

Tribun Medan's Marketing Communication Strategy in Facing Media Business Competition in the Digital Age

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the marketing communication strategy of Medan Tribune in the face of media business competition in the digital era. The theory used in this research is Kotler's 4P (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) marketing communication strategy combined with SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. The research method used was a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collection techniques including interviews, observation and documentation. The subjects of this study were the team involved in the marketing communication strategy of Medan Tribune, which was eight informants. The results showed that the marketing strategy of Tribun Medan entering the digital era was carried out by producing news content made in print, online and social media-based multi-platforms as well as building an online news portal filled with fast, accurate, interesting and diverse written and video reports to gain public trust, then creating a digital activity program and developing a Tribune Event Organizer.

Keywords : Marketing Communication Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The baby boomers and Generation Z are likely to be very familiar with one of these media. Newspapers, magazines and other print media are among the media that have contributed to meeting people's information needs. Today, newspapers and other print media are struggling to survive the changing times. Sometimes regarded as outdated and complicated, newspapers or magazines (print media) are currently said to be sluggish and affected by competition from more modern information media. Newspapers have also been consumed by the age of *senjakala*, limping to maintain their existence and serve information in the midst of declining reader interest and fierce competition in the modern digital age. This is the current state of the print media industry, especially newspapers in Indonesia.

The red report card for the national print media industry has started since the 2014 semester. At that time, a number of well-known national dailies had started to reduce the number of employees. In fact, in 2014, there were a number of print media that chose to close down. These included the National Journal and Soccer.

At the beginning of 2015, the situation of the national print media industry worsened as many well-known print media chose to close their operations. For example, *Harian Bola*, *Koran Tempo Minggu*, *Jakarta Globe* and other print media. The *Jakarta Globe* itself chose to transform into online media such as Lippo Group's *The Jakarta Globe Daily*.

TAHUN	MEDIA
2014	Majalah Jasa Keuangan Indonesia, Tamasya, Tabloid Gaul, Soccer, Chic, Harian Jurnal Nasional
2015	Koran Tempo Minggu, Jakarta Globe, Harian BOLA, Majalah Reader's Digest Indonesia, Majalah Fortune
2016	Harian Sinar Harapan, Majalah Kawanku, Majalah Sastra Horison, Majalah Cita Cinta, Majalah Chip, Majalah Motor, Majalah Trax, Tabloid Sinyal, Majalah Girls, What Hifi, Auto Expert
2017	Majalah HAI, National Geographic Traveler, Rolling Stone, MAXIM Indonesia, FHM, Cosmo Girl Indonesia, NYLON Indoneisa, Esquire Indonesia, Commando, High End Teen, Grazia Indonesia
2018	Tabloid BOLA, Bola Vaganza, Majalah Gogirls, Koran Bernas Yogyakarta
2019	Tabloid Cek & Ricek, Harian Medan Bisnis

Figure 1.1. Indonesia's Inactive Print Media (2014-2019)

Source: HasilOlahan

From the above description, some conclusions can be drawn about the causes of the decline of national and regional print media, which is the state of the media market, which is more oriented towards digital technology. Currently, various information can be obtained for free, print media circulation has decreased, and digital disruption has caused various print media to improve and transform their business. In addition to changes in Indonesian consumers' media consumption behaviour leading to digital media, it is possible that the declining confidence of brand owners to spend their advertising budgets on print media is one of the main causes.

The media business is now a business that must be ready to face all technological changes if it wants to survive in the midst of the development of the digital era. This media business sector shows that the online media business is quite lucrative for press entrepreneurs, even more visitors and Internet users in Indonesia are expanding and increasing. The support of Internet network infrastructure is indeed very influential as a support for connecting to this virtual media. In fact, nowadays gadgets are increasingly supporting access to this virtual world, with cheap access to increasingly affordable products. And the running costs are quite cheap.

In an effort to reach a wider market, the more competition there is, both in terms of products and market share. This, of course, requires appropriate, efficient and effective marketing communication strategies to win this competition.

One way to win this competition is to present quality information, product marketing coverage that can penetrate all segments, affordable product prices and product distribution points. All these things need to be supported by good management. Because the competition between media, with the emergence of many new media, will make the market increasingly narrow, if it does not have a strong product and a reliable marketing strategy, it will not be able to compete.

