

THE APPROACH TO VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN THE DREAMCATCHER ONLINE BUSINESS

Gladys Josal¹, Liliana Dewi²

Universitas Ciputra Surabaya
INDONESIA

Email: ¹ gjosal01@magister.ciputra.ac.id ² Ldewi@ciputra.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand and to analyze, as well as to structure strategic planning of social media marketing based in visual communication for online clothing brand "Dreamcatcher". The study is descriptive qualitative and uses purposive sampling to collect the data. In order to collect data, 3 interviewees were interviewed, namely the owner of online clothing brand, the professional in visual communication, and social media user. Results showed that social media marketing is very important to introduce the existence of online clothing brand. Nowadays, social media marketing is closely related to visual communication approach. Instagram is one of the good prospect to target audiences. To display excellent and attractive contents, it is very important to consider aesthetic and message aspect, as they are linked to one another.

Keywords: online clothing brand; social media marketing; visual communication approach; content display; aesthetic aspect; message aspect

Introduction

The development of digital era affected people's lifestyle, and competition in business sector. People's lifestyle becomes oriented to sophistication and practicality, which leads to the selection of online purchases. This potential is an open opportunity for various business sectors to explore online markets, including the clothing business. Online clothing brand business is becoming more and more numerous and the competition is becoming increasingly fierce. Dreamcatcher is a start-up business in the field of online clothing brands which began in the final quarter of 2018, with the brand concept "Sweet & Youthful". Dreamcatcher's target market is for women aged 18-25 years, with a feminine design style, simple cutting patterns, and conveying the impression of being youthful. As a start-up business, Dreamcatcher needs to do strategic planning to participate in competition and maintain business sustainability.

Strategic planning, according to Pemberton (2002) in Sosiawani et al. (2015) centered on regulating the long-term goals of an organization, the development and implementation of plans designed to achieve these goals. Social media is no longer just an ordinary communication media, but also an effective marketing tool for individuals, business start-ups, online businesses, small organizations, or large companies (Sajid, 2016). Based on the results of a survey conducted by the Marketing Charts (2018) social media marketing ranked first as the most effective digital marketing media by marketers from around the world. Social media marketing strategy in its development leads to a shift towards visual communication. The importance of visual perception in marketing strategies has been recognized (Zailskaite et al., 2017).

One of the problems experienced by most brand start-ups including Dreamcatcher is a limitation in terms of marketing. Sitepu (2017) states that right marketing will increase start-up business success. Wijatno (2009) in Sitepu (2017) also defines marketing as a determinant of the success of a business, so that without marketing, a business will not win the competition. Social media marketing is a marketing tool that is considered the most effective on online start-up businesses. Therefore, based on the background of the problem described, This study aims to understand and to analyze, as well as to structure strategic planning of social media marketing based in visual communication for online clothing

brand “Dreamcatcher”.

Research Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach by conducting interviews with 3 informants (based on purposive sampling) to collect the data, namely the owner of online clothing brand, professional in visual communication, and social media user. To analyze the data, this study uses the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (2012), namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This study uses source triangulation for validity and reliability test.

Results

In order to collect the data, 3 interviewees were interviewed, namely the owner of online clothing brand (SS), the professional in visual communication (PT), and social media user (MDA). The author analyzes the results of the interview as follows:

Online marketing is needed especially in this digital era. This is due to circumstances that require things to be instantaneous. Social media marketing is also very important to use in online clothing brand business. This is because when the content is viral, products are easier to sell until it's sold out, also it can help people to find out the existence of the online clothing brand.

"In this digital era, everything is instant. Online marketing is the most important application to my target audience." (SS)

"Its very important. The moment your content is viral, you can sell your products until it's sold out!" (SS)

“So, the way to promote is from... well, we need something like, a media, hmm... like a... other device so that we know the exact location of this clothing brand. For example, we should promote, well we need to establish social media marketing”. (MDA)

Doing social media marketing strategies cannot be separated from choosing the type of social media that will be used. Selection of the type of social media is based on various kinds of considerations, it can be based on the concept of the brand, as well as the target market.

"Youtube is more like a thorough review, Instagram for viral style posts, we have to strategically choose the kind of influencers that target the right audience." (SS)

Current data shows that Instagram currently has the best prospect for being used as a marketing strategy. However, in choosing the type of social media, it is also necessary to consider the suitability between the target market.

