

MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR TRAVEL AGENTS TO INCREASE CONSUMER INTEREST

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to determine the marketing strategy of travel agency companies to attract consumers. To support research, we employ qualitative techniques and adopt a descriptive perspective for analyzing the service marketing mix., namely "7P" (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence). The qualitative method used in this research produces subject data from interviews, observations, and documentation. The research results show that the marketing mix strategy carried out by the travel agency company PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah in attracting consumers is based on seven main indicators, namely product, price, promotion, place, people, physical evidence, and process. Therefore in this research, it can be concluded that the Marketing Mix Strategy carried out by the Travel Agent PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah can help maintain and increase sales based on seven main indicators.

Keywords: *Marketing, Marketing Strategy, Travel Agency*

INTRODUCTION

The development of the times and era of globalization, the business world throughout the world has caused business competition to become increasingly fierce, both in the domestic (national) market and in the international arena. Advances in communication technology play an important role in increasing business competition. Currently business competition is quite tight, especially for businesses operating in the tourism services sector. The higher the competition, the more companies must strengthen themselves to survive and develop. Therefore, the right way for a company to survive and develop is to implement a good and appropriate marketing strategy. Marketing strategy According to Philip Kotler (2023:10), marketing strategy is a marketing mindset used to achieve marketing goals, whether in the form of strategies related to detailed market targets, positioning, marketing mix, and marketing budget. Marketing strategy is a very important element in implementing overall company strategy because it includes plans and actions to achieve company goals in the market and can grow sustainable competitive advantages. Marketing strategy is a series of goals and objectives, policies, and rules that provide direction to a

company's marketing efforts from time to time, at every level, reference, and allocation, especially as a company's response to the ever-changing environment and competitive conditions (Sope AS, 2023).

Travel agent services are one of the sectors of tourism services. Companies operating in the service sector usually use a marketing mix strategy. According to (Kotler and Keller, 2018), the marketing mix is a set of marketing tools that a company uses to continue to achieve marketing goals in its target market. Services marketing requires an expanded marketing mix by adding elements that have been developed (Kotler and Keller, 2018). This marketing tool is called "4P" and has been developed into "7P" which is used very specifically for marketing services. The addition of elements to the services marketing mix is carried out, among other things, because services have different characteristics from products, namely intangible, inseparable, diverse, and easily lost. The marketing mix is a marketing strategy that has seven elements (7P) in the form of product, price, promotion, distribution, process, staff, and physical support which are optimized to achieve organizational targets (Dewi et al., 2021).

A travel agent is a commercial service business that organizes and provides services for a person or group to travel for a specific purpose (Syafira Wirdahani, 2021). Competition is getting tighter in Purwakarta Regency, where PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah experienced a positive impact from improving market conditions. PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah is a travel agent in Plered, Purwakarta Regency, which was founded in 2005. The existence of this travel agent is in line with the growth of business travel and tourism activities in the area. PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah is a company that operates in the tourism industry services, more specifically in the travel agency sector in Plered, Purwakarta Regency. PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah was founded in 2005. This travel agency emerged along with the development of business travel and tourism activities in Purwakarta Regency. A travel agency is a commercial service business that organizes, provides, and provides services for a person or group to travel for a specific purpose (Syafira Wirdahani, 2021). In Purwakarta Regency there is also increasing competition, where the business activities of PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah cannot be separated from increasingly improving market conditions.

