

Utilising Instagram as a Promotional Medium for Car Rental at Anugrah Rent Car Medan

Juprijal Raman Rambe

Communication Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Sumatera Utara

juprijairamanrambe@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the use of Instagram as a promotional medium in the car rental business at CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan. The background of this research is driven by the increasing use of social media as a marketing tool, including in the car rental service industry. The main focus of the study is to identify and understand how CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan utilizes Instagram features to promote its services. The research method employed is descriptive qualitative, with data collected through direct interviews with relevant parties at CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan. Data analysis was conducted by describing the findings from the interviews and linking them to concepts of digital marketing. The results indicate that CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan has successfully leveraged Instagram effectively as a promotional medium. The utilization of this platform includes the use of photos, feeds, stories, status updates, viewers, and hashtags to broaden the reach of its car rental service promotions. By maximizing the available features on Instagram, CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan has been able to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of its services in the market. In conclusion, the descriptive qualitative approach provides an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of Instagram utilization as a marketing tool for car rental services. This study implies that marketing strategies through social media, particularly Instagram, can serve as an effective solution to strengthen promotion and increase sales in the car rental service industry.

Keyword : Instagram, promotion, utilisation, rental



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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology in the modern era has significantly impacted various aspects of human life (Habibah, 2021). One of the fields that has undergone major transformation is communication. The emergence of communication devices, particularly smartphones, has enabled people to interact and share information without spatial and temporal limitations. Various digital communication applications on smartphones are not only used for personal needs but are also increasingly utilized to support business activities, particularly in the field of marketing communication (Diem & Yulianti, 2020).

Marketing communication functions as a medium for delivering the value offered by a company to its consumers. Through marketing communication, consumers can gain knowledge about products or services offered, brand identity, competitive advantages, user segmentation, and the means of acquisition. Furthermore, marketing communication plays an important role in building brand equity by embedding a brand image in consumers' minds. Alongside increasing digitalization, marketing communication has become increasingly dependent on online media as a promotional channel for both products and services.

Social media has now become an integral part of modern society and plays a vital role in digital marketing strategies. Among various social media platforms, Instagram has emerged as one of the most influential. Instagram is not only used as a medium for sharing personal moments but has also evolved into an effective promotional tool with key features such as photos, videos, stories, reels, and paid advertisements. This development creates vast opportunities for businesses to reach broader and more diverse audiences.

In the context of the car rental industry, particularly in large cities such as Medan—which is characterized by high mobility and increasing transportation needs—the use of social media has become essential. Intense competition requires companies to implement effective digital marketing strategies to attract new customers while retaining existing ones. One of the main challenges in this regard lies in managing promotional content that is not only informative but also interactive and capable of communicating the added value of services.

Anugrah Rent Car Medan is one such car rental company that has utilized Instagram as a promotional medium through its account @anugrahrentcarindonesia since 2019. This account is used to introduce its car rental services in Medan and has even collaborated with several public figures to expand its promotional reach. However, the effectiveness of Instagram as a marketing medium still requires further investigation, particularly with regard to content strategies, audience interaction, and the measurement of digital campaign success.

Accordingly, this study focuses on analyzing the use of Instagram as a promotional medium by Anugrah Rent Car Medan, while also examining the extent to which the applied digital marketing strategies can enhance the company's visibility and attract consumer interest.



Fig 1. Instagram account

The Instagram account @anugrahrentcarindonesia currently has more than 10,300 followers with a total of 204 posts. The information presented focuses on promoting car rental services, booking mechanisms, vehicle variations, price ranges, and rental locations in several cities. Followers of this account are also relatively active in providing responses through comments and interactions on Instagram Stories. In addition, the account consistently updates promotional content using various engaging visual and narrative approaches.

Although promotions have been carried out intensively, the results show a significant increase in consumer visits utilizing the car rental services. This indicates that Instagram plays an important role as an effective promotional medium for Anugrah Rent Car Medan.

Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to explore how the @anugrahrentcarindonesia account strategically leverages Instagram as a promotional medium. The focus of the study includes an analysis of content strategies, user engagement levels, and the evaluation of promotional campaign success through Instagram features. Thus, this research is expected to provide relevant insights for the company in formulating more effective digital marketing strategies to enhance competitiveness, market share, and profitability.

