

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORD OF MOUTH PROMOTION
THROUGH ORGANIZING EVENT WITH SCHOOL
STAKEHOLDER
(THE INTEREST IN FOUNDATION LEVEL MARDIWIYATA)**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine how the steps school promotion by word of mouth through the container school activities involving stakeholder of the school. Analyze the steps to make school promotion by word of mouth through the container school activities involving school stakeholders and to analyze the effectiveness of school promotion of mouth through the container activities involving school stakeholder, in relation to generate interest Junior High School Student Catholic Angelus Custos 1 continues to study at Senior High School Frateran Surabaya.

To conduct research is expected to contribute to the school in the decision making and the determination of the required policies, particularly on the matters relating to the promotion in an effort to increase interest in junior high school students to continue in senior high school.

This is a qualitative study using in depth interview technique to four informans who have been using purposive sampling. Researchers determine the criteria to be interviewed key informants are tenth graders who attended FAST (Frateran in Action Science Tournament).

The result of thid study to determine the effectiveness of the promotion by word of mouth through the container school activities that include emotional aspect: Emotional, Excitement, Inspiration, Powerfull, Compatible, Positif Impression, Consumer Satisfaction that have proven the impact of word of mouth that have been applied to the FAST (Frateran in Action Science Tournament) activities and the results have proven the impact word of mouth promotion at the level of talking and communicating is not until the recommended level.

The theoritical implications and the theoretical support research that already exists but the manajerial implications suggest to the school to be prudent in making decisions determining the types of promotional activities of the school.

Keywords: Promotion Effectiveness, Word of Mouth, School Activities and Stakeholder

INTRODUCTION

Competition in education institutions is getting intense, and this has triggered the emergence of numerous private schools which offer various kinds of activities and curriculum. In addition to

that, the vast development of technology and standard of live in the society have triggered various level of peoples' needs. In order to win the competition and to sustain the education institution, it is required to develop appropriate marketing strategy.

Nowadays, competition among schools is increasingly attractive. Schools not only organize academic activities but also *non-academic* activities that support their students' development. This can be proven by having many continuous creative and innovative efforts by education providers that have impact on the interests of educational service users. This emergence of excellent schools that offer facilities and a wide range of academic and interesting non-academic activities add competition in the world of education.

School as an institution that provides services in education needs to learn to have initiative in increasing customers' satisfaction, since education is a circular and continuous process in which its aspects influence each other. Which is why, a marketing strategy for educational service is needed to win the competition among schools and to improve the acceleration of quality improvement and school management professionalism. One of the marketing strategies that are interesting to discuss is Word of Mouth or oral promotion. School activities that are creatively and innovatively designed can become a very effective word of mouth and can affect students' positive interest to continue their study.

Word of Mouth can become a very powerful promotion since it gets endorsement from third party. This is since most supporters of the activities being promoted tend to be honest on their own words because those are based on their own experience and therefore they are proud to share their experience. Information in word of mouth is trustable since mostly are shared by satisfied customers, do not caused by money or other incentives. Combining *word of mouth* with social media and events or activities will become effective ways in sharing the messages and reaching target customers. These facts make the marketers design strategies by maximizing the potential of word of mouth (Sernovitz,2008).

Kartajaya (2006) claims that the most effective promotion is actually *word of mouth*. Satisfied customers will become the effective spokesperson for the product and better persuaders than any kinds of advertisements. This kind of satisfaction is impossible to achieve without excellent service. Kotler *et al.*, (1998) state that word of mouth is personal influence that is closely related to expensive product and full of risk. One way to minimize the risks of the product is by asking recommendation from friends who already use that product (Heskett,1997). Lovelock (2001) also emphasizes that *word of mouth* is opinion and recommendation made by customers about their experience when consuming product or service and hence strongly influence other customers' decision or buying behavior. This means that people trust information or recommendation from their friends more than advertisements or salesperson. Customers will believe recommendation made by credible people (familiar people) rather than company salesperson (Kartajaya, 2006).

