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## Adaptive Marketing Strategy of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk in Digital Landscape

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**Abstract:** The study focuses on e-commerce channels and the use of the Sirclo platform, analyzing PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk's adaptive marketing strategy in the digital landscape. As a leading player in the Indonesian consumer goods sector (FMCG), PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk is at the forefront of integrating digital solutions to maintain and improve its market dominance. Despite consumer shifts towards online shopping, the company identified e-Commerce as a strategic priority to strengthen its position in general and modern trade channels. This article aims to explain the company's strategic approach to the use of digital tools and platforms to optimize its presence on e-commerce and to ensure sustained consumer involvement and market leadership. The study analyzes the company's use of Sirclo platform and explains how PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk combines its mission to deliver high-quality products with an innovative digital marketing strategy to meet the evolving demands of the digital age.

**Keywords:** Adaptive marketing in the digital age, PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk and Digital Transformation

### INTRODUCTION

In the modern marketplace, companies are forced to develop sophisticated marketing strategies to effectively disseminate product information, highlighting distinctive features and benefits to the consumer. The vitality of these strategies lies in their ability to articulate the value proposition of the products, thereby facilitating the maximization of sales results. Kotler's conceptualization of a strategy, as expounded by Aminah (2020), is a meticulously crafted game plan aimed at fulfilling the objectives of a business unit. Furthermore, Kotler and Armstrong's definition, as referenced by Priansa (2017), positions marketing as a societal and managerial process through which needs and wants are satisfied via the creation, offering, and exchange of valuable products.

Kotler (2018) delineates a marketing strategy as an overarching mindset, a blueprint designed to navigate toward marketing objectives, encompassing target markets,

positioning, marketing mix, and budget allocation. Tjiptono (2017) echoes this sentiment, portraying a marketing strategy as a comprehensive plan that anticipates the influence of various marketing activities on product demand within a targeted market segment.

The digital era, marked by a surge in technological innovation, has revolutionized traditional communication and information modalities, ushering in a new paradigm of modern digital interaction. This transformation has profound implications for marketing, making digital strategies not only effective but also essential for engaging consumers with products and services.

The digital business landscape, as it evolves, exerts a multifaceted impact on corporate operations, improving responsiveness, measurability, and connectivity across all aspects of the company. The proliferation of communication and media innovations offers businesses unprecedented channels to engage with consumers, who in turn anticipate enriched shopping experiences.

In this digital world, online media and social networks have emerged as key marketing channels. The ubiquity of smartphones and the expansion of Internet connectivity have bolstered the digital era's growth, with e-commerce platforms providing consumers with unparalleled access to products and services. Kurniawan's insights (Sugiyono, 2020) into online media underscore its distinctiveness from traditional media, necessitating digital devices and Internet connectivity for information dissemination.

Ardiansah and Maharani (2021) highlight the interactive nature of social networks, which not only facilitate user interaction, but also serve as powerful tools for corporate marketing initiatives. Social media marketing, exemplified by sharing visual content on platforms such as Instagram, has become a staple in building a brand presence and engaging consumers.

Against this backdrop, PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk, a leading FMCG company in Indonesia, has been instrumental in enriching the daily lives of Indonesians with a diverse product portfolio. To strengthen its market presence, the company has adopted electronic media as a key promotional avenue. With a brand repertoire that includes Sunsilk, Lifebuoy, and many others, PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk is committed to quality and improving social well-being. Embracing digital transformation, the company has partnered with SIRCLO to streamline its e-Commerce operations across multiple online marketplaces, thus facilitating a seamless and accessible shopping experience for its customers.

This introduction sets the stage for an in-depth exploration of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk's strategic marketing endeavors in the digital domain, with a particular focus on e-Commerce and the utilization of SIRCLO's platform to navigate the complexities of online retail.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The digital era has transformed the marketing landscape, particularly for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies such as PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk. The use of on-line media and social networks has become an efficient marketing channel, with the Internet playing a pivotal role in the delivery of information (Kurniawan, Sugiyono, 2020). The increasing penetration of smartphones and the Internet has led to a surge in e-Commerce activities, offering consumers convenience in acquiring products and services (Digital Era Characteristics, Document).

