

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY :HOW UNILEVER ENGAGE WITH ITS CONSUMERS

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Abstrak:

Peran media sosial seperti facebook, yahoo messenger, dan twitter melebihi harapan dari sekedar media hiburan semata. Perubahan paradigma dalam dunia pemasaran disatukan dengan perubahan pola hidup dari konsumen. Televisi tidak lagi memegang peran yang dominan dalam mengisi waktu dari para konsumen. Perubahan dari penggunaan televisi menuju penggunaan media sosial membuat perubahan dalam strategi untuk mendekati konsumen. Unilever sebagai salah satu produsen dunia yang memasarkan produknya untuk berbagai lapisan masyarakat memanfaatkan media sosial sebagai upaya untuk menjalin komunikasi lebih intensif dengan konsumennya.

Keywords : *media social, engage, digital marketer.*

Generally speaking, we must be thinking teenagers will watch television after school hours, we are wrong. Also we have to be considering career woman from age 28 to 34 must be reading newspaper in the morning, then once again we are wrong. People now change their habit on media usage. Lewin (2010) wrote American children ages 8 – 18 spend more than seven and half hour playing on their cellphone, which is texting, calling, listening to the music, watching the video and surfing the Internet. Moreover, Lee (2010) stated that 79% of American adults use internet and 48% of them are social networkers. In other words, media consumption has changed to digital form. As a result, marketers must consider migrating to digital media if they want to grab their consumers' attention.

The above discussion then raises an interesting question which are do we have to be a great digital marketer if we want to be a great marketer, what are the challenges of creating a strong brand in the digital era, and what are the perils of waiting compared to tackling a technology that we have still not mastered?

Learn From Unilever

According to Unilever Global Company website, the company established in 1890s, and now has more than 400 brands and 12 of which generate sales over than €1 billion per year. Also, about 170 billion products sold each year in all over the world with total income was €44,3 in 2010. In addition, Precourt (2011) reported that its marketing budget touch the number of 3 billion, second-biggest advertiser.

That is why Unilever has to make sure that their money goes to the right track. Therefore, by considering the changes in media habits and consumptions, this company allocated its ad budget more on social media for some of its products, namely Dove, Axe, and Ben & Jerry's.

Moreover, all is about social media now. The 2010 U.S. Digital Year in Review (ComScore, Inc., 2011) show that 9 from among 10 internet users looking on social media sites each month. In addition, Facebook, the leading social media site, users reach the number of 153.9 million in December. Therefore, some industry experts state that by participating in Facebook, YouTube, and Second Life, firms will be a part of cyberspace. To this point, social media has an ability to build connection and create direct communication with its consumers more efficient than traditional communication tools. This makes social media relevant for any agencies (Kaplan and Heinlein, 2010). As a result, Unilever launched Facebook Fan Page, Twitter, Video on Youtube, and MySpace to be able to interact directly with its consumers and on the same time pursue the goals which are to establish the brand 'voice' and to leverage the engagement with its consumers.

In that case Rodgers (2002) formulated Interactive Advertising Model (IAM) which is denoted that interactive advertising might increase consumer involvement so that it could produce greater efficiency, trustworthiness and quality. Refers to that we can see the example on how Dove campaign through Facebook works. Firstly, by liking (means joining) the Dove Facebook Fan Page consumers will

receive any information regarding certain events, programs or even products of Dove. Secondly, consumers will decide whether they like or dislike about what has offered to them or even they act or not by buying the products or participating on the events and also the programs. Finally, the company can evaluate from the feedback that given by the consumers, is it positive or negative.

Besides, Bright (n.d) argued, what makes social media interesting for marketers is that they must be update in order to maintain good relations with their consumers. Also, they need to pay more attention on the content, make sure it simple and relevant. This might create stronger engagement and trustworthiness from their consumers. However, if we find negative feedback from our consumers, we can still make an argument as a defense. Lastly, we still have to integrate our campaign with other channels.

Every marketing plans have its own risk, no matter what media preferences are we've finally chosen. Weed (2011), Unilever's chief marketing and communication officer, argued that marketers have to challenge themselves, not all of the campaigns which have set were going well, but still they have to make sure that they could minimize the insufficient result and maximize the extraordinary one. Indeed technology has grown so fast, and if they just looking at it without doing something, so they will left behind. Most importantly we all live and learn.

In conclusion, as technology has developed so fast, people begin to change their habits, especially on they way they look for information. The massive usage of mobile internet requires marketers to shift their ad from traditional tools to digital platform. So they can still get in touch with its consumers. Marketers can't just look at what happen next and do nothing, because they will left behind before they could even realize it. They have to adjust with it. Therefore, in order to be a great marketers, they must be a great digital marketers. Moreover, they need to challenge themselves, because every marketing plans have its own risk. There are five things that marketers have to deal with if they want to engage their brand to their consumers through digital media, i.e. be update, make it simple, use relevant content, defense with argument, and integrate with other channels.

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