



Digital Marketing Strategy Analysis Through Free Ticket Program

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Abstract

A currently widely used strategy is digital marketing. This digital marketing strategy requires minimal costs but generates significant revenue. Digital marketing is generally similar to basic marketing. Digital marketing has many evolving characteristics, requiring all company members to be highly creative in implementing digital marketing strategies. The purpose of this study is to analyze the digital marketing strategy through free ticket program. This study uses qualitative research with a case study approach. The case study chosen to explain the digital marketing strategy through free ticket program is Pelita Air. The explanation of the case study's digital marketing strategy through free ticket program at Pelita Air is supported by secondary data such as internet sources, books, journals, and related sources. Research results show that digital marketing strategy through free ticket program is a promotional strategy that offers free access through an online platform to strengthen customer databases and increase brand engagement through data acquisition, the use of artificial intelligence, freemium and upselling strategies, and government incentives. Pelita Air implemented a digital marketing strategy through a free ticket program in its Pelita Air 56th Anniversary Challenge program as part of its strategy to strengthen customer engagement by distributing free flight tickets for the Jakarta-Singapore and Jakarta-Lombok routes.

Keywords : Digital Marketing, Strategy, Free Ticket

INTRODUCTION

The background of marketing economics is rooted in the need for companies to survive, grow, and compete in dynamic markets by maximizing consumer value and profitability (Mariani et al., 2023). Marketing economics emerged from the need to manage the exchange of goods or services in a planned manner to achieve company goals of profit or market position while satisfying consumers (Pandiangan et al., 2025). This encompasses a shift from simply selling products to complex customer relationship management, consumer behavior research, and adaptive marketing mix strategies. An adaptive marketing strategy is a flexible approach in which companies continuously monitor the business environment and change tactics in real time based on customer feedback, technological trends, and competitor behavior. This aims to maintain relevance, increase customer engagement, and adapt to rapid market changes for competitive advantage.

A marketing strategy is a company's way of increasing revenue and analyzing how to convert a company's target market into profit (Chakti, 2019). Marketing strategy can also be defined as a theory of market design and management techniques. Market developments must also be considered when developing a strategy. This allows companies to determine market development in the right place, both in terms of the surrounding environment and technological developments.

A currently widely used strategy is digital marketing. This digital marketing strategy requires minimal costs but generates significant revenue. Digital marketing is generally similar to basic marketing. Digital marketing has many evolving characteristics, requiring all company members to be highly creative in implementing digital marketing strategies. There are various types of digital marketing media currently used. Each media has a different market share, so organizations must consider the primary focus of the media used and determine market share based on the products sold. Market share strategies are divided into two categories: defensive and

offensive. Offensive strategies focus on acquiring new customers. Companies implement this strategy by increasing market share, finding customers through sales strategies, and increasing the number of customers. Meanwhile, a defensive strategy involves retaining customers and preventing them from switching to competitors (Sari et al., 2023).

Free ticket programs, generally known as "mudik" (free homecoming) travel, are government initiatives through the Ministry of Transportation, State-Owned Enterprises, or the private sector to provide free transportation for travelers celebrating the holidays. This program aims to reduce motorcycle use, reduce the risk of accidents, and reduce transportation costs for the homecoming and return journeys, especially on busy routes, using buses, trains, or ships. Free tickets offer key benefits such as savings on travel and entertainment costs, increased mobility, especially for the elderly, and access to premium amenities such as airport lounges. Other benefits include time savings, ease of access, and an enhanced travel experience, including special promotions on tourist attraction entrance tickets, hotel discounts, and loyalty programs (Sihombing et al., 2022). The purpose of this study is to analyze the digital marketing strategy through free ticket program.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses qualitative research with a case study approach. Qualitative research is a research method for understanding social phenomena in depth by collecting descriptive data such as words, behaviors, and images in natural situations, rather than numbers (Kurdhi et al., 2023). This approach prioritizes meaning, subjectivity, and inductive analysis, with the researcher acting as the key instrument, typically using in-depth interviews, observations, or documents. The goal of qualitative research is to understand social phenomena in depth, explore subjective meanings, experiences, and individual perceptions, and identify new patterns and theories by focusing on data depth rather than quantity. It is not intended to measure or test statistical hypotheses, but rather to obtain a complete and rich picture of an event in its context.

The case study chosen to explain the digital marketing strategy through free ticket program is Pelita Air. A case study is a qualitative research method that involves an in-depth, detailed, and intensive examination of a specific case, such as an individual, group, organization, or event, within a real-life context (Hamzah et al., 2025). The goal is to comprehensively understand a unique or complex ongoing phenomenon.

The explanation of the case study's digital marketing strategy through free ticket program at Pelita Air is supported by secondary data such as internet sources, books, journals, and related sources. Secondary data is used because it offers significant time, cost, and effort efficiencies, as well as providing access to historical or large-scale data, such as censuses, that are difficult to collect in-house. This data helps formulate the problem, provides context, and complements primary data for more robust analysis (Tambunan et al., 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Pelita Air

Pelita Air is Indonesia's national airline, a subsidiary of PT Pertamina (Persero), focusing on scheduled commercial flights and charter flights starting in 2022. Based at Pondok Cabe and Soekarno-Hatta Airports, Pelita Air provides medium-service services using Airbus A320s for domestic routes. Pelita Air is known as a safe flight option with high quality standards, and has now become an important part of the domestic aviation industry. Key characteristics and services:

1. Pertamina Subsidiary

Part of the Pertamina business group, focused on national air connectivity and supporting the oil and gas industry.

