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## ANALYSIS OF FOCUSED MARKET STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING CLEAN WATER SUPPLY SERVICES AT PT. AIR MANADO

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to determine the focused market strategy for implementing procedures and policies for clean water supply activities at PT. Air Manado. The research was conducted using qualitative methods with a case study approach and data collection methods, namely interviews, observation, documentation, and internet research (online research). The research results show that in the supply of clean water, PT. Air Manado implements several procedures and policies that start from processing raw water into clean water, distributed to customers concerning Minister of Health Decree No. 907/Menkes/SK/VII/. Apart from that, several management policies have been formed by the target of PT. Air Manado, whether it is a new connection policy, a tariff policy, or the company's policy in controlling leaks and pipe damage. PT. Air Manado's management strategy, namely the strategy to improve the quality and quantity of clean water, the customer service strategy, the pipeline network expansion strategy, and the performance improvement strategy, will cause the company to lose customers, even though there are still many complaints and even complaints that occur as a result of non-smooth water distribution. From the research results, it can be concluded that companies should implement a focused market strategy to help overcome problems that companies often face. The strategy implemented is a cost-focus strategy, which is to reduce costs that do not have added value to the clean water produced by the company. The differentiation focus, in this case, places more emphasis on improving customer service and technology by creating portals that can provide information related to the distribution of clean water and even a 24-hour complaint portal.*

*Keywords: Focused Market Strategy; cost and differentiation.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

A focused market strategy is a strategy that selects one or several market segments by identifying the needs, wants, and interests of customers and approaching them with goods or services specifically designed to meet those needs, best wants, and interests. This strategy is one of the management strategies put forward by Michael Porter in his book entitled competitive strategy. Each company's strategy must focus on the main factors contributing to its success; this can be seen in the actions taken by company managers to achieve the vision, mission, goals, and objectives set by the company.

Air Manado is a private company resulting from a joint venture between PDAMs and foreign companies as a company engaged in the supply of clean water, PT. Air has goals,



visions, and missions to be achieved. The Goals will be achieved if efforts are made that lead to the achievement of the company's goals, so to see the success or failure of an organization, it can be seen from the extent to which the original plan has achieved the goals of the organization.

PT. Air Manado is responsible for providing services to the community, specifically to customers, so to find out the extent to which the quality of this company needs to be seen from how the company's performance process is in the activities of providing clean water. Based on some of the results of research conducted by researchers, the problem that has not been implicated is related to clean water fees where customers from PT. It is difficult for water to get clean water, this is caused by the water not flowing correctly, and there is no notification as to why the water is not running smoothly even though customers always make payments for their water bills on time because if customers are late in making payments, they will be fined. Besides the efforts made by customers, namely providing reports regarding the problems above to the company, there is no follow-up on these problems; based on the results of a survey conducted by researchers, there is a phenomenon that occurs in the field, where the water rates charged to customers increase even though the air distributed to customers is usually not smooth. If this is not handled correctly, there will be a decrease in PT. Air Manado, According to Kompas Manado news, as of January 2022, the house connection of PT. Air Manado has decreased from 30,000 customers to 24,000 customers. In addition to the problems above, the researcher also found internal company problems that were known from the news, both through online media and newspapers, namely the condition of PT. Air Manado is currently experiencing internal problems requiring all expenses made by PT. Air Manado to obtain approval from the North Sulawesi Regional Development Company (PPDS).

This requires PT. Air Manado to increase and improve the company's overall performance and evaluate strategies related to the activities of providing clean water used by the company so that the problem of the availability of clean water can be resolved. A focused market strategy is expected to assist companies in dealing with these problems because, in this strategy, the company is directed to serve customers' unique needs more effectively and efficiently and make decisions not influenced by prices. Besides that, in this focused market strategy, the company can improve performance and the quality of service in the company's operational activities. Based on the description above, the writer is interested in conducting a research entitled "Analysis of Focused Market Strategies in Improving Clean Water Supply Services at PT. Air Manado."