Word of mouth promotion will become more effective if supported by stakeholders. School stakeholders have authorities to allocate fund, facilities and other resources to implement all recent and future school policies. Hence, the role of stakeholder in deciding kinds of activities related to school promotion is very important, and very significant in promoting school by having activities that involve all potential school resources.

With this effective word of mouth promotion, potential students will become attracted in choosing and continuing their high school education. In doing this word of mouth promotion to attract new students and to make them talk about positive things about the activities, then the activities must be attractive, the competition held must be very impressive for the new students to make them satisfied. The activities must be packaged with interesting topic to please the

students, so that these new students are willing to share positive things about the activities and to recommend these activities to other potential new students.

SMAK Frateran Surabaya organizes big events annually, one of them is FAST (*Frateran in Action of the Science Tournament*) as a realization of OPDIS SMAK Frateran Surabaya program, 2014/2015 period. This event involves hundreds of participants from junior high school level with their advisors. This science event is packaged in rally games and mini tournament. One of the cooperative junior high school (SMP) that participates in this event is SMP Angelus Custos 1 who is under the same foundation with SMAK Frateran Surabaya. This SMP supplies most new students for SMAK Frateran every year, yet ironically, the percentage of students of this SMP who did not continue their education in SMAK Frateran Surabaya reached 10% to 15%.

In relation to that, the research problems in this study are as follows:

1. What are the steps of creating word of mouth promotion for promoting school through organizing events with school stakeholders involved?
2. Is word of mouth promotion for promoting school through organizing events with school stakeholders involved effective to increase the interest of SMP Katolik Angelus Custos 1 to continue their high school education in SMAKatolikFrateran Surabaya?

The Objectives

Based on the background, objective of this study is “To investigate the steps of creating word of mouth promotion for promoting school through organizing events with school stakeholders involved”.

Contributions of the Study

This study is expected to give contributions to these related parties:

- 1). Theoretical Contribution
 - a) This study is significant to apply theories taught during study and to relate them with practice or real experiences in relation to word of mouth promotion for promoting school through organizing events with school stakeholders involved.
 - b) This study is important for related literature and scientific reference for future researchers who want to study problem with similar topic.
- 2) Practical Contribution
This study is expected to give contribution for school management in making decisions and policies, especially in relation to things that need promotion to attract high school students’ interest to choose SMA KatolikFrateran Surabaya as their next school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The main objectives of promotion, according to Alma (2005), are as follows:

1. Informing, which is informing the market about the existence of new product, price changing, explaining how the product works and kinds of service provided by an organization, correcting wrong brand impression, minimizing potential buyers’ fear or hesitation, and building organization image.
2. Persuading, which is shaping brand preference, shifting preference to certain brand, changing customers’ perception on product attributes, encouraging customers to make right now purchase, and encouraging customers to accept salesperson’s visit.

3. Reminding, which is reminding the customers that the related product is needed in the near time, reminding about location or place that sells the product, making customers remember the product though there is no advertisement yet about the product, and making sure that customers remember the product first than any other products.

Function of Promotion for Education

According to Gandhi (2004), *National Open University* states that promotion for education is marketing tool for educational service which functions to market the world of education, consists of:

1. Building awareness for packages of educational program and organization that offer education programs.
2. Creating and supporting schools differentiation as resulted from school competitor.
3. Communicating and explaining benefits provided by school.
4. Building and preserving school image and reputation.
5. Persuading the consumers of educational service to use or buy the education service.
6. Creating detailed information on the offer of core product, facilities, and supporting and additional education service.
7. Advicing the existing and potential users of education service on the specific education service package that is offered, modification of education service package, or new education service package.
8. Eliminating misunderstanding felt by customers of education service.

