

Digital Marketing Communication Strategy in Building Brand Awareness at Riverside Car Wash

Susi Marni¹, Nani Cahyani², Febriyantina Istiara³, Ruruh Aris Setya Wibawa⁴, Rahayusriasih H⁵

¹STEI Ar-Rachman, Indonesia

²Ibik Kesatuan Bogor, Indonesia

³STKIP PGRI Bandar Lampung, Indonesia

⁴Universitas Salakanagara, Indonesia

* Correspondence e-mail; dr.susimarni@gmail.com, nanicahyani@ibik.ac.id, febriyantinaistiara@stkippgribl.ac.id, ruruh@unsaka.ac.id, ar2rahayu@gmail.com

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Abstract

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in the business world, including in the motor vehicle maintenance service industry. The use of digital media, especially social media platforms, is one of the main strategies in marketing communication to reach consumers more widely, quickly, and interactively. This study aims to analyze the digital marketing communication strategies applied by Riverside Car Wash in building brand image and increasing brand awareness in the digital era. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and digital documentation. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques to identify communication patterns and the effectiveness of the digital strategies applied. The results of the study show that Riverside Car Wash implements a consistent digital marketing communication strategy through the use of social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and official websites. Content strategies that highlight visual before-after wash results, vehicle maintenance education, and active interaction with customers have been proven to increase engagement and strengthen a company's brand image. The main challenges found include limited human resources in the field of digital marketing and inconsistency in upload schedules. Overall, Riverside Car Wash's implementation of digital marketing communication strategies has proven to be effective in strengthening brand image, increasing brand awareness, and building customer loyalty.

Keywords

Digital Marketing Communication, Social Media, Brand Awareness, Engagement, Riverside Car Wash



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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in the business world, including in the motor vehicle maintenance service industry. The use of digital media, especially social media platforms and websites, has become one of the main strategies in marketing communication to reach consumers more widely,

quickly, and interactively. The presence of digital marketing not only functions as a means of promotion, but also as an interaction medium that allows consumers to obtain information, provide feedback, and form perceptions of a brand or company. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) state that digital marketing is the use of digital technology to create and maintain customer relationships through the internet. In line with that, Ryan (2016) defines digital marketing as the implementation of a marketing strategy that utilizes digital media to reach consumers directly and interactively.

In the Indonesian context, the latest data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2025 shows that the national internet penetration rate has reached 80.66% or equivalent to 229.4 million users out of a total of 284.4 million people (APJII, 2025). This shows that most of the Indonesian population has been connected to the internet, so that the digital ecosystem is one of the strategic channels for marketing communication activities. In addition, internet user behavior in Indonesia in 2025 will be dominated by activities of accessing social media (24.8%), entertainment (14.7%), news and information (15.0%), and online transactions (14.9%) (APJII, 2025). This data confirms that digital marketing communication, especially social media, is a strategic path in building relationships with consumers.

From the results of the Digital 2025: Indonesia report published by We Are Social in collaboration with DataReportal, the level of digital activity of the Indonesian people shows very rapid development. One of the important findings shows that the main reasons why Indonesians use the internet are to seek information (82.7%), communicate with family and friends (72.8%), and find new ideas and inspiration (71.9%). In addition, most users also use the internet to fill their free time (62.8%), learn how to do things (62.6%), and follow news and entertainment (61.8%) (We Are Social & DataReportal, 2025). As many as 57.0% of internet users aged 16 years and above in Indonesia stated that one of the reasons they use the internet is to conduct research on products and brands, which shows that online activities are not only informative but also consumptive (We Are Social & DataReportal, 2025).

In line with this trend, the automotive services and motor vehicle maintenance sectors also feel the positive impact of the shift in consumer behavior towards digital. People are now increasingly accustomed to looking for information, comparing prices, reading reviews, and making reservations for vehicle washing and maintenance services via the internet before deciding to use a service. The ease of access to this information encourages vehicle wash service business actors to be more

active in building a digital presence to remain competitive amid the growth in the number of new players in this industry. The increase in people's digital activities illustrates the increasingly strong role of the internet and social media as the main means of economic transactions and consumer decisions. Overall, the data shows that Indonesians' digital behavior has moved towards a more informative, interactive, and consumptive direction, where social media and digital platforms play a major role in building trust, strengthening brand image, and influencing purchasing decisions in various sectors, including automotive services and vehicle maintenance.

