

# Branding Strategy of Bulls Syndicate as Clothing Motorcycle Worshiper

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## ABSTRACT

Bulls Syndicate operates various branding strategies to introduce the brand to a wide audience. Bulls Syndicate is a clothing brand with a motorcycle design in Solo City, Central Java. Bulls Syndicate establishes a branding strategy amid the intense competition among clothing industries. In executing branding strategy, Bulls Syndicate optimizes various techniques that they have been going through to fit the branding objectives. The purpose of this study is to explore the Bulls Syndicate branding strategy as a clothing motorcycle worshiper. This research is classified as descriptive research with a qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews and observations, and supported by documentation. The informants of this research involved the store manager of Bulls Syndicate and the branding team of Bulls Syndicate. The results show that the branding strategy of Bulls Syndicate completely utilized eight out of eleven characteristics of the branding strategy. The activities include those focusing on specialization in driving products, upholding the authenticity, and quality of the product. These are the branding strategies of the motorcycle-oriented clothing store, Bulls Syndicate.

**Keywords:** Branding, Branding Strategy, Clothing Branding

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization which currently changes the state of the world is a complex process of social change as it occurs rapidly and simultaneously, involving several dimensions, such as world economy, politics, communication, and culture. Obviously, this transformation will entail impacts between one dimension and another. This change of era also involves many people without city, island, or even country boundaries from any part of the world. However, the core of such phenomenon towards globalization is the connectivity that accelerates the relationship between space and time [1]. The world economy, which is one of the dimensions undergoing this change also affects three groups of sectors; public, business or industrial, and social.

Based on the three groups of economic sectors, the business sector will be further discussed, especially the clothing industry. The selection of the clothing industry initially started from the phenomenon of the Indie Clothing Carnival event in Solo, where various brands offer different themes, however, there is a brand that

proposes motorcycle theme and offers goods and clothing for motorcycle purposes.

The new trend among young people, especially in the city of Solo, is the flaunted public to create motorcycle groups or communities based on the type of motorcycle. Moreover, riding events are used as a means of gathering for motorcycle communities and sharing various positive activities as well as raising funds for those in need. Similar events have loomed in various places, but in Solo, only one shop provides clothes or goods for motorcycle purposes and is associated with a motorcycle theme, namely Bulls Syndicate. This is rather fascinating because Bulls Syndicate can survive and maintain their work with ever-changing articles.

The clothing industry has become the economic history of Western countries. For example, in the UK, the trade in ready-to-wear clothing became one of the largest jobs created in decades of the industrial revolution [2]. In addition, the clothing industry sector has also become the center of attention in recent years as it supports the spatialization process to understand whether there is a balance between craft and mass production technology in

the clothing industry. A consequence of this spatialization is market globalization which the direction of the consumer segment is expanded as a result of competition among companies [3].

The clothing industry involves the use of textiles and similar materials to produce men's apparel, women's apparel, children's apparel, outerwear, pajama, and underwear [4]. In 2020, Agus Gumiwang, who serves as the Minister of Industry, expressed in a press release in Jakarta that the textile and apparel industry in Indonesia is one of the five priority manufacturing sectors for Making Indonesia 4.0 with an increasing growth of 15.35% throughout 2019 and this increase is expected to continue amidst the global financial pressure [5]

In the opinion of Achrol and Stern (1988), three factors that can make consumers feel unassured to make purchase decisions are the extent to which they have adequate information to make decisions, the extent to which they can predict the consequences of decisions, and the extent to which they are confident in making decisions [6].

Consumers will not only have one favorite brand for a long period of time, but they will also combine and allow changes in interest since the power of word of mouth will heavily influence their choices and preferences. Therefore, a brand should be considered as something conspicuous in a relationship among individuals in order to establish a top of mind brand. Brand should have elastic properties to be easily adjusted and shaped by consumers in various unlimited needs so that they can suit the choices and preferences of every consumer [7].

For easy to recall, a brand requires three parameters to be assessed by Top Brand, which are top of mind share, top of market share, and top of commitment share. Firstly, top of mind share is at the very top of the Top Brand pyramid, which is according to a brand that consumers easily remember when a certain product category is mentioned. Secondly, the top of market is in the middle of the Top Brand pyramid, which is based on a brand that consumers formerly used within a period of time. Lastly, top of commitment is based on a brand that consumers want to purchase in the future, meaning the brand remains in a wish list of consumers' mind (topbrand-award.com). [8].

