



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/ijam.v1i4>
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Digital Marketing Communication Activities of C&F on Instagram Account @cnfstoreofficial in Promoting Products to Consumers

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Abstract: This study explores the digital marketing communication strategies implemented by C&F, a well-established beauty and fragrance retailer, through its official Instagram account, @cnfstoreofficial. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, data were gathered through interviews with one key informant—the Junior Manager of PR and Digital Marketing—and four supporting informants who are active C&F consumers and followers. The findings reveal that C&F effectively utilizes Instagram as a digital marketing medium through three main approaches: advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing. Advertising activities are conducted through paid Instagram ads designed to increase product awareness and engagement. Sales promotions are executed via photo and video content highlighting discounts, free samples, and collaborations with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and beauty communities to expand brand reach. Direct marketing is facilitated through the Instagram Shop feature, which links users directly to the C&F website, simplifying online purchases. Among all strategies, collaborations with KOLs and beauty or fragrance communities were found to be the most effective in driving engagement and sales performance. This study contributes to the understanding of how integrated marketing communication can be optimized within social media ecosystems, particularly Instagram, to strengthen brand visibility and consumer interaction in the beauty industry.

Keyword: Digital Marketing Communication, Instagram Marketing, C&F, Key Opinion Leader (KOL), Consumer Engagement

INTRODUCTION

Marketing communication is a strategic process designed to convey the meaning and purpose of a product or service through various promotional channels such as advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations (Sugiarto & Gartanti, 2022). It serves as an essential bridge between businesses and consumers, ensuring that accurate and persuasive information about a product reaches its intended audience. Effective marketing communication aims to strengthen a company's overall marketing strategy by enabling it to

reach broader market segments, build meaningful connections with target audiences, and achieve communication efficiency. In today's competitive landscape, well-designed communication strategies are critical in shaping consumer perception and fostering brand loyalty.

One of the prominent companies actively developing its marketing communication strategy is C&F, a well-known Indonesian retail brand specializing in perfume and beauty products. Established in 1994, C&F operates more than 100 stores across Indonesia and is recognized as one of the pioneers in luxury fragrance retailing. As consumer behavior increasingly shifts toward digital platforms, C&F has adapted its marketing approach through digital marketing communication, employing various digital media such as its official website, YouTube ads, and particularly Instagram. Preliminary observations conducted in January 2023 revealed that C&F's Instagram account, @cnfstoreofficial, serves as a key medium for digital engagement, utilizing photos and videos featuring models, product promotions, giveaways, and educational content such as *tips & tricks* for skincare and fragrance styling.

Strategic planning and creativity play crucial roles in marketing communication. A well-executed communication strategy not only enhances a company's market presence but also transforms consumer perception, turning awareness into interest and ultimately driving purchase decisions. As Morissan (2015) asserts, communication is fundamental for informing consumers about a product's existence in the marketplace. Without communication, products would remain invisible to potential buyers. Marketing communication activities are ubiquitous in everyday life—seen in advertisements, television commercials, radio broadcasts, and digital promotions. Their core purpose is to deliver messages about the existence and value of products or services, thereby influencing consumer attitudes and behaviors.

In recent years, the evolution of digital communication has significantly transformed marketing practices. Traditional marketing methods are now complemented—or even replaced—by digital strategies that leverage internet technologies and social media platforms (Kotler et al., 2021). Digital marketing communication refers to all activities conducted via online networks to increase visibility, engagement, and reach. Among these platforms, Instagram stands out as one of the most influential tools for brand communication. As of April 2022, Instagram had approximately 1.45 billion users worldwide, making it the second most-downloaded social media platform after TikTok (GoodStats, 2022). Launched in October 2010, Instagram enables users to share visual moments through photos, videos, and direct messaging. Its visually oriented nature makes it an ideal platform for businesses to create attractive, engaging, and interactive marketing content (Kompas.com, 2022).

This study focuses on the official Instagram account @cnfstoreofficial, which embodies C&F's integrated marketing communication strategy. The brand uses its platform to showcase products ranging from perfumes and skincare to makeup and body care, representing over 100 brands. With over 128,000 followers, the account demonstrates high levels of engagement, reflected in thousands of likes and video views. C&F consistently updates followers on product launches, limited-time offers, and customer reposts. Its bio also includes direct links for online purchases and offline store locations, further integrating the online-to-offline customer experience. Additionally, C&F collaborates with Indonesian celebrities and influencers to enhance brand visibility and strengthen its market positioning.

