

PT Trio Utama's marketing communication strategy to increase the competitiveness of Carnation milk products in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

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Dairy products in Indonesia are currently experiencing growth, one of which is sweetened condensed milk (Susu Kental Manis (SKM)). Sweetened condensed milk (SKM) is a milk product produced by removing some of the water content in milk without adding other food ingredients. Carnation milk is in fourth position with a gain of 4.50%, which is quite a big difference from the first position, namely Frisian Flag milk with a gain of 54.60%. This can explain that competition in selling sweetened condensed milk is real. Competition that occurs within a company is not only from the type of product but also the quality of the product, the price of the product and how the company focuses on marketing and attracting consumers to buy its products. Marketing communication strategy is a concept about how a company organizes all process activities related to the company, with the aim of achieving the company's targets. This research examines the marketing communication strategy of PT Trio Utama to increase the competitiveness of Carnation milk products in Yogyakarta. This research uses a qualitative method by explaining the marketing communication mix of Product, Price, Place, Promotion and by using Kotler and Armstrong's theory (Promotion Mix) which divides the marketing promotion mix such as Advertising, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing and Event Marketing. The aim of this research is to examine the marketing communication strategy process carried out by PT Trio Utama in an effort to increase the competitiveness of its products Carnation milk in Yogyakarta.

1. Introduction

Dairy products in Indonesia are currently experiencing growth, one of which is sweetened condensed milk (Susu Kental Manis (SKM)). Sweetened condensed milk (SKM) is a milk product produced by removing some of the water content in milk without adding other food ingredients (Rubiana et al., 2023). Based on the findings of the latest survey data obtained from the average growth in sweetened condensed milk (SKM) consumption during the March 2023 period was 55.2% (Annur, 2023). With this growth, it has an impact on increasing the production of sweetened condensed milk (SKM) in Indonesia. The increase in sweetened condensed milk (SKM) production in Indonesia also has an impact on society. These impacts include many people becoming familiar with and even consuming sweetened condensed milk. This can be seen in the 2020-2024 Top Brand Awards table data:

Table 1. Top Brand Awards of Sweetened Condensed Milk in Indonesia

No	Brand	Top Brand Index
1.	Frisian Flag	54,60%
2.	Indomilk	20,10%
3.	Cap Enaak..	10,70%
4.	Carnation	4,50%
5.	Ultramilk	3,40%
6.	Cap Nona	1,20%

Source: (<https://www.topbrand-award.com>, accessed by Februari 2024)

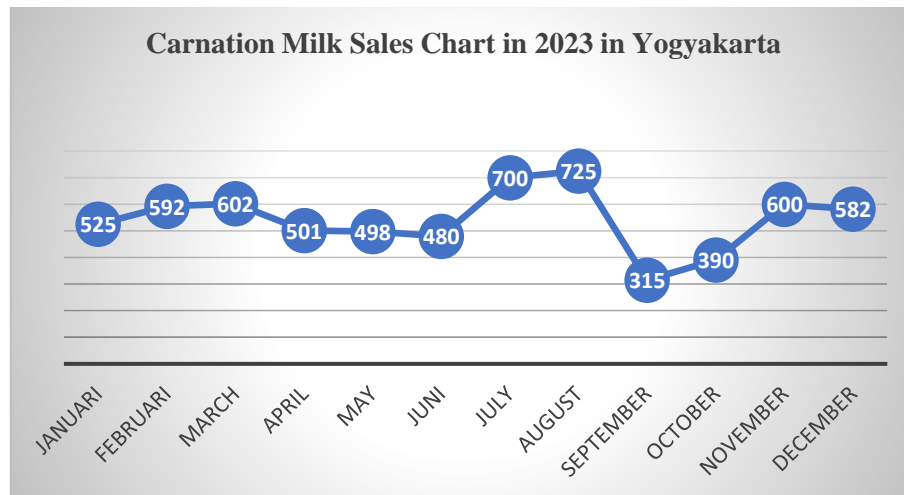
It can be seen from the percentage above, Carnation milk is in fourth position with a gain of 4.50%, which is quite a big difference from the first position, namely Frisian Flag milk with a gain of 54.60%. This can explain that competition in selling sweetened condensed milk is real. Competition that occurs within a company is not only from the type of product but also the quality of the product, the price of the product and how the company focuses on marketing and attracting consumers to buy its products (Yasinta, 2022). Competition in trade is usually known as competitors. Competitors mean companies that compete in producing or marketing products or services that are the same or similar to the products we offer (Saputro et al., 2023).

