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MARKETING STRATEGY TO INCREASE BRAND AWARENESS (CASE STUDY: VEGO)

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Abstract

The rising popularity of vegetarianism and plant-based diets in Indonesia gives a unique opportunity for VEGO to enter a growing market. However, the brand meets obstacles such as low brand awareness and uneven sales, which limit its market reach and growth potential. The research being conducted analyzes techniques for increasing VEGO's brand awareness and competitiveness in the vegetarian food industry. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative survey data from 206 respondents with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews. Cluster research revealed five customer groups with unique preferences, leading VEGO to choose Cluster 3: Sustainability Advocates as their major target market. Respondents in this cluster prioritize eco-friendly packaging, natural ingredients, and cost, which aligns with VEGO's basic principles and product offerings. The study uses marketing methods such as the STP framework, PESTEL analysis, and Porter's Five Forces model to examine market dynamics and create a customized marketing strategy. Key findings highlight the necessity of using digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok for promotions, engaging with eco-conscious influencers, and implementing modern technology to improve product quality and shelf life. The proposed marketing strategy aims to strengthen VEGO's unique positioning as a sustainable, health-conscious, mushroom-based product brand. By addressing consumer requirements and aligning its strategy with developing market trends, VEGO expects to increase brand awareness, encourage customer loyalty, and achieve long-term success in the competitive vegetarian food market.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Marketing Strategy, Vegetarian Food, Sustainability, Consumer Segmentation, Digital Marketing, and Product Innovation

Introduction

Brand awareness is one of the fundamental elements in marketing that determines the success of a product in the market (Azzari & Pelissari, 2020; Ilyas et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2022). In a global context, companies engaged in plant-based food face a major challenge in building brand awareness amidst the increasing interest in vegetarian diets (Irvan & Erdiansyah, 2022; Krishnaprabha & Tarunika, 2020; Upadana & Pramudana, 2020). A report from Euromonitor International (2019) shows that Indonesia ranks third in the growth of the number of vegetarians in the world, reflecting the global trend towards a healthy lifestyle and environmental sustainability. However, despite the increasing demand, many vegetarian food brands, including VEGO, face obstacles in expanding their market reach due to lack of brand exposure.

Several factors that influence VEGO's low brand awareness can be categorized as internal and external. Internally, limited resources for digital promotion and social media management reduce the effectiveness of communication with consumers. VEGO products, which are sold with a pre-order system, do not optimally utilize the potential of the online market to increase sales volume. Externally, the high level of competition in

the vegetarian food industry makes it difficult for VEGO to stand out among competitors who already have a strong customer base. In addition, changes in consumer preferences for environmentally friendly packaging and products with natural ingredients are additional challenges for emerging brands (Addessi et al., 2017; Mathur et al., 2008).

The consequences of these factors are sales stagnation and limitations in reaching a wider market segment. Initial data shows that VEGO's sales have decreased from IDR 2 million in the first month to only IDR 100 thousand in the following months. This shows that VEGO has not succeeded in attracting new customers outside its initial customer network. In addition, the lack of digital promotional activities has caused VEGO to miss opportunities to build deeper relationships with potential customers, especially those who are active on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok.

Brand awareness is defined as the extent to which consumers can recognize or recall a brand in a variety of situations (Ansari et al., 2019; Mujica-Luna et al., 2021; Nurhasanah & Syahputri, 2022). This variable is important because it creates the foundation for customer loyalty and repeat purchases. In the context of VEGO, efforts to increase brand awareness involve a combination of digital marketing strategies, market segmentation, and product innovation that are in line with consumer preferences (Karen & Zai, 2022). This strategy is designed to address the market need for vegetarian food products that are not only healthy but also sustainable. The study also highlights the importance of utilizing digital influencers and e-commerce platforms to expand market reach.

This study offers a new approach in mapping marketing strategies to increase brand awareness in the Indonesian vegetarian food industry. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, this study not only identifies consumer preferences but also analyzes market dynamics using tools such as PESTEL analysis and Porter's Five Forces model (Pangarkar & Prabhudesai, 2024; Süveges, 2019). Focusing on the "Sustainability Supporters" cluster as the main market segment provides a unique perspective that has not been widely discussed in previous literature. In addition, this study offers a digital strategy implementation model that is integrated with current market trends, such as the use of social media and collaboration with eco-friendly influencers.