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEWS**

### **2.1. Strategy Management**

In general, strategic management is a series of fundamental decisions and actions made by top management and implemented by all levels of an organization in order to achieve the goals of the organization. (Sondang, 2019: 16). strategy is essential for management, especially in business organizations, because it is a large-scale plan that is oriented towards reaching the distant future and is determined in such a way as to enable the organization to interact effectively with its environment in competitive conditions, directed at optimizing the achievement of the goals and objectives of the organization concerned.

Strategic management evaluates its competitors and determines methods for dealing with and competing with them. The first step taken in strategic management is compiling and disseminating the organization's mission. This will determine the actions that organizations can take to serve their customers. (Taufiqurokhman,2016: 21).

## 2.2. Generic Competitive Strategy

According to Porter, if a company wants to grow in an increasingly competitive market, it must choose between high-priced and low-cost products, not both. The company's competitiveness strategy relates to specific things, for example, specific efforts to please customers, what responses are needed to respond to market changes, initiatives to strengthen market position, and other specific things to achieve competitive advantage. (IAI, 2015: 24).

## 2.3. Cost Leadership Strategy or Low-Cost Provider.

Companies implementing this strategy will strive to be producers with the lowest costs compared to competitors in the industry. The company that wins on costs is not only in the most advantageous position to protect itself from a price war but can also use its power to attack competitors' positions by providing the lowest prices in the industry. The cost leadership strategy has the following characteristics: lower costs compared to competitors, a significant market share; an excellent essential product with acceptable quality with limited product offerings; and trying to make the best product features at a low price. (Herry, 2018: 27-28)

The benefits and drawbacks of this strategy, namely that low-cost-based companies can earn above-average revenue even when market competition is fierce, Companies' ability to work with their suppliers is also enhanced by their position as a cost-based market leader. The disadvantage is that this strategy is highly dependent on competitors' ability to imitate and imitate successful product differentiation strategies, and because companies are so enthusiastic about pursuing this strategy, they frequently eliminate various product features that customers consider necessary. (Prasojo, 2018: 61).

## 2.4. Broad Differentiation Strategy

Companies with a differentiation strategy will try to build customer loyalty by launching unique or different products. This strategy allows the company to set a higher product price than its competitors. One of the basic principles of the differentiation strategy is that it will only be attractive if buyers' needs and preferences are too different from one another and cannot simply be satisfied by a standard product offered in the market. (IAI, 2015: 24).

If a company can improve its product performance, minimize or eliminate the risks that customers must bear when buying it, and provide benefits that customers feel valued for (beneficial, prestigious, safe, increasing status, and so on). The company has the potential to implement a strategy of differentiation. The key to a successful differentiation strategy is to shape it around core competencies, namely those uniquely owned by the company compared to its competitors. The basic concept of differentiation includes excellent customer service, unique product features, complete product lines, the availability of spare parts, product reliability, excellent product quality, and extensive product knowledge. (Herry: 2018:30-31).

## 2.5. Focused Market Strategy

The main idea of a focused market strategy is to select one or several market segments by identifying customers' needs, wants, and interests and approaching them with goods or services specifically designed to meet those needs best, wants, and interests. Rather than trying to serve the entire market, companies with a focus strategy will specialize in serving specific target segments or niches. This focused market strategy aims to serve a limited target market more effectively and efficiently than competitors pursuing a broader market. The rationale for a focused market strategy involves total control of a small geographic area, targeting a group of customers with similar needs. (Herry, 2018: 33).

A focused market strategy consists of two parts: a focus on cost advantage and a focus on differentiation. A cost advantage focus strategy is an advantage that requires the company to provide products or services at a lower cost than its competitors, and a differentiation focus

strategy, namely the difference in customer perceived value compared to other companies. These two strategies conclude that the customer's interests are the most important thing by doing different things better, or differentiation, and the second is cost advantage, which attracts customer interest.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **3.1. Types of research**

The type of research used is qualitative with a case study approach. This research is being used because it is thought capable of describing existing phenomena without requiring any manipulation or changes to the variables studied.

