
The Role of the Instagram Application in Increasing Brand Awareness in Companies

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the role played by the social media platform Instagram in increasing brand awareness for companies. With the increasing use of social media as a marketing and communication tool, Instagram has become one of the main platforms used by companies to expand their audience reach and increase their brand awareness. This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The research results show that using Instagram effectively can increase brand awareness and expand marketing reach for companies. By leveraging features such as engaging visual content, use of relevant hashtags, paid advertising options, and collaboration with influencers, companies can strengthen their brand identity, increase user engagement, and expand brand influence among a wider audience. Thus, Instagram has proven to be an effective and important tool for companies in expanding their marketing reach, building closer relationships with consumers, and increasing brand awareness in the ever-evolving digital era.

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INTRODUCTION

Rapid developments in the business world have encouraged business actors to continue to adapt to dynamic environmental changes, including the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, market demand for various products and services experienced a significant decline due to a decrease in consumer purchasing power and shifts in consumption patterns (Amalia, 2022). As a response to these conditions, business actors are required to present innovative and adaptive marketing strategies to maintain their market share. Effective marketing strategies during this pandemic not only focus on increasing brand visibility through online platforms, but also on building strong emotional relationships with consumers to increase consumer loyalty and trust in their brands (Tirtayasa et al, 2021).

On the other hand, technological developments, especially with the entry of the internet into the business world, have fundamentally changed the business landscape. The internet provides new opportunities for companies to gain a wider market share through unprecedented increases in accessibility and connectivity (Prasetia, 2021). Business actors can now utilize various digital platforms, such as e-commerce, social media and other online marketing, to reach potential consumers throughout the world. By utilizing increasingly sophisticated technology, companies can optimize their marketing strategies through data analysis, content personalization, and content-based marketing aimed at attracting and maintaining consumer interest (Purwanti & Lupiana, 2021). Thus, the internet has played a very important role in accelerating digital transformation for business actors, enabling them to remain relevant and competitive amidst increasingly fierce competition (Nurwulandari, 2021).

According to the results of a 2017 survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), the number of internet users in Indonesia has reached 143.26 million people out of a total population of 262 million people (Rafiah & Kirana, 2019). The more people who use the internet, the more marketing through social media. Many businesses now market via social

media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Line, and others. The Organizing Association (Untari & Fajariana, 2018) of Indonesian Internet Services (APJII) conducted a social media survey of Generation Z. As a result, several companies made the Millennial generation who are active on social media the main focus in selling their products (Meifitri, 2020).

In the marketing context, the presence of the internet has changed the way of communication between companies and consumers. Through various digital platforms and social media, companies can easily build and maintain effective communication with their audience, which in turn can increase brand awareness (Rumondang et al., 2020). By using existing digital marketing tools, companies can disseminate information about their products or services more widely and more quickly to potential target consumers. Internet-based marketing strategies also allow companies to interact directly with consumers, listen to their feedback, and proactively adapt their marketing strategies according to consumer needs and preferences. Therefore, the internet has opened new doors for business actors to increase brand awareness through more direct, interactive and targeted communication (Arrahma & Abadi, 2021).

According to Kotler (2015), brand awareness is awareness of a brand which is related to the strength of the brand in providing information to consumers, making consumers know that the brand actually exists. The existence of brand awareness is very important for business actors because the more a product is known to consumers, the greater the possibility of transactions occurring (Nurwulandari & Irmawanti, 2021). This is in accordance with the research results of Pranata & Pramudana (2018) which stated that brand awareness has a positive effect on consumer purchase intentions. The higher the consumer's brand awareness of the product, the higher the consumer's purchase intention.

One of the social media that can increase brand awareness is Instagram. Instagram is a social media platform where we upload photos, images and videos using the internet network, so that meeting needs and disseminating information that has been or will be delivered can be received quickly (Novianti et al, 2020). Instagram generally functions as a medium for sharing photos and videos on social networks, where users can take photos and videos, add filters, and share borrowed photos to make them more interesting. Primarily, Instagram focuses on smartphone devices like Android and iOS. Instagram has the concept of interaction between users (followers). Users can also comment, like, upload and save photos and videos to their accounts (Wahyuni, 2019).

