INFLUENCERS AS A MEANS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY DIGITAL MARKETING LITTLE PEP JAYA

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Abstract. Sales promotion strategy is carried out by Little PEP Jaya to introduce its products to consumers through digital media including social media, Instagram, company web. This company is trying to attract consumers to buy its products by carrying out promotional strategies through the role of influencers, such as artists, fashion bloggers, fashion stylish, and others, in this way is expected to increase sales. This study aims to see an overview of digital marketing communication strategies through the role of influencers implemented by Little PEP Jaya. This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach and the data collection technique of this research is through interviews with influencers and management staff at Little PEP Jaya. Study literature through communication books and online sources relevant to this research. The result of this research is Little PEP Jaya’s digital marketing communication strategy planning through influencers using Instagram as a medium for disseminating information. In planning the caption that the influencer will upload on his personal social media as a form of promotion, Little PEP Jaya helps the influencer to design the caption. The captions that will be posted on their social media accounts are made by adjusting the personality of the Influencers. Informants from Little PEP Jaya said that Instagram media is very effective to support marketing communication strategies because the features contained in it can upload images and videos quickly and can reach consumers widely.

Keywords: marketing communication; digital; influencer.
INTRODUCTION

The creative fashion industry is currently quite in demand by young people in Bandung as an alternative to their business, one of the reasons for choosing this type of business is because of the assumption that basic needs are always sought after by the community and there is hope for big profits. Promotions are carried out by large companies as well as small companies to introduce products and increase sales, this promotion strategy can be done through public relations, personal selling, and other strategies and with promotional financing schemes that they have arranged in such a way to maximize their business. Strategy is a set of important plans and describes the ways in which an institution seeks to achieve its goals (Nidillah, 2021).

According to (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008) corporate marketing communication is a specific blend of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing tools used by companies to provide information and build relationships with consumers. Marketing communication is a form of communication that aims to increase the intensity of the application of marketing and marketing strategies that aim to support the company’s promotional activities. In addition, marketing communication is an activity that aims to introduce or establish communication with business partners, consumers, and companies that are business actors in communicating the marketing of their products to other people, namely consumers, suppliers, and other stakeholders (Cangara, 2009).

Sales promotion includes a variety of promotional tools designed to motivate an early market response. Sales promotions can be in the form of consumer promotions, such as product samples, coupons, discounts and so on. Trade promotions such as free products, reduced purchase prices and so on (Machfoedz, 2010). Promotion in the business world has a very important role in the stage of forming customer awareness and understanding. Thus a company requires appropriate strategic planning so that it can be easily accepted by the community. The marketing communication strategies carried out by the company also vary, such as offering products with attractive packaging, by communicating affordable prices or strategic sales locations. In addition, there is also a marketing communication strategy in the form of advertising in a number of media or with the help of influencers. These various marketing communication strategies are not only used to introduce the existence of a product, but also provide knowledge about the benefits of a product so that it creates a desire to buy it.

Various strategies are carried out by companies to market their products or services. However, Little PEP Jaya itself uses digital influencers as one of its marketing strategies. Digital influencers themselves are currently popularly used by companies. Digital influencers especially on social media can open up new channels for them to connect with customers directly, as well as get in touch with their daily lives. As the main link between brands and customers, influencers through their openness, have
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high social influence and credibility.

This research is a study that is carried out in depth and touches on objects that have not previously been studied by other parties. There are not many promotional activities carried out by entrepreneurs through online media that pay special attention to influencers and the promotions carried out are not optimal. Previous studies have only been limited to exploring the involvement of influencers and have not conducted studies to their personal search and collaboration between units in the company in promotional activities. In contrast to the research conducted by this author, who tries to see the collaboration and solid cooperation of Little Pep Jaya with influencers. Little PEP Jaya through public relations and related units learn more about the personal influencers, thereby determining the right strategy in creating promotional content.

METHODS

Research related to Influencers as a means of marketing communication strategy for Little PEP Jaya digital marketing was designed qualitatively, the selection of this research method was in accordance with the theme raised by the researcher and in accordance with its descriptive nature (Ardianto, 2011). A qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior (Sugiyono, 2017). This approach is directed at the background and the individual as a whole. In this case, it is not necessary to isolate individuals or organizations into variables or hypotheses, but it is necessary to see them as part of a whole (Moleong, 2017).