The branding strategy proposed by Wally Olins (1989) is a classification of the most famous corporate branding strategy, consisting of three main types of

branding strategies. The first is a monolithic strategy, which happens when a company can be instantly recognized because it displays identical symbols everywhere and only uses one visual style, such as Shell, Philips, and BMW. The second is a supported strategy, in which the subsidiaries have their distinguished style, but the parent company remains recognizable in the background as a result of diversified company and it has preserved part of the culture or brand tradition, such as General Motors and L'Oreal. The third is the branded strategy, in which the subsidiaries have their distinguished style and the parent company is unrecognizable, therefore the strategy implementation of the subsidiary cannot benefit from the reputation of the parent company, for example, Unilever. [9].

A brand may gain trust spontaneously from consumers so they will make an easy purchase decision because the brand has a decent brand image and reputation among consumers. The brand can create added value for a company, as a result, the company will become well-known within the market or society, either directly through selling products, or indirectly through the image and reputation of the company's brand or product. A study conducted by the Reputation Institute shows that successful companies maintain consistency in their corporate branding strategy by developing a stronger and better reputation and being able to maintain a reputation so an increase over time will be experienced [10].

Former study's [11] investigation obtained the result that RMG (Ready-made Garment) generated the most foreign currency among all sectors in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has secured the second position in exporting RMG after China. In the last 40 years, the RMG sector in Bangladesh has experienced a dramatic emergence as one of the top sources of clothing for apparel purchases worldwide. Most of the world's famous clothing brands procure clothes from Bangladesh and sell them as their products. The main reason for Bangladesh's popularity as a sourcing center in the RMG sector is its lower prices compared to other apparel manufacturing countries. Although Bangladesh amasses a large amount of foreign currency and has all the resources to create its international brand, in forty years of the RMG sector, it could not build a well-known international clothing brand. But the time has finally come to start a global Bangladesh brand as a worldwide market economy that is changing gradually and the competition is also increasing. This paper and the definition of various aspects of branding suggest possible strategies that can

prove instrumental in creating Bangladesh's worldwide clothing brand.

Similar research has been carried out by [12], which shows faster business competition consequences require those in a business setting to acknowledge good and appropriate strategies in order to survive and conquer the market. In recent business operations, any activity seems to be evolving rapidly that it will be forgotten easily. Therefore, it is essential to develop a strategy to win the business competition. While competitors appear to come from every direction, big companies can always change their marketing strategies to alter consumer behavior in the marketplace, likewise in the world of fashion, especially in Solo. The emergence of young and new designers in Solo remains a challenge for fashion entrepreneurs, such as Bella Quarta. Bella Quarta grasps the application of a unique communication strategy that distinguishes her from other entrepreneurs as the fitting strategy to maintain consumer trust. One alternative is to introduce highly skilled workers, both as fashion workers, tailors, clothing designers, and fashion show models. In integrated marketing communication, there are four principles (price, place, product, promotion) which are commonly referred to as the 4Ps. The details considered in this study are related to Bella Quarta's strategy to challenge competitors in product manufacture and design. By providing creativity and the ability to understand the offered products, it is expected that it will not only add value to sales but also provide a reliable workforce. Besides, social and economic values are not only the main expectation but also human resources. The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method that provides a data overview regarding the products and Bella Quarta's branding marketing communication strategy to maintain customer loyalty.

Based on the explanation from the Minister of Industry, the industry sector in Indonesia is currently entering the phase of industry 4.0 which is enforced by the Cyber-Physical and Internet of Things (IoT) system. Thus, the preparation required is the development of service models in various industrial sectors, including the clothing industry to create efficiency [13]. In this study, researchers attempted to formulate the application of branding strategy in the clothing industry by opting one of the clothing industries in Solo, Bulls Syndicate Motorcycle Worshiper, for the research object. The production focus of Bulls Syndicate is apparel and merchandise with unique motorcycle designs using hand draw techniques and vintage concepts for each item it produces. Based on this background, this research is

proposed entitled "Branding Strategy of Bulls Syndicate as Clothing Motorcycle Worshiper".

## ***1.1 Literature Review***

### ***1.1.1 Brand***

Brands are related to symbols, signs, or names and designs of products [14]. According to [15], brand is a name or symbol associated with a product or service and creates a psychological meaning or association. Brand is a means for companies to develop and maintain customer loyalty. According to [16], a brand is a distinguishing name or symbol (such as a logo, stamp, and packaging) to identify the goods or services of a particular producer or group of producers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. Furthermore, [17] states that a brand is a name, provision, design, symbol, or anything else that can be used as a tool to identify a product, either goods or services, as well as to differentiate it from other sellers.

