



Marketing Communication Strategy @Shaggydogjogja to Increase Merchandise Sales

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ABSTRACT

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This research aims to examine the marketing communication strategies employed by Shaggydog Jogja to increase merchandise sales. The band Shaggydog formed on June 1, 1997, in Sayidan, a riverside village in the heart of Yogyakarta. This band, comprised of six members, sells merchandise as souvenirs for their fans. The band sells a diverse range of merchandise, including t-shirts, hoodies, tote bags, hats, and jackets. This research method employs a qualitative descriptive approach, wherein the researcher describes or explains a research object based on its characteristics, with @shaggydogjogja serving as the research object. We collected data in this research using interview techniques, observation, literature review, and documentation. This research uses Fred R. David's marketing communication strategy theory, which includes formulation, implementation, and evaluation. The research results demonstrate the effectiveness of @shaggydogjogja's marketing communication strategy, which involves formulating, establishing, and evaluating performance through Instagram social media. This serves as a strategy to increase the sales of @shaggydogjogja merchandise.

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1. Introduction

The digital era has caused a paradigm shift for companies in implementing marketing strategies. People are gradually abandoning traditional media like newspapers, magazines, and television. The media is starting to shift to social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Social media has grown exponentially and successfully found a central place in people's daily lives. (Zafar et al., 2021). The number of internet users has grown by 3.7 percent over the past year, reaching 5.30 billion, equivalent to 65.7 percent of the world's population. (We Are Social, 2023). Meanwhile, the population of Indonesia has reached 213 million as of January 2023. This number is equivalent to 77% of Indonesia's total population of 276.4 million. (Kata data, 2023). Therefore, social media has become an important part of the new way of interacting in people's daily lives. (Utami, 2021). Social media also changes the way consumers communicate and share information about brands, allowing them to think, discuss, and provide their experiences with specific brands. One of the main players in the realm of social media is Instagram.

The We Are Social survey results for 2024 show that We Are Social has made Instagram the favorite social media platform in Indonesia, after WhatsApp. (kata data, 2024). Instagram, which is an image-sharing application, has now evolved into one of the most effective marketing tools for selling products. This is due to Instagram's implementation of the Instagram Ads feature for product advertising. (Wardhani & Alif, 2019). Additionally, Instagram caters to an audience with a high demand for easily digestible content, and users enjoy engaging with short-duration content through likes, comments, shares, and sometimes even video responses in the same format (Liang & Wolfe,

2022). The public widely accepts Instagram's popularity due to its easy accessibility and flexibility, viewing it as a platform easily accessible through computers or mobile phones. (Subagio, 2024). Instagram was created not only as a photo application, but also as a new means of communication through images, serving as a tool for digital marketing (Hida & Dewi, 2021).

Social media marketing is a key strategic activity that can achieve organizational goals and create value for internal and external stakeholders. Marketing communication widely employs social media as an effective tool, leading to brand-related consequences such as brand awareness and customer engagement. We refer to this activity as a key strategic step in marketing communication, producing brand-related consequences such as brand awareness and customer engagement. (Sfenrianto, 2023). In Indonesia, Instagram has emerged as the third most popular social media platform, frequently serving as a tool for product marketing (Karin & Abner, 2022). One of these products is the merchandise of the band Shaggydog. On June 1, 1997, Shaggydog, a band, formed in Sayidan, a riverside village in the heart of Yogyakarta City. Fans can purchase products from this long-established band as souvenirs. Band merchandise can be anything from t-shirts to posters, stickers, lighters, branded tote bags, hats, or anything else customized for fans to purchase (Taufiqqurahman, Fadillah, & Afifah, 2023). Shaggydog has a diverse range of merchandise products, including hoodies, keychains, office supplies, socks, and more. These products not only showcase the band's logo and artwork, but also provide long-lasting quality suitable for daily use.

The sale of Shaggydog Band's merchandise products utilizes Instagram as a platform to market them. Additionally, the merchandise products are promoted and communicated through Instagram. An effective marketing communication strategy to increase product sales involves a deep understanding of the target audience and consumer needs. The researcher's initial observations revealed that Shaggydog's marketing communication strategy is already effective. Four out of five fans show interest in buying Shaggydog's merchandise. This is marked by the presence of comment interactions on social media accounts, especially on Instagram at @shaggydog. Therefore, the researcher has developed an interest in examining the marketing communication strategy of @shaggydogjogja in order to increase merchandise sales. In order to achieve the goal of conveying vision and behavior, communication is a process that uses symbols, judgments, feelings of guidance, or thoughts in the form of information, ideas, or requests for input. (De Stefani & De Marco, 2019). Marketing is an activity that aims to achieve the company's goals by forecasting the needs of consumers or producers (Tien et al., 2019). An effective marketing communication strategy to increase product sales involves a deep understanding of the target audience and consumer needs.

