

How to Increase Sales by Strengthening Online Social Networking

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ABSTRACT

The current pandemic conditions force every company to think about how to survive in the industry. The digitalization process occurs in almost all industrial sectors. Things that have an impact on the condition can also be seen from changes in people's lifestyles online. The purpose of this study is to take a deeper look at social networking and the benefits that companies feel when using it as a marketing strategy. The sample of this study is the community of social media users. This type of research is descriptive with a sample of 30 respondents.

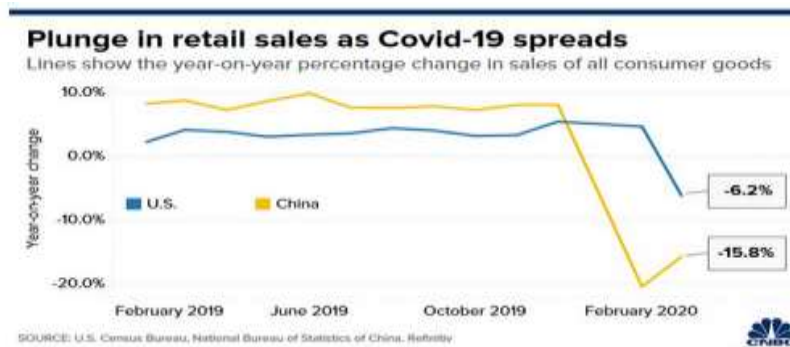
Keyword: Social network, Social media, pandemic

INTRODUCTION

Since WHO set March 11, 2020 as the beginning of the pandemic[1] it has changed all sectors of life. The perceived impact of the pandemic starts from education, economy, business, tourism and so on. From the beginning, technology was adopted slowly in various sectors, since the pandemic forced the acceleration of digital transformation [2]. The digital transformation in question is not just adopting technology but further than that, namely changing paradigms and culture [3]. This is what is happening now which has completely changed people's lives, not only in Indonesia, but also in the world. Changes that require people to become familiar with technology where all activities have been carried out through technology.

However, the negative impact that has occurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic is also very large. Where there is a decrease in the level of people's purchasing power, this happens because there are many work stoppages. Because some companies are no longer able to pay their employees. This then reduces the purchasing power of the people. Based on an excerpt from a CNBC article (Indonesia, 2021) it can be seen that there has been a decline in global sales during the period during this pandemic.

Figure 1: Decline in sales due to the pandemic



The data shown in the graph above is that several countries (US, China), which are major countries in the world, experienced a decline in sales levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can imagine this happening to major countries in the world, then what about other developing countries, of course, things are more difficult. bad can even happen. Indonesia itself has experienced quite bad conditions as well as the impact of this pandemic. Some food industries have had to close their outlets because they are unable to cover operational costs.

The more businesses that are closed, the more employees are laid off.

In conditions like this every company needs to survive. Companies must be smart in making strategies that can save their business. So if we look at the various strategies the company has implemented in order to survive. For example, McD collaborated with the BTS group, seeing that this group has a large and loyal fan base. So that the strategy is successful and creates purchase queues everywhere, one of which is in the city of Bandung [4]. Likewise, currently in a pandemic condition has changed people's lifestyles into healthy lifestyles. This is indicated by the large number of people who currently enjoy cycling or running and then create their own community. When you see this, of course, this can be used by itself as an opportunity because basically these various communities are also active in online community which is commonly known as a social network [5].

Seeing the background above, the author aims to analyze the current use of social networking strategies to deal with the crisis due to this pandemic. So this research was appointed with the title: "How to Increase Sales by Strengthening Online Social Networking".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Economy Digital

This pandemic condition has indirectly accelerated digital transformation. What arises is a shift to a digital economy. The digital economy based on (Baes et al., 2020) has two understandings, namely in a broad sense and in a narrow sense. In a broad sense, the digital economy means that sectors that were previously not digital are now being transformed by the adoption of digital technology. Meanwhile, in a narrow sense, the digital economy means digital functions or applications that create added economic value for the business sector and customers. This digital economy does not just happen, the digital economy also undergoes an evolution in its development [6]. E-government and the digital economy have a reciprocal relationship [7]. This proves there is a link between organization and technology.

Digital marketing

Digital marketing is the use of electronic media to carry out activities to promote products to consumers [8]. In facilitating marketing activities with consumers, digital

marketing is usually assisted with DMD- Digital Marketing Device [9]. The implementation of digital marketing is influenced by these factors which make the implementation different from one another. Not only based on technology adoption, but the implementation of digital marketing must be adapted to the company and also the consumers of the company itself.

Online Social networking

Social network is a group of people who interact socially together because they have the same interests [10]. It also explains about online social networks, namely a group of people interacting in the same way online. This has become a trend because online social networking is supported by several media, one of which is social media. The sense of virtual community was originally defined as the sense of belonging that members have of their community, enabling them to share beliefs and reach mutual understanding, thereby demonstrating their commitment to the community. The sense of community can be divided into four elements: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection [11].

RESEARCH METHODELOGY

This research is a descriptive research, where descriptive research is research that tries to describe a symptom, event, event that is happening at the present time (Soendari, n.d.). This research is an initial research conducted to see how the condition of the research members under study with the existing research problems. The sample in this study amounted to 30 respondents with data collection techniques using questionnaires.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Respondent profile

Gender	Man : 6 respondent Female : 24 respondent
Age	<17 y.o : 4 respondent 17-27 y.o :25 respondent 28-38 y.o : 1 respondent

In this study, the researcher wanted to ask the public's opinion about how people live their lives with social networking, especially online social networking. How then is the behavior of the community as buyers to see the influence of their social network environment which then decides to make a purchase. Furthermore, in this case, it can be a reference material for companies, what is the potential when targeting social networking in conducting marketing activities?

Of the 30 respondents who were distributed the following questionnaire is the result of the questionnaire data: of the 30 respondents, all of the respondents are members of social networks, especially online social networking with various interests. There are some who belong to sports, arts, and even online gaming communities. In online meeting routine questions, the average answer is based on their activity accessing social media. So basically online social networks are not binding and formal. Everything is returned to each individual where in essence they have the same preferences. However, there are things that distinguish online social networks from fan bases, in online social networks they have the same preferences

but there are no particular fanatics. If the fan base has a passion and they have this deep love and loyalty that makes them fanatics.

Of the 30 respondents who have been asked, 93% are affected by their social network environment in terms of being interested in buying a product. This indicates that the influence of social networks is very large in the early stages of purchasing decisions, namely attracting buying interest. This is in accordance with [12], which state that the influence of social networks, especially online social networks, is very large in deciding to buy. This is the result of this study where companies can see that online social networks are a big breakthrough to attract buying interest for consumers. In particular, social networks are usually self-segmented, so companies only need to look for communities (social networks) that match the company's products. In a pandemic condition like this, an effective strategy is needed by the company, because of course the company's resources must also be used effectively and efficiently. If you are able to target the right segment of course the company's target can be achieved. This is what makes several big brands hook up several groups/artists who do have a large number of loyal fan bases. Like BTS x McD, this allows the company to increase revenue even in the pandemic era.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research above, there are several things that can be concluded: in a pandemic condition, companies need to think effectively to produce the right strategy. In this study, it was found that choosing an online social network that is in accordance with the company's products can make the company become on target and not waste its resources.

SUGGESTION

The suggestions in this study are that this research only discusses the initial stages of learning social networks on purchasing decisions. Of course, if further research is carried out, it will be more interesting to discuss such as discussing the sense of social network. This will be seen more subjectively from community members. So that it can produce a more specific target market for the company.

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