

Marketing Communication Strategies to Increase Consumer Numbers for Rubber Seed Products in Berancah Village, Bengkalis Regency

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the implementation of marketing communication strategies for Dewra's rubber seed products produced by MSME actors in Berancah Village, as well as to identify the key factors influencing the increase in the number of consumers. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques including direct observation of marketing activities, in-depth interviews with three main informants consisting of business actors, consumers, and community leaders, as well as documentation studies related to Dewra's product marketing. Data analysis is conducted thematically to explore the ongoing marketing communication processes and their impact on business development. The findings reveal that the marketing communication strategy implemented is based on five main concepts: advertising through local and digital media, direct marketing with a personal approach to consumers, public relations through social activities and partnerships, sales promotion in the form of discounts and bundling packages, and personal selling that emphasizes trust and service. The implementation of these strategies has proven effective and significantly contributed to the sustainable growth of Dewra's consumer base from the early stages of marketing to the present. Additionally, local wisdom and the strengthening of community networks have played a vital role in reinforcing the product's position in both local and regional markets. This natural resource-based processed product not only increases the income of MSME actors but also contributes to the comprehensive economic empowerment of the Berancah Village community.

KEYWORDS: Communication Strategy; Marketing Communication; Dewra Rubber Seed,; MSMEs; Local Wisdom; Economic Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has witnessed rapid advancements across various sectors, including science, telecommunications, information technology, transportation networks, and other facets of life. These developments have facilitated the swift and seamless flow of information to individuals and groups in need. Technological progress in the modern era has significantly impacted the business and marketing world, particularly for companies operating in the industrial sector, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and product sales..¹.

The current business landscape is increasingly competitive, necessitating companies to implement effective marketing strategies to attract consumer interest in their products or services. Communication plays a pivotal role in marketing, as its effectiveness largely depends on the ability to communicate adeptly..². Communication is an essential human need for acquiring and conveying information. Therefore, marketing communication strategies positively influence companies by building a favorable public image and increasing the consumer base.

Marketing communication involves the exchange of messages aimed at fulfilling consumer needs. In the marketing process, communication serves as an exchange relationship, enabling communicators to offer products or services in a manner that persuades consumers to develop interest and purchase intentions³. Marketing strategies not only introduce products but also provide knowledge about their benefits, thereby generating a desire to buy.

One approach to increasing the consumer base for MSME products is leveraging natural resources and local wisdom. An example is rubber seeds, a flagship product in Riau Province, particularly on Bengkalis Island, where most residents own rubber

¹Lailatul, Akhirul Aminulloh, Ellen Meianzi Yasak "Strategi Komunikasi Pemasaran Kusuma Agrowisata Dalam Meningkatkan Jumlah Pengunjung" JISIP: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Vol 3, No 1 (2014), 2.

²Maria Fitriah, Komunikasi Pemasaran Melalui Desain Visual (Deepublish, 2018), h. 6–7.

³Fandy Tjiptno & Gregorius Chandra, *Pemasaran Strategik (Mengupas Pemasaran Strategik, Branding Strategy, Customer Satisfaction, Strategi Kompetitif, Hingga E-Marketing)* (Yogyakarta: Andi, 2012) h. 26.

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trees. MSMEs are independent productive business units, operated individually or as business entities across various economic sectors. According to the 1945 Constitution and MPR Decree No. XVI/MPR-RI/1998 on Economic Politics in the context of Economic Democracy, MSMEs should be empowered as an integral part of the people's economy, playing a strategic role in achieving a balanced, developing, and equitable national economic structure.⁴

Capital is a crucial factor in running a business, encompassing both financial and material resources. However, limited financial capital should not hinder entrepreneurs, as the ability to utilize surrounding potentials can generate income. This aligns with the teachings in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah verse 275, which distinguishes between permissible trade and prohibited usury.

Indonesia boasts abundant natural potential, especially in rubber plantations spread across Sumatra. Rubber plantation yields are a primary income source on the island, second only to palm oil plantations. However, rubber latex prices often fluctuate, particularly during the rainy season, necessitating innovation in processing rubber seeds as an additional income source.

Dewra Produk Biji Getah is an MSME that capitalizes on this potential by processing rubber seeds into various high-economic-value food products such as crackers, chocolate, biscuits, and more. Established in 2005, Dewra has participated in numerous competitions from village to national levels, earning various accolades, including recognition as a Top Brand and UMKM ambassador for Riau Province. The product has also received appreciation from the President of the Republic of Indonesia and related institutions.