The urgency of this research lies in the urgent need to address the low brand awareness of VEGO as one of the players in the competitive vegetarian food market. With the increasing vegetarian population in Indonesia, VEGO has a great opportunity to become a market leader. However, without an effective marketing strategy, this potential cannot be realized. This research provides an important contribution in addressing the challenges faced by VEGO and helps similar companies to understand how to optimally utilize market trends.

This study aims to identify VEGO's main competitors in the Indonesian vegetarian food industry and analyze their strategies. This study is expected to provide benefits to support the growth of a healthy and sustainable lifestyle in Indonesia through the promotion of innovative vegetarian products.

Research methods

Research Approach

This study is a qualitative study with a descriptive approah (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) that aims to understand and analyze marketing strategies that can increase brand awareness of VEGO as a vegetarian product. The descriptive approach was chosen because it is able to provide an in-depth picture of the phenomenon being studied, namely

the low brand awareness of VEGO in the plant-based food market. This study is designed to explore relevant information from various perspectives, both from consumers, competitors, and other relevant stakeholders.

Location and Time of Research

This research was conducted in Jakarta, which is one of the largest vegetarian consumer centers in Indonesia. Jakarta was chosen as the research location because this city offers a variety of market segments, ranging from consumers with premium preferences to those who are more price sensitive. The research implementation period starts from January to June 2024. This period includes the preparation phase, data collection, analysis, and preparation of marketing strategy recommendations.

Population and Research Sample

The population in this study were all vegetarian consumers in the Jakarta area. To obtain an accurate representation, this study used a purposive sampling method with specific criteria, namely consumers who adopt a vegetarian lifestyle or reduce their consumption of animal products. The sample used was 206 respondents, selected based on their activeness in consuming vegetarian products and their willingness to participate in this study. This sample is considered representative enough to describe the characteristics of the vegetarian market in Jakarta.

Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study include questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data on consumer preferences, including factors that influence their purchasing decisions. In-depth interviews were conducted to gain deeper qualitative insights into consumer motivations, needs, and expectations. In addition, secondary data such as market reports, previous studies, and industry trends were also used to strengthen the analysis.

Data collection technique

Data was collected through a combination of surveys and interviews. The survey was conducted online using a digital platform to reach a wider range of respondents. The questionnaire consisted of several sections, including demographics, product preferences, and consumption behavior. In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured technique, allowing for deeper exploration of topics relevant to the study. Secondary data was collected from reliable sources such as industry reports, academic journals, and related articles.

Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data was analyzed using a thematic approach for qualitative data and descriptive statistics for quantitative data. Thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns in the interviews, such as consumer preferences for vegetarian products and their views on VEGO. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to interpret the survey data, such as demographic distribution and consumer preferences. The combination of these two approaches allows the study to generate strategic recommendations based on rich and comprehensive data.

Validity and Reliability of Research

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study uses method triangulation, which combines data from surveys, interviews, and secondary sources. This triangulation aims to verify findings from various sources and ensure the accuracy of the research results. In addition, the data collection process is carried out systematically with strict research protocol guidelines to minimize bias.

