

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION (IMC)-BASED REBRANDING STRATEGY FOR BUILDING BRAND AWARENESS: A CASE STUDY OF SMARTONE SOLO

Dani Setiawan

Master of Communication Science, University of Lampung
2226031018@students.unila.ac.id

Tina Kartika

Master of Communication Science, University of Lampung
tina.kartika@fisip.unila.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the rebranding communication strategy implemented by SmartOne Solo branch following the change of ownership from Printex Solo. The rebranding was driven by differences in vision and mission between the two owners after two years of operation, which ultimately led to a full acquisition by SmartOne and a change in brand identity. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method and a constructivist paradigm to understand the process of constructing new meaning through communication between the company and the public. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that the rebranding communication strategy was carried out through systematic stages, including internal alignment, identity transformation, external communication, IMC implementation, and brand reinforcement. This communication integration reflects the application of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), which emphasizes message consistency and coordination across communication channels. The communication strategy has proven to effectively increase public brand awareness of SmartOne Solo, as indicated by the growing recognition and use of the brand name in daily interactions. This study confirms that the success of rebranding is not solely determined by changes in visual identity, but also by the effectiveness of an integrated, consistent, and sustainable communication strategy.

Keywords: brand awareness, communication strategy, IMC, marketing communication, rebranding

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology and globalization has driven significant changes in the dynamics of business competition, particularly in how companies build and maintain relationships with consumers. In this context, companies are required to develop effective marketing communication strategies to convey their value, identity, and competitive advantages to target markets. Essentially, a marketing communication strategy is a planned effort to select and utilize various communication channels to influence consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward a brand (Santoso & Ardiyansyah, 2023).

One of the strategies widely adopted by companies in responding to changes in the business environment is rebranding. According to Andriani (2019), rebranding is the process of reconstructing a brand image aimed at renewing the company's image and enhancing the brand's attractiveness in the eyes of the public. This indicates that rebranding is not merely related to visual changes, but also involves shaping new perceptions that the company seeks to establish.

In practice, rebranding is not only influenced by external factors such as market changes and competition, but also by internal organizational factors, including changes in ownership, management restructuring, and differences in the company's vision and mission. These conditions make rebranding a complex strategic process, as it involves not only changes in identity but also transformations in communication with all stakeholders.

However, the success of rebranding largely depends on the communication strategy employed. Without effective communication, changes in identity may lead to confusion or even resistance from consumers. Therefore, companies need to manage communication in an integrated manner across various channels, both offline and online, to ensure that messages are consistently received by the audience. In this context, the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approach becomes essential, as it emphasizes the integration of multiple communication channels to create consistent and effective messaging (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

This phenomenon can be observed in Printex Solo branch, which underwent a transformation into SmartOne Solo. This change was driven by differences in vision and mission between the two owners after two years of operation. These differences ultimately led to a full acquisition by SmartOne, followed by a comprehensive change in brand identity. The rebranding process carried out encompassed not only visual identity changes but also the implementation of an integrated communication strategy through both offline and online media.

Offline, the company implemented changes in physical identity such as signage, uniforms, and business cards, while also engaging in direct communication with the community through local administrative networks and social activities. Meanwhile, online efforts included the creation of new social media accounts, updates to digital information, consistent content production on a daily basis for six months, and the use of digital advertising. This strategy demonstrates the integration of communication as a key factor in shaping public perception of the company's new identity.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the marketing communication strategy in the rebranding process of SmartOne Solo and to examine how the integration of offline and online communication contributes to building public brand awareness. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of marketing communication and rebranding studies, as well as practical

contributions for companies in designing effective communication strategies during brand identity transformation processes.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to analyze the rebranding communication strategy implemented by SmartOne Solo. The paradigm applied is constructivist, which views rebranding as a process of constructing new meaning shaped through communication between the company and the public.

The object of this research is SmartOne Solo, which underwent a change in identity from Printex Solo in 2025. The focus of this study is the rebranding communication strategy carried out through both offline and online media, as well as how this strategy is implemented in building brand awareness within the community.

Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted on rebranding communication activities, such as changes in visual identity and digital activities. Interviews were conducted with the Operational Manager and Branch Manager of SmartOne Solo on May 21, 2025, to explore the communication strategies implemented directly at the SmartOne Solo office located at Jl. S. Parman, Dusun 1, Madegondo, Grogol District, Sukoharjo, Central Java. In addition, an interview via Zoom Meeting was conducted on January 10, 2026. Documentation studies included social media content, promotional materials, and several internal company documents.