Many previous researchers have studied marketing strategies used to attract the interest of potential consumers, including Marketing Strategy at PT Nuansa Wisata Prima Nusantara Tour & Travel Jember (Salam HI et al, 2019), Marketing Strategy In Travel Agency (Soegoto Edy S. et al, 2020), Analysis Marketing and Service Strategy in Efforts to Improve the Quality of Competitiveness of Hajj and Umrah Travel Bureaus Prospective Sharia Economics (Study at Pt. Makkah Multazam Safir and Al Madinah) (H.M. Nasrun Nazaruddin, 2020), Marketing Communication Strategy of the Tourism Service in Increasing Tourist Visits to the Lake Teloko Kayuagung (Fahmi Tohiri, 2023), and Analysis of Business Strategy to Maintain Competitiveness in Travel Agents Reviewed in an Islamic Business Perspective Study at Yura Trips Lampung (Fatih Fuadi, 2024). Through citing prior investigators, this study aims to establish a solid foundation for the ongoing research process. The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach with a service marketing mix analysis method, namely "7P" (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence) to determine the Marketing Strategy of Travel Agents to Attract Consumers in right company PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah in an increasingly tight era of globalization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A very crucial part of carrying out a company's strategy to attract consumers is the marketing strategy. Below is one of the previous research from Hilmi et al (2019) entitled Marketing Strategy at PT Nuansa Wisata Prima Nusantara Tour & Travel Jember using the marketing mix theory known as "7P" namely product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach which aims to find out and describe the actual situation regarding the marketing strategy carried out by the company PT Nuansa Wisata Prima Nusantara Tour & Travel Jember. The results of this research show that the service company PT. Nuansa Wisata Prima Nusantara Tour & Travel Jember uses a marketing strategy related to the marketing mix which includes product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and processes in running its service business. Himi et al (2019) research is related to the author's research because it discusses marketing strategies for travel agents.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach with the "7P" service marketing mix analysis method (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence) to find out what the "Marketing Strategies For Travel Agents To Increase Consumer Interest". This approach was chosen to provide a deeper understanding of "Marketing strategies for travel agents to increase consumer interest". The qualitative research method used in this research produces descriptive data through pre-interview, observation, and documentation stages with a team from PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah located in Plered, Purwakarta Regency, is a travel agent company, research was conducted from March 19 to April 5, 2024. The data obtained was related to the desired variables, namely regarding marketing strategies at travel agents to attract consumers. After getting the data, analysis is carried out to find out the results. This is the opinion expressed by Sugiyono (2020), who states that qualitative research methods depend on the philosophy of postpositivism or can also be called an interpretive approach because the data obtained is the result of the interpretation of data revealed in the field.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The development of times and the era of globalization, the business world throughout the world has caused business competition to become increasingly fierce, both in the domestic (national) market and in the international arena. Advances in communication technology play an important role in increasing business competition. Currently, business competition is quite tight, especially for businesses operating in the tourism services sector. The higher the competition, the more companies must strengthen themselves to survive and develop. Therefore, the right way for a company to survive and develop is to implement a good and appropriate marketing strategy. The marketing strategy carried out by PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah, namely by analyzing the service marketing mix, including "7P" (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence).

Product

To reach the desired market, a business starts with a product designed to meet the market's needs and wants. Managers must plan, develop, and manage company products according to the target market segment. A product is designed to satisfy the needs and wants of a predetermined target market and is often the first step in the formation of the marketing mix. Product is the first and most important element in the marketing mix (Z. Maulida, 2021).

Marketing strategy is planning and management to achieve goals, strategy is the long-term direction and scope of the organization, with attention to providing competitive advantage in an ideal and sustainable way over time using a global long-term view (Vanni, K. M, 2023).

In this research, according to informants from PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah implements a marketing strategy that refers to the service marketing mix including product strategy. Products provided by PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah in the form of services related to domestic and international travel in the form of transportation, booking plane tickets, processing travel documents, organizing Hajj and Umrah trips, and all forms of travel are organized flexibly because PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah offers a variety of destination choices that can be modified or adapted to consumer needs.



Figure 1: Domestic Tour Packages

Source: PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah (2024)

From the picture above it is explained that, PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah has a domestic (national) tour package, one of the domestic tour packages offered is a tour to the city of Yogyakarta, this package includes various tourist attractions such as Pindul Cave, Oyo River, Merapi Lava Tour, Kudung Kidul Beach, Bakpia Pathok 25, and Malioboro. In this tour package PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah also provides facilities such as transportation, star hotels, meals, mineral water, tourist tickets, documentation, banners, insurance, and tour leaders.



