THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER'S MEDIA EXPOSURE, BRAND PERCEPTION AND PURCHASE INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to investigate the effects of marketing communications on brand perception and purchase intention. It also further investigates whether there is a correlation between marketing communications and brand perception and a correlation between brand perception and purchase intention. For this study, a quantitative research method was employed through an online self-administrated questionnaire. Collected data came from 200 Thai male and female samples between the age of 25-44, who already have Grab application on their devices and have used GrabCar service in the past.

Results from the study reveal that there is a positive relationship between marketing communications and brand perception. This implies that consumers are more likely to form a positive perception on a brand based on its marketing communications. Additionally, the results indicate a positive relationship between brand perception and purchase intention. This implies that consumers are more inclined to make a purchase if they like the brands. Brands can easily achieve positive perceptions from customers by offering attractive deals and promotions. Other findings show that participants checked their Facebook and Line accounts on personal mobile devices multiple times a day. Interestingly, when it comes to the news and updates about Grab, participants could recall receiving them via Facebook, in-app message center, and mobile push notification. Results suggest that companies should invest more effort and activities in mobile marketing in order to gain more brand awareness from the customers.

INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that fast-changing technology has completely transformed today's standards of living. Especially now that the society and media has put much emphasis on the value of time; thus, people have begun to find ways to do more things efficiently in order to save time and

elevate their quality of life with a help of advanced technology. Luckily, the current obsession with time and efficiency brings about new and exciting business opportunities and trends.

In the most recent years, the term "sharing economy" has begun to surface and made its way into the media and every day's conversation. The term has become so popular that Oxford Dictionaries (n.d.) have included the term and described it as "an economic system in which assets or services are shared between private individuals, either free or for a fee, typically by means of the Internet." Belk (2014) seconded that the origin of the sharing economy come from the birth of the Internet. Vaughan (2017) claimed that the sharing economy businesses in the UK in 2017 would generate £7 billions in revenue and will become a £140 billion-industry by 2025. The reasons behind the popularity of this sharing economy business model can be explained in many ways. Ferrari (2016) proclaimed that the sharing economy allow people to utilize "underused assets by matching needs and haves." To many, this translates into additional income and convenience. With the new technology advancement, now there are plenty of online platforms and smartphone applications that connect service providers and users. Acquier, Daudigeos, and Pinkse (2017) suggested that the sharing economy offer a couple of benefits that satisfy both consumers and suppliers in which the consumers have more options of services and business owners have more opportunities to make additional income. Supporting the previous claim, a report by PricewaterhouseCooper (2015) showed that majority of the US adults recognize the benefits of the sharing economy in making life more affordable and efficient, as well as building stronger community and improving the environment. Taking ridesharing applications for example, not only consumers spend less money on gas, they also help reduce the air pollution and traffic, and provide income for the drivers. Perhaps one of the most interesting explanations on the rise of the sharing economy is the fact that people are now more inclined to reconnect with others due to the feeling of being detached as individuality is highly valued and encouraged in today's society (Ferrari, 2016). Whatever the main reason might be, it is evident that the sharing economy business model will continue to grow in many years to come.

While the sharing economy model has spread into different industries from dining, retail to entertainment, perhaps the most familiar and talked-about is within the transportation segment. It is safe to say that these ridesharing applications are one of the most innovative inventions in the past decade as they help solve transportation problems in major cities in terms of supply, logistic, and convenience. Today there are more than a dozen of ridesharing applications available to download across the globe. May (2016) reported that ridesharing applications will generate $6.5 billion in revenue by 2020 with North America as the main market followed by Western Europe and Asia Pacific. Smith (2016) found in his study that 15% of the US adults have used ridesharing applications and feel that the applications help them save time and rid of stress. A study done by PricewaterhouseCooper (2015) also showed that 56% of the US ridesharing users continue to use the services due to a reasonable fee. Furthermore, users felt rather positive towards ridesharing applications as they provide jobs for those who want flexible working hours (Smith, 2016).