RESULT

Based on the observation results, the rebranding carried out by SmartOne Solo was driven by a change in ownership that occurred at the Printex Solo branch. This change was caused by differences in vision and mission between the two owners after the company had been operating for approximately two years. These differences could not be reconciled, resulting in a full acquisition by SmartOne, which was then followed by a comprehensive transformation of the company's identity. The rebranding process not only involved changing the name from Printex Solo to SmartOne Solo, but also reflected shifts in business direction, communication systems, and the company's internal structure.

These findings indicate that rebranding is a strategic step that is not merely symbolic, but also involves more fundamental organizational changes. This is consistent with the view that rebranding is a process of transforming a company's identity and image to shape new perceptions in the minds of consumers (Andriani, 2019), and can be driven by internal factors such as changes in ownership and business strategy (Burhanuddin, 2023).

The results of the study show that SmartOne Solo implemented its rebranding communication strategy offline through changes in physical identity and direct engagement with the community. The transformation of physical identity was carried out comprehensively, including changes to company signage, employee uniforms, marketing team business cards, and customer service contact numbers. In addition, the company also replaced part of its human resources as part of the adjustment to its new business direction.

Beyond visual aspects, the offline communication strategy was also implemented through interpersonal approaches with the surrounding community. The company actively engaged in communication with local administrative units such as neighborhood associations (RT/RW) and village authorities to inform them about the company's identity change.

Furthermore, SmartOne Solo participated in various community social activities, such as Eid al-Fitr celebrations and Independence Day events, by installing banners and decorative flags displaying the SmartOne identity as a sponsor of these activities. This approach demonstrates that offline communication functions not only as a medium for delivering information, but also as a means of building social relationships with the community. In the context of marketing communication, this approach aligns with the concept of interpersonal communication, which enables direct interaction and more effective feedback (Effendy, 2003), and reflects efforts to build long-term relationships with the community (Santoso & Ardiyansyah, 2023).

In addition to offline strategies, SmartOne Solo also intensively implemented rebranding communication strategies through digital media. Based on the observation results, the company created new social media accounts representing the SmartOne Solo identity, such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, and updated its information on Google Maps to ensure that the company's new identity could be easily found by consumers.

One of the key findings of this study is the consistency in digital content production, where SmartOne Solo actively published content on a daily basis for six consecutive months. The published content aimed to introduce the company's new identity, increase brand visibility, and build interaction with the audience. In addition, the company utilized paid advertising through Meta Ads to expand its communication reach to the target market. These findings indicate that digital communication was carried out in a planned and sustainable manner. This is consistent with the concept of digital marketing, which emphasizes the use of digital platforms to enhance communication reach and consumer interaction (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2016), as well as the importance of message consistency in strengthening brand recall (Aaker, 1991).

Furthermore, the results of this study show that the communication strategies implemented by SmartOne Solo were not conducted separately between offline and online channels, but rather in an integrated manner. This integration is reflected in the

consistent use of visual identity and communication messages across various media, both in direct and digital communication. Offline activities, such as banner installations and participation in social events, were also supported by publications on social media, thereby reinforcing the communication message to the public. This demonstrates that the company applied a coordinated communication strategy in conveying its new identity. This integration aligns with the concept of marketing communication strategy, which emphasizes the importance of utilizing multiple communication channels in an integrated manner to achieve communication objectives (Santoso & Ardiyansyah, 2023).

The rebranding communication strategy implemented by SmartOne Solo has shown a positive impact on increasing public brand awareness. This is indicated by the growing recognition of the name SmartOne Solo among the local community, as well as changes in the use of the brand name in daily interactions, which previously referred to Printex Solo. Existing customers have also gradually become accustomed to referring to the brand as SmartOne rather than Printex. In addition, brand visibility has increased through the presence of the new identity in the physical environment and the intensive digital activities carried out by the company. The combination of direct and digital communication has created multiple touchpoints between the company and the public, thereby accelerating the brand recognition process. These findings indicate that the communication strategy has successfully established the initial stage of brand awareness, namely brand recognition, as explained by Keller (2013), who states that brand awareness is formed through processes of recognition and recall.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, the rebranding carried out by SmartOne Solo is not merely a change in visual identity, but also reflects a broader process of organizational transformation involving shifts in meaning and business direction. The transition from Printex Solo to SmartOne Solo indicates the company's effort to reconstruct its identity and reposition itself amid internal changes. In this context, rebranding can be understood as a form of organizational communication aimed at conveying new meaning to the public. This is consistent with the perspective of Muzellec and Lambkin (2006), who argue that rebranding is a strategic effort to reshape brand image and consumer perceptions.

