

MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ANALYSIS IN THE MANUFACTURER OF THE LIGHTNING PROTECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Every company definitely wants to emerge as a champion in the midst of intense market competition. To achieve this, what can be done by a company is to carry out effective marketing or promotional communication activities in order to be able to target the right opportunities. This research has the objectives, among others, to find out the marketing communication strategy at a company along with the constraints faced and the solutions implemented. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and supported by literature studies. From the results of processing the data obtained, this study concluded that objek penelitian had carried out marketing communications activities both conventionally and digitally quite well. Various obstacles were encountered by object of research, such as the lack of marketing communication activities to be carried out and adequate human resources. However, to overcome these obstacles, there are several solutions that can be implemented, for example implementing other forms of marketing communications, increasing the number of personnel, and increasing distributors at strategic points.

Keywords: communication, marketing, marketing communications, promotion, strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

As time continues to roll on, the business world is also growing and developing, not even a few of which are progressing rapidly. The large number of goods and services that fill the market—especially similar products—makes competition inevitable. Of course, the beneficiaries of this situation are consumers. Consumers are faced with a variety of products so they can freely choose which one is needed or wanted.

The adage "the consumer is king" seems to be still relevant today. No doubt the producers or marketers are always trying to prepare the right strategy to attract the hearts of consumers. Concerns about being crushed by competition make producers or marketers try to reach consumers in various ways that are effective and efficient approaches.

For producers or marketers, having a quality product at a rational price is not enough to win over consumers. An activity is needed that is able to convey messages about the superiority of products and services provided to consumers. The usual activity is marketing communication or often also called promotion.

A company that manufactures and markets lightning rods named object research realizes that there are quite a number of competitors in the same field. To be competitive, this company runs a marketing communication strategy so that consumers are interested in using its products.

Literature Review Strategy

To achieve a goal, a strategy is usually needed, especially in the business world. Many experts present an understanding of strategy. Kotler (2000:91), for example, argues that strategy is a game plan to achieve

the desired goals of a business unit. Meanwhile, according to Pearce II and Robinson (2008:2), strategy is a large-scale plan, with a future orientation, to interact with competitive conditions to achieve company goals.

Strategy, said Effendy (2002:3), is essentially planning and management to achieve a goal. However, to achieve this goal, the strategy does not function as a road map that only shows direction, but must be able to show how the operational tactics are.

From the definitions above, the authors conclude that strategy is a comprehensive set of plans and implementation taking into account competition factors to achieve the expected main goals of the company. A good strategy standard is a strategy that is not easy to imitate and has its own uniqueness so that it can survive in a relatively long period of time.

Marketing Communications

Basically, marketing communication is another name for the word promotion which is one of the elements of the marketing mix. A company or organization runs a promotional program to convey messages to target audiences or potential customers regarding the existence of its products on the market.

In this ever-evolving era, the existence of marketing communications is increasingly needed by organizations. In the context of modern marketing, Kotler & Keller (2009: 170) mentions the important role of communication for companies towards existing customers and potential customers. Marketing communication is an important aspect of the overall mission and success of marketing. Without communication, consumers and society as a whole will not know about the existence of a product on the market.

Marketing communications, said Shimp (2003:4), can be understood by describing the two main elements, namely:

- a. Communication is a process of thought and understanding conveyed between individuals or between organizations and individuals.
- b. Marketing is a set of activities by which companies and other organizations transfer values (exchanges) between themselves and their customers.

The combination of the two represents the combination of all the elements in the brand's marketing mix, which facilitates exchange by creating a meaning that is disseminated to customers or clients.

The notion of marketing communication according to Kotler and Keller (2009:172) is a means by which companies try to inform, persuade, and remind consumers—directly or indirectly—about the products and brands being sold. The marketing communications mix formula introduced by Kotler and Keller consists of eight elements. Each element plays its role in marketing communication efforts (Prisgunanto, 2006:9). The eight elements are as follows:

1. Advertising: all paid forms of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services through an identified sponsor.
2. Sales promotions: various short-term incentives to encourage trial or purchase of products/services.
3. Events and experiences: company-sponsored activities and programs, designed to create daily or brand-related interactions.
4. Public relations and publicity: various programs designed to promote or protect the image of a company or its individual products.
5. Direct marketing: the use of mail, telephone, facsimile, e-mail, or the Internet to communicate directly with or solicit a response or dialogue from specific customers and prospects.
6. Interactive marketing: online activities and programs designed to engage customers or prospects and directly or indirectly raise awareness, improve image, or generate sales of products and services.
7. Word-of-mouth marketing: oral, written and electronic communication between communities related to excellence or the experience of buying or using a product/service.
8. Personal selling: face-to-face interaction with one or more prospective purchasers for the purposes of making presentations, answering questions, and placing orders.