Results and Discussion

Competitor Data Analysis Results

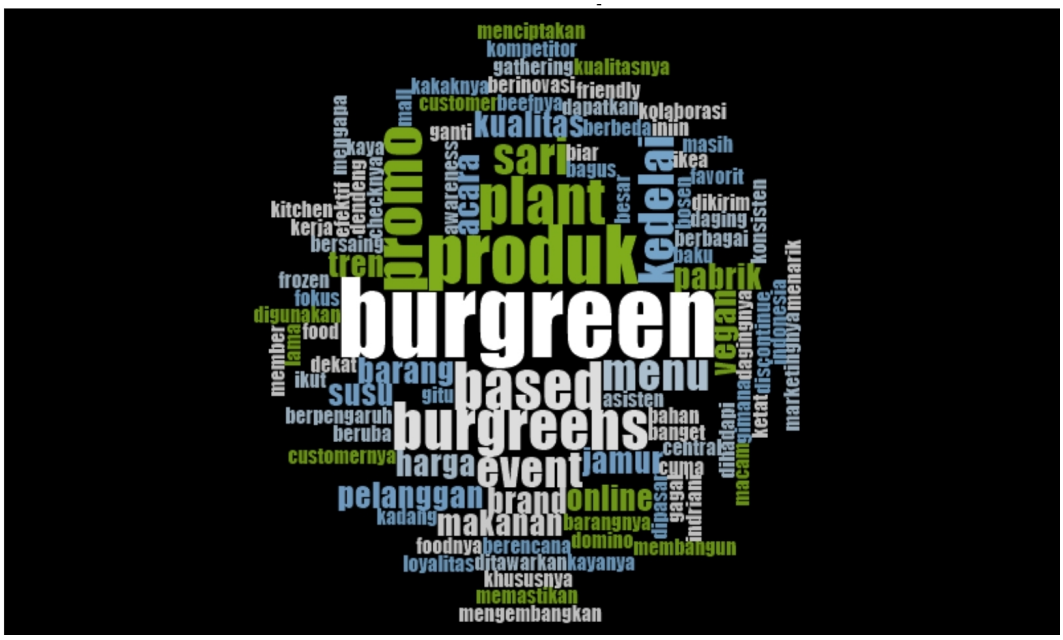


Figure 1. Word Cloud Competitor One

(Source: Author)

The word cloud for Competitor 1 highlights the key themes and focus areas discussed in the analysis. Prominent and recurring words provide insights into their business approach, customer engagement, and product offerings. the main focus on "Burgreens" because its the main topic on this interview, product "product" discussing about the product they offer, "plant based" and "vegan" indicate their specialty in restaurant, "promo" and "event" indicate they offer promos and joining events to attract consumers.



Figure 2. Word Cloud Competitor Two
(Source: Author)

From this word cloud we can imply the most frequently mentioned word is burgreen as the brand that we discussed about. The word product "product" and plant based are about the thing they are offered as a plant-based product. The word quality "quality" describes they maintain the quality of the products offered.

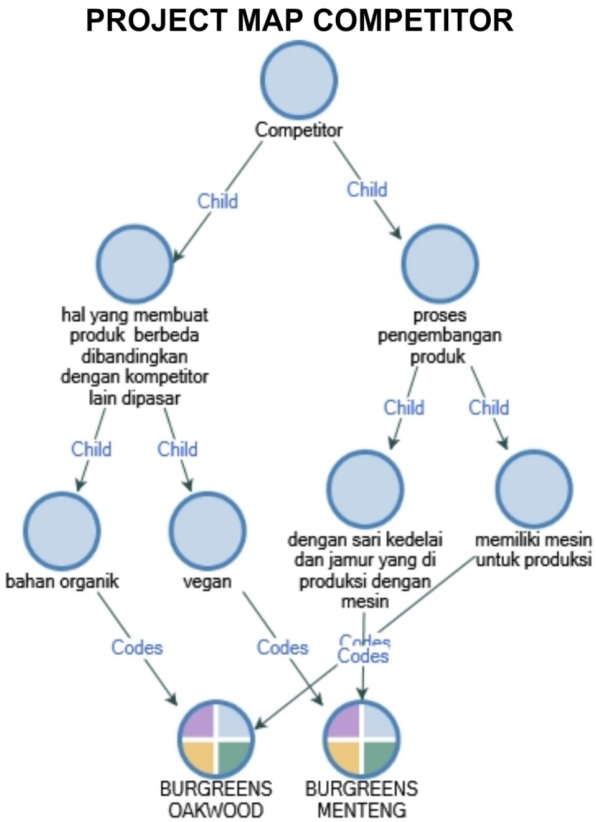


Figure 3. Competitor's Strategies
(Source: Author)

According to the competitor project map, Burgreens differentiates itself from other rivals by employing organic ingredients and developing products that include soy extract, jackfruit, and mushrooms. They also use machines to provide a meaty texture.