This research will analyze various strategies and best practices used by companies in utilizing Instagram as a tool to increase brand awareness. From the use of engaging visual content to active engagement with followers, these efforts will be examined in depth to understand how companies can best leverage the platform's full potential. In addition, this research will also consider how demographic and psychographic factors of Instagram users influence the effectiveness of company marketing strategies on this platform. Thus, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for companies looking to increase their presence on Instagram and strengthen their brand awareness among targeted consumers.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach method. According to (Sugiyono, 2011) qualitative methods are research that understands a phenomenon regarding what is experienced by research subjects, starting from behavior, perceptions, actions, etc. Researchers aim to find out and understand the role of the Instagram application in increasing brand awareness in companies. The research focus in this study is about the effectiveness of using Instagram social media for branding. The focus of this research will facilitate research and data processing which will later become a conclusion. Data analysis is carried out by identifying information that is appropriate to the research topic, drawing conclusions and evaluating relevant data. Data analysis was carried out using a

qualitative approach, where the researcher analyzed the context, meaning and notes of the subjects studied in the literature study, and provided an in-depth and detailed interpretation of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The advantages of Instagram as a marketing tool

Instagram marketing is a form of marketing strategy on social media platforms that relies on the Instagram application to reach audiences and increase sales. Instagram, with more than 1 billion monthly users, has become one of the most popular platforms in the world, becoming a very effective target for business marketing strategies (Watajdid et al, 2021). In marketing via Instagram, companies can use several strategies, including creating interesting and useful content for followers, utilizing relevant hashtags, utilizing paid advertising, and collaborating with influencers or celebrities with a large number of followers to promote their products or services (Ashilah, 2021). Instagram can be used as an effective marketing tool because it has several advantages as follows:

a) Has a wide audience

Instagram's main advantage lies in its strength as one of the largest social media platforms in the world, with more than 1 billion monthly active users. With this broad and diverse reach, Instagram provides a tremendous opportunity for companies to increase their brand visibility and reach potential audiences from various backgrounds and geographic locations. Thus, companies can leverage Instagram's global presence to expand their consumer base and introduce their products or services to previously unreachable audiences. The diversity of audiences on Instagram also provides an opportunity for companies to build strong emotional connections with various consumer segments, thereby strengthening brand ties with demographically and psychographically diverse customers.

Additionally, Instagram provides a variety of interactive features that allow companies to engage directly with their audience. Through features such as stories, IGTV, and live streaming features, companies can strengthen interactions with their followers in real-time. This allows companies to provide more dynamic and engaging content, as well as increase user engagement with their brand. By leveraging these interactive features, companies can build deeper relationships with consumers, thereby not only strengthening brand awareness but also expanding the base of consumers who are loyal and actively engaged with their brands. Thus, an Instagram presence not only provides broad reach, but also provides an opportunity to build a strong and engaged community around a company's brand.

b) Visually Appealing

Instagram as a platform dedicated to visual content offers invaluable opportunities for companies to showcase their products or services in an engaging and creative manner. With a primary focus on images and videos, Instagram provides a space to showcase brand aesthetics strongly and capture the attention of potential audiences through engaging visuals. Through carefully designed visual posts, companies can highlight the features and benefits of their products in a way that attracts and piques the interest of potential customers. Thus, Instagram allows companies to harness the power of visuals to inspire and build emotional connections with consumers, which in turn can increase customer interest and trust in the products or services the company offers.

c) Hashtags

Instagram uses hashtags as an important tool for organizing and grouping content published on the platform. By leveraging relevant hashtags, companies can increase the visibility of their content and help their audience find the content they are looking for. By choosing hashtags that fit

relevant topics or industries, companies can reach audiences who have similar interests or needs. In addition, using popular or trending hashtags can also help company content be more easily found by users who do not yet follow the company's account. In doing so, Instagram allows companies to expand the reach of their content and gain wider exposure among diverse audiences, thereby increasing the opportunity to attract the attention and interest of potential consumers.