#### **3.2 Place and time of research**

This research was conducted at PT. Water Manado, Jl. Yos Sudarso No. 65 Manado (Article 2). This research was carried out from August 2022 until it was completed.

#### **3.3 Types, Sources, and Data Collection Methods**

The types of data to be used in this research are qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative data in the form of reports on company operational costs and qualitative data in the form of general descriptions of the companies studied include company history, company vision and mission, organizational structure, and matters related to company strategy in implementing clean water supply procedures and policies at PT. Air Manado. The data sources used in this study are primary and secondary. Primary data sources are obtained directly from the research object through observation and interviews in the field. In this study, using the method of data collection through

1. In an interview, the author collects information using a question-and-answer method with related parties regarding the data needed by researchers.
2. Observation: Make direct observations on the object of research.
3. Documentation, data collection in the form of documents related to research
4. Internet research, additional data, and information from various sites related to the research conducted

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1. Results**

Air Manado is a private company that provides clean water and drinking water for residents in the company's service area. The result of the collaboration between BV. Tirta Sulawesi (WMD Netherlands) and PDAM Manado City (Manado city government) were the entry into a cooperation agreement with the agreement that PDAM Manado holds 49% of the shares and PT. Waterleidengmaatscappij Drenthe Netherlands (WMD) holds a 51% stake, thus forming a company resulting from a Joint Venture Company (JVC) and establishing PT. Air Manado, which has operated until now. This company's activities for clean water distribution include seven water management installations (IPA) spread across several Manado areas that supply clean water to the surrounding community.

##### **4.1.1 Clean Water Provision Procedure PT. Air Manado**

In providing clean water for customers, PT. Air Manado applies procedures generally the same as those at PDAM, starting with processing raw water into clean water, which is then distributed to customers. Based on the results of interviews with the technical director of PT. Air Manado, providing clean water for the community starts with taking raw water directly from the river; in this case, PT. Water uses broncaptering to catch raw water from springs. Broncaptering is one of the Simple Water Treatment Installation Systems (SiPAS).

Furthermore, the initial processing stage is carried out in the intake section. Inside the intake are coarse filters and sand precipitators, which function as filters for objects such as stones, wood, plastic leaves, and others. After the initial process, the raw water is flown to the sedimentation building. Then the raw water enters the Water Treatment Plant (IPA) building, a place for mixing chemicals used to process raw water into clean water. After undergoing several stages, the water flows through the filtration system to be filtered and then flows to the reservoir building, a clean water reservoir ready to be distributed to the community using pipes of various sizes so that clean water can reach customers.

Based on the results of an interview with one of the staff members of PT. Air Manado, the procedures to become a customer of PT. Air Manado is straightforward, namely by bringing a photocopy of the KTP and a picture of the floor plan or location of the house, along with the telephone number of the prospective customer. After that, a location survey will be carried out for the prospective customer if the location already has a pipeline from PT. Air Manado will speed up the process of installing a new connection.

Furthermore, people who are already customers of PT. Air Manado is required. Based on the results of the interviews conducted, it is possible to find out information related to the company's procedures for making a billing account list (DRD) that will be given to customers, starting from the meter reading by the officer, which is done to find out the amount of water used by the customer. Then the monthly water usage data will be recorded by the meter recording officer, which will then be processed to produce a list of account numbers billed to customers. In processing the data, the company will classify customers: government agencies, public hydrants, households, luxury homes, the commercial industry, places of worship, and others. Then, after the classification, the company will determine the rates set so that PT. Air Manado can issue a List of Billed Accounts (DRD) for water that customers must pay to the company. d to pay bills for water used according to the amount of water used by the customer.

