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Event Marketing and Experiential Marketing Towards the Formation of Net Marketing Contribution Margin (NMCM)

(Study at PT. Garuda Indonesia, TBK)

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Abstract

The number of customers attending the event decreased by 12.5% compared to the previous year, 2011. However, it did not considerably affect the profits from the ticket sale, which was 60%. The findings of this study show that the ratio of the promotion costs, the tickets and the sale towards the total of the sale fluctuated since 2009-2014. It demonstrates the completely opposite condition of the profits gained from Event Marketing and Experiential Marketing that continually increased yearly. It is predicted that this occurred due to the lack of good communication strategy as expected in the company's goals.

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1. Introduction

Changes in internal and external conditions require a company to be constantly dynamic and relentlessly prepared to take advantage of every possible chance and to face every change. The success of a company is extensively determined by the responds of the customer towards its products, requiring the company to be constantly creative and proactive by creating various products. Clear strategies are the keys to the success in dealing with the changing

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business environment, leading every member of the organization to one clear goal. On the other hand, unclear strategies lead to a subjectively made decision. The success of a company in selling its products, in the form of profits, might be evaluated based on every conducted activity in order to discover the activity that provides the expected return. In marketing, this process can be done using a number of methods. One of them is Net Marketing Contribution Margin (NMCM). The total profit obtained from the selling, through both event and experiential marketings, influences the formation of Net Marketing Contribution Margin (NMCM). Level of profitability reached by a marketing activity is known as NMCM because, when using the Net Marketing Contribution Margin (NMCM) as a measurement of the reached profitability, marketers can easily evaluate the impacts of a certain marketing strategy toward profits. The profits gained from event and experiential marketing to form net marketing contribution is definitely influenced by the success or the failure of the event held by the company.

2. Literature Review

A marketing strategy is a statement (either implicitly or explicitly) in regard to how a certain brand or product reaches its goals, giving a comprehensible direction for the market segment, target market identification, positioning, elements of marketing mix, and marketing mix costs (Hasan, 2014 : 66-67). A marketing strategy focuses on allocating and creating market resources to achieve the goals. Therefore, the scope of marketing strategy is on how to define the market target in a product line or certain product. Then, the company will find its own competitive qualities and integrate them into the elements of marketing mix which are in line with the demands and needs of potential customers in a market target (Walker & Mullins, 2014: 10).

To implement a strategy, comprehensive cooperation from all team members is needed, starting from all managerial levels through staff levels that are engaged in implementing a strategy. Thus, the company needs a proper approach to view the current situation. The main components in implementing a strategy are ten basic tasks (Thompson, Peteraf, dkk, 2014:288-289).

- Event Marketing

Types of business events are meeting, incentive, conference and exhibition or commonly known as MICE (Noor, 2013 : 24). Business Events consist of activities frequently conducted by a company or institution. Event marketing is a marketing activity performed by a company, which is also a part of business event. The characteristic of a business event is the appearance of profit increase in a company or an event area that provides a strategic and multipurpose tool for an organization that will be used to realize the multiple goals of related marketing (Crowther, 2011). One strategy of marketing communications is done through an event or generally known as event marketing. The event is also used to promote tourism, universities, films, music, and parades (Bonita, 2006 : 59). However, an event needs law recognition. A comprehensive law as a guarantee may reassure the sponsors (Louw, 2012 : 38). Event marketing as a way of marketing communications is recently getting more attention from many companies. However, it was previously considered merely as a complement to other communication activities (Manajemen, Riset PPM, 2008).

In product marketing mix, price, promotion, and distribution system are coordinated and integrated toward the same direction in all marketing tools (Clow & Baack, 2014:32). Generally, event marketing may assist a company to reach its marketing goals; one of which is to increase the selling (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). Nevertheless, the company is required to evaluate the marketing costs spent to hold event and experiential marketing since the costs are relatively high. Therefore, every event needs to be analysed to determine the ratio between the marketing costs and the obtained profits in order to define whether the event can be continuously conducted (Hoyle, 2002 : 89). Promotion Costs may increase, especially for companies without numerous shares. Thus, these companies will strive to keep their distributions by giving some kind of incentives to the customers (Walker & Mullins, 2014:195).