Communication and marketing strategies that keep pace with technological advancements or adapt to changing communication processes typically incorporate warnings about current internet developments. Information about the product can create brand or product value when consumers receive it (Humaidi et al., 2022). Often, businesses formulate steps and strategies to boost sales through marketing communication, aligning with their aspirations to maintain a competitive edge against emerging competitors. If a business fails to immediately address its obstacles, find solutions to its problems, and improve its existing strategies, it can become a crucial challenge. With mental readiness and strategic changes to face various challenges in a venture that marks the beginning of the business world, a company must be able to market itself by coordinating and communicating well with cooperation among other companies and developing new concepts in running the business through marketing communication.

Currently, marketing communication plays a crucial role in providing information, persuading, and reminding consumers directly or indirectly about the brand and products sold by a company. Marketing communication is one form of communication that can strengthen marketing strategies. Without marketing communication, consumers or the public will not know about the existence of products in the market (Kusniadji, 2016). Marketing communication plays a crucial role in realizing the company's aspirations, specifically in increasing sales that impact the overall company, generating sales profits, and ensuring the company's sustainability. (Ciravegna, 2020). Therefore, in promotional activities, marketing communication requires a strategy to effectively convey the message to consumers (Misdrinaya, 2017).

Mardiyanto & Giarti (2019) previously conducted similar research, analyzing merchandise marketing communication strategies at Kedai Digital 8 Solo. Adilla (2023) examined B2B

(business-to-business) marketing communication strategies to increase product sales at PT Cloud Hosting Indonesia. (Idcloudhost). Syafna and Rejeki (2021) conducted an analysis of the marketing communication strategy of the online shop "youth_millennial" with the aim of enhancing brand awareness and sales. However, the examination of @shaggydogjogja's marketing communication strategy to increase merchandise sales is still limited. This research focuses on @shaggydogjogja as a novel subject. Therefore, this research is important to fill the research gap. Based on the background above, this research is titled, "Marketing Communication Strategy of @shaggydogjogja to Increase Merchandise Sales".

2. Method

This research use descriptive-qualitative research. This research is a type of study that describes or elaborates on a research object based on its characteristics. Qualitative descriptive research aims to explain phenomena in depth through data collection. Should the collected data be comprehensive and capable of elucidating the studied phenomenon, further sampling may not be necessary. Descriptive research aims to provide insights into existing communication strategies by presenting, analyzing, and interpreting data (Rahmat, 2009).

This research employs a descriptive approach. In this method, the author gathers data, critically analyzes it, and draws conclusions based on the facts present during the research. The descriptive approach aims to describe things systematically and accurately (Nazir, 2011). Therefore, the author wants to describe the facts regarding the marketing communication strategy of @shaggydogjogja to increase merchandise sales. The data collection techniques used in this research are interviews, observations, literature reviews, and documentation.

Data collection techniques in this research are interviews, observation, literature review dan documentation. This research employs the Miles and Huberman interaction analysis model for data analysis, which encompasses data collection, data reduction, conclusion drawing, and verification. (Utari, 2013). In this study, data validation techniques in the form of data triangulation were used. Triangulation in credibility testing is the examination of data from different sources at different times. The researcher uses source triangulation to identify additional topics related to the subject under study, selecting sources based on their level of participation. (Hallaludin dan Hengki Wijaya, 2019).

3. Result and Discussion

Fred R. David (2010) asserts that strategy serves as a tool for achieving long-term goals. It is a potential action that requires top management decisions and a large amount of company resources. The strategy shapes the company's long-term development and steers it towards the future. Strategic management focuses on efforts to integrate leadership, marketing, finance, production, research, and development as well as computer information systems to achieve organizational success. The goal of strategic management is to exploit and create various new and different opportunities for long-term planning and to strive to optimize current trends for the future. The research results confirm the effectiveness of @shaggydogjogja's promotional communication strategy in boosting merchandise sales. The study also identified supporting and inhibiting factors in its marketing communication. The supporting factor is the diverse features of Instagram that are very helpful in marketing. The hindering factor is the growing number of online business competitors who are attracting more attention. In this case, @shaggydogjogja is trying to build relationships with consumers, namely their fans, in order to generate loyal and new customers. According to Fred R. David (2010), the strategic management process consists of three stages: strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation.

