

The Role of Digital Marketing in Enhancing Communication Strategies for Interior Designers

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ABSTRACT

After the Covid-19 pandemic, creativity, and collaboration in terms of communication have changed and become very important to ensure business continuity and healthy human relations. Changes that occur also affect the marketing of interior designer communication to clients. Marketing communication is a marketing strategy to communicate with target clients effectively in verbal and non-verbal forms. Before the digital age, interior designers were known by clients based on relationships between friends or partnerships. After digital developed rapidly, technology has helped designers to collaborate and to discuss with clients effectively and creatively by using various media in presenting their work. The problem in this article is what kind of marketing strategy is releavan in the present, so the purpose of this study is to explore what marketing strategies are used in the current era. This article is the result of an exploratory activity that examines the effectiveness of using digital media as a marketing strategy and conceptual communication media for a design idea. The research method used in this writing is a qualitative research method, which is a research process to understand social phenomena by creating a complex and comprehensive picture using detailed words and views obtained from informant sources. The results of the exploration show that social media (YouTube, Instagram, Tiktok, web, blog), walkthrough videos, and online presentations are the digital marketing communication media most often used by interior designers. However, the success of interior designers does not only depend on the ability of digital competencies skills but also requires good character qualities in using digital media wisely.

Keywords: *Interior Design; Digital Marketing; Communication Strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Background

Communication is an activity carried out by one person to another person who has the aim of conveying a message using an intermediary or directly (Dani & Mediantra, 2020). Communication is divided into verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication is communication using words whether oral or written. As for nonverbal communication, it is communication whose message is packaged without words (Kusumawati, 2015). Interior non-verbal communication in the form of freehand sketching, three-dimensional representation drawing using perspective, colour rendering and scale model making. Both communications are used by interior designers as social communication with clients and target clients. However, the use of social communication is shifting to digital communication. Changes in social communication were seen and felt when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Where communication uses digital tools as intermediaries such as zoom and Google meet. After Covid-19, human communication activities still use digital media as a means of human communication with each other. In this context, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed interior designers' marketing communication with clients. Marketing communication today uses digital media as a means to promote and market the products or services offered. The implementation of digital marketing into business strategies is a strategy that is often used (Gibson, 2018).

Literature reviews

Digital marketing is branding and marketing using digital platforms. Marketing is aimed at product and brand development. It is believed that digital marketing is an important part of marketing and has grown rapidly every year because more and more industries are aware of the importance of digital marketing (Mandal & Joshi, 2017). In order for digital marketing to be effective, it is necessary to know the steps of a good marketing strategy.



Figure 1. Steps for digital marketing

Digital marketing steps include: 1) Developing digital media strategy; 2) Search Engine Optimization; 3) Strategic website development; 4) Email marketing; 5) Digital advertising; 6) Content Marketing; 7) Social Media Marketing. Digital marketing mainly comes from the internet and search engine sites. In the past, interior designer marketing strategies were carried out by traditional marketing methods such as recommendations from friends and colleagues, radio, billboards, and other print media (Tang et al., 2023). But now with the digital era, interior marketing strategies can use social media platforms such as Instagram, web, blogs, and e-magazines. Streaming platforms such as YouTube are also one of the marketing media for the interior design industry. From figure 1, you could say there are 5 digital marketing strategies that can be used, namely (Gibson, 2018),

1. Content Marketing

Creating quality and relevant content with the aim of attracting and also retaining clients. Marketing strategies that focus on creating, disseminating, and sharing relevant, useful, and valuable content for the target audience as a way to attract attention, build engagement, and influence purchase decisions. The main goal of content marketing is to educate, entertain, or provide solutions to potential customers without directly promoting the product or service.

2. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Optimizing the website so that it is easily found by search engines like Google, Bing, Yahoo. The main goal of SEO is for a website to appear higher in organic (non-paid) search results so that it can attract more traffic and visits from internet users looking for a particular information, product, or service.

3. Social Media Marketing

Using social media such as YouTube, Instagram, web, blogs, e-magazines to promote products or services. The goal is to build interaction, engagement, and brand awareness through relevant and engaging content, as well as leverage the unique features offered by each social media platform.