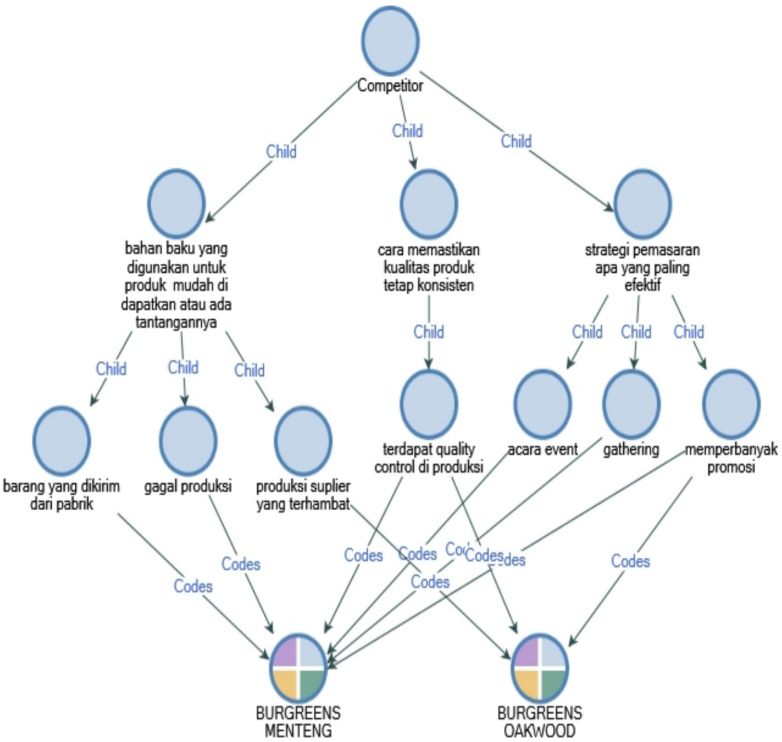


Figure 4. Competitor's Strategies
(Source: Author)

They indicated that there are difficulties in acquiring raw materials because the products are factory-produced, and there is still a risk of product failure.

Nonetheless, they ensure that the quality of the products sold is consistent by using quality control. They also believe that the most effective marketing methods include attending events and gatherings and increasing promotional activities.

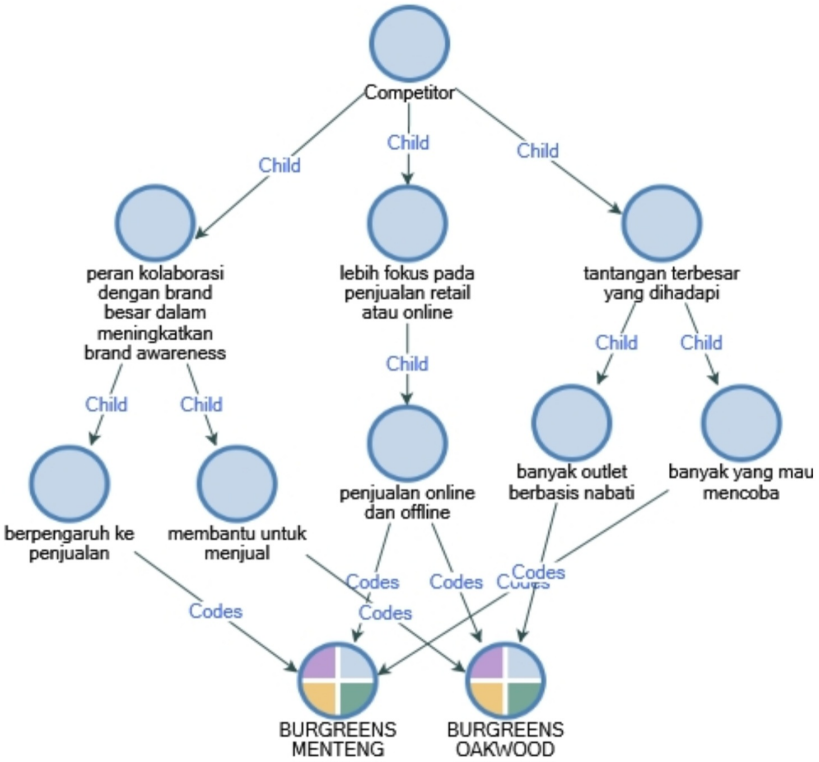


Figure 5. Competitor's Strategies
(Source: Author)

They also collaborate with major brands such as Starbucks, Domino's Pizza, Ikea, and more. Collaboration with these brands provides a significant benefit to sales. Despite the fact that they conduct activities both online and offline, they have one advantage: there are a large number of customers who come to this industry.

