

The Successful Promotional Strategy Initiated by Medan Area University in Recruiting New Students

(Using Macnamara's Model Approach)

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Abstract:- Promotion refers to raising customer awareness of a product or brand, generating sales, and creating brand loyalty. It is one of the four basic elements of the market mix, which includes the four P's: price, product, promotion, and place. Promotion is also defined as one of five pieces in the promotional mix or promotional plan. These are personal selling, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, and publicity. A promotional mix specifies how much attention to pay to each of the five factors, and how much money to budget. Medan Area University has a promotional strategy to recruit new students in an effort to increase the number of students. The strategy is by utilizing the professional personnel of academicians and citizens of the campus, as well as the activities carries out through a variety of media, which is an appropriate strategy to achieve the goal of promotion. Its promotional activity has resulted in an increase in the number of new students significantly. Apparently, more diverse promotional activities have increasing the results obtained.

Keywords: *Promotion; Strategy; Recruitment; Macnamara*

I. INTRODUCTION

Currently, Medan Area University has set its new vision that is creating an innovative human resource and morals. In realizing its vision, UMA in implementing *tri dharma perguruan tinggi* in education, as well as research and community service, always refers to the quality oriented. There are three main competencies that have been defined as "science", "personality" and "entrepreneurship". Medan Area University is established since 1983, now it has seven faculties with 17 study programs and postgraduate program with 3 departments. The number of graduates has exceeded 12.000 people scattered in various government and private agencies. In 2006/2007, the number of totaling students are 4.000 where new students tend to increase compared by previous year. Promotion for any colleges, especially private universities, is an activity that is almost equal with marketing activities in the business world. Marketing is a process of social, and managerial by which individuals or groups get what they need and want through the creation and exchange products and value with others (Kotler, 1996: 13). So in this case, promotion done by universities require a serious planning, analysis, implementation and control taken seriously. So that the sale can assure the public and impose his choice to continue their studies to universities concerned.

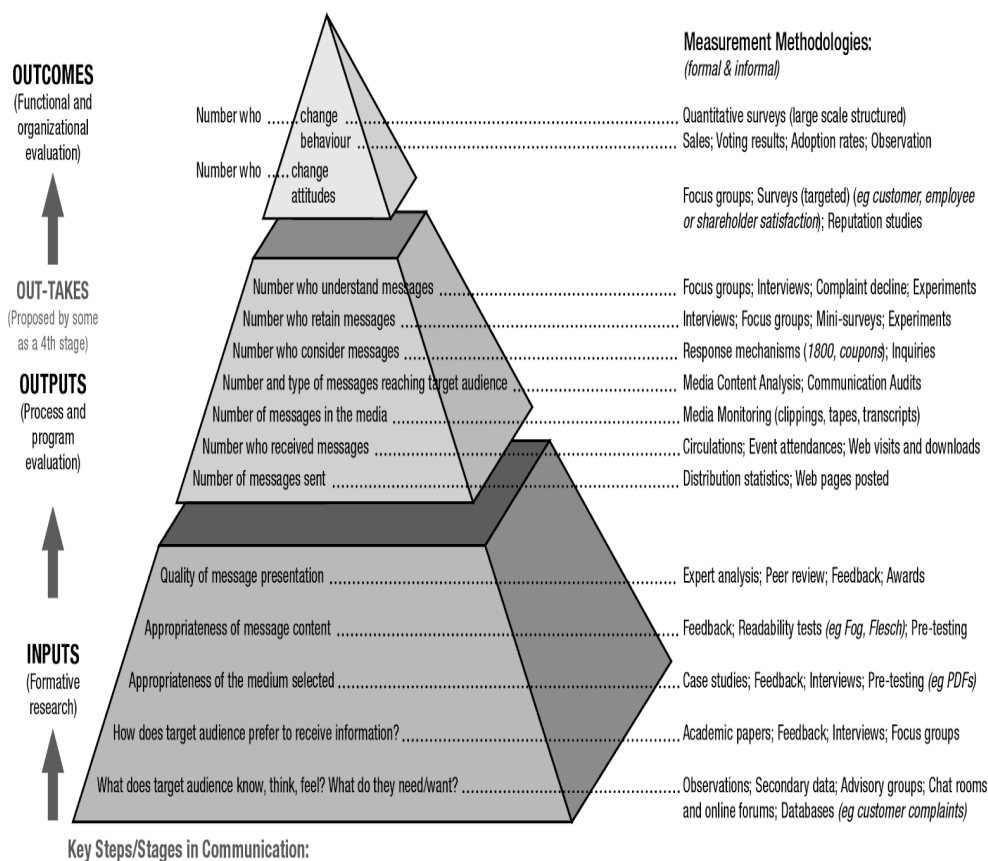
Each year, Medan Area University carries out promotional activities in various forms. Obviously, it is done with variety programs, including visiting some schools, advertising, brochure distribution, utilization print and electronic media, as well as other forms of promotion. This promotional activity has certainly a purpose target to attract high school students to continue their studies at one of the faculty or study program at Medan Area University. In addition, the cost incurred for promotional activities is certainly not little. There are several assumptions relating to the implementation of the campaign that has been conducted by Medan Area University. Among others, the promotion which does not meet the set targets or goals. Promotional budgets is big enough and it not used effectively, the promotion is not done on the basis of togetherness and frequency of promotions. It does not consider the reality or field conditions. To know various things above, there should be evaluation of the promotional strategies conducted by the Medan Area University.