4. Email Marketing

Send email newsletters or direct messages to clients or prospective clients to provide the latest information about services or products. The goal is to build relationships, increase engagement, and influence the purchase actions of email message recipients. It's an effective way to communicate directly with your audience and provide relevant content and value to them. Digital Advertising

Pay to display ads on social media as well as on Search Engines. The use of this strategy can also use influencers on social media. The goal is to reach and grab the attention of the right audience, increase brand awareness, and drive specific purchase actions or interactions.

5. Branding

The process of building and managing a unique image, identity, and perception associated with a product, service, or company in the minds of customers and the market. It involves a series of strategic and tactical decisions to create a consistent impression and remind the target audience of the brand's values, personality, and goals. Branding involves more than just a logo or visual display; It encompasses the emotions, values, and relationships established between brands and customers.

But for the use of digital marketing strategies, you cannot choose which platform is the most effective. Because every type of digital marketing has its own disadvantages and advantages. In the use of digital marketing strategies, it is also important to consider business goals and target audiences. In addition, the use of a combination of several types of digital marketing can help businesses to expand the marketing reach of products or services offered.

It is important to conduct careful market research and analysis to determine the platform that best suits your business. Some brands also find success in combining multiple social media platforms to gain a wider and diverse reach.

Digital marketing is becoming a powerful and effective tool in communicating services, showcasing portfolios and attracting potential clients (Tang et al, 2023). In the digital era, understanding digital marketing is an important strategy to keep interior designers competitive and growing. A designer who is in the digital era must have a digital leadership attitude, namely adaptability, adaptive, spirituality and creative. Not only able to develop digital competencies skills, but also have good character. Digital Leadership is the ability of individuals or organizations to effectively lead and adapt in the digital age. This involves the use of digital technology, encouraging innovation and flexibility to achieve success organization. A person who has a digital leadership attitude is able to use the internet and social media to improve the lives, welfare and circumstances of others (Cynthia et al, 2018).

In addition to technical expertise, soft skills are also needed in digital leadership which is formulated into seven supporting pillars of digital leadership



Figure 2. Pillars of digital leadership

From the pillar image, it can be formulated that soft skills dominate our characteristics in digital leadership (Cahyarini, 2021). Such as communication, public relations and branding. Communication is a leader's ability to communicate well with team members and other business-related parties. Public Relationship is the ability to maintain two-way communication between clients and interior designers, and the last is branding. Designers must have a brand identity so that it is easy to remember and look professional. Digital leadership refers to soft skills and hard skills so that they can utilize information and communication technology to achieve goals. However, Digital leadership does not only prioritize skills in design and marketing but must still develop competence in collaboration and also social character (Integrity)

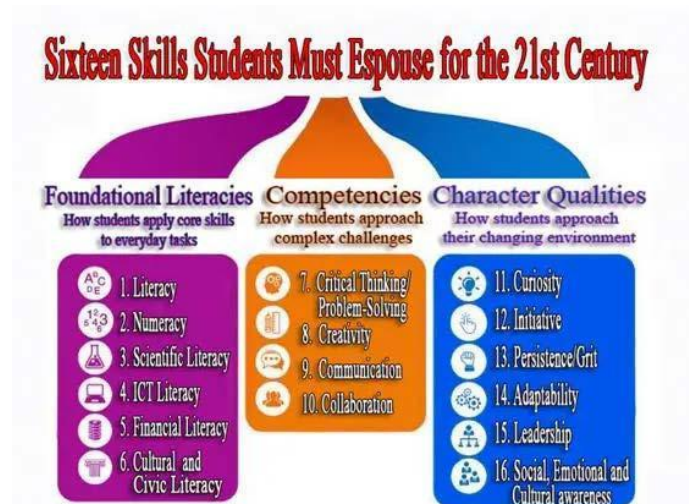


Figure 3. Skills Student Must Espouse for the 21st century

Research Questions

1. How does digital marketing improve communication strategies for interior designers?
2. What digital marketing techniques and platforms are used by intern designers for effective communication with prospective clients?
3. What is the attitude of a designer in the digital era that is now developing rapidly?

Problem Statement

In today's digital age, an interior designer faces various challenges when it comes to communicating services. The communication method used to be word-of-mouth reference, which is now less effective because the reach of clients is less wide and will be unable to compete in the highly competitive interior design industry. Therefore, the role of digital is needed in improving the communication strategy of interior designers.

