Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Based Branding Strategy in Building Brand Awareness at Sekolah Tinggi Multi Media Yogyakarta

Tituk Utari
Sekolah Tinggi Multi Media, Yogyakarta

Abstrak

The purpose of this study is to analyze the strategy of the search engine optimization (SEO) based branding program to build brand awareness carried out by the Sekolah Tinggi Multi Medial (STMM) in the context of developing STMM into the Institut Digital Nasional-University (IDN-U). The research method used in this research is qualitative by choosing a case study as the research approach. The results of the research on branding strategies based on search engine optimization (SEO) are if someone types the keyword “digital campus” in the google search engine, that person will find the Institut Digital Nasional-University (IDN-U). The achievement to be obtained from the branding strategy that will be carried out by IDN-U is the level of top of mind brand awareness, which is the highest level of brand awareness.

Keywords : branding, SEO, brand awareness

(*) Corresponding Author : tituk.utari@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Building brand awareness or brand awareness is important for an organization or company so that people can easily recognize the brand of the organization or company, because brand awareness is related to the ability of consumers to find a particular brand (Swasty, 2016). Brand awareness is built with the hope of creating a positive perception and growing public trust in the brand. Brand awareness must be done properly in order to create an association with the brand in the community. Associations in society can be what people think when they can remember the brand when they find a product category, and when they use the brand name to convey a product category.

Organizations and companies will strive so that brand awareness can be well constructed in the community. Many organizations and large budget companies to embed their brand in the minds of the people. This is very important because good brand awareness can influence consumers to buy goods or services that are known by consumers (Oktaviani & Rustandi, 2018). In order for the brand to be well constructed in the community, a branding strategy is needed so that the brand can be realized and known in the wider community.

Brand strategy is very important for an organization or company in order to compete and excel in the market. The ability of internet media to reach the global market is very helpful for companies in marketing the products or services offered. The use of digital marketing platforms such as websites, Instagram, Facebook ads, YouTube, etc. which are used as a marketing strategy to promote a product or service is very important. Digital marketing can not only improve the image of the company, add value to brand awareness, but also as a means of finding information in finding products or services offered to the public.

The use of the internet for branding strategies is currently not only used by profit-oriented companies but also by non-profit institutions such as universities, both public and private. This is because the market segment for higher education is the internet generation, namely high school students and the equivalent. Many universities use a branding strategy by building websites to show their existence and reputation, as well as a means of sharing knowledge with the public.

The branding strategy is also very important to be carried out by the Multi Media High School which in the near future will experience organizational development. The Ministry of Communication and Information (Kemkominfo) will develop the Yogyakarta
Multi Media High School (STMM) into the National Digital Institute-University (IDN-U). Quoted from several online newspapers according to the Minister of Communication and Information during a working meeting with Commission I DPR RI on June 7, 2021, the development was aimed at IDN-U being able to develop skill resources in the field of digital technology in Indonesia.

The branding strategy through the internet has become a crucial activity for Multi Media Colleges to achieve and maintain organizational success. As is done by organizations or companies, STMM takes advantage of the many conveniences of internet media by using internet media to support branding activities because in addition to being effective, it can also reduce costs compared to using conventional branding techniques such as using brochures, installing billboards or through television media.

For organizations or companies, it is very important to make consumers aware of a brand (brand awareness). The level of consumer awareness of a brand makes consumers focus and then choose a brand that they already know. Several levels of Brand Awareness (Aaker in Siahaan and Yuliati, 2016) are: 1) Unaware of brand, which is doubt or the customer is not sure about the brand being offered. 2) Brand Recognition (recognize the brand), at this stage the customer has been able to recognize the brand offered. 3) Brand Recall, the stage where customers are able to remember the brand without being given a stimulus first, and the highest stage is 4) Top of Mind. The top of mind stage is the most expected by the company because at this stage the customer will remember the brand as the first one that comes to mind when talking about a certain product category (MarkPlus, 2010).

![Figure 1. Brand Awareness Pyramid Source: Aaker in Siahaan and Yuliati, 2016](image)

The development of the digital marketing concept currently has new priorities, namely user-centred, scalable, interactive and can be accessed anywhere (Pineiro, 2016). Various marketing strategies are carried out by many business people in order to adapt the concept. Branding is one aspect that is also developing due to the application of digital marketing. Building a brand image and increasing brand awareness is one of the fundamental dimensions for marketing a product or service, because the brand is one of the main factors in influencing consumers to make a purchase. A well-known and trusted brand makes consumers interested and buying the product or service (Moisescu, 2010).