The strength of the brand has tied customer loyalty so as to deliver business success, toughness, and competitive products. Brands with all their strengths have different meanings with different purposes. High product quality will give a positive impression and experience for users and will generate loyalty to the product [18].

Based on that view, the meaning of a brand, in general, implies a symbol, a sign used as an identification of a product or service for trading purposes. The brand also serves as a determiner for other producers.

### ***1.1.2. Branding***

According to [19], branding is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them that aims to identify the goods or services or a group of producers and to differentiate their products.

To [20], brand building or often referred to as branding is often associated with a company's efforts to establish an image. The intended image must have a beneficial value in providing a certain perception that is generally positive. The exceptional power of branding is perceived as influential on the success of a company's business.

As expressed by [20], brand indicators comprise: (1) a product with a strong brand will be distinct from other competitors, making the brand recognizable than others, (2) branded products are easier to advertise and attract consumers – when one promotes a brand, it will be effortless to endorse products by displaying the brand logo, and (3) building image or trust/quality

assurance/prestige, the function of the brand is to incorporate the image into the brand information and experience-based products to consumers by penetrating the first idea, product trust, quality, and prestige into an experience-based brand and product information. Furthermore, (4) market management is manageable with a robust brand, the brand informs that competitors will take every step and it is easy to enclose additional information to the public about the brand one remembers.

### *1.1.3. Branding Strategy*

[21] assert that a strategy is the overall conditional decision regarding the actions taken to achieve the goal. Hence, in formulating a communication strategy, apart from the need to formulate clear objectives, it is also essential to consider audiences' conditions and situations.

The theory of branding strategy, in line with [22], is managing a brand to organize activities that pursue to form the brand element.

Eleven characteristics of the branding strategy are as follows. Firstly, authenticity is the strategy of producers in manufacturing outfits that is always oriented to the authenticity displayed in the work. If the product is authentic in branding, the public will recognize it and the discourse of the product will be distributed to other people once they purchase the product. This denotes that the product receives a higher level of trust than those who oversell the product and obtain poor reviews. This method should be carefully regarded in marketing a product.

Secondly, integrity implies that products marketed to consumers contain the honesty and authority of product users. Integrity branding engagement is driven because the product is open to communicating with prospects. However, it is more undemanding to connect with other people. The brand remains authentic in the quality of the product offered.

Thirdly, consistency consists of the product stability in exhibiting characteristics robustly. Having consistent promise and authenticity of the product offered will be far superior to twisting facts, exaggerating the product, or deception over the product. However, that does not necessarily mean others should act cruel about the truth. As an instance, if someone asks a question that will

possibly be detrimental if the truth is revealed, gently telling the truth should be considered.

The fourth specialization contains the message of a product offered with a focus on specific aspects. Once brand authenticity according to the facts is set up, concerns, audience, and what it does for buyers become more effortless to be notable. Producers deal directly with problems that customers encounter when they raise questions. Caring is actualized in action.

Fifth, authority is associated with products with a certain authority so that they give more value to users. In the present, consumers require the producer to be authoritative, honest, authentic, and transparent. Consumers follow social media, consumers write reviews, consumers provide product information to their friends, and consumers will stop buying if the product does not display authority, demeans other people, and is narrow.

Sixth, distinctiveness is related to products that are unique to the user. To date, being distinctive is mandatory. Many companies fail every day because of the hearsay that the business owner, advertising, or marketing is not eccentric. The public can now see everything about anyone or any brand online. If it is atypical, the customer will soon find it.

Seventh, relevant refers to the direct or indirect relationship between the products manufactured and the interests of consumers. Product descriptions with consumer compatibility are typically what people tell after developing an interest in the brand.

Eighth, visibility is a rather firm view of the products manufactured now and in the future. Many consumers purchase products because they need them, while others purchase products because of the story behind the product. It will prepare consumers' views for the future that suit their needs.

Ninth, persistence directs a product with a message of resilience towards achieving something. Apart from advantages for customer satisfaction, production planning also has benefits for companies or organizations in an effort to produce and market products on an ongoing basis.