Purpose of Study

1. Explore the results of the effectiveness of using digital media as a marketing tool and conceptual communication medium
2. Provide effective digital marketing platform information for interior designers
3. Learn how an interior designer behaves in facing the digital age

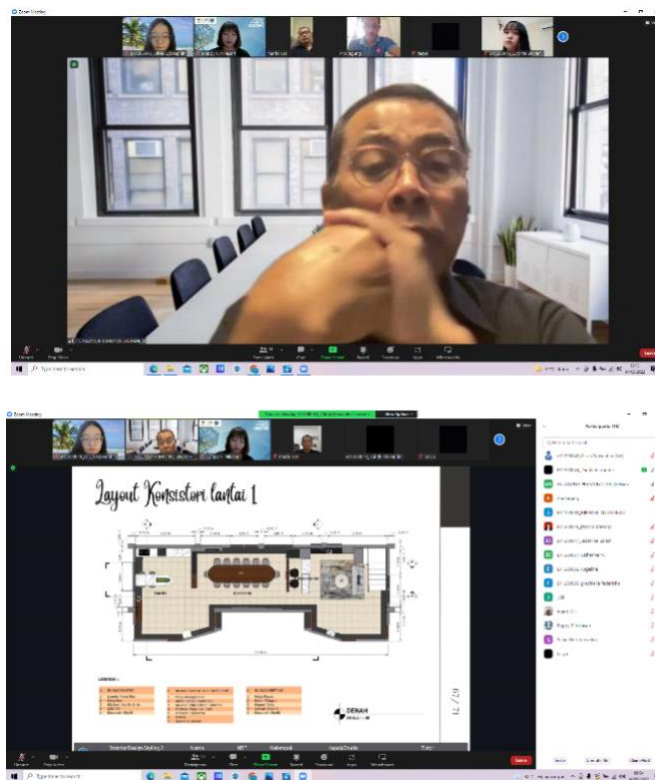
METHOD

The research method used in this writing is a qualitative research method, which is a research process to understand social phenomena by creating a complex and comprehensive picture using detailed words and views obtained from informant sources (Fadli, 2021). The author describes the importance of digital marketing in interior designers by analyzing every information through journals and existing researches. The analysis method used is descriptive analysis, where journals and existing research are analyzed in depth so that they can be used to support ideas. The research subjects used are some interior designers who are quite active in using social media as a bridge connecting clients and designers. The research subjects used were beta design studio, leclair décor, and rans Nusantara. The way to pull data is to observe and analyze written documents to obtain relevant information. In this study, the way to pull data is by analyzing and observing the interior designer's social media

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Online Presentation

Online meetings are becoming a tool to facilitate communication between clients as well as interior designers. Even in different locations, communication is still carried out, so that meetings become more effective and shorten time. With online meetings almost the same as offline meetings, that is, it can still be face-to-face and also discuss the details of the project in real time. It also makes it possible to get decisions quickly and ensures that the project runs smoothly without communication barriers where all parties must meet physically.



Social Media Marketing

With the development of social media becoming part of consumers' daily lives, companies have recognized the appeal and opportunity that exists in using social media for marketing purposes. In addition, according to Miller, Fabian, and Lin (2009) stated that social media is not only important to improve a company's brand image, but also to build relationships with its customers. Therefore, marketing strategies aim to conduct a two-way dialogue between sellers and buyers, and promotional strategies are carried out through personal interaction (Bruhn, 2003). Every year the use of social media in the world increases. Seen from Figure 4.

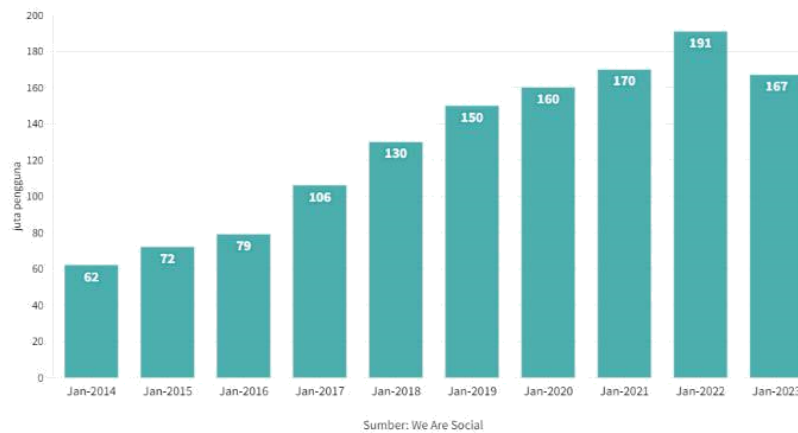


Figure 4. The number of active social media users in Indonesia (2015-2023)
Based on data taken from we are social, every year the use of social media increases, every year 10-15%.