3.1. Formulation of Shaggydog's Marketing Communication Strategy

The formulation of strategy, the initial stage in strategic management, involves methods or steps to identify the most effective specific strategy for achieving a goal. Strategic formulation issues include determining which businesses to enter, which businesses to avoid, how to allocate resources, whether expansion or diversification of operations is necessary, whether the company should enter

international markets, whether mergers or acquisitions should be made, and how to avoid detrimental takeovers. In the activity of marketing merchandise products that include mugs, business cards, ceramic clocks, screen-printed shirts, and other products, Shaggydog uses a marketing communication mix strategy as the basis for determining which marketing tools they use to promote their products to consumers. In an interview, the Shaggydog marketing team stated that:

"In determining the marketing communication strategy, we usually discuss it first with the media team to see the conditions and what the market needs from this band, Shaggydog." We begin by crafting captivating apparel designs that highlight Shaggydog's unique characteristics. Next, determine the price, target market, and business competitors, as many are now selling imitation products on e-commerce platforms under the Shaggydog name. Next, determine segments such as age, gender, social class, and region. Since Shaggydog is one of the senior bands in Yogyakarta, the majority of their fans are over 25 years old, most of whom are already employed, and they are spread across various major cities in Indonesia, including Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Sumatra, and other cities. So how do we as the marketing team collaborate with the media team to leverage existing social media in order to achieve our goal of widely marketing this original band merchandise". (Sasya Cipta, Marketing Team Shaggydog)

Based on the interview results, it was found that after determining the strategic approach, the strategy can be applied in a plan, where this plan is formulated based on an analysis of market opportunities, competitor analysis, and target marketing, so that it can determine what actions should be taken next. Linking potential segmentation to marketing communication will determine the necessary time, communication stages, media usage, frequency of message delivery, and the most effective messages to capture the target market's attention. In their interview, the Shaggydogjogja media team made the following statement:

"After determining the initial steps and observing the market conditions, we then choose the media that will be used to promote this merchandise. Currently, the media significantly contributes to product marketing. Although for now we haven't chosen many social media platforms to market Shaggydog merchandise, such as the recently added TikTok Shop, YouTube Shop, and Facebook Marketplace, we are still analyzing which media are suitable for marketing our products. Additionally, we determine the message we want to convey to fans through the content we upload on Shaggydog's social media. Typically, the content type is light, featuring videos of the members wearing merchandise backstage or photos of them performing while wearing their official merchandise, (Sasya Cipta, Shaggydog Marketing Team)".

Mass media is considered a medium that can reach a wider audience. Shaggydog's marketing strategy planning includes not only the unique and attractive product design, but also the selection of media for merchandise promotion. Shaggydog undoubtedly conducts media research or studies for this purpose. Media research results can provide valuable insights into the types of content and merchandise items that fans prefer. In outdoor media, selecting the right location is an important consideration besides the appeal of the message and visuals. Additionally, we comprehensively study the message and visuals in relation to marketing communication activities to ensure that the conveyed message can attract attention and create a strong impact. Producing a strong message aims to capture the audience's attention through media delivery.

3.2. Implementation of Shaggydog's Marketing Communication Strategy

According to Fred R. David (2010), the second stage of strategy execution involves setting the company's annual goals, motivating employees, and allocating resources to execute the formulated strategies. People often refer to the implementation of strategy as the "action stage" of strategic management. Implementing a strategy means mobilizing employees and managers to execute the formulated strategy. Often considered the most difficult stage in strategic management, the implementation of strategy requires discipline, commitment, and personal sacrifice. The successful implementation of a strategy depends on the manager's ability to motivate employees, which is more of an art than knowledge. The formulation of the strategy is useless if it remains unimplemented. In an interview, the administrator of the Instagram account @shaggydogjogja made the following statement:

"In its implementation, we utilize social media, specifically Instagram, to market merchandise. Shaggydog itself has an official merchandise account on Instagram, namely @doggyshopjogja, which has around 16 thousand followers." With a considerable number of followers on Instagram, the promotions we conduct usually involve using the features available on Instagram, such as uploading photo and video reels, posting Instagram stories with links that can directly access our e-commerce page, live streaming with attractive promotions, interacting with fans through Instagram DMs, uploading collaborative content with the account @shaggydogjogja, and also using Instagram Ads on some photo and video content for advertising. For special implementations, we usually hold merchandise launch events by inviting other media friends or collaborating with several artists in Yogyakarta. To reach a wider audience, we implement an open booth system whenever Shaggydog has a performance schedule outside the city. (Sasya Cipta, Tim Marketing Shaggydog)."