Tenth, goodwill is a positive feeling towards products marketed to consumers; a picture that depicts good intentions by producers and marketers of products to bring a real impact for themselves and society. Lastly, performance is connected with product quality that can be

maintained by producers for the products offered. Product performance can be developed through a series of steps that include conceptualizing, designing, developing, and marketing new products or rebranded products [23].

## 2. METHOD

This research employed a qualitative descriptive method. This study aims to collect detailed and actual information that describes the prevailing situation [24]. Sampling in this study consisted of employees of Bulls Syndicate selected through a purposive sampling technique, displaying the criteria as the branding team of the Bulls Syndicate that manages the branding issues of products. The subject of this research is Bulls Syndicate branding strategy. The object of this research comprises the informant or resource person selected for interviews in accordance with the research objectives. The object of this research consists of Bulls Syndicate manager, Ghofur Hanafi, and other informants Haikal and Kusworo as Bulls Syndicate marketing team.

Data collection applied observation technique and in-depth interviews. Observations were conducted to investigate the branding activities in Bulls Syndicate, both online such as on Instagram social media and websites, or offline in events organized by Bulls Syndicate. Meanwhile, in-depth interviews were carried out continuously in depth to obtain optimal answer results and documentation during interviews [25].

The data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions drawing. Data reduction is sorting out relevant data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Following that, the data are simplified, allowing presentation and a temporary conclusion. Finally, conclusions are drawn as a complete configuration activity so as to answer research questions and research objectives [26].

The data validation technique utilized data triangulation, which is a data validation technique that administers aspects other than the data used for checking purposes or as a comparison to the data managed. The technique was conducted by examining other data sources [26]. To verify the validity of data collected through interviews, observation, documentation, an analysis was carried out by comparing the answers of the informants and the explanation given by the Bulls Syndicate.

## 3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Analysis

Researchers classify and describe the results of interviews and observations that have been carried out in several categories, amounting to eight of the eleven characteristics of branding strategies, as follows.

#### 3.1.1. Authenticity (*authenticity*)

The producer's strategy in making products is always oriented to the authenticity of the work presented. The form of authenticity that can be presented to consumers is one of the designs. Bulls Syndicate itself has a permanent designer whose unique work has represented the identity of the Bulls Syndicate concept. Designs are exhibited to maintain authenticity, consistency in company values, and are developed with prevailing trends and designs. Bulls Syndicate manufactures their products not only from the graphic design but also from hand drawing artwork that incorporates urban vintage ideas into its own choice for apparel and merchandise designs. Besides being able to observe the authenticity of the product design, Bulls Syndicate also labels and tags the products they produce. These labels and tags reinforce the authenticity of the goods.

From the statement, it can be determined that, besides presenting hand drawing artwork designs from urban vintage, branding strategies related to the product authenticity marketed to customers are always affixed with Bulls Syndicate labels and tags. These labels and tags associate a message of product authenticity which is constantly protected and maintained as the identity of the Bulls Syndicate's product, restricting hijacking by others.

#### 3.1.2. Integrity (*integrity*)

The second strategy in branding displayed to consumers contains integrity. Bulls Syndicate has a custom culture product concept in the motorcycle sector. Bulls Syndicate profits from premium product materials and item detailing, which quality is always maintained, however has a very limited stock of goods, as in Kusworo's opinion: "Limited stock, very limited products". (interview with Kusworo, 12-1-2021)

As Haikal expressed: "From item detailing, it always wins. From the quality of the materials, Bulls Syndicate uses very superior and good quality materials" (interview with Haikal, 12-1-2021), which was also confirmed by the statement of another branding team, Kusworo:

“Maybe because it uses premium materials so it is far better than others” (interview with Kusworo, 12-1-2021)

From the excerpts above, it can be perceived that Bulls Syndicate always maintains the quality of the products. From the product availability, it is deliberately limited. Bulls Syndicate does have its own goal of making only a few items in stock, so limited purchasers can have the product, increasing consumer purchasing power and interest in owning the product due to its rarity.

### *3.1.3. Consistency (consistent)*

It implies a product with stability in displaying a firm product characteristic. Bulls Syndicate has a tagline or slogan as a feature to distinguish its clothing from other competitors and has its meaning in the tagline. There have been several changes to the tagline, but the eccentric and recent one is the ‘Motorcycle Worshiper’, which is very identical to the Bulls Syndicate. In Kusworo’s statement as the Bulls Syndicate branding team: "Motorcycle Worshiper means a motorcycle lover, hobby or sort of adoring motorcycle." (interview with Kusworo, 12-1-2021)

Corresponding to Kusworo's opinion, Ghufur conveyed his thought on the tagline as a distinguisher between Bulls Syndicate clothing and the taglines of other products.