A successful event is marked by the same success level between the product and the event itself, as well as the power to spread the feelings of entertainment and joyfulness among the visitors who are also the members of market target (Castronovo & Huang; 2012). Therefore, businesspersons decide to allocate a fund for promotion costs under below-the-line costs. Allocating a budget to promote the products to improve the selling is expected to last in long terms as annual activities (Pearson,2014:63). It is commonly conducted by a number of service companies (Preston & Hoyle, 2012:212). Below-the-line costs include the overall promotion costs, especially the costs provided to support

the selling process (Pearson, 2014:60). A large amount of the budget for overall marketing purposes is allocated by the company to hold an event. This is one of the strategies that require the marketers to directly get involved in the prospectus (Summers, 2013). The marketing costs in the form of annual events in the USA were as high as \$37 billion (Miller & Washington, 2012). In Australia, business costs related to events in 2011 increased by 19% compared to 2010 reaching \$10 billion (*Business Events International*, 2012).

Illustrates the use of media for marketing purposes in 2008 which shows that among the marketers who use technology, events are most widely used for marketing activities. Thus, modern marketers view events as a marketing method commonly used to achieve the goals of the prescribed marketing strategies. This phenomenon is projected in the increased number of event marketing professionals (Hoyle & Preston, 2012:58). The most recent study shows that, even in a developing economic situation, the marketing costs in the form of events increased by 7.8% in 2012 and by 3.6% in 2011 (Event Marketing Institute & Mosaic Experiential Marketing, 2012).

- **Experiential Marketing**

To hold an event as a form of marketing communication is closely related to the experience (experiential) felt by the participants attending the event. Experiential marketing is a process to identify and meet customer satisfaction of needs and aspirations through a beneficial activity, engaging them in two way-communication to bring the brand personality into their lives and added values (Smilansky, 2009:9). Experiential marketing may aid an organization to create an experience and emotions for the customers (Same & Larimo, 2012) and encourage them to take part in developing the product (Jain & Lohia, 2014). Emotional connections developed through the influences on the six senses during the event can create a long term relationship with the brand (Masterman & Wood, 2005 : 217-218). Apart from that, using senses in experiential marketing may create a new thing and emotional experience or unique perception.

The stimulations through the vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell may trigger customer motivation and needs, and encourage them to buy the products to reach the marketing goals (Wang, Chang & Lin, 2014). The reason behind the continuously increasing demands of experiential marketing is that it may work on both sides, the brand and the customer (Srivastava, 2008). Besides that, experiential marketing can also assist the company to maximize the ROI related to the promotion of the brand (goods as well as services) (Sharma & Sharma, 2011). Regular customers constantly respond to a variety of promotions offered by diverse products. They tend to do all the things such as submitting the lottery, bonus package, and keep responding to other promotions.

On the other hand, customers who are sensitive to prices are less tempted to buy unnecessary goods. For this type of customers, making decision to purchase something is not primarily important, but they tend to take part in a promotion related to discount (Clow & Baack, 2014:352). As asserted by Aronne, Reis & Lobo (2009), experiential marketing is company's way to process and create a whole experience felt by the customers through the most possible and best way provided by the company. It certainly can be done if the company can hold an experiential marketing effectively with thorough preparation. The effectiveness of the experiential marketing in achieving company's target is closely related to the preparation before the implementation, the process during the implementation, as well as the evaluation after the experiential marketing is implemented.

The concept of strategic experience modules (SEMs) is aimed at assisting the managers in creating a range of experiences for their customers (Alkilani, Ling & Abzakh, 2013). SEMs is then made into measurement method of experiential marketing (Natasha & Kristanti, 2013).

