

Astra Daihatsu special event process analysis in customer virtual event by PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia

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Abstract

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in all parts of the world, including Indonesia, resulted in most industrial sectors experiencing economic paralysis. Business people must do various ways to keep their business running and marketing activities carried out with innovations according to the situation. With all the limitations of movement, the emergence of various virtual events is a solution for marketing activities to keep going in this critical pandemic. Astra Daihatsu is one of the active brands in holding virtual events during the pandemic through PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia as an alternative to their marketing activities during the pandemic. The purpose of this study was to identify the unique event process implemented by PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia as the organizer of the Astra Daihatsu virtual event. The research method used is in-depth interviews, descriptive qualitative and data collection, observative pastoral, documentation, and literature study. The results explain the application of the special event stages in implementing the Astra Daihatsu virtual event by PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia in carrying out its marketing activities.

Keywords: special event, customer virtual event, Astra Daihatsu, PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia

Introduction

The Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic announced by the WHO (World Health Organization) in March has caused an economic shock to the entire world community. This pandemic has succeeded in undermining the joints of the economy, both individuals, households, small, medium, and large companies, even affecting the country's economy with a scale of coverage from local, national, or global. Indonesia was announced to be affected by the Covid-19 virus by President Joko Widodo on March 2, 2020, and was declared a non-natural

national disaster.

One of the industries most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic is the event industry. Based on survey results from the Indonesia Event Industry Council (Ivendo) (Dewan Industri Event Indonesia, 2021), there were 96.4 percent postponements of events and 84.8 percent of event cancellations in 17 provinces in Indonesia due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with potential losses per company at a ratio of Rp 2.57 billion to Rp. Rp. 6.63 billion. Event industry workers should be innovative and adaptable in the face of the pandemic condition. As an industry that prioritizes income from the crowds of visitors, most event organizers convert their offline agenda for the virtual event as the new way to communicate their brand.

Marketing communication is an activity to convey value by an owner value to a targeted consumers. Communication in marketing activities is a form of interaction between the brand as the owner of the value in your products or services to potential customers in delivering the message according to the brand's goals (Ali, 2017). Thus, with limited movements for preventive measures from the spread of Covid-19, industry and business players have transformed their business into digital form.

Putri (2020) states although virtual events are known to be unable to provide the same experience as face-to-face. While, Noor argues that the virtual events executions were sufficient to meet the event characteristics mentioned (Noor, 2013). In addition, to being an alternative to face-to-face events, a virtual event provides more benefits that the audience did not get before. The flexibility of the virtual event is the main attraction for the audience. Virtual events has been actively aired since April 2020 from various brands and event organizers. Various virtual events were held, including music concerts, workshops, webinars, and product launches. Virtual events may not completely replace the offline event experience, but holding virtual events is the choice for organizing events during a pandemic. Organizing the event in virtual does affect the amount of revenue to the brand. However, the virtual event's primary purpose is that the interaction and communication between brands and consumers remain intertwined smoothly and openly defend the brand to continue running the business (Welch, 2020).

Event activists must be savvy in moving the event consumer experience into digital, as a form of market demand that they must capture. Event organizers must also manage digital concepts and provide creative ideas with measurable indicators and brand or corporate needs to achieve event goals.

Throughout 2020, Astra Daihatsu was very active in holding virtual events. Based on key

informants, at least PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia or Maximum Ultimate holds virtual events for Astra Daihatsu about one to two times every month. Astra Daihatsu Virtual Event Customer is one of the virtual events held by Maximum Ultimate for Astra Daihatsu customers with the event title “Safe and Comfortable Vacation with Astra Daihatsu (Liburan Aman dan Nyaman bersama Astra Daihatsu)”. Through the Zoom media conference call, the Customer Virtual Event was held on December 5, 2020, so the audience will be relaxed on the weekends. This virtual event is interesting to be researched because the virtual customer event was held as a closing promotional event in 2020 which carries the theme of a safe year-end holiday in a pandemic. The Astra Daihatsu virtual event is held to maintain communication and interaction with the community and continue the routine marketing activities of Astra Daihatsu. All of Astra Daihatsu’s marketing activities including this event has to shift in virtual form.