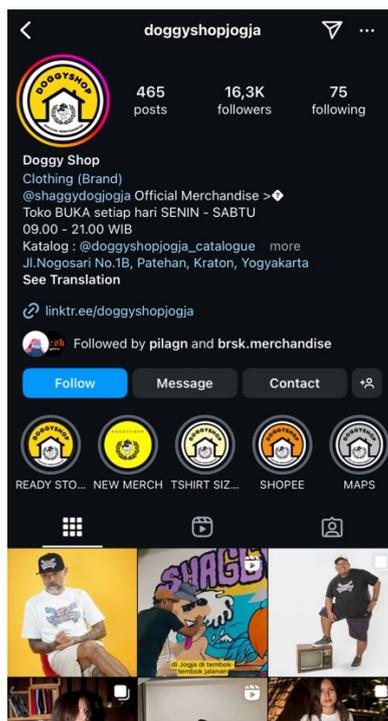


Figure 1. Instagram Profile @doggyshopjogja

Based on the above interview results, it's clear that Shaggydog's marketing communication strategy effectively uses the Instagram social media account @doggyshopjogja to promote merchandise in an innovative and effective manner. By leveraging their followers, Shaggydog can not only reach a quick audience but also build closer relationships with their fans. By utilizing features available on Instagram, such as Instagram stories, Shaggydog can provide engaging content and establish a more personal connection with their fans. Through live streaming, Shaggydog can hold Q&A sessions with fans, creating deeper moments. In addition, the use of DMs (direct messages) provides fans with the opportunity to communicate directly. By utilizing Instagram Ads, Shaggydog can target ads to the right demographics and expand their reach. Overall, Shaggydog's implementation strategy can significantly increase merchandise sales. In addition, the Shaggydog marketing team also added in their interview that:

"We exclusively use Instagram Ads for social media advertising, promoting content that our media team has already created." Typically, we organize a new merchandise launch event in partnership with Yogyakarta artists, extend invitations to other media teams for coverage, and reach out to the local community. Simultaneously, sales through online media platforms such as Instagram will experience significant growth, as many individuals create Instagram stories, visit the @shaggydogjogja and @doggyshopjogja pages, and subsequently make purchases through e-commerce. Not only that, but in-store purchases also draw in a large number of buyers, as we offer a 30% discount on randomly selected items with each release." (Sasya Cipta, Tim Marketing Shaggydog)."



Figure 2. Reels Advertisement @doggyshopjogja on Instagram

From the interview results, it was obtained that the marketing communication mix applied includes advertising using Instagram Ads and personal selling (direct selling). Advertising is any form of message about a product conveyed through media intended for the public. Among the diverse media platforms, Shaggydog most frequently utilizes Instagram for product marketing. Furthermore, to attract consumers, Shaggydog has been maximizing online media, such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and online shopping sites. The media team not only mandates daily content uploads but also intensifies communication with customers through online media, whether it's for product orders or simply interacting with fans. Researchers concluded that online media has become the primary choice for ShaggyDog marketing its products because it is considered more practical and effective in attracting customers.

Consumers and followers successfully drew attention to the Instagram account @shaggydogjogja, prompting the target market to purchase Shaggydog merchandise due to their interest in its content. Based on promotional indicators related to advertising, @shaggydogjogja produces reels or short videos for Doggyshop Jogja, a merchandise store that sells various Shaggydog products. The Instagram social media account @shaggydogjogja admits to only utilizing existing social media and directly approaching their fans to encourage them to purchase the merchandise products offered. Based on public relations indicators, it is known that @shaggydogjogja has established a good relationship with the community through promotional events for merchandise releases that involve the surrounding community. The public relations activities carried out by the @shaggydogjogja social media involve direct outreach to the community, aiming to build a positive image so that more people will want to purchase merchandise products.