Figure 5. The number of active social media users in Indonesia (2015-2023)

And the data obtained the highest use of social media is Facebook and followed by YouTube and Instagram. This is in line with the use of the platform that will be discussed, namely the use of Instagram, Youtube, Tiktok. These three platforms are used by interior designers in terms of marketing. An example taken is digital content via Instagram beta design.studio. Beta design studio is quite active, uploading content every day, and has a brand identity with digital content creation with a distinctive dubbing voice. So that it will become a hallmark of beta design studio content and easy to remember by clients and prospective clients. So that it can be seen that the content created can even be seen more than the followers they have. This proves that

the content seen is not only his followers but other people also see it. From this it can be concluded that by creating interesting content and has characteristics can attract new clients. Beta also includes the results of its portfolio on the website Archify, which is one of the famous interior design websites. Not to forget, Beta design also includes its videos on the digital platform Tiktok.

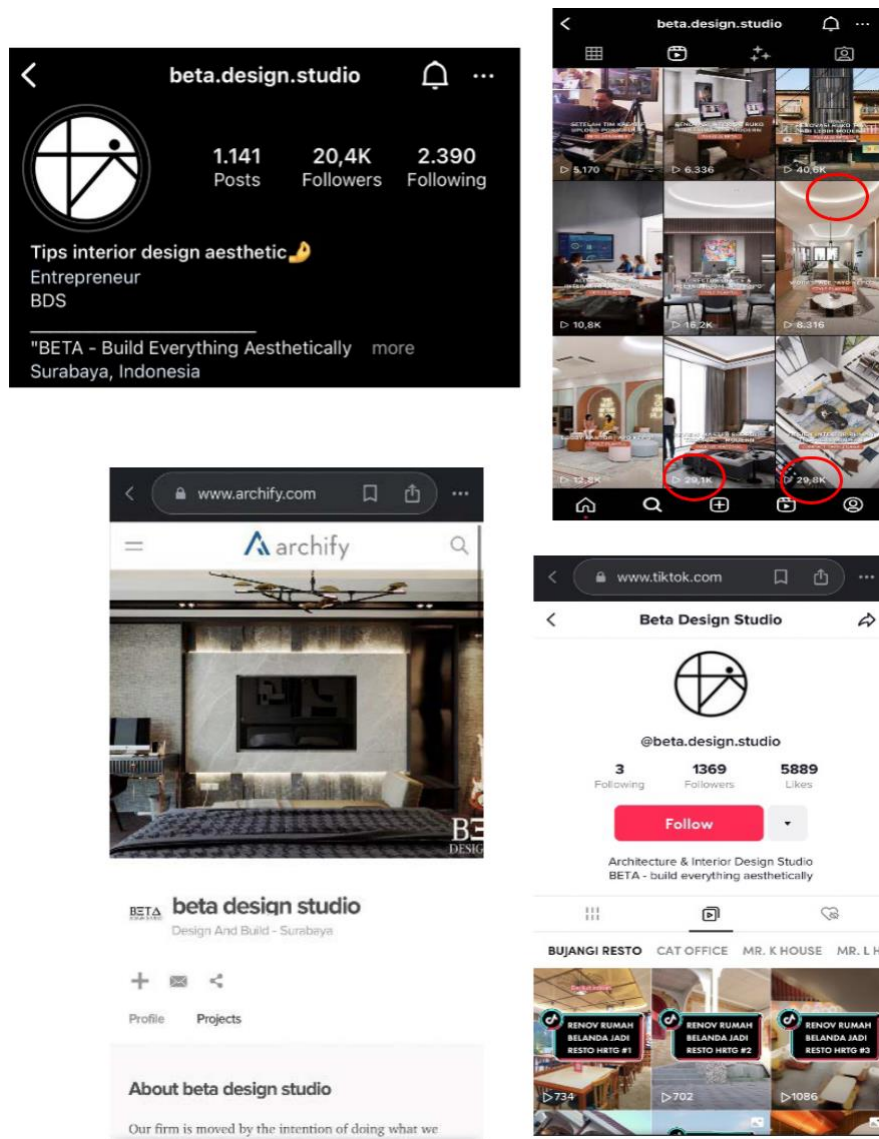


Figure 6. Instagram, Website Archify, & Tiktok Beta Design Studio (above to below)

In the instagram there is an overview feature so that it can see the development of viewers and followers every month. So that a designer who uses social media as his marketing strategy can find out the needs and target of his clients. When we create content that is appropriate and liked by followers, then indirectly followers trust the interior designer.