The findings also reveal that the offline communication strategy played a significant role in building public understanding of the company's new identity. Changes in physical identity, such as signage, uniforms, and business cards, function not only as visual markers but also as symbolic communication that directly conveys the message of change to the community. Furthermore, direct communication with local communities through neighborhood associations (RT/RW) and social activities

reflects an interpersonal communication approach that enables direct interaction and feedback. From a communication perspective, this approach is considered effective, as interpersonal communication has the ability to build trust and strengthen social relationships (Effendy, 2003).

Stages of Rebranding at SmartOne Solo

The rebranding process carried out by SmartOne Solo did not occur spontaneously, but rather followed systematic and interconnected stages. These stages demonstrate that rebranding is not merely a change in visual identity, but also a strategic communication process involving internal alignment, identity transformation, and the implementation of communication to the public.

The first stage is internal alignment, marked by a change in ownership resulting from differences in vision and mission between the previous managing parties. In the context of SmartOne Solo, this stage was realized through the full operational acquisition of Printex Solo by SmartOne, followed by adjustments in business direction and organizational structure. In addition, the company replaced part of its human resources to align with the new business strategy. This condition indicates that before communicating the new identity to the public, the company first conducted internal consolidation to ensure that all organizational elements shared a common understanding of the changes. This is consistent with the view of Muzellec and Lambkin (2006), who emphasize the importance of internal readiness in determining the success of rebranding, and is further supported by Andriani (2019), who argues that the reconstruction of brand image must begin internally.

The second stage is identity transformation, which refers to the process of establishing the company's new identity as SmartOne Solo. At this stage, the company implemented comprehensive changes to visual identity elements that serve as key touchpoints with consumers. In practice, SmartOne Solo replaced its company signage at the front of the building, updated employee uniforms with the new identity, redesigned marketing team business cards, and renewed customer service contact numbers. These changes were carried out simultaneously to emphasize that the company had adopted a distinct identity from its previous form. This example illustrates that visual identity functions not only as a symbol but also as a communication tool that directly conveys change to consumers. This is in line with Keller (2013), who states that brand identity is the primary representation in shaping consumer perceptions, and is supported by Burhanuddin (2023), who highlights the importance of visual element transformation in the rebranding process.

On the other hand, the online communication strategy implemented by SmartOne Solo demonstrates intensive and well-planned utilization of digital media. The consistency in daily content production over a six-month period reflects a communication strategy oriented toward increasing brand exposure. These activities

serve not only to disseminate information but also to foster interaction with audiences and strengthen the brand's presence in the digital space. This aligns with the concept of digital communication, which emphasizes the importance of interactivity and continuity in building relationships with consumers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In addition, the use of digital advertising through Meta Ads indicates that the company has adopted a data-driven communication approach to reach target markets more effectively (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Furthermore, the rebranding process carried out by SmartOne Solo demonstrates a structured and phased communication pattern. The initial stage begins with internal alignment, which involves organizational adjustments following the ownership change, including the realignment of business direction and human resources. This stage serves as a critical foundation before communicating the new identity to the public. The next stage is identity transformation, in which the company modifies visual identity elements such as the name, signage, uniforms, and other communication attributes. Once the new identity is established, the company proceeds to the external communication stage by disseminating the changes through various communication channels, both offline through direct community engagement and social activities and online, through social media, Google Maps, and digital advertising.

These stages then evolve into the IMC implementation phase, where all communication activities become consistently integrated across channels, resulting in message reinforcement for the audience. This integration is essential in enhancing communication effectiveness, as audiences receive consistent messages across multiple touchpoints. In the final stage, brand reinforcement, sustained and consistent communication leads to increased public brand awareness of SmartOne Solo. Theoretically, these stages align with the concept of rebranding as a strategic process involving both identity and communication transformation (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006), the marketing communication mix (Kotler & Keller, 2016), and, within the context of this study, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) as an effort to align various communication channels to ensure message consistency (Belch & Belch, 2018).