More and more organizations and companies use internet media in branding to promote products or services, this has an impact on the increasingly fierce competition in getting customers or clients through internet media. One way to optimize digital marketing strategies to get good rankings on search engine pages is to use search engine optimization (SEO) techniques. This is important because search engine optimization (SEO) is a technique to improve the position of a company or product on search engines with selected keywords or sentences using a structured approach (Chaffey, 2012). Search engine optimization or SEO can optimize a website to achieve as much visibility as possible on
Search engines and can bring in potential traffic for an organization or company. The impact of using this technique is to increase brand awareness, which is the ability of the public to recognize or remember a brand.

Organizations like STMM need a branding strategy to increase brand awareness by optimizing SEO. This strategy is to get a good ranking on search engine pages so that more people know about STMM's products or services. This makes STMM's brand awareness easily well-constructed in the community so that it adds a positive image for STMM's development towards the National Digital Institute-University (IDN-U) which will be inaugurated by the Ministry of Communication and Information.

RESEARCH METHODO

The research method used in this research is qualitative by choosing a case study as the research approach. According to Moleong (2013), qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, etc. holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a context. natural specialization and by utilizing various natural methods. Qualitative research aims to explain a phenomenon as deeply as possible by collecting data as deeply as possible, thus showing the importance of depth and detail of the data being studied.

Data collection methods are needed to obtain accurate or valid data to support the success of a study. In conducting research to obtain the required data and information, the methods used in the data collection process are interviews, observations, and surveys.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Currently branding is not only synonymous with profit-oriented companies or institutions, but branding has been widely used by non-profit organizations and institutions. There is a close relationship between the brand and the success and reputation of an organization, institution or company. Universities are now aware of the importance of brands to be more easily recognized and based on the need for the importance of an identity that can show the existence and reputation of universities in the eyes of the community. Higher education is an educational service institution so that it has become a top priority to have good branding so that it can still exist and develop in the face of increasingly fierce competition in higher education.

A search engine is a computer program designed to find or search for files according to specific criteria containing keywords stored on the internet. Information obtained from search engines that already use keywords include web pages, images or other types of information (Artanto, 2017).

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques are a collection of useful methods for positioning a website so that it occupies the top position on search results pages and also for making a website easy for search engines to crawl. With the right SEO techniques, a website will have properties that make it easier for search engines to recognize the website and will make it easier for the website to appear on the first page of the Search Engine Result Page (SERP). Website optimization with SEO will make it easier for internet users to find websites by typing certain keywords or keywords in the search bar, and then clicking on the links displayed in the search results. SEO itself is divided into two, namely on-page and off-page. (Nugroho, 2019).

The Ministry of Communication and Informatics is currently planning the development of the Yogyakarta Multimedia College (STMM) into the National Digital Institute-University (IDN-U) to print Indonesian digital talents. IDN-U is a program that aims to educate Indonesian digital talent at a higher level. The presence of IDN-U is a
breath of fresh air for the education sector in Indonesia. IDN-U will have 4 schools led by 4 deans, namely the Digital Communication School, the Digital Business and Platform School, the Kominfo Graduate School, and the Digital Policy and Regulation School. IDN-U is the first educational institution in Indonesia that focuses on digital skills, so it will continue to be developed so that our digital talent needs can be met.

With the development of STMM into IDN-U, a branding strategy to increase brand awareness is needed. The results of the interview with Mrs. Ratri Nugrahini, S.Pd as the Sub Coordinator of Cooperation and Public Relations and Bp. Candra Santosa, M.Eng as the Head of the Technology and Communication Unit (ICT) at the Multi Media High School indicated that the Multi Media College has several university branding strategies that will be carried out to increase brand awareness. The search engine optimization (SEO)-based branding strategy to build brand awareness in the context of developing the Multi Media College (STMM) to become the National Digital Institute-University (IDN-U) that will be carried out are:

1. The Cooperation and Public Relations Subdivision will propose the formation of a social media team related to the development of the Multi Media College (STMM) into a National Digital Institute-University (IDN-U). The social media team will have the main task of being the center for branding and promotion of the campus through social media. With the social media team, branding and promotion activities will be more organized and can be more focused on the right target.

2. Creating promotional activities in the form of information on new programs that will be held on campus related to the development of the Multi Media High School (STMM) into the National Digital Institute-University (IDN-U) to prospective students through social media.