The competition for the media market in Indonesia, especially in North Sumatra, raises the curiosity of researchers to see what marketing communication strategies are used by each media. This is because Indonesian society is not an easily influenced society, as can be seen from its educational background. Many studies suggest that people with higher education are quite difficult to influence.

Competition in the mass media business in the current digital era, especially in the

North Sumatra region itself, is quite fierce. There are several mass media that already have a strong enough brand because they are decades old, such as Analisa, Waspada, Sinar Indonesia Baru, Medan Pos, MimbarUmum. On the other hand, Tribun Medan, SumutPos, Andalas, Pos Metro, Metro24 and several other media are newcomers to the market. Almost all of these mass media are based on print media and are forced to keep up with the times and also have online portals and social media. One of the media that has a fairly strong and influential brand awareness in North Sumatra is Tribun Medan.

Marketing strategy has 4 basic concepts. The basic concept in question is the 4P formula formulated by Kotler in his book, such as (Kotler, 2016):

1. Product, regarding the selection of goods and services offered appropriately. Ideas for determining products can be obtained from various sources, and the way to make the issued products more valuable than other similar products is to first do a little research. So that the results of this research can be used to gain knowledge of the prospects or opportunities of the desired target market.
2. Price, which involves setting the selling price of the goods in accordance with the quality of the goods and what the consumer can afford.
3. Place, which concerns the selection of places and ways of distributing goods or services so that they reach consumers in a timely manner.
4. Promotion, which concerns the selection of appropriate promotional policies in accordance with the goods or services offered.

Tribun Medan as a brand seems to be very competitive and can even excel and stand out compared to other media, especially in print media, online media and social media. Of course, this excellence must be the result of various marketing communication plans and strategies that have been well executed.

This is what interests researchers to conduct research on how Tribun Medan's marketing communication strategy in facing media business competition in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of research used in this study is qualitative. There are several terms used for qualitative research, which are naturalistic or natural research or inquiry, ethnography, symbolic interactionist, internal perspective, ethnomethodology, phenomenological, case study, interpretive, ecological, and descriptive (Moleong, 2018).

Mulyana (2001) clarifies that qualitative research methods are research methods that do not rely on evidence based on mathematical logic, numerical principles, or statistical methods. Actual conversations, gestures and other social actions are the mental material for qualitative analysis.

Qualitative research aims to preserve the form and content of human behaviour and to analyse its qualities, rather than to convert them into quantitative units. It is an empirical method in the sense that it finds evidence in what is experienced rather than in formal or analytical transmission.

The approach used in this research is the case study, which is a comprehensive description and explanation of various aspects of a person, individual, group, organisation (community), programme or social situation. Case study research seeks to examine as much data as possible about the subject under study. It often uses a variety of methods such as interviews, observations, document review (findings), surveys and any other data to describe a case in detail.

In general, a case study is a method that is more appropriate when the research question used in formulating the problem is how and therefore needs to be clarified. (Yin, 2008)

In this research, the case is positioned as an instrument or tool to provide an in-depth

explanation and understanding of how Tribun Medan's marketing communication strategy is carried out in facing media business competition in the digital era. This research will look at how the communication strategy process carried out by Tribun Medan to achieve the expected goals by looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that exist.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The theory used in this research is the 4P marketing communication strategy (product, price, place, promotion).

1. Price

Price is a form of marketing communication strategy that is carried out by setting the selling price of goods in accordance with the quality of goods so that it can be reached by consumers. In this study, one of Tribun Medan's marketing communication strategies related to price was when the company first entered the print media business market in North Sumatra by selling its newspapers at prices far below market prices.

This very low selling price strategy is designed to break the prices of major newspapers in North Sumatra such as Analisa, Waspada, Sinar Indonesia Baru (SIB), Sumut Pos and Medan Bisnis, which sell their newspaper products at a price range of Rp 2,000-3,000. Tribun Medan comes as a newcomer by selling newspapers at a price of Rp.1,000, with the concept that Tribun Medan newspaper is a free newspaper (news information does not need to pay and is easy to get) and not cheap because it still maintains the quality of bold, independent and reliable news. Meanwhile, the price of Rp 1,000 is just a delivery service fee for the carrier or seller of the newspaper, because Tribun Medan's main income is not from the sale of newspapers, but from the sale of advertisements in the newspaper. If the newspaper sales are high enough, the readership will increase and advertisers will come. This is the first step for Tribun Medan to be well received by all readers in North Sumatra.