This study aims to see an overview of digital marketing communication strategies through the role of influencers implemented by Little PEP Jaya. This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach and the data collection technique of this research is through interviews with influencers and management staff at Little PEP Jaya. Study literature through communication books and online sources relevant to this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview Theory

There are a variety of digital marketing strategies based (Suryadi, 2017):

1. The email marketing, email marketing is marketing via email, usually in the form of a welcome email series, specials, newsletters.
2. Social media marketing, marketing by creating company social media accounts.
3. Google Adwords, a method that uses the Google search engine to bring visitors to a business website.
4. Search engine optimization (SEO), a technique to increase the visibility of your blog/website.
5. Content Marketing, marketing by planning, creating and distributing content that is able to attract customers/audiences.
6. Retargeting Ads, providing relevant advertisements to audiences who have previously visited business/company sites.
7. Digital influencers, Marketing that uses
Digital Influencers or Influencers, is usually done on Instagram. This type of marketing is used by Little PEP Jaya.

**Characteristics and Selection of Digital Influencers**

Of course, in determining influencers, it is not just "choosing", but still needs to be selected or filtered first. Before that, starting from the company itself, the company must first target its target audience. First, they have to determine their marketing goals first, with the right target, companies need to think about who they really want to reach through influencers. Little PEP Jaya itself has a target audience of children and parents, therefore the influencers that are more suitable to be used are children and parents. After determining the target audience, it is necessary to determine the right influencers to click to influence the audience. There are three factors in measuring potency based on (Backaler & Shankman, 2018):

a. Reach – influencer is calculated from the number of followers, traffic, etc. Each of their approaches can be divided into several categories, in Little PEP Jaya divided between micro and macro influencers.

b. Resonance – engagement between the influencer and his followers or community. Can be measured from shares, likes, views, comments, retweets, etc. Resonance is important because influencers need to show that the followers they are building are not just numbers, but there is interaction and shows that the community is genuinely interested and engaged. Content influencers. In Little PEP Jaya, resonance is carried out through an examination using the sociobuzz.com web to check the engagement rate.

c. Relevance – ensuring that the content created by the influencer matches the topics the community is interested in. From the brand side, it is the same as how relevant the influencer’s content is to the brand they will be working with. This is quite important when selecting influencers for the Little PEP Jaya campaign. The selection of influencers must be in accordance with Little PEP Jaya's brand image, namely as a Family Clothing Distributor so that the influencers that are widely used are Children and Parents.

**Collaborating with Digital Influencers**

In collaborating with digital influencers, there are ways to collaborate with influencers (Brown & Hayes, 2008) marketing through influencers is considered to increase brand awareness and knowledge. In influencer marketing, the company will create a message about the brand (product or service) to the influencer, what will be conveyed to their community. In other words, influencers will bring the company’s message to market, and because they are influencers, they tend to be heard and trusted, like a bridge between brands and audiences. Marketing through influencers at Little PEP Jaya itself, is carried out on Instagram influencers, where they will post content according to the directions (poses) and captions that have been determined by the team.

This method is of course adapted to what platform will be used by the company.
In working with digital influencers, you must first make sure that their image and that of the company match or match.

The marketing communication strategy carried out by Little PEP Jaya includes assisting digital influencers, by conducting product reviews to explain product prices and quality. Digital influencers are those whose skills and expertise have made them “followers”. Because digital influencers are more trusted by their followers or followers, their opinions are also trusted so that the published content can influence their followers, including in trying or buying products. Marketing communication strategies using digital influencers then become one of the company’s choices in an effort to promote their products or services. The power of social media is indeed quite significant at this time, in 2019-2020 the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII) surveyed 196.7 million Indonesians who are internet literate (APJII, 2021). With the internet, marketing communication strategies are increasingly varied and marketing communication activities in introducing a product or company increasingly have many alternative choices in conducting promotions. This significant use of the internet is then used as one of Little PEP Jaya’s marketing communication strategy media, especially social media that is often used by digital influencers, namely Instagram (Febritania & Riyadi, 2020).

Little PEP Jaya as a creative industry in the field of clothing distribution that tries to keep up with the latest clothing styles and the times which can of course be accessed via mobile phone technology or digital media, as well as target customers who tend to actively use social media and then decide to use digital influencers as an effort to market their products. This study aims to describe the strategy of the Little PEP Jaya marketing team in promoting the use of influencers and the location of this research was carried out at the Little PEP Jaya company in Bandung, West Java.

