

THE ROLE OF BRAND AMBASSADOR IN INCREASING THE INTERESTS OF THE CUSTOMERS OF DOUJ PROTECT'S PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

The use of brand ambassadors is important for companies in order to introduce their products to the society at large as well as to increase their revenue. The purpose of this research is to determine the role of brand ambassador in increasing the customers' interests of Douj Protect products. The informants, as the chosen subjects in this research, are potential customers, customers, company owners, brand ambassadors and expert marketing. The object of this research is the Douj Protect Company. This research uses descriptive and qualitative approaches. The method used for data collection is interview supported with data documentation. Interviews are used to find out the opinions of the informants about the role of brand ambassador on Douj Protect products. The results indicate that brand ambassador can generate an appeal to the customers and potential customers through VisCAp (visibility, credibility, attraction, power) model. The brand ambassador chosen by Douj Protect is popular on Youtube, which is known as the 'sneakers head' with good credibility. The chosen brand ambassador is in accordance with the target market of Douj Company and is able to generate customers and potential customers' interest of the product. Other than the brand ambassador, price and quality also come into customers' consideration in making purchases of a product so that companies must be able to compete in other markets.

Keywords : Qualitative, Brand Ambassador, Marketing, Online Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of increasingly advanced technology makes it easier for everyone to access all the desired information on the internet. Therefore, the internet has become the most used communication tool in Indonesia. The table 1.1 shown below, obtained from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, states that the amount internet users in 2013 reached 72.8 million people. The following year, the number increased to 83.7 million people. The total of internet users by 2017 has reached 112.6 million people.

Tabel 1. The Amount of Internet Users in Indonesia.

Top 25 Countries, Ranked by Internet Users, 2013-2018						
<i>millions</i>						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1. China*	620.7	643.6	669.8	700.1	736.2	777.0
2. US**	246.0	252.9	259.3	264.9	269.7	274.1
3. India	167.2	215.6	252.3	283.8	313.8	346.3
4. Brazil	99.2	107.7	113.7	119.8	123.3	125.9
5. Japan	100.0	102.1	103.6	104.5	105.0	105.4
6. Indonesia	72.8	83.7	93.4	102.8	112.6	123.0
7. Russia	77.5	82.9	87.3	91.4	94.3	96.6
8. Germany	59.5	61.6	62.2	62.5	62.7	62.7
9. Mexico	53.1	59.4	65.1	70.7	75.7	80.4
10. Nigeria	51.8	57.7	63.2	69.1	76.2	84.3
11. UK**	48.8	50.1	51.3	52.4	53.4	54.3
12. France	48.8	49.7	50.5	51.2	51.9	52.5
13. Philippines	42.3	48.0	53.7	59.1	64.5	69.3
14. Turkey	36.6	41.0	44.7	47.7	50.7	53.5
15. Vietnam	36.6	40.5	44.4	48.2	52.1	55.8
16. South Korea	40.1	40.4	40.6	40.7	40.9	41.0
17. Egypt	34.1	36.0	38.3	40.9	43.9	47.4
18. Italy	34.5	35.8	36.2	37.2	37.5	37.7
19. Spain	30.5	31.6	32.3	33.0	33.5	33.9
20. Canada	27.7	28.3	28.8	29.4	29.9	30.4
21. Argentina	25.0	27.1	29.0	29.8	30.5	31.1
22. Colombia	24.2	26.5	28.6	29.4	30.5	31.3
23. Thailand	22.7	24.3	26.0	27.6	29.1	30.6
24. Poland	22.6	22.9	23.3	23.7	24.0	24.3
25. South Africa	20.1	22.7	25.0	27.2	29.2	30.9
Worldwide***	2,692.9	2,892.7	3,072.6	3,246.3	3,419.9	3,600.2

Note: Individuals of any age who use the internet from any location via any device at least once per month; *excludes Hong Kong; **forecast from Aug 2014; ***includes countries not listed
Source: eMarketer, Nov 2014

Source: www.kominfo.go.id

Douj Protect Company was established in April 2016. It mainly engages in the shoe industry, with product examples such as Douj Air Refreshner, Douj Foot Refreshner, and Douj Water Repellent.