With the significant development of the rubber seed product's reputation, marketing communication strategies become crucial in increasing the consumer base and revenue for Dewra Produk Biji Getah. Therefore, this research will examine the marketing communication strategies employed by Dewra to enhance its product's consumer base in Berancah Village, Bantan District, Bengkalis Regency.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, chosen to provide an in-depth and comprehensive depiction of the marketing communication strategies implemented to increase the consumer base for rubber seed products in Berancah Village, Bantan District, Bengkalis Regency. The qualitative approach is deemed appropriate as it captures social phenomena in the form of speech, behavior, and writings from individuals or groups involved in the product marketing process contextually and thoroughly.⁵

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

A communication strategy can be understood as a systematic and organized planning process aimed at directing various communication activities to achieve predetermined goals effectively and efficiently. Etymologically, the term "strategy" originates from the ancient Greek word "strategos," meaning a military leader responsible for organizing troops to win battles⁶. In the business and marketing realm, this concept is adapted into a framework used to design and implement communication intended to build constructive relationships and interactions between organizations and their target audiences, particularly consumers.

In the marketing context, a communication strategy serves as a vital tool for conveying marketing messages accurately and persuasively. This strategy is designed to ensure that the messages delivered are received, understood, and influence consumer perceptions and behaviors in line with the desired marketing objectives. The success of a marketing communication strategy is measured not only by the effectiveness of information dissemination but also by its ability to create positive and sustainable interactions between businesses and consumers, thereby supporting business goals such as brand awareness, customer loyalty, and ultimately, increased product sales.

Implementing a communication strategy involves several key elements, including selecting appropriate communication media, crafting precise messages, segmenting the audience, and adjusting communication styles to align with consumer characteristics. Additionally, marketing communication strategies consider consumer feedback as part of a dynamic and interactive communication cycle. Thus, a communication strategy is not merely about one-way information delivery but a two-way process that fosters constructive dialogue between organizations and their customers.⁷

⁴Lathifah Hanim, MS. Noorman, *UMKM & BENTUK-BENTUK USAHA* (Jawa Tengah: UNISSULA PRESS, 2018), h. 8.

⁵Made Laut Mertha Jaya, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif dan Kualitatif teori, penerapan, dan Riset Nyata* (Yogyakarta: Anak Hebat Indonesia, 2020) h. 6.

⁶Hafied Cangara, *Perencanaan dan Strategi Komunikasi* (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2017) h. 64.

⁷Astrid Kusumowidagdo, *Desain Ritel (Komunikasi Strategi Pemasaran Bisnis dengan Tepat)* (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2015) cet. II, h. 57.

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MARKETING STRATEGY

According to Philip Kotler, marketing is understood as a social and managerial process aimed at fulfilling consumer needs and desires through value exchange mechanisms between involved parties. This process not only focuses on selling products or services but also encompasses value creation that is mutually beneficial and the maintenance of long-term relationships with consumers.⁸

Marketing strategies are designed by considering various elements of the marketing mix, widely known as the 4Ps concept: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. These four elements synergistically guide marketing activities to achieve organizational goals effectively and efficiently. The product refers to the goods or services offered to meet market needs, price is the value set for the product, place relates to product distribution to consumers, and promotion includes all forms of communication used to convey marketing messages to the target market.⁹

Furthermore, Kotler and Armstrong emphasize that marketing communication is an integral part of marketing strategy, combining five main instruments: advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing. These instruments work together to create persuasive, effective communication and build strong relationships with customers.

Advertising functions as indirect communication aimed at reaching a broad audience with controlled messages, while sales promotion focuses on short-term incentives to stimulate purchases. Public relations aim to build and maintain a positive company and product image, personal selling involves face-to-face interactions between salespeople and consumers to build relationships and trust, and direct marketing uses media that allow personal and responsive communication directly to consumers.

By effectively integrating these five communication tools, companies can achieve consistent message delivery, strengthen brand awareness, influence purchasing decisions, and maintain customer loyalty in the long term. This comprehensive marketing communication approach also enables message and strategy adjustments according to market characteristics and evolving consumer behavior.

MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Marketing communication can be understood as a series of strategic processes carried out by organizations or companies with the primary goal of effectively conveying information to consumers and influencing their attitudes and behaviors related to specific products, services, or brands. This process not only serves as an information dissemination channel but also as a crucial mechanism in building and maintaining strong, long-term relationships between companies and consumers¹⁰.

