

**IMPLEMENTING CHURCH MARKETING IN ATTRACTING CHURCH PARTICIPANTS
(STUDY CASE: GROW CENTER MANADO)***IMPLEMENTASI PEMASARAN GEREJA DALAM MENARIK PARTISIPAN GEREJA
(STUDY CASE: GROW CENTER MANADO)*

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Abstract: Church Marketing is one of strategy of church to attracting church participants with marketing tools. Church participation is one of the purpose a church may set and is supported by some factors. Church participation can be seen from its congregation's involvement in church activity. Marketing promotion or promotional marketing is a set of activities to share knowledge about a particular brand, product, or service with as many people as possible with the aim of increasing brand awareness and sales. The goal of promotions is to present your product, increase demand, and differentiate it. So, promotion is the basic element of marketing. The researcher conducted this research to implementing church marketing attracting church participation. This study uses qualitative method with exploratory approach. Meanwhile in-depth interview is used to collect the data among the respondents which are Grow Center Manado participants. Findings of this research shows that Grow Center Manado participations in many aspects rapidly and significantly such as church growth, increasing number of service attendance and committed volunteers. From the results, it is recommended for Grow Center Manado to keep up with their service standard and equip the leaders, workers, and volunteers through Grow Center Manado programs.

Keywords: church marketing, church participants

Abstrak: Pemasaran gereja merupakan salah satu strategi gereja untuk menarik peserta gereja dengan alat pemasaran. Partisipasi gereja adalah salah satu tujuan yang dapat ditetapkan gereja dan didukung oleh beberapa faktor. Partisipasi gereja terlihat dari keterlibatan jemaahnya dalam kegiatan gereja. Promosi pemasaran atau pemasaran promosi adalah serangkaian kegiatan untuk berbagi pengetahuan tentang merek, produk, atau layanan tertentu dengan sebanyak mungkin orang dengan tujuan meningkatkan kesadaran merek dan penjualan. Tujuan promosi adalah untuk mempresentasikan produk Anda, meningkatkan permintaan, dan membedakannya. Jadi, promosi adalah elemen dasar dari pemasaran. Peneliti melakukan penelitian ini untuk mengimplementasikan pemasaran gereja yang menarik partisipasi gereja. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan eksploratori. Sedangkan wawancara mendalam digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data dari responden yang merupakan peserta Grow Center Manado. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Grow Center Manado berpartisipasi dalam banyak aspek dengan cepat dan signifikan seperti pertumbuhan gereja, peningkatan jumlah kehadiran layanan dan relawan yang berkomitmen. Dari hasil penelitian ini disarankan agar Grow Center Manado dapat mengikuti standar pelayanan dan membekali pimpinan, pekerja, dan relawan melalui program Grow Center Manado.

Kata kunci: pemasaran gereja, partisipan gereja

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

Nowdays, there are many pros and cons about marketing in the church. Many people associate that heavenly things cannot be related to worldly matters. Though everything in this world is the creation of a Creator in heaven. The marketing concept proposes that in order to satisfy them more effectively than its competitors. This concept originated from Adam Smith's book *The Wealth of Nations*, but would not be widely used until nearly 200 years later. Marketing and marketing concepts are directly related. A non-profit organization is an organization that uses its funding to pursue a specific purpose, such as a charitable cause, rather than pursuing profits for its own benefit as a for profit business does. Non-profit are beneficial for individual groups of people, but also benefit the community. Marketing is a common way for people to attract their friends to join an organization. According to Mary Lou Roberts and Paul D. Berger (1999), to building and maintaining customer relationship, marketing is uniquely able to engage in a continuing dialog with an identified customer in order to establish, grow and maintain a customer relationship.