The marketing strategies used by the company are offline and online marketing strategies. Participating at a sneakers exhibition in Jakarta and implementing product consignment through stores in Surabaya, such as On Market Go at Tunjungan Plaza, are examples of its offline marketing strategy. The purpose is to introduce the products as well as the Douj Protect brand to the customers and the community.

The company is demanded to become more aware towards the customers' wants and to be able to communicate the product well and efficiently. One of the ways of doing it is by promoting and advertising through a person or a public figure, who has charisma and the ability to attract people's hearts and their attention. In the business world, this is called 'celebrity endorser' or 'brand ambassador'.

So far, Douj Protect has attempted to advertise its products by using the celebrity endorser or brand ambassador. The company uses public figures, Malvino Fajaro and Hanif Ramadhan. Malvino Fajaro is a young actor, 35 year old, who plays many roles on the big screen and is often seen as a brand ambassador of an advertisement such as a fast food product. Hanif as Ramadhan is a youtuber who has many subscribers which then makes him an influencer to sneakers head's community. The purposes of advertising a product by using a celebrity endorser are to increase followers on Instagram and Line, to introduce the company's product to the sneakers and non-sneakers community, to persuade the society to maintain their footwear hence prevent a consumptive behavior and to find out the role of brand ambassador in increasing the customers' interest of Douj Protect products.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing is a societal process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and freely exchanging products and services of value with others (Kotler dan Keller, 2012:5)

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offering that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (Kotler dan Keller, 2012:5).

Social media is an online publishing and a communication tool, sites and the purpose of Web 2.0 which is rooted on conversation, engagement, and participation (Gunelius, 2011: 10).

Social media marketing is a form of direct and indirect marketing which is used to build awareness, recognition, remembrance, and action for brands, businesses, products, people, or other entities and implemented by using tools from the social web such as blog, microblog, social network, social bookmark, and content (Gunelius, 2011:10).

Endorser is the ad advocate or known as a commercial star who support all products he/she advertises. There are two types of endorser, a Typical Person Endorser who makes use of non-celebrity people to deliver a product's message and a Celebrity Endorser who is already famous and is able to influence other people due to his/her achievements (Soesatyo, 2013).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses descriptive and qualitative approaches. Descriptive method is conducted by studying a group of subject that has been determined, an object, a condition, a way of thinking or a present event. The first subject in this research is Douj Protect's owner who is expected providing valid information about their online marketing through social media by using brand ambassador. The next informants are five customers who buy the Douj Protect products and give customers who do not. The purpose is to ascertain whether or not the brand ambassador is able to attract customers until he succeeds to pull of the emergence of buying desire from the customers. The next informants are the brand ambassadors themselves and a marketing expert. While the object of this research is Douj products produced by Douj Portect Company.

Validity is a measurement scale which will appear 'valid' if it does what it should do and measures what it should measure (Kuncoro, 2013:172). If the measurement scale is invalid, it will not be helpful for the researcher because it does not measure what it needs to measure.

Reliability is a consistency and stability of a score (Kuncoro, 2013:175). This research is reliable if the data shows a consistency based on information given by various sources.

This qualitative research uses descriptive analysis towards data collection results from source exploration. It uses interview, documentation, and observation as data collection methods.

The qualitative data analysis in this research applies a descriptive and qualitative analysis. The analysis technique which describes the processing stages qualitatively and the data analysis in this research are consisting of (Sugiyono, 2012:247-253) data reduction, data presentation, data comparison, condition and conclusion.

FINDING

In accordance with the interview results of Douj Protect's potential customers, states that the existence of brand ambassador has indirectly attracted the attention of the potential customers of Douj Protect.

"It really works because that brand ambassador gives such appeal to some people who never buys the product, myself included." (Tegar, 5, page N-1)

There are some of the informants who suggest to be more careful in selecting their brand ambassador. According to their opinion, although the chosen brand ambassador is sufficient, but it will better if he/she is a quite known public figure in order to widen the market coverage.