- **Net Marketing Contribution Margin (NMCM)**

The analysis towards profitability requires analyst to determine the costs related to particular marketing activities aimed at finding the profitability of market segment, product, customers and different distribution line (Walker & Mullins, 2014 : 338). Marketing activities require relatively big cost that forces the company to find the contribution of each marketing activities conducted by the company. This contribution can be identified from the amount of the profit (profitability) generated from the marketing activities known as marketing profitability. The analysis towards the expense component of marketing activities can be related to the measurement of contribution margin and the

breakeven point of sales (Cravens & Piercy, 2013 : 468). Net marketing contribution is the amount of profit gained by a company resulted from the strategic plan. There are two ways in increasing the net marketing contribution (Smartsims, 2009), namely:

- Increasing the gross margin without increasing the marketing expense,
- Decreasing the marketing expense without lowering the gross margin.

The measurement by using net marketing contribution margin can better describe the whole profit a business. If the income, variable cost, and marketing cost are combined, it will be resulted in the measurement of marketing profitability. It is a component of profitability which is, in majority, controlled under the marketing function. Operational cost is commonly under the marketing function. Therefore, the profit of a company where the marketing function takes control towards NMCM of the net profit can be described as follows: (Best, 2009 : 507-508)

$$\text{Net Profit (before taxes)} = \text{Net Marketing Contribution} - \text{Operating Expenses}$$

NMCM can be calculated thoroughly. However, there are other alternatives in the calculating methods, i.e. Though the forecast of each component involved. Products or costumers are considered as a part of the analysis that can evaluate various aspects of NMCM that can lead to a better forecast aimed at the development of marketing strategies directed to the increase of profitability. Pertaining to the alternative, Best (2004 :41) makes a concept of NMCM considering the market and profit growth.

3. Research Methods

This study uses scientific methods as to obtain data with a certain objective, i.e. exploratory method used as the initial research which describes a phenomenon on the research object as well as the explanatory method used as to find the relation among variables. The analysis technique used is descriptive analysis technique, where most of the data obtained are gained from the financial data of the observed object, which are then processed using a simple technique (excel 2013) to be further analyzed as to gain answers for the development of the object observed. The analysis unit in the study is PT. Garuda Indonesia, Tbk. Pertaining to the GATF in 2015, the observation unit refers to the consumers attending the event as well as the company management, including directors / head of division / general manager related to the marketing and finance of PT. Garuda Indonesia, Tbk. This observation unit is also involved in the research indicators to be measured, i.e. to support the data pertaining to the event and experiential marketing, as well as the data used in measuring the increase of NMCM reached.

The measurement for event and experiential marketing towards net marketing contribution margin is conducted through different measurement methods. The measurement for event variable is considered from the number of consumers attending the event as well as the number of tickets sold, the whole profit obtained, the income obtained from on board flight and promotion cost, ticket, as well as the total sale of PT. Garuda Indonesia, Tbk. While for the experiential marketing variable, the data are taken from the customers' satisfaction level, complaint, compliment, suggestion addressed to PT. Garuda Indonesia, Tbk., as well as the number of garuda miles members and the contribution of traffic and the increase of the total number of garuda miles member. However, net marketing contribution margin data are obtained from the data of net profit (before taxes) and operating expenses. Based on the indicators of each variable observed, the data collection is then conducted by using secondary data, through two technique types, i.e. field research and library research.

4. Discussion

The studies on the influence of event and experiential marketing towards the sale as well as profit have been previously often conducted. Among them is the study by Johannes (2007) that shows the increase of selling volume of 11.8% resulted from the event marketing held by a company. It is in line with the study from Fahmi (2007) that shows big influence of a marketing event conducted in face to face mode as to reach several selling and other marketing targets. This is in line with the study from Gupta (2003) and Sneath, Close & Finney (2005) saying that event marketing is used by a company in order to reach goals that includes the selling amount. Event conducted by a company cannot be separated from the experiential marketing. The influence of experiential marketing towards the sale as well