In the vehicle washing and maintenance services industry, increasingly fierce competition encourages every business actor to be able to create an effective and adaptive marketing communication strategy. Car wash businesses not only compete in terms of service quality and speed of work, but also in terms of how they present their image and build relationships with consumers through digital channels. An integrated marketing communication strategy is the key to attracting consumer attention, increasing brand awareness, and driving service usage decisions. Kotler and Keller (2016) refer to the purchase decision as the final stage of the consumer decision process, where the consumer chooses to buy a particular product. Meanwhile, Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019) define purchasing decisions as a series of steps taken by consumers, starting from the identification of needs to post-purchase evaluation.

Riverside Car Wash as one of the business actors engaged in vehicle washing and maintenance services faces the same challenges. To maintain its existence and increase competitiveness, Riverside Car Wash needs to optimize its digital marketing communication strategy that is aligned with the needs of modern consumers, especially the generation that is familiar with technology. Through the use of social media, official websites, and other digital platforms, the company is expected to be able to strengthen its brand image, increase customer loyalty, and expand market share. Riverside Car Wash is one of the vehicle washing and maintenance service businesses that is developing in its operational area. The company provides car and motorcycle washing services with a modern concept that combines speed, cleanliness, and comfort for customers waiting on site. Since its establishment, Riverside Car Wash has tried to build a professional and trusted brand identity amid growing competition for similar businesses.

Riverside Car Wash offers several main service lines, including regular washing services (exterior wash), complete washing (interior and exterior), vehicle body

polishing and coating, machine detailing washing, and subscription maintenance packages for regular customers. This variety of services is designed to reach different consumer segments, from customers who want fast service to customers who need thorough maintenance of their vehicles. In its operations, Riverside Car Wash is committed to the core values of cleanliness, speed of service, and friendliness to customers. These values are applied in all service lines to provide a comfortable, efficient, and memorable vehicle wash experience for every customer who comes.

As part of its digital communications strategy, Riverside Car Wash leverages various social media platforms to strengthen its brand image and expand its market reach. The content of uploads on Riverside Car Wash's social media accounts predominantly contains promotional content such as discounts, service bundling packages, vehicle maintenance tips, information on operating hours, to documentation of washing results through photos and videos before-after. Social media is not only intended as a means of conveying information and promotion, but also as a medium that can be used as an effort to build reputation and branding. In addition, social media can also be used as a medium that becomes a link between the company and its audience so that the level of engagement between the company and the audience can be built through this digital media.

The use of social media is related to the concept of social media advertising as a form of marketing communication. Tuten and Solomon (2017) stated that social media advertising is a form of paid marketing communication delivered through social media platforms to encourage consumer interaction and response. Social media advertising is characterized by the use of paid media, delivery through social media, the purpose of creating user engagement, and the use of visual forms such as short videos, interactive images, and promotional storytelling (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Felix et al. (2017) explain that advertising on social media not only displays visual messages, but also allows for a two-way dialogue with consumers. This condition is relevant to the use of Riverside Car Wash's social media which is not only used to convey promotional content, but also serves as a liaison between the company and its audience.

The use of digital media by Riverside Car Wash is also related to efforts to build brand awareness. Keller (2013) states that brand awareness is the ability of consumers to recognize and remember a brand under certain conditions. Brand awareness includes two main aspects, namely brand recognition, which is the ability to recognize the brand when it sees it, and brand recall, which is the ability to remember the brand when the category is mentioned (Keller, 2013). Rossiter and

Bellman (2012) define brand awareness as the probability that consumers will remember a brand when considering a product category. In the context of Riverside Car Wash, the use of social media and various content delivered through digital channels is part of the company's efforts to strengthen its image and branding, as well as build consumers' ability to recognize and remember brands.

In addition to building brand awareness, the use of social media is also related to consumer engagement with brand content and communication. Brodie et al. (2013) define engagement as the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement of consumers in brand interactions. These engagements include cognitive engagement related to interest and attention, emotional engagement related to emotional reactions to content, and behavioral engagement that can be seen through activities such as like, comment, share, follow, and link clicks (Brodie et al., 2013). Dessart et al. (2015) state that engagement in social media is the active participation of users in brand content and communication. Therefore, the use of social media by Riverside Car Wash is not only related to the delivery of information, but also to efforts to build audience engagement through interaction with content and brand communication.

