Alfateema Business Communication Strategy in Increasing Consumer Loyalty

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Abstract: Online business requires business communication that is useful for persuading potential consumers while making existing consumers loyal. One of the UMKM brands that uses business communication is Alfateema. The purpose of this research is to determine Alfateema's business communication strategy for increasing consumer loyalty. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method by collecting data through observation, interviews, and literature studies. The data analysis technique uses source triangulation. This research uses elements of communication, 7C business communication principles, and consumer loyalty characteristics. Alfateema builds relationships with consumers and increases loyalty through effective communication that the company owns across various platforms. The business employs communication principles such as completeness, conciseness, courtesy, and consideration to achieve this, as revealed by the results of the research. Then the business communication carried out by Alfateema produces a positive reputation so that consumers turn into loyal customers and faithfully use Alfateema products by making repeat buyers, recommending to others, and demonstrating immunity to the full competition.

Keywords: Communication Business, Online Business, Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Currently, not only individuals with large capital engage in business in Indonesia, but also those with small or even no capital can initiate and conduct business. Business is a term to describe all personal and organizational activities that produce goods or services in everyday life (Nathaniel, 2020). So, business can be done by anyone individually, in groups, organizations, or companies.

Business is also the practice of buying and selling products and services. The Islamic view regarding the practice of buying and selling is taken very seriously. Islam forbids usury and upholds the concept of mutual consent or pleasure in buying and selling, as stated by Allah in verse 275 of QS al-Baqarah (Ulum, 2020). Therefore, it is important to emphasize the value of fairness and pleasure in business dealings when running a business.
Before information and communication technology developed very rapidly, business tended to be conducted offline and face-to-face. Meanwhile, currently, business can be done online via various media, which are the result of developments in information and communication technology. An online business is a business that uses Internet media as a marketing medium for a product or service (Timothy, 2010). The products marketed are diverse, such as clothing, food, electronic equipment, software, applications, and so on, while services include graphic design, copywriting, advertising services, and many others.

The use of the Internet as a product of the development of information and communication technology has become a channel for connecting online business transactions because it reaches millions of people and can be used to pursue a target market consisting of a certain group of people. The internet has become an efficient and ideal marketing tool for online shop business owners. (Fauziah, 2020). The Internet media used is very diverse, such as websites, social media, and e-commerce.

A company or person has various factors to consider when running an online business. One of the factors is that it can reach its targets widely, even unlimitedly.

When starting an online business, business people must make planning and organization related to segmentation, targets, business models, business promotions, and so on according to the product.

Online business activities also require business communication that is useful for persuading potential consumers as well as making existing consumers loyal. Communication in the business world is related to interactions that occur between two or more business people. Business communication is communication in business that involves various forms of communication, both verbal and non-verbal, to achieve certain goals (Christy, 2019). One can make money by increasing sales through business communication. Consumers will not know about the goods being marketed if there is no communication (Praditya, 2019).

Alfateema also uses business communications as a UMKM brand from Cirebon that runs its business online. Another important factor in Alfateema's progress is technological progress. Through the Internet and e-commerce platforms, UMKM can expand its product marketing, reach new markets, and increase operational efficiency. Alfateema products are currently used by several Indonesian public figures, such as artist
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Revalina S. Temat, Chair of Commission 1 of the DPR RI Meutya Hafid Ansyah, DJ Yasmin, and others. Alfateema is a fashion brand originating from Cirebon, founded in February 2015. Initially, Alfateema products focused on kaftan clothing models; over time, various Muslim clothing has followed trends and can still be used for formal events for those who do not wear a headscarf. Alfateema is synonymous with ethnic-patterned fabric from various regions, such as Cirebon and Makassar.

