

ANALYSIS OF THE MARKETING STRATEGY FOR FREIGHT FORWARDING SERVICES AT THE HEAD OFFICE OF PT KAY OCEAN INDONESIA IN SEMARANG

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Abstract

This study analyzes the marketing strategy of PT Kay Ocean Indonesia, a freight forwarding company based in Semarang, which has experienced difficulties in consistently achieving its monthly profit targets. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the company's marketing strategy amid increasing industry competition. The analysis integrates Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP), the 7P service marketing mix, and SWOT Analysis. The findings reveal that the company applies geographic segmentation, targeting customers in Central Java and Yogyakarta, and positions itself as a service-oriented freight forwarder with a commitment to halal logistics certification. The 7P analysis indicates that product, place, process, and customer service are relatively well implemented, while price competitiveness, promotion, human resources, and physical evidence remain suboptimal. Furthermore, the SWOT analysis identifies key internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats that influence business performance. The study concludes that improving digital marketing, enhancing pricing strategies, and strengthening human resource capabilities are essential to increase competitiveness and achieve profit targets. These findings provide practical insights for freight forwarding companies in developing more effective marketing strategies.

Keywords

STP Analysis, SWOT Analysis, 7P Marketing Mix, Freight Forwarder, Marketing Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of both domestic and international trade, particularly export and import activities, has significantly increased the demand for logistics and distribution services. Compared to domestic trade, international trade is considerably more complex due to regulatory requirements and the involvement of multiple stakeholders (Aprita & Adhitya, 2020). Many businesses actors in international trade lack understanding of applicable regulations and procedures, leading them to rely on third-party service providers commonly known as freight forwarders.

A freight forwarder is a service company responsible for managing export and import activities, including shipping, transportation, and cargo handling through multimodal transport systems such as land, sea, and air (Mandasari et al., 2021). Freight forwarders play a critical role in facilitating the movement of goods from sellers to buyers and handling various logistical requirements, including warehousing, regulatory compliance, certification, and documentation (Dwiguna et al., 2024). By delegating logistics responsibilities to professional freight forwarders, companies can focus more on their core business activities (Aidina & Suwandi, 2023).

Currently, the number of freight forwarding companies continues to grow, resulting in increasingly intense competition (Karimah, 2023). This condition requires companies to implement effective marketing strategies that align with customer needs and preferences (Mulyati & Fauzia, 2020). Marketing is used to develop and run business operations, achieve sales and profits in line with set targets, maintain the company's existence, and face competition, particularly from competitors in the same industry. Marketing plays a crucial role in achieving sales targets, maintaining business sustainability, and building long term relationships with customers (Windi & Mursid, 2021). Marketing is a series of deliberate activities designed to ensure that the products produced by company whether goods or services can be utilized and enjoyed by customers.

Marketing is a vital element required by every company, including freight forwarders, to market logistics services such as handling and managing export and import shipments to customers. PT Kay Ocean Indonesia, located in Semarang, is one of the freight forwarding companies providing logistics services for both domestic and international shipments. As a freight forwarder, it is vital for PT Kay Ocean Indonesia to engage in marketing to bring its services closer to customers and achieve optimal profit.

This profit is generated from freight forwarding services, which include the coordination and management of transportation and shipping activities for both domestic and international (export–import) operations. PT Kay Ocean Indonesia has established a monthly profit target for its head office in Semarang, amounting to IDR 170,000,000. This target serves as a key performance benchmark for evaluating the company's sales performance. The following data present the monthly profit achieved by the Semarang head office from January to November 2024.

Table 1. Sales Profit of PT Kay Ocean Indonesia, Semarang (January-November 2024)

No	Month	Sales Profit	
1	January	IDR	73.401.744
2	February	IDR	49.752.380
3	March	IDR	126.173.370
4	April	IDR	54.027.318
5	May	IDR	307.234.884
6	June	IDR	8.500.745
7	July	IDR	24.962.153
8	August	IDR	134.103.182
9	September	IDR	19.299.194
10	October	IDR	40.432.602
11	November	IDR	24.564.318

Source: Compiled and processed by the author (2025)

Based on the data above, throughout 2024, the head office of PT Kay Ocean Indonesia in Semarang was only able to achieve its sales profit target once, namely in May. In contrast, the targets for the remaining months: January, February, March, April, June, July, August, September, October, and November were not achieved. Achieving sales profit targets is crucial for companies, including PT Kay Ocean Indonesia, as it serves as a primary source of revenue to support business operations, sustain organizational performance, and remain competitive in an increasingly intense freight forwarding industry. Failure to consistently meet these targets may hinder business growth, reduce market share, and threaten the company's sustainability due to its inability to compete effectively with competitors. Therefore, PT Kay Ocean Indonesia requires an appropriate marketing strategy to improve sales performance and achieve its profit targets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Marketing

