

Designing a Customer Engagement-Based Digital Marketing Strategy to Increase the Number of Customers at Republik Barbershop

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Abstract—This study aims to design a customer engagement-based digital marketing strategy to increase the number of customers at Republik Barbershop. The research is motivated by the growing competition in the barbershop industry and the increasing importance of digital platforms in attracting and retaining customers. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation. The analysis was guided by the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) framework to evaluate the effectiveness of existing digital marketing activities and identify opportunities for strategic improvement. The findings indicate that social media, particularly Instagram, plays a significant role in enhancing brand visibility, fostering customer interaction, and strengthening customer relationships. Customer recommendations, service quality, a comfortable environment, and a strategic location were identified as key factors influencing customer acquisition and retention. Based on these findings, a digital marketing strategy centered on customer engagement is proposed, including the development of interactive content, customer-generated content, online review management, personalized communication, and consistent social media engagement. These strategies are expected to strengthen customer relationships, increase brand awareness, and contribute to sustainable customer growth at Republik Barbershop.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Strategy; Customer Engagement; Social Media Marketing; AIDA Model; Barbershop Industry

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has driven significant changes in marketing activities, particularly through the utilization of digital marketing as a means of communication between businesses and consumers. Digital marketing enables business owners to reach broader markets, improve promotional cost efficiency, and build more interactive relationships with customers (Natania & Dwijayanti, 2024). One of the most widely used forms of digital marketing is social media marketing, as it has the ability to increase brand visibility, expand market reach, and facilitate real-time two-way communication with consumers (Ivana et al., 2021). Research by (Ciamas & Anggraini, 2021), also indicates that the effective implementation of digital marketing can improve business performance and increase company revenue. Therefore, the utilization of digital media has become essential for businesses seeking to maintain competitiveness amid changes in consumer behavior, where customers increasingly rely on digital platforms to obtain information about products and services.

The barbershop industry is one of the service sectors that has experienced rapid growth in recent years. Increasing public awareness of personal grooming and appearance has encouraged the emergence of numerous barbershops offering diverse concepts and services (Poling et al., 2025). This condition has intensified business competition, requiring business owners not only to offer competitive prices but also to create positive customer experiences, build strong brand images, and develop innovative promotional strategies (Nisa et al., 2026). In this context, customer engagement plays a crucial role in creating, developing, and strengthening relationships with customers, making it an important strategy for sustaining business performance in the future (Dwi et al., 2022). Furthermore, customer engagement developed through social media can enhance customer interactions with a brand, thereby influencing service usage decisions and encouraging recommendations to potential customers.

Republik Barbershop is a men's grooming service business that utilizes social media as a promotional and communication tool. However, based on preliminary observations and interviews with the business owner, customer growth over the past year has fluctuated and has not yet achieved the targets established by the company. Although the barbershop actively uses social media accounts to share promotional content and service information, customer interaction levels remain relatively low and do not yet reflect optimal customer engagement. In addition, most new customers are still acquired through recommendations from friends or family, indicating that the current digital marketing strategy has not functioned effectively as a customer acquisition tool. This situation reveals a gap between the potential of digital marketing to increase market reach and customer engagement and the actual outcomes achieved by Republik Barbershop (Asbary, 2026).

Previous studies have generally focused on the impact of digital marketing on purchase decisions (Fadhilah, 2024), customer satisfaction (Utama et al., 2024), and business revenue growth. However, there is still limited research that specifically addresses how to design a customer engagement-based digital marketing strategy for barbershop service businesses. In other words, most existing studies have primarily examined the effects of digital marketing on specific variables, while relatively few have produced practical strategic recommendations that can be directly implemented by service-based businesses. This research gap provides a strong rationale for conducting the present study. Therefore, this study aims to design a customer engagement-based digital marketing strategy that aligns with the characteristics of

