
Promotion Strategy Of Soponyono Restaurant In Maintaining Customer Existence In Kesu' Sub-District, North Toraja District

Jeanne Fransisca Bokko¹, Mey E.Limbongan²
¹⁻²Indonesian Christian University Toraja, Indonesia

Author Correspondence: meyenggane@ukitoraja.ac.id*

Abstract. *Promotion Strategy of Soponyono Restaurant in Maintaining Customer Existence in Kesu' District, North Toraja Regency*” This study aims to answer the questions (1) How is the promotion and promotion strategy carried out by Soponyono Restaurant? (2) How to maintain customer existence? This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. Data collection by means of observation, interviews, and documentation with business owners, employees and customers of Soponyono Restaurant. The results obtained from this study are the Promotional Strategy of Soponyono Restaurant using promotional media using social media, namely WhatsApp and YouTube and how to maintain customer existence by being kind, polite and friendly to customers and convincing customers that in Soponyono Restaurant the food and beverage menus are delicious, delicious and comfortable places.

Keywords: *Promotion Strategy, Social Media, Customers*

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the restaurant business in the city of Rantepao, North Toraja, is growing rapidly, serving various groups with different flavors and services. Public enthusiasm for activities in restaurants, such as birthdays, meetings, and casual gatherings, is increasing, leading to intense competition between culinary businesses. To maintain existence and income stability, improving product quality and customer satisfaction is essential.

Promotion is an important key to introducing products and influencing consumer purchasing decisions, which has a direct impact on increasing sales and company profits. The culinary business in Indonesia continues to grow with many restaurants offering a variety of uniqueness. Restaurants provide a place to enjoy a meal with services such as dine-in, takeout, and delivery.

Promotional strategies through social media, advertising, and direct communication are very effective in increasing sales. Digital development and increasing internet users support the shift from conventional to digital systems, where social media plays a big role in influencing people's behavior and product promotion.

Soponyono Restaurant in Kesu' Sub-district, North Toraja, grew from a small warung to a large restaurant with many loyal customers. Despite fierce competition, Soponyono has managed to retain its customers. This research aims to understand the promotional strategies used by Soponyono Restaurant to retain customers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Strategy and Promotion in Marketing

Strategy and promotion are two crucial concepts in the field of marketing that are closely interrelated. Strategies, according to some experts, are incremental steps that continue to increase to achieve organizational goals by considering future market needs (Desky, 2019; David, 2011; Widharta & Sugiharto, 2013; Ichwanda et al, 2015). On the other hand, promotion is a series of marketing activities that aim to stimulate consumer interest in the products or services offered, through various methods such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and others (Sangadji & Sopiah, 2013; Kotler et al., 2012).

2.2 Promotion Strategy

Promotion strategy is a plan to optimally utilize promotional elements such as advertising, public relations, personal selling, and sales promotion (Sutari & Dalem, 2017; Hedynata & Radianto, 2016). Nowadays, promotional strategies are increasingly adopting the use of

2.3 Promotion Mix

Promotion mix, according to Belch & Belch (2018) and Kotler & Keller (2013a), consists of five or six main elements, including advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing. Advertising uses various media to deliver messages to audiences in a non-personal manner, while sales promotions offer direct incentives to consumers to increase purchases. Public relations aim to build a positive image of the company, while personal selling and direct marketing rely on direct interaction with consumers.

2.4 Customer Existence

Customer existence is key to business continuity, where maintaining existing customers while continuing to look for new customers is a major challenge (Sjafirah & Prasanti, 2016). Understanding customer presence includes not only their physical presence, but also the interactions and engagements made to maintain customer loyalty.

In the context of marketing, an effective strategy in integrating promotional elements by understanding customer existence and needs is very important. The use of the right promotional strategy can affect the brand image and sales success of a product or service in today's competitive market. Thus, an in-depth understanding of the concepts of strategy, promotion, promotion mix, and customer existence is crucial in designing a successful marketing campaign.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research on Promotional Strategies in Maintaining Customer Existence

This research uses a qualitative approach that aims to produce descriptive data about the promotional strategies used by Soponyono Restaurant in maintaining customer existence. The research location is located on Jl. Poros Rantepao-Makale, North Toraja Regency.