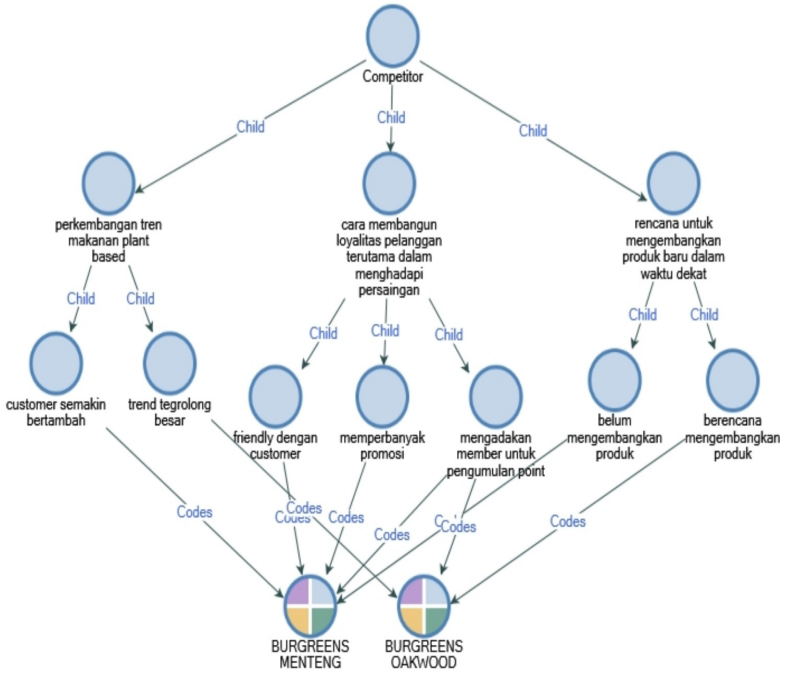


Figure 6. Competitor's Strategies
(Source: Author)

With the growing popularity of plant-based foods, Burgreens has the opportunity to build customer loyalty through frequent promotions and a membership program. They are also constantly updating with new menu items and plans to launch new products.

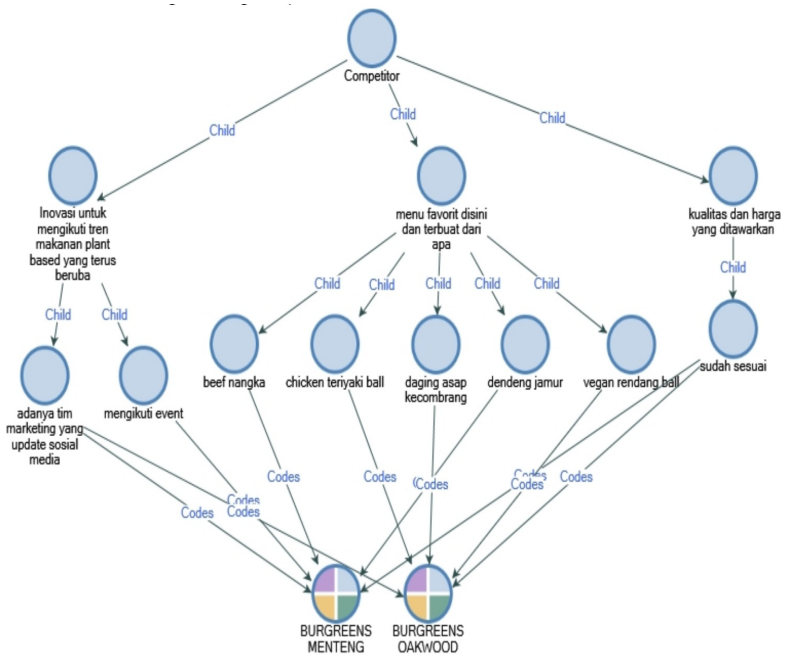


Figure 7. Competitor's Strategies
(Source: Author)

They believe that the prices and quality of the products offered are appropriate, and they have marketing teams who are always monitoring market trends. Favorite menu items include beef from jackfruit and chicken teriyaki balls made from soy.