Grow Center Manado is a church located on the 4th floor of Star Square Mall. This church was established in mid 2017. This church does many things to be able to attract many participants to carry out their vision, namely, preparing people who are worthy of God. They also have another vision, which is saving the lost. They do marketing to attract participants. Through this research, it will be explained how effective marketing in this church is to attract participants

In Manado City, Grow Center Church is a new church. All ages can enter this church. Not seeing the participant background, this church is open to everyone. This church has a special team that is rarely owned by other churches, namely the internal outreach team. Many things are done using marketing. And many of the church's participants, decided to become members of this church starting with marketing.

Through this research, the author will explain how the role and effectiveness of marketing in non-profit organizations and implementing marketing on church : how effective marketing approach on attracting church participants.

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to know how to implementing church marketing in attracting church participants in Grow Center Manado.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Marketing

Based on marketing concept and theory, according to American American Marketing Association (2012) marketing is the activity, set of institutions and processing for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society large. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010) said marketing is the social process by which individuals and organizations obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others. The definition is based upon a basic marketing exchange process and recognizes the importance of value to the customer. According to Kotler and Keller (2012), marketing is about identifying and meeting human and social needs.

Marketing Mix

Marketing mix is originating from the single P (price) of microeconomic theory (Chong, 2003). According to Kotler and Armstrong marketing mix is the set of marketing tools that the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target market. Marketing mix is not a scientific theory, but merely a conceptual framework that identifies the principal decision making managers make in configuring their offerings to suit consumers' needs. The tools can be used to develop both long-term strategies and short-term tactical programs (Palmer, 2004). McCarthy (1964) offered the "marketing mix", often referred to as the "4Ps", as a means of translating marketing planning into practice (Bennett, 1997). The marketing mix management paradigm has dominated marketing thought, research and practice (Grönroos, 1994), and "as a creator of differentiation" (Van Waterschoot, n.d) since it was introduced in 1940s. Kent (1986) refers to the 4Ps of the marketing mix as "the holy quadruple of the marketing faith written in tablets of stone".

- 1) Product
Product is defined as a physical product or service to the consumer for which he is willing to pay. It includes half of the material goods, such as furniture, clothing and grocery items and intangible products, such as services, which users buy (Singh, 2016).
- 2) Price
Kotler and Armstrong, the price is defined as the amount of money to pay for a product or service, or the value of the exchange help customers receive a product or service for a certain amount. Also, the price can be specified as an actual or valuable, giving value, and the price of companies to identify their products or services in the role as the regulation of its marketability (Owomoyela, Olasunkanmi, and Oyeniyi, 2013).
- 3) Place
Another very important element of marketing is a place that is also called the distribution, which is defined as the process and methods by which products or dservices reach customers (Martin, 2014).
- 4) Promotion
Promotion means activities that communicate the merits of the product and persuade target market to buy it.

Marketing Promotion/Promotional Marketing

Marketing promotion or promotional marketing is a set of activities to share knowledge about a particular brand, product, or service with as many people as possible with the aim of increasing brand awareness and sales. **Promotion** belongs to the 4Ps of marketing. It's all about strategies and techniques that help communicate a product to the audience. The goal of promotions is to present your product, increase demand, and differentiate it. So, promotion is the basic element of marketing.

Promotional Mix

The promotional mix is a term used to describe the set of tools that a business can use to communicate effectively the benefits of its products or services to its customers. In The Chartered Institute of Marketing 2004, the promotional mix includes the following tools advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling. Gary Armstrong defines promotion mix as, "A company's promotional mix includes advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing. It also includes product design, shape, package, colour, label etc., as all these communicate something to buyer." Advertising, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion, Public Relations, Direct Marketing. Direct marketing is a form of communicating an offer, where organizations communicate directly to a pre-selected customer and supply a method for a direct response.

Church Marketing

Despite the increasing interests on the application of marketing techniques in church settings over the past two decades, there is a substantial gap in the literature particularly on the topic of market orientation. Webb and Joseph (1998, p.13) state the need for a future research with more consumer behavior aspects in church context: "to advance our understanding of motivations, incentives, and deterrents that influence people to choose, to attend, to get involved, to lose interest, to stop attending, or to switch to another congregation". The present study aims to examine the extent to which market orientation affect people's motives and willingness to participate in church services.

