# Injurity: Interdiciplinary Journal and Humanity

Volume 4, Number 6, June 2025

e-ISSN: 2963-4113 and p-ISSN: 2963-3397

# Turning Followers into Customers: Marketing Communication Strategy of @Aw.Seserahankuningan

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# **ABSTRACT**

In the ever-evolving digital era, Instagram has become one of the most innovative technological platforms widely utilized as a promotional medium. The technological advancements on Instagram not only facilitate interaction between brands and consumers but also enable the development of more creative and efficient marketing strategies. By effectively utilizing Instagram's features, marketers can leverage the platform as a tool to increase brand awareness, attract new customers, and ultimately boost sales. This study aims to thoroughly analyze the communication strategies employed in the Instagram activities of the @aw.seserahankuningan account and to assess the resulting increase in customer trust and its impact on sales growth. The research method applied is descriptive qualitative, employing the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theory, which is recognized for its effectiveness in developing promotional programs. Data collection techniques include observation, literature review, in-depth interviews with users of the @aw.seserahankuningan Instagram account, and documentation. The results of this study indicate that the @aw.seserahankuningan account has successfully captured the attention of potential customers, enhanced interaction, and fostered trust. Furthermore, Instagram as a social media platform has proven to be an effective tool for product promotion and branding in the handover (seserahan) segment. The @aw.seserahankuningan account has successfully converted its followers into loyal customers and brand advocates, who actively encourage others to purchase the product.

**Keyword:** Marketing Communication Strategy; Instagram; Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC); Marketing

#### INTRODUCTION

With the development of digital technology, there has been a significant shift in the way companies interact with their customers—especially within creative sectors such as wedding handover (*seserahan*) service providers. Social media plays a crucial role for business actors in marketing products or services effectively, with the primary goal of expanding business reach and increasing public awareness. As a marketing tool, social media is closely related to marketing communication, serving to streamline the sales process. *Self-sale* is the process by which ownership rights of a good or service are transferred from seller to buyer based on an agreed price. Every marketer aims to increase sales, which can be measured by the total number of transactions completed. The higher the sales rate, the greater the profit achieved by the seller (Saputra et al., 2023).

Instagram has grown into the go-to platform for businesses to build audiences and execute marketing strategies, with over 200 million active business profiles. This data indicates

that around 15% of Instagram's total users are businesses, underscoring the platform's importance as a valuable opportunity for brands. With such a large number of business profiles, optimal use of Instagram is key to standing out and capturing attention in a highly competitive market (Timofeev, 2024).

The development of the digital economy has had a major impact on the business world, particularly within creative industries such as wedding gift decoration services. Digital transformation requires companies to be more adaptive in implementing marketing strategies, especially through digital platforms like Instagram (Andriany, 2022). Not every product or service automatically attracts buyers or enthusiasts. Therefore, manufacturers must develop marketing strategies that engage consumers and effectively introduce and promote their offerings. A robust communication strategy should encompass all necessary aspects to ensure effective communication with the target audience. To achieve these goals, a well-directed and well-planned marketing communication strategy is essential. This strategy aims to capture public attention so that business objectives can be met efficiently and effectively. By understanding consumer needs, companies can make mutually beneficial decisions. The right marketing communication strategy also helps build a positive image for a company and its products (Sari, 2020).

In this context, the @aw.seserahankuningan account leverages social media—especially Instagram—to promote creative and unique wedding handover (seserahan) services in the Kuningan region. The account achieves this by showcasing products and building emotional relationships with potential customers through regular content uploads, stories, and customer reviews. While Instagram offers a variety of features to support marketing activities, its use does not guarantee success in attracting customers or increasing sales. Currently, the @aw.seserahankuningan account is focusing on developing new strategies, such as collaborating with content creators, to boost sales. This approach was adopted due to challenges in promotional effectiveness on Instagram, which previously resulted in the handover service not receiving maximum attention.

In addition to @aw.seserahankuningan, many other business actors use Instagram as a marketing communication medium. For example, Savitri Wedding, a wedding organizer service, promotes its brand across various platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and its website. However, Instagram remains the primary platform due to its ease of management and comprehensive communication features (Communication et al., 2023).

The theory of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is explained by Agus Hermawan in his book *Marketing Communication*. The marketing strategy of the @aw.seserahankuningan Instagram account is aligned with this theory. According to the American Association of Advertising Agencies (Four As), IMC is the concept of marketing communication planning that integrates various communication strategies—such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, and direct response—to achieve clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact. According to Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, IMC is the process of managing multiple sources of information about goods or services with the aim of encouraging consumer engagement and loyalty. Increasingly fierce market competition demands more effective and innovative communication

strategies. This includes not only the quality of visual uploads but also consistency in branding, active engagement with followers, and leveraging the latest trends on Instagram (Hermawan, 2012).