“...well, actually it is rather effective, as seen from the data and now there are more brand, even the hospitality industry has their own Instagram account. So, to market our product, I think we should have an Instagram account, but it goes back to your target market...” (PT)

"Just ... for now it seems to me that people have more interest to open the Instagram application,..." (MDA)

Another important thing to consider in social media marketing is reviewing internal and external factors. The intended internal factors are the values that are wanted to be offered to consumers, so that the contents can deliver that value consistently. Whereas from external factors, it is necessary to review the days that can be utilized to hold promos and increase sales, observe competitors, and current trends.

“...from the internal perspective, value of a brand is, ehm, is something that the company wants to highlight. What is the practical and affordability side, or other factors, so that there is a consistency within the content to share the values.” (PT)

“... for example, there are new competitors on days where we can push our sales because there is a special event or occasion...” (PT)

“from the visual perspective, as I said before, low saturation color tone is on trend now, but we still need to adjust to the internal brand value. If the brand offers colorful, pop products, then we cannot apply the trend to the brand, we should see the trend and the company's value.” (PT)

Based on the results of the interview, there are several strategies that can be used to build brand existence, namely celebrity endorsement, Instagram sponsor, and giveaway.

"Celebrity dressing, it helps to promote the brand in terms of marketing. It is also a form of brand status, to be worn by famous celebrities. (SS)

"Yes, maybe you can sponsor ... umm your brand. It can be through the Instagram story or Instagram post." (MDA)

"... maybe other marketing is needed, for example a giveaway." (MDA)

"Or if you want a more aggressive technique, maybe an endorsement technique" (MDA)

Visual today is inseparable from people's daily lives, including in the world of marketing. The visual communication approach has become a special part of marketing strategies, including in social media marketing.

"Creating a content that send the right message is an effective way to be successful marketing." (SS)

"Well, it is very important to know how to take photos or to create content that can attracts the Instagram users. The way we take the photos as well as the way we design the content involves elements of visual communication." (PT)

"Yes... In my opinion it is very important. It is not only about having the photos available, and don't care about the quality of the photo, as long as I have the picture, I will upload it and only with simple information, done. I don't think this is how it should work. Nowadays, the community seen it as a complex thing, and see the overall quality." (MDA)

To create good and interesting content, it is important to pay attention to the aesthetic aspects and message aspects. A good display content related to aesthetic aspects needs to pay attention to image results and quality, layout consistency, color tone, and the theme of the content.

"Using lookbooks that feature and portray our clothing in such ways that appeals to our target market. Also using appealing graphics for promotions and newsletters." (SS)

"Oh yes... certain elements, obviously, make sure that the photo is in high quality, and if possible, upload a sharp and clear photos because sometimes people... well, this is done to show our professionalism, because sometimes when the photos that we upload on Instagram is too small and when people zoom it in the picture is blurry, it doesn't looks good. So the sharpness of the photo must be taken into consideration, especially when you sell detailed products, I mean when there are lots of details on the shirt or something... and then, well yes, the way you choose the coloring of the layout will also have some effect to the viewer. The color shows a gradient... ehm, there is a transition..." (PT)

"... well for example if it's Spring / Summer, then take the theme that you want to highlight." (MDA)

"Like you have to have an interesting design. So, when you post, you don't just post it without putting any effort. You have to be consistent with your feeds' design." (MDA)

"... If the brand has a style, it can also be taken from color tones, to support the brand's style." (MDA)

A good display content related to message aspects is about how a brand can convey its message both implicitly and explicitly through its content.

"Creating a content that sends the right message in an effective way is the key to successful marketing." (SS)

"Your brand will lift its value, the target population, well it is there to achieve your relate target

market, so you should show how the lifestyle looks like...” (PT)

“...so, storytelling should always exist even though you have perfect photos, well storytelling is supported by the caption.” (PT)

“it should clearly explain the product collection, or the style of the design product that you sell, also to show the target market so that it is easily to be known, from the model, the theme of the photo, the photo campaign should explain, ehm, the occasion...” (MDA)

“We should show the detail of the product and what we want to sell, it should be clearly shown.” (MDA)

Discussion

Social media marketing is needed so that online clothing brand can introduce its existence. Pradiani (2017) states that social media is very popular because it offers convenience and opportunities for people to connect online in the form of personal relationships, politics, and business activities. Social media has a real impact on increasing website traffic and online sales (Solis, 2010, in Mileva and Fauzi DH, 2018). Social media marketing is needed because even though an online clothing brand has social media, but if it is not marketed well, it will be a disadvantage because it cannot build its existence on its target market.