The right use of hashtags also allows companies to participate in trending conversations or viral topics, thereby amplifying engagement and interaction with followers and potential audiences. By leveraging the popularity of hashtags, companies can increase their brand awareness and expand the reach of their content into a wider community. As such, Instagram provides an effective way for companies to engage in relevant conversations with their audience and expand their marketing impact through the smart and strategic use of hashtags.

d) Paid Advertising

In addition to organic features, Instagram also provides paid advertising options that allow companies to expand the reach of their marketing content to a wider and more targeted audience. Through paid advertising, companies can customize target audiences based on specific demographics, interests, or behaviors, thereby ensuring that their advertising content is served to people who have the highest potential to be interested in the product or service being offered. By taking advantage of the targeting features provided by Instagram, companies can optimize their advertising spend by reaching a more relevant audience, resulting in higher conversion rates and optimizing their return on investment.

Paid advertising on Instagram also allows companies to display engaging visual content and highlight their products or services effectively among targeted audiences. By utilizing creative and engaging ad formats, companies can create engaging experiences for Instagram users, which in turn can help build emotional connections between brands and consumers. Thus, Instagram's paid advertising options provide an opportunity for companies to expand their marketing influence, increase sales, and strengthen their brand awareness among strategically targeted audiences.

e) Influencer Marketing

Instagram has become an ideal platform for developing marketing strategies in collaboration with influencers, which have proven effective in increasing customer interest in certain products or services. By using influencer marketing, companies can work with individuals who have large and influential followings on the platform to promote their products or services to a wider audience. Through content presented by influencers, companies can introduce their products organically and attract the attention of the influencer's followers who already trust and value their views.

Collaborating with influencers also allows companies to harness the power of influencers' personal and authentic narratives, which can help build emotional connections between brands and consumers. By involving influencers who have interests or values that align with the company's brand, companies can expand their consumer base by attracting the attention of audiences who may not previously be familiar with the products or services they offer. Thus, Instagram provides an ideal platform for companies to harness the power of influencers to expand their marketing reach, build consumer trust, and generate significant impact in influencing consumer purchasing behavior and preferences.

2. The Role of Instagram in Increasing Brand Awareness in Companies

The following are several points that explain the role of Instagram in increasing brand awareness in companies:

a) Global Reach

Instagram's existence as a social media platform with more than 1 billion monthly active users makes it a very effective means for companies to reach audiences globally. With such a broad and diverse user base, Instagram provides an incredible opportunity for companies to expand their brand reach across multiple geographic locations, without being constrained by the geographic limitations typical of traditional marketing media. Through the use of appropriate marketing strategies, companies can attract the attention of potential audiences in various parts of the world, introduce their brand to new consumers, and expand their consumer base in international markets. By leveraging Instagram's global reach, companies can expand their brand visibility significantly, resulting in a powerful impact in building brand awareness at a global level. With the increasing internet penetration and use of social media around the world, Instagram is becoming an invaluable tool for companies to communicate with audiences from various cultures and backgrounds, helping strengthen brand ties with potential consumers in various international markets, and ultimately, creating a global presence strong for their brand.

b) Attractive Visual Content

With a primary focus on visual content, Instagram provides an ideal platform for companies to convey their brand identity through engaging and engaging images and videos. By utilizing features such as high-quality image uploads, short, engaging videos, and other creative features, companies can creatively express their brand messages visually, helping to build a strong and consistent brand image in the eyes of consumers. Through engaging and inspired visual content, companies can capture the attention of their target audience, create a memorable impression, and differentiate themselves from competitors in the same industry. Instagram's ability to present visual content in an engaging and attention-grabbing way plays an important role in building emotional connections between brands and consumers. By presenting images and videos that trigger emotions and create a connection with their audience, companies can build deeper and more meaningful connections with their consumers. Thus, Instagram not only allows companies to showcase their products and services, but also allows them to tell their brand stories visually, build strong bonds with consumers, and form a positive and memorable brand perception in the minds of the audience.

c) Use of Hashtags.