In addition, Riverside Car Wash also uses link integrations such as Linktree to connect access to service catalogs, locations, and other digital booking channels. This digital-based communication strategy is in line with the use of digital media to reach consumers directly and interactively (Ryan, 2016). The use of various devices, platforms, media, data, and technology in digital marketing activities is also part of the 5Ds of Digital Marketing principles introduced by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), namely Digital Devices, Digital Platforms, Digital Media, Digital Data, and Digital Technology. Thus, the use of social media, websites, and the integration of digital links by Riverside Car Wash shows the use of various digital channels in supporting the company's marketing communication activities.

Based on these conditions, a digital marketing communication approach is important for Riverside Car Wash in facing competition in the vehicle wash and maintenance services industry. The use of social media as a means of promotion, information delivery, interaction with audiences, and brand awareness development shows that digital channels have a role in building relationships between companies and consumers. With consistent development, innovation in services, and a strategic digital communication approach, Riverside Car Wash seeks to position itself as one of the players to be considered in the vehicle wash and maintenance services industry in its operational area.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand in depth the digital marketing communication strategies implemented by Riverside Car Wash in building brand awareness in the digital era. This type of approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the meaning, perception, and experiences of informants directly, rather than just measuring phenomena quantitatively. This research was carried out in the Riverside Car Wash environment, as one of the vehicle wash service business actors who are actively carrying out digital marketing communication activities through various platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and the official website. The research subjects include marketing management, digital media staff, and consumers or customers involved in online interactions with companies. Participants in this study were determined by purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of informants based on certain considerations who are considered to know and understand digital marketing communication strategies at Riverside Car Wash (Sugiyono, 2020).

Yes	Name/Position	Remarks
1	Mr. Rian S. Owner / General Manager Riverside Car Wash	Provide a managerial perspective on the effectiveness of digital strategies
2	The Mother of the Goddess P. Marketing & Social Media Coordinator	Responsible for social media strategy and digital campaigns
3	Brother Fajar N. Content & Graphic Design Staff	Manage content uploads and interactions with customers
4	Mrs. Sari M. Customers are active on social media	Providing a view from the recipient's side of digital communication messages

Method In its implementation, in-depth interviews are conducted with Corporate Marketing Communication Managers and staff who are directly involved in social media management. The interviews were used to obtain information about the digital marketing communication strategies implemented by the company. In addition to in-depth interviews, data collection is carried out through participatory

observation by conducting direct observations of the company's digital activities, including the type of content published and the company's interaction with the audience. This research also uses digital documentation in the form of screenshots, content uploads, engagement statistics, and internal documents related to digital marketing strategies. Thus, the data collection technique in this study was carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation to obtain information related to Riverside Car Wash's digital marketing communication strategy.

The type of data used in this study consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly through the results of interviews and observations of the company's digital activities. Meanwhile, secondary data comes from internal reports, news articles, official websites, and digital statistical data such as social media insights. The data is used to complement the information obtained from interviews and observations so that it can provide an overview of Riverside Car Wash's digital marketing communication activities. To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses source triangulation techniques and triangulation methods (Moleong, 2017). Source triangulation is done by comparing data obtained from various informants, such as managers, staff, and customers. Meanwhile, the triangulation method was carried out by combining the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the consistency of the findings. The credibility of the data is also strengthened through member checks, which are confirmations of the results of interviews with sources to ensure the accuracy of the interpretation of the information provided.

The data analysis in this study uses the model of Miles and Huberman (2014) which includes three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. In the data reduction stage, the researcher sorts and simplifies the data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation by focusing on information relevant to the research. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of narratives and descriptive tables to facilitate the analysis process. The final stage is the drawing of conclusions and verification, which is to conclude patterns and findings that illustrate the effectiveness of Riverside Car Wash's digital marketing communication strategy. The researcher also upholds research ethics by maintaining the confidentiality of the informant's identity and using data only for academic purposes. All interviews were conducted with the consent of the informant, and the results of the research were presented objectively without data engineering.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, Riverside Car Wash has consistently implemented digital marketing communication strategies to build brand awareness, strengthen brand image, and improve relationships with customers through various digital platforms, especially Instagram, TikTok, and official websites. The use of digital media is carried out as a form of adaptation to changes in consumer behavior who are increasingly dependent on the internet and social media in finding information, comparing services, and making decisions to use services.

