

# COMMUNICATION STRATEGY USED BY PT GRAB INDONESIA IN MAINTAINING DRIVER-PARTNER LOYALTY

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## ABSTRACT

Employee loyalty is one of the most important things that must be maintained by a company. Grab is a transportation company that focuses on maintaining the loyalty of its driver-partners. Therefore, the Grab company can survive until now. The Grab company then made an innovation, namely Grab Benefit to provide benefits to drivers in the hope of increasing driver loyalty. This study focused on analyzing the management of communication strategy used by PT Grab Indonesia in providing benefits to the drivers to increase the loyalty of their driver-partners. This research made use of the qualitative research method and the data collection was conducted through interviews. The results of this study showed that Grab Benefit is currently able to provide benefits to their drivers where all driver needs are provided from basic needs to entertainment for drivers. In addition, to grab benefits, Grab also holds Night Appreciation Partner which is run every year to give rewards to driver-partners who excel. It is not only for drivers, but their family members also get the benefits provided by Grab, one of which is scholarships for driver-partner children. Grab also provides a place for driver-partners to express their complaints, a discussion activity between driver-partners and representatives from Grab. Furthermore, this study implies that communication strategy is important to be developed to maintain sustainable drivers' loyalty towards Grab company.

*Keywords: Communication Strategy, Loyalty Communication Management, Grab*

## INTRODUCTION

Technological developments can create many innovations, one of which is in the field of transportation. Ordering transportation can now be done easily just through a smartphone. This sophistication makes people feel helped because they can carry out activities more easily and effectively. Several activities such as the delivery of goods, purchase of basic needs, or shuttle services are now widely available in several applications in Indonesia. One of the transportation companies that became the object of this research is an online transportation company, namely Grab. Grab was present in Indonesia in June 2012 as a transportation booking application that has provided transportation options such as cars or motorbikes. The Grab application was also named a finalist in the Harvard Business Schools' 2011 Business Plan contest (Sasongko, 2019).

In Indonesia, Grab has grown as the mainstay of transportation in five major cities, one of which is Denpasar and four other cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, and Padang. The survey results

of the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association for the 2019-Q2/2020 period noted that Grab is the most frequently used online transportation application service by the public. there are 21.3% of respondents who claim to often use the Grab application to travel or do other activities (Dimas, 2020)

Every company always has a goal to be able to develop its company, as well as PT Grab Indonesia. Grab wants to develop and maintain its company so that it can compete with competitors in the online transportation sector. A transportation company certainly cannot develop if it does not have a driver. A company can develop because of the loyalty of an employee. Jusuf (2010) said that loyalty is an attitude that arises as a result of the desire to be loyal and devoted to his work, group, boss, or workplace that can make a person willing to sacrifice to satisfy other people or society. This makes Grab focus on maintaining the loyalty of their drivers so they can be more productive so that the company's goals can be achieved. In increasing the productivity of drivers' loyalty, Grab must be able to

provide satisfaction to their drivers because according to Robbins (2001) that job satisfaction is a general attitude of an individual towards his work.

Grab then made several management strategies to maintain the productivity and loyalty of their drivers. In the application of this strategy, there is a communication factor. Basically, communication is the main weapon of a company. If the communication is good and effective, the productivity and loyalty of drivers will be higher. From the description above, the researcher wants to examine the communication strategy of PT Grab Indonesia in increasing the loyalty and productivity of Grab Bali driver-partner employees.

Communication strategies are all plans and tactics or methods that will be used to facilitate communication by displaying the sender, message, and recipient in the communication process to achieve its goals (Seta, 2014). Communication strategy is also defined as planning and management to achieve goals. In this case, PT Grab Indonesia in Bali uses management communication to achieve its goal of maintaining the loyalty of its drivers.

According to Fred R. David's strategic management theory, there are three stages of strategy, including (1) strategy formulation, (2) strategy implementation, and (3) strategy evaluation. In strategy formulation, the creators, formulators, and drafters think carefully about opportunities and threats from outside the company and produce backup strategies and choose strategies to be implemented. In strategy formulation trying to find problems in the company which then produces strategies for the progress of the company.

After the strategy is formulated, the next step is the implementation of the strategy. At this stage, commitment and cooperation from all divisions within the company are required. This last stage is needed to re-measure the success of the

strategy made. In this stage, it is seen how the strategy has been implemented correctly or still needs improvement.

Management is a combination of management and communication. Where there is a definition of communication management, namely the process of using various communication resources in an integrated manner through the process of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling the elements of communication to achieve the goals that have been set (Parag Diwan, 1999). According to Kaye (1994), communication management cannot be separated from the demand for more grounding of communication science in the real world. Where communication management was born as a bridge between communication theorists and communication practitioners (Hamawati, 2018).