Steps of Effective Promotion

Steps that are needed to be implemented to have effective promotion activities are as follows (Kotler, 2007):

1. Identifying Target of Promotion. The performers of marketing communications must determine clear the target for promotion since it will influence decision on deciding what kind of promotion strategy will be used.
2. Determining Objection of Promotion. The performers of marketing communications must determine what kinds of responses are expected from the target for promotion.
3. Designing Message for Promotion. Message or information conveyed through promotion should be formulated: the content of message, message system of delivery, format of information that will be used, and who will deliver the message.
4. Choosing Channel of Promotion. Company and the performers of marketing communication must decide effective and efficient channel of promotion to deliver information.
5. Planning Budget of Promotion. The number of budget allotted for promotion activities is the key factor in promotion.
6. Deciding Promotion Mix. Company can reach the level of maximizing product or service offered by them through promotion mix.
7. Measuring Result of Promotion. Company and the performers of marketing communication must measure the result of promotion activities.

Definition of Word OfMouth

Word of mouth has become one of the promotional media that influences customers' decision to consume product or service. Lupiyoadi (2006) explains *word of mouth* as promotion in form of mouth to mouth recommendation about the benefits of a product. It can then be concluded that

word of mouth is communication done by the consumers who purchased the product or service and shared their experiences about the product or service to others and thus the consumers have indirectly done promotion that can attract other consumers to listen to the information.

Mouth to mouth story is consumers' comments or recommendations about experiencing product or service they have which has a strong influence on others' buying decision. Therefore, word of mouth is a form of marketing communication.

Sumarwan (2011) defines *word of mouth communication* as ideas, thoughts and comments sharing between two consumers or more, and none of them is the producer.

It can be concluded that *word of mouth* is a communication done by people involved in activities who share their experiences when consuming a product or service to other consumers, and thus the consumers have indirectly done promotion that can attract other consumers to listen to the information.

Indicators of Word Of Mouth

According to Wiyono, (2009) the followings are the indicators of *Word Of Mouth*:

1. Sharing. Someone must have been involved with a specific product or activity and therefore wants to talk about or share about it to other people, and so the word of communication process happens.
2. Promoting. Someone may talk about product he or she has consumed before and by sharing it to others (friends of family), he or she has indirectly done promotion activities.
3. Recommending. Someone may recommend a product he or she purchased to other people (friends of family).
4. Selling. This does not mean to change consumers into salesmen, but it means that the consumers of the product or service have successfully transformed other consumers who previously did not use the product, had negative perception and did not want to try other brand, into those who use, have positive perception, and want to try other brand that is promoted.

Benefits of Word Of Mouth Communication

Kotler in Molan (2005) explains that there are at least two benefits of word of mouth communication:

1. Word of mouth is more convincing since the words are the only words that come out from consumers to other consumers.
2. Word of mouth is affordable and inexpensive.

Elements of Word Of Mouth

Rosen (2000) explains that there are six elements that must become the characteristics of a product to result positive and continuous *word of mouth*:

1. The product must be able to trigger emotional comments.
2. The product must have delight or excitement effect, means that it has to be able to give effects that exceed consumers' expectation.
3. The product must have something to advertise itself or to inspire others to ask more about it.
4. The product will become more powerful if it has many users.
5. The product must be compatible with other product, especially can be applied in product depends on technology.

6. The product must make positive first impression when used. Once consumers feel disappointed, they will not use the product anymore and will become like terrorist to the product.

How to Create Effective *Word of Mouth*

Iput(2007) explains that in order to create positive *word of mouth*, the followings are to be considered:

1. Satisfied consumers (the product or service meets their expectation) are not yet to talk share it to other people. If they do not experience emotional satisfaction or great experience when using the product or service, they will not share the product or service to other people so that word of mouth that is expected will not happen.
2. Positive *word of mouth* will come out from experience that is very excitement for consumers, or from high level of emotional experience. In other words, when making purchase, the product or service is more powerful than the consumers' expectation. Next, as expected by the company, consumers will become loyal and share positive word of mouth.
3. Negative word of mouth is a phenomenon that is most feared by company or businesspersons. This is because consumers who have negative satisfaction level will speak not only to familiar people but also to other people. This negative experience comes not only from the physical apperance of the product or service, but also from intangible such as facilities, service and experiences when doing purchase.