3.2 Data Collection Method

Primary data was obtained through direct observation, interviews with business owners, employees, and customers. The purposive sampling technique was used to select informants who were considered the most knowledgeable about the promotional strategies used.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is done through:

- Direct observation of activities in the restaurant.
- Interviews with business owners, employees, and customers.
- Documentation in the form of internal company data relevant to the research.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive method, which includes:

- Data reduction to summarize the main things and find patterns or themes that emerge.
- Presentation of data in narrative form that is easy to understand.
- Drawing relevant conclusions based on the findings in the research.

With this approach, it is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of effective promotional strategies in maintaining customer loyalty in the culinary industry. This research uses a quantitative approach, where data is collected through questionnaires and analyzed statistically to test hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2017). The research was conducted at Toraja Indonesian Christian University, Tana Toraja Regency. The data used is primary data obtained directly from respondents through questionnaires distributed to students of the UKI Toraja Management Study Program. Population: UKI Toraja Management Study Program students class of 2020 as many as 402 students. Sample: 80 students selected using purposive sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2020).

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

- Observation: Observing the use of Shopee e-commerce by students.
- Questionnaire: Distributing written questions online using Google Form.

Data Analysis Technique

- Instrument Testing:
 - Validity Test: Measuring the accuracy of the data by comparing r_{count} with r_{table} .
 - Reliability Test: Determines the consistency of the instrument with a reliability coefficient value ≥ 0.6 .

This study aims to examine the effect of promotion and ease of access on online purchasing decisions at Shopee, with a focus on students of the UKI Toraja Management Study Program.

4. RESULTS

Effective Promotion Strategy for Soponyono Restaurant

4.1 Advertising

Advertising is one of the main pillars in Soponyono Restaurant's promotional strategy. By using various media such as print, television, and digital media, advertising helps restaurants to present their products and services to a wider audience. Through careful market analysis, advertising campaigns can be strategically directed to increase consumer awareness of Soponyono Restaurant's uniqueness and advantages over its competitors. In a broader context, advertising also plays a role in building a strong and attractive brand image.

4.2 Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is an important instrument in attracting consumer interest and significantly increasing sales volume. Soponyono Restaurant can implement various promotional strategies such as special discounts, family package promos, or direct gifts with certain purchases. This approach not only aims to encourage short-term transactions, but also to build customer loyalty by providing added value that is immediately felt.

4.3 Public Relations

Public relations plays a crucial role in building and maintaining Soponyono Restaurant's positive reputation in the eyes of the public. In addition to conveying information about the latest activities and innovations, PR activities also create a two-way communication channel for the public.

4.4 Personal Selling

Personal selling is a form of promotion that involves direct interaction between the sales team and potential customers. At Soponyono Restaurant, the sales team not only sells the menu, but also provides a first-hand experience of the quality of the food and service provided.

Through this personal approach, the team can answer consumer questions, provide specific recommendations, and build deeper and more trusted relationships.

4.5 Direct Marketing

Direct marketing has been one of the successful strategies used by Soponyono Restaurant, especially through social media and telemarketing. By using platforms such as WhatsApp to send updates, special promos, and collect feedback from customers, the restaurant is able to optimize two-way communication efficiently. In addition, telemarketing allows the marketing team to interact directly with potential customers through personalized phone calls, which can increase response and conversion rates.

4.6 Retaining Customers

One of the keys to Soponyono Restaurant's success is its ability to retain its existing customer base. With a focus on friendly, responsive and memorable service, the restaurant is able to create a consistent dining experience in terms of quality and service. Providing exclusive discounts, valuing any feedback from customers, and responding quickly to feedback or complaints are all effective strategies in building long-term customer loyalty.

The promotional strategy implemented by Soponyono Restaurant not only includes various communication tools and media, but also emphasizes the importance of a personalized and adaptive approach to market and customer needs. By continuing to develop this strategy, the restaurant can expand its market reach, improve customer retention, and ensure business sustainability and growth amidst the increasingly fierce competition in the food industry.

