

Radio Suara Surabaya's Marketing Communication Strategy In Seeking Advertising Clients

Miftahol Anwar¹, Lifatin Nada², Feri Zain³, Mohammad Amin⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Communication Science and Business, Universitas Annuqayah, Sumenep, Indonesia. Email: miftaholanwar.id@gmail.com¹, fatinnada97@gmail.com², ferizain509@gmail.com³, aminjatiningrat02@gmail.com⁴

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: August 18, 2025
Revised: September 16, 2025
Accepted: August 20, 2025

DOI

<https://doi.org/10.52970/grdis.v5i4.1666>

ABSTRACT

Competition among radio stations is becoming increasingly fierce due to the increasing number of radio stations. For private radio stations, advertising is a key input in operating as a professional and profitable mass media outlet. Therefore, radio stations must have a marketing communications strategy to attract advertisers. The author chose Radio Suara Surabaya as the research object because, amidst intense competition in the Indonesian broadcast radio industry for advertisers, Radio Suara Surabaya remains viable and resilient. The research question is how Radio Suara Surabaya employs its marketing communications strategy to attract advertisers. The purpose of this research is to determine Radio Suara Surabaya's marketing communications strategy. This qualitative study used primary data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results concluded that Radio Suara Surabaya's marketing communications strategy to attract advertisers focuses heavily on a personal and integrated approach, based on SWOT and STP analyses. Radio SS employs a compelling promotional mix of personal selling, advertising, and public relations, which has proven to be superior in terms of app installs and followers across various social media platforms.

Keywords: Marketing Communication Strategy, Radio Suara Surabaya, Advertising.

I. Introduction

Communication often occurs during exchanges or sales processes. Communication in these exchanges serves not only to convey messages but also to provide information and make potential customers aware of the products offered (Hinderer & Pousa, 2021). Communication can attract potential consumers to learn about the products or services offered by a company (Lela Abdushelishvili, 2025). Effective communication is essential for providing an understanding of consumer needs, enabling products to meet customer expectations (Lassar et al., 2016).

Communication at a higher level not only facilitates transactions by informing, persuading, reminding, and differentiating products but also offers a means of exchange. Many companies utilise marketing communications as a means of communicating with the public, particularly target consumers, about their products' presence in the market. Effective communication creates a competitive advantage and strengthens long-term relationships with consumers (Duralia, 2024).

A company's marketing and brand building depend on how well its marketing communications program connects with customers. The crucial role of marketing communications is to shape brand image and foster customer relationships, thereby increasing brand sales (Schultz et al., 2015). The concept of brand positioning strategy maximises available resources to achieve marketing communication objectives effectively and efficiently.

Today, increasing business growth has intensified competition in product marketing (Maulida Sari & Setiyana, 2020). Manufacturers strive to market their products in various ways to attract customers to purchase or use them. Advertising in various media, including both electronic and print, is one method manufacturers use to market their products. Online advertising can offer a higher return on investment and lower costs compared to traditional marketing media (Agrawal et al., 2020). Broadcast radio is a component of online mass communication media that plays a role and is intertwined with the history of the Indonesian nation. Contrary to popular belief, the competitiveness of the radio industry has increased significantly. Private and national radio stations are increasingly important in the media landscape, as radio must not only meet and shape public tastes but also play a role in shaping opinion and social control. Private radio stations must have a marketing strategy to attract advertisers. Similarly, radio media desperately need a marketing communications strategy to navigate competition and achieve the company's advertising sales targets, thereby maximising profits. Ari R. Maricar also argues that radio stations with specific segments or distinctive characteristics have far greater advertising potential than broadcast radio stations with a more general audience, due to their specialised audience.

The author chose Radio Suara Surabaya 100 FM as the research object because, amidst fierce competition in the Indonesian broadcast radio industry for advertisers, Radio Suara Surabaya remains a viable and resilient entity. Radio SS began its journey as a conventional radio station, known for implementing a citizen journalism broadcasting model. However, in 2000, Radio SS transformed into SS Media with the creation of the suarasurabaya.net website. It then expanded to include other communication infrastructure, such as the Suara Surabaya Mobile app and social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok). Many radio stations in Surabaya have adopted media convergence, but Radio SS's media convergence far surpasses those of other radio stations in terms of reach. Both in terms of follower count and smartphone app installations. The following table shows SS Media's achievements with four radio stations in Surabaya, its potential impact, and setting the stage for the subsequent sections:

Table 1. Comparison of SS Media's achievements with the four radio stations with the highest listenership levels in maximizing New Media

Radio	Web	Number of App Installs	Number of Facebook Followers	Number of Instagram Followers	Number of YouTube Subscribers	Number of Twitter Followers
Surabaya	Available	100.000+	1.500.000+	643.000+	67.000+	994,6 rbu+
Bahtera yudha	Available	100.000+	1.300+	23.300+	4.210+	615
Wijaya FM	Available	100.000+	10.659	2.921	6.480+	3.998
Delta	Available	100.000+	3.000+	97.800+	16.100+	2.722
Media 9.0 FM	Available	100.000+	48.782	3.652	0	63

Source: PRSSNI East Java (2023).

Based on the data above, Radio Suara Surabaya excels in terms of the number of app installs and followers across various social media platforms. Among them, Twitter has 994,600 followers, Facebook has reached 1.5 million followers, Instagram has 643,000 followers, and 100,000 users have downloaded the app.

Based on the background and data found, the author is interested in examining how Radio Suara Surabaya implements its marketing communication strategy in seeking advertising clients.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Communication Process

Communication is the process of exchanging information between a sender and a receiver (Ondriová et al., 2023). Communication is crucial in human life as social beings. Communication is divided into two types: verbal communication and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication refers to communication in spoken or written form. In contrast, nonverbal communication encompasses communication through gestures, body language, facial expressions, and other forms of communication that do not involve spoken words. Both of these forms of communication are crucial for understanding social interactions. The communication process consists of seven elements:

1. The sender is the person who conveys the message or idea.
2. The message is the information the sender wishes to convey to the receiver.
3. The transmission channel is the medium used to convey the message.
4. The receiver is the person or party receiving the message.
5. Decoding is the process of receiving and understanding the message conveyed by the sender.
6. Encoding is the process of converting ideas into a form that can be transmitted.
7. Feedback is the response given by the receiver to the information conveyed by the sender (Szmoski et al., 2018).

2.2. Marketing Communication Strategy

A marketing communication strategy is a series of creative steps taken by a company on an ongoing basis to achieve marketing targets and customer satisfaction (Siregar, 2023). Companies must understand the best strategies for communicating their business to consumers. According to Siregar (2023), there are six marketing communication strategies frequently employed by companies, as cited from various sources: the marketing mix strategy (4Ps: product, price, promotion, and place), the use of social media (online) as a marketing communication tool, advertising, personal selling, sales promotions, and word of mouth. The promotional mix is a marketing communication strategy and can be used in conjunction with other important components. Other components include the STP (Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning) model, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis that assesses the influence of external and internal environmental factors on a company, setting marketing communication strategy objectives, and budgeting.

III. Research Method

The type of research employed is qualitative. Qualitative research is an approach based on a specific philosophy. It is used to conduct research under non-scientific (non-experimental) conditions, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument (Sugiyono, 2020). Data collection and analysis techniques were employed qualitatively, with a primary focus on the interpretation of the data obtained. The data collection techniques in this study are divided into two types: primary data collection, which includes observation, interviews, and documentation. Primary data collection was carried out through observation at Radio Suara Surabaya. The data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Sugiyono, 2020).

IV. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the research conducted through interviews with key informants, namely Mr. Eddy Prasetyo as Media Production Manager, Mr. Ady Priyanto as Business Development Manager, Mr. Punjung Slamet HY as Finance Accounting Manager, and Irma Widya Budiyanti as Marketing Communications for Suara Surabaya Radio. This research also collected company documents that provided in-depth explanations of the issues discussed and evaluated the research data to ensure that everything aligns with the reality of the marketing communications strategy. This research focuses on Suara Surabaya Radio's marketing communications strategy to attract advertisers. This research examines Wilburn Schramm's encoding technique in communication, as it is employed in Suara Surabaya Radio's marketing strategy to identify the desired target audience. Therefore, Suara Surabaya Radio must create and plan its marketing communications strategy as a message decoder to easily understand the messages communicated by its target audience. This will enable more effective product marketing communications. Considering this communication process, a marketing communications strategy is necessary to convey its marketing messages to Suara Surabaya Radio listeners effectively.