The online sales system implemented by Alfateema is designed so that it can attract many consumers from various regions and abroad. This is because Alfateema carries out business communication activities by interacting with its consumers online via social media and e-commerce by conveying business messages, such as responding to consumer chats and comments, information relating to ordering rules, and others. The communication carried out by Alfateema is also based on morals. Communication based on akhlaqul karimah is communication that adheres to Islamic principles. Speech rooted in the Islamic worldview referring to the Al-Quran and Hadith is called akhlaqul karimah communication (Pratami et al., 2022). The existence of business communication and online sales carried out by Alfateema means that the brand has now expanded to Malaysia and Brunei through an agent sales system. Some consumers are satisfied with the response, service received, and products marketed.
Consumer satisfaction, as seen in the picture above, is expected to make consumers loyal. According to Alida Palilati (2004:67), loyalty to a company's products or services (brand) is defined as a favorable attitude towards a brand, which is represented in purchases that are committed to that brand all the time (Warnadi & Triyono, 2019). Customer loyalty is a customer's promise to continue making repeat purchases or maintaining a regular subscription to a product or service (Azaria Amadeapuri et al., 2020).

Consumers who are loyal by making purchases will, of course, increase sales for Alfateema. Alfateema can also survive amidst the many business competitors from new entrants with the loyalty of its consumers. Based on this explanation, the author intends to find how Alphateema's business communication strategy increases consumer loyalty.

**METHOD**

This research uses descriptive qualitative methods as the main reference. Descriptive qualitative research aims to reveal a particular problem or situation as it is so that it can provide an accurate picture of the actual situation of the object being investigated to solve a specific problem (Kimbal, 2015).

Data collection techniques include observing the Alfateema online shop account on Shopee and Instagram, conducting interviews with the owner of Alfateema, and conducting literature studies to find the necessary data from various sources.

The data analysis technique uses source triangulation. Source triangulation is the process of testing the validity of data by confirming research data that has been obtained from different sources (Hermawan & Amirullah, 2016). The researcher obtained data from observations, carried out an analysis to produce a conclusion, and then triangulated the sources by conducting interviews with the owner of Alfateema.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Business Communication Strategies Implemented by Alfateema**

Strategy can be defined as a series of actions that must be taken to bring about change (Rahman et al., 2023). Meanwhile, communication is the process of conveying messages from the communicator to the communicant using various media to create a common understanding between them. The information provided can influence the communicant (Ramahdani et al., 2022). A communication strategy is a combination of communication elements aimed at creating understanding in communication, fostering and motivating the communicator to achieve the desired
goals. A communication plan must be able to show how practical operations must be carried out to achieve the goal (Afriaris & Windartini, 2021). Communication strategy is the overall planning, tactics, and methods that will be used to facilitate communication by paying attention to all aspects of the communication process to achieve goals.

According to Anwar Arifin (Irene Silviani, 2021) in the book Communication Strategy, so that the message conveyed to the target (the public) is effective, the following communication strategies may be needed: first, getting to know the audience. Audiences can be identified from various aspects. For example, in terms of knowledge, the audience's attitude towards the content of the message conveyed. Second, compose the message. The message must be able to arouse attention, be interesting, and meet the emotional needs and hopes of the recipient of the message. Messages can be conveyed through various communication media. Third, determine the method. The following are several delivery methods in communication, namely: Redundancy (repetition) is influencing the audience by repeating messages to the audience. Canalizing is understanding and researching the influence of groups on individuals or audiences.

An informative message is a form of message content that aims to influence the audience by providing information. Fifth, persuasive means influencing by persuading. Sixth, educational. The educational method means providing an idea to a real audience based on facts, opinions, or experiences that can be accounted for in terms of truth, deliberately, regularly, and as planned, by changing human behavior in the desired direction. Seventh, cursive means influencing the audience by force. Eight, selection and use of media. Ninth, obstacles in communication: when conveying a message from the communicator to the communicant, it often occurs that understanding as desired is not achieved, so misunderstandings arise.

Meanwhile, business the exchange of ideas, opinions, information, and instructions that occurs in the business world as a process of conveying a series of messages with commercial purposes and, of course, includes various forms of communication, both verbal and nonverbal (Silitonga, 2020). Effective communication in a business context is very important to ensure the success of a business and facilitate good cooperation between the various parties involved. The following are the 7C principles of business communication, namely:
Completeness
The first point suggests that a business communications practitioner must be able to present as complete information as possible to various parties who request or need it. This is important because the completeness of the information will be able to minimize misinterpretations, which in the end can create trust and certainty for the recipient of the information.