This research will investigate the marketing communication strategy of PT Trio Utama, a distributor of Carnation milk in the Yogyakarta area. The marketing communication strategy is a concept encompassing the management of all company-related activities, aiming to achieve the company's targets (Nurmelyani et al., 2022). In a marketing communications strategy there are several mixes of marketing communications. The marketing communications mix focuses on elements consisting of (Wijayani, 2022): Product: Marketing activities that provide a process of exchange and development of relationships with consumers by observing consumer needs. (1) Price: Agree on prices with consumers regarding the goods offered. (2) Place: Determining the location to be determined to meet consumer needs. (3) Promotion: Activities to promote products that aim to attract consumer interest in the product.

In the marketing promotion section, there is also a marketing promotion mix proposed by Kotler and Armstrong which emerged in 2012 in their book entitled "Marketing Management". The definition of promotional mix according to Kotler and Armstrong is a mixture of several marketing mixes used in a company which aims to communicate value to customers persuasively and build relationships with customers (Muhliso et al., 2020). Some promotional mixes according to Kotler and Armstrong include (Mahrizal & Maisur, 2021): (1) Advertising: Is a form of non-personal marketing that involves payment transactions to disseminate information through mass media such as newspapers, radio, television, billboards or through social media such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and others (Talalu et al., 2021). (2) Personal Selling: Is an attempt to gain a profit through direct relationships between sales representatives and consumers (Ali & Aan, 2022). The aim of personal selling is to convince and influence potential consumers to buy products and even subscribe to the products offered by the seller. (3) Sales Promotion: Sales promotion is a flexible marketing tool or strategy that a company uses to move the market and achieve their market goals (Wibowo, 2021). Effective sales promotions can influence consumer response and increase product sales. (4) Direct Marketing: Is an interconnected system that uses advertising media to observe and produce measurable consumer behavior. The thing to remember about direct marketing is planning the most effective response from marketing targets (Ali & Aan, 2022). The main goal of direct marketing is to obtain measurable actions and responses from the target market. (5) Marketing Event: Is an activity or program carried out by a company which aims to create daily interaction with a particular product (Wibowo, 2021). In this program, a company usually explains or presents the products it offers to the public. The aim of marketing events is to convince and influence consumers to choose the products being offered.

In this research, the researcher focused his research on the Carnation milk brand in distributing this product in the Yogyakarta city area. In the city of Yogyakarta itself, there are several companies that are distributors of daily necessities (consumer goods), one of which is PT Trio Hutama. Seeing that there are many products and competing companies for sweetened condensed milk spread across the Yogyakarta area, PT Trio Hutama requires PT Trio Hutama to determine an effective strategy to be able to compete in marketing its products. Determining a company's strategy in making decisions is one of the important things in a company, because basically, strategy has an important role in helping the company to achieve the company's goals (Kusumasari & Afrilia, 2020).

Table 2. Carnation Milk Sales Chart in 2023 in Yogyakarta



Source: Researcher Processed Through Interviews

(GD Force - Tracking Performanced (Switching & Maintain) Updated, 2023)

As illustrated in the graphic table above, derived from direct interviews conducted in the field, sales of Carnation milk products by PT Trio Hutama have exhibited fluctuations. Consequently, this research aims to examine the marketing communication strategies by employing Kotler and Armstrong's Promotion Mix theory. The analysis of marketing communication strategies is an academic investigation focusing on the mix of marketing communication strategies used in product marketing. The objective of this analysis is to understand how these strategies are employed to enhance the competitiveness of products in the surrounding markets.

2. Method

This research employs a qualitative approach, which produces insights that would not be attainable through quantitative methods or statistical procedures. Qualitative research can reveal social phenomena such as social life, history, behavior, organizational functionalism, social movements, and kinship relationships. While some data may be examined through census data, the analysis remains qualitative (Sugiyono, 2021). According to Kirk and Miller (1986), qualitative methodology is a specific tradition in social science that relies on observing objects and engaging with them (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019).

In this study, the researchers utilized qualitative descriptive methods. The qualitative research method is a process that examines phenomena by analyzing, characterizing, and illustrating the conditions of the research subject or object using observable data from the field (Santoso, 2021). The outcomes of this research are factual findings that will be articulated through descriptive words, which will convey the discoveries made by the researchers (Rusandi & Muhammad, 2021).