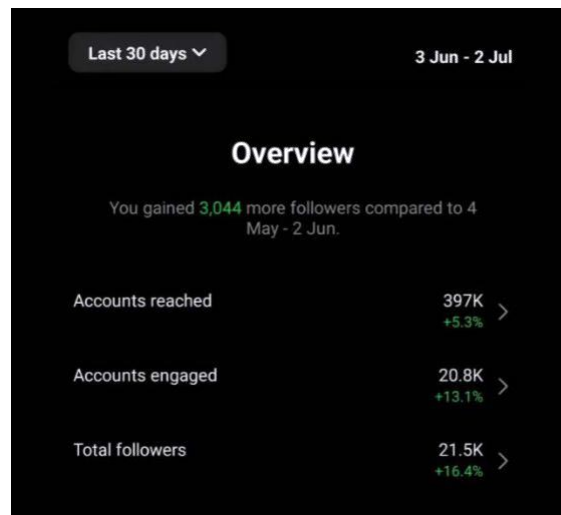
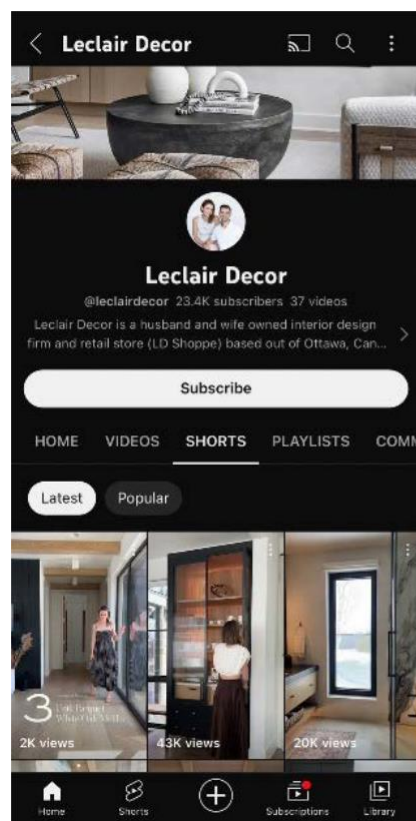


Figure 7. Overview instagram “Beta design Studio”

The use of the youtube platform can also be used. The YouTube platform can be filled with content discussing interesting interior design. The use of blogs can also be used. Blogs also have contacts, portfolio project results, etc. that make it easier for clients to see the results of their interior design