Thailand is no stranger to ridesharing applications. A country that is notoriously known for heavy traffic and unreliable taxi drivers, it makes a perfect sense that ridesharing companies would enter the Thai market. Among the competitors are the US-imported Uber, Southeast Asia's very own application called Grab, and a few of foreign and home-grown brands which are either no longer exist or being acquired by another company. Currently there are 2 major players in the ridesharing sector, which are Uber and Grab. While Uber has been in the market longer than its rival, Grab (2017) boasted that 66% of passengers in Thailand use Grab application. GM Live (2017) reported that in the first half of 2017, Grab enjoyed 100% growth in usage as it has expanded to 9 different cities in Thailand.

When Grab entered the Thai market in 2013, it acquired new users by offering irresistible discounts – a basic marketing tactic adopted by many companies. de Oliveira Santini, Ladeira, Hoffmann Sampaio, and Falcão Araujo (2016) argued that monetary promotion can be an effective tool for a short-term campaign as it can potentially depreciate the brand's image when used subsequently. Perhaps this is the reason why the company has started to invest its effort in changing the consumer's perception of being discount-oriented brand to a brand that offers affordable and convenient service. Though Grab continues to offer discounts and promotions to stay on top of the competition, its marketing effort has also gone into advertising, online marketing, event marketing, and mobile marketing. This new approach to integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategy seems to pay off as the company single-handedly dominates the Thai market.

Apart from IMC, Hong (2014), Su (2015), and Tung (2015) claimed that one of the secrets to Grab's success is to go hyperlocal with the marketing campaigns. Since Grab is based in Southeast Asia, it has an advantage in understanding the market and formulating the knowledge into successful marketing campaigns that resonate with each country's cultures and trends (Tung, 2015). While the marketing campaigns have been kept locally relevant to each country, Goh (2016) remarked that the brand's Vice President of Marketing insist on incorporating the brand's personalities of being daring, positive, and genuine into its marketing campaigns. This is a very important decision as Zhu, So, and Hudson (2017) discovered that apart from the utilitarian benefits, social and emotional values also influence adoption intention. This finding was also supported by PricewaterhouseCooper (2015).

A previous research done by Keawnakorn (2015) found that majority of Thai consumers used Grab because it is easy to use. The research did not include marketing communications as part of the factors. Other research also focused on the usability but only on GrabTaxi. No research on Grab's IMC and its effects on brand perception and purchase intention has been done before, especially something else besides GrabTaxi. This particular research intends to focus on GrabCar as the company promotes this product more than others based on the frequency of mentioning and appearance of this product on the brand's social media channels during the time of the research. Overall, the study aims to better understand Thai consumers' insights on how brands should communicate with them in order to gain favorable perception and increase sales volume.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the relationship between Grab's marketing communications and consumer's brand perception.

2. To examine the relationship between Grab's marketing communications and consumer's purchase intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Keller (2001) discussed in his paper about the basic concept of marketing communications in which it is used by marketers to connect with consumers to relay information of the new products and persuade them to make a purchase. With similar products being in the market, marketers have to find ways to communicate the benefits of the products to consumers in the most efficient way by distributing the information in different channels; hence, the birth of integrated marketing communications (Keller, 2001).

In an updated definition of IMC by Kliatchako (2009), he explained in great length how the digital landscape has transformed the IMC pillars. In terms of audience, the marketing communications have to focus on customer engagement to cater to the new group of users who value the spirit of collaboration or sense of community. It is important to remember that with digital media, audience now has a control over what they want to see. Most importantly, audience also has the ability to create their own content, which they can share with others on social media platforms. Last but not least is the revolution in marketing channels, which are no longer limited to traditional media like TV and newspapers but has expanded to online platforms and mobile devices. These are important facts that marketers have to keep in mind when planning integrated marketing communications.