### *3.1.4. Specialization*

Bulls Syndicate constructs the concept of its brand, which is motorcycle. Many clothing products from Bulls Syndicate support riding accessories, such as jackets, casual t-shirts, formal shirts, gloves, hats, beanies, bandanas, and keychains. Not only does Bulls Syndicate products provide clothing for adults, but also clothing for children known as Bulls Junior.

As a support for the specialization of driving products produced and offered by Bulls Syndicate, such as casual t-shirts, jackets, formal shirts, hats, beanies, bandanas, gloves, and keychains, besides adult products, children sizes are also manufactured.

### *3.1.5. Authority*

As a form of value stating that the product has an element of authority, Bulls Syndicate has marketed its products to various groups. These groups range from the lower middle class to the upper-middle class. The Bulls Syndicate product has been worn by President Jokowi, which establishes the product authority as the user and makes more groups feel assured about the quality of the

Bulls Syndicate products. The results of the interview with Haikal as the branding team are provided as follows. "The flagship product of the Bulls Syndicate, as people may already know, is a windbreaker jacket or a motorcycle jacket," (interview with Haikal, 12-1-2021). Furthermore, the statement of Ghofur as the manager adds "Because it used to be overhyped since the president wore it " (interview with Ghofur, 12-1-2021).

### *3.1.6. Relevant*

The relevance of product sales is pursued in accordance with the character of the consumers of Bulls Syndicate clothing, which aims at the motorcycle riders. They do not only want safe clothes, but also have contemporary designs, selected colors, and are unique. It is done as an effort to maintain product sales adjusting the needs and desires of consumers to remain to exist among riders. The following is the result of an interview with Kusworo, the branding team from Bulls Syndicate: "Yes, maybe we follow the current trend or we support events and continue to endorse celebrities and so on." (interview with Kusworo, 8-1-2021).

From the results of the interview above, it can be observed that the Bulls Syndicate product branding strategy is designed according to the relevance of consumer needs, namely motorcycle riders. Consumer needs can be identified through motorcycle events organized or followed by Bulls Syndicate. In addition to understanding the consumer needs, this method is planned to approach consumers, especially among motorcycle riders because the concept of Bulls Syndicate is motorcycle-related.

### *3.1.7. Persistence*

In branding efforts, the subsequent aspect to do is persistence. Bulls Syndicate's persistence can be seen in their efforts to form a special team to support their branding. This team is devoted to designing branding strategies to create creative and sustainable marketing and structure and position their brand in a wider audience to suit the goals. As asserted by Haikal, the branding team: “We have a separate team for the branding; there is a division of marketing team.” (interview with Haikal, 8-1-2021), Kusworo corroborated the previous excerpt with the statement: “We have a solid team to design creative marketing to support sale growth.” (interview with Kusworo, 8-1-2021)

Apart from the special team, the persistence of Bulls Syndicate can be observed from the following interview

results: "In branding strategy, Bulls Syndicate participates in events held by outside parties. Participating in relevant events aims to remain to exist among motorcycle riders and to introduce our brand." (interview with Ghofur, 8-1-2021)

The events followed were organized by national and global organizers. For example, a national-scale event, such as Kustomfest whose base is in Yogyakarta accommodated an exhibition of custom motorcycles contest and there were also a sale and purchase of motorcycle parts and merchandise from various brands and custom builders. As mentioned by Ghofur, the manager of Bulls Syndicate: "Any expo, such as Kustomfest in Jogja and BBQ ride in Bandung, and abroad as well as a very end of the year at Yokohama Hot Rod mooneyes." (interview with Ghofur, 7-1-2021)

Furthermore, it can be seen that the branding strategy by Bulls Syndicate in the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted by marketing their products, which previously went directly to events, to online marketing. Bulls Syndicate creates photo content and describes products on website pages and social media accounts. The purpose is to affix insight to consumers so that they better understand the details and descriptions of the quality of the products during internal activities held by Bulls Syndicate. As stated by Ghofur, the manager of Bulls Syndicate: "In the current situation, it has changed due to the pandemic situation, it has not become online, which tends to be online promos." (interview with Ghofur, 7-1-2021)

From the interviews, it can be determined that the branding strategy by Bulls Syndicate is rather persistent in marketing its products. It participated in various local, national, and international events. Subsequently, the situation changed due to this pandemic forcing Bulls Syndicate to practice online marketing which has been carried out to this day.