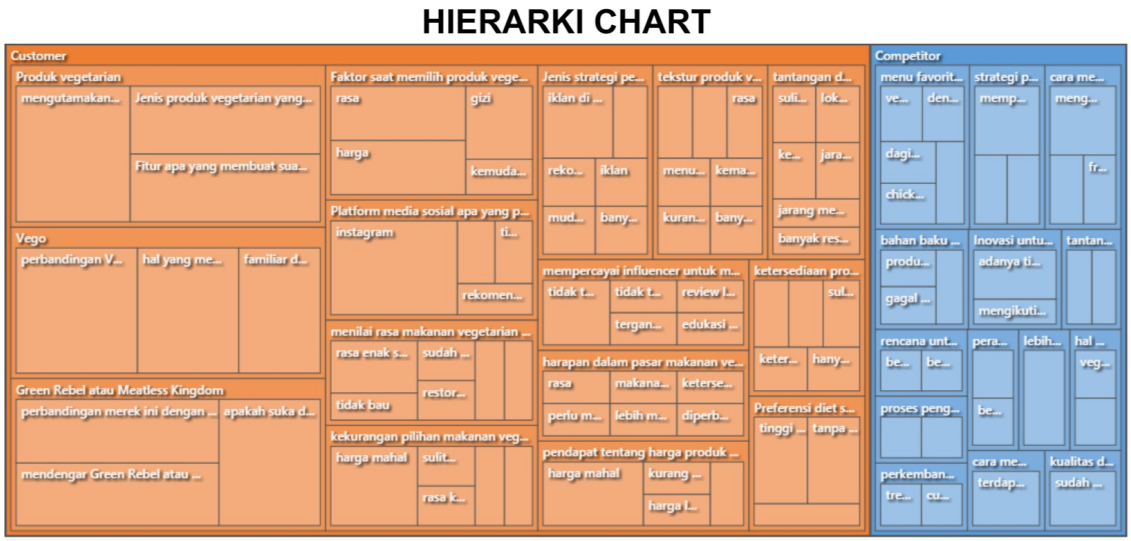


Figure 8. Hierarchical Chart
(Source: NVivo Result)

A hierarchical chart showing the words often mentioned by customers and competitors. The graphic focuses on the key issues or traits that are most significant to customers and competitors. These words reflect customers' preferences, needs, and pain areas; for competitors, they represent their strategic priorities and positioning. Frequently used terms reveal what customers value most, such as product quality, packaging, price, taste, and convenience. This helps in identifying areas where VEGO's offerings can better fit consumer expectations. Competitors' marketing focus might be revealed by the words they use frequently, such as availability, internet presence, or brand awareness activities.

Strategy Formulation

VEGO will conduct marketing mix as their strategy formulation. According to Kotler (2019), marketing mix is a set of marketing tools used by businesses to achieve their marketing objectives within a target market. Adjustments to the marketing mix are commonly made by businesses, where they modify its elements to meet the needs of their particular target market. The success of these marketing mix components relies on their alignment with the company's unique situation and market environment. As a result, the marketing mix can be understood as the controllable factors that marketing managers use to impact consumer buying behavior. These factors include product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence (7P).

Products

According to the survey results, 66% of consumers prefer products made with local ingredients, 41% seek low-calorie vegetarian products, 68% want high-fiber vegetarian food for digestive health, nearly 30% desire vegetarian food that is long-lasting and free of preservatives, and 39.8% prefer vegetarian products based on mushrooms.

To address these consumer needs and preferences, VEGO intends to work with local farmers and suppliers to find high-quality local mushrooms. In the manufacturing process, VEGO will use natural ingredients and ensure that products are MSG-free, resulting in low-calorie solutions with a natural and authentic taste.

To meet the demand for long-lasting vegetarian food without preservatives, VEGO will use special vacuum-sealed plastic to remove air from the packing, thereby reducing the breakdown process. In addition, VEGO will use sterilization technology that kills bacteria with high-pressure water, giving the product a shelf life of up to two years.

