DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY FORMULATION FOR DISTRIBUTOR-BASED COMPANY USING DIGITAL CUSTOMER JOURNEY APPROACH (STUDY CASE: PT BARCA TRIOS CHEMINDO)

FORMULASI STRATEGI PEMASARAN DIGITAL UNTUK PERUSAHAAN BERBASIS DISTRIBUTOR MENGGUNAKAN PENDEKATAN PERJALANAN DIGITAL PELANGGAN (STUDI KASUS: PT BARCA TRIOS CHEMINDO)

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ABSTRACT
The research objectives are to identify critical touchpoint (s) of digital customer journey in PT BTC marketplace channel strategy, to discover the result of current PT BTC digital customer journey feedback, to give recommendation in digital marketing strategy to improve PT BTC digital customer journey, and to give supporting strategy to enhance PT BTC’s performance. In this research, data collection methods will be using qualitative data from Primary Data and Secondary Data. This research found 5 critical touchpoints of digital customer journey in PT BTC marketplace channel strategy, like Awareness, Appeal, Ask, Act, Advocate (5A’s Framework). Current marketplace channel strategy is effective to catch new B2B customers but less effective to retain their consistency to buy via online transaction. From this finding research, the best suitable digital marketing strategy that fit to PT BTC customer journey is complementing and upgrading company’s online channel with establishing website channel strategy and improving its system to become modify-website that enabled to e-commerce facilities without eliminating its marketplace channel. The supporting strategy for establishing website marketing strategy is purposing new company’s marketing division structure to delegate workload better, more effective and more efficient.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Strategy, Distributor-Based Company, Digital Customer Journey

INTRODUCTION
Based on Vantage Market Research (2022), surfactant industry condition as globally is valued at USD 41.84 billion in the year 2022 and is anticipated to reach a value of USD 59.95 billion by the year 2030. The Global Market is forecasted to grow to exhibit a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 4.60% over the forecast period. According to Mordor Intelligence (2023), The global market trends of surfactants as follow: anionic surfactants are expected to dominate the
market and Asia-Pacific is expected to dominate the market. Surface active agents or surfactants are organic compounds which derived from oleo chemical raw materials or petrochemical raw materials. Surfactants are materials that lower the surface tension between two liquids or between a liquid and a solid. It may act as a wetting agent, emulsifier, foaming agent, or dispersant in products like paints, emulsions, adhesives, inks, biocides (sanitizers), shampoos, toothpaste, firefighting (foams), detergents, insecticides, and others. By application, the market is segmented into household soaps and detergents, personal care, lubricants and fuel additives, industry and institutional cleaning, food processing, oilfield chemicals, agricultural chemicals, textile processing, emulsion polymerization, and other applications.

Currently, surfactant industry in Asia Pacific especially in Indonesia has prominent condition in the next years. Based on Data Bridge Market Research (2022), the surfactant market is expected to gain market growth in the forecast period of 2022 to 2029 at a CAGR of 4.80%. The factors expected to cushion the growth of the surfactant market in the forecast period are the increasing demand for bio-based surfactants and sustainable green surfactant products. Additionally, the increasing purchasing power of the growing middle class and low cost and easy availability of synthetic surfactants will further carve the way for the growth of market. Based on Transparency Market Research (2017), there are growing demand for beauty products that ensure steady uptake of surfactants in Asia Pacific market. The growing concerns pertaining to beauty, hygiene, and aesthetics have led to a skyrocketing demand for surfactants in the personal care industry in Asia Pacific. Indonesia same with other country that there are fluctuative raw material prices in certain period and can affect the supply and the demand of the products. When the commoditive price is high, then the demand is slowly decreasing and when the commoditive price is low then the demand is quickly increasing.

