

# THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO MARKET CAFE TARGETING AT GENERATION-Y

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## Abstrak

*Media sosial online atau disingkat media sosial mulai populer pada awal 2000-an. Di tengah persaingan media sosial, Facebook adalah media sosial yang paling banyak digunakan oleh pengguna aktif se-dunia diikuti oleh MySpace sebagai pesaing terdekatnya. Facebook saja digunakan oleh lebih dari 500 juta orang, jumlah yang lebih besar daripada jumlah penduduk Indonesia! Pemasaran dengan menggunakan media sosial memiliki sasaran pemirsa yang sangat besar. Pengguna media sosial dapat dibagi ke dalam beberapa kelompok. Kelompok terbesar pengguna media sosial adalah Generasi-Y. Generasi-Y atau dikenal juga dengan nama "millennial generation" adalah generasi yang lahir sekitar tahun 1980-an hingga awal 2000-an. Sebagian besar pengguna Facebook masuk ke dalam kelompok Generasi-Y. Sejalan dengan perkembangan gaya hidup di Bandung, semakin banyak café berdiri dan bersaing ketat. Kebanyakan dari café tersebut menggunakan strategi diferensiasi sebagai dasar untuk memperoleh keunggulan bersaing. Beberapa café di Bandung memanfaatkan media sosial untuk mendapatkan keunggulan bersaing dengan "positioning" yang berbeda di kalangan Generasi-Y. Tulisan ini bertujuan mempresentasikan strategi pemasaran café dengan menggunakan media sosial untuk menjangkau pasar sasaran Generasi-Y.*

## INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this millennium, social media became popular and the number of users has been growing ever since to reach over 500 million users on this day. Social media were originally developed as an on-line platform to connect people and to allow them to communicate to each other. Nevertheless, recent development of social media enable companies to use it as a marketing tool.

Using social media as a marketing tool require different mindset. Marketers who try to dominate the market using social media in the same way as traditional marketing media will surely fail. In traditional marketing, the audience do not have a good channel to talk back about the message given by the marketer. If you do not agree to the message deliver in a big marketing campaign of a cigarette company, you cannot find any channel to deliver your opinion on the same scale. On the other hand, you can easily comment on any message deliver in Facebook, Twitter or any other social media, and the comment has nearly the same exposure as the message itself. That is one of the reason why cigarette companies hardly focus on social media as their advertising media.

Twenty years ago, most of the so called café were still in the form of restaurants, which offered unique taste, good food and positioning price. Today, café focus on unique market segment, offer unique atmosphere supported by a specific neighborhood. The competition base has shifted from product to service. With the advent of social media, which are very suitable to market service business, such café find a new way to market themselves.

## **THE PARADIGM SHIFT FROM TRADITIONAL TO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**

Traditional marketing worked very well for many years. Before this millennium, consumers expected companies to talk at them in one-way communication. Today, consumers expect to publish their opinion and expect the companies to pay attention to them. Before, the consumers can easily be segmented into certain market segments. They are less diverse. They are even less savvy. At that time, a company targeting women in her thirties could assume that they are married and they are stay-at-home mom who put her family first. Today, they may just as likely be single women focusing on their career. With such diversity, marketers must use multiple channel to reach their target market.

Shama Hyder Kabani pointed seven marketing paradigms that must be altered when someone expects to successfully use social media as marketing channel:

- Traditional marketing aims to dominate the market using newspaper, television and banners with a big financial budget, the goal of online marketing should be to create a community within the market.
- The way traditional marketing conveys the message is by shouting out loud, but using social media, the message must be conveyed by listening and then, whispering. The louder you shout, the less audience will hear the message.
- When communicating using traditional marketing approach, the message is centered on the company, its activities, and its accomplishments, but nobody will pay attention to someone who praise oneself directly in social media. Thus, the message should be centered on the community where the company exists, the contribution to the community, and the acknowledgment of the community.
- Traditional marketing adopts push strategy, which offer the products or services aggressively. Social media marketing should focus on pull strategy, which persuade its audience by using story and information.
- Advertising is the heart of traditional marketing, but word of mouth constitutes in social media.

- Traditional marketing makes every effort to control the opinion of its audience. Using social marketing, the marketer cannot control opinion, because the media provide two-way communication. Instead, one should allow the opinion to form and influence it toward one's advantage.
- The trophy of traditional marketing is to become a market leader, which cannot be achieved using social media. Social media should aim to nurture relationships.

## **GENERATION-Y**

Generation-Y, also known as the Millennial Generation is a term to describe the demographic cohort born around 1980 until 2000. Although its characteristics vary by region, generally it is marked by familiarity with communications, media, and digital technologies.

While older generations are most influenced by authority figures, data and facts, Generation-Y are tend to make a decision based on the influence of their own peers. A research conducted by The Australian Leadership Foundation confirmed that the biggest factor determining the choice of Generation-Y will make is the experiences of their core group of 3 to 8 friends. Rather than making independent decisions based on core values, they live in a culture encouraging them to embrace community values, and to reach consensus.

