsible for planning and implementing marketing communications.

Data collection techniques are the first step in research, because every research aims to obtain data as a reference to the object to be studied. Researchers use participatory observation, in-depth interviews and documentation for data sources, triangulation of sources means, to get data from different sources with the same technique (Sugiyono 2020).

The data analysis process carried out by researchers uses the Miles and Huberman Data Analysis Model (Sugiyono 2020b), namely Data Collection, Data Reduction, Data Presentation, Verification.

3. RESERCH METHODS

1. Strategy to Increase WhatsApp Database

1).AISAS Model

Attention

At the Attention stage, marketing admins spread promotional information through social media that has been prepared by business actors. With the spread of this information, the customer will be aware of the existence of this information, either goods or services.

Interest

Then at the Interest stage, the customer has started to have two choices, namely continuing to find out information or not continuing. The task of the marketing admin is to design as attractive as possible so that

customers can be interested in contacting the seller directly, even if they just ask.

Search

The next stage is Search, at this stage the customer has begun to be interested in knowing more about the product being offered. Customers start looking for more complete information or looking for reviews or also comparing reviews with other similar products and so on. The admin's job is to organize all business accounts to ensure that all existing reviews are positive reviews.

Action

At the Action stage, all information is considered sufficient by the customer. Furthermore, he can decide to buy or not a product. If he buys, then he will contact the contact that has been prepared, in this case the contact in the form of WhatsApp is more dominantly displayed. With the customer contacting the WhatsApp contact that has been prepared, of course that is the purpose of the promotion carried out, namely to increase the WhatsApp database.

Share

The last stage is Share, at this stage the customer is already at the loyal stage. It can be in the form of being satisfied after trying, recommending to others, or it can also share so that he can save the information because one day he will buy the product.

The admin's job at this stage is to ensure that customers get the goods according to their expectations or ensure that customers do not feel disappointed. Even if the customer is disappointed, the marketing admin is tasked with keeping him loyal to our products by providing good service, exchanging products, providing bonuses and others.

In the five stages of the AISAS approach, it is able to increase the WhatsApp database as a medium of interpersonal communication created by business actors. WhatsApp that enters the marketing admin chat

contact is responded quickly to keep customers informed faster. So that the customer can get the item he wants faster too.

2). Integrated Marketing

Communication Strategy

Advertisement

The business makes promotions or advertisements through print media, broadcast media, packaging, brochures, posters, films, displays, videos, logos and other advertising media that can provide information about products.

Sales Promotion

Sales promotion can be done in the form of making give away, providing samples, demonstrations, opening booths, bazaars, discounts or discounts, trade-in, giving gifts or others.

Public Relations and Publicity

Public Relations and Publicitas can be in the form of audiences at seminars, events on radio or tv or other online media, charitable donations, sponsorships, events, publications, building relationships with the community or providing scholarships.

Personal Selling

Personal selling can be in the form of presentations, incentive programs, samples, booth openings, sales meetings or others.

Direct Marketing

Direct selling can be done through telemarketing, emailing with customers, shopping through e-commerce, tv shopping, etc.

The task of the marketing department is to provide the same information even though through different media. Customers are directed to contact the marketing admin when interested in a product. Thus, the WhatsApp database will increase due to the follow-up stage carried out through one door.

2. Interpersonal Approach

WhatsApp Story Posting Pattern

Promotion through WhatsApp Story is a direct promotion to personal customers without realizing it. Because only those who save each other can see posts. In the sense that every person who saves a contact must have a reason why he saves that contact. In that sense, customers and sales both know the contact. So that the WhatsApp Story promotion process becomes a more personalized promotion without having to reach out.

For this reason, the seller has a posting pattern that can make customers call directly to find out about the product being informed.

The pattern that is helped in posting WhatsApp Story, for example, every 1 hour the admin is required to post, the first post about very important product information, the second page about storytelling about product usage, the third post of photos of customers who are shopping, the fourth post, testimonials from customers, the fifth post about customer problems that are directly given a solution through sales products, the sixth post about the good condition of the goods, the seventh post about customer reviews, the next post can be storytelling again about why use the product and so on.

With this posting pattern, customers are not asked to shop immediately with the product displayed. But it is more emphasized to provide information so that customers feel the need for the product being promoted.

Welcoming Customer Chat

After our task of providing feedback through WhatsApp Story, the next task of the admin is to maintain a relationship with the customer who started the chat first.

Marketing admins must provide a warm response to customers and provide more friendly emoticons so that customers feel closer. Then offer help and ask about customer problems regarding the product the customer is looking for. So that customers feel more cared for in the sense that customers feel they are consulting with the right people.