In comparison, competitors such as Guardian and Watsons Indonesia have larger followings—@guardian_id with 1.1 million and @watsonsindo with 967 thousand followers—but their promotional strategies differ. Guardian's Instagram feed mainly features static posters of beauty products and celebrity endorsements, while Watsons maintains more modest engagement levels. Unlike its competitors, C&F emphasizes dynamic visual

storytelling, using short-form videos, models, and lifestyle-based content that humanizes the brand. Furthermore, C&F's interactive initiatives—such as giveaways and user-generated content—help build a sense of community and authenticity.

Preliminary interviews with C&F's marketing management in January 2023 highlighted several distinctive strengths. C&F has rebranded itself as a “one-stop beauty destination,” where customers can find all beauty-related needs in one place. It also differentiates itself as the only local distributor offering *niche fragrances*—rare and luxury perfumes from international brands such as Penhaligon's, Dali Haute, Etat Libre d'Orange, and Xerjoff—imported from France and Korea (Kompas.com, 2023). Several C&F stores even dedicate exclusive spaces to display these niche collections, emphasizing luxury and exclusivity. These characteristics make C&F a unique and compelling subject of study in understanding how digital marketing communication operates within Indonesia's beauty industry.

The effectiveness of marketing communication has been widely examined in previous research. For instance, Alimudin and Dharmawati (2022) studied digital marketing communication strategies to promote tourism in Pari Island, revealing that well-implemented strategies significantly increased visitor numbers through advertising, direct marketing, and public relations. Similarly, Sucipto and Fauziah (2022) investigated Subway Indonesia's Instagram reels strategy, which effectively enhanced brand awareness and consumer interest, demonstrating that visual storytelling and creative content drive engagement. Another study by Haposan and Agustrijanto (2022) analyzed the role of brand ambassadors in influencing consumer purchase intentions on Instagram, concluding that celebrity endorsements, such as by actor Chico Jerikho, significantly strengthen brand attraction.

This study differs from previous works by focusing on C&F's digital marketing communication activities on Instagram—analyzing how the brand's integrated use of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing manifests within the social media environment. A qualitative descriptive approach is employed to systematically describe and interpret C&F's communication activities through observation and interviews, aiming to understand the structure, content, and audience engagement strategies utilized on @cnfstoreofficial.

According to Firmansyah (2020), the marketing communication mix consists of several key components—advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing—which collectively serve to achieve a company's marketing objectives. Advertising refers to a structured and paid form of communication designed to inform and persuade audiences about products or services (Firmansyah, 2020; Morissan, 2015). It influences consumer attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward brands (Haider & Shakib, 2017, as cited in Shiratina et al., 2020). C&F utilizes digital advertising through short videos, images, and captions on Instagram to communicate product value and aesthetics.

Sales promotion is another essential tool that directly encourages consumers to purchase products through discounts, giveaways, or special offers (Firmansyah, 2020; Darmawan & Sutrisno, 2022). C&F actively applies this through limited-time sales, cashback programs, and product giveaways, often tied to interactive campaigns. Such promotions create a sense of urgency while fostering emotional connections with customers.

Public relations (PR) play a vital role in maintaining positive relationships between a company and its stakeholders. According to Firmansyah (2020), PR activities include publications, events, sponsorships, exhibitions, and investor relations, all designed to build goodwill. C&F's PR efforts include collaborative events, partnerships with international brands, and active social media engagement to reinforce its reputation as a trusted luxury retailer.

Personal selling involves direct interaction between sales representatives and potential customers to promote and clarify product benefits (Dellamita et al., 2014). At C&F, this

occurs both offline through in-store consultations and online via WhatsApp, email, or Instagram direct messages. This hybrid approach ensures personalized assistance and enhances consumer trust.

Finally, direct marketing focuses on building long-term customer relationships through targeted communication channels such as catalogs, email campaigns, and online advertisements (Firmansyah, 2020). Digital direct marketing allows for real-time responses, cost efficiency, and global reach. C&F's direct marketing initiatives include online catalogs, product recommendations, and personalized customer outreach via digital channels.