Republik Barbershop in order to increase customer numbers, strengthen customer loyalty, and create sustainable competitive advantages.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses Customer Engagement Theory as the primary theoretical foundation for understanding how customer engagement can support the success of digital marketing strategies. Customer engagement is a psychological state reflected through customer interaction, participation, and emotional connection with a brand that contributes to increased customer loyalty and recommendations (electronic word of mouth) (Brodie et al. (POLOBUNTU, 2025), Hollebeek (Nuraini et al., 2026)) Research specifically addressing the design of customer engagement-based digital marketing strategies in barbershop service businesses is still relatively limited. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by designing a digital marketing strategy that suits the characteristics of Republik Barbershop. As an analytical framework, this study uses the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model to identify customer responses to digital marketing activities and as a basis for developing strategies aimed at increasing engagement and the number of customers (Chandra & Sari, 2022)

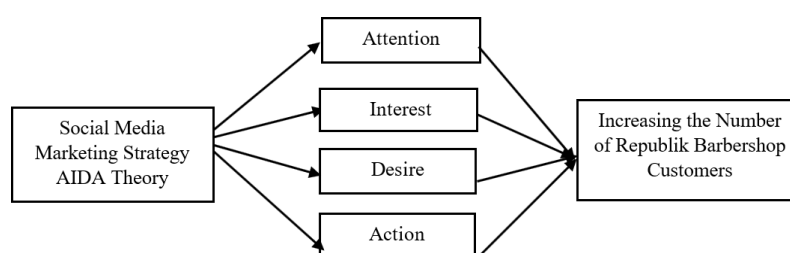


Figure 1. Research Framework

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the digital marketing practices implemented by Republik Barbershop and to develop a customer engagement-based digital marketing strategy that aligns with the business's needs and characteristics (Sugiyono, 2022) Qualitative research is a research method used to understand social phenomena from the perspective of research participants through the collection of descriptive data in the form of words, actions, and documents. This approach was chosen because the study does not aim to test relationships among variables statistically; rather, it seeks to explore customers' experiences, perceptions, and views regarding the digital marketing activities carried out by Republik Barbershop.

Research informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involves choosing participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The informants consisted of the owner of Republik Barbershop and customers who had used its services and interacted with its social media platforms. The selection process continued until data saturation was achieved, ensuring that the collected information provided a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore informants' experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding the effectiveness of the digital marketing activities implemented by Republik Barbershop. Observation was carried out by directly examining digital marketing activities, including the types of content published, posting frequency, forms of customer interaction, and promotional activities conducted through social media. Documentation was used to complement the research data by collecting social media posts, customer testimonials, promotional materials, and other relevant supporting documents.

The collected data were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke, which enables researchers to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns or themes emerging from the data systematically and comprehensively (Kiger & Varpio, 2020) The data analysis process was conducted through several stages, including reading and familiarizing with the data, performing coding, identifying key themes, categorizing themes based on the concepts of customer engagement and the AIDA model, and interpreting the meanings of the findings. To enhance the credibility of the research results, data triangulation was employed by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, source triangulation was applied by comparing information gathered from the business owner and customers to ensure the validity and consistency of the findings (Sugiyono, 2022). Through this approach, the study is expected to generate customer engagement-based digital marketing strategy recommendations that are tailored to the characteristics of Republik Barbershop and can be effectively implemented to sustainably increase the number of customers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the effectiveness of Republik Barbershop's digital marketing cannot be evaluated solely based on the existence of social media accounts, but also on the ability of digital content to influence customer behavior at each stage of the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) and its contribution to customer

engagement. Based on the results of both structured and open-ended interviews, customers were initially attracted by visual content showcasing haircut transformations, promotional offers, and the barbershop atmosphere. These findings suggest that engaging visual content is capable of generating customer attention and interest in the services offered. Furthermore, informative, relevant, and visually appealing content can enhance customer engagement and encourage more intensive interactions between customers and the brand on social media platforms (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Therefore, the consistent use of high-quality visual content is a crucial factor in enhancing the effectiveness of Republik Barbershop's digital marketing efforts, particularly in attracting customer attention and building strong relationships with customers.