5. DISCUSSION

Descriptive qualitative research conducted on Soponyono Restaurant revealed some significant findings related to promotional strategies and efforts to retain customers in the context of the culinary industry. Here are some important points that can be discussed based on the research results:

5.1 Promotion Strategy Success

Soponyono Restaurant has successfully implemented various effective promotional strategies to increase consumer awareness and influence purchasing decisions. The use of advertising through print, television, and digital media helps the restaurant to reach a wider audience and introduce their menu effectively. With careful market analysis, advertising campaigns can be properly directed to reach relevant market segments, which in turn can increase visits and sales.

Sales promotions, such as special discounts and package deals, have also proven effective in attracting consumers and encouraging them to visit Soponyono Restaurant. This strategy not only increases short-term sales volume, but also helps build customer loyalty by providing immediate added value.

In addition, through good public relations, Soponyono Restaurant has managed to build a positive image in the eyes of the public. PR activities not only focus on disseminating information, but also creating meaningful two-way interactions with customers and the general public. This helps the restaurant in maintaining a harmonious relationship with the surrounding neighborhood and expanding their consumer base.

5.2 Challenges in Retaining Customers

Although Soponyono Restaurant has been successful in attracting new customers through various promotional strategies, retaining customers remains a challenge. In the competitive culinary industry, the level of customer loyalty can be influenced by many factors, including service quality, consistency in the dining experience, and responsiveness to customer feedback.

Friendly, responsive, and memorable service is the main key in retaining customers at Soponyono Restaurant. Providing special discounts, valuing customer feedback, and responding quickly to complaints are practices that have proven effective in maintaining customer satisfaction and building strong long-term relationships.

Implications and Recommendations

The results of this study provide several important implications for managers and business owners in the culinary sector. First, the importance of continuing to develop innovative and adaptive promotional strategies to overcome increasingly fierce market competition. Second, the expansion of the use of digital technology and social media as the main tool in reaching and interacting with modern consumers who are increasingly connected.

The recommendation for Soponyono Restaurant is to continue to improve service quality and product consistency, as well as increase public relations activities to strengthen their brand image in the eyes of the public. In addition, continuing a personalized approach to sales and maintaining an empathetic relationship with customers is also key to long-term success.

By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that Soponyono Restaurant can not only survive in a dynamic market, but also grow and develop into the top choice for locals and tourists looking for a special culinary experience in North Toraja Regency, South Sulawesi.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained regarding the Promotion Strategy of Soponyono Restaurant in Maintaining Customers in Kesu 'Subdistrict, North Toraja Regency, namely based on the results of the interview said by Mr. Ahmad, Soponyono Restaurant implements a promotion strategy using social media, namely Whatsapp and telemarketing in order to interact with customers and build good relationships. And Soponyono Restaurant is often booked to hold birthday events and break fasting together by the police, DPRD and other customers. Customers of Soponyono Restaurant are located in Toraja and outside of Toraja, many also know in various other cities such as Palu, Palopo to Java and all customers are satisfied with Soponyono Restaurant. Soponyono Restaurant maintains its customers by always serving politely, and providing discounts, and the owner must also respond quickly to requests and complaints when interacting with customers.

In the conclusions found above, the suggestions that the authors can give are as follows the promotional strategies used by Soponyono Restaurant in Kesu 'District, North Toraja Regency are as follows:

1. To know more about Soponyono Restaurant regarding the addition of food, drinks or price changes, the owner must improve his promotional strategy, for example through social media Instagram, Facebook, Twiter, Youtube.
2. The owner must also always quickly respond to what complaints and input are given by customers in order to always retain their customers.
3. So that Soponyono Restaurant starts making promotional videos on social media in a more interesting form such as videos of food and drinks, as well as videos of the Soponyono Restaurant place.
4. The owner must also add types of food and drinks so that customers who come do not feel bored with just that type of food and drink.
5. For Soponyono Restaurant to form a special sales team that markets products via WhatsApp and direct marketing in order to significantly improve services.

7. LIMITATION

The study on Soponyono Restaurant's promotional strategy in Kesu' Sub-district, North Toraja, presents valuable insights but has several limitations:

1. Technological Focus; Emphasis on WhatsApp and YouTube excludes other effective platforms like Instagram and Facebook.

2. Dynamic Market Conditions; Does not account for market changes like new competitors or shifts in consumer preferences.
3. Impact Measurement; Lacks quantitative metrics for evaluating strategy effectiveness (e.g., sales growth, customer retention).

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