Marketing communication activities encompass various forms of interaction designed in a structured and integrated manner, aiming to achieve multiple marketing objectives such as increasing brand awareness, shaping positive perceptions, and fostering sustainable loyalty among consumers. In practice, marketing communication combines several diverse communication tools, ranging from advertising, sales promotions, public relations activities, direct marketing, to the utilization of digital technology and social media as dynamic and interactive communication channels.

The main function of marketing communication is to direct and influence consumer behavior through the delivery of persuasive and relevant messages. These messages aim not only to inform but also to motivate consumers to take purchasing actions and strengthen their emotional and cognitive bonds with the brand in question¹¹. With the right and integrated communication strategy, companies can create a strong brand image and clear differentiation amid increasingly tight market competition.

Furthermore, the primary goal of marketing communication is to build and expand public awareness of a brand, while simultaneously fostering deep preferences and loyalty that can drive sustainable sales and market share growth. In a competitive and dynamic business environment, the effectiveness of marketing communication becomes a key factor determining an organization's success in maintaining the existence and competitiveness of its products or services.

Therefore, marketing communication should be viewed as a systematically and measurably planned process, where interactions between companies and consumers, as well as other stakeholders, occur continuously and meaningfully to achieve optimal business objectives.

MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs)

MSMEs are one of the main pillars in the national economy, playing a crucial role in job creation, increasing community income, and promoting inclusive economic growth. MSMEs are generally defined as small to medium-scale business units, typically

⁸Ulfah Ainun Humaira, *Apa Sih, Strategi Pemasaran Itu?* (Jakarta: Pustaka Taman Ilmu, 2021) h. 5.

⁹Redi Penuju, *Komunikasi Pemasaran* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2019) h. 9.

¹⁰Eko Nur Syahputro, *Melejitkan Pemasaran UMKM Melalui Media Sosial*. (Jawa Timur, Caremedia Communication), h.17.

¹¹Anang Firmansyah, "Komunikasi Pemasaran", (Jawa Timur: CV. Penerbit Qiara Media). h. 1

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characterized by a limited number of employees, relatively small capital, and simple management, often run by families or individuals.¹²

Based on Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2008 concerning Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the classification of business types is determined by the value of assets and annual turnover. Micro-enterprises typically possess assets not exceeding IDR 50 million and generate an annual turnover of up to IDR 300 million. Small enterprises have assets ranging from IDR 50 million to IDR 500 million with a turnover cap of IDR 2.5 billion, while medium-sized enterprises own assets between IDR 500 million and IDR 10 billion and may achieve a turnover of up to IDR 50 billion.

MSMEs exhibit distinctive characteristics such as operational flexibility, rapid adaptability to market changes, and strong ties with local communities. Despite these advantages, MSMEs face substantial challenges, including limited access to capital, outdated technology, low managerial capacity, and difficulties in marketing their products both domestically and internationally.¹³

Their role in national economic development is strategic, particularly in fostering equitable economic distribution and poverty reduction. As they are widespread across the country, MSMEs serve as a primary source of employment and act as key drivers of local economies. Therefore, government policies have been directed toward enhancing MSME competitiveness through training programs, financial access, institutional strengthening, and the adoption of digital technology to boost productivity and market reach.

In summary, MSMEs are not only microeconomic actors but also vital agents of socio-economic development, promoting innovation and creativity within society.¹⁴

RUBBER SEEDS: A RESOURCE WITH MULTIFACETED POTENTIAL

Rubber seeds, derived from the rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*) belonging to the Euphorbiaceae family, are one of the significant agricultural commodities in the rubber industry, particularly for natural rubber production. These seeds are generally found in tropical plantation areas across Southeast Asia and are characterized by their hard, dark-brown shell containing high levels of vegetable oil, protein, and complex carbohydrates.

The processing of rubber seeds involves drying, shell removal, and oil or chemical compound extraction. The oil content is rich in unsaturated fatty acids, such as linoleic and oleic acid, making it a viable raw material for biodiesel and environmentally friendly chemical products.¹⁵

Moreover, rubber seeds hold economic value as a source of superior-quality seedlings for plantation rejuvenation and yield optimization. Proper selection and treatment of the seeds improve germination rates and seedling quality, which significantly impacts latex output. However, there are still challenges in utilizing rubber seeds, including vulnerability to pests and diseases, and limitations in eco-efficient processing technology. Ongoing research and technological innovation are therefore crucial to enhancing their added value and ensuring sustainability in the rubber industry.¹⁶

In essence, rubber seeds are not only critical for replanting efforts but also offer diverse industrial applications that support the development of rubber agribusiness and product diversification.