Astra Daihatsu collaborated with a Corporate Event Organizer Maximum Ultimate (PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia), to design events virtually. One of the goals of implementing this virtual event is to strengthen emotional ties with target markets, especially the millennial generation in Indonesia, to build a unique and innovative Astra Daihatsu corporate image by conducting virtual events as an entertainment shows for all Indonesians.

The prior research used for this research base is *The Special Events Strategy in Increasing Visits by Using Live Music in the Aeropolis Commercial Area* by Franky Augustinus (Hersin, 2019) and *The Special Event Strategy of PT. LG Electronics Indonesia in Increasing Awareness* by Caecilia Nila (Arundani, 2018). These two previous studies use the particular event theory from Joe Goldblatt as the theoretical basis. However, there is a gap between prior research and this research—namely, applying particular event theory carried out in face-to-face events and virtual events. Thus, the novelty that can be given in this research is how to apply particular event theory to events that are carried out virtually. Based on the problem’s background described, the research question formulated is “How is the special event process of Astra Daihatsu Customer Virtual Event held by PT Maha Kreasi Indonesia?”. This research aims to understand the executing process of a virtual event as a special event to implement the Marketing Public Relations strategy in the pass strategy tactic.

Method

The research method used is descriptive qualitative. According to Cresswell (Cresswell, 2013), research with a qualitative approach is carried out by finding out and understanding the

research subject either individually or in a group to find solutions to human social problems. Research is carried out in real human life that begins with a problem, obtains field data, and ends on a theoretical basis. This research will describe and explain in comprehensive information the implementation of the theory of exceptional event management by Joe Goldblatt in designing the Astra Daihatsu virtual customer event by PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia.

This research uses triangulation of sources. The data collection technique used is through in-depth interviews, participatory observational studies, documentation, and literature. Based on the pre-research conducted around the special event strategy, the researcher focused on the special event at the Astra Daihatsu virtual customer event by PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia. The analysis that will be carried out on the research results will refer to the particular event process theory by Joe Goldblatt. The research informant is the main person in charge of the Astra Daihatsu virtual event from PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia.

The main informant in this study is the person in charge of the Astra Daihatsu virtual event team from PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia. Furthermore, the supporting informants to help justify the main informant are a human capital development staff of PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia and an event management lecturer in Communication Science at Telkom University.

The duration of research data collection was carried out for four months. The research will use interactive model to analysis the data (Sugiyono, 2016). Data analysis activities carried out included data reduction, data presentation, and verification of conclusions. To test the validity of the data obtained, researchers used data triangulation. Stages triangulation of data is done first is to compare observed data and in-depth interview data. Then from the data, a comparison of situations and points of view from different perspectives is made. After that, the interview data and the documentation that has been obtained are being compared (Moleong, 2010).

Discussion

According to the AMA or The American Marketing Association, marketing is a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders (Lotti & Lehmann, 2007). Philip Kotler (Ali, 2017) explains that the purpose of marketing public relations is to show how to serve target consumers with memorable marketing to maintain

consumer loyalty. Kotler uses the concept of public relations, which consists of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling in marketing to create purchasing responses from potential consumers using trusted marketing communications that carry company or brand values.

The MPR has created a three-way strategy to gain public opinion and build a corporate image from this public relations concept. Philip Kotler explains the MPR three ways strategy: push, pull, and pass strategy, which is the alliance concept of public relations marketing activities in conveying company information to target consumers (Ali, 2017).