II. METHODOLOGY

In this research, promotional programs done by Medan Area University (UMA) will be analyzed using a macro model evaluation offered by Jim Macnamara, a Professor in Public Communication, University of Technology Sydney. This model form is a Pyramid (Gregory, 2004: 147). At the basic part is input consisting of information and planning. While at the top is the objective or outcome. Each activity is separated into several step processes of communication. Input in this model is recognized by asking questions to the user to make an assessment of the quality of information, communication and content selection medium. After that, output is considered of that which is generated by the communication.

Furthermore, results or outcomes to be considered is what the truth achieved by communication itself. Along the lines of the pyramid, there is a list evaluation methods which may be used. Each project requires a modification of the model, but the concept remains essentially the same. The strength of the model is able to identify a set of evaluation methods. Evaluation method is sophisticated in the top of the Pyramid, which is the measure outcomes, and methods of which is at the bottom of the pyramid is more fundamental and can be considered as a tool for testing. In this study, the evaluation model of Jim Macnamara is modified as appropriate as the research object, that is the promotion of UMA, as shown below:

Figure 1
Pyramid Model of PR Created by Macnamara



Here, input means promotion planning by Medan Area University, while the output is how input held that the forms of promotional activities since 2005/06. Outcome or end result is the number of new students as a result of promotion conducted. The third stage is analyzed using the methods of evaluation relevant documents such as studies and content analysis. Organizations must have an idea about the level of the desired transaction with the target market. At one time, the level of actual demand can be below, equal or above the desired level of demand. That is possible situation where there is no demand, low demand, inadequate demand, excessive demand and so on. Marketing management must deal with a variety of different circumstances. The marketing concept is the business philosophy which appears to challenge preconceived notions. The marketing concept says that the key to achieving organizational goals consists of determining the needs and wants of target markets and provide the expected satisfaction effectively and efficiently than competitors. The marketing concept has been expressed in various ways:

- a. Discover and fulfill market demands
- b. Make what can be sold and do not try to sell what you can make.
- c. Love your customers, not your product.
- d. Do it according to your ways
- e. You decide

f. Do everything within the limits of your ability to appreciate the customer money which is full of value, quality and satisfaction. Many organizations have turned to marketing as the ultimate answer to the problem at hand. Among 3,000 private colleges in America, more than 200 have been closed since 1965 because it is not able to attract enough students or funding or both (Kotler, 1996: 39). It is thus important and strategic promotional efforts for the survival of private universities.

2.1 Promotion

According to Wikipedia, promotion refers to raising customer awareness of a product or brand, generating sales, and creating brand loyalty. It is one of the four basic elements of the market mix, which includes the four P's: price, product, promotion, and place. Promotion is also defined as one of five pieces in the promotional mix or promotional plan. These are personal selling, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, and publicity. A promotional mix specifies how much attention to pay to each of the five factors, and how much money to budget.

There are three fundamental objectives of promotion. These are:

1. To present information to consumers and others.
2. To increase demand.
3. To differentiate a product.

The purpose of a promotion and thus its promotional plan can have a wide range, including: sales increases, new product acceptance, creation of brand equity, positioning, competitive retaliations, or creation of a corporate image. The term 'promotion' tends to be used internally by the marketing function. To the public or the market, phrases like "special offer" are more common. Examples of a fully integrated, long-term, and large-scale promotion are My Coke Rewards in the USA or Coke Zone in the UK and Pepsi Stuff.