### *3.1.8. Goodwill*

Branding strategy for good cause has been shown by Bulls Syndicate in several activities, such as city riding or known as Dakota Ride. The Dakota Ride is held once a month, the assembly point is decided in at the Bulls Syndicate store and then move around Solo City, and the destination has been settled. In the destination, a sharing session is managed by the premotor figure to the participants who often discuss happening issues among motorcycle riders, and there is a fundraiser for victims of natural disasters in Indonesia. As expressed by Ghofur,

the manager of the Bulls Syndicate: "Once a month, we have an activity, which is city Dakota Ride, riding through the city, and the assembly point is usually in the store, we travel around Solo City." (interview with Ghofur, 7-1-2021)

Based on the results of the interview, it shows that a branding strategy with positive intentions and social actions is also implemented by Bulls Syndicate. In addition to actively conducting touring events, fundraising is organized to help those affected by natural disasters in Indonesia.

## **3.2. Discussion**

Bulls Syndicate store designs a branding strategy to support their brand goals packaged in various ways that are mutually sustainable. Various efforts have been made by Bulls Syndicate which are administered by the manager and branding team. Bulls Syndicate creates a branding strategy amid intense market competition between other brands. Based on the results, there are activities offered by Bulls Syndicate to create a branding strategy.

First, producer manufactures authentic-based products. Bulls Syndicate establishes authenticity by creating visualizations in the form of designs that can serve as characteristics and distinguishers from other brands/products. Product design, as the main characteristic of Bulls Syndicate in visual form, is always applied in events that can promote Bulls Syndicate's products directly or indirectly. The designs presented are not only to maintain originality and consistency in company values but also to develop existing trends and designs. Bulls Syndicate produces products from hand drawing artwork that incorporates vintage urban ideas into its selection. The designs are the entry point that reflects a brand and the spirit of the entity. Building a visual brand in the form of a successful design can construct an identity or personality that can establish a relationship between the company and its customers [27].

Second, the branding strategy by Bulls Syndicate to consumers represents integrity. Bulls Syndicate has a custom culture concept in the motorcycle sector. In building this attribute, it upholds the quality and detailing of products that are highly protected, from production to sales packaging. Kotler and Armstrong (2004:283) affirm that product quality is closely related to the product's ability to perform its functions, including the overall product, reliability, accuracy, ease to use and repair, and other valuable attributes [28]. Therefore, product quality

is a set of traits and characteristics of goods and services that are able to meet needs. Bulls Syndicate offers limited products, they only release a few products in a single catalog. This is not a baseless action as Bulls Syndicate has its own goal to increase consumer purchasing power and interest in owning the product due to its rarity.

Third, the Bulls Syndicate product also created a tagline as its identity, namely "Motorcycle Worshiper". This tagline can strengthen branding and represent Bulls Syndicate products, which issue products with a special theme, namely motorcycles. Bulls Syndicate tagline is a powerful branding tool to motivate customers to support a brand in the form of phrases made in verbal form to express the importance of a product. The tagline becomes a keyword in the branding strategy of a product and a good tagline is when the message in the tagline can be understood and easily remembered by customers [29].

Fourth, in managing the Bulls Syndicate branding strategy, they specialize in the products they market. Because Bulls Syndicate endorses motorcycle theme, it offers products that support riding, such as thick motorcycle-designed t-shirts, shirts, and safety jackets with special pads on each elbow for protection while riding and make riding comfortable, hats and beanies, bandanas, riding gloves, motorcycle key chains, and a variety of jeans and chinos designed for safe riding and daily use.

Fifth, Bulls Syndicate's branding strategy is authority – they create products that contain authority so that customers who purchase the products are more invested and convinced to buy products offered by Bulls Syndicate. Furthermore, after customers procure products, they will perceive that the products provide an authority impression. The products manufactured by Bulls Syndicate have their own specialties so that they can add more value to the users. In that way, customers will write reviews related to the products of Bulls Syndicate, whether products have more value for the user or otherwise. This corresponds to the statement of [23].