DISCUSSION

About Little PEP Jaya

Little PEP Jaya is a fashion company that started operations in June 2015 and is located in Soekarno Hatta, Gedebage, Bandung City, West Java. Basically, Little PEP Jaya is like a fashion company that provides clothing products, which is chaired by Salsa Afanti.

Little PEP Jaya is a company inspired by the owner’s only child. Starting from the owner’s love for the world of fashion and design as well as the owner’s love for children’s clothing, Little PEP Jaya started. Starting from the owner making designs of cartoon characters that children liked at the time, and applying these designs to children’s clothes, attracting the attention and interest of friends and relatives in the work he made. Starting from a limited production only for children and closest friends to be given free of charge, but the great interest of the surrounding community and wanting to buy, gave rise to the owner’s idea to create a small business at that time until it has run until now.

The Little PEP brand itself has its own meaning for its owner, starting from the word Little which means small in English,
and the word PEP is taken from the nickname of the father, Papap, who at that time because the child was still small the first words when learning to speak were spoken from the child. A man whose father only calls him by the word PEP. So the Little PEP brand means Little Papap which is indeed inspired by an only child. Little PEP Jaya is a clothing brand for children and parents that was born from the beginning, which is intended to invite Indonesian children to express themselves through the t-shirts they wear. In terms of product concept, Little PEP Jaya offers a choice of clothing that makes anyone who sees it happy or just glances at the wearer.

Based on the results of research with the theme Influencers as a Means of Marketing Communication Strategy for Digital Marketing Little PEP Jaya, the researcher describes and explains some of the results from observations, interviews with informants who are directly related, namely company owners, influencers and other parties who are still related, and the researcher also adds some findings from the search results through a literature study.

After the maximum planning stage, enter the implementation stage where marketing communications through Influencers here will be published by Influencers to the public, which aims to make the audience know Little PEP Jaya’s brand and products.

It is explained in (Murniarti, 2019) that Publicity is a translation of German and Dutch publications. Publicity is a technique that is often used in public relations programs. The role of publicity is to generate trust in the product, and strengthen the image of the value of a product and strengthen it to special customers.

Publicity used in this research is publication through social media. The technique is Little PEP Jaya contacting its prospective Influencers through social media, email, or the Influencer contact manager with the aim of promoting the company or brand. them so that the Influencers who are asked to promote know more about the company, after paying the Influencer fee that has been agreed upon by both parties, don’t forget to send photos of the products or services offered to the Influencer.

After that Little PEP Jaya will wait for a response from the Influencer and Little PEP Jaya will be contacted through the social media used such as via private messages on Instagram or direct messages on WhatsApp and they will choose the items they want. After the product is selected, the product is sent and after it is received, the Influencers share their photos using products from Little PEP Jaya by uploading them on their social media.

At the publication stage there is an agreement between the Influencer and Little PEP Jaya, after the product is sent and received by the Influencer, Little PEP Jaya will design the caption for the Influencer’s post on their social media. The caption that the Influencer will post on Little PEP Jaya’s social media account is made by adjusting the personality of the Influencers, Little PEP Jaya studies Influencers, from looking at their Instagram, how they make captions, seeing what words are often used, so they are impressed if they. who created the message. Little PEP Jaya really thinks about
the marketing communication strategies they use to achieve awareness of the existence of a product or service (awareness), foster a desire to own or get products in the minds of consumers (interest), to retain customers (loyalty).

1) Advertising

Advertising is mass communication through the media of newspapers, magazines, radio, television and other media or direct communications designed specifically for business-to-business (to-business-to-business) customers and end users. Advertising is a form of mass communication that conveys market information to bring together buyers and sellers at the point of sale of products. Advertising is any form of indirect presentation of information and promotion by sponsors to offer ideas, goods or services. (Machfoedz, 2010).

Little PEP Jaya specifically advertises on their social media by using good messages and photo pamphlets, such as announcements of discounts that are often held on holidays or certain events as well as notifications about the bazaars they will participate in. PEP Jaya also advertises their Influencers using products from Little PEP Jaya itself, this can be seen from the post on Little PEP Jaya’s Instagram account where influencer Zhi Alatas wears a Little PEP t-shirt, in his Instagram post there is the caption Fun and compact family kak @zhialatas with a doodle flower, exciting moments like this will not be forgotten.

2) Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is an activity or material in its application by using techniques under the control of the seller or producer, which can communicate interesting persuasive information about the products offered by the seller or producer, either directly or through influencing parties. purchasing decisions (Singh, 2018). Therefore, a maximum sales promotion is needed in planning the strategies used in promoting products to consumers, as well as Little PEP Jaya which has a strategy in promoting its products. As a producer, sales promotion planning has a close relationship with the communication process.

Sales promotion includes a variety of promotional tools designed to motivate an early market response. Sales promotions can be in the form of consumer promotions, such as product samples, coupons, discounts and so on. Trade promotions such as free products, reduced purchase prices, and so on. (Machfoedz, 2010) In addition, PEP Jaya Kecil also often participates in bazaars which are often organized by malls and print media such as magazines. Other sales promotions such as product discounts, as well as other bonuses such as cooperation in giving door prizes and so on are often carried out on holidays and certain events such as Little PEP Jaya’s birthday, year-end discounts and clearance sales.

3) Public Relations

Public Relations is something that summarizes the overall planned communication, both internally and
externally between an organization and its entire audience in order to achieve certain goals based on mutual understanding. PEP Jaya Kecil has public relations within their company. They all work in teams to showcase the products they offer. The entire team is well versed in the company and the products it offers so that when consumers ask questions they can answer well. Little PEP Jaya Public Relations Duties and Responsibilities include:

a. Little PEP Jaya Public Relations Duties
   1. Perform strategic planning related to publications and campaigns
   2. Answer and explain questions from the public or customers
   3. Organize promotional events such as exhibitions and visits
   4. Provide and provide data information about new promotional opportunities and campaigns to customers
   5. Assign or conduct related market research
   6. Design, write, produce flyers, publicity brochures, information for websites and promotional videos.

b. Responsibilities of Public Relations Little PEP Jaya

As a profession, a Public Relations officer is responsible for providing information, educating, convincing, gaining sympathy, and generating public interest in something or making people understand and accept a situation. Public Relations of Little PEP Jaya is required to create programs to take deliberate and planned actions in an effort to maintain, create, and maintain mutual understanding between the company and its community. The position of Public Relations is a supporter of achieving the goals set by the management of Little PEP Jaya. The target of Little PEP Jaya Public Relations is customers, where operationally Little PEP Jaya Public Relations is tasked with fostering a harmonious relationship between the company and its customers and preventing the emergence of psychological barriers that may occur between the two (Ruslan, 2008).

4) Personal Selling

Personal Selling is a form of direct communication between sellers and prospective buyers (person-to-person communication). In this case the seller tries to help or persuade potential buyers to buy the products offered. Little PEP Jaya uses a personal selling strategy. One of them is by having resellers and also by participating in the bazaar, in participating in the Little PEP Jaya bazaar the team involves their marketing marketing team to directly offer their products to customers who visit the bazaar, so in this way Little PEP Jaya can immediately try to help or persuade potential buyers to buy Little PEP Jaya products, besides participating in this bazaar is one of Little PEP Jaya’s strategies to promote its brand, so that it is not only known by customers in the city of Bandung but can be known outside the city according to the location of the bazaar that Little PEP Jaya is participating in, such as in the city Jakarta, Surabaya and Banten.

5) Direct selling
is an attempt by a company or organization to communicate directly with potential target customers with a view to generating sales responses and/or transactions. Little PEP Jaya uses a Direct Selling strategy by selling in offline stores that consumers can visit directly, and in bazaars that they often attend.

Little PEP Jaya in its direct sales strategy also routinely provides information to their followers through their social media, especially Instagram to inform the bazaar schedule they follow or about their offline store, including, (Kennedy & Soemanagara, 2006) said marketing communication aims to achieve two goals. The stages of change aimed at consumers are:

a. The Knowledge Change Stage

The Knowledge Change Stage is a change in knowledge shown by Little PEP Jaya consumers knowing the existence of this Little PEP Jaya product, what the product is made for, and for whom the product is intended so that the message conveyed by Little PEP Jaya is not again displays important information from the products they offer.