RESEARCH METHODS

The Approach

Based on the types of pronlems and the purpose of research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research methods. This is since the issues discussed do not concern on numbers but to explain experiences or phenomena in clear and detail explanation, and to obtain in-depth data from the focus of research on the effectiveness of the promotion of the mouth to mouth through activities involving school stakeholders.

Case study is one of qualitative research designs. A case study intensely focuses on one particular object that is studied as a case. The case study approach is to focus on an intensive and detailed case to maintain the integrity (wholeness) of object. It means that data collected in the case studies will be studied as an integrated whole, where the goal is to develop in-depth knowledge about the object in question. Hence, a case study should be characterized as exploratory and descriptive research. Stake (2005), Creswell (2009), and Yin (2009) argue that a case study uses a variety of data sources to reveal facts behind the studied case. Various sources of data are intended to achieve data validity (credibility) and reliability (consistency) to convince the truthfulness of the research.

Site and Time of Study

The study was conducted in SMAK Frateran, Surabaya City, East Java, during April – May 2016.

Selecting the Informants

Informant in qualitative research is closely associated with contextual factors to gather as much information from various sources. It aims to find specifications in a unique context. This is in

accordance with Moleong (2010) who states that the purpose of the informant as a sample of qualitative research is a purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is type of non probablingsampling, which does not give equal opportunity to every research objects to become research subjects. In this recent study, the samples are determined by researcher's consideration that the informants can provide data based on the research focus to derive conclusion.

This study was conducted to five students who share certain characteristics. The reasons of selecting the informants are adjusted to the theme of this study. The informants selected in this study were students of SMP Angelus Custos 1 and now have to continued their studies in SMAK Frateran Surabaya, Class X. All students ever participated in the FAST (Frateran in Action of the Science Tournament) 2015.

Technique of Data Collection

Data collection is an important step in the research process since this step will influence the next steps, which are conclusion that is relevant, accurate and credible. Data collected in this study were through the followings:

1. Interview. Interviews used in this study were structured interview and in-depth interview.
2. Observation. In this study, observation serves as a backup method. Observation was used to complement the data which cannot be obtained by the interview method.
3. Field Notes. Field notes were conducted after observation and interviews.
4. Documentation. When conducting observations and interviews in the field, the researcher focused on a prominent factor in the study. This was done by digging up information on primary sources, as well as supporting them in detail.

Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher analyzed the data using constant comparative method proposed by Glases and Strauss in Moleong (2010). This method in the analysis of data constantly compares one datum with another datum and then regularly compares the category with the other categories.

Subjects in this study were all students SMAK Frateran Surabaya who were former students in SMPK Angelus Custos 1 Surabaya, a school under Mardi Wiyata Foundation. They participated in FAST activities (Frateran in Action of The Tournament) when they were in Class IX of junior high school. The researcher selected several informants as samples to study the phoneoman of word of mouth promotion. All the subjects were directly participated in FAST activities.

A general overview of the FAST activities has shown the steps necessary to create a promotional activity in accordance with Kotler's theory (2007) about the steps that need to be done to make effective promotional activities, which include; identification of target promotion, determining objective of promotion, designing message of promotion, choosing channel of promotion, planning budget of promotion, determining promotion mix, and measuring result of promotion. Based on the interviews, FAST is one effort conducted by school to do an effective promotion. The following is discussion on several aspects that affect school activities to become effective word of mouth promotion.