Conciseness
This second point requires that communication activities be done using short, concise, and clear words. This will make it easier for the recipient of the message to understand what the message-giver wants to convey.

Concreteness
This third point means that the message-giver designs and composes the message to be communicated in a concrete and specific manner. Stay away from abstract words that can cause confusion and multiple interpretations for the recipient of the message.

Consideration
This fourth point means that the message-giver considers the situation and condition of the message recipient when he wants to give a message.

Clarity
This fifth point means that business communication practitioners can compose the message they want to communicate in sentences that are easy for the recipient of the message to understand.

Courtesy
This sixth point suggests that manners are one of the things that must be paid attention to.

Correctness
This seventh point requires business communication practitioners to be careful and precise when creating messages to avoid mistakes (Akib, dkk, 2022).

Currently, people tend to prefer shopping online because the emergence of online businesses through social media and e-commerce marketplaces is the result of technological advances. Many people love Shopee, a marketplace. Shopee promises many interesting things for its fans, such as relatively cheaper prices, a free shipping program, constant availability of goods, and many choices of payment methods for every transaction. Instagram and WhatsApp as social media are also used for marketing and sales processes for online businesses. This is also done by Alfateema as part of the communication and sales process using social media and e-commerce. The communication strategy carried out by Alfateema to its consumers uses social media and e-commerce, namely:
Identify the audience. The majority of Alfateema consumers are women aged 18 and over. Although some of the products marketed also have special family models consisting of clothes for adult women, there are also clothes for children and adult men, but these products are only available in certain editions.

The message conveyed is informative and persuasive. Alfateema, in conveying his message on his Instagram social media platform, uses text, photos, audio, and video, with various features provided on this platform. Meanwhile, the Shopee platform only uses text and photos. The text content on Instagram social media contains information about the product name, product type, ingredients, price, contact person for purchasing, and invitations to buy as part of persuading consumers. The following are several business communication principles that Alfateema applies, namely:

Information about products is written in the caption that Alfateema always posts, such as on the Instagram account @alfateema, which contains the information "Check the complete catalog at @alfateema.catalogue or shopee: alfateema.id". So consumers can see product details on Alfateema's second account.

The words written are short. The average caption on Instagram for @alfateema is no more than 5 sentences, such as the following: "Back in stock ANIKA DRESS. There are six colors, yes. Check the complete catalog at @alfateema.catalogue or shopee: alfateema.id", or the caption for the 2023 Ramadhan edition post, "Back in stock Our favorite Kaftan from the Ethnic Silk Series is MAINA KAFTAN. This timeless kaftan model, this time using fully embroidered silk fabric! Guaranteed to look beautiful and elegant. Check out the complete catalog at @alfateema.catalogue. Order by Whatsapp 081222203722 or shopee: alfateema.id".

The content of Alfateema's message when responding to comments from its customers has good manners, such as the following: "Hi sis, this is the complete catalog of ALFATEEMA RAYYA COLLECTION 2023". Alfateema continues to use greetings and responds politely by referring to consumers with the pronouns "brother or sis". Consider Alfateema's messages when responding to consumers' comments on Instagram, adjusting the questions asked by consumers, such as if consumers ask the price, Alfateema will state the price. Then fill in the message in the WhatsApp application. Alfateema always provides information regarding the order format, payment confirmation, and other provisions, always using the word "thank
you” at the end of conversations with consumers via WhatsApp as part of etiquette.

The method used is repetition in Instagram story posts by uploading feed or reels content into the Instagram story. Then several words that invite buying and the purchasing contact person also repeat. The order format, payment confirmation, and other conditions are also repeated on the WhatsApp conversation application for every consumer who contacts Alfateema.

The media used by Alfateema are social media platforms like Instagram, Shopee, and WhatsApp to market its products online. Alfateema utilizes the features of Instagram for marketing, Shopee, and WhatsApp for selling. The obstacle that Alfateema experiences when communicating with its consumers is the terms and conditions that apply to Shopee e-commerce, such as the fact that in the chat column you are not allowed to share WhatsApp numbers. Furthermore, the Alfateema product ordered by the consumer is out of stock, and Alfateema cannot suggest cancellation to the consumer. This is because if consumers click the "cancel" button, there will be penalty points that will be charged from Shopee to Alfateema.