The sustainability of media companies depends on the advertisements that come in or are published alongside the news content every day, with advertising being the main source of revenue. For this reason, several media companies have adopted strategies to attract advertisers, including attractive advertising offers and price promotions.

2. Place

Place concerns the selection and distribution of goods or services so that they reach and are received by consumers in a fast and timely manner. If it is related to research, the distribution of goods or services carried out by Tribun Medan to the public is carried out in various ways.

The distribution of printed media goods (newspapers), Tribun Medan does so by using newspaper agents and specialised retailers. For collaborating agents, they send out newspaper orders every afternoon to pick up the next day's edition of the newspaper totalling ±15,000 copies to be distributed to the public, with a maximum return rate of 5% specifically for out-of-town agents only. No returns are allowed for agents within the city of Medan.

3. Promotion

Promotion in marketing communication can be interpreted as an action taken by selecting strategies in introducing goods or services to the public. In this research, the promotional activities carried out by Tribun Medan aim to introduce Tribun Medan as widely as possible to all people in North Sumatra.

Promotional activities that are usually carried out by Tribun Medan before entering

this pandemic are to create their own events at least twice a year. Usually the annual big events that are made are mass in nature, such as healthy walks, leisurely bikes, fun runs by inviting all people in North Sumatra. The implementation of these event activities is also used to brand Tribun Medan to the public because usually the number of participants who attend these events is quite large.

This research also uses SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) with the following results:

1. Strengthness

Strength is an analysis used to determine the strength of a company's products, prices, distribution and promotion against its competitors. When looking at the strength of Tribun Medan's products, researchers see that the strength of Tribun Medan's products is a multimedia platform, which means that Tribun Medan has print media, online media, social media, digital activation and event organisers that can complement each other.

The strength of written news content and video news is also an advantage in itself, where Tribun Medan has a bolder news value and does not seek safety in conducting social criticism and public policy. The presentation of news with a different point of view with the concept of easy reading (easy to understand) is increasingly demanded by readers. This is what makes Tribun Medan a media that has a strong enough influence in the eyes of the public, in the sense that what is presented by Tribun Medan, especially in the news, can be a major concern for all levels of society and government.

As for the product price analysis, Tribun Medan newspaper is one of the newspapers with a relatively cheap price of Rp. 2000 per copy with relatively good quality paper and news, so the image formed in the community that Tribun Medan newspaper is a cheap newspaper, but the content is not cheap. As for advertising prices, Tribun Medan itself is very flexible by considering the needs or budget of the client. Tribun Medan will also provide various additional benefits to advertisers by offering multimedia advertising packages (print, online and social media) that cannot be obtained from competitors.

The distribution of Tribun Medan newspaper products has the strength of using networks such as authorised agents, specialised retailers and retail partners. This network helps Tribun Medan to accelerate the distribution and visibility of its newspaper in the community. The results showed that Tribun Medan consumes $\pm 25,000$ to $\pm 30,000$ (January-March 2021 data) copies of newspapers daily, which are distributed throughout North Sumatra both through specialised retailers at the red lights of the city's protocol roads and through retailers such as Alfamidi and cooperating gas stations.

Weakness is an analysis conducted to determine the weaknesses of the company's products compared to its competitors' products. In this research, the weakness of the products made by Tribun Medan is that there are more and more mass media that take the same style of reporting as Tribun Medan, so it becomes a challenge in itself to make the speciality of the news made different from competitors.

Another weakness is the lack of local news from areas far away from Medan city, such as Nias, Labuhan Batu, South Tapanuli, North Padang Lawas, Humbang Hasusutan, Dairi, Pakpak Bharat, Central Tapanuli and several other areas. This is due to the lack of reporters in these areas, so they have to work with contributors (freelance journalists) or send reporters from Medan when there is an important event in the area.

There are no weaknesses for Tribun Medan in terms of product prices and advertising prices, as the prices are still relatively cheap and affordable compared to competitors, although there are also those who say that the advertising prices are still a bit expensive.