2.2 Strategy

In the Indonesian dictionary, strategy is a careful plan of the activities to achieve specific goals (Alwi, 2001: 1092). While audit communication is used to monitor and evaluate the media, messages and communication climate within the organization. Audit communication is a research that is used to describe and measure public relation activities and provides guidelines for public relations programs in the future. The purpose of this audit is to improve efficiency, so that needs to be done regularly and repeatedly.

III. DISCUSSION

UMA campus is located on two sites, called Campus 1 and 11. Campus 1 is called the Main Campus located at Jalan Kolam, Estate Medan, Medan. Faculties contained on Campus I are: Engineering, Agriculture, Law, Social and Political Science, Psychology and Biology. Campus II is located on the road No.79B Medan Setia Budi. In this location, the lectures are held in the morning and evening. On the morning of lectures organized for the Faculty of Economics, while at night in addition to the Faculty of Economics also Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Engineering, Law, and Psychology. At this location also organized lectures for the Graduate Program which consists of the Master of Public Administration, Master of Agribusiness Management and Master in Business Law. At the age of 25 years, Medan Area University has been managing 17 SI Programs and 4 Master Programs. In general, study program at Medan Area University has been accredited with the average of B grade. The number of permanent lecturers as many as 172 people consisting of 13 persons who are Doctor (3 of them professors), 88 Masters and the rest with S1 degree (most are following post-graduate education). Non-permanent lecturer are as many as 75 people including 20 doctoral degrees, 8 of them professors and 30 master degree. Thus, the total lecturers in UMA are as many as 247 people. To support the process of teaching and administration, UMA has 182 employees as administrative personnel, laboratories and libraries.

3.1 Data Source

This research investigates the promotional strategies of Medan Area University in recruiting new students. In this case, the primary data source is a document relating to the policies, processes and results of promotion at 2005/2006. In addition to the primary data source, this research also uses secondary data source that any reference which can be used to expand and refine the analysis. Of course, books, articles and research results related to the promotion and communication audits will serve as a secondary data source.

3.2 Techniques in Collecting Data

Data collection techniques are the techniques or methods that may be used by researcher to collect data. There are several techniques of data collection conducted by researcher namely:

a. Documentation

Documents related to the promotion conducted by Medan Area University during the past three years, will be compiled as a whole. This course will be contacted interested parties, both at the university level as well as the foundation and the parties which are deemed to have or save the document. Among the necessary documents are matters relating to the planning and preparing promotion, equipment, promotional activities and the results of the promotion.

b. Interview

In Indonesian dictionary, interview is a conversation between researcher and someone who hopes to get information and informs someone who is assumed to have important information about an object (Berger, 2000: 111). The interview is a data collection techniques which is used to obtain information directly from its source. Interviews in qualitative research is referred to as in-depth interviews and special. In-depth interview is a way of collecting data or information by means of direct face to face with the informant in order to obtain complete data deepest. Special interview is held by drawing a question and answer verbally to the chairman of the promotion committee in recruiting new students.

3.3 Technique in Analyzing Data

The data collected from primary sources, whether obtained through interviews and observations, will be analyzed by qualitative approach which refers to the Model audit approach communications by Macnamara. Data analysis in qualitative-constructivist approach which is preceded by efforts to uncover the trustworthiness of the research subjects, namely checking the accuracy and honesty of the subject of research in uncovering the reality. Trustworthiness is tested through testing: credibility of the subject, with test answers questions relating to the experience and knowledge of the promotion committee.

Next is testing the authenticity, the researcher provides opportunities and facilitate the construction disclosure of personal details. Furthermore, researcher conducts triangulation analysis, which analyzes the answers to the subject of research by examining authenticity based on empirical data exist. Researcher becomes facilitators to test the validity of each answer based on documents or other data, as well as logical reasoning. The next step to do inter-subjectivity analysis, meaning that all the views, opinions or data from a research subject, discussed with the opinions, views, or data from other subjects.