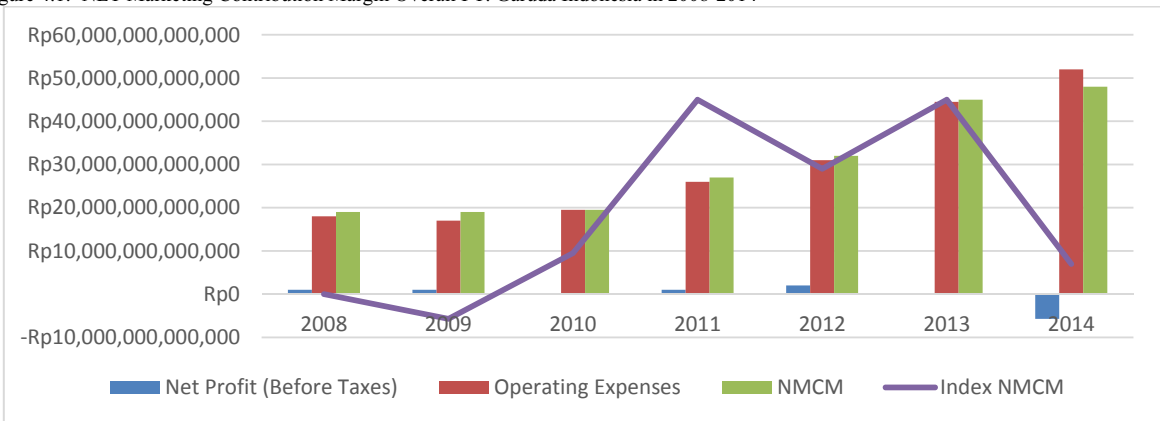
as profit of a company has been often researched previously. In 2012, Yang & Huang explained in their study that experiential marketing in the form of entertainment can increase the selling amount of a company.

It is also in line with the study conducted by Rajput & Dhillon (2013) which shows that experiential marketing has recently become a marketing tool that has been succeeded in increasing the selling amount for long term period or even permanently. However, Brito (2009) conveys that experiential marketing can build emotional relationship with consumers that can lead to the continuous value of selling. Experiential marketing can also help an organization create experience and emotion to consumers (Same Larimo, 2012), as well as encourage consumers to participate in every product development (Jain & Lohia, 2014). Experiential marketing focuses on 6 factors pertaining to the senses (smell, vision, taste, touch, hearing and balance) in order to build emotional bond with a brand. The experience can be in the form of interaction. However, the easy weast way to create that is through an event. Emotional bond encouraged through an event that involves the six factors, can generate a long term relationship with the brand that can also be sustained (Masterman & Wood, 2005: 217-218). Considering the cost budgeted for promotion, it is hoped that it can be made into a routine event that is conducted for long term period (Pearson, 2014:63). In marketing mix, product, price, promotion, and distribution system are coordinated and integrated into all marketing media (Clow & Baack, 2014:32). The integrated marketing communication (IMC) takes benefit from the management who works effectively due to the communication. however, this kind of communication is mostly conducted by service companies (Preston & Hoyle, 2012: 212).

This study is conducted at PT. Garuda Indonesia, Tbk. since the company is the biggest airline company in Indonesia that has achieved various international awards. In 2014, PT. Garuda Indonesia, Tbk. was the only Indonesian airline achieving World Airline Awards. Therefore, by using a good marketing communication, supported by good income level, Garuda Indonesia may generate good NMCM from each marketing activities taken.