"Douj needs to observe much further, do more survey about the impact given by Hanif to its company. For example, if Douj is brave to hire a very famous Youtuber, such as Reza Oktavian or Kemal Palevi who is known for his sneakers collections because he is a collector and willing to spend a fantastic amount of money (to purchase a pair of sneakers). But, I think so far, Douj

(ambassador) is already okay. I mean, suitable having Hanif (as brand ambassador) because he is also a newcomer on Youtube (Youtuber) who already has many viewers and fifteen thousand subscribers and for now, it is more than enough for a new Youtuber.” (Aan, 10 halaman O-3)

Further to note is the suitability between brand ambassador and company's products. The suitability between Hanif and Douj's products is that Hanif is a sneakers head (Appendix U-3) and Douj is a company who offers shoe protector products which causes a suitability between Hanif and Douj's products. Having a brand ambassador, it is expected to influence the customers as well as potential customers with his appeal so that, in the end, the customers will decide to buy Douj's products. This statement is in line with the result of customers and potential customers interviews.

“Hmm.. it indeed gives an impact. I think, it (the sales) will increase if there is a brand ambassador.” (Tegar, 7, page H-2)

The researcher measures the strength of influence or impact (of a brand ambassador) by finding out the customers' consideration in buying Douj Protect's products and the impact of having a brand ambassador on the company's strong brand image towards the point of view of the customers.

“Of course...because a strong brand image will strengthen the branding too.” (Tegar, 9, page N-2)

“Of course it will increase (the brand image), because what I said earlier on. The people will trust the product review given by that influencer.” (Dania, 9, page R-3)

“Yes, of course. It definitely gives a really strong impact because the most influential marketing (tool) for all kinds of product nowadays is certainly social media. Once you post something (on social media), everyone will know about it too.” (Nuril, 9, page Q-3)

The brand ambassador, in this stage, does all the promotional activities with some approaches to the potential customers by using all available media as a means of promotion.

DISCUSSION

Douj company hires two brand ambassadors, an actor named Malvino Fajaro, and a youtuber named Hanif Ramadhana. Both brand ambassadors are sneakers heads (or sneakers lovers) who already have popularity or being famous. This condition is supported by Putra's theory (2014) about the utilization of a brand ambassador which is done by the company to influence or persuade the customers. The purpose is to attract customer to use the product, especially because the process of selection of a brand ambassador is based on the image of the famous celebrity.

The results of Douj's customers' interview indicate that Douj Protect Company has chosen the right brand ambassadors because of their good credibility. However, there are some informants that suggest to be more careful in selecting a brand ambassador. According to some informants, the chosen brand ambassadors are suitable for the company but it will be better if there is a better and more famous brand ambassador so that can cover a wider market.

The result of interviews of some informants indicates that a brand ambassador can influence the customers and potential customers so that gives an appeal and affect the customers' purchasing decision of Douj's products.

The customers state that a brand ambassador can attract people's attention and is able to strengthen the brand image towards customers. In addition, there are other considerations from the customers in deciding their decision to purchase the products, which are price and product quality. The existence of a brand ambassador is expected to be able to influence the people's decision to purchase.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this research, the role of a brand ambassador in increasing customers' interests on Douj products on VisCAP model: is able to attract the customers' attention as well as the potential customers by using a brand ambassador and the right social media, to choose a more well-known brand ambassador and suitable with the company's products. In addition, the brand ambassador must be able to do a product campaign well so that he/she is able to attract customers and potential customers.

They also need to gain trust from the customers and potential customers through brand ambassadors in order to create brand awareness. Brand ambassadors chosen must follow the target market set by the company in order to reach the market easily.

Price and quality have become the consideration for customers in making decision to purchase. However, a brand ambassador can increase the brand image in the eye of a customer. It is suggested for a brand ambassador to use social media not only to do a product campaign such as photographs and videos, but also to give educated campaign.

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