Digital Marketing Strategy For Market Visibility in Regulated B2b Services: A Case Study of A Hazardous Waste Transportation Firm in Indonesia

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***Abstract*.**

This paper will focus on how lack of digital marketing will limit the market presence and acquisition of clients in controlled business-to-business (B2B) service companies. Digital presence in the modern B2B procurement has ceased to be a discretion tool; instead, it is a legality-checking mechanism and supplier pre-screening tool at the initial stage. It is a single-case study with a qualitative design that seeks to examine PT Surya Cipta Wisesa, which is a hazardous waste transportation company in Indonesia that has low digital visibility, despite having good operational backgrounds. The information was gathered in the form of semi-structured interviews with internal participants and buyer-side informants, competitor digital audits, and document analysis. Results show that the major problem of the firm is not a lack of operations but a lack of legitimacy signalling: valuable resources cannot be seen when digitally mediated buyer screening occurs, which results in systematic non-consideration in sets of consideration. The internal evidence shows that the regulatory sensitivity and document management limitations- not cost is the major obstacle to the development of the digital presence. The paper proves that the way that digital marketing in controlled B2B settings works is as a legitimacy infrastructure, and not a promotional practice. It has proposed a gradual, legitimacy-first digital approach that is clearly defined in terms of definition of done and key performance indicators in each of the implementation phases. The study adds to the body of knowledge on B2B marketing by conceptualizing the digital absence as a strategic capability gap and provides useful recommendations on SMEs functioning in regulated markets of the emerging market.

Keywords: *Digital legitimacy; B2B procurement; regulated services; market visibility and signalling theory.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The high pace of digital technologies transformation has essentially transformed business to business (B2B) trade in the world. Digital transformation is a strategic issue, and digital presence becomes a fundamental factor of corporate legitimacy and competitiveness on the market, which B2B segments start to appreciate. In B2B ecosystems, digital marketing has become a key factor in the determination of the vendor and procurement decisions of the corporate clients, where business clients use digital platforms to assess possible providers of services before engaging in the formal process [1].B2B procurement has been digitally mediated as a byproduct. Buyers, instead of initiating face-to-face interaction with suppliers, are researching, shortlisting and vetting vendors by means of remote and electronically mediated self-service interactions [2]. This transition elevates digital visibility into the category of a gatekeeping tool: suppliers who do not demonstrate online contact can get left out prior to any ability-based assessment of the same. Studies show that about a third of B2B purchase processes have shifted to the digital self-serve channel, and this trend has not decreased since the pandemic shift [3].

The problem is especially acute in controlled sectors like the hazardous waste management, where the compliance with the regulations, the transparency of the operations, and the corporate responsibility become the main criteria in the judgment of the vendor. Discord between digital appearance and the informational anticipations of contemporary B2B buyers of firms has been linked to diminished trustworthiness and increased risk perception amongst acquiring experts [4]. However, SMEs in those industries typically have limited digital infrastructure, and they use relationship-based acquisition models that might have been successful in history but are gradually limiting market access.This study addresses the philosophy by use of a single case study of PT Surya Cipta Wisesa, an Indonesian hazardous waste transportation company. Although the company has been operating continuously over a 10-year period with continuity and compliance on regulations, it does not have an operational corporate webpage or professional emailing domain, or even online business profiles that can be searched on the internet. This paper investigates the impact of such digital deficiency on client acquisition and creates a viable digital marketing plan based on organizational strength and regulatory limits.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Resource-Based View and Digital Capabilities

In the digital marketing capability, the Resource-Based View (RBV) offers a framework in which the concept of digital marketing capability can be comprehensively analysed as a strategic organizational resource. Barney indicates that sustainable competitive advantage is a result of resources which are valuable, rare, inimitable, and well organized [5]. Digital marketing ability is an intangible strategic asset that would allow firms to gain market presence and communicate with future customers using digital platforms [6]. Lack of digital marketing capability is a strategic weakness and not a neutral situation because companies without such capabilities have lesser visibility when undergoing buyer screening processes.

Signalling Theory in B2B Context

Signalling theory describes the development of credibility in markets where there is information asymmetry [7]. In B2B service markets, buyers have limited firsthand information on the competence of suppliers before interaction. The digital presence has become one of the key signalling tools, and professional sites, searchable corporate information, and electronic documentation are all signalling tools of organizational legitimacy and operational maturity [8, 9]. Lack of digital presence can also be viewed as a negative cue and will block communication of positive credibility signals and increases the perceived risk in procurement.