Suara Surabaya Radio's marketing communication strategies for attracting advertising clients include:

1. Suara Surabaya Radio frequently interacts directly and personally with interested parties, such as advertising agencies and companies seeking to advertise their products.
2. Suara Surabaya Radio provides excellent service, thus encouraging customers to continue advertising on Suara Surabaya Radio and strengthening their emotional connection.
3. Suara Surabaya Radio also develops new media to increase brand awareness and attract new clients.
4. Suara Surabaya Radio also offers discounts for advertising for repeat customers. The goal is to attract advertisers to the radio station because the prices are lower than those of competitors.

The author believes that Suara Surabaya Radio employs these strategies to ensure the success of its strategy and its goal of attracting clients. Meanwhile, Suara Surabaya Radio's promotional strategy includes hosting numerous offline events, developing new media, and visiting potential clients to strengthen its brand awareness. To achieve its desired marketing goals, Suara Surabaya Radio must take several steps before developing a marketing communication strategy. First, Suara Surabaya Radio must conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Then, it must determine segmentation, targeting, and positioning, establish marketing communication objectives, and develop a budget. Suara Surabaya Radio, a radio station that provides information, news, and hard news, faces competition from other radio stations and similar media outlets in terms of marketing. Therefore, one of the methods Suara Surabaya Radio employs is a SWOT analysis, which comprises strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The SWOT analysis of Suara Surabaya radio consists of strengths, namely, according to AC Nielsen in 2021, there were 1,168 listeners with an average time spent listening to SSFM: 132 minutes. Suara Surabaya Radio continues to exist with a news or information format that is not owned by other radio or similar media. One of the following strengths is citizen journalism. Citizen journalism, also known as citizen journalism, is an active participation activity carried out by the community in gathering and reporting news. According to him, there are already 649 thousand SS listeners who also act as reporters. This pioneering effort also received an award in 2017 on National Press Day as a Pioneer Media for Citizen Journalism. Meanwhile, Suara Surabaya radio's weakness lies in its funding, as significant events with headline news in newspapers can be costly. The next weakness is that, with the shift to the digital era, many young people have started reading online news portals. Additionally, when using direct marketing promotional media via telephone, it is often overlooked by target companies. Radio SS can capitalise on opportunities when organising or attending significant events. The large audience and high-profile events will attract a significant number of advertisers. This will automatically increase the number of on-air listeners, as audiences will be curious about what Radio Suara

Surabaya is like. Radio SS also has opportunities to develop new media platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and others. Radio Suara Surabaya's threats include low attendance and the risk of rain at outdoor events.

Determining Radio Suara Surabaya's segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) begins with defining its target audience: adults and young adults, both male and female, aged 25-45, who have at least a college education and belong to the upper-middle socioeconomic bracket. Psychographically, they are information seekers, mature, established, professional, and charming. They are intelligent, critical, intellectual, and meticulous in their attention to detail. They care deeply about the environment, care about the people, are willing to take care of others, and can maintain a neutral/impartial attitude. Suara Surabaya Radio's positioning is "News, Interactive, Solution-Based." The marketing communications objective at Suara Surabaya Radio is to achieve predetermined advertising targets and increase revenue for the radio. A budget is required to implement Suara Surabaya Radio's marketing communications strategy. This budget is allocated for advertisements broadcast on SS Radio and is managed by the Marketing division. Meanwhile, the budget also covers team member salaries, and the Account Executive division is responsible for finding advertising clients.

Based on the theory explained by Terence A. Shimp in his book *Advertising Promotion and Additional Aspects of Marketing Communications*, the term "promotion mix" can also be used to describe marketing communications tools. Terence A. Shimp also categorises five types of promotional tools: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing. The promotional tools used by Suara Surabaya Radio are personal selling, public relations, and advertising, as shown in the table below.

Table 2. Promotional tools used by Suara Surabaya radio

Promotional Mix Used	Activities include
Personal Selling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering advertising spots directly or selling airtime. Approaching advertisers directly by visiting or making appointments with potential clients. Providing excellent service to clients. Maintaining long-term relationships with advertisers.
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radio Suara Surabaya primarily uses below-the-line advertising media such as events, brochures, banners, stickers, pamphlets, and more. It also utilises its social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok
Public Relation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audio material software: Creating a radio profile, using media identities such as logos, brochures, business cards, stickers, holding off-air events, and developing personal contacts. Written material: Creating and distributing posters and pamphlets. Interactive phone and WhatsApp messaging