In a broader context, the findings of this study also contribute to the understanding of the role of social media in supporting the growth of the car rental industry in Indonesia. Given the competitive market dynamics and the continuous development of technology, the ability to adapt to digital platforms such as Instagram becomes a key factor in maintaining business existence while expanding networks.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marketing Communication

Communication is essentially the process of conveying messages from one party to another through symbols, codes, or language with the aim of achieving mutual understanding. In the context of organisations, communication not only serves as a means of exchanging information, but also as a tool for conveying needs, sharing knowledge, and building relationships between parties (Sahputri Nasution & Dhani, 2021). Communication can be interactive or transactional, and can be direct or indirect, depending on the medium used.

Marketing communication is an important aspect of marketing strategy because it serves to inform consumers about the value, advantages, and differentiation of a product or service. This concept combines the elements of communication—as the process of conveying messages—and marketing—as the process of exchanging value between companies and consumers (Gogali et al., 2020). Thus, marketing communication encompasses all promotional activities designed to facilitate exchange through the creation of meaning conveyed to consumers using various media.

2.2 Car Rental

Rental is an agreement that involves granting the lessee the right to use goods or property for a certain period of time in exchange for payment as agreed (Article 1548 of the Civil Code). In the context of transportation, car rental is the provision of vehicle rental services on a daily basis, on a contract basis, with a driver or self-drive. This type of business is a practical solution for individuals and companies that need vehicles for operational purposes without having to own a car permanently.

As a form of service business, car rental requires a contract that is binding on both parties. The service provider is obliged to deliver the vehicle in proper condition, maintain its quality, and provide comfort in accordance with the agreement. Meanwhile, the renter is obligated to use the vehicle as agreed, pay the rental fee on time, and return the vehicle in good condition (Civil Code, Articles 1548–1600). Thus, car rental is a business sector that relies on contractual relationships and trust between service providers and consumers.

2.3 Promotion

Promotion is one of the essential elements of the marketing mix, serving to introduce, inform, persuade, and remind consumers about specific products or services. According to Siregar (2017), promotion functions as an active tool for companies to influence consumer purchasing decisions. In line with this, Nickels as cited in Swastha & Irawan (in Airlangga & Reynaldy, 2021) defines promotion as a one-way flow of information aimed at encouraging exchanges in marketing.

In general, the objectives of promotion include three main aspects: informing, persuading, and reminding consumers. Information is provided to introduce new products, explain benefits, and clarify misunderstandings. Persuasive promotion is intended to influence consumer preferences toward a particular brand, while reminder promotion aims to maintain consumer awareness of existing products (Yuliyanto, 2020).

The function of promotion is not only to provide information but also to build brand image and create a positive impression in consumers' minds. According to Nurhadi (2019), promotion can enhance the value of a product by delivering relevant information about its price, benefits, and advantages. Therefore, promotion plays a strategic role in increasing sales while strengthening brand positioning in the market.

Promotional methods can be carried out through various channels, including advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and personal selling (Ismail, 2021). The selection of appropriate promotional media is a key determinant of marketing campaign success, particularly in the digital era.

2.4 Social Media

Social media has now become one of the most effective marketing communication channels. Its advantages lie in its interactive and personal nature, as well as its ability to enable two-way communication between companies and consumers. Through social media, marketers can gain insights into consumer behavior, build closer relationships, and create stronger engagement with the products or services offered (Julitawaty et al., 2020).

The Web 2.0 phenomenon has transformed the way organizations communicate, where consumers are not only recipients of information but also content producers who can influence brand image. Therefore, marketing through social media generally focuses on creating engaging content that encourages audiences to share messages within their networks (Azrimaidaliza et al., 2017). This makes social media a strategic platform for enhancing brand awareness and expanding market reach.

2.5 Instagram as a Promotional Medium

Instagram is a visual-based social media platform that allows users to share photos, videos, and stories. Founded in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, Instagram has now become one of the most widely used applications worldwide. Its distinctive characteristic lies in its emphasis on visually appealing, interactive, and easily accessible content (Ismail, 2021).

For businesses, Instagram functions not only as a medium for sharing moments but also as an effective promotional tool. With features such as likes, comments, sponsored ads, reels, and Instagram Stories, companies have significant opportunities to enhance consumer engagement. Through creative content, promotions on Instagram can strengthen brand image, increase customer loyalty, and encourage purchasing decisions (Yuliyanto, 2020).

Therefore, the utilization of Instagram as a promotional medium is considered highly relevant, particularly in service industries such as car rentals, which require product visualization (car images, prices, and services) to attract potential consumers.



Fig 2. Instagram logo

The social system on Instagram is built through interactions between users by following other accounts and having followers. These social interactions are then reinforced through the likes and comments features on uploaded content. The more likes and comments a post receives, the greater the chance that it will become popular on the Instagram platform (Handayani & Putri, 2021).