B2B Buyer Evaluation Logic

B2B procurement deals with controlled information searching and reviewing after which a formal contact with supplier is pursued [10]. According to the recent literature, the early-stage assessment has turned into a more digital-mediated process, as the buyers perform significant independent research on the online platforms to locate, evaluate, and approve organizational authenticity before an actual face-to-face interaction [1, 11]. Lack of digital presence will put suppliers at a disadvantage by simply being locked out of the screening processes at the early stages as opposed to being rejected directly. This digital based procurement logic highlights the role of why digital marketing presence is more of a market access requirement than a promotional activity that is discretionary.

B2B Elements of Value Framework

The framework of B2B Elements of Value developed by Bain and Company [12] offers an interpretive framework on the dimensions of value that affect B2B buying decisions. The information accessibility is crucial in value perception; even in cases where suppliers can provide a lot of functional value; when buyers cannot observe those qualities, value is latent and does not affect the purchase decision. In B2B services that are regulated like hazardous waste management, the value elements of compliance assurance, transparency, responsiveness, and risk reduction differing are particularly critical because of their visibility.

III. METHODS

Research Design

This research takes the qualitative, exploratory, as well as, interpretive single-case study design to investigate and determine how the lack of digital marketing acts as a strategic capability gap in a regulated B2B service environment. The focal case is a hazard waste transportation company in Jambi, Indonesia, called PT Surya Cipta Wisesa. The firm has been in existence more than 10 years and has shown high regulatory compliance but low digital presence which is an analytically revelatory case of examining the phenomenon of interest.

Data Collection

Three complementary methods that allowed triangulation were used in data collection. To begin with, they were semi-structured interviews with five informants (two internal stakeholders, founder and operations staff, and three buyer-side informants, one clinic owner and two procurement professionals, who have direct responsibility in screening hazardous waste service providers). Interviews took between 30-40 minutes and were recorded in contemporaneous notes which were later converted into interview memos. Second, a systematic competitor online audit reviewed publicly visible online presence of two direct rivals in the scope of such dimensions as site presence, social media presence, email domains, and search presence. Third, document review involved reviewing of organizational documents such as company profiles, regulatory permits, and operational procedures.

Data Analysis

Data Analysis Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify the patterns in the data [13]. The methodology was a combination of deductive coding based on theoretical constructs (RBV, signalling theory, B2B buyer behaviour) and inductive coding which reflected patterns that emerged. Themes were logically structured according to research questions and triangulated across sources of data to make sure of analytical rigor [14].

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Digital Capability Gap Analysis

The rival digital audit demonstrated that there are digital maturity gaps between PT Surya Cipta Wisesa and the major competitors. Where competitors have rudimentary digital resources such as business websites, business email address, and business in directories that can be searched, the focal firm has none of these pillars. This disconnect is structural and dualistic as opposed to the issue of marketing performance quality- the company merely lacks minimum legitimacy certification infrastructure by which the purchaser desires to be screened during initial filtering.

Internal Stakeholder Perspectives

The internal data provided by the founder interview suggests that the client acquisition is still referral-based and trust-based. The entry of new clients tends to be the most frequently occasioned by some urgent compliance related incidences like permit difficulties with the present vendors, audit by the regulatory body or your contract running down. In such circumstances, buyers focus on quick credibility checking, and have less friction on information checking at the first screening phase. The founder named legal and compliance questions as the main distinguishing factor of progression and permitted, manifest traceability, SOP clarity, insurance, and fleet preparedness as some of the decisive screening signals. Notably, the founder has positioned the primary obstacle in the presence online not as cost, but rather as compliance risk. Fear of using wrong words, improper use of images or excessive sharing of sensitive information about its operations limits the publication desire. The evidence presented on the operations side supports the fact that screening at an early stage often goes further and becomes a document-readiness test. The problem of managerial friction is mainly caused by document management than the unwillingness of clients, and fragmentation of document stores on a personal device, shared cloud drive, and messaging tool generates version-control risk and delays.

Silent Exclusion Mechanism

The main analytical result is evident structural mismatch between the relationship-based model of acquisition in the firm and the current B2B screening behaviour of procurement. The buyer-side informants mentioned that vendors that are not well renowned in terms of digital traceability are often slow or filtered out during pre-screening. Various informants also start with the vendor consideration with the fast sanity check that is digital before getting to substantive engagement. Some of the triggers to use are exclusion triggers, where there is no digital footprint, unprovable certificates, incongruent legal identities, questionable waste flow procedures, and generic email addresses. The most regularly requested online functionality is a special Legal and Compliance page that includes active permits, service scope, manifest and traceability overview, K3 and emergency response SOP summaries and official contact information. This system is silent exclusion, in which the company is not explicitly rejected but effectively invisible at pre-screening stages when vendors are filtered on which ones will advance to formal consideration.