A push strategy is an activity to encourage emotions and provide motivation so that people as potential consumers have a sense of curiosity about the company or brand (Ali, 2017). Companies usually do this by actively carrying out promotional activities and mobilizing sales representatives or SPG (Sales Person Girl) to bring in their customers directly to provide product offers that the customer may not need at that time. A pull strategy is an activity to create something to get the attention of potential customers and encourage customers to come to the brand (Ali, 2017). This strategy must find a place where its target market interacts and know what they need because the techniques for promoting its product offerings are usually through electronic word of mouth. Pass strategy is a company activity in influencing society in achieving the goals of a company's public relations. The pass strategy is carried out by trying to penetrate society by working with activists, volunteering activities, holding events, and working together as sponsors.

In this case, events are one of the marketing activities carried out by Maximum Ultimate to maintain communication and interaction between ASTRA Daihatsu and the public that has been created from the beginning with the community through virtual events during the pandemic.

Pass Strategy in MPR 3 Ways Strategy

The pass strategy is carried out by blending with the community through collaboration with activists, volunteer activities, holding events and cooperating as sponsors (Ali, 2017). The ASTRA Daihatsu customer virtual event that Maximum Ultimate carried out mainly to meet directly with the community through virtual events to create a positive company image in public. Also, virtual events are held to continue maintaining and increasing the public's brand awareness of the brand. Thus, the special event conducted by PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia for ASTRA Daihatsu is an implementation of one of the strategies of the MPR 3 Ways Strategy, which is a

passing strategy to communicate a brand through holding an event. This virtual event, which is one of the marketing activities from Astra Daihatsu, generated high audience enthusiasm and increased sales of Astra Daihatsu products. Based on the informants' argumentation, Astra Daihatsu gained 3000 audiences to watch this virtual event and increasing sales of Daihatsu products during the pandemic. It is proven that this event provides many exciting promos and discounts during the event, so the audience would be interested in purchasing during that period.

Special Event Stages

The special event is implementing one of the MPR 3 Ways Strategy strategies, namely the passing strategy in holding an event. According to Ruslan (Ruslan, 2010), holding an event or special event in MPR activities is one way to get people's attention to the company or brand included in the event. Notable events in marketing public relations activities are the implementation of experiential marketing. According to Smilansky (Ali, 2017), experiential marketing is a marketing activity carried out by uniting emotions and logic in interacting with consumers.

According to Smith (2009), special events are designed or implemented by an organization or company to interact with the public. Then the event is an activity that aims to celebrate important moments in human life, both in terms of culture, customs, race, or religion, involving local environmental masses individually or in groups held at certain times (Noor, 2013).

Based on the particular event presentation, according to the experts, it is concluded that the special event is an activity that involves the collection of much mass to celebrate the critical moments in the interests of individuals or groups. For companies, special events can be used as a place for them to interact and educate their brands so that the target audience can remember them.

According to Goldblatt (2010), several steps must be taken to create a special event consisting of research, design, planning, coordination, and evaluation.

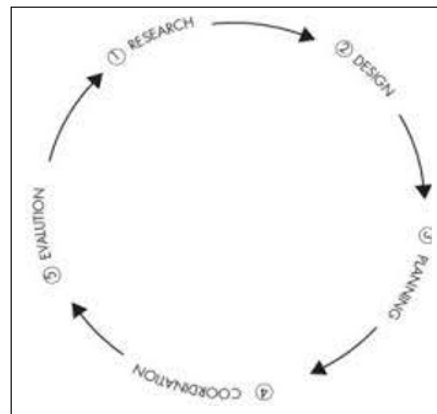


Figure 1. Special Event Process Research

Source: (Goldblatt, 2010)

At the research stage, the public relations team conducts research about the event's target market, plans the date, place, and time of the event, and conducts SWOT analysis on the event to prevent event failure when it is carried out (Goldblatt, 2010). In the second stage, design is carried out by brainstorming the concept of the event, including the theme and layout to support the event's execution. The next step is planning or the central planning of the event. In event planning, three essential elements must be considered, including time, space, and tempo. Time is the event organizer's time duration in preparing the event until the event is held. The event organizer determines the appropriate time based on the research carried out in organizing the event. The second element is space, namely the selection of the location for the event. The location of the event's venue also follows the research that has been done, which is based on the target audience and the company's brand image.