The third stage is external communication, in which the company begins to communicate its new identity to the public through various communication channels. In the context of SmartOne Solo, this communication was carried out through two main approaches. Offline, the company engaged directly with the local community by coordinating with neighborhood associations (RT/RW) and village authorities, as well as participating in social activities such as Eid al-Fitr celebrations and Independence Day events. During these activities, the company displayed banners and decorative flags featuring the SmartOne logo as a means of introducing its new identity.

Meanwhile, online communication was conducted by creating new social media accounts on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, updating the

business name on Google Maps, and actively publishing content on a daily basis for six months. In addition, the company utilized paid advertising through Meta Ads to reach a broader audience. These examples demonstrate that external communication was carried out extensively and through multiple channels, in line with the concept of the marketing communication mix proposed by Kotler and Keller (2016), and supported by Santoso and Ardiyansyah (2023), who emphasize the importance of selecting appropriate communication media in the rebranding process.

The fourth stage is IMC implementation, where all communication activities become consistently integrated. In practice, SmartOne Solo not only utilized multiple communication channels but also ensured that the messages conveyed remained consistent across all media. For example, the visual identity used on signage, uniforms, and banners was also consistently reflected in social media content. In addition, offline activities, such as sponsorship of community events, were documented and published on digital platforms, thereby reinforcing the communication message. This integration indicates that offline and online communications supported each other rather than operating separately. This condition reflects the application of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) concept, in which message consistency and coordination across channels are key to communication effectiveness (Belch & Belch, 2018).

The fifth stage is brand reinforcement, which represents the outcome of the overall rebranding communication process. Based on observations, the public has begun to recognize the name SmartOne Solo and has started using it in daily interactions, replacing the previous name, Printex Solo. Furthermore, the company's new identity has become increasingly visible through active and consistent digital activities. The combination of visual exposure in the physical environment and intensive digital communication has created multiple touchpoints that accelerate the brand recognition process. This example indicates that the communication strategy has successfully established the initial stage of brand awareness, namely brand recognition. This finding is consistent with Keller (2013), who states that brand awareness is formed through consistent and repeated communication exposure.

Thus, the rebranding stages implemented by SmartOne Solo demonstrate that the process of brand identity transformation is a structured communication process, beginning with internal alignment and culminating in the formation of public brand awareness. Each stage is interconnected and supported by an integrated communication strategy, thereby strengthening the overall effectiveness of the rebranding effort.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the rebranding carried out by SmartOne Solo represents a strategic initiative driven by a

change in ownership resulting from differences in vision and mission between the previous managing parties. This rebranding process not only involved a name change from Printex Solo to SmartOne Solo, but also encompassed a comprehensive transformation of the company's identity, organizational structure, and communication system used to convey these changes to the public.

The results indicate that the rebranding communication strategy implemented by SmartOne Solo was conducted through systematic stages, starting from internal alignment, identity transformation, external communication, IMC implementation, and culminating in brand reinforcement. Each of these stages is interconnected, demonstrating that rebranding is a structured communication process rather than merely a symbolic change. The communication strategy was executed through a combination of offline and online media, where interpersonal communication with the community and consistent digital activities played a crucial role in conveying the company's new identity.

Furthermore, the communication strategy reflects the application of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), characterized by message consistency and integration across communication channels. Offline communication activities, such as changes in physical identity and participation in social events, were reinforced by digital communication through social media and online advertising, thereby creating multiple touchpoints with the audience. This integration enabled the rebranding message to be delivered repeatedly and consistently, enhancing the overall effectiveness of communication.

The impact of this rebranding communication strategy is evident in the increased public brand awareness of SmartOne Solo. This is reflected in the growing recognition and usage of the SmartOne Solo name in daily interactions, as well as increased brand visibility both physically and digitally. Thus, it can be concluded that the success of rebranding is not solely determined by changes in visual identity, but also by the effectiveness of an integrated, consistent, and sustainable communication strategy in shaping public perception of the new brand.

Overall, this study confirms that an effective rebranding communication strategy must be able to integrate multiple communication channels while considering the communication process in a systematic manner. This approach is essential to ensure that changes in corporate identity can be optimally accepted and understood by the public.

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