Legitimacy Signalling Gap

When viewed through the Resource-Based View, the company has the valuable and hard-to-copy resources (regulatory permits, operational expertise, compliance capabilities) that fail to create the competitive advantage since they are not observable in the process of buyer screening. Signalling Theory describes this phenomenon by pointing out that digital presence is a credibility signal in informationasymmetric procurement settings. The low level of digital verifiability only limits the process of acquiring new clients by conducting early screening of procurement as well as relationship continuity on old clients is relatively steady because of the existing trust built through earlier performance.

Proposed Digital Marketing Strategy

On the basis of these findings, it is suggested to implement a phased approach to digital marketing through a legitimacy-first approach. The solution is informed by three design principles, which include: (1) phased implementation due to the limited organizational capacity; (2) prioritization on the basis of legitimacy which implies focusing on verifiable compliance indicators; and (3) minimal sufficient infrastructure aimed at industry-baseline standards and not marketing sophistication. Phase 1 is devoted to establishing central legitimacy cues indicating infrastructure: a professional informational web-site, a special Legal and Compliance centre, a corporate email address, minimal search engine visibility, a Google Business account, and a standardized first document packet. Phase 2 adds the level of information to facilitate buyer assessment, such as systematic service coverage, evidence based signs, and clear access to the public versus demand-oriented documents. Phase 3 deals with the controlled visibility growth by use of LinkedIn presences, selective directory listing and simple search engine optimization with source tracking.

Implementation Framework with Definition of Done

To make sure that the implementation is testable and not descriptive per se, every phase will have a definition of done (DoD) and key performance indicators (KPIs). Phase 1 DoD contains: live site with Legal and Compliance hub, active company email domain, validated Google Business Profile and template document pack. Among the key indicators, it is possible to identify time to first document pack, verifiability task completion (tester is capable of verifying permits in three minutes), follow-up frequency of basic documents, and brand search accuracy. Phase 2 DoD incorporates systematic service scope that is comparable to procurement requirements, signal-oriented proof through compliance interface method, specified public/request-based document accessibility, and set up of management routine.

The most important ones are screening cycle time, qualification rate, the burden of clarification, and cross-touchpoint consistency score. Phase 3 DoD entails the presence of LinkedIn company, selective listing to directories, basic SEO, and implementing the source tracking. Some of these indicators are source mix, qualified inquiry ratio, and conversion to meeting/ quotation. The progress of phases is dictated by the decision rules: Phase 2 starts with the third week of consistent uptime of the websites and continued improvement of response preparedness. Phase 3 commences when there is stability in the information architecture and where there is reduction in clarification burden compared to baseline. The monitoring is accompanied by weekly reviews of operations and monthly reviews of the founders with a low level of tooling demands.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper shows that digital non-presence in regulated B2B services is an initial-stage screening exclusion policy but not a performance deficiency after the engagement. These companies that cannot prove their digital data are locked out prior to the assessment of competition and the operational potential does not come into the mix of buyers. The study unveils that in the case of controlled B2B SMEs, compliance risk and document management limitations may become the main obstacle to the digital presence instead of budgetary factors. Some practical guidelines are the following: (1) the implementation of baseline digital infrastructure, with a Legal and Compliance hub, to facilitate legitimacy checking; (2) focusing regulatory transparency more than promotion content; (3) gradual implementation with explicit definition of done criteria and KPIs based on buyer screening behaviour; (4) with clear internal custodianship with governance procedures such as standardized templates, document checklists, and approval pathways to published information.

The quality risk (whereby untrue information sabotages instead of reinforces legitimacy), outsourcing risk (the need to retain control of the regulation claims in-house), and over-investment risk (strategic restraint after baseline visibility is attained) should be considered as to be implemented. The weaknesses of the research are single case design, small number of buyers informants, and competitor auditing based on publicly available information. The way forward on research is by exploring buyer side empirical studies on B2B screening behaviour, comparative studies in regulated B2B sectors and longitudinal studies involving tracking of the consequences after implementation of digital infrastructure.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is deeply grateful to the thesis supervisor, Ms Ilma Aulia Zaim, S.Ds., M.S.M., Ph.D., who helped and contributed insights in the whole research. It is also important to appreciate the School of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi Bandung, interviewees of the present study who gave their experiences, and also to PT Surya Cipta Wisesa to access organizational information that made this research possible.

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