Church Participation

Participation in Organization

Participation have long been of interest to managers and organizational scientists. The topic has received renewed attention in recent times, in part because of an engaging series of debates that has spanned a period of several years. Cotton et al. (1988) initiated this debate with a review of the participation literature (although they most likely never anticipated the debate itself). They focused specifically on participation in decision making and reached two basic conclusion.

Church Participation in General

Church participation is the set of activities of the church and its congregation when they are involve to reach a church goal and vision. Church involvement, as a context within which a person learns to live in relationship with God, humanity and the world, has the potential to positively transform the lives of young people.

Importance of Church Participation

Church participation is one of the most important part of a church's vision and goals. When a church created a vision and set the goals, church participation will be one of them. Church participation shows the effectiveness of church performance Siegel and Scrimshaw (2002) found that people engage in religious activities such as prayer and meditation to gain spiritual support through a personal relationship with God (spiritual benefits) as well as social support gained through their interactions with other members or attendees (social benefits).

The Relation of Church Participation and Church Marketing

The relationship between church marketing and church participants is when direct marketing and promotional strategies influence the increase in the number of participants in the church. In this case, through what is offered through marketing can take people's attention to be able to join the church.

Previous Research

Stephen Pratama, Chairy Chairy (2020) the communication process by using Instagram as a media marketing communication by Religious Institutions in this case GMS. In this case Instagram becomes advertising and direct marketing. So far the research discusses the use of Instagram as a marketing communication tool in Church institutions very limited. No doubt Instagram is effectively used to spread information relating to an event from a religious institution. Posts on Instagram make it easy for Jama'at to get information and get it make them interested in attending a way organized by religious institutions.

Odia E. O. (Mrs) and Isibor F. O. (2014) there is no doubt as to whether marketing has a place in the church. Churches all over the world adopt marketing techniques and tools. Marketing offers so many benefits to the Nigerian church. There is however still much that Nigerian churches must learn if they will be able to harness marketing as an effective tool. The issue this paper addresses is therefore how churches can effectively employ marketing as a tool and maximise their gains from doing so.

George Obeng Appah, Babu P George (2015) churches are increasingly using marketing concepts, consciously or unconsciously, in their promotion efforts. The marketing plans are often devised by the clergy without giving heed to the voice of the believers, resulting in acrimony (McDaniel, 1986). A critical failure in church marketing is that it considers that the Church is the maker of the products that it sells. The Church is rather an agency of God, the ultimate granter of faith products (Kenneson and Street, 2003). Also, salvation is an individualized good and mass marketing with sweeping promises will not yield meaningful impact

Conceptual Framework

The relationship between the variables in this research is explained in this conceptual framework.

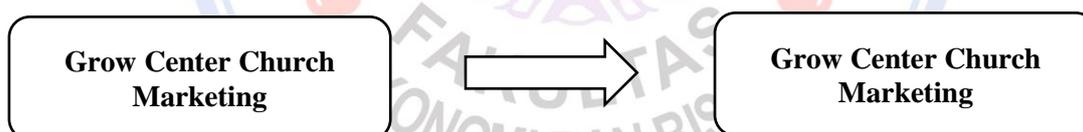


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework
Source: Data Analysis Method (2020)

The purpose of conceptual framework is to identify the implementing marketing on Grow Center Manado Church (how effective marketing to attracting church participants).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach

The type of this research is qualitative research methodology to find out 'How effective the direct marketing Approach on Attracting Church Participants?'. According to Ronald L. Jackson II, Darlene K. Drummond, Sakile Camara, qualitative research is primarily concerned understanding human beings' experiences in a humanistic, interpretive approach. Issues of research design differences between quantitative and qualitative research are traced with an emphasis on identifying diverse methodologies, including those focusing on analysis of text, and diverse forms of data collection along with criteria for evaluating qualitative research.

Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Population is identifiable group of elements (e.g, people, products, organizations) of interest to the researcher and pertinent to the information (Hair, 2006). Sample is the subset or subgroup of population (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). While as quotes from Sugiyono (2007), sample in qualitative research is not called as respondent instead as a sources, participant, informant, friend and teacher in research process. According to Sugiyono (1997), purposive sampling is a technique to collect sample of data source with some considerations like people who are considered understand the matter, can be trusted or people who has authority that will make it easier for the researcher to explore the certain object or social situation.

Data Collection Method

In-depth interview is an unstructured one-to-one discussion session between a trained interviewer and a respondent (Hair, et al, 2007). In this research, the interviews were held face-to-face. Sekaran and Bougie (2010:186) stated that interview is a useful data collection method for exploratory research.

Operational Definition of Research Variables

Operational definition is an explanation about the variable in this research. Therefore, the variable in this research is church branding and church participation. Church branding is the visual representation of Hillsong Church Bali identity. Church branding is one of church marketing strategy to create church's image, to attract and promote itself and even to gain more visitors.

Instrument Testing

Reliability is defined as the extent to which a measurement is consistent and free from error (Portney and Watkins, 2000). Validity refers to the credibility or believability of the research. Bond (2003) in Kimberlin and Winterstein (2008), validity can be seen as the core of any form of assessment that is trustworthy and accurate. Validity encompasses the entire experimental concept and establishes whether the results obtained meet all of the requirements of the scientific research method.

Technical Analysis

Qualitative method of analysis is aimed to make valid inferences from data in the form of words. According to Miles and Huberman in Sekaran and Bougie (2010), there are generally steps in qualitative data analysis which are data reduction, data display, drawing and verifying conclusion.

RESULT AND DISSCUSSION

Result

The interview is conducted among church members of Grow Center Manado. This part explains about discussion after the interview.

Informant 1

In this case, He is the pioneer of Grow Center Manado. The reason behind of his decision to start Grow Center Manado in the first place is that he wanted to save the people outside the church that have not yet heard about Jesus Christ. People from their own residence can attend church services and activities easier because it is done online and they have more time at home to attend church. Hence, direct marketing will be more efficient in this pandemic and it must be escalated.

Informant 2

He got to know Grow Center Manado from his friend who invited Mr Carlo to join. He believes that social media must be used for good and sharring website links for online church services is one of the ways to apply direct marketing in order to reach out other people outside the church.

Informant 3

She is claimed that she knew Grow Center Manado from her friend who told her about this church and also invited her to attend the church. Until this moment, She is already a volunteer in Grow Center Manado and she began from being someone outside the church.. Therefore, She is used direct marketing, mainly by directly calling her own friends to attend church services or activities due to she consideration that direct call is more efficient and engaging rather than messaging them.

Informant 4

He knew the Grow Center from his family, so he chose to join. Feeling homey made become a participant in the Manado Grow Center. Marketing is very necessary for attracting church participants because he also knows the Grow Center because of direct marketing, and also as an internal outreach team in the church, He continues to do direct marketing and advertising in his social media to attract souls, especially during this pandemic. Lerry felt God's presence and he wanted to share it with people.

Informant 5

She knew Grow Center Manado from her friend whom invited her to this church. This is one of the application of direct marketing and that is by inviting other people. She is applied direct marketing to invite her friends to follow Grow Center Manado's church activities and make them experience by themselves the personal encounter with God.

Informant 6

He explained that he knew Grow Center Manado because his parents attend the church and decided to become a participant. Naturally as a child, he will follow his parents to be a participant. Therefore, it is a greater opportunity to invite his friends attend church activities that are done online, which makes attending it easier and could be done anywhere.

