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Promotional Strategies Using Online Media to Increase Sales at PT. X Medan Branch

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Abstract

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Online media current development has created a highly tight competition, particularly for PT. X, Medan Branch. The condition encourages companies to continue developing promotional strategies through online media to increase sales. This research aims to find out the implementation of promotional strategies and determine types of promotional strategy using online media which can increase sales. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Data are collected through observation, interviews and documentation. The research concludes that PT. X of Medan Branch has carried out promotions, but it has not used online media optimally. The inhibiting factors found are namely the absence of human resources who are specialized in online media promotion. Therefore, the company should determine promotional policies and continue to explore potential resources by focusing on promotional strategies improvement using online media.

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Introduction

The digital era is an era or epoch that has experienced conditions of progress in the realm of life in a completely digital direction. The development of the digital era continues and develops according to demands and requests so that human life becomes efficient and more practical. The influence of the digital industry ultimately has an impact on all lines of industry, including creative industries and real

industries, such as retail and food businesses. This is a strong sign of the emergence of the digital economic era which will probably reach its peak in the next few years. Through the development of digital technology, it cannot be denied that various new businesses/activities can help the family economy and various other businesses.

The development of digital technology of course also occurs in product innovation, which is considered the process of using new technology in a product so that the product can compete. Lukas and Ferrel (2000) define innovation as a new idea, practice, process, or product (use) that is considered an innovation. Innovation is also defined as the process of putting new technology into use. Innovation can also be interpreted as something that can change, because innovation is greatly influenced by changes in daily use, products, technology and markets.

Product innovation is a way to increase value as a key component of the success of a business operation that can bring a company to a competitive advantage and become a market leader (Henard and Szymanski, 2001). And to have a competitive advantage, superior products are also needed. Apart from product innovation, it is also possible to improve *Income* or income from business is through product promotion. Promotion is an activity to market or introducing a product to the public (Fitriana & Utami, 2017). Promotion has been very widely used as a marketing instrument because of its effectiveness in creating and maintaining product performance loyalty (Ferdinand, 2000).

This shows that promotional activities are needed in marketing a product so that the product's presence can be known and accepted by more levels of society. Meanwhile, in terms of consumer interests, promotions can be used as a medium to identify and match goods and services on the market with *needs* and desires (*wants*) they. In determining a promotional strategy, we first divide promotions based on their mix, namely: Advertising, Sales Promotion, Personal *Selling*, Direct Marketing (*direct selling*), and Public Relations (*publicity*). Fifth mix This promotion has the aim of introducing the product to society so that it can increase public interest and offers for the products that producers have made. Promotions must be made as attractive as possible and with language which is easy for the public to understand.

Realizing the importance of promotions in marketing, PT. X Medan Branch continues to strive to present promotional strategies to be able to survive and compete amidst the growing market situation. PT. X Medan Branch was founded in 2000 in Jakarta, Indonesia as a company engaged in import, distribution and service for *valves, fittings, instrumentation and control products*. PT X Medan Branch is a *valve company* that was listed as a public company on the Indonesia Stock Exchange in 2013. Entering the age of 22 years in Indonesia, PT has now become a provider of supporting products for various industries, ranging from oil and gas, palm oil, shipping, *oleochemicals*, water processing, *petrochemicals*, buildings, mining, to energy. Supported by 34 branches and 12 sales divisions in large and strategic cities, one of which is in the city of Medan as a distributor for the North Sumatra region.

Very tight competition with other competitors encourages companies to continue to develop effective marketing strategies. Moreover PT. X Medan Branch has a poor sales record, this is as shown in the following sales graph:

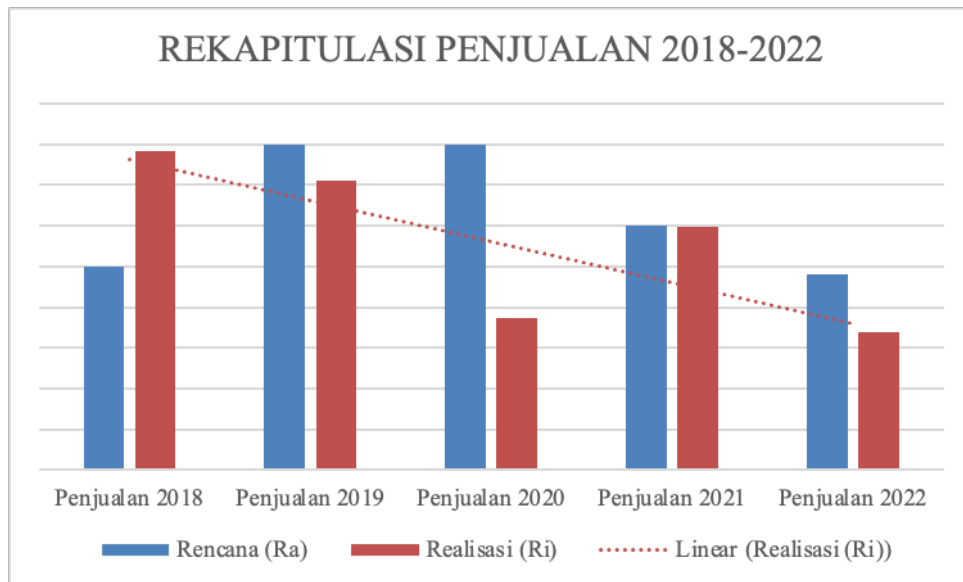


Figure 1.1 Sales Chart of PT. X Medan Branch
 Source: Company Internal Data, 2023

Based on the information in the graph above, it clearly shows that there is a sales realization trend throughout 2018 to 2022. This decreasing sales trend is in line with the failure to achieve the target set by the Company's *holding* company. Achievements exceeding the target were only achieved in 2018, and in 2021 the company almost achieved sales realization in line with the target (99.38%). This shows that the marketing strategy that has been established by PT. X Medan Branch has not been effective in achieving sales realization and even has a downward trend.