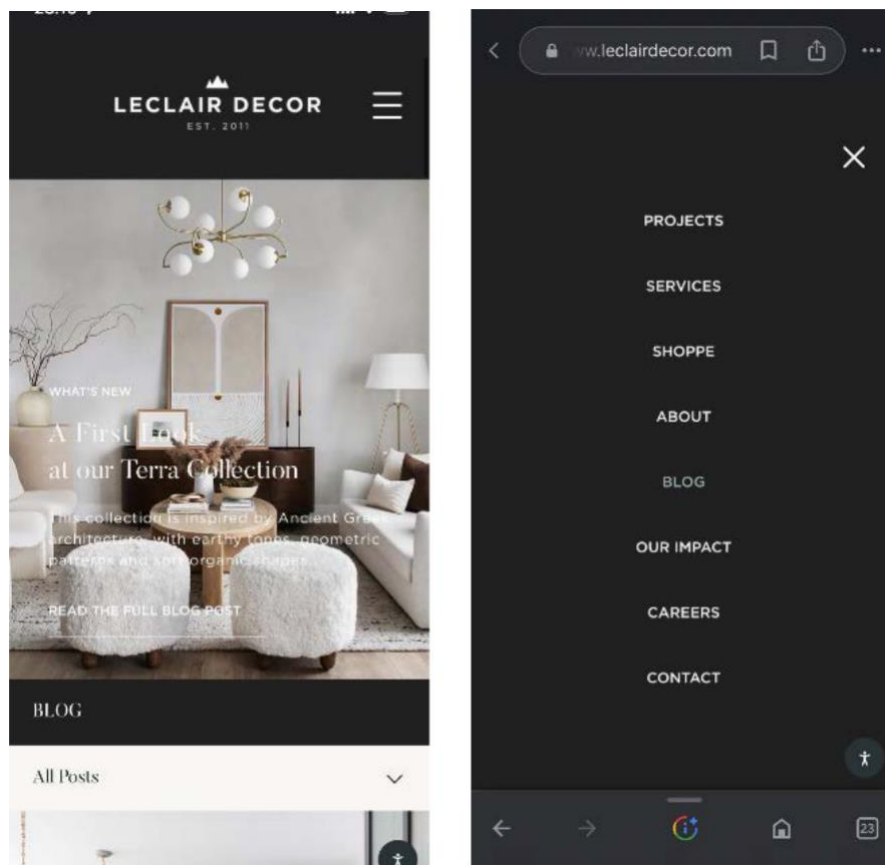


Figure 8. Youtube & Youtube Reels (Above) ; Blog (Below)

Digital Advertising

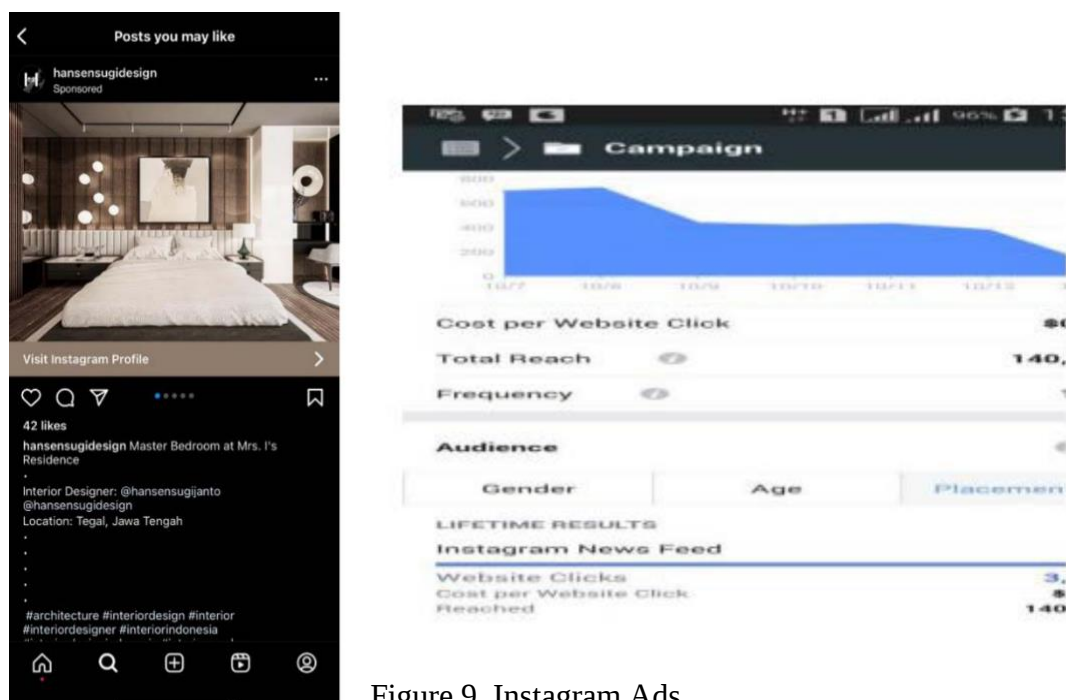


Figure 9. Instagram Ads

Instagram has a feature in the form of Instagram Ads Sponsored. Instagram can generate Instagram ads statistics reports such as Figure 8. In this feature there is information about who sees our Instagram account so that we understand who our audience is. By understanding this, it makes it easier for an interior designer to create content according to his audience (Arifah, 2015). Do not rule out the possibility of an interior design work with influencers/artists. For example, Raffi Ahmad is the top 1 artist in Indonesia. This is Dio Living's collaboration with Rans Entertainment.