#### **4.1.2 Clean Water Provision Policy at PT. Air Manado**

According to the findings of interviews with PT. Air Manado's general director, the company refers to Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution (UUD) 1945 paragraph (3) in its activities of providing clean water, which reads about earth and water and the natural resources contained therein controlled by the state and used for the greatest prosperity of the people. In addition, in terms of water treatment that is distributed to customers, the company refers to the decision of the Minister of Health, Number 907/Menkes/SK/VII/2002, concerning requirements and monitoring of drinking water quality. The pristine quality in question is not cloudy or colorless, odorless, or tasteless; this is done to achieve the company's vision and mission to provide quality, quantity, and continuity of clean water at an affordable price. Besides that, there are several management policies at PT. Air Manado, including, among others, production and labor policies that emphasize that the equipment used by the company is well maintained and has a trained workforce so that the company's operational activities run smoothly service policies, and clean water tariff policies. In assigning tariffs to corporate customers, there are two classifications; in particular, for installing new connections for residential homes, the company sets a tariff of IDR 750,000, and for installing new connections for businesses and commerce, the company determines a tariff of IDR 1,250,000. Furthermore, for clean water consumption rates, PT. Air Manado calculates based on the amount of water used by the customer, which is known from the reading of the customer's water meter.

#### **4.1.3 Strategic Management PT. Air Manado for Clean Water Provision Activities for Customers**

Based on the results of interviews with the manager of PT. Air Manado, in carrying out its



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business, the company generally has several strategies implemented, namely those related to strategies to improve the quality and quantity of clean water distributed to customers, for example, by conducting periodic checks on the quality of the water produced according to the standards set and used by the company so that the water produced and distributed to customers is fit for use as a daily necessity for both drinking and cooking, among others. PT strategy The next Air Manado is a service strategy for customers. Apart from selling clean water to customers, PT. Air Manado provides services in the form of new connection services, water tank services, water pipe installation, and disconnection services,

The following strategy from PT. Air Manado, namely the expansion of the distribution pipeline network, aims to be able to reach people who do not have clean water because if the distribution pipeline network is expanded, it will add to the installation of new connections, which will automatically increase service coverage so that this will have a positive impact on the company's income, which will increase. In addition, the company also implements a performance improvement strategy, which aims to ensure that the company's operational activities can be carried out properly while also improving the performance of PT. Air Manado's employees.

#### **4.2. Discussions**

##### **Market Strategy Analysis Focused on Improving Clean Water Services at PT. Air Manado**

Based on the research results conducted in carrying out its business activities, PT. Air Manado is advised to implement a focused market strategy because it focuses on one or several market segments by identifying the needs, wants, and interests of customers and approaching them with goods and services specifically designed to meet the needs and desires of these customers well. Besides that, the rationale of this strategy is total control over a small geographical area, targeting customers with the exact needs; in this case, the focus of PT. Air Manado is to provide and perform clean water services for customers per the company's vision and mission.

The result of the analysis carried out by the researcher is that PT carries out the procedures and policies in the supply of clean water. Air Manado has not been entirely successful. This is because customers still have many complaints about the company's water distribution. Based on the survey results, it can be explained that customers have not fully felt the distribution of clean water from this company because clean water that should flow for 24 hours only flows for a few hours or even for several days, so customers of PT. Air Manado feels difficulty in getting clean water for daily use. Based on the results of interviews with one of the customers of PT. Air Manado in the Sario area explained that he also felt the same way as other customers; he had to buy gallons of water to use for cooking and to flush the toilets. Based on the results of the interview, he also explained that he did not want to pay bills because the water being distributed was not smooth; even for two days, the water did not flow, and it only flowed for a few hours, and there was no notification or explanation to customers as to why the clean water did not flow, even though it was a regular thing. Needed by customers, besides the fact that the water bill, according to him, is unreasonable because it is expensive while the clean water does not flow smoothly. Besides that, PT. Air Manado is also less responsive to complaints submitted by customers via the complaint telephone number provided by the company. Things like this make the company lose customers, which reduces its profits.