Table 1. Results of Republik Barbershop's Digital Marketing Analysis Based on the AIDA Model

AIDA Stage	Research Findings	Enabling Factors	Identified Constraints
Attention	Customers are attracted by haircut transformation content, promotions, and the barbershop atmosphere.	Attractive visual content and promotional offers.	Content publication is inconsistent and lacks variety.
Interest	Customers are attracted by the quality of service, affordable prices, and comfortable environment.	Service information and customer experiences are shared through social media.	Service information is not presented comprehensively or consistently
Desire	Customers' intention to visit is influenced by customer testimonials, before-and-after content, and recommendations from other customers.	Word of mouth dan customer-generated content	Customer testimonials have not been managed systematically.
Action	The decision to visit is influenced by promotions, ease of access to information, trust in the service, and social media interactions.	Quick responses to customers and documentation of service results.	there is no structured customer conversion strategy in place

The findings indicate that Republik Barbershop's digital marketing activities have influenced customers at every stage of the AIDA model. Furthermore, the success of digital marketing is determined not only by the number of posts or the mere presence of social media accounts, but also by the company's ability to create meaningful interactions with customers.

The observation results further reinforce that Republik Barbershop still faces several strategic challenges, including inconsistent content publication schedules, limited branding efforts, minimal utilization of customer testimonials, and a lack of content diversity. These weaknesses reduce the effectiveness of digital marketing in encouraging customers to move from the Desire stage to the Action stage. As a result, social media currently functions more as an information channel rather than as a structured customer conversion tool.

Tabel 2. Digital Marketing Implementation Challenges at Republik Barbershop

No	Implementation Challenges	Implications for Digital Marketing Performance
1	Inconsistent content publication	Reduces reach, brand visibility, and customer awareness.
2	Limited content variety	Reduces content attractiveness and lowers customer engagement levels.
3	Underutilization of customer testimonials	Limits the development of trust and service credibility among potential customers.
4	Weak brand identity (branding)	Makes it difficult for the company to differentiate itself from competitors.
5	Limited human resources	Hinders consistent, creative, and sustainable social media management.

The observation results indicate that the implementation of digital marketing at Republik Barbershop still faces several challenges that may affect the effectiveness of its marketing strategy. These challenges include inconsistent content publication, limited content variety, minimal use of customer testimonials, weak brand identity (branding), and limited human resources for social media management. Inconsistent content posting can reduce brand reach and visibility, while limited content variety may decrease audience engagement.

In addition, the underutilization of customer testimonials reduces potential customers' trust in the quality of the services offered. A weak brand identity also makes it difficult for Republik Barbershop to establish a clear differentiation from its competitors. These issues are further exacerbated by limited human resources, which hinder the consistent and strategic management of social media activities.

Overall, these challenges can reduce the effectiveness of digital marketing efforts in building customer engagement and may hinder the conversion process of customers from the Interest and Desire stages to the Action stage within the AIDA model. These findings are consistent with the study by Li, Larimo, and Leonidou (Li et al., 2021), which emphasizes that the effectiveness of social media marketing is strongly influenced by content consistency, customer interaction

quality, and an organization's ability to manage digital resources to enhance customer engagement and trust. which states that the effectiveness of social media marketing is strongly influenced by content consistency, the quality of customer interactions, and a company's ability to manage digital resources in order to enhance customer engagement and trust.

Table 3. Recommended Digital Marketing Strategy

No	Strategy	Purpose
1	Developing a consistent content calendar	Increasing visibility and brand awareness.
2	Utilizing customer testimonials and user-generated content	Increasing customer trust and purchase intention.
3	Conducting polls, Q&A sessions, and giveaways	Increasing customer interaction and engagement.
4	Strengthening the brand's visual identity	Enhancing brand recognition and differentiation from competitors.
5	Measuring engagement rate, reach, conversion inquiries, and repeat visits	Enabling the evaluation and optimization of digital marketing performance.