Little PEP Jaya said they only optimize social media as a marketing medium, especially Instagram @little.PEP which they manage and update every day with lots of product posts every day. They also build communication with consumers through Instagram in a way, when their consumers tag photos of the Little PEP Jaya products they use, Little PEP Jaya will give positive comments such as "wow that's so cool".

Little PEP Jaya has more reliable social media and different message styles. Little PEP Jaya has products that can be used as unisex (can be worn by both men and women), funny, unique, creative and quality, therefore they sell their flagship products, namely T-shirts, Shirts, Hoodies, Sweaters, Pants, Materials, Jeans and Raincoats funny and can make other people can smile by looking at it. Their segmentation is more towards children and young parents and their messaging style is more relaxed and informal. These products are then distributed to consumers through social media.

The same thing was also said by a Little PEP Jaya customer, a customer named Marsyella Chan bought Little PEP Jaya products because the designs are very creative, cute and "very young" like the design on her clothes with the "gundam" picture which is currently being developed. unpretentiousness among children and young parents. He also admitted that he often saw on Instagram, several influencers had used this product from Little PEP Jaya. Spoken by Marsyella Chan that:

"I like the Little PEP Jaya t-shirt because of its cute design, that's why I bought it. I have seen Little PEP Jaya's Instagram several times, some influencers also use their products. I think the social media is complete, but I have never bought it online because at that time I bought it at the Bintaro Jaya X-Change event."

b. Attitude Change Stage

Attitude Change Stage is an attitude
that describes a person's relatively consistent judgments, feelings, and tendencies towards an idea object, someone here is a consumer of Little PEP Jaya. The stages of attitude change are related to the influence of marketing communication on consumer assessments of the products offered by Little PEP Jaya. At the attitude factor there are three components, namely:

1) Cognitive Component (belief in the brand).

Trust in the brand is the consumer's trust and knowledge of the object, the object here is Little PEP Jaya itself. Brand is important in showing off the products offered. Likewise with companies in Indonesia that introduce their brands to their customers through social media. Because in this day and age where technology is very advanced, messages are made to make people aware of the brand and its products just by making friends or "add as friend" and can be read by everyone when the company writes a status message on the page (Ridwan, Ridwan, & Sy, 2020).

This company puts their profile on the social media they use, just as Little PEP Jaya puts their profile on their website. So that it can be read by all consumers and can instill confidence in the minds of consumers that the product is worthy to be marketed and purchased because it has good quality.

2) Affective Component (Brand Evaluation)

Brand evaluation is an emotion that reflects one's feelings towards an object (brand evaluation), whether the object is desired or liked by consumers. Like Little PEP Jaya's brand ambassador, they have their own audition for them and this brand ambassador will display photos using products both online and offline (such as during the bazaar).

Little PEP Jaya also has product photo quality that is clear and pleasing to the eye so that consumers are moved to buy it. Because they say in showcasing their products, they pay a lot of attention to the theme, layout, design, colors and quality of the photos. As in the layout which is arranged in colors that are adjusted to the full color product image, the photo quality is also good because the photo uses a large size so that the photo does not break. If they feel these five points are lacking, then they will not randomly post product photos.

Judging from Instagram's social media, Little PEP Jaya often uses 'foreign' or foreign influencers so that this brand seems international and the tendency of advertising using foreign-faced influencers is preferred by consumers.

3) Behavioral Component (purchase intention)

The behavioral Component reflects the actual tendency and behavior of an object, where this component shows a tendency to take an action (Simamora, 2002). Little PEP Jaya has a combination of a good message and attractive product
photo packaging. This can be seen from the number of followers who reach more than ninety five thousand followers, this number proves that many already know their existence as a company in the children’s fashion industry and their parents or family partners of choice, and it can also be seen from consumer testimonials. on social media can also prove that consumers are satisfied with Little PEP Jaya’s products and services.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The digital marketing communication strategy of PT. Little PEP Jaya through Influencers by using social media as a medium for disseminating information. In planning the caption that the influencer will upload on his personal social media as a form of promotion, Little PEP Jaya helps the influencer to design the caption. The captions that will be posted on their social media accounts are made by adjusting the personality of the Influencers. The informant from Little PEP Jaya said that Instagram media is very effective to support marketing communication strategies because the features contained in it can upload images and videos quickly and can reach consumers widely.

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