Figure 2: International Tour Packages

Source: PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah (2024)

From the picture above it is explained that PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah provides international tour packages, such as Umrah and Muslim Tour packages. Facilities provided include Umrah equipment, plane tickets, visas, hotels, meals, complete rituals, experienced muthowif (companion), guidance on worship in the holy land, city tours of Medina and Mecca, 5 liters of Zam Zam water, and tours to Muslim countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia and others.

Price

Price is essentially an offer to consumers and is an important variable in marketing. Price is the amount of money required for a product or service and the value that customers exchange to own or use the product or service (Nurfauzi, 2023). Price is one of the most important factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Price influences consumer purchasing decisions. Prices themselves can change quickly; changes occur due to market conditions based on consumer supply and demand, Price is a view of prices related to how consumers perceive prices to increase or decrease prices and fairness, which has a strong influence on purchase intentions and satisfaction when purchasing (Sari, 2023).

According to the results of interviews with the owner of the travel agency PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah, to determine the price uses a pricing strategy that takes into account the costs incurred by the company and uses an adjusted market price strategy, namely determining the selling price by considering the price charged by the company. Apart from that, you have to consider the costs and market conditions as well as the prices of PT's competitors. Mega Rizki Arrahmah in determining pricing strategies is also by purchasing power or consumer needs. By adjusting prices to their needs, consumers have the opportunity to buy goods offered by the company, so they can experience the beauty of travel according to their needs and desires. Then the company PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah provides discounts in the form of vouchers to consumers, this is done to attract consumers.



Figure 3: Tour Package Prices

Source: PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah (2024)

From the picture above it is explained that PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah provides various tour package prices which vary depending on the destination and facilities provided and these prices can change depending on consumer preferences.

Place

Place is a place where a type of business can be carried out. Location selection is the most important factor in running a business. When choosing a location, several important elements can be considered, including:

1. Accessibility, for example, the convenience of a location that is easy to reach and accessible by public transportation.
2. Visibility, namely the position is visible at normal viewing distance.
3. Traffic, concerns two main factors, namely the number of people passing by which can influence purchasing decisions, and density or congestion which becomes an obstacle in reaching that location.
4. Parking area, if the company provides a large and comfortable parking area, comfort will be created when customers visit the company.
5. Expansion, namely the availability of large enough space to develop the business in the future, which can support business growth.
6. Environment, especially areas that can support the activities carried out.
7. Competition, especially the position of competitors, will influence the running of the business.
8. Government regulations, for example, regulations that prohibit the establishment of livestock businesses near residential areas (Simbolon, S. I., 2022).

According to the results of interviews with the owner of the travel agency PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah, a long-standing company, PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah has seen some quite significant developments throughout her journey. Therefore, the owner must develop his business even better. One of the efforts made is to implement a more strategic implementation strategy of course easy to achieve. The selected office location is on Jalan Raya Cibogo, Sangatgihan, Plered District, Purwakarta Regency. Indeed, the location is very strategic, close to the city center, train station, shops, markets and residential areas.



Figure 4: Place (Location) of PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah

Source: Author Documentation (2024)

From the picture above it can be seen that the location of the PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah is on Jalan Raya Cibogo, Sangatgihan, Plered District, Purwakarta Regency. PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah has an office and a storage garage for transportation units PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah.

Promotion

Promotion is part of the company's overall activities related to communication and offering its products to the target market. Promotion includes sales, advertising, sales force, public relations, and direct marketing. Providing more comprehensive product knowledge will contextualize products in the present and future, so that promotions will become a means of educating consumers, especially regarding the products they are interested in (Miati, 2020). There are five elements of the promotion mix, namely advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, and direct marketing (Astutik, L. R. D, 2020).