Informant 7

He admitted that his wife diligently pray and he also has a friend who likes to do so as well. One day, there is a invitation to come to Grow Center Manado's House of Prayer in a Saturday morning. Though, He is admitted that his wife and him attended the House of Prayer in the first time because of His wife's friend invited them. The invitation is categorized as a direct marketing in economy.

Informant 8

She knew Grow Center Manado from her friend and got invited by her friend to Grow Center Manado's Christmas Celebration. From time to time, She is finally decided to be a participant and until now a volunteer in the church to be able to serve in church departments. She is admitted that she learned about the truth in Gospel by being a participant in Grow Center Manado

Informant 9

He is agreed that direct marketing is important to reach out other people outside the church, but only spiritual growth in God will make people decide to be a participant in church.

Informant 10

All the interviewees decided to be a participant in Grow Center Manado and they admitted that the spiritual growth and God's presence made them decide to be a participant. There are also other minor factors that contributed in their decision, such as friendly people inside the church, close distance from home to the church and good direct marketing to follow up church activities.

Discussion

Based on interview result conducted among church members who are the workers, volunteers, and church participants, from the interview result it is found that there are some main factors indicate the implementing church marketing in attracting church participants.

Factors indicate of Implementing Church Marketing in Attracting Church Participants

The media also helped the participants in Manado's Grow Center. Based on interviews from 10 informants, the main factor they know about the Grow Center is through other people, by direct marketing and advertising. Informant 1, who is the founder of the Grow Center Manado, said that this church conducted direct marketing to their acquaintances and those closest to them in order to carry out the great commission with a vision to prepare people who are worthy of God. In addition, what influenced the addition of participant in the Grow Center was the culture that made the church a home, where the lost were found and those who lost the love of the Father felt the love of the Father. According to informant 7, another word for direct marketing is evangelism. Evangelism is one way to carry out a great commission. Another factor is that many of the participants decide to become part of the Grow Center, when they praise God they feel God's love and God's presence that satisfies their souls. Coupled with the physical atmosphere of the church like family, many people choose to become a part of the Manado Grow Center.

Implementing Church Marketing in Attracting Church Participants

Based on 10 informants, there are two things that are most important for attracting church participants, namely direct marketing and advertising. Implementing Marketing on Church is the best way to get participants in the church. Along with prayer and hard work. Promotional strategy is very important for a non-profit organization in terms of reaching out to members. Overall, marketing is important for a church, in terms of carrying out the vision of this church, namely the Great Commission. The message of Jesus Christ and His love for mankind must be the driving force that motivates every promotion, advertisement and marketing strategy that a church engages in. Apart from Christ, the church ceases to exist. Marketing is simply a way to give a method to the idea of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (NIV). Churches must learn to function with the excellence of a business, but with the attitude of Christ. Through promotional marketing strategies, people can share the gospel with others by introducing and making members of the church to learn the church's vision together and carry it out.

All participants hope that the Grow Center will never stop marketing approaches on attracting church participants so that people can feel God's love and continue to feel God's presence so that people can know the way of truth according to the teachings of the church. Because Implementing Marketing on Church is effective to attracting church participants.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Marketing is very important in a non-profit organization because it is the beginning to get new participants in the church. But to make the participant choose to contribute more than just ordinary congregations, they feel a different atmosphere, when they worship and praise God, fellowship and feel comfortable in the house, because there is a slogan in this organization, My Home My Grow Center. They provide a place for people who have lost the love of the Father, people who miss God's touch, even lost children. In addition to direct marketing they also do prayers to call on souls to join in feeling God's love.

Recommendation

Based on the results of the study, there are a number of things that must be considered more in terms of direct marketing used in Manado's Grow Center, namely, direct marketing and advertising through social media must be increased even more, to be able to attract more new participants so that there will be many who join to achieve common goals namely to save the lost and prepare people who are worthy of God. And still continue to improve relationships within the organization, and continue to provide a home atmosphere for many people because there are still not many churches that have that vision.

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