The process of choosing the type of social media must be based on strategic determination by first recognizing the usefulness and purpose of each type of social media so that it can target the right audience. However, based on the analysis of interview results, the existing data shows that currently Instagram has very good and effective prospects. So, for marketing purposes, at least the brand must have an Instagram account. Hellberg (2015) states that every type (platform) of social media has its own uniqueness in functioning. Instagram, according to Hellberg (2015) is a visual content sharing social network that focused on the taking and sharing of photos.

For internal factors it is very important for the brand to recognize the values they want to highlight to the audience. This is useful so that in the content shared, brands can consistently deliver the intended value. Whereas from external factors, it is important to know events or holidays, so that brand can take advantage of these opportunities to hold promos and increase sales. Agnes (2016) explained that special day events included one of the content promos favored by consumers. Brands should also review the steps implemented by competitors, and conduct research to find out the current trends in the market, so that the brand becomes update to developments.

In doing social media there are also several strategies that can be considered, namely celebrity endorsement, Instagram sponsor, and giveaway. The celebrity endorsement strategy can help promote the brand in terms of marketing and improve brand status. Dewi (2017) states that celebrity endorsement is one of the most popular methods on social networks. Anggraeni et al. (2018) also stated that at present, many companies are interested in using celebrity endorser services to market their products because they are considered more efficient. Instagram sponsor can be very influential especially when the user is scrolling on Instagram, In addition, giveaway strategies will also be very beneficial in spreading the brand's existence. Agnes (2016) wrote a giveaway event as one of the content promos favored by consumers.

Social media marketing now leads to a visual communication approach. Marketing that uses visuals maximizes consumer understanding of the products offered (Diamond, 2013, in Agnes, 2016). The influence of the visual communication approach in social media marketing is very important because it requires a special effort in creating and compiling content to attract user attention, which requires the involvement of visual communication elements. According to Zailskaite (2017), the importance of visual perception in marketing and advertisement has been recognized.

Social media marketing based in visual communication is inseparable from creating good and interesting content. And to achieve that, it is very important to consider both of aesthetic aspects and message aspects. Things that need to be considered in aesthetic aspects, namely image quality, attractiveness and professionalism of product images, consistently designed layouts, and color tone. Agnes (2016) states that photography techniques and artistic values are important keys for online businesses to look professional and attract the attention of prospective consumers. Meanwhile for message aspect, it is divided into two types, namely the explicit messages and then implicit messages.

The explicit message is carried out to support storytelling and clarify content, by utilizing the caption feature and listing the product description. While the implicit message is about how the visual content can be interpreted by the audience (regarding collections, styles, target markets, value offered, product occasion, etc.). Putri and Mormes (2017) stated that the success of an online start-up company is determined by how the company utilizes its media, one of which is planning the message and choosing a strategy so that the information is delivered according to its purpose.

Managerial Implications

By reviewing the concept of brand and target audience, the brand will take advantage of the good prospects offered by Instagram. And in the use of Instagram, Dreamcatcher will review internal factors (brand value) to support consistent content creation, and external factors (events, competitors, and trends) and implement the strategy of celebrity endorsement, giveaway, and Instagram sponsors to support the brand's existence. Dreamcatcher will utilize elements of visual communication to create good and interesting content, based on consideration of the suitability of elements to the brand concept, functions, and rules relating to these elements. To produce good and interesting content display, Dreamcatcher will involve the aesthetic aspects (Selection of attractive content with high quality pictures; The choice and transition of color tone in accordance with the brand concept) and message aspects (Arrange an interesting caption to explain the content; Provide product descriptions on each content; Showing images that represent the brand concept and lifestyle of the target market).

Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this study are in the interview process, which in the goal of conducting semi-structured interviews, but in the process, interviews against one of the informant (SS) is done e-mail and there are some questions that are missed. For further research, the author recommend doing more diverse data collection methods to support data validity.

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