2. Brand Perception

Brand perception is generally referred to how the brand is being seen by the consumers. Keller (as cited in Li et al., 2013) described brand perception as "a series of interwoven network framework, including description, evaluation and other information associated with the brand held in the memory of consumers". He went on to explain that perception consist of brand awareness and brand image. Li et al. (2013) detailed that brand awareness is defined by the strength of the brand in the consumer's mind. In other word, how easy or difficult it is for the consumers to recall the brand. As for brand image, Li et al. (2013) referred to it as "the aggregation of multiple brand associations in the minds of consumers". In their study, Li et al. (2013) proposed a model of brand perception that combine brand awareness and the definitions of brand image by Keller and Biel. There are 5 dimensions in brand perception, which include

brand awareness, corporate perception, brand personality perception, benefit perception, and subjective popularity (Li et al., 2013).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is how familiar the market and the consumers are with the brand, which is normally identified by how quickly consumers can recall the brand (Li et al., 2013). Wang and Yang (2010) concluded in their study that brand awareness have a positive impact on purchase intention. Aaker (as cited in Sharifi, 2014) identified that there are 4 ways to measure brand awareness: brand cognition, brand recall, top of mind, and dominant. Brand cognition is when consumers already have been exposed to the brand. Rossiter and Percy and Rossiter, Percy, and Donovan (as cited in Eom & Cho, 2015) stated that without brand awareness, consumers cannot form attitude or purchase intention. Keller (as cited in Eom & Cho, 2015) and Sharifi (2014) mentioned that a high level of brand awareness can influence consumers' decision as they can recall the brand and compare it with others. This theory was also supported by Hoyer and Brown (as cited in Eom & Cho, 2015), who claimed that a better-known brand is more likely to be selected by consumers compared to unknown brands. Interesting enough, higher brand awareness also links to a better perception on product quality (Li et al., 2013).

Corporate Perception

Similar to brand perception, corporate perception is how consumers view the corporate. Consumers often rely on a corporate perception when making a purchase decision on a new product; hence, many companies manage their corporate image as a brand (Li et al., 2013). Brown and Dacin (as cited in Li et al., 2013) described that there are 3 dimensions in corporate perception: corporate ability perception, staff image perception, and social responsibility perception. Corporate ability perception means the ability of a company in providing products or services; staff image perception is a performance delivered by staff in the process of providing products or services; social responsibility perception is how the company expresses its morality when facing a social issue (Li et al., 2013).

Benefit Perception

Benefit perception is an advantage that a product or service provide in the eye of consumers. Park (as cited in Li et al., 2013) explained that there are 2 types of benefits, which are functional and emotional. Li et al. (2013) commented that consumers are likely to increase a brand perception based on the offered benefits.

Product Knowledge

Dacin and Mitchell, and Wong (as cited in Li et al., 2013) concurred that product knowledge is features offered by the product or service, which include but not limited to price, function, performance, technology, etc. Li et al. (2013) stated that knowledge on a product can influence consumer's evaluation. Kim et al. (2012) also found in their study that higher product knowledge link to higher purchase intention.

Brand Personality

Jain (2017) claimed that brand personality is "personification of brand". In other words, brand also has personality traits just like human. Jain (2017) claimed that brand personality is formed by consumer's experience with the brand over the period of time. Based on a framework by Aaker (1997), there are 5 dimensions to a brand personality: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Having a distinguish brand personality can be beneficial to the brand as it can help differentiate the brand from others by communicating positive traits, create emotional bonding with consumers, and build long-lasting relationships (Jain, 2017). Sirgy (as cited in Li et al., 2013) speculated that consumers tend to prefer brands that reflect their personalities.

Subjective Popularity

Subjective popularity can be defined as perceived expectations of specific individuals or groups. It also includes user's motivation to agree with the said expectations. For instance, if users' friends or family members seem to have positive perception towards a product, users are likely to agree with them. Jamil and Mat (as cited in Lim et al., 2016) concurred that influence from individuals or groups have a positive effect on purchase intention.

3. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

In addition to a brand perception model proposed by Li, Ji, and Jiang (2013), the researchers have decided to include a Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to the research framework. Since the study attempts to measure the perception of consumers towards a mobile application, TAM is needed to be adapted into the research framework as mobile applications have unique attributes and usage compared to other consumer's goods. Peng, Chen, and Wen (2014) suggested that prior to using an application, users have to accept it first. Davis (as cited in Chuttur, 2009) was the first person who introduced the technology acceptance model (TAM) in 1985. TAM was originated from Fishbein and Ajzen's Theory of Reasoned Action explaining the relationships between attitude and action (Chuttur, 2009). Davis stated that attitude is an important factor for users in determining whether to use or reject the application (Chuttur, 2009). Park (2009) examined that there are 2 cognitive beliefs in TAM, which consist of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Based on the model, the decision of using the application relies on user's behavioral intentions, attitude, perceived usefulness of the system, and perceived ease of the system (Park, 2009). The external variables, however, does not need to be taken into consideration as they are not part of the main factors per Davis' suggestion (as cited in Fleischer & Wahlin, 2016). This model is supported by Hsu and Lin (2016), who found that users do not generally feel the need to get approval from others when adopting an application since it is for private use. This implies that social norms do not influence ones to download or use the application.

4. Purchase Intention

With a numerous number of products available in the market, consumers now have more choices than ever in selecting products that are suitable to their needs. Companies have invested heavily in marketing communications to persuade and remind consumers of the products' benefits. Purchase intention, as Kwek, Lau, and Tan (2010) described, is one of the consumer's cognitive behaviors on how one has made a decision to buy a particular brand. It is vital to remember that it is the purchase intention that drives action or the actual purchase. Ajzen and Fishbein (as cited in Lee & Lee, 2015) proposed the Theory of Reasons Action (TRA) in 1975 claiming that a person behaves based on his or her intention. Lee and Lee (2015) highlighted again that the higher purchase intention, the higher probability of actual purchase. Day (as cited in Kwek et al., 2010) opined that intention can be impactful especially when consumers have to make a decision based on limitations.

METHODOLOGY

The target samples for this research were Thai males and females between the age of 25-44 as it represents the largest group of population that have used the sharing economy services (PricewaterhouseCooper, 2015). Employing a quantitative methodology, the survey was distributed online to collect 200 responses.

The survey consisted of 5 parts including screening questions, demographic, media exposure, brand perception, and purchase intention. The screening questions helped eliminate participants who did not fit the study's criteria: between the age of 25-44, already have Grab application on their devices, used GrabCar between July-September 2017, and saw GrabCar's marketing communications between July-September 2017.

After data had been collected, it was then being calculated using SPSS (Using a license from server IP address: splm.it.chula.ac.th). The descriptive statistic calculation includes mean, percentage and standard deviation. The inferential statistic calculation was used to confirm the relationships among variables.

Using SurveyMonkey, an online questionnaire was set up and the link was distributed to samples to collect the data for this study. All questions were available in English and Thai. From a total of 55 questions, there were 5 sections in the survey: screening questions, questions about demographic, questions about media exposure, questions about brand perception, and questions about purchase intention. Participants had to rate their opinions on each provided statement from scale 1-5, where 1 refer to strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

To ensure the accuracy of data, Cronbach's Alpha was used to find the reliability and the validity of the survey. The pre-test used data collecting from 30 samples. The reliability score for brand perception is 0.835 whereas the reliability score for purchase intention is 0.872. The numbers imply that both variables are consistent as general level of acceptance is 0.7.

As for inferential statistical analysis, this has to do with the questions that contain 5-point Likert scale. The calculation for inferential statistics will be based on the answer provided by participants, which later converted into numbers. (See Table 1).

Table 1

Likert Scale Calculation

5-Point Likert Scales		Scoring Scale with Interval for Inferential	
Level of Agreement	**Score**	**Definition**	**Scoring Range**
Strongly Agree	5.00	Strongly Agree	5.00 – 4.21
Agree	4.00	Agree	4.20 – 3.41
Somewhat Agree	3.00	Somewhat Agree	3.40 – 2.61
Disagree	2.00	Disagree	2.60 – 1.81
Strongly Disagree	1.00	Strongly Disagree	1.80 – 1.00

Last but not least, the correlations between the variables will be calculated by using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to uncover the positive and negative relationships as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Measurement (r)

Scoring Scale	Meaning
1.00 – 0.80	Very High Association
0.79 – 0.60	High Association
0.59 – 0.40	Normal Association
0.39 – 0.20	Low Association
0.19 – 0.00	Very Low Association