Social networks are not only a medium of interaction, but also a powerful tool for companies to market their products, build brand images, and facilitate two-way communication with consumers (Ardiansah & Maharani, 2021). Social media marketing, particularly through platforms like Instagram, has become a norm where visual content plays a significant role in attracting and engaging followers (Social Media Marketing, Document).

The marketing strategies of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk, as a leading FMCG company in Indonesia, encompass the use of electronic media and various digital programs aimed at optimizing brand assets and customer relationships (Company Promotional Strategies, Document). The marketing concept, as discussed by Sumarni et al. (1995), emphasizes understanding the needs, wants, and values of the target market and adapting company activities to meet these needs more efficiently than competitors.

Kotler and Keller (2012) highlight the importance of the marketing mix, which consists of the traditional 4Ps—Product, Price, Place, Promotion—and the modern 4Ps—Process, People, Programs, Performance. These elements are crucial for influencing consumer behavior and achieving marketing objectives (Kotler & Keller, 2012). The approach of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk to integrating these components reflects its commitment to maintaining a competitive edge in the market (Marketing Mix Implementation, Document).

In general, the literature suggests that the successful application of digital marketing strategies, including the comprehensive use of the marketing mix, is vital for FMCG companies to thrive in the current digital environment.

Based on the literature on digital marketing and the dynamics of the FMCG industry, this study posits the following hypotheses.

H1: The degree of innovation in social media content creation (measured by engagement rates such as likes, comments, and shares) is positively correlated with the marketing performance (measured by brand awareness and conversion rates) of FMCG companies.

H2: The integration of e-commerce platforms into the marketing strategies of FMCG companies is positively related to their sales volume, suggesting that e-commerce is a significant driver of sales growth in the Indonesian FMCG sector.

H3: The adoption of digital marketing strategies by PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk, including the use of social networks and e-commerce platforms, has a statistically significant positive impact on its market share and consumer retention rates.

H4: The degree of alignment of a company with the needs and values of its target market (measured by market research and customer feedback) is a significant predictor of its marketing efficiency (measured by return on marketing investment) and market effectiveness (measured by market share).

H5: The implementation of an integrated marketing mix, which encompasses the modern 4Ps, Process, People, Programs, Performance, contributes positively to customer satisfaction (measured by customer satisfaction surveys) and marketing success (measured by overall profitability and brand loyalty) for FMCG companies.

These hypotheses will be empirically tested using quantitative methods to assess the relationships between the marketing strategies of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk and their results in the digital era.

## METHODS

This investigation adopts a qualitative research design that uses a descriptive method to conduct an in-depth examination of the marketing strategies used by PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk in the digital era. The qualitative descriptive approach is selected for its effectiveness in providing a detailed description and elucidation of the phenomena under study. This approach is particularly suited to explore complex issues by engaging with the subject matter in a manner that captures the nuances and subtleties inherent in the marketing strategies of a large corporation.

In this qualitative paradigm, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, with the human element central to the interpretive process. Data are collected through various means such as interviews, document analysis, and observation and are

subsequently articulated in a narrative form that conveys the richness and depth of the observed phenomena. The qualitative nature of this research allows the results to be presented in a descriptive format, comprising words and statements that reflect the complexities and dynamics encountered in the real world.

The focal point of this research is PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk, a leading FMCG company in Indonesia. The study aims to dissect and comprehend the company's marketing strategies within the digital landscape, with a particular emphasis on its e-commerce channel strategies and the integration of Sirclo's platform. By delving into these strategies, the research seeks to uncover the intricacies of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk's approach to digital marketing and e-commerce, providing insights into how the company adapts to and thrives in the rapidly evolving digital marketplace.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The marketing strategies of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk are a testament to the company's understanding and application of the marketing mix in a way that is both strategic and responsive to market demands. This section discusses the results of the analysis of the marketing strategies of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk, which are classified according to the four pillars of the marketing mix. Product, Price, Place, and Promotion.