2. Commercial Services

Offering popular domestic routes such as Jakarta-Bali and Jakarta-Surabaya with a fleet of Airbus A320s.

3. Service Type

Medium service includes 20 kilograms of free baggage, snacks, and wireless in-flight entertainment or starlight.

4. Charter Service

Still serving aircraft and helicopter charter flights for business and government.

5. History

Founded in 1970, the airline initially focused on air services for the oil and gas industry before expanding into commercial services.



Figure 1. Pelita Air

Digital Marketing Strategy Analysis Through Free Ticket Program

Research results show that digital marketing strategy through free ticket program is a promotional strategy that offers free access through an online platform to strengthen customer databases and increase brand engagement through:

1. Data Acquisition

Data acquisition is the process of measuring and collecting real-world physical signals such as temperature, pressure, voltage, current, or sound and converting them into digital numerical data (Pandiangan et al., 2024). This digital data is then processed, stored, and analyzed using a computer or software. This system consists of sensors or transducers, signal conditioners, and analog-to-digital converters. Data acquisition in marketing is the systematic process of acquiring, collecting, and storing customer or prospect information from various sources to optimize marketing strategies. In the era of data-driven marketing, data acquisition is the foundation for understanding consumer needs, behaviors, and preferences to target campaigns more effectively. Data acquisition in digital marketing is the process of collecting, measuring, and recording information from various digital sources to understand customer behavior, preferences, and engagement patterns. This acquired data is used to make more targeted, personalized, and efficient marketing decisions (Sihombing et al., 2022).

2. The Use of Artificial Intelligence

The use of artificial intelligence is the use of artificial intelligence technology to simulate human intelligence in machines to increase efficiency, productivity, and accuracy in various sectors. Artificial intelligence analyzes big data to predict trends, automate routine tasks, and facilitate faster and more accurate decision-making. The use of artificial intelligence in digital marketing increases efficiency and strategic accuracy through content personalization, real-time consumer behavior data analysis, campaign automation, and the use of chatbots for 24/7 service (Chakti, 2019). Artificial intelligence helps marketers optimize ad targeting, predict future trends, and increase returns on investments.

3. Freemium and Upselling Strategies

Freemium is a business strategy that offers a basic product or service for free, while offering advanced or premium features for a fee to increase user conversion. Upselling is a sales technique that persuades customers to purchase a more expensive version or additional features of a product they are considering. Both aim to increase revenue, with freemium focusing on acquisition and upselling maximizing customer value. A freemium strategy offers a basic service for free to attract a large number of users, then uses upselling or feature upgrades or premiums to generate revenue from additional features. This model reduces barriers to entry, builds a loyal user base, and drives conversion through direct experience of the product's value. It is particularly effective in digital marketing strategies such as SaaS, apps, and web-based services (Sari et al., 2023).

4. Government Incentives

Government incentives are various forms of support, rewards, or facilities provided by the central or regional government to individuals, groups, or other regional governments to encourage good performance, achieve national strategic goals, develop the economy, or improve public services. These incentives can take the form of cash in the form of fiscal incentives or regional incentive funds, tax breaks, subsidies, or other facilities, sourced from the state budget or other sources, aimed at motivating and accelerating the achievement of development targets or government policies. The Indonesian government provides various incentives to encourage digital marketing, particularly for businesses, through tax breaks, business credit subsidies, working capital assistance, and digitalization training programs (Sundari and Lestari, 2022). This incentive aims to facilitate the adoption of digital platforms, expand market reach, and increase global competitiveness.

Pelita Air implemented a digital marketing strategy through a free ticket program in its Pelita Air 56th Anniversary Challenge program as part of its strategy to strengthen customer engagement by distributing free flight tickets for the Jakarta-Singapore and Jakarta-Lombok routes. The program invited the public to share their best moments while flying with Pelita Air. Participants had the opportunity to win two round-trip tickets from Jakarta to Singapore and two tickets from Jakarta to Lombok. The program ran from January 24–26, 2026, with the winners announced on January 27, 2026, via Pelita Air's official Instagram account (Kontan, 2026). This initiative was part of the company's efforts to maintain customer engagement amidst increasingly fierce competition in the aviation industry. This special pricing program was presented as a token of gratitude to the public for trusting Pelita Air as their preferred air travel option. Pelita Air is leveraging this anniversary to strengthen its image as a customer-experience-focused airline while expanding brand exposure through digital channels. Information on the giveaway mechanism and terms can be accessed through the @pelitaair Instagram account. Through this program, Pelita Air affirms its commitment to providing safe and comfortable flight services, while maintaining its relevance in the domestic and regional aviation markets.

CONCLUSION

Research results show that digital marketing strategy through free ticket program is a promotional strategy that offers free access through an online platform to strengthen customer databases and increase brand engagement through data acquisition, the use of artificial intelligence, freemium and upselling strategies, and government incentives. Pelita Air implemented a digital marketing strategy through a free ticket program in its Pelita Air 56th Anniversary Challenge program as part of its strategy to strengthen customer engagement by distributing free flight tickets for the Jakarta-Singapore and Jakarta-Lombok routes.

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