In addition, the number of followers plays an important role in building the credibility of an account, as it can influence the exposure and public perception of an account (Rakhmawati, 2020). In other words, followers are not only passive audiences, but also part of a social system that determines how far a message or promotion can reach a wider audience.

Furthermore, Instagram provides a synchronisation feature with other social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, which allows users to find friends who also use Instagram. This expands users' social networks and creates a broader and interconnected digital communication ecosystem (Saputra & Kurniawan, 2022). Thus, the social system on Instagram is not just about sharing photos or videos, but also about building networks, influencing public opinion, and creating social and economic value for its users.

Tabel 1 The Usefulness of Features on Instagram

Fitur.	Kegunaan
Homepage.	The main page that displays a timeline of the latest photos from followed users.
<i>Followers</i> (Pengikut)	This feature is designed to enable users to follow someone's Instagram account or to be followed by others. The greater the number of followers an Instagram account has, the more popular and widely recognized the account becomes.
Like (Suka)	This feature allows users to like photos on their own Instagram account, on their friends' accounts, or on the accounts they follow. The 'like' function serves as an indicator that other users appreciate the photos uploaded by fellow users.
<i>Comment</i> (Komentar)	Writing impressions about a photo in the space provided. The photo caption feature allows users to write a description of the uploaded photo in order to reinforce the character or message intended to be conveyed through the image.
<i>Arroba</i> (@)	This feature allows users to mention other users by adding the at symbol (@) followed by the respective Instagram account. By mentioning another user, individuals can directly address and communicate with the person tagged. Essentially, the mention feature is intended to facilitate interaction and engagement between users.
<i>Hashtag</i>	A hashtag is a label in the form of a word preceded by the pound symbol (#). Hashtags function to categorize themes or topics more specifically on social media, and at the same time, they make it easier for others to search for related topics. In the digital world, particularly in digital content marketing on social media, hashtags are useful for grouping a theme or product-related information so that others or potential customers can easily find the information conveyed in a post through specific hashtags.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to examine the utilization of Instagram as a promotional medium at CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan. This approach was chosen to enable the researcher to interpret social phenomena in depth through field data collection (Rukin, 2019). The research informants

consist of the administrator of the Instagram account @anugrahrentcarindonesia as the primary source, as well as several Instagram users who are followers and customers of CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan.

3.1 Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques used in this study consisted of interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with the administrator of the Instagram account @anugrahrentcarindonesia as the key informant, along with several followers and customers of CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan. Observation was employed to examine the promotional content and user interactions on Instagram, while documentation was used to collect supporting materials such as screenshots, promotional posts, and relevant company records.

3.2 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Zellatifanny & Mudjiyanto, 2018). This process was repeated to ensure the consistency of the research findings.

3.3 Research Location and Time

The research was conducted at CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan, located at Jl. Prof. HM. Yamin SH No. 214, Medan City, North Sumatra, in February–March 2024.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

This study analyzes the utilization of Instagram as a promotional medium by CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan through its official account @anugrahrentcarindonesia. The findings reveal that social media, particularly Instagram, plays a significant role in expanding promotional reach, increasing customer engagement, and strengthening the company’s image as a car rental service provider in Medan.

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, it was found that the use of Instagram features such as photo uploads, Instagram Stories, captions, hashtags, and interactions through comments and direct messages greatly contributed to building engagement with consumers. The content presented was not limited to car rental promotions but also included information on pricing, vehicle types, service locations, and customer testimonials. This provided information transparency while simultaneously strengthening consumer trust in the company.

Consistent promotional efforts have proven to enhance account visibility. The @anugrahrentcarindonesia account currently has more than 10,000 followers and over 200 posts. According to the account administrator, routine activities such as uploading photos and using relevant hashtags have helped broaden audience reach, attract new customers, and encourage loyalty among existing ones. Communicative captions also contributed to building emotional closeness with consumers.

From a marketing perspective, the study found that CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan applies demographic segmentation targeting consumers aged 22–45 years, including students, employees, entrepreneurs, and civil servants. Psychographic segmentation was also considered, focusing on middle-class consumers who require practical, flexible, and affordable transportation services. This demonstrates the alignment of marketing strategies with the needs and behaviors of consumers in Medan as a metropolitan city with high mobility.

Interviews with customers revealed that most respondents learned about the car rental services through Instagram. This indicates that social media serves not only as an entertainment platform but also as a primary source of information for consumers in making purchasing decisions. The presence of Instagram helps the company build brand awareness while enhancing competitiveness in the car rental industry.