According to Dr. Decky C. Kananto Lihu in his book Marketing Communication Strategies, marketing communication is the process of planning message delivery through various methods such as advertising, public relations, and direct marketing, emphasizing strategy and message effectiveness. Several previous studies have examined marketing communication strategies through Instagram in various business contexts. For example, Butar Butar et al. (2022) analyzed @POLKADOTKITCHEN's culinary promotion strategies through message design and audience response. Research by Haikal Ibnu Hakim et al. (2022) and Aryani and Murtiariyati (2022) demonstrates the effectiveness of attractive visual content in increasing consumer interest. Saputrie (2023) and Alviera & Aulia (2023) highlight the importance of integrating media and messaging strategies in the promotion of service products. Firlianur & Setiawan (2023) and Jannah et al. (2023) reveal the success of e-commerce and Instagram in shaping customer buying behavior. Other research by Rahmah et al. (2023), Saputra et al. (2023), and Arneisha et al. (2024) discusses the use of Instagram's interactive features to introduce brand identity and increase sales, despite certain challenges related to product characteristics. Unlike these studies, this research specifically examines the @aw.seserahankuningan Instagram account, which operates in the wedding decoration service sector, focusing on the communication strategies used to build trust among potential consumers and their impact on increasing sales. Therefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing the communication strategies applied through the Instagram activities @aw.seserahankuningan account, with a focus on the factors that influence follower trust and conversion into paying customers, as well as their impact on sales growth.

Despite the growing use of Instagram for marketing, many businesses struggle to effectively convert followers into loyal customers. Previous studies (Butar et al., 2022; Saputrie, 2023) have analyzed Instagram's role in enhancing customer interest and behavior, but often focus on large-scale businesses or product-focused industries. Limited research has explored how specific service providers, such as wedding decorators, utilize Instagram for customer engagement and conversion. This gap in the literature necessitates an in-depth examination of how small creative businesses can leverage Instagram's features for targeted marketing communication.

This study addresses this gap by investigating the communication strategies used by the @aw.seserahankuningan Instagram account, which specializes in wedding decoration services in Kuningan, Indonesia. Unlike previous research, this study focuses on how marketing strategies can build consumer trust and convert followers into paying customers. The research applies Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theory to explore how well-executed content, user engagement, and influencer collaborations contribute to increasing sales and customer loyalty.

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the strategies used by @aw.seserahankuningan to foster customer trust and loyalty through Instagram. By examining the effectiveness of visual content, interactive features, and influencer partnerships, this research aims to provide insights into the practical application of IMC for small businesses in

the creative industry. The findings will benefit small business owners by offering actionable strategies to optimize Instagram for customer engagement and brand growth. Additionally, this study will contribute to the academic discourse on marketing communication strategies in the digital age, particularly within niche industries like wedding services.

#### RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive data presentation. The focus of the research is the marketing communication strategy through social media run by the Instagram account @aw.seserahankuningan. The primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with account owners and several customer informants, while secondary data was supported by literature, books, and previous research. Data collection techniques include direct observation, interviews, documentation, and literature studies. The data that has been collected is analyzed using the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theoretical approach from Belch (2017), and using data analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction (simplification for the focus of analysis), data presentation (systematic preparation for easy understanding), and conclusion drawing (answers from research objectives or questions).

The research was carried out in Karamatmulya District, Kuningan Regency, West Java, precisely at the residence of the account owner @aw.seserahankuningan, which is also the center of business activities. In addition to interviews, researchers also directly observed digital marketing activities carried out through the Instagram account. The research was carried out for three months, from December 2024 to February 2025, with an adjusted schedule based on the actual situation when the research activities took place.

To ensure the validity of the data, the source triangulation technique is used, which is by comparing and combining data from various sources to obtain more accurate and in-depth information. With this approach, the research is able to explore various perspectives that are relevant to the object of study, so that the results obtained become more targeted and comprehensive. This research also adopts the IMC theory from Belch (2017), which explains that IMC is a strategic process in compiling, implementing, evaluating, and measuring an integrated brand communication program. The IMC consists of eight interconnected stages, from the identification of the target audience to the overall coordination of the communication strategy, with the aim of increasing brand value and achieving short-term and long-term profits.