Based on the results of interviews with the general director of PT. Air Manado and staff from PT. Air Manado, it is known that several factors are causing the above problems, namely:

1. Many of the pipes are leaking and damaged because the quality of the pipes used is poor, and they need to be replaced with new ones.
2. Irresponsible members make illegal pipe connections with the public. For example, in some cases encountered in the field, unscrupulous public members deliberately modified existing pipes to commit water theft so they would not pay water bills.
3. The machines used to process raw water into clean water that will be distributed to customers are very old, and many are damaged, but the company has not been able to renew the machines and distribution pipes because it does not have a sufficient budget.

According to the analysis findings, the company's strategy has not been implemented optimally because many obstacles still exist. Several focused market strategies can be used by PT. Air Manado company managers, especially in improving clean water services at PT. Air Manado, in order to achieve the vision and mission set by the company to minimize the problems faced by PT. Air Manado. The following is a focused market strategy that PT. Air Manado can consider or incorporate into its corporate strategy:

1. Cost focus.

Companies must focus on producing products at low costs in this strategy, because companies that can create low production costs can sell their products at lower prices. PT. Air Manado's provision of clean water for customers has operational costs, including costs for water sources, water treatment costs, transmission, and distribution costs. Based on the results of the analysis conducted by researchers on the company's financial statements, PT. Air Manado needs to suppress production costs due to the company's current condition, which is facing several internal problems that significantly affect the company's financial condition. The following presents the company's operating expense reports for 2018 and 2019 as follows:

Table 4.2 reports on operational costs for 2018 and 2019.

	2018	2019
<b>A. Water Resource Cost</b>		
Employee Cost of Water Resource	667.692.674	1.332.471.521
Electricity Cost of Water Resource	6.921.928.279	6.780.440.935
Fuel Cost of Water Resource	870.750	17.502.500
Other operation Costs of Water Resource	35.588.500	-
Other Maintenance Costs of Water Resource	-	-
Water Resource Depreciation Cost	2.599.580.899	2.309.406.072
Maintenance Cost of Pump Installation	-	-
Depreciation Expense of Pump Installation	70.626.207	79.238.503
<b>Amount of Water Resource Cost</b>	<b>10.296.287.309</b>	<b>10.519.059.531</b>
<b>B. Water Process Cost consist of :</b>		
Employee Cost of Water Process	1.554.592.890	729.293.454
Chemical Cost of Water Process	3.533.417.500	3.233.381.750
Maintenance Cost of Water Process	1.008.986.855	1.546.062.971
Water Process Depreciation Cost	74.953.068	74.953.068
<b>Amount of Water Process Cost</b>	<b>6.171.950.313</b>	<b>5.583.691.243</b>
<b>C. Transmission &amp; Distribution Cost</b>		
Employee Cost of Transmission & Distribution	5.001.857.241	4.350.812.941
Operation Cost of Transmission & Distribution	6.489.224.302	6.755.167.701
Maintenance Cost of Transmission & Distribution	343.926.605	148.714.150
Transmission & Distribution Depreciation Cost	1.900.383.452	1.902.805.980
<b>Amount of Transmission &amp; Distribution Cost</b>	<b>13.735.391.600</b>	<b>13.157.500.772</b>

Source: PT. Air 2019 financial report

Based on the financial statements of PT. Air Manado for the last two years, PT. Air Manado strives to reduce costs where possible. However, there are still some costs that need



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to be considered by the company for reduction, such as staff costs for water sources, because based on financial report data, these costs increase quite a bit every year. Apart from employee costs, PT. Air Manado also needs to reduce fuel costs at water sources. Because fuel costs experienced a significant increase in 2019, this greatly affected the company's operational costs.

Besides that, PT. Air Manado should also focus on reducing the costs of companies that do not add value to the clean water they produce, for example, office costs such as stationery, transportation, and other office costs. This cost-focused strategy needs to be considered and evaluated, especially concerning policies and the basis for determining company tariffs, because of the phenomena that occur in the field where water rates billed to customers increase even though the water is distributed to customers is usually not smooth.