In order to explore the research problem, the author conducted a preliminary study by conducting data analysis and open interviews with PT company management. X Medan Branch in making sales the product has done strategy of approaching customers directly through *the sales team*. The strategy of using a direct approach to customers is considered effective for obtaining information on customer needs and requests. The company continues to develop strategies to adapt to market needs and/or demands. The company strategy is formulated every year to support the achievement of targets for the coming year.

Likewise, the strategy that PT *subsidiary* by building more intensive communication to cover *all projects in* the region, 4) Cooperating with each other, exchanging information and *sharing* with other branches, 5) Building solid and mentally strong *team-work*, 6) *Increasing knowledge sales* about *products* with *training* and learning in the field, 7) Conducting *trips* every 2 months around visiting *users at sites* (*non-stop* for 1 week).

However, the strategy planned above does not fully touch on promotional strategies. In conditions like this, companies must be more creative and innovative by offering products or services through promotions. This is what is demanded by the market that is the focus or target to compete. Generally, companies strive to meet consumer expectations, by building trust in a long-term relationship between the company and its customers.

Based on the description above, it can be seen that PT. X Medan Branch has problems in terms of sales, which can be seen in Figure 1.1 shows a declining trend and so that it does not meet the targets set by the company's *holding*. In response to this, the management of PT This strategy is considered ineffective in increasing company sales, where the company should carry out promotional strategies to build product awareness among customers and increase sales, so that the company can compete with competitors. As in the background above, The author conducted research taking the research title "*Promotional Strategies through Online Media to Increase Sales on PT. X Medan Branch*". Based on this background description, the aim of this research is to find out and analyze how implementation and determining strategy promotion PT. X Medan Branch

Promotion

According to Ridwansyah and Ardhi (2017), the definition of promotion is a tool or activity used by a company to communicate customer value. Laksana (2019) explains that promotion is a communication between sellers and buyers that comes from the right information which aims to change the attitudes and behavior of buyers, who previously did not know them, become familiar so they become buyers and still remember the product.

According to Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong (2012), the combination of promotional elements and tools is found in the reference or mix which consists of *Advertising, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion, Public Relations and Direct Marketing*.

Online media

According to Suryawati (2011: 46) online media is a communication medium that uses internet devices. People are starting to intensively use the internet network, because the internet is a medium that is able to provide information on a wide scale and in a very fast time.

The types of online media that we know today can be classified into search engines, portals, social media, chat applications, electronic mail (email), electronic commerce (e-commerce).

Sale

According to Salmiah, et al (2020), sales are the internal goals of a business. Sales emphasize more on transactions, so it is part of marketing activities. Sales places more emphasis on the products offered. According to Abdullah, Thamrin and Tantri (2019), sales are complementary activities or supplements to purchases, to enable transactions to occur.

RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used in this research is a descriptive qualitative research approach, which focuses on the depth of the data (quality) so that researchers can dig deeper into the object being studied. The informants in this research were the Ranch Manager, Supervisor and Marketing Staff. In this research, the type of data is qualitative data, the data sources consist of primary data and secondary data. In this research, data collection techniques are through interviews, observation and documentation. The data analysis method in this research is qualitative data, which consists of of 3 (three) interrelated actions, namely the data presentation stage, data reduction stage, conclusion drawing stage.

RESULT

Strategy Implementation Promotions to Increase Sales At PT. X Medan Branch.

Promotional strategy is the spearhead or the most important tool in the marketing mix. Promotional strategy is a determinant for whether a company creates a product that can be sold or not. Every company that sells a product must have a promotional strategy to introduce the product among the public so that the product sells and sells. From the results of the research that has been carried out, promotional strategies can be seen There are several applications implemented by PT X Medan Branch, namely:

1. Direct Sales (*personal selling*) is meeting the buyer face to face, to convince the buyer to buy the product being offered and carrying out *direct sales* to partners.
2. Sales promotion is where the company provides information regarding promotional programs that apply in the company like the promotions that will be attract customer interest in buying company products but in an effort to improve sales through sales promotions.
3. Social media promotion is a marketing process carried out such as Facebook, Instagram. However, there are obstacles in social media promotion What happened at PT
4. Public Relations (*public relations*), in this case the company establishes relationships with colleagues or partners to expand its sales reach

Promotion Strategy Through Online Media to Increase Sales at PT. X Medan Branch.

Promotion strategy through online media used by PT. X Medan Branch is via the official website of PT Companies also use social media in marketing Even though this method is not working optimally, the product does not exist considering there is no maximum strategy policy for promotion through online media and special human resources for promotion through online media. PT. X Medan Branch still lost compare with competitors in promotions using online media, because competitors are similar have used social media and also utilizing marketplace platforms to market their products considering that this method can reach a wider range of consumers.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of the strategy carried out by PT . X Medan Branch consists of Direct Sales (*personal selling*), Sales Promotion, Social media promotion, Public Relations, but even though several of these strategies have been implemented, they are still not maximally visible in terms of increasing sales. The results of this research are supported by Wahyuni (2019) that promotion with public *relations* can increase sales. PT. X Medan Branch carries out promotions through the official website of PT the product should increase sales. As the results of this research are supported by Indra Lesmana (2022), social media can increase the number of sales.

CONCLUSION

PT X Medan Branch has carried out promotions, but has not utilized online media optimally. The inhibiting factors are the absence of a maximum promotion strategy policy through online media and special human resources to carry out promotions through online media. In this way, the company will determine promotional policies and continue to explore potential resources by prioritizing a focus on improving promotional strategies through online media .

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