Sixth, the requests for Bulls Syndicate products from consumers during the event to be responsive, competent, and embrace them well is welcomed. This implies that Bulls Syndicate should improve a good customer relationship system so that in the future the brand can create and maintain good relationships with customers that will lead to their needs [30]. Customer loyalty is the likelihood of attitudes and behavior to support one brand among other brands, whether due to the satisfaction with the product or service, convenience or performance, or

simply familiarity and comfort with the brand. Customers who are satisfied with goods and services from the brand will continue to interact and repurchase Bulls Syndicate brand. During the event, it is more likely for Bulls Syndicate to find consumer needs and be able to see responses from prospective buyers to sales offers so they can make adjustments sooner. During the event, word of mouth is actively promoted. Customers will discuss with other customers or other people their experiences using the products they purchase [31].

Seventh, Bulls Syndicate shows its persistence in managing branding strategies, one of which is by creating a special team to focus on branding issues. This team has specific schedule and activities to design and take direct action in branding activities. Furthermore, Bulls Syndicate is active in various events. Bulls Syndicate often participates in this direct branding, whether as an organizer or participant. Bulls Syndicate holds monthly events called Dakota Ride. Furthermore, it does not limit them to participate in national and international events which, obviously, can upgrade their brand image more broadly. The national event is, for example, Kustomfest in Yogyakarta, and the international event is Yokohama Hot Rod, a custom culture festival, collaborative performances of various international custom works, consisting of Custom Motorcycles, Hot Rods, and Custom Cars, Custom Bikes, Pedal Cars, Body Art, Die Cast, Paint Work, Arts and Culture, Entertainment, Vendor Booth and so on in a single concept of an annual custom cultural celebration in Japan. This method aims to allow consumers experience the sensation of becoming part of the Bulls Syndicate brand.

Furthermore, the persistence of Bulls Syndicate is also seen in the current COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless of the implementation of the new normal, it does not mean that all activities will return to their previous state, which has forced and changed Bulls Syndicate's branding strategy into online branding. In online branding, the team is always active in posting photos and videos related to the activities carried out by the Bulls Syndicate. [32] also state that digital branding uses the internet and information technology to expand and enhance traditional marketing functions. Subsequently, Bulls Syndicate remains active in the online community and offers exclusive prizes from its products. Bulls Syndicate is also active in online media, through website and Instagram account @bullsyndicate. On its Instagram page, the brand has posted more than 1500 photos and videos and has more than 33,000 followers. Also, it actively posts products and activities on social media pages almost on

daily basis. Social media is currently a significant tool in branding products. Consequently, Bulls Syndicate often uploads on website and Instagram with a public figure as their brand ambassador, therefore attracting more attention to the audience and readers of their page. The use of micro influencers or local influencers is deemed more effective in facilitating message delivery according to the target because the level of proximity of micro influencers or local influencers with their followers is nearly personal [33].

Eighth, in carrying out branding strategy, it also emphasizes goodwill for a wide audience. Goodwill mentioned is helping those in need. This is done using financial aid or goods which will be distributed through a representative. Hence, it can be observed that Bulls Syndicate also emphasizes that it participates in different circumstances. The brand strategy focuses on aspects of reciprocal communication in order to achieve an understanding of goodwill and a good image between the institution and the public. Public relations are carried out to appear decent in the eyes of the community [34]

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that Bulls Syndicate employs eight out of eleven characteristics of a branding strategy optimally. In comparison with the theory of Schult and Barnes, Bulls Syndicate has actively carried out various branding strategies that have been previously designed through activities, such as always authenticity-oriented products, maintaining the quality of the products, using taglines to display robust product characteristics, specializing in riding supplementary products.

To optimize the branding strategy, Bulls Syndicate consistently follows national- and international-scale events and it organizes an event to approach consumers and make them become part of the Bulls Syndicate. The event organized by the brand also includes social activities. In that way, the brand understands consumer needs. In addition, it proves to the public that eight out of eleven characteristics of the branding strategy are carried out by Bulls Syndicate can be used as a reference for making other branding strategies.

## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

In this study, the first author is assigned to find and collect data, then process the obtained data to arrange a complete manuscript.

The second author acts as a manuscript editor that has been arranged by the first author so it becomes more

adequate. Apart from editing the manuscript, the second author also acts as a manuscript planner to understand and design the content of the manuscript so as to create a good article that follows the original purpose.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We'd like to thank Allah who has given His grace and guidance so that researchers completed this research. We'd also like to thank Bulls Syndicate for giving us the opportunity to conduct research. We hope this research can be useful for various parties. Thank you.

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