In summary, marketing communication serves as the lifeblood of C&F's brand strategy, particularly in the digital landscape where social media has reshaped how businesses interact with consumers. Instagram, with its visual and interactive features, allows brands like C&F to craft compelling narratives, foster engagement, and build a loyal customer base. This study seeks to analyze how C&F utilizes its digital marketing communication—particularly on Instagram—to effectively promote its products and engage with its audience.

The research question guiding this study is: "How does C&F's digital marketing communication activity on Instagram (@cnfstoreofficial) contribute to its product promotion and consumer engagement?"

The primary objective is to describe and analyze C&F's digital marketing communication strategies in promoting its products through Instagram, emphasizing the application of the marketing communication mix. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of literature on digital marketing communication in Indonesia, particularly within the beauty and lifestyle sectors, and offer insights for practitioners seeking to optimize their social media marketing efforts in an increasingly digitalized marketplace.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research involves data collection in a natural setting with the primary aim of interpreting ongoing phenomena, where the researcher acts as the key instrument. Data analysis in qualitative research is inductive and focuses more on meaning rather than generalization (Setiawan, 2018). As Setiawan (2018) emphasizes, qualitative research should adopt a naturalistic approach to understand particular social phenomena, especially those emerging within real and complex environments. This method was chosen because the object of study—digital marketing communication activities by the beauty and fragrance distributor C&F through its Instagram account @cnfstoreofficial—is a naturally occurring phenomenon rather than an experimental condition.

The study used a descriptive qualitative design, which aims to portray and explain a phenomenon by providing in-depth descriptions, clarifications, and validations of the data collected (Ramdhan, 2021). In descriptive research, the formulated problem must be researchable, scientifically valuable, and sufficiently focused (Ramdhan, 2021). The main objective of this approach is to describe the structure and meaning of communication practices carried out by C&F's digital marketing team and how these activities influence consumer engagement.

Participants in qualitative research are referred to as informants. Informants are individuals who provide the necessary information to achieve the research objectives. The study used purposive sampling, meaning that informants were selected based on specific criteria related to the research focus (Sumargo, 2020). Two main groups of informants were identified: C&F employees and C&F consumers who follow the Instagram account @cnfstoreofficial. The key informants included individuals actively involved in the company's digital marketing division, those responsible for decision-making in digital communication activities, and those with authority over marketing information. Supporting

informants were active Instagram users who followed the @cnfstoreofficial account and had purchased C&F products more than twice.

The research object refers to the attributes, characteristics, or values of a subject that hold unique significance for analysis (Sugiyono, 2017). In this study, the research object was the digital marketing communication activities on C&F's official Instagram account.

Data collection techniques included interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews involved direct interaction between the interviewer and the respondent to obtain relevant information (Fadhallah, 2020). Following Almanshur (2012), interviews were conducted in both structured and unstructured forms. Structured interviews ensured consistency by asking the same questions to all respondents, while unstructured interviews allowed for flexibility and deeper exploration of emerging themes. Observations were also conducted to examine relevant aspects of the communication activities, including the actors, space, time, and events (Almanshur, 2012). Both participant and non-participant observation methods were used (Sugiyono, 2014), allowing the researcher to experience and interpret the phenomenon firsthand while maintaining analytical objectivity.

Supporting data were obtained through documentation in the form of images and records related to C&F's digital marketing activities. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981, as cited in Nugrahani, 2014), documents—whether written or visual—serve as crucial evidence that complements primary data. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014, as cited in Saleh, 2017), which involves three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, triangulation was applied through cross-verification among data sources, methods, and theoretical perspectives (Saleh, 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study involved five informants—four supporting informants and one key informant—selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance to the research objectives. The key informant represented the organizational perspective of C&F, while the four supporting informants were active consumers who followed and engaged with the C&F official Instagram account, @cnfstoreofficial.