# RESULT AND DISCUSSION

# **Marketing Communication Strategy**

One of the most important aspects that must be implemented in a business in order to compete in the market is the marketing communication strategy. In this case, the @aw.seserahankuningan account, which is a creative business actor for wedding handover services, has a marketing communication strategy that focuses on the use of social media. The main platform used is Instagram, the choice of this media is based on Instagram social media is a medium that is widely used by the younger generation from various circles which is also a market segmentation @aw. So, the use of Instagram is considered a strategic step in reaching the target audience effectively.

The Instagram account @aw.seserahankuningan shows that marketing communication activities carried out to attract interest in wedding handover services are quite good. The account has 935 followers and 276 uploads, most of which feature photo boxes of gifts that have been ordered to complete the customer's wedding. Adinda Sulihhati, a 26-year-old young entrepreneur, started a wedding handover business using only an initial capital of 5 million rupiah in 2022. Through the Instagram account @aw.seserahankuningan, she managed to attract the attention of many brides-to-be around Kuningan and Cirebon.

The researcher will discuss the research findings and their relationship to theory in this section of the discussion. At @aw.serahankuning, marketing communication strategies are evaluated based on the eight steps necessary to build effective promotional and communication campaigns. To become a marketing communicator, they must do the following:

Identifying the intended audience, based on the results of an interview with the account owner @aw.seserahankuningan who stated that @aw.seserahankuningan has shown foresight in choosing the right target market by focusing on brides-to-be who need gifts for their wedding. By utilizing hashtags such as #seserahanpernikahankuningan and #seserahanmurah, he can reach audiences around Kuningan and Cirebon. The use of relevant hashtags shows a focus on local market segmentation, so that products are easy to find by potential buyers with specific needs.

With the right strategy in determining the target market, account owners can make optimal use of digital media to increase the visibility of their products. The use of appropriate hashtags not only helps to reach potential customers more effectively, but also strengthens their position in the local market. Foresight in understanding the needs of the audience and the implementation of a targeted marketing strategy is the key to success in building a competitive and sustainable business.

Based on the results of an interview with one of the service users of @aw.seserahankuningan, he said that he knew about the handover service through the hashtags used by the @aw.seserahankuningan account. In this case, @aw.seserahankuningan managed to reach a wider market through Instagram.

Defining the purpose of communication, once the target market has been identified, it is important to set clear objectives so that the message can achieve the desired outcome. The purpose of communication helps in determining the direction and focus of the message to be conveyed to the audience. Gordon (1971: 37) stated that the goal of communication is to achieve the best quality in the overall communication process, including the "motivational" aspect. This includes the various aspects of behavior involved in communication, with humans as the main actors in the interaction.

The owner of the @aw.serahankuninging account has set specific goals to achieve the success of his business. The main goal is to introduce the handover product more widely, increase public awareness about the existence of the brand and encourage brides-to-be to choose their products. To achieve this goal, account owners highlight the product's advantages, such as a complete variety of flowers and a neat look, and use engaging educational content to build the trust of potential buyers and increase sales

Mer Designing a message, when designing a message for an audience, it is important to structure the communication element with the goal in mind to achieve. With the right message,

information can be conveyed clearly and attractively, while building a better relationship with the recipient. According to Mahmud Machfoedz, in order for communication goals to be achieved, marketers need to understand the information needed by the audience and adjust the content of the communication message to the characteristics of the intended consumer (Communication et al., 2023).

In marketing through Instagram accounts, messages that are focused on the quality and variety of handover products, by highlighting neat designs and decorative completeness, also use caption techniques by mentioning previous customers, in order to strengthen closeness and build the trust of other potential buyers. The message conveyed is simple yet effective, emphasizing affordable prices and comparable quality to similar products on the market.

According to the testimony of one of the customers who said that the handover service made by Adinda was very neat, good, and luxurious (Vera Nur Aini, 16/10/2024). This states that this strategy helps attract the interest of potential customers, increase interaction on social media, and build a professional and trusted brand image. With a consistent approach, marketing through Instagram can expand the reach of your audience and increase sales opportunities.

essential in an effective communication strategy. Choosing a channel that resonates with your target audience can help convey your message and achieve your desired goals. Communication channels, according to Cohen (1984), they are tools or media used to convey messages by individuals, groups, or organizations. This channel serves as an intermediary that allows the source of communication to convey messages to the recipient. In other words, communication channels act as a liaison that channels information from the source to the intended party.

