

Slices and Brews: A Digital Voyage Through Mokky's Pizza & Coffee

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ABSTRACT

Mokky's Pizza is a Malaysian food and beverage (F&B) brand specializing in New York-style pizza paired with specialty coffee. Founded one and a half years ago, it combines culinary excellence with vibrant, New York-inspired aesthetics. Led by Marketing Director Muhammad Azfar bin Abdul Aziz, Mokky's focuses on leveraging digital platforms, particularly Instagram, to engage customers and build its brand. The brand's unique pairing of pizza and coffee appeals to a diverse audience while creating a memorable dining experience. Despite its strengths, Mokky's faces challenges such as over-reliance on Instagram, limited use of platforms like Facebook and Google Ads, and resource constraints that hinder customer communication. Negative feedback management and scalability while retaining its unique identity further complicate its growth. To address these issues, Mokky's can diversify its digital presence, integrate AI tools for improved communication, and expand loyalty programs to enhance customer retention. Collaborations with influencers and strategic partnerships can also amplify brand visibility. By implementing these recommendations, Mokky's Pizza can strengthen its competitive position, overcome operational challenges, and achieve sustainable growth in Malaysia's dynamic F&B market.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Strategies, Customer Engagement, Malaysian F&B Industry, Brand Differentiation, Customer Experience

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Mokky's Pizza is a Malaysian-based food and beverage (F&B) brand founded to introduce New York-style pizza to the local market, paired with specialty coffee to create a unique dining experience. Established approximately one and a half years ago, the brand is owned and operated by Mokky's Food and Services. Mokky's Pizza strives to provide customers with high-quality food and excellent service while offering a vibrant, New York-inspired ambiance. The combination of pizza and coffee, though unconventional, is a hallmark of Mokky's innovative spirit, setting it apart from traditional F&B establishments.

The brand is led by Marketing Director Muhammad Azfar bin Abdul Aziz, who plays a pivotal role in shaping its identity and growth. Azfar's rich background in the F&B industry, along with his social media marketing expertise, underscores the critical role of digital platforms in engaging customers and building brand identity (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). His vision extends beyond food; he aims to create an inclusive space that appeals to a wide demographic while retaining the unique identity of Mokky's Pizza.

Azfar's interests have significantly influenced the brand's direction. His love for vibrant, streetwear-inspired aesthetics and New York culture is reflected in the shop's design and overall concept. The focus on aesthetic design is supported by research showing that visual appeal and immersive environments enhance customer perception and engagement (Cyr et al., 2010). Additionally, his commitment to customer service and quality ensures that every customer interaction builds loyalty and satisfaction.

HISTORY AND INDUSTRY CONTEXT

The F&B industry in Malaysia is a dynamic and competitive market, driven by customer preferences, digital trends, and an emphasis on experiential dining (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Mokky's Pizza entered this competitive landscape with a unique product offering: large, flavorful pizzas reminiscent of New York slices paired with artisanal coffee. This novel

concept has allowed the brand to cater to diverse customer groups, from families to young adults and professionals seeking both quality and a memorable experience.

Mokky's Pizza operates in two prime locations—Bukit Jelutong and Bukit Tunku. Bukit Jelutong was chosen for its affordability and proximity to the cycling community, a personal connection of the founder. Bukit Tunku, a high-end area, was strategically selected to elevate the brand's profile and cater to affluent customers.

Mokky's Pizza takes pride in offering a unique combination of products and services that cater to diverse tastes and preferences. At the heart of its menu is the New York-style pizza, characterized by large, thin-crust pizzas crafted with bold flavors and the freshest ingredients. These pizzas capture the authentic essence of New York's iconic culinary tradition. Complementing this is Mokky's selection of specialty coffee, featuring high-quality brews designed to appeal to Malaysia's burgeoning coffee culture. This addition not only enhances the dining experience but also positions Mokky's as a versatile destination for both pizza lovers and coffee enthusiasts. Beyond its menu, Mokky's Pizza provides an engaging in-store experience with a vibrant, street-inspired New York aesthetic, creating a welcoming and memorable ambiance for its diners. This fusion of great food, excellent coffee, and an immersive environment sets Mokky's Pizza apart as a standout dining destination.