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Media Exposure

Participants checked Facebook and Line applications multiple times a day with Facebook at 80% and Line at 98%. The frequency of participants checking Twitter multiple times a day is only at 20%. When it comes to receiving news or updates about GrabCar between July-September 2017, 77% of participants mentioned that they received them through Facebook. As for media used to promote GrabCar that participants could recall, 77% of participants could recall seeing information about GrabCar on Facebook, 49% through mobile push notification, and 48% through in-app message center. For the media frequency, results show that top 3 communication channels that participants saw GrabCar's marketing communications are Facebook ($\bar{X}$ = 3.29), in-app message center ($\bar{X}$ = 3.26), and mobile push notification ($\bar{X}$ = 3.05).

Brand Perception

Combining brand perception concept purposed by Li et al. (2013) and TAM, the survey aims to measure respondent's perception on Grab by understanding their level of brand awareness, corporate perception, perceived brand personality, subjective popularity, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use.

Under brand awareness, respondents agreed that they can remember GrabCar ($\bar{X}$ = 3.75), they think of GrabCar first when they need transportation ($\bar{X}$ = 3.68), and GrabCar comes at the top of their mind ($\bar{X}$ = 3.43). The respondents, however, strongly disagree about using GrabCar because they saw a marketing communications on Twitter ($\bar{X}$ = 1.71). For corporate perception, respondents agree that Grab provides a reliable service ($\bar{X}$ = 3.79) and impressive service ($\bar{X}$ = 3.69). As for brand personality, respondents agree that reliability and impressive service are the main characteristics with a mean of 4.07 and 4.06 respectively. When it comes to subjective popularity, respondents only somewhat agree to about being influenced by family and friends when using GrabCar ($\bar{X}$ = 3.19). They disagree to the statement linking their GrabCar usage to celebrity endorsement ($\bar{X}$ = 1.84). Moreover, respondents strongly agree to the perceived usefulness in the aspect of being able to see the fare before taking a ride ($\bar{X}$ = 4.23), providing a lot of promotions ($\bar{X}$ = 4.21), and the ability to settle fare in cash or credit card ($\bar{X}$ = 4.11). Under perceived ease of use, respondents agree that Grab application is easy to use and booking GrabCar is easy with a mean of 4.06 for both statements.

Purchase Intention

For intention to use, respondents agree that they will use GrabCar if there is one near their location ($\bar{X}$= 3.68) and that they will also look for one if they need a transportation ($\bar{X}$ = 3.61).

Inferential Statistics Analysis

Using collected data and applying Pearson's Correlation calculation, results show that there is a positive relationship between media exposure and brand perception (R = 0.272) at 0.05 significance level. The results also show that there is a positive relationship between brand perception and purchase intention (R = 0.665) at 0.05 significance level.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

Grab's Marketing Communications

Results show that majority of the samples are quite active on social media. People tend to check their Line and Facebook accounts multiple times a day. The findings here correspond with the respondents' ability to recall the marketing communications about GrabCar on Facebook. This can possibly be described by the availability and readiness of 4G phone reception that is now spread across Thailand and the accessibility and affordability of smart phones.

Aside from Facebook, respondents tend to recall receiving the news and updates on GrabCar rather often through in-app message center and mobile push notification. The ability to recall the news received through in-app message and mobile push notification can maybe rationalized by the fact that these 2 types of communication tools are linked with the application. This means any users who have Grab application on their smart phones will always receive communications via the in-app message and mobile push notification. Since the respondents already have and know how to use Grab application on their smart phones; thus, it is safe to assume that they are familiar with the application and remember that the company often uses these 2 communication channels to deliver the news and updates. Since Grab often informs users about discount on services through in-app message and mobile notification, it can be the main reason why users are aware of these 2 communication channels. Based on the fact that Grab uses its own media to promote discounts, it can be expected that media have influence on keeping the customers informed and satisfied about the latest offers resulting in increased number of rides. This assumption is similar to what Bart et al. (as cited in Stephen, 2016) claimed in their research that consumer's attitude and purchase intention can be influenced by mobile marketing.