According to the results of interviews with the owner of the travel agency PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah carries out promotions through personal sales activities—the method used by PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah in the scope of personal sales provides offer letters or flyers to prospective tourists, government agencies, and other travel agencies by providing facilities provided by the company, apart from promotions using personal selling, PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah carries out promotions through direct marketing. This promotion is carried out through social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.



Figure 5: Media Social of PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah

Source: Author Documentation (2024)

From the picture above it is explained that the promotional media of PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah, one of which is through the Instagram platform. PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah already has 5,312 followers and 167 posts. In this social media, there is information about travel events provided by PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah both domestic and international, so that potential consumers can get an idea of the tour package they want.

People

Humans (People) are all agents who contribute to introducing services to influence customer perceptions (Maisah et al, 2020). Human factors are company employees and consumers. An important role of humans is to provide quality service to consumers. People are involved in resource planning, job standards, job descriptions, recruitment, employee selection, employee training, and work motivation. Training and professional development are needed in managing human resources (HR) to achieve performance according to job classification (Nurhayaty, 2022).

According to the results of interviews with the owner of the travel agency PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah, to differentiate themselves from competitors, service companies must recruit and train employees who are more adept at handling consumer requests with greater skill and reliability. Therefore PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah in recruiting employees looks for and selects people who are professional in their work, responsible, honest, and experienced. PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah also provides training and evaluates employee performance.



Figure 6: Human resources (People) PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah

Source: Author Documentation (2024)

In the picture above we can see that the human resources/people owned by PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah is very competent and has sufficient experience accompanied by supporting certification to make consumers satisfied and confident in the services provided by the PT travel agency. Mega Rizki Arrahmah.

Physical evidence

Physical Appearance is an important tool for delivering truly quality products and services. Physical evidence indicators, especially the ability to demonstrate external scalability, reliable form and capacity of facilities and infrastructure, and attractive environmental conditions (Maimunah, M., 2023).

According to the results of interviews with the owner of the travel agency PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah, they were stated that the physical appearance of a company has a big influence on consumers in using the products and services offered, elements of the physical environment that exist at PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah is equipped with complete office facilities to help employees complete their tasks more easily while providing satisfactory service to consumers. Office equipment such as attractive work uniforms are also provided by the company. Physical elements of the PT building. Mega Rizki Arrahmah, which has a comfortable design and representative building architecture, is also expected to influence the interest of potential consumers.



Figure 7: Physical evidence (infrastructure)

Source: Author Documentation (2024)

From the picture above it can be concluded that physical evidence from the PT. Mega Rizki Arrahma is very good because it is equipped with supporting facilities such as adequate office equipment, for example, tables, chairs, printers, writing equipment, and supporting communication tools for tourist events, for example, Walkie Talkie (HT).

Process

Processes are all activities that occur in a company or business to meet consumer needs (Darmawan, R., 2023). The marketing process here refers to the entire process that takes place to determine the quality of business activities that can bring satisfaction to consumers (Fadila, H. A., 2021).

According to the results of interviews with the owner of the travel agency PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah the process strategy implemented by PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah, among other things, provides coupons or discounts and documentation during travel to consumers to satisfy consumers. Service companies also prepare attributes and decorations such as event banners, banners, and so on.



Figure 8: Process strategy provided by PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah

Source: Author Documentation (2024)

In the picture above you can see that PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah carries out a process strategy by providing vouchers or discounts to consumers to increase consumer loyalty and reduce the possibility of switching to other competitors, and consumers feel satisfied with the services provided by PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah.

CONCLUSION

The results of research at PT. Mega Rizki Arrahmah can conclude that to improve marketing strategies, seven marketing strategies are needed which include effective promotions, quality products, experienced and competent human resources, strategic locations, structured processes, competitive prices, and a supportive physical environment. In addition, researchers recommend that business owners help increase consumer interest by collaborating with other travel agents, as well as increasing promotions by regularly producing content regarding domestic, and international travel packages and other interesting holiday experiences.

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