Based on the explanation above, Alfateema continues to grow with a predetermined strategy even though more and more businesses are starting to switch to online businesses. Alfateema is also trying its best to maintain its best reputation, which has been built since 2015, so that it will always be an online shop with the best service and good-quality goods with easy access for consumers to choose from.

Loyalty is an important factor in the growth of a company's business and business performance. Loyalty is closely linked to repeat business. A customer is loyal when he or she frequently repurchases a product or service from a particular provider. Loyalty also refers to a person's loyalty, trust, and commitment to an individual, organization, or brand. Customer loyalty is defined as people who buy, especially those who buy regularly and repeatedly. A customer is someone who continuously and repeatedly comes to the same place to satisfy their desires by having a product or getting a service and paying for that product or service (Suryati, 2015). Consumer loyalty to a company's products or services is shown in the pattern of consumers purchasing goods or services continuously (Ristyanadi & Dwi Jayanti, 2018). According to Griffin (2003:31) (Suryati, 2015), loyal customers have the following characteristics: (1) Make regular repeat purchases (repeat buyers). Customers repurchase the same products offered by the company. (2) Make
purchases across product and service lines. Customers make purchases across the product and service lines offered by the company. (3) Recommend to others (recommended to others) Customers recommend to other people the products offered by the company. (4) Demonstrates immunity to the appeal of similar products from competitors (demonstrates immunity to the full of competitions). Customers will not be interested in offers of similar products produced by competitors.

Consumer loyalty refers to a customer's inclination or allegiance to a particular brand, product, or service. Loyal consumers tend to make repeat purchases, provide recommendations to others, and remain loyal to a brand or company over a long period of time. Alfateema, a brand that has been established since 2015, has consumers who are loyal to the brand. Buyers who previously had the status of ordinary consumers have turned into loyal business communication remains friendly, Alfateema maintains an attitude when answering various questions asked by buyers of its products, and other things that Alfateema has done well so that the consumer's status has changed to become a loyal customer. The characteristics of loyal Alfateema customers are as follows:

Make regular repeat purchases (repeat buyers). In the picture below, several Alfateema customers provide comments in the column of the Shopee e-commerce application by repurchasing the products offered.

The account owner, I****5, said, "The product never disappoints," which means he has made a purchase before. Then the owner of the Trinarahmi account also believes that Alfateema products never fail and are always good. This shows that the owner of the Trinarahmi account has also purchased Alfateema products because there is the word "ever" in the comment he wrote.

Recommend to others. Alfateema customers upload photos or videos of the clothes they bought to Instagram or feeds with interesting captions, mention them on Alfateema's Instagram account as a form of happiness, and recommend the product to others. They use it.

Demonstrates immunity from the attraction of similar products from competitors (demonstrates immunity to the
full of competitions). On Alfateema’s Instagram account, many accounts mention Alfateema’s account, such as news anchors from CNN Indonesia Morning Editor Dea Kartika and Yudi Yudwan and news anchors from CNN Indonesia Prime News Elvira Khairunnisa and Ferdi Ilyas. Then several other public figures, such as Chintya Ramlan, Allyssa Hawadi Soeleman, Gya P Sadiqah, Deanda Puteri, and others, use Alfateema products repeatedly with different models, colors, and types of fabric. This shows that people who have great influence because they work as public figures are interested in Alfateema products, even though there are many similar products produced by competitors in other fashion businesses.

CONCLUSION

The business communication strategy carried out by Alfateema to increase loyalty is to build relationships with consumers through good, friendly, and easily accepted communication through various platforms it owns and apply business communication principles such as completeness, conciseness, courtesy, and consideration. Opening a comments column on Instagram and Shopee e-commerce and allowing consumers to communicate via chat via Shopee e-commerce and the WhatsApp application, of course, makes it easier for users to ask questions about a product or submit complaints. The business communication carried out by Alfateema produces a positive reputation so that consumers turn into consumers who have loyalty and faithfully use Alfateema products by making repeat buyers, recommending them to others, and demonstrating immunity to the full of competitions.

REFERENCES


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