Communication with Customers

When customers ask for prices, the marketing admin will provide benefits first, then inform the price. So that customers feel they are getting good benefits and do not feel expensive at the price given.

Admin informs the goods ordered in good condition and fast response, starting from asking questions, preparing goods to shipping goods.

Close customer chat

Communication with customers must end in the marketing admin, even if it only gives thanks or emoticons. And don't forget to pray for the customer so that all his affairs are facilitated, his body and soul are healthy and his fortune is also blessed.

Building Organic Interaction with Customers

To build organic interaction with customers, marketing admins are required to respond naturally every day to the customer's social media status and WhatsApp Story. At least 5x comments and love on FB posts, IG, Tiktok Customer and WhatsApp Story Customer.

For example, responding:

Barakallah Fii Umrik Kak, hopefully the future age will be blessed.

I'm happy that your child has grown smart like this. Hopefully, you can continue to make your parents proud and become more shaleh/sholeha.

Sorry for your loss, may your mother be placed in the best Heaven.

The above is an example of a natural comment using a business account. So that customers feel cared for, and eventually customers will respond when the marketing admin promotes their products through WhatsApp Story.

Every day the marketing admin is required to interact with different accounts, so that every day there is an organic interaction with the customer without having to offer the product.

If a marketing admin is able to interact with 5 different customers a day, then in one month he will get 150 different customers via WhatsApp. Plus more with other social media.

So the more interactions that are built, the more closings that occur. Imagine if we do this activity consistently every day for years, it will definitely affect the spread of information and the expected sales level.

Giving Customers Gifts

In this section, the marketing admin gives gifts to customers who spend a lot, or loyal customers who help promote products or customers who are having a birthday. Or it can also give gifts to customers who buy goods, but the goods are for their parents. With this gift, it certainly makes a special memory for the customer.

Resolving Customer Complaints

Marketing admin responds quickly and well to complaints from customers. The company facilitates the exchange of damaged goods, if the stock is no longer available then it can refund, if the goods sold are good and some are not good, then the bad goods can be weighed then the funds can be returned.

If the customer wants to be quick, then the admin will provide a calm response by offering a gift as an apology and so on.

At the end of the chat, the marketing admin thanked you for submitting the complaint directly and apologized for the negligence. Then the marketing admin said that for the next order we will prepare the product more carefully.

Provide discount for customers

Most customers will definitely bargain first before shopping, especially for customers who buy more. Every time a customer bids, the marketing admin is allowed to give a discount, even if it's only 1,000

rupiah. In a sense, every customer makes an offer so that we are not too consistent with the price given.

Even if the price is only slightly reduced, the important thing is that we can fulfill the offer from the customer. But if we really can't give it, then convey it in a good way or can also offer other similar products at a lighter price.

4. Strategy to Increase Sales

Through all the promotional strategies and strategies for building interactions with customers that have been described above, the more interactions that are built and the more WhatsApp databases that are obtained, the more sales can be made.

Businesses can engage customers, foster customer loyalty and drive purchases through WhatsApp. The study emphasizes that personalized and interactive content is essential to meet customer needs and encourage active participation.

Content impact, customer engagement, and overall engagement are enhanced through the incorporation of rich interactive elements in storytelling, as well as integrated media elements.

WhatsApp marketing promotes easier communication, increases customer satisfaction, and enables efficient and real-time interaction with customers.

This literature review study reveals the potential of content marketing through WhatsApp Story with an interpersonal approach to increase sales.

Three categories of direct users of advertising were identified in this study: those who already endorse the product, those who accept the product after seeing and using it, and those who are unaffected. Advertisers are critical to the success of advertising campaigns.

Studies show that internet sources show lower levels of fear than other sources for WhatsApp. The interpersonal relationship between buyers and sellers eliminates concerns about online shopping, especially about losing money.

The study found that digital marketing strategies, particularly WhatsApp, are strategic and demonstrate the feasibility of new technologies.

The results show that there is a match between theory and practice in how the WhatsApp Business application increases sales and increases sales after use.

4. CONCLUSION/PENUTUP (Style: Heading1)

1. The application of the AISAS Model and IMC Strategy is able to increase the Whatsapp Marketing Communication database.

2. By using an interpersonal approach in promotion, customers feel more comfortable in communicating. So that the communication that occurs is more interactive and the customer feels closer to the seller.

3. The presence of Whatsapp marketing communication with the combination of promotion through interpersonal approaches can naturally increase sales.

4. Communication strategies through WhatsApp media can reduce marketing costs and can reach the desired target market quickly. So that with a communication strategy through WhatsApp media, customers can provide feedback so that there is direct interaction.

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