The sales promotion indicator, @shaggydogjogja, offers a 30% discount to the public who attends the merchandise release promo. For face-to-face sales, @shaggydogjogja conducts direct sales at an offline store named Doggyshop Jogja. In addition to selling merchandise at the offline store Doggyshop Jogja, @shaggydogjogja also uses a booth system to sell merchandise at various out-of-town events. In addition, @shaggydogjogja uses Instagram @doggyshopjogja and online shopping sites such as Shopee and Tokopedia for online marketing. In this case, @shaggydogjogja is trying to build a good relationship with its fans to gain their full trust, which can result in loyal customers and new ones. According to the summary provided by the researcher, Shaggydog has

successfully utilized five components of a promotional media strategy through the Instagram account @shaggydogjogja as a medium for promoting its merchandise.

3.3. Evaluation of Shaggydog's Marketing Communication Strategy

Strategy evaluation is the final stage in strategic management. Fred R. David (2010) Managers must know when a particular strategy is not working well; assessment or evaluation of the strategy is the main way to obtain such information. All strategies are open to modification in the future because various external and internal factors are constantly changing. Strategy evaluation is necessary because what works now may not work later. Success always creates new and different problems; organizations that easily become complacent will experience failure. During an interview, the marketing team @shaggydogjogja made the following statement:

"For the evaluation of Instagram usage as a marketing medium, we usually look at the analysis of post insights, profile visits, live streaming viewers, and the number of likes, comments, and shares for each photo or video content we upload on Instagram (@doggyshopjogja)." Every week, we consistently promote our uploaded photos and videos on Instagram @doggyshopjogja, conduct regular live streaming sessions twice a week, and share photo and video reel content. We aim to assess the effectiveness of our past strategies and implementations in boosting the Shaggydog band's merchandise sales. Additionally, what will Additionally, we will consistently evaluate how we can maintain our image, foster positive relationships with our fans, and preserve the originality of our products, enabling buyers to distinguish between genuine and counterfeit products. constructive criticism and suggestions from fans to improve the quality of this merchandise brand. We understand that ensuring customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in our product marketing success. (Sasya Cipta, Tim Marketing Shaggydog)."

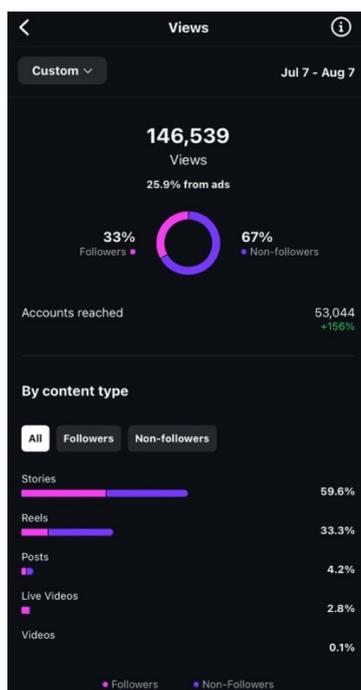


Figure 3. Insight Instagram Profile @doggyshopjogja

The interview results reveal that the evaluation serves as a benchmark for implementing the next strategy. At this stage, Shaggydog employs insight analysis on Instagram under the username @doggyshopjogja. Evaluation plays a crucial role in team commitment and cooperation, allowing us to monitor the success of our targeted goals and strategies. The evaluation will undoubtedly influence the level of brand awareness that @shaggydogjogja will attain. To support the marketing communication strategy being implemented, @shaggydogjogja is taking several steps to increase awareness. Among these strategies are the use of Instagram social media for merchandise marketing, the expansion of distribution through Instagram ads, word-of-mouth communication, and the invitation of various parties to collaborate as a form of personal selling.

4. Conclusion

The research results indicate that @shaggydogjogja is effectively and optimally implementing and evaluating Fred R. David's marketing communication strategy to increase merchandise sales. By using strategies such as market analysis, segmentation determination, and appropriate media selection, Shaggydog Jogja successfully leveraged social media to promote its products. In its implementation, Shaggydog uses social media, especially Instagram, to market its products. By utilizing features available on Instagram, such as Instagram Story, Live Streaming, DM (direct messages), and Instagram Ads, Shaggydog successfully reaches and attracts attention through engaging content and establishes intense communication with its fans. The marketing communication mix that Shaggydog uses includes advertising and direct sales. In advertising, Shaggydog only uses Instagram ads as a promotional medium, which demonstrates the effectiveness of using online media to acquire customers. For direct sales, Shaggydog approaches fans directly to strengthen the brand image and build customer trust. Shaggydog carried out the evaluation by analyzing the Instagram insights of @doggyshopjogja. The periodic evaluation is the most important factor in determining the success of marketing strategies and increasing brand awareness, so Shaggydog can continue to grow and maintain positive relationships with its fans.

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