Marketing communication is a form of communication that aims to strengthen marketing strategies in order to be able to reach a wider market segment. Companies use various forms of marketing communications to promote what they offer and achieve financial goals.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative research is research that is used to analyze data by describing or describing data that has been collected properly without intending to make generally accepted conclusions or generalizations (Sugiyono, 2012).

According to Mukhtar (2013: 10) descriptive qualitative research method is a method used to find knowledge of research subjects at certain times. In this study, the authors used descriptive qualitative research because they wanted to know and get in-depth information related to the topic (Sugiyono, 2012).

The author conducted observations and interviews as research data collection techniques. In this study using participant observation and semi-structured interviews with the interviewer having prepared the topic and a list of questions before the interview activity was carried out. The author needs to explore further a topic based on the answers given by the participants.

According to Creswell (2016), the data analysis model in this study follows the concept of activities in qualitative data analysis which are carried out interactively and continuously at each stage of the research until completion. Components and data analysis in this study, namely:

1. Data reduction.
The data obtained from the report is quite a lot, so it needs to be recorded carefully and in detail. Reducing data means summarizing, choosing the main things, focusing on the things that are important, looking for themes and patterns.
2. Data Presentation
After the data is reduced, the next step is to display the data. In qualitative research the presentation of data can be done in the form of brief, charts, relationships between categories, and with narrative text. By displaying data it will make it easier to understand what happened and plan further work based on what has been understood.
3. Data Verification or Inference
The initial conclusions put forward are still temporary and will change if strong evidence is found to support them at a later stage. However, if the conclusions put forward at the initial stage are supported by valid and consistent evidence when the researcher returns to the field to collect data, then the conclusions put forward are credible conclusions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The object of research is a company engaged in general trading and the production of lightning rods using electrostatic technology systems. Lightning rods produced and marketed by research objects have used a new method, namely the electro-magnetic development system. This so-called electrostatic system is still relied upon in securing the protection system (object protection). The research object was declared officially to be one of the domestically made Electrostatic system lightning rod manufacturers.

After obtaining the data needed in this study, the authors then process and divide the discussion into two, namely the marketing or promotional communication strategy applied and the constraints faced by the object of research.

Marketing Communication Strategy

To attract consumers to use the products being marketed, the research object implements a marketing or promotional communication strategy as follows:

1. Do Personal Selling

In this case, the company carries out face-to-face interactions with prospective customers by:

- a. Visits to new projects
The marketing team visits prospective customers and then conducts product presentations (lightning rods) with the aim of inviting cooperation for the installation of lightning rods in ongoing projects.
- b. Provide bid proposals to potential customers
The object of research makes an appointment to meet potential customers and then provide a product offer proposal.

Personal selling activities carried out by the object of research are quite effective because they have great potential in creating intense interactions between sellers and buyers. This form of marketing communication also has a large enough opportunity in making product purchasing decisions by consumers.

2. Direct Marketing and Interactive Marketing

In today's digital era, most consumers prefer to interact with marketers through practical and fast communication devices. Smartphone technology and internet tools play an important role in direct marketing and interactive marketing activities.

Elements of direct marketing and interactive marketing allow marketers to use direct channels to communicate with target audiences. In this case, the object of research utilizes e-mail devices, Whatsapp applications, and social media (Facebook and Instagram).

Direct and interactive promotions carried out by research objects using digital media, including:

a. Whatsapp

The use of the Whatsapp application in marketing communications allows companies to provide regular information more effectively. This channel is also useful for obtaining feedback from consumers, such as complaints, criticisms, and suggestions.

b. E-mail

Like letters in general, e-mail is used to provide product information along with price offers while at the same time attaching brochures to consumers.

c. Instagram

This application is used to upload interesting and educational content about lightning rods supported by interesting photos. At certain moments, Instagram also offers promotions, such as discounted prices and so on.

d. Facebook

Facebook is used to convey various information about products that are up to date and their prices. This social media is more often used by research objects to promote than others.