1. Product Strategy:  
The approach of Unilever Indonesia Tbk to product diversification is a strategic response to the varied needs of different market segments. The company's extensive product portfolio, which includes brands such as Pepsodent, Lux, and Sunsilk, is designed to appeal to a broad consumer base. The diversification strategy allows Unilever to mitigate risks by ensuring that the company does not rely on a single product or market.
2. Pricing strategy:  
The company's pricing strategy is characterized by its flexibility. By offering products in various sizes and at different price points, PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk ensures that its products are accessible to consumers across different economic segments. This tiered pricing structure enables the company to meet the budgetary constraints and preferences of a diverse consumer population.
3. Place strategy:  
The distribution of Unilever products is widespread and includes various retail environments, from large urban malls to small rural shops. This extensive reach ensures that Unilever's products are available to all segments of society, thereby enhancing market penetration and brand presence across the nation.
4. Promotion Strategy:
  - a. Advertising: PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk employs a multichannel advertising strategy that spans television, radio, the Internet, and outdoor print ads. This approach is designed to maximize consumer exposure to the company's marketing messages, thereby reinforcing brand recognition and product awareness.
  - b. Personal Selling: The company's use of personal selling, particularly in the cosmetics segment through initiatives such as Rumah Cantik Citra, exemplifies a tailored approach to consumer engagement. This strategy allows for direct interaction with potential consumers, offering a personalized experience that can foster brand loyalty and provide valuable feedback.

The discussion of these strategies reveals the comprehensive approach to marketing within the digital era. The company's ability to blend traditional marketing techniques with digital initiatives allows it to maintain a robust market presence and engage with consumers effectively. The results indicate that PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk has successfully adapted its marketing mix to the nuances of digital marketing, using a combination of traditional and digital channels to maintain market relevance and consumer connection.





Figure 1. Essential Digital Headlines

The digital landscape in Indonesia has experienced a remarkable expansion in 2022, with Internet penetration reaching more than 204 million people and social media engagement close to 191 million users. The data indicate that the average Indonesian spends more than 8 hours per day online, which underscores the significant opportunity for businesses to connect with consumers in this digital space.

This surge in digital engagement has profound implications for Indonesian companies. The results of this study suggest that for entrepreneurs and companies in Indonesia, the establishment and maintenance of a strong digital presence is no longer optional but rather essential for success. Digital assets such as websites, social media profiles, and e-Commerce platforms have become indispensable tools in the entrepreneur's toolkit, serving as critical touchpoints for customer interaction.

The discussion extends to the strategic importance of these digital assets. They are not just channels for marketing and sales, but are instrumental in building brand awareness, understanding consumer behavior through analytics, and fostering long-term customer relationships. The ability to leverage these digital platforms effectively can provide businesses with a substantial competitive advantage, allowing them to reach a wider audience, personalize marketing efforts, and respond quickly to market trends.

Furthermore, the results indicate that sustainable market penetration and consumer engagement in the modern economy are increasingly dependent on a company's digital savviness. For PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk and similar entities, the integration of digital strategies into their marketing mix is not just about staying relevant; it is about thriving in a digital economy where consumer behaviors and expectations are continually evolving.

In conclusion, the findings underscore the need for Indonesian companies to embrace and improve their digital presence. As the digital economy grows, so does the need for companies to adapt and innovate, ensuring that their digital marketing strategies are as dynamic and multifaceted as the digital ecosystem itself.