Then the last one is tempo, where this tempo is a series of event creation processes from event planning to run. When the event is running, there is a need for a rundown event as planned (Goldblatt, 2010). The next step is coordination with every party involved in designing an event, where it aims to make communication run in harmony and the implementation of the event can be carried out as planned (Goldblatt, *Special Events: Creating and Sustaining a New World for Celebration*, 2013). Evaluation is the final step in planning an event. In this step, the event organizer reviews the completed event implementation process by collecting feedback from event visitors.

Research is carried out in the early stages of event planning to determine the target

market for the event, planning the date of place and time of the event, and SWOT analysis of the event to prevent failure of the event. PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia, as the event organizer, adjusted the target audience owned by Astra Daihatsu, namely millennials and young families. So Maximum Ultimate easily adjusts the content of events and content in tandem with the needs of the current millennial. Found millennial trends in choosing the convenience of purchasing products in research adapted by Astra Daihatsu. So that this virtual event is here to facilitate the convenience of purchasing transactions for Astra Daihatsu products, the purpose of implementing the Astra Daihatsu virtual event is to maintain company communication with the public Daihatsu consumers.

At the same time, Astra also wants to introduce new car products from Astra Daihatsu through its virtual event. Daihatsu's new car product that became the highlight of this virtual event was the Daihatsu All New Terios. In addition, the event is being held as a closing event promotion that has been carried out throughout 2020. The entire audience present at the virtual event is getting limited special promotions only during the event and promoting a given is much more significant than other promotions given in previous virtual events. With the theme of the virtual event that has been initiated, namely the year-end holiday with Astra Daihatsu, the event organizer brought safety driving content delivered by Soni Susmana from the Safety Driving Council Indonesia (SDCI). This safety driving content adjusts to the interests of millennials who want to take a vacation at the end of the year. Soni Susmana provides tips and advice, so their holidays trip remain safe during the pandemic and are comfortable with safe driving bits of advice.

Design

Design is a step after researching by brainstorming the concept of the event to be carried out, including the theme and layout to support the implementation of the event (Goldblatt, *Special Events: Creating and Sustaining a New World for Celebration*, 2013). The Astra Daihatsu virtual customer event raised the theme of year-end holidays with family by camping and road trips using Daihatsu. This theme was born notice pandemic situation advocated for outdoor activities (outdoor). Seeing the conditions that encourage people to do more outdoor activities, this virtual event sparked the theme of a camping holiday by the lake.

Apart from helping to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus, Astra Daihatsu and Maximum Ultimate see trends in people starting to like activities in the open. Pandemic conditions are new and create new habits for people on vacation so that the theme of a year-end

road trip that is safe from pandemic with Astra Daihatsu is created. In processing the concepts and themes that have been decided, PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia emphasizes the presentation of virtual events for Astra Daihatsu in the audiovisual aspect.

The Maximum in-house team is responsible for creating virtual sets and virtual stages that are broadcast live compositing to represent agreed themes and concepts. Carrying the theme of a safe and comfortable year-end holiday, the virtual set and virtual stage design provide a camping atmosphere background on the edge of a forest lake. Accompanied by adjusting the Daihatsu All New Terios car-sized product placement according to the human ratio on virtual stages. Complementing the visual and audio elements to stimulate the audience's sense of hearing reflects a fun, vibrant, and cheerful nuance. In addition, the original set decoration is also essential to complete the virtual set and stage to make it more alive, like camping tents, camping chairs, including camping outfits for the hosts and guests.