Based on Data Bridge Market Research (2022) in Indonesia, there are several major players of surfactant industry which produce various of surfactant type such as: BASF, Kao Corp, Unilever Corp, Indo Chemical, Rhodia, Evonik Corp, Dow, Procter & Gamble, Bayer, and etc. Some of them has upstream to downstream business line which not only produce raw materials of surfactant but also distribute the products until produce the finished good. Producer of raw materials of surfactant has its distributive chain to distribute its product to consumer or another producer who produce the finished good products. The distributor of PT Kao Indonesia Chemicals (KIC) handles the operation of product delivery, administration and certification letter, payment method mechanism and return of defect product. Also, some of distributor can help to be formulator of product development of its customer. PT Barca Trios Chemindo is one of authorized KIC agent-distributor and still trying to enlarge market share for selling its products in Indonesia. Customer who willing to buy PT KIC’s raw material of surfactant must buy through their agent-distributor.

In the latest year according to Wahyudi and Jantan (2010), industries were rapidly growing in Indonesia especially in Jakarta and its extensive area (Jabodetabek) area as centre of Indonesia’s economic which becomes concentrated location of many industries including surfactant industries. In this decade, the condition of concentrated
location in this area influenced raw materials of surfactant market becomes concentrated too and tend to be saturated. As it impacted to PT BTC, number of similar business’ competitors became high, number of principles didn’t raise significantly and number of customer players didn’t growth significantly.

Nowadays, with the advance of technology especially Internet, many firms can establish their website for offering interaction much better way to communicate complex B2B information tailored to the customer’s situation. Firms that can enter the E-commerce marketplace or website by leveraging Internet capabilities with information processing, delivery capability, interorganizational collaboration, and flexibility may be able to develop important differential advantages in selected market segments (Hutt and Speh, 2010). E-commerce channel has different experience as it is online channel that much different with conventional offline channel. Determining on the latest digital customer journey can help PT BTC to understand what people perceived in terms of benefit and weakness and what people need to provide services better especially in B2B scope instead of B2C scope that there is still limited research about it due to complexity on lead generation and conversion sales. Also understanding each step of touchpoint will help PT BTC to evaluate and formulate digital marketing strategy better in the future.

METHODS
Data collection methods refer to the systematic process of gathering and measuring information on variables, using various techniques such as surveys, interviews, observations, or experiments. In this research, data collection methods will be using qualitative data from Primary Data with semi-structured interviewing to director of the company and customers, and Secondary Data with collecting latest information sources. Qualitative research is intended to deeply explore, understand and interpret social phenomena within natural setting (Cresswell, 2002). It also can be described as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences (Cresswell, 2003).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Digital Customer Journey

![Figure 1. Current Digital Customer Journey on PT BTC Marketplace Account](image)

**Digital Customer Journey Findings**
Marketplace’s role was giving impact of advantage to PT BTC’s digital customer journey. There were lot of revenue increasing, huge number generating lead and big number of new buyers from this strategy channel but almost every touch point of customer journey (Awareness, Appeal, Ask, Act, Advocate) not really require marketplace as primer stake of its process, or even it can be completed and facilitated better with other platform such as website. Showing credibility on appeal process like rating and customer’s review can be found or accessed with another way such as website access, call by phone or direct coming to the shop, and no need to use
marketplace access. All of customers preferred to purchase via offline transaction that makes marketplace’s role on taking action becomes useless due to higher pricing impacted from marketplace charge on seller. The top list of influence factors (price, shipping, quality) to purchase at PT BTC also accessible without marketplace’s role facility.

The impacted role of marketplace on this customer journey are for increasing awareness and giving easiness of access to customer to find PT BTC. Searching column on marketplace platform give easiness way to customer to quickly find their needs specifically. Some customers even search by browsing on internet and finding Barca Kimia as link of marketplace which helped by marketplace’s SEO mechanism. Marketplace gives easy access to upload new product and give attractiveness of product launching, but in a long run, product update is necessary things that has to be updated on every online platform such a website and sometimes it is hard to publish on marketplace due to copyright restricted of information. Marketplace can show to customer about recommendation by latest review and it also can be supported by testimony on website or other social media platform such as LinkedIn (professional social media).