The first supporting informant, Putri Anggi Firstiani, aged 31, is a homemaker who has been a follower of C&F's Instagram account since 2019 and a loyal customer for several years. The second informant, Nandya Ismi Nabilah, aged 24, works in the private sector and has followed the C&F account since 2021. She initially became aware of C&F through paid advertisements appearing on her Instagram feed. The third informant, Silvia Amanda, a 20-year-old university student, began following the account in 2022 after encountering C&F through influencer marketing content. The fourth informant, Sonny Anggara, aged 26, also a private employee, has been following C&F since 2020 and has consistently purchased its products.

The key informant, Kurnia Putri Aryani, serves as the Junior Manager of PR & Digital Marketing at C&F, a company established in 1994. She plays a critical role in managing digital marketing communication activities, supervising the creative direction of campaigns, and overseeing strategic decisions concerning online promotional content.

Marketing communication plays a vital role in connecting brands and consumers through information exchange, persuasion, and relationship-building (Kotler & Keller, 2016). C&F's digital marketing communication activities on Instagram are designed to strengthen brand awareness, encourage engagement, and increase sales conversions. According to the key informant, these activities include posting product visuals, running targeted advertisements, collaborating with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), and maintaining an Instagram shop that redirects consumers to the official website, www.cnfstore.com.

The supporting informants confirmed these practices. For instance, Nandya Ismi Nabilah stated during an interview (May 13, 2023) that she followed C&F's Instagram account after being exposed to a paid advertisement promoting a product discount. This aligns with the role of digital advertising in generating awareness through algorithm-based targeting (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Meanwhile, Silvia Amanda mentioned that she discovered the brand through influencer *Sabrina Chairunnisa*, whose endorsement prompted her to follow the brand's page. This reflects the increasing role of parasocial relationships between influencers and followers in digital marketing effectiveness (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

According to Kurnia Putri Aryani, C&F maintains a structured content strategy: "Each month we upload at least two to three visual photos or videos per product, focusing on brand introduction, product knowledge, and sales-oriented content. Every content piece is supported by paid advertising to reach audiences who don't follow the account yet." This statement illustrates that C&F applies an *always-on* communication strategy—consistent content exposure supported by social media ads that enhance visibility and engagement (Tuten & Solomon, 2020).

C&F's collaboration with KOLs represents a central pillar of its communication strategy. As Kurnia Putri Aryani explained, "We work with KOLs for one to two months, starting with unboxing videos, product storytelling, and ending with personalized discount codes. This allows us to track sales generated through each KOL." This indicates the integration of influencer marketing with performance tracking systems—a practice common in contemporary digital campaigns where authenticity and data analytics converge (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

Observational data further support these interview insights. C&F's Instagram feed features diverse content formats such as product descriptions, educational posts about fragrances and skincare, and promotional campaigns. Three examples illustrate this diversity:

1. A product showcase post for *Marina De Bourbon Style Collection* perfume, describing scent profiles and packaging aesthetics;
2. An educational post where a dermatologist discusses the use of fragrance in skincare products;
3. A promotional post announcing Ramadan cashback offers.

These content types align with *content marketing theory*, which posits that brands must provide informational, educational, and entertaining value to sustain consumer attention and build trust (Pulizzi, 2014).

Based on Firmansyah's (2020) framework, the marketing communication mix includes five elements: advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing. However, observations and interviews revealed that C&F primarily applies three components relevant to digital environments: advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing.

1. Advertising

Advertising serves to increase brand awareness and inform potential customers about product offerings (Firmansyah, 2020). C&F utilizes Instagram's paid advertising tools to display promotional posts up to three times daily, particularly during product launches or seasonal campaigns. The advertisements typically include product visuals, discount information, and calls-to-action encouraging users to follow the account or participate in giveaways.

The effectiveness of this strategy lies in Instagram's algorithmic advertising model, which allows precise audience targeting based on interests, behavior, and location (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020). For example, users who previously engaged with beauty-related content are more likely to encounter C&F's sponsored posts. This precision supports

the findings from Nandya's interview, where she described discovering the brand through targeted ads.

Furthermore, C&F's emphasis on visual aesthetics—high-quality photography, elegant color schemes, and consistent branding—enhances the emotional appeal of its advertisements. According to Belch and Belch (2021), visually appealing advertisements contribute significantly to brand recall and attitude formation in digital contexts. Therefore, C&F's advertising strategy not only drives reach but also reinforces its luxury and beauty-oriented brand identity.