Communication management includes receiving, processing, storage, and submission of information in social sub-systems including individuals, groups, organizations, masses, and communities. Communication is seen as a central element in organizational management activities for several reasons, namely, first, communication has the function to bring together the goals of the organization with the target results achieved. Second, serves to adapt to changes in the organizational environment. Third, to foster among members of the organization in carrying out various tasks (workload) of the organization (Hamawati, 2018).

Loyalty in a company is an important thing for everyone who works in the company. In this case, the loyalty of Grab drivers greatly influences the sustainability of the Grab company to remain active in taking orders or delivering and picking up orders. Building loyalty through socialization is one of the ways used by companies. One form of effective socialization involves four main elements, those are (1) Organizations encourage employees to be loyal by giving rewards, (2) Organizations influence employees to

remain loyal through persuasion rather than coercion, (3) Organizations shift employees away from their values and goals towards organizational values and goals, (4) Organizations establish the appearance that individuals may exercise free choice when hiring in and remaining employed.

Several previous research on the communication strategy was carried out by Nurhafinah (2020), Seta (2014), and Isfiantie (2020). Nurhafinah (2020) found that with good communication and good supporters, directly employee loyalty grew by itself without being asked and perpetuate all of its performance for the sake of the company's progress. The results of research conducted by Seta (2014) showed that PT. Kaha Event Management carried out several stages of strategy, namely problem formulation, strategy implementation, and then strategy evaluation. While the results of research conducted by Isfiantie (2020) revealed that the internal communication strategy was carried out by holding various communication forums through the concept of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Face-to-face communication activities were carried out through forums on a regular basis according to the schedule. The interactions that occurred in the forum, could foster a sense of togetherness among employees and the loyalty of the employees themselves.

Based on the explanation above, the researchers found something new in this study, namely the communication strategy of PT Grab Indonesia in maintaining productivity and loyalty of grab Bali driver-partners. The purpose of this research was to find out what communication strategies were being carried out by Grab Bali in retaining their drivers in the midst of the emergence of online transportation service competitors.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative methods where the research

provided a careful description of certain individuals or groups about the circumstances and symptoms that occurred (Koentjaraningrat, 1993:89). This study was conducted in Bali to reveal PT Grab Indonesia Communication Strategy in Maintaining Driver Partner Loyalty. This study used two sources of data, namely the first primary which is a source of data in the form of verbal or spoken words, gestures or behavior carried out by the subject with regard to the variables studied or data obtained from respondents directly (Arikunto, 2010). The two secondary data are data obtained from previous research. The unit of analysis in this study is the Grab Company located in Bali. Data collection techniques in this study used 3 ways, namely by interview, observation, and also literature study. In determining the informants, this research used the purposive sampling technique. The informants selected for this study include (1) Grab benefit division team, and (2) Grab driver-partners. There were two informants chosen because they have in-depth knowledge of grab benefits at Grab Bali.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Grab was founded by Anthony Tan and Hooi Ling Tan, two Malaysians. Grab then grew rapidly and began to develop its business in Indonesia in 2012 until now. This application provides several transportation options ranging from Grab car, Grab Bike, Grab Express, Grab food, Grab Assistant, Grab eScooter, Grab gift and in 2020 added 1 more service, namely Grab Mart. In Southeast Asian countries, Grab already has more than 300 thousand driver-partners. The existence of Grab in Indonesia is also growing and growing as reliable transportation in several cities, one of which is Denpasar.

Driver-partners or drivers are an important part of the Grab company. Therefore, Grab wants to increase driver job satisfaction in order to increase the loyalty of Grab drivers. The goal is for

drivers to be more diligent in taking orders which can increase company productivity. There are several activities that are used as strategies by Grab, including creating the Grab Benefit feature which is a program to provide benefits in the form of discounts on staple foods, health, to vehicle service packages. In addition, Grab also provides incentives to drivers that are tailored to the company's conditions, conducts an activity called KOPDAR or *Kopi Darat* (direct meeting), an activity where drivers can gather and tell their complaints to Grab management and also the year of Night Appreciation Partner activity which is an appreciation event. or awarding for Grab driver-partners.

From the results of research conducted by the authors, it was found that the communication strategy carried out was also in accordance with three stages in accordance with strategic management theory, namely: Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, and Strategy Implementation.