1. Activities should be able to evoke an emotional response, means that participants will be happy and enjoy all the activities of FAST and hence will be emotionally satisfied and share their emotional experiences to other people. From the

- interviews can be concluded that if a person feels happy then he or she will talk about what happened with others. This will lead to effective word of mouth.
2. Activities should give delightful and excitement impact. Activities should give delightful and excitement impact. Fun impact is the key to make participants share what they have experienced during the activities. All informants, when interviewed, shared about fun impact of FAST activities that they experienced. So it can be concluded that when an activity is attractively packaged, it will have delight or excitement impact and thus someone involved in such activities will tend to narrate the experience to others.
 3. Activities should inspire. An activity that can inspire someone will impress people and people tend to share about what inspire them. Based on the interview results with three informants, they stated that they were inspired by FAST activities. They were inspired by the form of activities and their seniors who were in the board of committee.
 4. Activities with many participants involved will look powerful. This kind of activity, with a large number of participants, will seem spectacular. People will tend to talk about event that becomes the center of attention. From all informants being interviewed, they agreed that this event, though in a school level, was big and involved many participants. Therefore it can be concluded that something that involves many people is powerful and tend to become topic for word of mouth.
 5. A compatible activity will become a talking topic. Since schools are compete with each other, an activity held by one scholl will become a topic to talk among other schools. From interview results, informants agreed that this activity was competitive with other schools. It can be concluded then that an event held by school in competition with other schools will become a hot topic to talk about. Someone will tend to compare his or her school activities with other school activities as a form of pride of his or her school.
 6. An activity will lead to word of mouth if the participant has a positive impression. From interviews, all informants expressed their positive impression with the activity. In conclusion, if an activity can have a positive impression on the participants it will trigger word of mouth communication by participants attending the event. Positive impression will arise as triggered by participants' satisfaction.
 7. An activity will lead to word of mouth if the activities carried out exceed the expectations of participants (consumer satisfaction). What is interesting is that an event will become word of mouth if exceeding participants' expectations. The interview results showed that all informants were very impressed because they thought the game in the competition would be the same with other schools, yet this was different since the race was the application of everyday science. From this, it can be concluded that if an activity exceeds the expectations of the participants or consumers, a person tends to tell others or lead the word of mouth.

DISCUSSION

Education services promotional activities serve as a tool to market education products. These activities do not only serve as means of communication between school and customers of education, but also as a tool that influence customers of education to continue purchase or use education service based on their needs.

One of the activities is the school promotion packaged in school events to become a tool to promote the school, with aim to give value to education customers for school existence. It is school's job to make an event to convince society to choose that school for their education needs.

Effective promotion is word of mouth of school events with support from school stakeholders. Word of mouth promotion cannot be separated from any form of communication that involves the entire school community in performing these activities and thus become the form of internal and external communications. To know whether word of mouth promotion is already effective, the researcher interviewed informants to gather data on the promotion done through FAST event that was organized and implemented. The questions covered how are the steps of promotion conducted, how is the cooperation with other parties, what kind of media that are used and whether the promotion result lead to positive word of mouth or not.

Based on interviews with informants, SMAK Frateran Surabaya organizes annual big event which aims to demonstrate the school existence and to make the school more familiar to the society. Unfortunately, there is no depth evaluation of the impact of these activities in terms of promotion, yet only limited to the successful level of the event. Which is why, the board of committee must plan strategic steps to determine what kind of event that can lead to positive and continuous word of mouth.

To make consumers willing to talk about positive things about the event, school has to make connection with other parties, especially in the form of education activities. By organizing education event that is fun and interesting, costumers of education will be happy and proud to share about it. If they are happy and satisfied with the service, they will be satisfied so that will trigger them to do word of mouth communication.

Previous research on word of mouth by Andy Sernovitz (2008) reveals that to make positive word of mouth, consumers must first feel happy. However, in this qualitative research, the researcher has revealed that word of mouth effectively happens when the event conducted exceeds participants' or consumers' expectation. In conclusion, happiness or excitement does not enough to trigger someone to make word of mouth in the level of recommending this to other people.

In addition, this is possible since FAST event is unique and different from other school thus has triggered participants to do effective word of mouth. This event, no doubt, has gone very well by support of school stakeholders, such as Principal, Vice Principal, OPDIS Trustees and Chairman. Their supports are forms of complete cooperation in education institution.