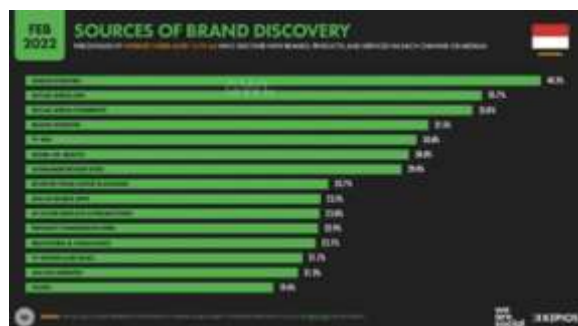


Figure 2. Source of Brand Discovery

The survey findings reveal a significant trend among consumers, who predominantly use search engines as a primary means of discovering products and brands. This consumer

behavior requires that businesses ensure their product visibility on digital platforms, including proprietary websites and third-party marketplaces.

The presence in the marketplaces, while crucial, comes with the caveat of intense price competition. Data suggest that affordability often dictates marketplace success, and cost-effective options typically dominate sales. This competitive environment can lead to a race to the bottom in terms of pricing, which may not always be sustainable for businesses in the long term.

The results of this study advocate for a balanced digital strategy that does not depend solely on marketplaces for sales. Diversifying the digital presence to include owned websites and social media channels can offer several advantages. First, it allows businesses to avoid direct price wars often found on marketplace platforms. Second, it provides an opportunity to cultivate a unique brand identity and foster customer loyalty, which is less likely to be achieved solely through marketplace transactions.

Moreover, direct consumer engagement on owned digital platforms can lead to deeper customer relationships. The study finds that such engagement not only enhances brand loyalty, but also generates valuable consumer data. These data can be instrumental in understanding consumer behavior patterns, preferences, and trends, which, when analyzed, can inform more nuanced and effective marketing strategies.

In conclusion, research suggests that, while marketplaces are an essential component of a comprehensive digital strategy, they should not be the sole focus. A more holistic approach that includes investment in proprietary digital assets can allow businesses to compete beyond price points, build brand equity, and establish a loyal customer base. This strategy can ultimately lead to a more sustainable business model in the digital economy.



Figure 3. Factors Influencing Consumers to Make Online Purchases

In conclusion, research suggests that, while marketplaces are an essential component of a comprehensive digital strategy, they should not be the sole focus. A more holistic approach that includes investment in proprietary digital assets can enable businesses to compete beyond the market.

The research identifies several consumer incentives that significantly influence purchasing decisions within the Indonesian market. These incentives are critical for businesses to consider when developing strategies to increase product sales online. The following points discuss the motivational factors that can encourage consumers to buy products from Indonesian companies.

1. Cost savings through free shipping:

The provision of free shipping is often perceived by consumers as a direct cost savings. This study finds that eliminating shipping costs can be a primary motivator for consumers when deciding to make an online purchase, as it reduces the total cost associated with the product.

2. Enhanced perceived value through discounts:  
Discounts and price reductions are shown to increase the perceived value of a product. For cost-sensitive consumers, a lower price can significantly increase the attractiveness of a product, suggesting that price adjustments can be a potent tool in stimulating sales.
3. Social proof through customer reviews:  
The impact of social proof, as evidenced by customer reviews and testimonials, is substantial. This research indicates that potential buyers place considerable trust in the feedback and experiences of others, using this information as a benchmark for quality and reliability.
4. Convenience of online shopping and delivery:  
The convenience factor of online shopping, especially when coupled with free delivery, is identified as a strong purchase incentive. The ease with which consumers can complete transactions from the comfort of their home is a compelling reason for the preference for online shopping.
5. Building trust with positive reviews:  
A positive reputation, as shown in customer reviews, contributes to the trustworthiness of a business. This study highlights that trust is a decisive factor in attracting new customers and is essential for repeat business and customer loyalty.
6. Incentivization through special offers:  
Special offers, such as free shipping and discounts, are effective in incentivizing consumers to complete purchases. The findings suggest that these offers can tip the scales for consumers who are undecided, prompting them to complete transactions that they might otherwise abandon.