To attract advertisers, Radio Suara Surabaya utilises personal selling, allowing customers to purchase advertisements privately. This responsibility falls to the marketing division and account executives. This personal selling activity begins with an Account Executive visiting and speaking directly with the client, typically an advertising agency or company that has a product they wish to advertise. If the client is interested in the AE's offer, a meeting is held. Afterwards, an agreement is reached regarding the placement of the advertisement. In the author's opinion, Radio Suara Surabaya's decision to use personal selling as a promotional strategy to acquire clients is highly appropriate. This is because personal selling enables Radio Suara Surabaya to interact directly with clients and build long-term relationships that leverage the advantages

of this approach. Personal selling allows Radio Suara Surabaya to deliver messages tailored to advertisers' needs. Furthermore, Radio Suara Surabaya can utilise other marketing approaches, such as providing excellent customer service, which encourages repeat advertising.

Public relations at Radio Suara Surabaya falls under the New Media Supervisor division, which is responsible for maintaining good relationships between Radio Suara Surabaya and its listeners, other media outlets, and clients. Suara Surabaya Radio's public relations activities include written materials (such as the creation and distribution of posters and pamphlets), audio materials and software (such as creating a presentation featuring the Suara Surabaya Radio profile), institutional identity media (such as logos, brochures, business cards, stickers), and events. Personal contact is used to facilitate collaboration with clients. The author argues that Suara Surabaya Radio has utilised public relations as a promotional strategy, as it plays a role in introducing the station and its advantages to the public, while also maintaining good relationships between the company and its customers.

Suara Surabaya Radio also utilises advertising as a marketing communication tool. Advertising is carried out by Suara Surabaya Radio using various media, including events, brochures, stickers, banners, and pamphlets. Brochures and pamphlets are usually distributed during events, and banners are displayed at every event hosted by Suara Surabaya Radio. The author believes that the use of advertising as a promotional tool for Suara Surabaya Radio is highly appropriate because it fulfills its function: it conveys information and encourages customers to advertise on Suara Surabaya Radio, reminds advertisers to consider Suara Surabaya Radio as a potential advertising medium, provides added value to influence client perceptions, and finally, acts as a companion that facilitates Suara Surabaya Radio's other marketing communications efforts.

Furthermore, to find clients and engage with its target audience, particularly adults and young adults, Suara Surabaya Radio interacts with its listeners via telephone and WhatsApp. In addition to finding advertising clients and approaching its target audience, especially adults and young adults, Suara Surabaya radio interacts with its listeners via telephone and WhatsApp. The number of callers to Suara Surabaya radio continues to increase, with a rise of 1,959 in 2022 and 2,333 in 2023, resulting in a total of 762,668 contacts recorded in the database from 2006 to 2022.

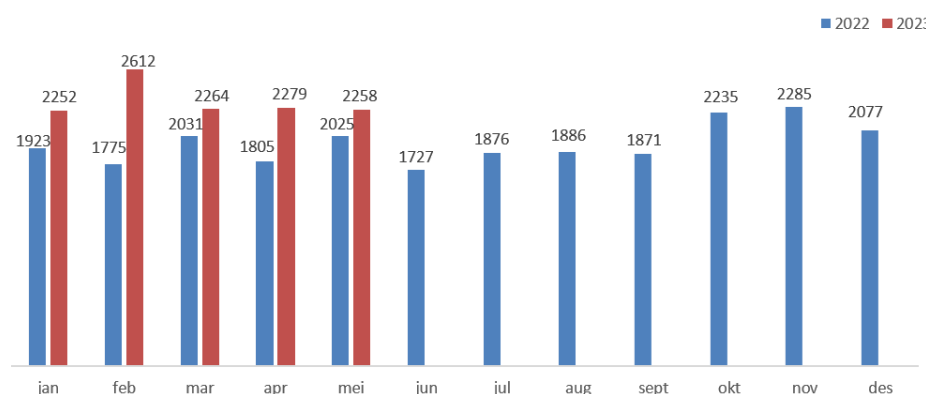


Figure 1. New caller data from 2019-2023

Through this interactive phone data, Radio Suara Surabaya can create more personalised and relevant advertisements. Relevant advertisements are more engaging to listeners and increase campaign effectiveness.

Then, at the end of 2029, Suara Surabaya Radio attempted to switch to WhatsApp as a replacement for SMS. Data obtained from Suara Surabaya Radio's internal team shows that an average of 11,147 WhatsApp messages is received per month. Interactive content is available on Suara Surabaya Radio across all programs, including talk show commercials. WhatsApp can be a highly effective tool for Suara Surabaya Radio in finding

advertising clients. It can help establish direct communication with potential clients, share relevant information, and explain the value the radio station can provide.