## 2. Differentiation focus.

In this case, the differentiation-focused marketing strategy emphasizes improving customer service. This strategy explains that the company can serve customers optimally and must understand customers' needs and desires to make not only changes in products but also provide excellent and different services for customers so that the quality of the company, as perceived by customers, can exceed expectations. (Wibowo, 2021: 52). This strategy of focusing on services can be carried out by improving services on existing networks by repairing pipelines and not focusing on adding new connections; this aims to ensure the distribution of clean water goes well according to the goals of the company.

PT. Air is also considering improving the quality of service by creating complaint portals so that problems that occur, be they leaking pipes or damage that occurs in the field can be immediately recognized by the company. In this strategy, PT. Air is also expected to be able to build good communication with customers so that customers can provide accurate information when problems occur in the field, whether intentional or unintentional leaks or pipe damage by customers, or water theft fraud. Alternatively, connecting illegal pipes carried out by the public and customers in the company's pipeline network; will have a positive impact, especially in maintaining customer loyalty to PT. Air Manado.

## 3. Focus on improving the technology the company uses.

In addition to the strategy of focusing on costs and differentiation, Porter explained that the value chain framework is essential as a company foundation that describes two activities, namely the main activities related to the main activities of the company's operations and support activities that support the primary activities (which consist of human resources (HR)), even increasing or developing technology (Wijiharjono, 2021: 11). Looking at some of the problems that often occur at PT. Air Manado, it is best if the company makes improvements in technology, especially in terms of providing information related to the distribution of clean water and complaint portals. Currently, PT. Air Manado does not yet have a portal or website that is easily accessible to find information related to the company. In providing information related to repair routes and the temporary suspension of clean water due to damage using only the dissemination of information via Facebook, even the information provided is not updated. PT. Air Manado needs to pay attention to these things so that customers know what causes the non-smooth water distribution and can prepare themselves by storing water if there will be a temporary stop to the distribution of clean water. Suppose the customer will submit a complaint to PT. Air Manado only provides services through telephone numbers that are serviced from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. No official 24-hour complaint portal has been provided; it is just that customers have taken several initiatives by making complaints on social media and ratings on Google Maps, which have received very little attention and follow-up by PT. Air Manado. This is very useful to do so that information on the causes of water not flowing can be known by customers. Besides that,



it can make it easier for companies to disseminate information if there is a temporary water stoppage due to problems in the field.

### 5.1 CONCLUSION

PT. Air Manado is a private company that provides clean water. In providing clean water for customers, PT. Air Manado generally applies the same procedures and policies as PDAM. The procedure starts with processing raw water into clean water, then distributing it to customers. PT. Air Manado implements management strategies for its business activities, including improving the quality and quantity of clean water distributed to customers, service strategies, and expanding the distribution pipeline network. Based on the results of the analysis, the strategy used by the company has not been implemented optimally because there are still many obstacles to overcome. PT. Air Manado needs to implement a focused market strategy, especially in implementing procedures and policies made by the company. The focused market strategy that PT. Air Manado:

1. Based on financial reports for the last two years, cost focus, PT. Air Manado is trying to make possible reductions in costs, but there are still several costs that need to be considered, such as emphasizing employee costs, both for water resources employees and staff for transmission and distribution costs.
2. Differentiation focus. In this case, the differentiation-focused marketing strategy emphasizes improving customer service. Company services should not only focus on adding new connections to increase the number of customers but also on overcoming problems in the field to reduce customer complaints, especially regarding clean water needs.
3. Focus on improving the company's technology; companies need to improve technology, especially in providing exciting information related to the distribution of clean water and creating complaint portals.

### 5.2 SUGGESTION

Based on the conclusions above, the suggestions that can be given to the company are as follows:

1. Air Manado can apply some of the above strategies according to the company's needs, especially to retain customers.
2. Employee performance should be improved further as a service company to maintain the company's image in the eyes of the public, particularly customers who use the company's services.
3. For further research, I hope this research can be used as a reference for further research related to management strategies, especially generic strategies in terms of providing clean water for the community.

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