The results of this study underscore the importance of understanding the factors that motivate Indonesian consumers. Businesses that take advantage of these insights can tailor their online marketing and sales strategies to align with consumer preferences, thus driving sales and fostering customer loyalty. By integrating these consumer incentives into their digital platforms, companies can create a competitive advantage in the increasingly crowded online marketplace.

PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk has articulated a strategic framework that includes five key priorities aimed at sustaining and strengthening its market position. This section discusses the implications of these strategic priorities and their alignment with the company's overarching goals.

1. Core Brand Enhancement:  
The company's initiative to fortify and maximize the potential of its core brands is evident in its commitment to product innovation, as exemplified by Rexona's promise of 72-hour freshness. The strategy extends beyond product enhancement to include efforts to broaden product usage and market expansion. This approach is indicative of a deep understanding of brand equity and its role in driving growth.
2. Portfolio Diversification:  
The strategy of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk to diversify its portfolio in various market segments, including premium and value offerings, reflects a nuanced approach to market segmentation. This diversification allows the company to cater to a wide spectrum of consumer needs and preferences, thereby improving its competitive edge.

3. Channel Leadership:

The company's emphasis on strengthening its presence in both General Trade and Modern Trade, as well as in digital channels, demonstrates a multifaceted channel strategy. In the distributor trade, the focus on expanding store count, improving store quality, and optimizing distributor networks is geared toward enhancing market reach and efficiency. In modern trade, the pursuit of increased market share is a clear indicator of the company's growth aspirations.

4. Integration of everything E:

The implementation of E-Everything across all business lines signifies PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk's commitment to digital integration. By embedding digital tools and platforms into every facet of the business, the company is poised to take advantage of the efficiencies and insights that digital transformation offers.

5. Sustainable Business Leadership:

The commitment of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk to maintain a leadership role in sustainable business practices underscores the company's recognition of the importance of environmental and social responsibility. This commitment is aligned with global trends that prioritize sustainability as a core component of business strategy.

The discussion of these strategic priorities reveals the comprehensive approach of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk to navigate the complexities of the modern business environment. The company's strategies reflect a balance between growth and responsibility, innovation and sustainability, and market expansion and digital transformation. The results suggest that these priorities are not only driving the company's current success, but are also laying the groundwork for its future trajectory in an increasingly competitive and digitally oriented marketplace.

**Table 1.** . Sales of PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk. for the years 2018-2022 (in millions of Indonesian Rupiah)

Year	Sales
2018	41,802,073
2019	42,922,563
2020	42,972,474
2021	39,545,959
2022	41,218,881

Unilever Indonesia Tbk's strategic marketing initiatives demonstrate a profound commitment to an effective marketing mix, which is intricately linked to its sales performance and market dominance. This section delves into the company's strategic approaches and their implications for consumer engagement and sales outcomes.

**Affordable Pricing and Market Segmentation:**

Unilever's pricing strategy is a reflection of its consumer-centric approach, targeting a broad market segment with affordable pricing. This strategy is instrumental in improving the frequency of purchases, which in turn contributes to higher sales volumes. Sales data would likely reflect this, with higher transaction frequencies indicating the success of this approach in attracting price-sensitive consumers.



Supply chain optimization:

The company's efforts to strengthen the supplier-customer relationship underscore the importance of a reliable supply chain to ensure product availability. By ensuring that suppliers can meet demand promptly, Unilever facilitates the easy access to its products for consumers of diverse demographics. This extensive reach is crucial in ensuring that the customer base has timely access to the company's offerings, which is expected to be mirrored in sales reports through consistent product availability and reduced instances of stock shortages.