3. Develop an effective and intuitive STMM website as a means of campus publication. The website is one of the most important tools for branding strategies related to the development of the Multi Media College (STMM) into the National Digital Institute-University (IDN-U), because it can publish various news and information related to campus development.

4. Creating interesting content related to the development of the Multi Media College (STMM) into the National Digital Institute-University (IDN-U) on the STMM website and social media.

5. Utilizing STMM alumni facebook as a means of branding related to the development of the Multi Media College (STMM) into a National Digital Institute-University (IDN-U). Alumni are, of course, a good branding tool for campuses, because outstanding alumni are a benchmark for prospective new students to be able to achieve the same success.

**SEO-based branding strategy steps in building brand awareness**

People in today's digital era are, of course, very accustomed to finding the information they need, including searching for universities via the internet with the help of search engines, such as Google, Amazon or Yahoo. Colleges of course want their campuses to be easily found on several search platforms when people want to know about information related to the College.

Optimizing Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is one way to help universities can be easily searched on the internet by using certain keywords. The steps for an SEO-based branding strategy that can be taken to increase brand awareness are as follows:

1. Develop a website that is user friendly, visually attractive and responsive. College websites with attractive user interfaces and satisfying user experiences really help increase brand awareness, because people usually visit the website first to learn and get to know more about the university.
2. The education sector, especially universities, has the main target of people aged 18 to 25 years, therefore the use of social media as a means of branding is a very effective strategy. By activating all social media platforms with two-way facilities because it can help increase brand awareness for people who want to interact directly.

3. Utilizing the campus search platform is a popular way today. Besides the platform being used by the public to find information about universities and providing complete information about universities and their majors, utilizing this platform will of course be able to improve SEO.

4. Quality content is an important priority when carrying out an SEO strategy. Creating and investing in content is an important cornerstone of an SEO strategy. In SEO content creation it is not enough with quality content but content must be the best result for a particular search. SEO content should comprehensively publish everything visitors need when searching for keywords. Building longer content spanning more than 300 words can answer search queries better than short content. Longer content will attract links and sharing on social media, thus a competitive advantage can be achieved by creating comprehensive content.

5. Determining the right keywords for SEO, because keywords are a collection of words or syllables that are typed in a search engine to be used by internet users when they are looking for the information they need. Keyword research tools such as google keyword planner, ubersuggest, keywordtool.io. and others can be used to get the right keywords in SEO. The right keywords and related to college are pinned on the Title Tag or the title of a content that will be made to be read by search engines. These keywords are also inserted in the content of the content to be created.

6. Optimization for visitors by making a few sentences of really short content so that visitors can understand the content in one reading.

7. Create a lot of multimedia in the content that has been created such as video, audio, diagrams, interactive media, quizzes and infographics. Using multimedia in content is an effort to improve search rankings on search engines. The strategy of creating a lot of multimedia in the content will trigger a google quality guidelines document to tell reviewers to consider pages that have additional content in the form of downloads, diagrams and calculators to be higher quality than pages that contain text only.

8. Using H tag subheadings needs to be done to break up long content, and include one subheader for every 200 words of content to make it more readable by search engines.

CONCLUSION

Branding activities at universities need to be carried out to form certain images and characteristics that can distinguish one university from another. Branding in universities can also help build brand awareness. One of the benchmarks that can indicate the success of brand awareness is the traffic from the number of visitors who visit the college site. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a way for search engines to determine which sites will rank highly on every query entered into their search engine.

The search engine optimization (SEO)-based branding strategy to build brand awareness in the context of developing the Multi Media College (STMM) into the National Digital Institute - University (IDN-U) has been owned by the Sub-Division of Public Relations and Cooperation supported by the Technology and Informatics Unit. Branding activities will be carried out to build brand awareness in the context of developing a Multi Media College (STMM) into a National Digital Institute - University (IDN-U). get high rankings on every query entered into a search engine.

Multi Media College (STMM) which will develop into the National Digital Institute - University (IDN-U) wants a branding strategy that can build IDN-U brand awareness. The expected result of a search engine optimization (SEO)-based branding strategy is that if someone types in the keyword “digital campus”, that person will find
the National Digital Institute-University (IDN-U). The achievement to be achieved from the branding strategy that will be carried out by IDN-U is the level of top of mind brand awareness, which is the highest level of brand awareness.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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