CRAFTING DIGITAL CONNECTIONS: MOKKY'S MARKETING APPROACH

Platform Utilization and Focus

Mokky's Pizza leverages Instagram as its primary marketing tool, utilizing the platform's visual nature to showcase vibrant images of its New York-style pizzas and cozy café ambiance. Research by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) underscores the potential of social media to foster customer engagement and enhance brand visibility. Reflecting on this strategy, Azfar shared, *"Usually, I use Instagram a lot. I post stories every day, updating customers on how many pizzas are left or how long they need to wait. It's our go-to platform."* (Azfar, A. personal interview, October 20, 2024).

The brand's experimentation with TikTok, aimed at engaging younger audiences, has shown mixed results. Discussing this, Azfar mentioned,

"We just started using TikTok. I hired a Gen Z staff member who loves the platform and knows how to follow trends. I let him create content that resonates with younger people." (Azfar, A. personal interview, October 20, 2024).

However, minimal focus on Facebook and the absence of Google Ads reveal untapped opportunities. Azfar admitted,

"I don't really focus on Facebook much. It's connected to Instagram, but it's not a priority for us." (Azfar, A. personal interview, October 20, 2024).

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) suggest that diversifying digital marketing strategies, including search engine advertising, can significantly expand reach and enhance customer acquisition.

Content Strategy

Mokky's content strategy emphasizes professional photography and high-definition reels to create visually appealing posts. These efforts aim to capture the brand's identity and entice customers with vibrant images of food and the café's atmosphere. By maintaining a consistent aesthetic, Mokky's seeks to strengthen its brand recognition and appeal. This approach aligns

with Cyr et al. (2010), who highlight the impact of aesthetic appeal on consumer engagement, particularly in the online space.

Customer Engagement

Customer interaction is a cornerstone of Mokky's marketing strategy, with direct messaging on Instagram being the primary tool for communication. Despite this, the high volume of inquiries often overwhelms the team, leading to delays and, at times, negative customer experiences. Azfar reflected on this difficulty:

"Sometimes there are so many DMs that I cannot reply to them all. When I miss a message, and the customer arrives to find the pizza sold out, it creates a bad experience." (Azfar, A. personal interview, October 20, 2024).

To address this, Mokky's has started incorporating QR codes to encourage customer reviews and engagement, but the brand recognizes the need for more streamlined communication systems. Huang and Rust (2018) emphasize the role of AI-driven solutions in enhancing customer service and operational efficiency, making this a viable strategy for Mokky.

NAVIGATING THE COMPETITIVE SLICE: MARKETING HURDLES AND STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

Lost in the Feed: Overcoming Platform-Specific Challenges

While Instagram remains Mokky's primary marketing tool, reliance on a single platform limits its reach. TikTok's growth potential is hindered by inconsistent video performance and limited resources which Azhar acknowledged:

"TikTok is a bit of luck. Sometimes a video can reach 100,000 views, and sometimes less than 10,000. It depends on the creativity and content quality." (Azfar, A. personal interview, October 20, 2024).

Furthermore, the underutilization of Facebook and the absence of Google Ads limit Mokky's ability to reach older and search-driven audiences, which remains an area for improvement.

Turning Feedback into Fuel: Managing Customer Reviews

Managing reviews on Google is another pressing issue for Mokky. Negative reviews that cannot be removed have a lasting impact. Azfar explained,

"When a customer gives one or two stars on Google Reviews, it stays there forever. We can't do much about it, and that's frustrating." (Azfar, A. personal interview, October 20, 2024).

Anderson and Magruder (2012) emphasize the importance of reputation management and leveraging positive reviews to mitigate the effects of negative feedback. Efforts to solicit positive reviews through QR codes have been partially effective, but a more proactive approach to reputation management is needed.

Juggling the Hustle: Resource and Communication Bottlenecks

With the marketing efforts largely managed by the founder, resource constraints hinder scalability. The overwhelming volume of customer inquiries on Instagram often results in delayed responses, risking customer dissatisfaction and missed opportunities for engagement.