In terms of effectiveness, this study confirms that Instagram is an efficient marketing medium with relatively low costs yet capable of delivering significant results. Digital promotion via Instagram has proven to be faster, more interactive, and capable of reaching a broad base of potential consumers. Nevertheless, challenges remain, particularly regarding the need to continually adjust content strategies to align with changing trends and Instagram algorithms.

Overall, the findings emphasize that the success of CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan’s promotion through Instagram is determined by consistency in posting, creativity in content presentation, and the ability to maintain two-way interactions with consumers. With such strategies, the company has successfully expanded its market share, increased its customer base, and strengthened its position within Medan’s competitive car rental industry.

Tabel 2 Key Findings and Implications of the Research

Key Findings	Research Implications
Instagram is effective as the main promotional medium for CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan.	Instagram is proven to be an effective primary promotional medium for CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan.
Consistent content posting increases consumer engagement and loyalty.	Consistency in posting content significantly increases consumer engagement and customer loyalty.

Target market segmentation of consumers aged 22–45 with middle-class lifestyles is highly relevant.	The target market segmentation (aged 22–45, middle-class lifestyle) is highly relevant to Medan’s market needs.
Instagram facilitates direct interaction with customers (DMs, comments, stories).	Instagram features (DM, comments, stories) make direct interaction with customers easier and more effective.
The main challenge lies in adapting to changes in trends and Instagram algorithms.	The main challenge faced is the need to adapt continuously to changing trends and Instagram’s algorithms.

4.2 Discussion

In promotional efforts, an organization must first identify its target market. This step is crucial to ensure that promotional activities directly reach the intended audience. The same applies to the car rental service in Medan, which utilizes the Instagram account @anugrahrentcarindonesia for its marketing activities. The promotional content published through this account is generally directed toward the wider public.

However, several challenges are often encountered, which may hinder the smooth implementation of promotional activities. These obstacles can affect public interest in the car rental services offered. Therefore, it is essential to identify and overcome such barriers to ensure that promotional activities run effectively. According to information obtained from research informants, the challenges faced by @anugrahrentcarindonesia include a lack of consistency in content posting—primarily because the account is managed by a single individual—difficulty in determining appropriate themes, and challenges in creating captions that align well with uploaded photos.

As implemented by @anugrahrentcarindonesia, the utilization of Instagram involves various promotional strategies, including advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations. Promotion, in this context, refers to the range of activities undertaken by the company to communicate its product advantages and persuade potential customers to use the services. Thus, it can be concluded that the foundation of promotional activity lies in communication and interaction between the company and its consumers to stimulate sales.

The content management pattern on the @anugrahrentcarindonesia account follows a pre-arranged timeline. This schedule specifies the dates for content updates, photo and video uploads, as well as reposting selected content from followers. On average, two to three photos are uploaded daily, while videos are shared at least once a week. In addition to scheduled content, spontaneous uploads are also carried out by the account administrator.

Caption writing on the account does not employ a specific strategy but emphasizes the use of effective promotional language. The primary aim is to create engagement with followers, which often occurs when they respond to the uploaded content. Captions typically include interesting facts about the service or are written in the form of questions to encourage interaction. This approach has proven effective, as it drives followers to actively participate in the comment section.

The account also promotes its services by offering rental cars at standard rates within Medan City. Such promotional efforts are particularly important during the maturity stage of the product life cycle, as they help maintain the company’s customer base. The overall purpose of these promotions is to ensure that people become familiar with, understand, and ultimately trust the car rental services offered by @anugrahrentcarindonesia. Although promotions are ideally informative, in practice, many are persuasive in nature, aiming to stimulate consumer purchases. Companies often prioritize building a positive impression rather than seeking immediate responses, with the long-term objective of shaping customer perceptions and fostering loyalty toward Anugrah Rent Car Medan’s services.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the utilization of Instagram by the account @anugrahrentcarindonesia as a promotional medium for car rental services in Medan has proven to be effective. Evidence from interviews with the account administrator and two representative customers who had used the rental services indicates that Instagram’s diverse features—such as photo uploads, feed posts, stories, status updates, viewers, and hashtags—play a significant role in expanding the promotional reach. By maximizing these available features, the company is able to enhance visibility and strengthen its digital marketing efforts. The promotional strategies adopted by @anugrahrentcarindonesia are also shaped by clear market segmentation, consisting of both demographic and psychographic approaches. The demographic segmentation focuses on population mapping factors such as gender, age, and type of occupation, while the psychographic segmentation considers consumer lifestyle and personality traits. These two segmentations form the foundation for defining the target market of CV Anugrah Rent Car Medan, thereby ensuring that promotional messages are more relevant, targeted, and effective in attracting potential customers.

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