HISTORY AND PROFILE OF DEWRA RUBBER SEED PRODUCT BUSINESS

Dewra is a culinary brand established in 2005, specializing in the production of snacks made from rubber seeds (locally known as Buah Para), which are commonly found in local rubber plantations. Based in Berancah Village, Bantan District, Bengkalis Regency, Dewra is one of the local MSMEs involved in processing these seeds into products such as chips and other light snacks.

The name "Dewra" is derived from Dewi, the founder and innovator behind the use of rubber seeds as food ingredients. Over time, especially starting in 2017, the business expanded and participated in regional and provincial competitions for local food products, winning several awards. These achievements were accompanied by efforts to meet market standards, including securing halal certification and other regulatory requirements.

¹²Encep Saefullah,dkk."MANAJEMEN USAHA MIKRO, KECIL DAN MENENGAH (UMKM)", (Serang: PENERBIT C.V.EUREKA MEDIA AKSARA). h. 15.

¹³Sri Handini, dkk "Manajemen UMKM Dan Koperasi",(Surabaya: 2019), h. 20-21.

¹⁴Kerjasama Lppi Dengan Bank Indonesia "*PROFIL BISNIS USAHA MIKRO, KECIL DAN MENENGAH (UMKM)*", (Jakarta: 2015), hlm. 12.

¹⁵Agus Purnomo, dkk, "*PEMANFAATAN LIMBAH BIJI KARET MENJADI OLAHAN MAKANAN KRIPIK BERNILAI EKONOMIS*.(Jurnal, Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari Banjarmasin tahun 2023), hlm. 336.

¹⁶Jeni Kamase, Sukmawati, "*Alternatif Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Melalui Pelatihan Pemanfaatan Biji Karet Sebagai Produk Olahan Emping, Di Desa Bontomangiri,Kecamatan Bulukumpa, Kabupaten Bulukumba Tahun 2022*".(Jurnal, Universitas Muslim 2022), hlm. 2.

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The brand's motto, "Persevere and Advance," reflects the entrepreneurial spirit behind the business. In 2018, Dewra gained national attention by presenting at the National Technology Day (Harteknas), where the founder introduced a self-designed rubber seed-cracking machine named Dewlateks, earning commendation from the late President B.J. Habibie. By 2020, Dewra represented Riau Province in the BERLIAN Entrepreneur program and participated in national exhibitions inaugurated by President Joko Widodo in Jakarta and Bali.

In 2021, Dewra's founder received special recognition from the Deputy Speaker of the Bengkalis Regional Parliament for elevating the name of Berancah Village and Riau Province nationally through unique innovations. This story is now a source of inspiration for local youth to become actively involved in the MSME sector.

Marketing Communication Strategy for Dewra's Rubber Seed Products

Marketing communication strategy plays a pivotal role in expanding market reach and consumer base, especially for MSMEs like Dewra that focus on local resource-based products. Dewra employs an integrated and targeted communication strategy to not only attract new customers but also retain existing ones through effective and culturally resonant promotional methods.

The key components of Dewra's strategy¹⁷, derived from interview findings, include¹⁸ :

1. Advertising

Dewra capitalizes on digital advancements by utilizing platforms like TikTok, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram for engaging promotional content. These platforms enable real-time, interactive engagement with diverse audiences through storytelling that highlights local wisdom and the uniqueness of the product. Traditional media, such as local newspapers and RRI Pro 1 Bengkalis radio, are also used to reach demographics less connected to digital platforms, thereby enhancing brand credibility and regional identity.

2. Direct Marketing.

Dewra actively participates in local government events, MSME bazaars, and community exhibitions, facilitating direct interaction with potential customers. This approach fosters emotional connections and builds trust through two-way communication. It also serves as an educational platform to promote rubber seed products as cultural souvenirs of Bengkalis.

3. Public Relations.

Strategic partnerships with government agencies, cooperatives, and business associations such as KADIN enhance Dewra's distribution and promotional channels. These collaborations offer regulatory support, strengthen product legitimacy, and amplify the brand's reputation within and beyond the region.