Promotion and Product Accessibility:

Unilever's robust promotion strategies are designed to ensure product visibility and availability at the point of purchase. This preventive approach is the key to preventing consumer disappointment and fostering satisfaction, thus improving customer loyalty and reducing the likelihood that consumers will turn to competitors. Reflecting on the insights from Muliawan (2010), it is apparent that Unilever's close ties with suppliers have been pivotal in ensuring consistent market supply to meet consumer demand, a factor that is likely to be substantiated by sales trends and consumer retention metrics.

Product diversification and strategic placement:

The company's marketing strategy, characterized by product diversification, resonates with the alternative strategies proposed by Uythervoven and the internal growth strategies outlined by Glueck. Unilever's strategic selection of sales locations is aimed at optimizing consumer interest and driving purchases. This tactical placement is a critical component of the company's strategy to attract and encourage consumer buying behavior, which should be evident in the sales data, showcasing the effectiveness of product placement in generating sales.

In summary, Unilever Indonesia Tbk's strategic marketing initiatives are intricately designed to enhance consumer engagement and drive sales. The company's approach to pricing, supply chain management, promotion, product diversification, and strategic placement collectively contributes to a robust marketing mix that supports sustained sales growth. The results and discussion presented here are expected to be corroborated by sales reports, which would provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of these strategies in achieving the company's sales and marketing objectives.

## CONCLUSIONS

PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk has strategically positioned itself to capitalize on the growing e-Commerce market in Indonesia, reflecting a forward-thinking approach in its marketing strategy. The company's concerted efforts to enhance and leverage the potential of its core brands, diversify its product portfolio, and assert its dominance across various sales channels are indicative of a robust and adaptive business model.

The strategic partnership with SIRCLO underscores Unilever's commitment to digital expansion, enabling the company to effectively manage a significant portfolio of brands across multiple online platforms. This collaboration is a testament to Unilever's global strategy to embrace digital transformation and remain at the forefront of the evolution of the FMCG sector.

By integrating e-Commerce as a central pillar of its business strategy, PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk not only responds to changes in consumer shopping behavior, but also is proactively shaping its operations to thrive in a digital-centric commercial landscape. The company's investment in digital capabilities, such as on-line category management and social commerce, coupled with its use of technology and data analytics for targeted marketing, is a clear indication of its innovative approach to e-Commerce.

Furthermore, PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk's emphasis on providing an exceptional customer experience through digital transformation initiatives, particularly in General Trade

and omni-channel presence, is a strategic move to enhance customer engagement and satisfaction. The company's focus on sustainable business practices alongside its digital endeavors reflects a balanced approach to growth, ensuring that its expansion does not come at the expense of environmental or social responsibility.

In conclusion, PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk's strategic marketing initiatives, particularly in the realm of e-Commerce, demonstrate a comprehensive and dynamic approach to business in the digital age. The company's strategies are well aligned with the current trends and future directions of the FMCG industry, positioning it to continue its trajectory of growth and market leadership.

In response to the findings of this study, we propose targeted recommendations to increase PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk's digital marketing strategies. First, the institution of regular and comprehensive digital marketing training sessions is critical. These training modules should be tailored to enhance the team's abilities in crafting impactful promotional content and leveraging paid promotion tools effectively. The curriculum should encompass a holistic understanding of digital marketing tactics, including the nuanced management of social media platforms. To accommodate the diverse expertise within the company, the training content must be differentiated according to the skill levels of the participants. Furthermore, the implementation of follow-up evaluations is essential to measure the training's practical impact and to ensure its application in real-world scenarios.

Secondly, we advocate for the strategic hiring of experienced digital marketing experts. Recruiting professionals with a demonstrated history of success in the digital realm can significantly bolster PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk's efforts to expand its online presence and market penetration. The skill and experience of these specialists will prove indispensable in the intricate landscape of digital marketing, enabling the company to deploy sophisticated strategies that truly resonate with their intended audience.

The integration of these recommendations is expected to provide PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk with the necessary resources and expertise to thrive in the digital marketing arena, thus sustaining its competitive advantage and establishing new standards in digital engagement and e-commerce excellence.

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