Other influence on Generation-Y are TV and movies followed by dark lyrics music such as of Eminem and Marilyn Manson. These make them less idealistic than older generations. Combined with global economic crisis, Generation-Y has developed an increasingly short-term focus.

The characteristics of Generation-Y change the preferred communication style. While older generations prefer structure style, this generation prefer freedom. Learning has shifted to experience. They relate rather than react, and they are more socially driven supported by technology such as online social media. There are four essentials to consider when engaging with Generation-Y:

1. *Real*: Generation-Y expects understanding and respect. While older generation accept authoritative communication, they are more skeptical and better informed. If there is a hidden agenda, they will see it. Thus, we must develop not only a credible communication style but also a credible character, rather than relying on our authority.
2. *Raw*: Older generation can be bought by slick presentations. While older generation communication style is generously fulfilled with email, mobile phone and short text messaging (sms), Generation-Y need social media, such as Facebook, smart mobile phone, such as Blackberry and iPhone, and Twitter. Generation-Y live in a world with the most advanced technology, movie special effects and video games.

Therefore, they are not impressed with slick presentations and rehearsed talk. They look for more spontaneous and interactive communication style.

3. *Relevant*: Beside the content of communication has to fall within Generation-Y's area of interest, the style must be relevant to a generation who are visually educated and entertained. For example, a café equipped with Wi-Fi access and used social media to offer special promotion event will be perceived as more appropriate for the generation.
4. *Relational*: The communication style of Generation-Y must seek understanding of both parties. Thus, the communicator must be more open, vulnerable and possess genuine interest. The environment should be relaxed and socially conducive to discussion. Social media provide a mean to achieve this.

### **CAFÉ WITH GENERATION-Y AS ITS TARGET MARKET**

In the 1980s, what is called café nowadays were still in the form of restaurants. Among the prominent restaurants in Bandung at that time were Tizi, Bakmi Naripan, Sate Maulana Yusuf and PT. Rasa. Most of the restaurants adopted differentiation strategy. They differentiated themselves offering unique taste and competitive pricing. As the number of restaurants grew and the competition increased, a new competitive dimension was developing. Besides good food and pricing positioning, the new restaurants offered service and atmosphere. Many restaurants built in the 1990s started to call themselves café. They started to choose a unique neighborhood, such as Dago Pakar and Cihideung area. By 2000, the competition has turned into battle on market segments. Some restaurants focus on upper segment, while some others focus on middle level workers having income twice to thrice as much as minimum regional wages (UMR). The last segment falls into Generation-Y category.

Since Generation-Y needs a place to nurture their relationships using electronics devices, café targeting at that segment provides the following facilities:

1. *Large screen television*. While customers of traditional restaurants enjoy good food while talking to their relatives and friends, Generation-Y requires additional television to complete their dining experience.
2. *Wireless Internet Access*. Generation-Y needs internet access in enjoying its leisure time.
3. *Sofa and low table* replacing traditional chair and table of restaurants. As they spend more time in the café, they need more comfortable seats.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING TOOL**

The advent of online social media provides a mean to communicate with Generation-Y. As the most active users, Generation-Y are easily accessible through social media. Online social media is different from television or other traditional marketing media. People watching television are in the position of passively receiving any message. People using online social media are in the active position of sending and receiving messages, and they are socializing. Those people are not in buying mood and therefore, more resistant to any kind of advertising.

In the real world, an office has a definite address. In the Internet, it must own a website address. If you are serious in marketing your business online, a web page hosted by a trusted provider is a must. However, there is a significant cost for hosting a web page. The biggest cost is not the price you pay to have a web page since it is quite cheap to register your web page address and pay a trusted provider to host it. There are even many online sites, such as blogspot and wordpress, offering free hosting. If you decide to own and maintain a web page, you must be prepared to hire someone who does the maintenance and the update on the web page. You also must have someone who provides materials to be uploaded to your web page in a regular basis, so that it is alive. Just as you do not want your real store looks dirty and neglected, you do not want to have outdated information in your web page. You also want to take immediate action, when customers send online complaints or someone hacks into your web page.

Social media marketing must always aim to attract people to visit your website. Why? Because people visiting social media is not in buying mood. The more you try to promote your business in social media, the less audience you will get. In social media, you must provide value to the community for free. The more value you provide, the more people will pay attention to you. You make yourself attractive and some of your fans will be interested to learn more about you. At this point, they will click on the link that you always display on your profile, which direct them to visit your website. Then, on your website, you must have all commercial requirements that will convert some of your fans to your customers. Among the requirements, you must be able to follow up with your visitors, such as the ability to store their email address in a database.

There are some social rules that are the same in both places, but yet there are differences. Some of them are:

- *Spam*. In the real world or offline, we always receive brochures or fliers. As much as they annoy us, we just accept them. Sending such brochures online is much easier and can cover wider area. This is called spamming. Spamming is impolite activity. Some social media will ban spammer.