The recommended digital marketing strategy is designed to address the various challenges identified during the study while improving the effectiveness of Republik Barbershop's marketing efforts. Establishing a consistent content calendar is expected to increase the frequency of communication with customers and expand audience reach in a sustainable manner. The utilization of customer testimonials and customer-generated content plays an important role in building credibility and strengthening potential customers' trust in the quality of the services offered.

In addition, implementing interactive activities such as polls, question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions, and giveaways can encourage more intensive two-way communication, thereby enhancing customer engagement. Strengthening the brand's visual identity and service differentiation is also necessary to build a stronger brand image and improve competitiveness in the increasingly competitive barbershop industry.

Furthermore, the use of digital performance indicators, such as engagement rate, reach, conversion inquiries, and repeat visits, enables the company to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategies in a measurable manner. Therefore, the implementation of these strategies is expected not only to increase visibility and customer interaction on social media but also to encourage customer conversion from the Attention, Interest, and Desire stages to the Action stage, in accordance with the AIDA model.

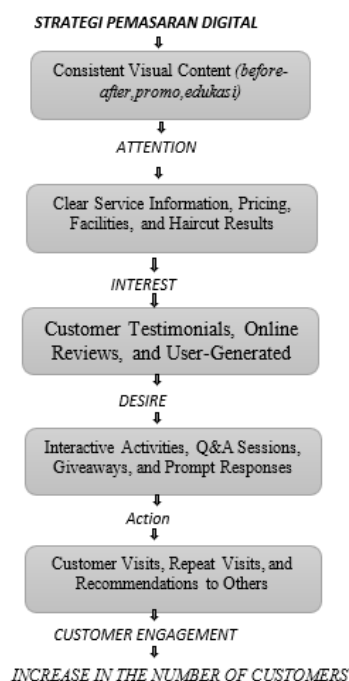


Figure 2. Customer Engagement Flow Diagram Based on the AIDA Model

The digital marketing strategy proposed in this study is designed to increase the number of customers through a customer engagement approach. The strategy is based on the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), which is integrated with digital marketing activities conducted through social media platforms.

At the Attention stage, Republik Barbershop should consistently provide visual content, such as before-and-after haircut documentation, promotional information, and educational content relevant to customers' needs. The quality of visual content and the consistency of content publication play an important role in increasing brand awareness and attracting audience attention on social media (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

At the Interest stage, customers begin to show interest after receiving clear information about the services offered, such as pricing, facilities, haircut quality, and the barbershop atmosphere. Providing complete, accurate, and easy-to-understand information helps potential customers evaluate the services and reduces uncertainty before making a visit. Relevant and valuable information has been shown to increase customers' interest in a brand and encourage higher levels of engagement in the digital environment.

At the Desire stage, customers' intention to use the services can be strengthened through the use of customer testimonials, online reviews, and user-generated content. The findings of this study indicate that positive experiences shared by previous customers and recommendations from other customers have a strong influence on building trust and creating positive perceptions of the quality of Republik Barbershop's services. Customer testimonials and reviews serve as social proof that can influence potential customers' purchasing decisions (Ismagilova et al., 2020).

The Action stage focuses on encouraging customers to visit through various interactive activities, such as question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions, polls, giveaways, and prompt responses to customer inquiries on social media. These interactive activities not only make it easier for customers to obtain information but also enhance their trust in and connection with the brand. Responsive and continuous interactions have been shown to increase the likelihood of customers taking concrete actions, including making a purchase or using the services offered (Dwivedi et al., 2021)

All of these stages contribute to the development of customer engagement, which is reflected in customers' interactions, participation, and ongoing relationships with the brand. The higher the level of customer engagement, the greater the likelihood that customers will make repeat visits, recommend the business to others, and become loyal customers. Therefore, customer engagement serves as the primary mechanism linking digital marketing strategies to an increase in the number of customers at Republik Barbershop (Lim et al., 2022).