Emotionally, four informants stated that they were pleased after participating in FAST event in SMAK Frateran. They were also very enthusiastic during the FAST activities. Their good feelings triggered them to do word of mouth to other people. Besides that, this event has strong content that gives delight or interesting effect to other people's interest so that the participants felt excited during their participation.

Moreover, if an activity can inspire someone in their life, then the person will tend to discuss about it with others. In this FAST activity the game is presented a science model in daily life application that will inspire the participants in making game strategy. FAST event involved a large numbers of participants that it has created an impression that this event was held on a large

scale and thus has triggered word of mouth. If this event gives positive impression, this can trigger word of mouth too.

The researcher concluded that successful and effective word of mouth promotion through school events consists the following:

1. The activity must trigger emotional response.
2. The activity must give delight and excitement impact.
3. The activity must inspire someone to make statement about the activity.
4. The activity must be powerful.
5. The activity must be compatible with other activities.
6. The activity must give positive impression.
7. The activity must give satisfaction to the consumers.

During research process, the word of mouth done has not reached the recommendation level, only at the level of sharing, talking and discussing.

CONCLUSION , SUGGESTION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

SMAK Frateran Surabaya is private school which its existence is more than 50 years. This school celebrates big events annually that involve all school community and stakeholders.

This study is interesting in relation to the uniqueness of subjects and research location which took place in SMAK Frateran Surabaya as also the location of FAST event, therefore this study is helpful in term of deciding steps that determine promotional activities. In this qualitative study, the researcher found that promotion in form of school event causes word of mouth in the levels of talking, discussing and sharing, yet not in the level of recommending. This does not mean that school does not have to organize events, yet the events are still needed to show the school existence to the society.

The researcher then tried to find measurement of successful and effective word of mouth promotion through school events by interviewing informants from SMAK Frateran Surabaya. The steps of successful and effective promotion can be seen from the indicators and elements in an event that can trigger positive word of mouth.

Indicators of the word of mouth include talking, communicating, and recommending. From the interview it can be concluded that the indicators of word of mouth are sharing, discussing their experience after FAST was finished. Yet, they did not recommend it to all friends. It means that the school event preference leads to word of mouth.

When reviewing the elements that must be found in an event that leads to effective, positive and continuous word of mouth, the event then must be able to trigger emotional response, give delight and excitement effect, inspire others, powerful, and compatible with other activities. Positive impression is the characteristic of events held by SMAK Frateran Surabaya, however this does not yet lead to exceeding consumers' expectation, since this may be missed or ignored when organizing an event. It is expected to do some preliminary study first to the consumers, who are students of junior high school level, on their expectation towards the event held by SMAK Frateran Surabaya. After getting the data needed, the school can design event to fulfil the consumers' expectation even exceed their expectation. This can be a very effective word of promotion inside and outside the school.

Recommendation

The followings are recommendations based on the result.

1. School as institution that offers education service must consider kinds or types of school events to make them effective in creating word of mouth promotion.

2. School stakeholders need to design and support the events in order to create word of mouth promotion by considering steps of promotion. This is needed to add the value for students' interest when choosing the school as their next school. Participation of potential new students in the event should be based on the principle of word of mouth, since this influences their positive interest to choose the school as their next school.
3. By conducting this study, it is expected to conduct future study on the effectiveness of word of mouth promotion in order to improve quality and quantity of education service institutions in Indonesia.

Limitation of the Study

This research is limited to qualitative research. All working hypotheses are also conclusions, therefore needs to be studied further. The limitation is also on the informants who provided data and were selected since they were the students of Class X, SMAK Frateran Surabaya, it means that the data were taken six months after FAST event was organized.

This study also has limitation on the study of the word of mouth indicators, namely at the level of talking and discussing after FAST was finished, yet not in the level of recommending FAST to their friends. Therefore it is recommended to design activities that can reach this recommendation level to make a very effective event.

One limitation of this research is carried out FAST activities do not involve the parents as parents. Therefore it will be more effective if this activity involves the parents so that they can also do word of mouth to make a larger impact.

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