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The @aw.seserahankuningan account chose Instagram as the main channel because this platform has many features that make it easier for him to promote and interact directly with customers. The use of social media such as Instagram also shows how important the digital world is in building brand awareness and establishing relationships with audiences. In addition, @aw.seserahankuningan also takes advantage of endorsements from local content creators in Kuningan to expand its reach. This allows us to reach more people, especially those who already follow the influencer, and indirectly build the trust of potential customers. This is in line with the right communication strategy, where these local influencers can help increase credibility and a more personal relationship with customers.

Based on the findings of an interview with the informant who revealed that he found out about this handover service through Instagram. This shows that Instagram is one of the main platforms used by people in Kuningan and its surroundings to find handover services. With a clear and targeted communication strategy, @aw.serahankuningan can expand market reach, strengthen brand image, and attract more potential customers.

Setting a promotional budget, setting a realistic promotional budget is essential so that all marketing activities can run smoothly without disturbing the financial balance. With careful planning, the available budget can be used optimally to achieve the best results. Financial planning is an important step towards achieving financial goals by designing a clear and structured plan, which helps individuals manage their finances effectively and ensure the right direction towards stability (Ummah, 2019).

In designing a clear and structured plan, the strategy carried out in managing finances and marketing by @aw.seserahankuningan is to focus on the use of Instagram social media as the main tool in promotion and interaction with customers. The @aw.seserahankuningan account manages the promotional budget wisely, including the use of paid content on Instagram and collaborating with local content creators. Through this strategy, the @aw.seserahankuningan account has succeeded in maintaining business continuity by managing income and expenses in a balanced manner. In the business run by @aw.serahankuning, the price of each handover package varies, ranging from 250 thousand for rattan basket boxes to 700 thousand for crystal boxes. The total promotional budget includes production costs as well as paid content through Instagram. Even if the budget is not very large, the marketing strategy is still carried out efficiently by optimizing attractive visual content to increase the appeal and reach of the promotion.

Based on the results of interviews with customers, he chose to use the service of decorating handover goods at @aw.serahankuningan because the price is more affordable than other service providers. In addition, the decorations provided meet customer expectations and provide individual satisfaction.

Determining the decision on the promotion mix, Kotler and Amstrong (2014: 429) state that the promotional mix consists of a combination of various promotional tools, including direct marketing, public relations, personal selling, advertising, and sales promotion. To convey the value of the product to customers, persuade them to buy, as well as build a good relationship

with them. The main goal of the promotion mix is to achieve the company's marketing targets by providing interesting information and convincing consumers to make purchases (Uluwiyah, 2022).

The Instagram account @aw.seserahankuningan is an example of using the promotional mix on social media effectively. This account uses various promotional strategies, such as placing attractive ads on Instagram to increase brand awareness. In addition, this account also implements sales promotions by offering discounts or flash sales that are exclusive to followers. Giveaways are also often held as an interaction strategy to increase audience engagement.

Not only that, account owners also prioritize direct communication with customers through message replies (DM) and friendly and personal comments. This approach supports stronger relationships with potential customers, increases trust, and strengthens brand loyalty. Measuring the results of promotions, Tjiptono (2001) stated that sales promotion has various objectives. Among them are attracting new customers, encouraging consumers to try new products, increasing purchase volume, overcoming competitor promotions, encouraging impulse purchases, and building better relationships with stores (Setiawan & Bustan, 2017).

From year to year, the effectiveness of the promotion continues to increase. At first, the market price of the product ranged from 400-500 thousand rupiah. However, to adjust to consumer purchasing power, the price is 350 thousand rupiah. Even though prices are lowered, revenue continues to increase as the number of customers continues to grow.

This strategy shows that proper price adjustments, supported by effective promotions, can increase product appeal without reducing profitability. In addition, high customer satisfaction contributes to word-of-mouth promotion, which further expands the market reach and strengthens the brand's position in the handover industry.

Managing and coordinating the integrated marketing communication process, entering the digital era, the world of marketing faces various challenges, especially in managing effective communication. One of the keys to success is the ability to integrate marketing communications, ensuring that every message and content delivered is organized and appropriately appropriate

Adinda, a business actor in the field of handover services, manages his marketing communication through one main channel, namely Instagram. Without the help of employees, he managed to maintain structured communication by scheduling regular uploads at 14.00-15.00 WIB, when many users were active on the platform. With self-taught methods and personal innovation, Adinda is able to coordinate various promotional elements to achieve optimal results.