According to the author, the use of the Whatsapp application and social media can be quite effective in today's era. By relying on viral effects, a product can be widely known by potential customers. It's just that, making a message go viral is certainly not an easy matter. It takes creativity to create interesting and potentially viral content or messages.

3. Advertising

Advertising is an effective means of communication to reach a wide audience that is spread geographically. By delivering repeated messages, advertising is considered capable of growing a long-term image or triggering sales of a product quickly.

It's just that in the research object, the advertisements that run are limited to making catalogs which are then distributed to customers and potential customers. Usually the catalog will be updated once a year because it involves the latest information that needs to be conveyed to customers.

Catalog distribution can be considered effective in building awareness of a product, in this case a lightning rod. Distributing catalogs directly to potential customers can also create quite intense interactions that are expected to result in feedback or purchasing decisions.

Challenges Faced

The various marketing communication strategies implemented by the research object are certainly not without challenges or obstacles. The following are various challenges or obstacles faced by the object of research:

1. Implementation of forms of marketing communication is still not optimal

If you follow the theory as stated above, then ideally a company should run eight forms of marketing communications. While the object of research only carries out three forms of promotion to reach potential customers. This means that there are still many ways that research objects can introduce their products to target audiences, such as distributing brochures, participating in exhibitions, word of mouth marketing, and so on.

2. Lack of human resources in the marketing division

Having only two employees in the marketing division seems to be still not optimal for research objects in reaching potential customers. Especially if you have to make a visit to a new project or have an appointment to meet a potential customer, an inadequate number of human resources can waste opportunities that should be obtained. Adequate human resources play an important role in conveying product messages, especially in personal selling or activities that require intense face-to-face meetings.

3. Lack of distributors in strategic locations

The role of distributors is very important so that lightning rod products can be distributed effectively and efficiently. However, distributors owned or cooperating with research objects are still lacking in terms of the ideal number. So far, delivery of ordered products to consumers is quite slow. Long distances between lightning rod production sites and consumers take a significant amount of time, especially if they have to be sent to other areas where there are no distributors. Slow delivery will certainly disappoint customers so there is a possibility of not repeating orders.

4. CONCLUSION

Through the presentation of marketing communication strategies implemented by research objects to introduce lightning rod products while increasing the number of customers, the authors draw the following conclusions:

1. There are three forms of marketing communications carried out by the object of research, namely personal selling, direct and interactive marketing, and advertising. Although still limited, these three forms of promotion have been implemented quite well.
2. Utilizing the advantages of e-mail and social media, such as Whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram to convey information and product offers. This makes it easier for research objects to reach a wider audience.
3. There are obstacles that must be faced by the object of research, namely the lack of forms of marketing communication that are carried out, the availability of human resources that are not yet adequate, and the number of distributors in strategic locations that are not yet ideal.

Suggestion

By observing the marketing communication strategy that has been carried out by the object of research so far, various obstacles have been found that have arisen, the suggestions that the author can convey include:

1. It would be nice to add more forms of marketing communications that are possible to run. If you can't cover all forms of promotion, then you can choose one that is considered quite effective and efficient in terms of cost. Word of mouth marketing, for example, can be done by providing incentives for everyone who succeeds in getting new customers. Another form of marketing communication is actively participating in property-themed exhibitions or events that can be used to distribute brochures, catalogs and various other forms of promotion. In addition, you can also make and beautify the appearance of the company's website so that the intended target market is interested in knowing the products and services provided.
2. It is necessary to consider increasing the number of personnel in the marketing division, both to support personal selling activities and other promotional activities. To optimize digital marketing, it is better to be supported by personnel who specifically manage websites and social media. This is so that digital devices owned by research objects are filled with interesting and potentially viral content.
3. Increasing cooperation with potential distributors in strategic areas. The ideal number of distributors not only speeds up and optimizes service, but can also be a means of promotion for lightning rod products. At distributor locations, posters can be put up, distributing brochures and catalogs, as well as other advertising props that can be accessed by the target market.

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