**Frustrated Touch Points of Customer Journey**

From research findings and analysis about customer journey, there are frustrated touch points that still be perceived by customers either they utilized customer journey with full or partial used of marketplace channel process. Most of them put emphasizes on Appeal and Act Stage. Appeal stage showed them that Barca Kimia has limited and less variation of product catalogue. The less variation of the product, the less attractiveness of customer to continue the journey. The more variation of the product, the more willingness of customer to purchase many items from one place due to their efficiency of the cost. “One stop solution” of raw materials of home care product can be provided by PT BTC to give easiness access to customers. Customer can have lower cost to deliver their needs when they can get all needs in one place.

Act stage showed that cheaper price of offline transaction becomes barrier for customer to order via online transaction. Even though there are some customers still continue the journey by purchasing offline, Barca Kimia already lost opportunity to catch some customers who still wants to purchase via online because of trustworthy issue if transaction conducted by offline. Marketplace still give facility for some customers to get guarantee of arrival product after they do the payment and others still utilize it to get financial access of credit to buy the product. But most of customers put price and low cost into top priority list that makes them to prefer purchase by offline transaction after proofing the credibility of the company.

**Core Elements of Marketing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Strategy Marketing (Mind Share)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Segmentation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Targeting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positioning</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Tactic Marketing (Market-Share)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differentiation</th>
<th>Source of Raw Materials</th>
<th>Type of Raw Materials</th>
<th>Service of Delivery</th>
<th>Affordable Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tactic</td>
<td>Sourced from PT Kao Indonesia Chemicals that ensure the originality of products</td>
<td>Focused on detergent and toiletries product</td>
<td>Fast respond and fast delivery</td>
<td>Offering best fair price</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marketing Mix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Variative products with variative packaging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>No fix price, dependent on quantity needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Online channel via marketplace, and offline channel via direct store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Loyalty’s specialty price, higher request of quantity get lower price</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selling

| Type of Selling | Low-Cost selling, affordable price with optimum services |

Table 3. Value Marketing (Heart-Share)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Brand Embedded</th>
<th>Fast Delivery and Reliable Supplier Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Fast Delivery Priority</td>
<td>Optimizing delivery for every customer not more than 5 work days. These services supported by availability of stock and good arrangement of schedule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SWOT Analysis

Table 4. SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Threat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Guarantee product</td>
<td>2. Give limited access</td>
<td>2. Open new market</td>
<td>2. Big customer always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Porter’s Five Force Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Porter’s Aspect</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substitute product</td>
<td>- low amount of substitute product in the market to replace the same function</td>
<td>Low pressure (favourable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Not many substitutes product has better performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Buyer have high cost to switching to substitute which has same function</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer’s bargaining product</td>
<td>- Buyer demand is high in this industry</td>
<td>High pressure (unfavourable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplier’s bargaining product</td>
<td>- Supplier’s products are standardized as commodities</td>
<td>High pressure (unfavourable)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Porter Five Force Framework

Here below Porter’s Five Forces Analysis in specific distributor-based business model of raw material industry. The company is between supplier (manufacture that produce the raw materials) and customer (manufacture that produce the finished goods or retail business)

Table 5. Porter’s Five Force Framework
Potential new entrants
- Customers have weak brand preferences and/or loyalty to incumbent
- High barrier entry due to distributor status
- Capital requirement is high
- Government policies and trade policies are restrictive

Rivalry among competing seller
- Buyer demand in this industry is slow
- Buyer cost to switching brand is low, easy to switch to another brand
- Competitor are numerous and abundant type of similar product exist in the market

From Porter Five Force analysis above, we can conclude that several aspects become favourable and becomes advantage for specific distributor-based business model of raw material industry as follow: **there is limited substitute product and limited potential of new entrants** (2 of 5). The raw materials are specific usage that can’t be easy replaced and substituted by another product that has same functions. The example of the usage of raw materials in finished good products is shampoo. Shampoo with certain raw materials still can used for washing body but not everyone will do it because the ingredient of making shampoo is different than body wash even though both can produce lot of foam and cleansing ability. The limited potential of new entrants is because not everyone can become main agent distributor (first-hand) of the manufactures even they have lot of capital funding. The agent distributor is restricted account and can’t be replaced easily with another company. The benefit of this issue is company can get cheaper price of the product and has better margin to the market.