- *Distributing business card.* Offline, you do not distribute your business card blindly. One of the reason is that you do not want to waste your money. Thus, you should not post your website link blindly on people's online spaces. Not because you will lose money, but it will annoy the owner of the space.
- *Use your real name.* Although you want people to know your company better than yourself, people do not want to be friends with a company. They want to be friends with a genuine human being.

Most commercial websites offer online transactions. The products and service will be delivered to the customers' site afterwards. However, the service of a café will be delivered on its own premise. This is different from Amazon.com and DHL.co.id who deliver the products and services to customer's sites. Thus, the requirement of having café's own website can be postponed until later development unless the owner plans to have online transactions immediately.

The first objective will be to have people who are willing to listen to your message or audience. The terms for audience are varied among different media. While Facebook calls them *friends*, Twitter refers them as *followers*. Although you want to have as many audience as possible, you do not want to waste your effort to collect *friends* or *followers* that will never become your customers.

How do you get your audience? First, you have to focus on a smaller pool of people with whom you have connected rather than thousands with whom you have not. This means you grow your network incrementally and not blindly aggressive. You should focus on the quality as you increase quantity. Categorize your audience, so that you can send appropriate messages.

You can collect more audience with the help of your real café. Several café display signs asking their customers to become their Facebook friend and Twitter follower. Most of Generation-Y customers will agree, because they love to expand their relationships.

The next objective is to provide value to your audience. I will stress on the word value and not message, because again in online social media, the goal is to influence your audience and not to control them. The value to be provided depends on your audience. In the case of Generation-Y, we have to understand that they are looking to expand their relationships. This means that we need to provide information suitable for the purpose, such as relevant references. For example, when the café aims to promote its coffee, it should become *friends* or *followers* of other groups related to coffee, such as coffee lover group. In this case, the audience will perceive that the café is a coffee specialist provider and they have a reference to expand their relationships.

Other value that can be delivered is promotion. For example, special events or discounts are announced to your online audience using social media. This is one of the four essentials to engage with Generation-Y as we called it: *relevant* style. The café can also provide value by its involvement in online discussion. There are many topics to discuss in online social media, but we have to choose those that are relevant to our objective.

## **STUDY CASE: FACEBOOK AS MARKETING TOOL**

Facebook is the current market leader in social media. It has more than five hundred million users. People use Facebook for many different reasons, but most of them join Facebook to express themselves. After self-expression comes their need to connect with others. Self-expression is more than showing their true identity. In Facebook, people want to be perceived as someone that better serves their objective.

When you join Facebook to market your café, you must create your personal profile first. As much as possible, you should be genuine in creating your profile, because you want to build your credentials and you do not want to get caught as a phony. Facebook does not allow you to create company profile as a replacement of personal profile.

Facebook offers two options to create your company profile. You can create Fan Page and Group. Although you can create both at the same time, I suggest to focus on the Fan Page first. Fan Page is a great thing to be connected to people. For example, an actress owns a Fan Page and her fans can associate themselves with her page. They will receive updates by clicking the "like" button on her Fan Page. People are better associated with a Fan Page than with a group. They can write their reviews on a Fan Page. Thus, the messages written by administrator and by people are grouped separately. This is different from that of personal wall or group wall, where there is only one wall available.

A group is analogous to a club in offline world. You can control who can become member, or you can just let anyone to become member without your approval. On the other hand, a group is better off for inviting your friends to join it. It can send an invitation to all of your friends with one action. The association of people joining the group is divided between the group itself and you as the administrator, because the name of the sender is not the name of the group, but the administrator's name. A group is more personal, while a Fan Page is better for building a brand. My suggestion to focus first on a Fan Page is based on the assumption that you want to promote your café and not yourself.

Your Facebook profile is the very first page that is shown to people when they find you in Facebook. The profile page must show you as someone who is appropriate to manage a café.

Next, there is a wall on to which you can write something new about yourself or about your café as you can write it on your wall or on your café's wall. Facebook has privacy setting allowing you to decide who gets to view what part of your Facebook presence. Nevertheless, do not take it for granted, because a glitch can occur and your private information can be made public.

After finishing with your profile and page, you start building your friendship base. You can use the tool to find whether your email contacts have joined Facebook. Then, you can ask them to become your Facebook friends. You can also ask visitors of your café to join you in Facebook as explained in previous section.

Facebook has event feature. This feature can be used to communicate special promotion or real event in your café. By using the feature, you communicate with a *relevant* style to Generation-Y.

## CONCLUSION

We understand that technology creates many new opportunities. Online social media is a relatively new technology that helps the development of a new competitive platform. Using the technology, business entities has a new marketing channel to reach a generation - Generation-Y. The use of social media to market a café plays only a small part. Products that can be delivered to customers' premises can be marketed better using the media. Nevertheless, the technology has enabled the development of a new breed café. Instead of focusing on products, the café focus on the needs of a generation.

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