In terms of product distribution, Tribun Medan's weakness is that, especially for newspaper products, it is still slightly distributed in areas that are still far from Medan, such as Nias, Labuhan Batu, South Tapanuli, North Padang Lawas, Humbang Hasusutan, Dairi, Pakpak Bharat, Central Tapanuli and other cities.

While the weakness in terms of promotion is that the events and radio promotions carried out by Tribun Medan are still only in Medan city and have not touched other cities in North Sumatra.

2. Opportunity

Opportunity is an analysis carried out to identify opportunities and possibilities in the company's development. In this study, from the product side, the researchers see that the use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Tik-tok can be further developed so that it can get bigger advertisements. In addition, the digital activation programme also has a great opportunity to be developed by creating programmes that can bring in a lot of views, so the opportunity to get sponsors for advertising can be more.

Develop Tribun Medan's regional network in several potential regencies or cities, such as regencies around Lake Toba, which will become a world tourist area, around Labuhan Batu, South Tapanuli and Central Tapanuli areas, where news from these areas has the potential to bring in many online readers who can increase the traffic visits to Tribun Medan's online website.

3. Threat

Threat is an analysis carried out as an effort to anticipate threats to the company's business from any party. From the results of the research, the researchers see that the mass media business is actually an advertising business, so all mass media will strive to increase the number of print media readers, online media readers through the level of visits to their website or social media where it can bring advertisers.

The biggest threat to a media is when it runs out of advertising and has to close down. This is the fear of all mass media and all are trying to survive in the midst of this digital era and one of the solutions is to try to capture the advertising market in online media and social media.

Tribun Medan itself is trying to adapt to all entertainment social media platforms such as Tik-tok, by trying to make Tik-tok one of its content distribution platforms and creating content that adapts to this platform. So far, Tribun Medan is considered to be quite successful with the number of followers reaching 716,600, which has a great potential to get advertisements.

As far as Tribun Medan's products are concerned, the threat comes from the increasing number of influencers or YouTubers who use social media for entertainment content, which is quite popular among netizens. Then there are new startups based on technological innovation by the online news industry as a newcomer to the world of journalism. Startups in news in the mission of journalism contradict the principle of journalistic authority, because the practical aspect is more about adapting to the "products" brought by certain companies. Ideally, the principle of journalistic authority should include the ideology of journalism, which is to be independent and neutral for the public interest (Thariq, 2018).

Another threat is the rapid changes in technology, so the mass media must adapt quickly and be able to prepare all the supporting infrastructure for these changes, such as computer equipment, audio-visual, internet networks, and human resources (HR) capable of using these technologies. Tribun Medan itself seems to have anticipated this by preparing all its equipment according to the needs of online and digital content, as well as the availability of staff who are familiar with the technology through regular training provided by the Tribun Network.

In terms of product prices and advertising prices, there are more and more online media, influencers and new local YouTubers that offer cheaper advertising prices with lighter and more entertaining content. Researchers see that the share of advertisers in mass media has begun to decline and has shifted to social media, which is controlled by individuals such as celebrities or YouTubers with more entertaining content that is preferred by netizens. Although there is still a separate segment for netizens who still like news on social media from mass media.

Regarding the distribution of Tribun Medan products, the decline in the circulation of Tribun Medan newspapers has reduced the income of newspaper retailers. This has caused many retailers to quit or change jobs.

While in terms of promotion, such as the increasing number of new media, especially online media that appear in districts / cities in North Sumatra that promote and provide more local information, so that business people and local governments are more willing to cooperate with media whose segments are more to the local area.