In the increasingly competitive automotive washing and maintenance industry, the success of a brand is not only determined by the quality of offline services, but also by the company's ability to build a brand presence and online interaction. Therefore, Riverside Car Wash implements a planned and integrated digital marketing communication strategy through content creation, increased engagement, and the use of various digital channels to reach consumers more widely. The digital marketing communication strategy implemented by Riverside Car Wash has three main goals, namely increasing brand awareness, strengthening customer relationships, and building customer loyalty. These three goals are realized through various digital communication activities that are carried out consistently and continuously.

In terms of brand awareness and brand visibility, Riverside Car Wash utilizes visual storytelling-based content marketing by displaying clean and neat vehicle washes, the comfort of waiting facilities, and service friendliness as the company's main identity. Content that displays the before-after washing process, detailing activities, service promos, and bundling packages are the types of uploads that attract the most attention from the audience. This strategy helps the company create brand differentiation amid increasingly fierce competition in the car wash industry. These digital activities also strengthen the brand's position in the minds of consumers through increasing the number of followers, likes, comments, and shares on various social media platforms. A consistent digital presence allows Riverside Car Wash to build an image as a modern, professional, and reliable vehicle wash service provider. Thus, social media not only serves as a means of promotion, but also as a medium for forming brand perception and identity.

In terms of marketing and promotion strategies, Riverside Car Wash uses social media as the main communication channel to convey various information to customers. The published content includes discount promotions, service packages, vehicle maintenance tips, operational information, and documentation of service

results. Compared to conventional promotional methods, digital marketing makes it easy to reach a wider audience, deliver messages quickly, and build more interactive communication. Furthermore, in terms of customer engagement and interaction, the study found that Riverside Car Wash actively builds two-way communication with the audience through comments, direct messages, and responses to customer reviews on various digital platforms, including Google Reviews. Responses to customers are given in a personal and solution-oriented manner, especially to complaints related to washing quality, waiting time, and cleanliness of the service area. The follow-up process is carried out to ensure that customer problems are resolved properly.

These fast, responsive, and empathetic interactions contribute to building trust and creating a positive experience for customers. Efforts to maintain relationships with customers are also carried out through the provision of special offers for repeat customers, personal greetings at certain moments, and friendly service both on digital channels and direct interactions. This condition shows that digital media is not only used as a promotional tool, but also as a means of building long-term relationships with customers. In terms of digital ecosystem integration, Riverside Car Wash utilizes Linktree, the official website, social media, and online reservation system to make it easier for customers to obtain information and make service orders. The integration of various digital channels increases the effectiveness of marketing communications because customers can access services through one interconnected system. These findings show the application of the 5Ds principles of Digital Marketing which include digital devices, digital platforms, digital media, digital data, and digital technology (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

However, this study also found several challenges in implementing digital marketing communication strategies. These challenges include limited human resources in content management, inconsistency in upload schedules, and not optimal use of digital analytics to measure content performance in more depth. This condition shows that the success of a digital communication strategy does not only depend on promotional activities, but also on the company's ability to manage data, understand consumer behavior, and maintain communication consistency. Overall, the results of the study show that the digital marketing communication strategy implemented by Riverside Car Wash has made a positive contribution in increasing brand awareness, strengthening brand image, building engagement, and maintaining long-term relationships with customers. Content consistency, interactivity, responsiveness to customers, and integration of digital channels are the main factors that support Riverside Car Wash's competitiveness in the vehicle wash

and maintenance services industry.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the digital marketing communication strategy implemented by Riverside Car Wash has proven to be effective in strengthening brand image and increasing brand awareness in the digital era. Through the use of social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and official websites, the company has succeeded in building interactive two-way communication with the audience and growing customer loyalty. A marketing approach based on visual content and storytelling is key in capturing the audience's attention, strengthening brand identity, and building an emotional closeness with customers. Digital media integration also facilitates the online service reservation process and improves the efficiency of marketing communication. Nonetheless, challenges such as limited digital resources, consistency in content management, and the need for advanced data analysis need to be a concern for future strategy development. With continuous optimization, Riverside Car Wash has the potential to strengthen its position as one of the superior and adaptive vehicle wash service businesses to digital transformation.

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