The revenue constantly increases since 2011 is not balanced with the net profit before tax generated year to year. The difference, accordingly, influence net marketing contribution margin, i.e in terms of contribution of marketing activities of Garuda Indonesia aimed at generating profit. Based on the data management of financial report of Garuda Indonesia pertaining to NMCM gathered in a year, it can be seen as in the following figure:

Figure 4.1: NET Marketing Contribution Margin Overall PT. Garuda Indonesia in 2008-2014



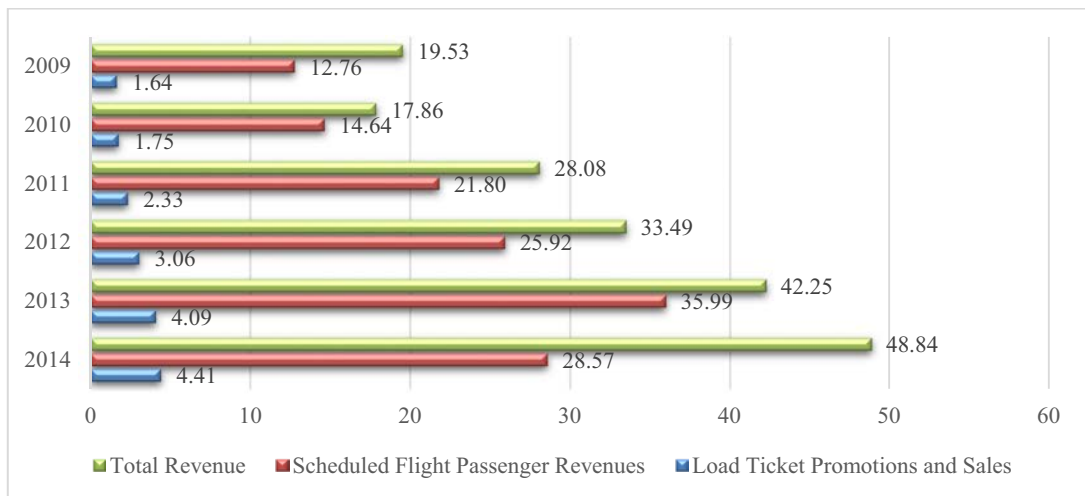
Source: Processed

The figure above shows that annual NMCM increased consistently from 2008 to 2014. However, the net profit before tax was fluctuating. Moreover, in 2014, it decreased to the level of 5.7 trillion rupiahs. Even though NMCM was increasing, if it is seen from the growth rate of NMCM, Garuda Indonesia decreased significantly. It can be seen from the figure that the growth rate of NMCM decreased significantly from 37.38% to 3.96%. It shows that some marketing activities of PT. Garuda Indonesia are indicated not to optimumply contribute to the company. Therefore, although the value of NMCM was good, the growth index was decreasing. NMCM can show the contribution of marketing activities towards the net profit of a company.

The decrease in the growth of NMCM is not in line with the increase of the revenue in marketing activities of Garuda Indonesia, which includes GATF (Garuda Indonesia Travel Fair) routinely conducted since 2009. The condition shows that the activity is one of the methods used in marketing strategies that positively contributes to the creation of NMCM. However, the success of GATF should be observed intensively so that various factors that make the event success can be implemented to other events which can lead to the sustainable growth of NMCM. The decrease in the growth index of NMCM in 2014, if it is examined from the formula, is caused by the loss of the company in 2014. If it is closely rereviewed, it is resulted in the increase in the total operational cost of the company in 2014 of 14.6%. If the cost is detailed, it can be seen that there is an increase in the marketing cost of the company of 5.65%. the increase of the marketing cost should be in line with the increase of NMCM. However, it did not meet the reality thus the effectivity of the marketing activities should be analyzed, either in terms of event marketing or of experiential marketing.

It is also followed by the cost increase of ticket, promotion, and sales categorized as the cost of company’s marketing activities. It can be the indicator that the marketing activities held by Garuda Indonesia such as an event has made a linear relationship with a company revenue increase. The change of revenue and the cost of marketing can be shown in the following figure:

Figure 4.2: Overall Revenues, income and load scheduled flight Ticket, sales promotions PT. Garuda Indonesia 2009-2014