Consumers' Perception

Grab has been in Thailand since 2013. Up until now they have used different communication marketing strategies including online and offline advertisement as well as events and sponsorship. It seems that the company's marketing effort works as most respondents are well-aware of Grab and GrabCar service. Not only they know what GrabCar is, the service also comes to the top of their mind.

In the previous research done by Ackaradejruangsri (2015), he found that the main reason people use Grab is because it is reliable. This is probably triggered by the fact that it is a common issue here in Bangkok where taxi drivers refuse to pick up passengers due to a number of reasons. With Grab, once a user books a car, the reservation will automatically be assigned to the nearest drivers. To prevent drivers from rejecting the bookings, Grab has a system where drivers are only allowed to reject the bookings for certain amount of times before getting banned from driving with Grab. The system helps strengthen its image of being reliable. In this research, the results show that people identify Grab as being reliable, sharing the same results as the study conducted by Ackaradejruangsri (2015).

Since there are other ride hailing applications apart from Grab such as Uber and LineTaxi, consumers now have more options to choose from. Despite product similarity, it all comes down to price and functionality. From the research, it is clear that people use Grab because of the upfront fare, weekly promotions, and the ability to pay with cash or credit cards. It is important to highlight that the ability to see the total fare prior to booking a service helps differentiate Grab from its competitors.

In addition to being reliable and useful, people also feel that Grab application is easy to use. This is definitely an advantage because it has a potential to convert users who are not tech-savvy to use the application such as elders. The finding from this part yields the same result from the study done by Keawnakorn (2015), who discovered that most Thais prefer to use Grab because it is easy to use.

Combining the perceived image of being reliable with price and simple interface, these 3 components are definitely the main factors that motivate people to use Grab. By focusing on the 3 elements here, there is no need for Grab to use celebrities to promote its services as suggested by the results that celebrity endorsement has no effect on brand perception.

Consumer's Purchase Intention

Since the samples in this survey are individuals who have used GrabCar in the past, the intention for this research is to understand whether they will use GrabCar again in the near future. Based on the results, the samples are likely to use GrabCar service again as they agree to the statements in which they will use GrabCar when there is one conveniently around and when they need transportation. After looking at the collected data, it can be concluded that consumers use GrabCar

because of positive brand perceptions that come from corporate and brand perception of being reliable, perceived usefulness with upfront fare and discounts, and perceived ease of use. The conclusion aligns with TAM, in which users are more likely to adopt the application based on how useful and easy it is to use (Park, 2009).

Relationship between Media Exposure and Brand Perception

Applying statistical calculation to the collected data, the result indicates that there is a positive relationship between media exposure and perception. This finding confirms H1 that there is a correlation between media exposure and brand perception. The results here imply that the more consumers are being exposed to the media, the more positive brand perception they might have. Since majority of the people use Facebook multiple times a day, Grab seems to imitate the users' behaviors by posting multiple times a day. This perhaps is related to the findings that most respondents of the survey could recall receiving the news and updates about GrabCar via Facebook. Based on the assumption that the respondents have already followed Grab on Facebook, this implies that they have already been exposed to Grab's social media content given that they check their Facebook accounts multiple times a day. The findings of this particular correlation have been supported by the research of Malthouse et al. (as cited in Kressmann, 2017), who claimed that information on social media can affect consumers' perceptions and behaviors.

Aside from social media, users also recalled receiving the news and updates from Grab via in-app message center and mobile push notification. From the observation, messages sent via application are often about discounts for services and Grab usually sends them multiple times a week. Because these messages are concerned with discounts, perhaps they help consumers create a positive association between these messages received via in-app message center and mobile push notification with usefulness.

The overall findings on the correlation between media exposure and brand perception are supported by the previous research done by Kim et al. (2012) and Xie and Lee (2015), who mutually agreed that consumers' brand perception and purchase intention can be influenced by repeated exposure.