The research involves observation, interviewing two respondents who are competent to provide insights relevant to the study and supplementing the data with graphs or images to enhance the explanation. Once sufficient data is collected, the researchers will analyze the results to substantiate the study's findings.

3. Result and Discussion

Based on research conducted using data obtained from direct interviews with selected informants, the information comprises detailed explanations provided by the two chosen respondents. This information pertains to the marketing communication strategy implemented by PT Trio Hutama to enhance the competitiveness of Carnation milk products in Yogyakarta. The marketing communication strategy employed by PT Trio Hutama includes the following components:

4.1. Marketing Communication

Openness is the willingness to respond to information received in an interpersonal communication process, openness is also influential in presenting effective interpersonal communication. At the openness stage, correctional officers use a topical approach and adjust the communication needs of correctional-assisted citizens, this is so that correctional-assisted citizens can be open and faster to receive guidance or learning materials while being fostered at the Class II A Kasongan Narcotics Correctional Institution.

Product. In this process, PT Trio Hutama, in an effort to increase the competitiveness of Carnation milk products, innovated several milk size variants, including starting from 375 grams, 405 grams and 495 grams. These findings were obtained from interviews collected by researchers with informants who served as Head Office Area (Informant 1) and Marketing Principal Brand (Informant II), regarding the concept of Carnation milk products, presented below:

"For Carnation milk products themselves, there are several size variants, some are 365 grams, some are 488 grams, some are 495 grams. The reason the variant is made that way is because it meets the needs of the surrounding market" (Informant I)

"Carnation milk products vary in size, it depends on the needs of the consumer. The 365 gram and 488 gram samples are usually for cake or martabak sellers, beverage outlets, while the 495 gram ones are not always used for mixed drinks. Because this type is the evaporated type, not sweet thick. And in Yogyakarta itself there are, but not many people use evaporated milk as a mixture in making food or drinks (Informant II)



Figure 1. Carnation Sweetened Condensed Milk Variant

Source: (<https://id.images.search.yahoo.com/>, n.d. accessed by March 9, 2024)

Price. In this process, PT Trio Hutama, in an effort to increase the competitiveness of Carnation milk products, determines the price in accordance with production costs. This data was obtained during interviews with the Head Office Area (Informant 1) and Marketing Principal Brand (Informant II), presented below:

"The price for Carnation milk products varies depending on the size variants. For the 365 gram Rp. 12,000/can but per carton IDR 513,000/carton (48 pcs), for 488 grams IDR. 14,000/can but per carton Rp. 650,000/carton., For 495 grams Rp. 16,000/can while per carton IDR. 750,000/carton. The reason the variant is made that way is because it meets the needs of the surrounding market" (Informant I)

Place. in this process, PT Trio Hutama, in an effort to increase the competitiveness of Carnation milk products, chose the distribution destination to beverage or food outlets as well as cafes spread across Yogyakarta. Because basically Carnation milk is used to mix drinks or even food, not to dissolve it in water and then drink it. These findings were obtained from interviews collected by researchers with informants who served as Head Office Area (Informant 1) and Marketing Principal Brand (Informant II), regarding the concept of determining the distribution of Carnation milk locations, presented below:

"As for the distribution of Carnation milk products themselves, they are more often sold in beverage and food outlets such as avocado shakes, martabak, city tea and the like. "The thing is, carnation milk is meant to be a mixture of flavors, not to be brewed with water and then drunk" (Informant I)

"Due to my role as principal brand, my job is also to organize where the product will be distributed. Considering that the market often consumes Carnation milk products, the average food and beverage seller is the target of selling Carnation milk to these places. (Informant II).

Promotion. Considering that sales promotions are very important in an effort to increase the competitiveness of the products offered, PT Trio Utama also carries out sales promotions with the aim of attracting consumers' interest in buying Carnation milk products. That way, Carnation milk products can still compete with other milk products spread across Yogyakarta. These findings were obtained from interviews collected by researchers with informants who served as Head Office Area (Informant 1) and Marketing Principal Brand (Informant II), regarding the Carnation milk promotion concept, presented below:

"As for promotional activities for Carnation milk products, it is clear that they exist. Because the aim of promotion is also to attract consumers to buy the product. "If lots of people are interested in Carnation milk products, this will have a positive impact on the company and Carnation milk products will still be able to compete with milk brand competitors spread across Yogyakarta" (Informant I)

"When we talk about promotions, every sale must have a promotion, but how the promotion is carried out is different for each company. PT Trio Utama itself has many ways to promote its products. (Informant II).