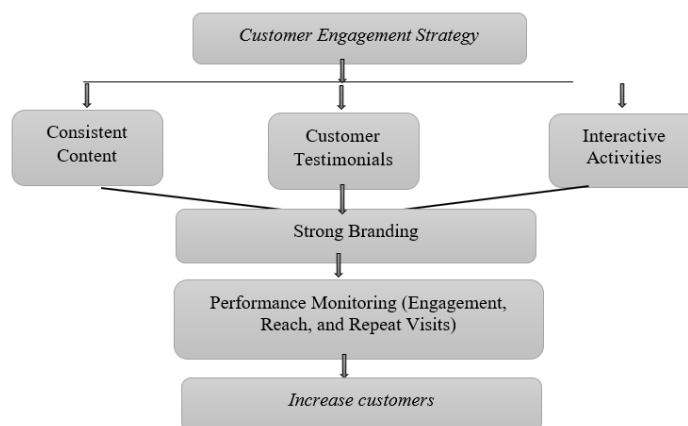


Figure 3. Customer Engagement-Based Digital Marketing Strategy

Based on the overall findings, this study proposes a customer engagement-based digital marketing strategy consisting of five main components: the development of a consistent content calendar, the more intensive use of customer testimonials, the implementation of interactive activities such as polls and question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions, the strengthening of brand identity through visual consistency, and the monitoring of social media performance using indicators such as engagement rate, reach, and customer repeat-visit rates.

These strategies are designed to enhance customer engagement and strengthen the customer conversion process from the Attention stage to the Action stage. Therefore, customer engagement serves as the key factor linking digital marketing activities to the sustainable growth of Republik Barbershop's customer base.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of digital marketing at Republik Barbershop is determined not only by the existence of social media accounts but also by the company's ability to build customer engagement throughout each stage of the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action). The results indicate that visual content, clear service information, customer testimonials, and social media interactions play important roles in influencing customer behavior from the attention stage to the decision-making stage. However, the effectiveness of digital marketing is still constrained by several challenges, including inconsistent content publication, limited content diversity, minimal utilization of customer testimonials, weak brand identity, and limited human resources for social media management. Based on these findings, this study proposes a customer engagement-based digital marketing strategy consisting of five key components: the development of a consistent content calendar, the systematic use of customer testimonials, the implementation of interactive social media activities, the strengthening of brand identity through visual consistency and service differentiation, and the monitoring of digital marketing performance using measurable indicators. These strategies are designed to enhance customer engagement while strengthening the customer conversion process from the Attention stage to the Action stage. From a managerial perspective, this study highlights that social media should be managed not only as an information-sharing platform but also as a tool for building long-term customer relationships and driving

customer conversion. The use of before-and-after haircut content, customer testimonials, and interactive activities can help increase customer trust and strengthen purchase decisions. In addition, business owners should regularly evaluate digital performance indicators such as engagement rate, reach, conversion inquiries, and repeat visits to support more effective and data-driven decision-making. The study also emphasizes the importance of integrating digital marketing with offline service experiences to ensure business sustainability in an increasingly competitive barbershop industry. Digital marketing serves to attract customer attention and generate interest, while service quality, customer experience, loyalty programs, and customer referrals play crucial roles in customer retention and repeat visits. This integration creates a continuous customer journey that not only supports customer acquisition but also strengthens long-term loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that the integration of Customer Engagement Theory and the AIDA model provides an effective framework for designing digital marketing strategies in small service-based businesses, particularly barbershops. The findings offer practical insights for business owners and serve as a reference for future research on customer engagement and digital marketing strategy in similar service industries.

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