Relationship between Brand Perception and Purchase Intention

There is a clear link between brand perception and purchase intention as proven in this study. Based on the results, majority of the respondents intend to use GrabCar again because the application is easy to use, users can see a total fare upfront, there are a lot of promotions, and users can choose to pay with cash or credit cards. To simply put, users are more prone to use Grab again

as they consider the application to be useful in terms of functionality. Moreover, the respondents feel that the service is reliable and impressive. Each of the aforementioned reasons fall under brand perception; thus, it can be concluded that brand perception has an effect on purchase intention.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Emphasizing the Reliability of the Service and User-Friendly Interface

Most Grab users tend to agree that Grab application is easy to use. Thus, the company should capitalize customer's testimonial on the usability in its communication when trying to acquire new users. Also, the fact that people mention reliability as the main reason for using Grab, this point should be used to promote the service to potential and existing users by pointing out the common issue of getting rejected by taxi drivers. Since people are already perceived Grab as being reliable and simple to use, the company need to maintain such standards to retain existing customers as these group of people can help spread the good words among their friends and family in which the company can potentially gain new customers.

Social Media Can be an Effective Marketing Tool

Based on data analysis regarding media exposure, the company should adapt to the modern technology by start investing in social media platforms especially on Facebook. In order to attract users to become a fan of Grab's official page, the company needs to create content that are relevant and appealing to its users. This can be done by conducting a content analysis and social listening to fully understand the current trends and adapt the learnings to its own social content. This will not only make the company perceived as being trendy but also can help attract potential users who are browsing on the trending topics to Grab's official Facebook page.

Though there are a lot of Line application users here in Thailand, some users may not want to add the company's Line official account to their contact lists as they may want to limit the usage to personal conversation only. Given the cost of having a business account on Line, the results may not be worth the investment. Even though the company finds a way to compensate users to add the official account on their contact lists by offering free stickers or coins, there is still a risk of users blocking the company's account after receiving incentives. In order to keep the users engaged to the company's official Line account, Grab needs to come up with promotions or content that are specially made available for Line to lessen the number of blockage from users.

From the study, it is obvious that Twitter is not an effective marketing tool especially in Thailand. This is possibly from the fact that the number of Twitter's active users in Thailand is less than Facebook's. It is essential to understand that different social media platforms require different content to engage with online audience. With a small number of followers, it may not be worth spending time and effort in crafting special content just for Twitter. Perhaps this channel of

communication is not necessary for brands in Thailand. However, companies need to still monitor Twitter for trending topics and see if there are similar trending topics on Facebook so the company can jump on the trend by creating relevant content.

Mobile Marketing is the Most Efficient Marketing Tool

Apart from relying on social media marketing, companies like Grab needs to focus on mobile marketing whether it is a mobile push notification or in-app message center. It is no denying that people now spend more time on their phones instead of computers; therefore, companies need to consider ways to increase their visibility on a mobile platform. Since Grab's existing users already have the application on their phones; hence, it makes a perfect sense for the company to continue communicating directly to its users via the application.

There are a lot of advantages in using mobile marketing including speed, location, cost, and user targeting. Another advantage of mobile marketing is the ability to personalize the message, which can increase the level of engagement from the customers. Since Grab has a huge customer base in different cities, it should use mobile marketing to target the right audience. For instance, if there are new services or promotions that are available in a specific city like Bangkok, it should only send communication to users who are based in Bangkok instead of all users in Thailand. This is to ensure that the messages are sent to relevant users and prevent users who are not applicable for such promotions from complaining.

Offering Something More than Discounts

Grab has been offering promotional discounts on services weekly. Although this is one of the main reasons why people prefer Grab, the company needs to keep in mind that users may associate Grab with discounts and may not want to use the service when there are none being offered. Given that there are other competitors in the market, offering discounts is definitely necessary to attract new users but not exactly a good way to retain existing users. In order for Grab to attract new users and maintain existing users, the company needs to start offering something more than discounts. Suggestions for this would be marketing campaigns that offer additional benefits to users especially something tangible such as free movie tickets or coffee after completing certain number of rides. By offering something tangible, users can have a better experience and feel more appreciated which can lead to positive perceptions and continuous usage.

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