4. Sales Promotion.

Dewra employs tactics like free samples and exclusive discounts to entice first-time buyers and encourage repeat purchases. These incentives help reduce psychological barriers and generate positive consumer experiences that foster loyalty. Timed events and limited-time offers also create a sense of urgency.

5. Personal Selling

Face-to-face engagement remains a key strategy, especially in local stores and outlets. The business owner regularly monitors product quality and maintains direct communication with shop owners and consumers, reinforcing trust and gaining valuable feedback for product improvement.

The implementation of an integrated and holistic marketing communication strategy has not only contributed to the increased number of consumers for Dewra Produk but also reinforced its brand positioning as a pioneer of local wisdom-based innovation in Bengkalis Regency. The synergy between digital and traditional media, active involvement in social and governmental events, and a personalized approach to sales are pivotal elements that enhance brand awareness, consumer interest, and loyalty toward the processed rubber seed products.

This strategy highlights the importance of technological adaptation, cross-sector collaboration, and human-centered approaches in creating added value while ensuring the sustainability of MSMEs rooted in local resources.

¹⁷Dewi Melinda, Pemilik Usaha, Wawancara dengan Penulis, pada tanggal 03 Mei 2024 pukul 15.12 WIB.

¹⁸Kemal Khaidir, "Strategi Komunikasi Pemasaran Dalam Meningkatkan Jumlah Pengguna Jasa Pada PT Sahara Kafila Wisata di Jakarta pada Tahun 2022" (skripsi, Fakultas Dakwah Dan Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2022)

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KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN INCREASING CONSUMER BASE

The success of Dewra Produk's marketing communication approach is shaped by several interrelated core factors that collectively enhance promotional effectiveness and market expansion. These factors are not merely supportive but are fundamental in ensuring widespread product recognition and consumer appeal:¹⁹.

1. The Role Of Mass And Digital Media

Traditional mass media such as newspapers, local radio, and television have played a significant role in expanding marketing outreach. These platforms reach communities less exposed to digital technologies, thus ensuring inclusive communication. At the same time, social media platforms—including TikTok, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram—offer strategic advantages like market segmentation, interactivity, and two-way engagement with consumers. The ability to share visual content and product storytelling also fosters emotional connections with audiences, boosting brand awareness and consumer trust.

2. Strategic Partnership And Cross-Sector Collaboration

Forming strategic alliances with diverse stakeholders significantly enhances the distribution and promotion of products. Collaborations with similar businesses facilitate the sharing of resources and market access. Partnering with larger institutions such as supermarkets and business organizations like KADIN allows for more systematic and professional distribution. Moreover, cooperation with government agencies provides regulatory support and enhances public legitimacy and trust, facilitating broader marketing acceptance.

3. Community Support And Workforce Engagement

Active participation from the community and employees contributes greatly to informal promotion methods such as word-of-mouth, which is highly influential in building trust and reputation. Employee dedication to maintaining product quality and customer service plays a critical role in delivering a positive consumer experience, leading to increased customer loyalty and repeat purchases.

4. Local Wisdom-Based Branding And Product Identity

An effective marketing communication strategy must be able to elevate local cultural values as a competitive advantage. Dewra Produk has successfully positioned rubber seeds as a signature product of Bengkalis, rich in both cultural and economic significance. Its brand image as an authentic local product adds value and draws attention from local, national, and even international markets. This strategy also contributes to cultural preservation and promotes community-based economic growth.

5. Synergy And Organizational Readiness

These contributing factors are not isolated but rather interconnected in forming a cohesive strategy. The success of Dewra Produk's marketing efforts depends heavily on the organization's ability to manage this synergy effectively. This includes adapting to technological and market changes, building robust networks, and optimizing human resources and information technology to support long-term marketing success.

CONCLUSION

The marketing communication strategy employed by Dewra Produk in Berancah Village comprises five main elements: Advertising (via social media, print, radio, and local TV), Direct Marketing (through participation in government agendas and public events), Public Relations (with community organizations and government institutions), Sales Promotion (in the form of free samples and special offers), and Personal Selling (conducted through local stores and promotional events).

The execution of this strategy has proven effective in expanding the consumer base and increasing market share at both local and national levels. Supporting factors include synergistic use of communication media, government backing, business partnerships, and the active participation of the community and employees.

Altogether, this approach strengthens Dewra Produk's branding as a local wisdom-based MSME and supports the long-term sustainability of its business.

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