Planning

The planning step is the primary planning in making events. Three essential elements that need to be considered in the planning step include time, space, and tempo. In determining the time, Maximum Ultimate determines the right time for Astra Daihatsu, which is at the beginning of the month, is December 2020 to welcome the year-end holidays that are about to arrive. With the theme of year-end holidays, Maximum Ultimate and Astra Daihatsu decided to implement the event on December 5 to coincide with the weekend holidays. Seeing the habits of the millennial generation as a target market who wants to enjoy a weekend without burdens, the Astra Daihatsu virtual event is designed as a virtual event to take part in while relaxing. Then, on the spatial aspects, the selected virtual event's platform is through the Conference call Zoom with the technical execution of the virtual event held in the PT. Astra Internasional Tbk. Hall, North Jakarta. Not only venue selection but the preparation of technical equipment to support virtual event broadcasts, but is also equally important in preparing for an event. The technical equipment used is almost similar to that of a media company, including green screens, lighting, broadcast cameras, teleprompters, computers. After that, on the aspect of tempo, the key informant stated that the preparation of each virtual event varies depending on the difficulties they have in creating the virtual event itself. At the Astra Daihatsu virtual event this time, the preparation for the event took about two to three weeks, most of which was spent in audiovisual production.

Coordination

The next step is coordination with every party involved in the design process of an event. Of course, when the event has shifted into a virtual form, coordination is done differently from the usual coordination in face-to-face events. With the virtual event, there is efficiency for the crew responsible in the field and make employees as little as possible to reduce the spread of Covid-19. In this virtual event, people who are active in the field are Person in Charge (PIC), Project Officer, Show Director, Event Crew, Front of House Team, Copywriter, and Digital Marketer. For the Front of House Team, there are Set and Stage Designer, Motion Graphic Designer, Music Director, and Creative Team. Each of them has a role in running a job desk to support the flow of virtual events.

The forms of communication patterns that are carried out are mainly carried out by non-verbal or sign language. The sign language used is not much different from that of a television broadcast crew. Communication is carried out to inform the next segment, the remaining time remaining, and adjust the performers' position and guests of the event. Apart from that, to minimize the 'noise' that enters the virtual event broadcast, each program crew communicates through handy talkies to be more personal and do not need to shout or talk loudly in the venue. All staff of PT Maha Kreasi Indonesia also monitors the coordination situation of the event team through Zoom Meeting, which functions to give a second opinion if the event team experiences problems. Nevertheless, so far, the event team who have taken to the field have always resolved field obstacles very well and professionally. The virtual event's execution succeeds running in one hour.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a reviewing process of the event executions completed with a collection of feedback from event visitors. Based on the research results, the evaluation was conducted by PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia as the organizer of the Astra Daihatsu virtual customer event was held three times. The evaluation consists of evaluating the internal team implementing the event, then continued with a weekly report with all staff of PT. Maha Kreasi Indonesia then reports to Astra Daihatsu and also gets feedback for future event service improvements. The evaluation includes crew performance and event results, identifying constraints in implementing virtual events and finding improvements in the following virtual event through input and suggestions.