Service are intangible products offered by one party to another without resulting in any transfer of ownership. Service marketing refers to the process of creating, offering, and delivering valuable service products to individuals or groups who need or desire them (Fatihudin & Firmansyah, 2019). It primarily focuses on achieving customer satisfaction through the value derived from service utilization. Service marketing encompasses organizational activities aimed at delivering service offerings that can be experienced and benefited from by customers, even though they cannot be physically seen, touched, or possessed (Hasan et al., 2022). According to Fandy (2019)

service marketing is characterized by several distinctive features that differentiate it from goods marketing, including intangibility, variability (heterogeneity/inconsistency), inseparability, perishability, and lack of ownership.

Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) in Service Markets

Segmentation is the initial step in STP analysis, involving the division of a heterogeneous market into smaller, homogeneous groups based on shared characteristics (Fandy, 2019). It serves as a fundamental basis for designing service marketing strategies and allocating organizational resources effectively. Market segmentation in services can be categorized into geographic, demographic, behavioral, and psychographic segmentation.

Targeting refers to the process of evaluating and selecting the most appropriate market segments to serve (Fandy, 2019). Since not all consumers share the same needs and preferences, companies must focus on specific segments that offer the greatest potential for profitability and efficiency. Effective targeting enables firms to identify and prioritize market segments with the highest attractiveness and alignment with their service offerings (Rina, 2024). This process involves assessing opportunities within each segment to determine the most suitable target market.

Positioning is the process of establishing a distinct image of a product, brand, or company in the minds of both existing and potential customers relative to competitors (Fandy, 2019). As the final stage of STP analysis, positioning not only ensures that a product is easily recognized and remembered but also shapes customer perceptions and preferences. It is a strategic effort to attract customer attention, differentiate offerings, and influence purchasing decisions.

Service Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is a strategic framework consisting of a combination of controllable internal marketing elements used to design and implement marketing programs. Each element influences customer responses and demand for the products or services offered by the company. Therefore, the marketing mix is widely recognized as an effective and universal strategy to support companies in delivering value and meeting the needs of their target markets. In the context of services, the marketing mix functions as a tool to shape the characteristics and value propositions of service offerings (Fandy, 2019). The service marketing mix is commonly conceptualized as the 7P framework, which includes product, price, promotion, place, people, process, physical evidence, and customer service.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a strategic tool used to assess and evaluate a company's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats (Rina, 2024). This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the internal and external factors that influence business performance. By applying SWOT analysis, companies are able to formulate and develop

marketing strategies more effectively and efficiently. In addition, it enables firms to identify their market position, recognize potential opportunities, and anticipate challenges that may arise in a competitive business environment.

METHODS

This study was conducted at the head office of PT Kay Ocean Indonesia, located in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to provide an in-depth understanding of the company's marketing strategy as a freight forwarding service provider. The study was motivated by the company's inability to consistently achieve its predetermined sales profit targets, highlighting the need for a more effective marketing strategy amid increasingly intense competition within the freight forwarding industry. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with selected informants, direct observation, and documentation conducted at the research site. Informants were determined using a purposive sampling technique, focusing on employees who possess relevant knowledge and authority in the company's service marketing activities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) Analysis of PT Kay Ocean Indonesia Semarang

The segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) strategy of PT Kay Ocean Indonesia, Semarang, has been formulated in a clear and specific manner. The company applies geographic segmentation, categorizing its market based on regional characteristics and location. In terms of targeting, the company focuses on businesses located in Central Java and Yogyakarta, particularly those engaged in export and import activities. Regarding positioning, PT Kay Ocean Indonesia positions itself as a freight forwarding company that delivers high-quality services while maintaining a strong commitment to halal logistics certification. This positioning emphasizes compliance with Islamic principles in ensuring the halal integrity of cargo handling and distribution processes. Halal logistics certification can serve as a distinctive positioning element for PT Kay Ocean Indonesia. This certification may create added value for customers in industries such as food, beverages, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and other halal-sensitive products that require assurance of halal integrity throughout the logistics process. By emphasizing this certification, the company can differentiate itself from competitors and strengthen its competitive advantage in specific market segments.