Staying Fresh in the Slice Game: Navigating a Saturated Market

In a competitive F&B industry, maintaining differentiation is challenging. Mokky's unique combination of pizza and coffee sets it apart but scaling while preserving this distinctiveness is complex. Azfar highlighted this struggle:

“I want to maintain the concept while growing. Even if we have 100 or 200 shops, the identity has to remain the same.” (Azfar, A. personal interview, October 20, 2024).

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN MARKETING AND COMPETITION STRATEGIES

Pixels and AI: Unlocking the Power of Technology

Integrating AI tools for customer interaction can address Mokky’s communication challenges. Huang and Rust (2018) suggest that AI-driven systems, such as chatbots, can significantly improve customer engagement and reduce resource strain. Discussing this potential, Azfar noted:

“We’ve started using MOOLA to track repeat customers and send SMS promotions. It’s a step toward using data to improve engagement.” (Azfar, A. personal interview, October 20, 2024). Chatbots and other AI-driven solutions have the potential to simplify customer communication and alleviate resource constraints.

Going Beyond Likes: Broadening the Digital Footprint

Mokky’s can enhance its reach by incorporating Google Ads to target search-driven audiences and optimizing its TikTok strategy with more engaging, trend-based content. Building a professional website with an interactive menu and virtual tour of the café would also attract new customers and improve online visibility, as recommended by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019).

Creating Loyalists, Not Visitors: Enhancing Customer Engagement

Developing loyalty programs that reward repeat visits with points or discounts can strengthen customer relationships. Kotler and Keller (2016) highlight the effectiveness of personalized promotions and loyalty incentives in driving customer retention. Mokky’s early attempts, such as point-based rewards, can be expanded to include tailored experiences that resonate with individual customer preferences. Azfar shared an example of their early attempts:

“We give points to customers who register with their phone numbers. They can redeem points for vouchers or free drinks.” (Azfar, A. personal interview, October 20, 2024).

Customizing experiences, such as offering personalized promotions aligned with individual customer preferences, can significantly strengthen loyalty and drive long-term retention.

From Local to Legendary: Boosting Brand Visibility

Collaborating with influencers and media outlets can elevate Mokky’s Pizza’s profile in the F&B market. Strategic partnerships with complementary brands or industries, such as lifestyle or apparel, can also amplify its appeal to broader audiences.

SERVING UP SUCCESS: TAILORED STRATEGIES FOR MOKKY’S NEXT CHAPTER

Mokky’s Pizza exhibits notable strengths, including its innovative concept, strong visual branding, and effective customer engagement efforts. These elements contribute to its appeal and visibility in the competitive food and beverage (F&B) market. However, the business faces significant challenges that limit its growth potential. These include an overreliance on specific digital platforms, resource constraints, and the difficulty of managing negative feedback effectively.

To overcome these challenges and capitalize on opportunities, several strategic recommendations are proposed. First, Mokky’s Pizza should diversify its digital presence by

expanding its focus to include platforms such as Google Ads, Facebook, and a professionally developed website, thereby broadening its reach and enhancing visibility (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Second, investing in automation tools, such as AI-driven systems, can streamline customer communication and improve feedback management processes (Huang & Rust, 2018). Finally, enhancing competitive positioning through collaborations with influencers, leveraging data-driven marketing strategies, and exploring strategic partnerships can reinforce brand differentiation and scalability.

By addressing these challenges through the recommended strategies, Mokky's Pizza can strengthen its digital marketing approach, bolster its competitive advantage, and position itself for sustainable growth within the F&B industry.

CONCLUSION

Mokky's Pizza exemplifies an innovative F&B brand with a strong visual identity and customer engagement strategies. However, to sustain its growth, addressing challenges like platform diversification, feedback management, and resource optimization is crucial. With targeted actions, Mokky's can enhance its market presence, expand its customer base, and solidify its reputation as a unique dining destination in Malaysia.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is Mokky's Pizza & Coffee's unique selling proposition (USP)?
2. What are the main challenges Mokky faces in its digital marketing efforts?
3. How does Mokky's Pizza manage customer engagement on digital platforms?
4. What strategies are recommended to overcome Mokky's challenges and enhance its growth?
5. How does Mokky's Pizza maintain its brand identity while planning for scalability?

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