Observations made by researchers in this study include observing several websites that present data on websites and social media sites that are most visited by users, from these observations researchers found it interesting that the Tribunal has never been ranked at the bottom nationally or regionally. In addition, other observations that the researchers made by looking at the number of large companies that collaborate or use the services of Tribun Medan in conducting promotional activities or handling the activities they carry out include Bank Sumut, Telkomsel, Cap Lang, Alfamidi and Alfamart and so on.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted by researchers on Tribun Medan's marketing communication strategy in the face of media business competition in the digital era, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) from the aspect of product of Tribun Medan, such as
 - a) The strengths of Tribun Medan's products are multimedia platforms, which means that Tribun Medan has print media, online media, social media, digital activation and event organisers that can complement each other. The quality of written news content and video news is also an advantage in itself, where Tribun Medan has a bolder news value and does not seek safety in conducting social criticism and public policy. The presentation of news with a different point of view with the concept of easy reading (easy to understand) is also of interest to readers.
 - b) The weakness (Weakness) of Tribun Medan's products is that more and more mass media are adopting the same style of news coverage as Tribun Medan, so it becomes a challenge to make the speciality of the news made different from competitors. Another weakness is the lack of local news from areas far away from Medan city, such as Nias, LabuhanBatu, South Tapanuli, North Padang Lawas, HumbangHasusutan, Dairi, Pakpak Bharat, Central Tapanuli and several other areas.
 - c) Opportunity from Tribun Medan products is the use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Tik-tok, which can be further developed to generate more advertising revenue. In addition, the digital activation programme also has a great opportunity to develop by creating programmes that can bring in a lot of views so that the opportunity to get sponsors for advertising can be more.
 - d) Threats from the product side of Tribun Medan are the increasing number of influencers or youtubers who use social media for entertainment content, which is quite

- popular among netizens. Another threat is the rapid change of technology, so the mass media must adapt quickly and at the same time be able to prepare all the supporting infrastructure for these changes, such as computer equipment, audio-visual, Internet networks and human resources (HR).
2. SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) based on the price aspect of Tribun Medan, such as
 - a) Strengths in terms of product pricing Tribun Medan is a newspaper price that is still very cheap and affordable at Rp. 2000 with a quality that is not cheap. The advertising price is also still competitive, flexible and affordable, and can be adjusted to the client's budget.
 - b) Weakness in terms of product price and advertising price Tribun Medan does not exist because the price is still relatively cheap and affordable compared to competitors, although some say the advertising price is still a bit expensive.
 - c) Opportunities in terms of product prices and advertising prices for Tribun MedanareTribun Medan still has the opportunity to become a leader in the social media segments of Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and Tik-tok by increasing customer advertising responses (insight, reach, views, likes and engagement).
 - d) Threats to Tribun Medan in terms of product pricing and advertising prices are the increasing number of online media, influencers and new YouTubers emerging at the local level, offering cheaper advertising prices with lighter and more entertaining content.
 3. SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of the product distribution aspect of Tribun Medan, including
 - a) Strengths in terms of product distribution of Tribun Medan are the ease of getting Tribun Medan newspapers at red lights through special retailers, then at Alfamidi retail stores and several gas stations in Medan, so the distribution and visibility of the newspaper is quite good. As for the online product itself, the distribution and dissemination of Tribun Medan's news content and programmes is very good because there is a special online and social media team that handles it, using Tribun Medan's social media, which has a fairly high number of followers and community groups in it.
 - b) Weakness in terms of distribution of Tribun Medan products, especially newspaper products, are still slightly spread in areas that are still far from Medan such as Nias, Labuhan Batu, South Tapanuli, North Padang Lawas, Humbang Hasusutan, Dairi, Pakpak Bharat, Central Tapanuli and other cities.
 - c) Opportunity in product distribution Tribun Medan still has the opportunity to develop markets in several cities that still have low readership through online products by creating regional online portals such as tribuntoba.com or tribuntapanuli.com or tribunnias.com.
 - d) Threats from the distribution side of Tribun Medan products are the decline in circulation of Tribun Medan newspapers, which has reduced the income of newspaper retailers. This has caused many retailers to quit and change professions.
 4. SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) from the promotional point of view of Tribun Medan, such as:
 - a) Strengths in terms of promotion, that is, Tribun Medan consistently carries out events and radio promotions to maintain brand awareness.
 - b) Weaknesses in terms of promotion are the events and radio promotions carried out by Tribun Medan are still only in Medan City and have not touched other cities in North Sumatra.

- c) Opportunities in terms of promotion areTribun Medan still has the opportunity to develop networks in other cities by conducting promotions and events in cooperation with the local district / city government.
- d) Threats in terms of promotion are the increasing number of new media, especially online media, appearing in areas other than Medan that promote and promote local information.

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