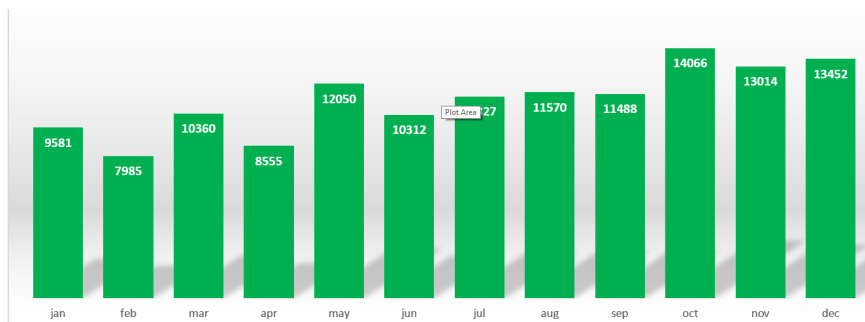


Figure 2. Total WA Inbox Data per Month

V. Conclusion

The research on Suara Surabaya Radio's marketing communications strategy reveals that Suara Surabaya (SS) Radio's marketing communications strategy to attract advertisers focuses heavily on a personalized and integrated approach, based on a SWOT analysis and STP (Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning). SS Surabaya defines the STP as a specific target audience aged 25-45, and its positioning is "News, Interactive, Solution-Oriented." Radio SS implements a compelling promotional mix, including:

1. Personal Selling, which is considered adequate because it allows direct interaction and the development of long-term relationships with clients.
2. Public relations is used to maintain brand image and good relationships with listeners and clients through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Increasing interactions via phone and WhatsApp also demonstrates Radio SS's efforts to understand audience needs and create more relevant advertisements.
3. Advertising serves to convey information and encourage client interest in advertising through events, brochures, and social media.

References

- Agrawal, N., Najafi-Asadolahi, S., & Smith, S. A. (2020). Optimization of Operational Decisions in Digital Advertising: A Literature Review. In Springer Series in Supply Chain Management (Vol. 9, pp. 99–146). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-31733-1_5
- Duralia, O. (2024). The Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Behaviour. *Studies in Business and Economics*, 19(2), 96–109. <https://doi.org/10.2478/sbe-2024-0027>
- Hinderer, H., & Pousa, C. (2021). Digital Communication in B-To-B Sales. *International Business Development: A Concise Textbook Focusing on International B-to-B Contexts*. [https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1007/978-3-658-33221-1_11](https://doi.org/DOI:10.1007/978-3-658-33221-1_11)
- Lassar, W. M., Roy, S., & Makam, S. B. (2016). Relationship Communication and Relationship Quality as Predictors of Relationship Continuity BT - Rediscovering the Essentiality of Marketing (L. Petruzzellis & R. S. Winer (eds.); pp. 745–746). Springer International Publishing.
- Lela Abdushelishvili. (2025). Social Marketing Communication: The Role of Language and Culture. IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-3924-4.ch006>
- Maulida Sari, C. D., & Setiyana, R. (2020). Sosialisasi Digital Marketing pada Usaha Mikro Kecil Menengah (UMKM). *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat: Darma Bakti Teuku Umar*, 2(1), 63. <https://doi.org/10.35308/baktiku.v2i1.2050>

- Ondriová, I., Fertaľová, T., & Hadašová, L. (2023). Specific approaches to communication in patients who have dementia. *Prakticky Lekar*, 103(3), 134–137. <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85172202763&partnerID=40&md5=0150cbcd8bb517e40fb8f95edfaa71c2>
- Schultz, D. E., Barnes, B. E., Schultz, H. F., & Azzaro, M. (2015). Building Customer-Brand Relationships. In *Building Customer-Brand Relationships*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315706023>
- Siregar, S. S. G. (2023). Marketing Communication Strategies To Attract Consumer Interest: Literature Review. *Journal of Proceedings*, 3, 126.
- Sugiyono. (2020). Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R & D.
- Szmoski, R. M., Ferrari, F. A. S., Pinto, S. E. S., Viana, R. L., & Baptista, M. S. (2018). Cryptography based on chaotic and unsynchronized elements of a network. In *Chaotic Signals in Digital Communications* (pp. 397–421). <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781315216256-15>