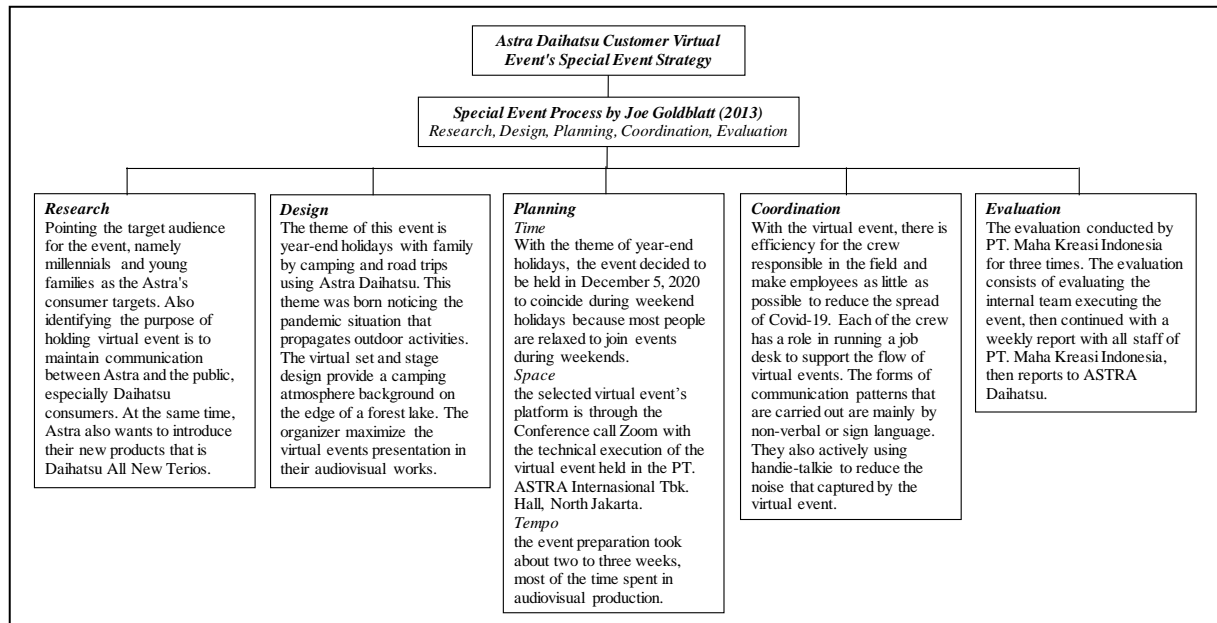


Chart 1. Special Event Process of Astra Daihatsu Customer Virtual Event

Source: primary data

Conclusion

There are several implementations of marketing activities carried out by Astra Daihatsu, and one of the most effective marketing activities is by holding events virtually. Astra Daihatsu uses virtual events to implement the passing strategy for the Marketing Public Relations (MPR) Three Ways Strategy. This virtual event successfully generated high audience enthusiasm and increased sales of Astra Daihatsu products. In a result, the implementation of virtual events as one of the marketing activities is the right choice during this pandemic for various brands. By understanding organizing virtual special events, a brand can organize events to fulfill its marketing targets and goals. In preparation for the virtual event represented as a special event, Maximum Ultimate carried out five stages of a special event, including research, design, planning, coordination, and evaluation (Goldblatt, Special Events: Creating and Sustaining a New World for Celebration, 2013). The research done by Maximum Ultimate is to identify the ongoing trends around and draw a line between Astra Daihatsu's business needs and target

consumers' needs. After that, at the design stage, Maximum Ultimate tried to creatively present a different virtual event from before by producing attractive virtual sets and stages with a tent nuance and producing motion graphic animation for the transition of each segment.

Furthermore, in the planning stage, the Maximum Ultimate event team prepares an agenda to determine the date, time, place of implementation, and virtual event broadcast media. In addition, they also prepare audiovisual support equipment and produce animation and motion graphics for virtual event displays, talent preparation, and performers. Then in the next stage, namely coordination, the person in charge of the Maximum Ultimate event team prepares the event team crew according to their respective job descriptions. In the communication pattern of the Maximum Ultimate event team crew, they communicate using handy-talkies and sign language. As well as monitoring by several Maximum Ultimate staff through the Zoom Meeting to see the performance and obstacles faced by the Maximum Ultimate team during the virtual event. In the last stage, namely the evaluation, the Maximum Ultimate event team reviewed three times, namely internally the implementation team, then at a weekly meeting of all Maximum Ultimate staff, and reporting with Astra Daihatsu regarding performance results and receiving feedback.

The theoretical benefit of this research is to add more insight for readers and researchers, especially for communication students that look for one of the implementations of special event theory, which is a virtual event. This subject is relatively new, with more to discover. The practical benefits of this research are to pursue more researchers on virtual events and understanding the virtual event preparation process to execution using the special event theory by Goldblatt as the theoretical basis.

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