4.2. Mix Marketing Promotion (Kotler Armstrong)

PT Trio Utama to increase the competitiveness of Carnation milk products in Yogyakarta definitely requires promotion in selling its products. The promotion mix that is felt to be in accordance with PT Trio Utama's concept in promoting Carnation milk products is the Promotion Mix (Kotler and Armstrong). The Promotion Mix (Kotler and Armstrong) are as follows (Ramadhaniyah et al., 2023):

Advertising. The findings obtained from interviews collected by researchers with informants who had a role in the sales promotion process for Carnation milk in Yogyakarta, apparently did not carry out an advertising process in the sales promotion of Carnation milk in Yogyakarta. PT Trio Utama argued that they were a company that sold various daily necessities, so there were no specifics regarding the advertising they carried out. PT Trio Utama only relies on related brands to promote Carnation milk. The interviews obtained are as follows:

"PT Trio Utama does not have a detailed advertising process regarding the Carnation milk brand in its sales promotions. PT Trio Utama only relies on the advertising process from the related brand. Like the Carnation milk brand, they have an Instagram account @carnation, Indonesia to promote their products. "This account is not an account created by PT Trio Utama but an account from the Carnation milk brand itself" (Informant I and Informant II)

Personal Selling. The findings obtained from interviews collected by researchers with informants who have a role in the sales promotion process for Carnation milk in Yogyakarta, regarding how they promote their products through personal selling, are presented below:

"PT Trio Utama has someone in charge of personal selling. They are assigned to meet consumers, at which meeting the person in charge of personal selling will offer Carnation milk and try to influence consumers to buy the product. "And their other task is to establish relationships with consumers so that it is hoped that from this good relationship, consumers will choose Carnation milk in their sales" (Informant I)

Sales Promotion. The findings obtained from interviews collected by researchers with informants who have a role in the sales promotion process for Carnation milk in Yogyakarta, regarding how they promote their products through personal selling, are presented below:

"PT Trio Utama has someone in charge of sales promotion. They are assigned almost the same as the duties of a personal seller. However, they are usually aimed at offering Carnation milk products

or new variants and also to use up unsold Carnation milk products. Sales promotion is needed because there is product competition in society with almost similar products. (Informant I)

Direct Marketing. The findings obtained from interviews collected by researchers with informants who have a role in the sales promotion process for Carnation milk in Yogyakarta, regarding how they promote their products through direct marketing, are presented below:

"PT Trio Hutama direct marketing has been carried out by meeting consumers directly, both new consumers and potential consumers (who have the potential to subscribe to Carnation milk products. Direct marketing is direct in nature, direct marketing is considered more efficient because the seller can know what they want from consumers so that this can be a correction for a company." (Informant I).

"At PT Trio Hutama, direct marketing has been carried out. Consumers who have subscribed must have my personal number. "Usually they order via Whatsapp then I will deliver it to the location where they sell." (Informant II)

Marketing Event. The findings obtained from interviews collected by researchers with informants who have a role in the sales promotion process for Carnation milk in Yogyakarta, regarding how they promote their products through marketing events, are presented below:

"In the sales promotion of Carnation milk in Yogyakarta carried out by PT Trio Hutama, they often hold marketing events every 6 months. The event is called "Kendurian" where customers will be invited to attend an event held by Carnation milk. Apart from the kendurian event, the marketing event carried out is "Kolaborasi" [an abbreviation of Kolaborasi & Rasa, Kolaborasi: Collaboration, Rasa: Flavor], this event is almost the same as kendurian but this event only invites "Big Customers" who are loyal to Carnation milk products." (Informant I and Informant II)

3.3. Discussion

Based on the results of interviews, documentation and observations regarding PT Trio Hutama's marketing communication strategy in an effort to increase the competitiveness of Carnation milk products in Yogyakarta, it can be seen that PT Trio Hutama uses several promotional aspects in marketing communications. The aspects used as written include:

Advertising. In accordance with the results of interviews with informant I and informant II, PT Trio Hutama does not carry out advertising in promotional activities for Carnation milk products. The advertising carried out is advertising from the brand itself. By using social media that is still active today, namely Instagram social media with the account name @carnation.indonesia. Advertising in marketing is to provide a message or information that prioritizes the product through advertising both through mass media and print media (Meilasari & Sari, 2020). The following is an example of advertising uploaded to Instagram @carnation.indonesia:



Figure 2. Instagram Post of @carnation.indonesia

Source: (<https://www.instagram.com/reel>, accessed by March 2022)

Personal Selling. In an effort to compete with existing competitors, PT Trio Hutama also promotes sales of Carnation milk by means of personal selling. As explained to informant I, PT Trio Hutama assigned someone to carry out promotions by persuading and influencing consumers to be interested

in the Carnation milk products offered. The following is one of the documentation that was obtained when researchers observed directly in the field to see how personal selling was carried out by one of PT Trio Hutama:



Figure 3. Personal Selling PT Trio Hutama
Source: Field Documentation by Researcher

Sales Promotion. In accordance with the results of interviews with informants I and Informants II, PT Trio Hutama has carried out Sales Promotion in promotional activities for Carnation milk products. Sales promotion carried out by PT Trio Hutama in selling Carnation milk products is by offering attractive offers such as discounts, giving bonuses to several cans of milk if consumers buy the product with sufficient capacity, giving gifts such as glasses or plates to consumers who are loyal to milk products. Carnations. However, sales promotions only apply for the short term. If this is done continuously, it will result in losses for the company (Zulaefa, 2018). The following is documentation of the sales promotion for Carnation milk in promoting it's products:



Figure 4. Sales Promotion PT Trio Hutama
Source: Field Documentation by Researcher

Direct Marketing. In accordance with interviews conducted with informant I and informant II, direct marketing at the company PT Trio Hutama in selling Carnation milk products has also been carried out. Where consumers who have subscribed to purchase Carnation milk can contact Informant II to order. The functions of direct marketing at PT Trio Hutama include reaching customers from Carnation milk, being able to customize the latest product variants because it can match consumer interests and needs directly and of course can increase sales (Muhlisoh et al., 2020). The following is documentation of the direct marketing for Carnation milk in promoting it's products:



Figure 5. Direct Marketing PT Trio Utama

Source: Field Documentation by Researcher

Marketing Event. In promoting sales of Carnation milk, PT Trio Utama also uses marketing events to promote its products. This explanation was obtained when the researcher conducted interviews with Informant I and Informant II. They explained that marketing events from PT Trio Utama to promote their products were held every six months. The event is called "Kendurian". The concept of the event is to invite consumers of Carnation milk to take part in activities such as seminars which will explain the advantages of Carnation milk and offer the milk product to invited guests.

Not only "Kendurian", PT Trio Utama also has marketing event activities but only invites "Big Customers" who are loyal to their products. The event is called "Kolaborasi" where the concept of the event is to invite collaboration between consumers and producers in creating an interesting food or drink menu using Carnation milk as an additional ingredient. In the marketing event that is carried out, there are prizes that are enough to attract consumers to come to the event. The following is documentation of the sales promotion for Carnation milk in promoting its products:



Figure 6. Example of PT Trio Utama Marketing Events

Source: Field Documentation by Researcher

From the explanation above, PT Trio Utama is more dominant in using marketing events in promoting Carnation milk products. According to interviews conducted with two informants, PT Trio

Hutama did not carry out advertising in the sales promotion of Carnation milk because the sales promotion using advertising was carried out by the brand of Carnation milk itself. This is in contrast to research with the title "Effectiveness of Using Facebook Advertising as a Media for Increasing Sales of Haus Durian Drinks" where the research explains that sales through Facebook advertising are said to be effective for selling Haus Durian products (Silalahi et al., 2023). However, on the other hand, PT Trio Hutama has a promotional program that is not available in Promotion Mix Theory (Kotler and Armstrong). The concept of this program is to enter into a cooperation agreement in purchasing Carnation milk products between PT Trio Hutama and consumers within the time period specified when making the agreement.

4. Conclusion

PT Trio Hutama's marketing communications strategy to increase the competitiveness of Carnation milk products in Yogyakarta using the Promotion Mix theory (Kotler and Armstrong) can be said to have not worked well, especially in the advertising aspect. PT Trio Hutama has not made full use of the media in advertising itself. It can be seen from the discussion above that PT Trio Hutama only relies on the Carnation milk brand's Instagram social media in carrying out the advertising process. However, in other aspects, PT Trio Hutama has carried out aspects of its marketing communications strategy well using the Promotion Mix theory (Kotler and Armstrong), such as personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and event marketing. In addition to the sentence above, PT Trio Hutama also has another program to increase competitiveness by entering into a cooperation agreement in purchasing Carnation milk products between PT Trio Hutama and consumers within the time period specified when making the agreement.

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