Price

68% of respondents think the price of vegetarian food is still expensive, particularly when compared to non-vegetarian food containing real meat. As a result, promotions and discounts are viewed favorably and have become an important consideration when purchasing vegetarian products. Respondents also choose low-cost products over popular brands at higher prices. They are willing to spend extra for quality, though.

To solve this, VEGO intends to create a low pricing strategy that blends affordability and quality. VEGO will offer regular promotions and discounts, including seasonal campaigns, bundle deals, and first-time buyer discounts, to attract price-sensitive customers and encourage them to try the products.

Place

According to the interviews, vegetarian food is still difficult to find outside of big cities, and they are unable to buy vegetarian products at their nearby minimarkets. They

also mentioned difficulty in getting easy and convenient vegetarian food. Respondents hope that vegetarian food would become more widely available, particularly in non-vegetarian restaurants, allowing them to dine with their non-vegetarian friends and family. To solve these issues and meet customer expectations, VEGO intends to work with supermarkets, minimarkets, and both vegetarian and non-vegetarian restaurants to make vegetarian products more widely available. Additionally, VEGO is now available on online markets, allowing users to buy vegetarian products without leaving their homes.

Promotion

According to interviews with consumers and potential customers, social media is the most successful channel for promoting products, with many people discovering new products on social media, especially Instagram. In response, VEGO will actively promote its products on social media channels such as Instagram and TikTok, using the advertisements feature to reach a broader audience. VEGO will also provide discount promotions during TikTok Live sessions and sell its products through Shopee and Tokopedia. VEGO's strategy is to keep both existing and future consumers up to date on the company's offers while also providing more motivation to purchase through marketplaces by taking advantage of available discounts. This approach is likely to increase VEGO's visibility, engagement, and sales.

People

Because of low awareness of the brand, which has resulted in low sales, VEGO recognizes the need to increase its brand awareness. One strategy is to work with influencers to review VEGO products. The selection of influencers is critical because they must reflect VEGO's image as a healthy, plant-based, vegetarian-friendly business. Collaboration with influencers who live a healthy lifestyle will strengthen VEGO's positioning and reputation. This strategy is consistent with respondents' comments, which indicated that they believe suggestions from influencers who encourage a healthy lifestyle. By employing these trusted individuals, VEGO hopes to effectively engage its target audience, develop trust, and raise brand awareness, resulting in increased sales.

Process

A total of 68% of respondents wanted a meat-like texture, with mushrooms as the dominant component. Creating a meat-like texture from mushrooms is not an easy or quick procedure, taking a lot of effort and time. To streamline and simplify this process, VEGO intends to invest in equipment created exclusively for processing mushrooms into a texture that closely resembles meat. With this technology, VEGO hopes to meet consumer demands more effectively while preserving the quality and appeal of its products. This investment is projected to increase production capacity, allowing VEGO to offer products that meet consumer preferences and increase customer satisfaction.

Physical Evidence

A total of 201 respondents indicated that they prefer eco-friendly packaging for vegetarian products. This demonstrates an increasing consumer knowledge and need for sustainability in product presentation. To satisfy this demand, VEGO intends to use environmentally friendly packaging materials, such as recyclable, biodegradable, or compostable materials. These packaging solutions will reflect VEGO's dedication to sustainability and appeal to environmentally aware customers. VEGO will also

emphasize this environmentally friendly approach in its branding and marketing, including labels and certifications such as "Eco-Friendly Packaging" or "Sustainable Materials" on the product. This approach is to increase customer satisfaction, align with consumer values, and establish VEGO as a forward-thinking, ecologically responsible brand in the vegetarian food market.

Conclusion

According to data analysis, the vegetarian food market in Indonesia is growing rapidly due to increased health and environmental consciousness. VEGO, as a new entry, has a clear potential to establish itself in this market by addressing major consumer desires. Cluster 3, which focuses on sustainability, natural ingredients, and environmentally friendly packaging, is the most appealing target market for VEGO. Competitors in Cluster 4 have established offline and online store presence, making direct competition less realistic at this time. VEGO must differentiate itself by capitalizing on its strengths in sustainability and innovation.

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