Instagram provides an opportunity for companies to expand user engagement through the use of relevant and effective hashtags. By utilizing hashtags that match popular topics or trends, companies can optimize the visibility of their content and increase the likelihood of their content being discovered by audiences who have not previously followed their company account. Through the right use of hashtags, companies can engage in trending conversations in their industry, attract the attention of a wider audience, and create bonds with communities that share similar interests. Additionally, Instagram allows companies to expand the reach of their content through the effective use of hashtags, helping brands to expand their marketing impact among a wider audience. By utilizing features such as popular hashtags, hashtags related to certain events or trends, companies can reach audiences who have interests or needs that match the products or services they offer. Thus, Instagram not only helps companies to engage in relevant conversations and interest a wider audience, but also allows them to expand their marketing reach through the smart and strategic use of hashtags.

d) Paid Advertising Options.

Paid advertising options on Instagram provide companies with the opportunity to optimize their marketing strategies by targeting more specific and relevant audiences. Through the use of targeting options provided by Instagram, companies can organize their ads based on certain

demographic criteria, interests, behaviors and preferences, thereby ensuring that their advertising content is displayed to people who have the highest potential to be interested in the products or services offered. In doing so, companies can optimize their advertising spend and increase the efficiency of their marketing campaigns by reaching audiences that have the highest likelihood of responding and interacting with their advertising content. Additionally, paid advertising options also allow companies to expand their brand exposure among relevant audiences, helping to increase brand awareness and increase consumer confidence in the products or services offered. By using paid advertising, companies can display engaging and relevant content to audiences who already have interests or needs that match their products, creating a greater opportunity to achieve conversions and generate more positive results from their marketing campaigns. Thus, paid advertising options on Instagram not only help companies to target relevant and responsive audiences, but also help them expand their marketing impact by reaching the audiences with the most potential in terms of conversions and engagement.

e) Collaboration with Influencers.

Instagram offers powerful collaboration opportunities between companies and influencers, which can significantly expand brand influence through authentic and emotionally connected narratives. By working with influencers who have large and engaged followings, companies can leverage their influence to introduce their products or services to a wider audience. Through content presented by influencers, companies can create a compelling brand narrative and engage the influencer's followers, build strong bonds with audiences, and expand their brand's reach among potential consumers who may have previously been unreachable.

Collaboration with influencers also allows companies to strengthen consumer engagement through content that is personalized and related to values or interests that are relevant to the target audience. By leveraging the influence and credibility of influencers, companies can develop more compelling and compelling marketing campaigns, which helps in building consumer trust in the brand and the products it offers. Thus, collaboration with influencers on Instagram not only expands the reach of a company's brand, but also strengthens consumer engagement and helps in building deeper and more meaningful relationships between brands and consumers.

CONCLUSION

Instagram plays a crucial role in increasing brand awareness and expanding marketing reach for companies. With more than 1 billion monthly active users, the platform provides ample opportunities for companies to reach a global audience, while its focus on visual content allows companies to strengthen their brand identity through engaging images and videos. Effective use of hashtags, paid advertising options, and collaboration with influencers also help companies increase user engagement, increase brand exposure, and expand their marketing impact. By leveraging all the features and strategies provided by Instagram, companies can create deeper engagement with their audience, expand market share, and build stronger relationships with consumers. Thus, Instagram is not just a social media platform, but is also a very effective tool for companies to build and strengthen their brand presence in an increasingly competitive and global market. By continuing to optimally utilize Instagram's potential, companies can improve their position in the market, expand their consumer base, and strengthen their competitiveness in the ever-evolving digital era.

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