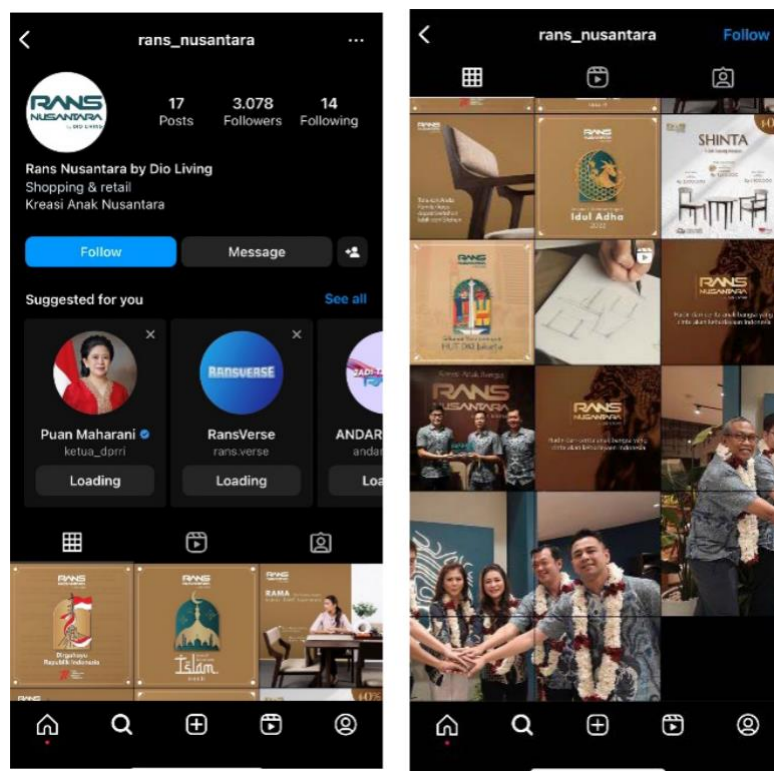


Figure 10. Collaboration with influencer/Artist

Which platform is the most effective ?

Indeed, when it comes to digital marketing strategies, it can be challenging to determine which platform is the most effective because, Every type of digital marketing has its own disadvantages and advantages and Important to consider business goals and target audiences. But there is nothing wrong with combination of several types of digital marketing can help businesses to expand the marketing reach of products or services offered. It's essential to continuously evaluate and adjust strategies based on data, analytics, and market trends to optimize results.

There's nothing wrong with using various social media platforms for your marketing strategy, especially if your business has enough resources and you want to reach a diverse audience.

Using various social media platforms can have a number of benefits, including:

1. **Wider Reach:** Each platform has a unique audience. By being on multiple platforms, you have a greater chance of reaching different groups of people.
2. **Risk Diversification:** Relying on just one social media platform can be risky if that platform experiences algorithm changes or technical issues. By being present on multiple platforms, you reduce your risk depending on a single source.
3. **Availability of Different Types of Content:** Each platform has different content formats, such as images, short videos, short text, and others. This allows you to explore and adapt to the type of content that best suits your business.
4. **Resilience to Changing Trends:** Trends in social media can change rapidly. By being on multiple platforms, you can more easily adapt your strategy to the latest trends.

However, keep in mind that managing multiple social media platforms also requires resources such as time, manpower, and funds. You must ensure that you can maintain content quality, interaction with your audience, and measure campaign performance on each platform. In addition, not all platforms will be suitable for all types of businesses. Before making a decision, it's important to understand your audience, your marketing goals, and the most effective types of content to deliver through each platform. By planning carefully and maintaining consistency, the use of various social media platforms can be an effective part of your digital marketing strategy.

CONCLUSION

In the results of this literature research, it can be concluded that in the digital era, the use of online presentations Zoom and Google Meet is often used to communicate directly with clients because of the flexibility and ease of conducting meetings and communication remotely. Along with this, digital marketing media is also an effective strategy used to promote products and services. Some digital marketing strategies that can be used are content marketing with social media (Instagram, web, Tiktok, Youtube and blogs.) and digital advertising. It is effectively used on interior design marketing strategies. Social media can help interior designers showcase their portfolio, attract clients, and expand marketing reach. In line with that, in addition to technical skills, interior designers also need to have a digital leadership attitude, namely the ability to continuously adapt to technological changes that continue to develop. Soft skills, such

as communication skills, public relations, and branding, are also important in interior designer digital leadership. In order to achieve success in digital marketing, interior designers need to combine several appropriate strategies, consider business goals and target audiences, and develop technical skills (Hardskills) along with the necessary soft skills.

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