At the time of formulating this strategy, the management held discussions and meetings with internal parties. See what the drivers need, and how their drivers are doing. The formulation of this strategy was drawn from the activity they carried out, namely KOPDAR or *Kopi Darat* (direct meeting), wherein in this activity the drivers could convey everything they wanted to convey to management and share complaints between drivers. After doing KOPDAR or *Kopi Darat* (direct meeting), the management then meets to discuss what strategies they can do, which parties they can invite for cooperation, and what steps they can take to be able to give satisfaction to their drivers. For example, their drivers need their vehicle service because their vehicle is their tool at work. Grab then formulated a strategy to invite several workshops to become partners so that Grab drivers could get discounted fees for their vehicle services. In addition, Grab also registers partners such as pharmacies, basic food

stores, cell phone accessories stores, credit, and all kinds of driver needs including entertainment venues in the Grab Benefit application. This Grab partner will also always be invited to all events held by Grab for its drivers, one of which is the annual event, namely Night Appreciation Partner. In this case, internal parties are needed to be able to communicate with partners so they can join and work with Grab. Internal parties make offers and explain the benefits that partners can get if they join as partners with Grab.

In implementing this strategy, cooperation between internal and external parties is required. Internal parties are asked to help display all information related to promotions from partners in the Grab Benefit application, which makes it easier for drivers to find out information related to promos. After discussing the needs of drivers, internal parties then look for partners that match the needs of the drivers. Internal parties are looking for the best offer to be able to provide discounts that can reduce the costs of drivers. Meanwhile, external parties can help by providing attractive promos for Grab drivers. Promos given from partners can be in the form of discounted prices or exchange of goods, which can help relieve drivers. Starting from basic needs to entertainment needs and driver travel with family. The annual event is one of the strategies implemented. Where in this annual event Grab can provide awards for drivers who are active and productive in taking orders or orders. Awards are also sometimes given to drivers' families, such as scholarships for drivers' children who excel. This of course requires the cooperation of external parties, namely the sponsors. KOPDAR or *Kopi Darat* (direct meeting) is routinely carried out as one aspect of this communication strategy, either offline or online. This KOPDAR or *Kopi Darat* (direct meeting) activity is usually held at the Grab Bali office. KOPDAR or *Kopi Darat* (direct meeting) is very important because this activity is a

place for drivers to convey the obstacles they feel while working in the field. Grab also protects the Grab driver community through social media. One of Grab's internal parties joins the Grab driver community to be able to control and also accommodate suggestions from drivers.

In this evaluation phase, Grab conducts a review of the factors that form the basis of the strategy, such as internal and external. Evaluation is usually done every month for Grab Benefit. Judging from how many drivers exchange vouchers to partner shops. If there are partner stores that are rarely encountered by our drivers, the internal team will have further discussions, perhaps by making more attractive offers or temporarily removing partners from Grab Benefit. While other activities are always evaluated after the activity takes place. Like the MAM (Partner Appreciation Night) event which will always be evaluated after the event is over. In order to improve the event for the better in the following year.

Judging from its management activities, the forms of communication that Grab uses to maintain driver loyalty are as stated by GR Terry, these communication forms including Formal communication, (2) Informal communication, (3) Informal communication, (3) Technical communication, and procedural communication. When viewed from the grouping of communication in management, the communication carried out by Grab are vertical group, horizontal communication, and external communication.

This form of the Grab program is quite effective in building loyalty because it contains 4 main elements, namely: (1) Grab encourages driver-partners to be loyal by providing rewards such as exchanging profits at Grab benefits and also during Night Appreciation Partner, (2) Grab can influence driver-partners by persuasion such as giving an annual award to driver-partners or by giving some compliments to Grab drivers, (3) the Grab

company is able to divert driver-partners to both make people feel safe and choose to Grab as safe transportation by always implementing health protocols by installing and always providing hand sanitizer for passengers and providing free vaccines for all drivers, and (4) the Grab company provides freedom for driver-partners in their working hours. There are no rigid working hours imposed on Grab driver-partners.

## CONCLUSIONS

Grab company has carried out the stages of a good communication strategy. Grab is also thinking about how to give satisfaction to drivers by meeting the needs of drivers by providing benefits and other benefits. It is also easy to convey the strategy to drivers by incorporating Grab Benefit in the driver application so that drivers only need to have 1 application. Not only basic needs are provided by Grab for drivers but tertiary needs such as promos for family/entertainment attractions are also provided by Grab. In addition to the Night Appreciation Partner event, which is an awarding event for drivers, Grab provides scholarships for drivers' children who excel. Grab wants not only drivers to feel comfortable but also the driver's family can feel the comfort.

In addition to conveying conclusions, there are also several suggestions or notes for PT Grab Indonesia Bali in order to be able to equalize the benefits or profits for the drivers. Like Grab Benefit, which joined to become Grab Benefit's partner, most shops are located in Denpasar and Singaraja. It should be made evenly throughout Bali where there are Grab drivers. This allows Grab drivers outside of Denpasar and Singaraja to also experience the same benefits. In addition, it is hoped that the Grab internal team can make a schedule to create a KOPDAR or *Kopi Darat* (direct meeting) forum in areas other than Denpasar. With this, Grab drivers from

outside the Denpasar area can experience KOPDAR or *Kopi Darat* (direct meeting) offline without having to travel far.

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