**PEST Analysis**

1. Political
   - The political condition of the Indonesia is significantly affecting by political year in 2024 and 2023 as preparation year to determine the policy direction in future. Also, conflicting war in Rusia-Ukraine and Africa region gives big impact of delaying shipment then raising price of the raw materials due to fluctuation of dollar exchange rate.

2. Economic
   - The Indonesia economic condition within business context affected by supply and demand which impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. The economic recovery on one side and political year on another side will be give huge influence of business condition in Indonesia

3. Technology
   - The development of technology gives better raw materials and better opportunity to the company to compete with the other competitor

4. Social
   - The company has no CSR program then do not give much impact also to the society because less interaction and relationship with society.

   From the PEST Analysis, the biggest factor to influence the company from external macro-condition is political, because it can’t be controlled directly by company, the condition of political and safety not only will raise the price because of the shipment of the supply will be hampered but also will give impact to exchange rate of the country which raising or lowering the value of the raw materials. The higher exchange rate of US dollar to Indonesia Rupiah will give more margin to the company but the risk is higher exchange
rate will drop the demand of the products.

CONCLUSION

From this feedback of customer journey touchpoints, author concluded that current digital marketing strategy which is current marketplace channel was effective enough to catch new B2B customers but less effective to retain their consistency to buy via online transaction. Most of them prefer to buy via offline transaction due to several factors and its phenomena makes market channel becomes less effective on taking action’s role because it can easily substitute with other online strategy such as website implementation. The most attractive of current strategy is its ability to reach online customer using mainstream platform and its capability to show off the product catalogue and each price. From this feedback research, author also check about low number of customers that conduct repeating order in next period. Most of them just buy once in range of the time not because their disappointed of PT BTC’s services but due to their needs still low and needs more time to repeat order in the next period. Some of them found that they discontinue of the production. The others especially from outside Jabodetabek admit that offered price is good enough but the shipment cost is high and postponed their repeat order until they can find others cheaper shipping expedition.

RECOMMENDATION STRATEGY

Digital Marketing Strategy

Figure 1. Proposed Strategy Framework

Based on illustration above, author purpose the strategy recommendation starting with multistep of developing and exploring its digital marketing strategy until it reaches mature and rich condition for better digital marketing system. PT BTC need to upgrade and complement its e-commerce strategy channel from marketplace-based channel only with establishing website as core and main of e-commerce strategy after evaluation and feedback from customer’s perspective and company’s perspective. Establishing website as e-commerce strategy channel not removing previous marketplace channel, but it created to support and complement PT BTC’s digital customer journey strategy better.

Developing new website needs supporting system to enhance credibility, quality content and high attractiveness, then company needs to develop Search Engine Optimization (SEO) due to more affordable strategy to improve website quality and engagement. Off-page and On-page on SEO strategy can be utilized to enhance website performance, but we will focus on On-Page strategy that suitable to improve content relevance for transactional-search website.

After the website and its system develop better and running automatically, company can improve its website performance by modifying website enabled to e-commerce facility. At this point, website can facilitate from pre-purchase until post-purchase process that makes customer can start inquiry order via online, checking stock availability and shipment schedule until shipping, then after-sales system already also to provide customer’s licensing needs. Site map of website becomes important to figure what things that should be on website page.
Supporting Strategy Recommendation

To support brand new marketing strategy, the company needs to remodel their marketing structure.

Figure 3. Current Company’s Marketing Structure

On previous structure, marketing manager only has marketing division and sales division below its authority. The current needs of digital marketing not well-covered either by marketing or sales division. The task becomes overlap and confusing especially on recording each performance.

Figure 4. Proposed Company’s Marketing Structure

On new structure, marketing division has two lines below its authority: E-Commerce Development and E-Commerce Maintenance. E-Commerce Development staff will focus creating new system of marketplace and website while E-Commerce Maintenance will focus on maintain marketplace and website running. With new structure, the proposed digital marketing strategy can be conducted better and each workforce can optimize on focusing their specific task based on timetable and objectives.

REFERENCES