According to Ourwersloot and Duncan (2008), integrated marketing communication is an approach that manages brand messages consistently across communication channels to create a strong bond between brands and consumers. This process involves planning, executing and monitoring messages aimed at strengthening customer awareness and loyalty, by ensuring every communication creates a positive and relevant brand experience (Bari, 2020).

Although sales have not shown a significant increase, the promotional strategy that has been implemented for 2 years has had a positive impact on @aw.serahankuningan. Adinda as a business owner revealed that Instagram is an effective platform in improving the journey of this handover service.

# **Factors That Affect Followers' Trust to Become Customers**

One of the effective factors in increasing consumer trust is by displaying positive reviews and testimonials from customers who are satisfied with the product. This shows that consumers tend to trust products that have received good recommendations and reviews from previous customers. Therefore, @aw.seserahankuninging can leverage customer reviews through Instagram and other platforms to provide proof of credibility.

Through a combination of superior product quality, design innovation, and the implementation of the right strategy. @aw. A handover of Kuningan not only attracts new customers, but also maintains the loyalty of existing customers. Collaborations with local content creators such as @sekarakay have had a significant positive impact, with an increase of almost 70%. As a marketing platform, Instagram plays an important role in connecting these handover products with a wider audience, making the marketing strategy of @aw.serahankuningan accounts very effective in driving sales.

The number of sales that has increased in @aw.semenkuninging from year to year shows a positive trend. @aw.serahankuningan managed to get 35 customers from April to December 2023, with a package price that is still affordable of Rp. 350,000. This affordable pricing strategy appeals to younger customers who are planning weddings on a budget. Entering 2024, starting in July @aw.seserahankuningan is taking strategic steps by improving the quality of its products, designs and services by changing prices. The price of the handover package was increased to Rp. 400,000 to Rp. 500,000. Customer confidence in product quality and style remains high despite the price increase, as evidenced by the number of customers to 40. With this promotion strategy, business revenue has increased to reach the range of Rp.5,000,000 per period. This shows significant growth compared to the initial period of the business.

In building a business, one of the most important things is to introduce the brand to the wider community. As time goes by, @aw.serahkuningan begins to gain attention and trust from potential consumers. As a form of commitment to providing the best service, @aw.seserahankuningan continues to innovate, one of which is by presenting the latest products in the form of more modern and elegant handover boxes.

By optimizing Instagram features, such as feeds and stories, these accounts are able to reach a wider audience, strengthen customer loyalty, and drive sales significantly. This strategy demonstrates the effectiveness of social media in building strong relationships with consumers. Overall, by utilizing customer reviews as proof of credibility, @aw.serahankuningan not only attracts new customers but also maintains the loyalty of old customers. In this case, the use of Instagram as the main marketing platform allows the service to decorate these wedding gifts can reach a larger audience and increase customer interaction.

# **Impact on Sales Increase**

An effective marketing strategy does not rely on just one method, but a combination of various approaches to achieve optimal results. Based on interviews that have been conducted, there are three main strategies that have proven to have a significant impact on sales, namely: The impact of creative content, containing tutorial and educational content plays a crucial role in building closer ties with the audience. By providing useful and relevant information, potential

customers better understand the benefits of the product, so they are more interested in buying. The impact of collaboration with local influencers, Influencers have a big role in building consumer trust, especially in the local community. When influencers who have a relevant audience recommend a product, it can drive higher buying interest. The impact of using paid content, Paid promotions allow brands to target audiences more specifically and efficiently. With the right strategy, investing in digital advertising can provide benefits that outweigh the costs incurred By combining these three strategies, brands can increase sales, build a stable business, and stay competitive in the digital age.

# **CONCLUSION**

The study highlights how the Instagram marketing strategy of @aw.seserahankuningan, grounded in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), has effectively built trust and audience engagement by identifying target audiences, setting clear communication goals, crafting tailored messages, selecting suitable channels, managing promotional budgets, and optimizing the promotional mix, though direct sales have not yet seen a dramatic increase. Key to its success are elements such as leveraging customer reviews for social proof, maintaining regular and relevant content including tutorials and testimonials, and utilizing high-quality visuals, all of which have enhanced brand visibility and fostered customer loyalty. The findings suggest that, while the current strategy is strong in engagement, further optimization—such as investing in more visually dynamic content, diversifying post types, utilizing advanced Instagram features (e.g., Stories, paid promotions), and collaborating with influencers or running interactive campaigns—could help convert engagement into higher sales. Future research could explore the specific impact of influencer collaborations and interactive campaign features on both engagement and conversion rates for similar small creative businesses in competitive digital environments.

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