2. Marketing Mix (7P) Analysis of PT Kay Ocean Indonesia Semarang

The service marketing mix of PT Kay Ocean Indonesia Semarang is described as follows:

a. Product

The company provides a wide range of cargo delivery services that are comprehensive and adaptable to customer needs. These services include both domestic and international shipments through air freight, sea freight, and land transportation. In addition, the company offers customs clearance services (PPJK), covering the preparation of import declarations (PIB) and export declarations (PEB), which enhances the overall service value offered to customers.

b. Price

The pricing strategy of the company is relatively less competitive compared to its competitors. This condition is primarily influenced by the high procurement or buying costs incurred from third-party vendors. As a result, the selling price offered to customers tends to be higher. Therefore, strategic efforts are required, such as establishing long-term cooperation contracts with vendors—including shipping liners and trucking companies—to reduce procurement costs and improve price competitiveness in the market.

c. Place

The company is strategically located near the city center, offering easy accessibility for customers. Its location is also close to key stakeholders in logistics activities, such as airports, seaports, customs offices, and shipping liners, which supports operational efficiency. Moreover, the presence of competitors in the surrounding area contributes to a more dynamic competitive environment. In addition to its main office in Semarang, the company also operates a branch office in Jakarta to support service distribution.

d. Promotion

Promotional activities are conducted through various channels, including the company website, social media, telemarketing, canvassing, and direct visits. However, digital promotion has not been fully optimized. Reactivating inactive social media platforms and publishing informative and engaging content such as service updates, pricing information, shipping schedules, and educational materials on export-import are recommended. Expanding promotion through platforms such as TikTok may also increase market reach. The suboptimal use of digital promotion may contribute to the company's limited ability to reach new customers and expand its market share. In the freight forwarding industry, digital channels are important not only for promotion but also for building customer trust through service information, shipment updates, and company visibility. Therefore, weak digital promotion can reduce customer acquisition and indirectly affect the company's ability to achieve its monthly profit targets.

e. People

The human resources of the company demonstrate sufficient competence in delivering responsive services and maintaining coordination both within and across divisions. These capabilities are essential in managing and supervising cargo delivery activities. Nevertheless,

the company needs to improve employee competencies, particularly in digital marketing, to adapt to current technological advancements and market demands.

f. Process

Service processes are implemented through standardized operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure service quality and consistency. These procedures cover the entire workflow, from customer inquiry to cargo delivery at the destination, and are executed systematically in accordance with company guidelines. This structured process contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

g. Physical Evidence

Physical evidence includes office facilities, employee appearance, and company profile materials. These elements play an important role in shaping customer perceptions and supporting purchasing decisions. Improvements are required, particularly in updating company profile information and incorporating visual documentation of actual cargo handling activities.

h. Customer Service

Customer service is characterized by a strong emphasis on fast response, which is critical in time-sensitive logistics operations. Service delivery involves cross-functional collaboration among marketing, customer service, operations, and management teams, facilitated through dedicated communication channels such as WhatsApp groups for each shipment.

3. SWOT Analysis

The SWOT Analysis identifies the following internal and external factors affecting the company:

a. Strengths

- 1) Comprehensive and flexible service offerings tailored to customer needs
- 2) High-quality customer service
- 3) Halal assurance system and halal logistics certification
- 4) Competent and experienced workforce with strong teamwork
- 5) Flexible pricing through negotiation with customers

b. Weaknesses

- 1) Suboptimal digital promotion and branding
- 2) Lack of employee competence in digital marketing
- 3) Relatively uncompetitive pricing
- 4) Limited market share

c. Opportunities

- 1) Increasing demand for domestic and international cargo delivery
- 2) Global networking through logistics and forwarding associations
- 3) Strong customer loyalty
- 4) Government policies supporting exports and import liberalization

d. Threats

- 1) Intensifying competition within the logistics industry
- 2) Potential shipment disruptions due to adverse weather conditions

Based on the SWOT analysis, PT Kay Ocean Indonesia should prioritize a WO strategy by utilizing the increasing demand for domestic and international cargo delivery to overcome its weaknesses in digital promotion, market share, and price competitiveness. The company can strengthen digital marketing activities through active social media management, educational export-import content, and clearer service information. In addition, cooperation with logistics partners and vendors should be improved to obtain more competitive procurement costs, allowing the company to offer more attractive prices to customers.

CONCLUSION

The marketing strategy implemented by PT Kay Ocean Indonesia, Semarang, is analyzed using the STP framework, the 7P service marketing mix, and SWOT analysis. The STP analysis indicates that the company adopts geographic segmentation, targeting the Central Java and Yogyakarta regions, and positions itself as a freight forwarder that delivers high-quality services while maintaining a commitment to halal logistics certification. The 7P marketing mix analysis shows that the elements of product, place, process, and customer service have been effectively implemented. However, the remaining elements (price, promotion, people, and physical evidence) have not been optimized and require further improvement. Furthermore, the SWOT analysis identifies key internal and external factors that influence the company's business performance.

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