Source: Processed

Based on Garuda Indonesia financial statement, the ratio of promotion cost, ticket cost, and ticket sales to the total of sales can be analysed that they remain fluctuative specifically during 2009 – 2014. However, In 2013, their ratio was going down from 9.04% to 9.02%. In 2014, the total of Garuda Indonesia revenue was likely getting increase yet not for that of scheduled passenger that was going down to 20.61% which is from IDR 35.99 trillion to IDR 28.57 trillion. This shows that the contribution of marketing costs in total remains decrease. It is not relevant with the revenue gained through GATF which remains increase year by year. Thus, the analysis on marketing costs made by PT. Garuda Indonesia, Tbk. is going to be important things since it has made a big costs and is expected to have a big return to company. As stated by the President Director of Garuda Indonesia, the three most important things to make sure that the financial condition of some companies is safe, are forming revenue generator, determining driver costs, and cutting down unproductive budget. Hence, an evaluation to the marketing strategy become one of important things conducted by the company. A marketing strategy needs to be carried out including Event Marketing and Experiential Marketing aimed to maximize the amount of contribution margin of those marketing activities to meet the three most important things for better Garuda Indonesia financial condition.

Moreover, based on Experiential Marketing related to the customer satisfaction, there are many positive response from customers year by year specifically for GATF which has made an increase of participants. The percentage of response in GATF 2014 has significantly raised up in terms of visitors as shown in 2013 with 113.251 visitors and in 2014 with 113.251. Thus, GATF has been twice held as in the middle of the year (April) and at the end of the year (September) considering the peak time of travelling and positive response from customers. This indicates that visitors may have positive feels through GATF so that their response is expectedly increase annually.

Considered that the amount of member growth is getting increase compared to the Garuda Miles first establishment yet not for 2011 which went down to 14%, from 113.3% in 2010 to 99.3% in 2011. Based on Garuda Miles traffic contribution percentage, the increase remains also stable but not for that of percentage in 2011 which decrease to 0.3%, from 28.7% in 2010 to 28.4% in 2011. It indicates that Garuda Indonesia needs to maintain its achievement and even to improve the service quality throughout customers to avoid the decrease as happened in 2011. In addition, Figure 1.4 shows the similar condition in which the decrease of number of visitor around 5.000 people happened in 2011. It indicates that Garuda Indonesia has made the decrease of service quality, hence the customers did not get the optimum experience in terms of sense, feel, think, act, or relate. If it is analysed based on figure 1.5, the increase of Garuda Miles member growth and its highest contribution traffic were in 2013. In this year, the increase is about 57% while traffic contribution deals with 4.3%. This happens due to some aspects related to Garuda Indonesia service improvement containing training program for Frontliner to improve their service ability with Indonesian-Hospitality-based, Remain & Monitoring program, Evaluation and Procedure simplification in line with the program of Customer Services and Customer Intimacy, by communicating/founding the relationship with customer throughout event Momentum (annual Report of Garuda Indonesia, 2013). Those programs has positively affected to Garuda Indonesia due to the direct approach from a company to its customer such as the event GATF. However, to avoid the decrease of company performance such as in 2013, it needs further analysis related to the effect of Event and Experiential Marketing to the profit which can be scored based on Net Marketing Contribution Margin (NMCM).

5. Conclusion

In implementing a marketing strategy, a company should realize that every effort gives a positive impact, especially in a competitive environment. Every implemented strategy requires coordination and cooperation from not only internal management but also customers who are directly involved. Specifically, the strategy and formulation of marketing strategy management are outlined to clarify the important steps that need to be done by a marketing manager. It is closely related to the role of marketing mix that is also a group of variables that can be used by the company to influence the customers. Implementing an event marketing and an experiential marketing in all industries nowadays has become one of the primary concerns in marketing strategy since these types of marketing communications enable the customers to directly get engaged.

The implementation of event marketing in airline industries is also commonly applicable since this industry is tightly connected to the tourism and travelling. Thus, a number of airline industries take advantage of this condition by holding an event, which is providing relatively cheap tickets to certain tourism objects. This strategy also appeals to PT. Garuda Indonesia, Tbk. Therefore, they hold several events in implementing their marketing strategies. As a result, every event as well as experiential marketing that is held can return to the company in the form of marketing profits that are calculated using net marketing contribution margin.

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