The results of these interview is analyzed and interpreted using the categories of analysis (filling system) which has been determined by reference to the communication audit promoted by Macnamara. Documents relating to the promotion is divided into three stages, namely input (planning), output (activities) and outcomes (results). The third stage is analyzed using the methods of evaluation which are relevant as a study document and content analysis.

3.4 Types of Promotional Strategy

Types of promotional activities aligned to be easily accepted by the public at large and has a variety of types of activities that correspond to the needs of the community. Implementation time adapted to the appropriate conditions for students so as not to interfere with activities of teaching and learning in schools. Information provided arranged in a complete, clear and accurate and packaged and presented attractively. In the promotion 2005/2006, there are eight promotional activities that have been carried out (see Report 2005/06), namely:

a. Installation of Banners

The installation of banners is on May till July 2005. Having regard to locations and places that are strategic both in the city of Medan and in the regions of 11 regencies/ cities in North Sumatra, banners of UMA is installed totaling 107 pieces. Some of these banners have in cooperation with Medan authority, and the rest is independently. The content of the banners relates to information and the acceptance of new students in UMA, congratulations following national examination and congratulations on the following of SPMB.

b. Distribution of Brochures

Brochures are distributed at schools and campuses held SPMB. In the year 2005/2006, brochure distribution involves lecturers, employees and students. Brochures distributed consists of UMA brochure coupled with brochures faculties total amounted to approximately 6,000 sheets.

c. Radio Advertisement

Radio advertising promotional activities are conducted in July 2005 by three spot and in August 2005 by two spots. This advertisement is broadcast by several radio stations such as RRI Pro2 FM, Radio Sonya

Medan, Siantar CAS Radio, Radio Bayu Kabanjahe, Radio Pujangga Swara Rantau Prapat, Radio Swaracaraka Yudhatama Binjai, Radio 107 Kalamaira Angaraini Langkat and Radio Mass Mandailing Natal.

d. Printed Media Advertising

Advertising in print media is also done to get prospective students which can learn about UMA after the unveiling of SPMB. In 2005/2006, UMA advertisement is published in two newspapers: Waspada Newspaper and Analisa Newspaper.

e. Installation of Billboards

There are two billboards of UMA-shaped vertical and horizontal mounted in strategic places. Installation of billboards is done in cooperation with PT Star Indonesia and UMA.

f. Visiting Government and Private Agencies

Visiting to both government agencies and private is intended to build cooperation in improving the quality of human resources. Hopefully, the employees at the institution concerned may continue in the UMA lectures at undergraduate or postgraduate level appropriate that course.

g. Radio Talk Show

UMA promotion through radio talk show is first performed on the 2005/2006 campaign. This activity involves rector, graduation, faculty and execution units as well as students. Talk show is performed on various radio stations which also broadcast the advertisement UMA. This activity is turned out to get the attention of the public at large, interactive dialogue proved to be a positive response from the audience.

h. Star Education Expo

This education exhibition is held at Balai Raya Tiara Convention in cooperation with PT Star Indonesia. In these activities, it stands Bureau of Psychology Consulting of UMA that can demonstrate psychological test tools. Stand UMA always fills with people and students who want to do a psychological test.

3.5 The Results Achieved

The results of the promotion in 2005/06 totaled 1.085 students join at seven faculties. For more details, can be seen at the following table:

Table. 1
Result in Accepting New Students in 2005/06

Faculty	Number of New Students	Percentage
Techniques	128	11.80%
Agriculture	47	4.33%
Economics	359	33.08%
Law	184	16.95%
Social Politics	81	7.46%
Psychology	282	26.00%
Biology	4	0.38%
Total	1,085	100%

Source: Adapted from reports of new admissions in 2005/06

IV. CONCLUSION

Medan Area University has a promotional strategy to recruit new students in an effort to increase the number of students. The strategy is by utilizing the professional personnel of academicians and citizens of the campus, as well as the activities carries out through a variety of media, which is an appropriate strategy to achieve the goal of promotion. Its promotional activity has resulted in an increase in the number of new students significantly. Apparently, more diverse promotional activities have increasing the results obtained. Anyhow, it

still needs more creative thinking and innovative in packaging promotional activities. However, though the external promotional activities have been done bigger, but do not ignore internal promotion. Therefore, in effort to increase the quantity, but it must be accompanied by a commitment to improve the quality. If the quality orientation puts forward, of course, the promotional activities will be spared from the things that are manipulative.

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