2. Sales Promotion

Sales promotion refers to short-term incentives designed to encourage consumer purchasing (Firmansyah, 2020). C&F implements sales promotions through time-limited discounts, giveaways, and collaborations with influencers. Based on the interviews and content analysis, the company frequently posts promotional visuals on Instagram Stories featuring limited offers, free samples, or exclusive events.

C&F's sales promotion also integrates influencer campaigns, where KOLs share voucher codes or highlight special deals. This dual approach combines *transactional* incentives with *relational* influence, leveraging social trust between KOLs and followers (Jin, Muqaddam, & Ryu, 2019). According to Kurnia Putri Aryani, this collaboration strategy not only drives sales but also maintains visibility in competitive beauty and fragrance markets.

The brand also participates in community-based promotions with beauty and fragrance enthusiasts. This community engagement approach aligns with the concept of *social capital in digital networks*—where consumer participation and peer endorsement strengthen brand loyalty (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). Hence, C&F's use of sales promotions extends beyond monetary incentives, fostering a participatory marketing ecosystem that encourages dialogue and co-creation.

3. Direct Marketing

Direct marketing focuses on personalized interactions and measurable consumer responses (Kotler & Keller, 2016). C&F integrates direct marketing into its digital strategy through the Instagram Shop feature, enabling users to browse and purchase products seamlessly. Each product listing contains images, stock availability, and prices, and redirects users to the official website for checkout.

This feature exemplifies *omnichannel marketing*, where brands integrate multiple digital touchpoints to deliver consistent consumer experiences (Verhoef, Kannan, & Inman, 2015). According to observations, C&F updates its online catalog regularly—particularly when launching new products—ensuring that consumers can access real-time information.

Moreover, direct marketing allows C&F to collect data on consumer preferences and purchasing patterns, thereby enhancing personalization and campaign optimization. Firmansyah (2020) argues that direct marketing builds long-term customer relationships while minimizing operational costs through automation and flexible adjustments. In this context, C&F's integration of Instagram Shop and website analytics enables the company to track consumer engagement and adjust its promotional messages accordingly.

The findings suggest that C&F's combination of advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing effectively strengthens its brand presence in the digital marketplace. Among these activities, collaboration with KOLs and beauty communities emerged as the most impactful strategy. According to the key informant, influencer partnerships generate high engagement rates, broader audience reach, and measurable sales conversions through affiliate tracking systems.

This finding aligns with studies demonstrating that influencer marketing outperforms traditional advertising in terms of credibility, emotional connection, and peer influence (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). The credibility of influencers—

particularly those in beauty and lifestyle sectors—serves as a persuasive element that enhances consumer trust in product recommendations.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of visual storytelling in maintaining consumer engagement. By consistently integrating brand aesthetics, educational narratives, and interactive promotions, C&F successfully constructs a cohesive brand narrative. This supports the theory of *integrated marketing communication (IMC)*, which emphasizes message consistency and synergy across multiple channels (Kliatchko, 2008).

From a theoretical standpoint, the research also reflects McLuhan's concept of *the medium is the message*, where the platform itself shapes the nature and perception of communication (McLuhan, 1964). Instagram's visual and interactive affordances dictate how C&F designs and delivers its marketing content, influencing not only consumer behavior but also brand culture formation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that C&F has successfully integrated various digital marketing communication strategies through its Instagram account, @cnfstoreofficial, to enhance brand awareness, engagement, and sales performance. The company's consistent use of advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing has proven to be effective in building a cohesive brand identity and attracting consumer attention in the competitive beauty and fragrance market.

Advertising through visual posts and paid Instagram ads increases product visibility and ensures that C&F remains top-of-mind among social media users. Sales promotion strategies—such as giveaways, discounts, and influencer collaborations—stimulate consumer interest and foster a sense of community around the brand. Meanwhile, direct marketing via Instagram Shop simplifies the purchasing process by connecting social media engagement directly to product sales.

Furthermore, the partnership with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and beauty or fragrance communities plays a pivotal role in amplifying C&F's brand message. These collaborations not only generate trust and credibility but also allow the company to reach niche audiences with authentic, personalized endorsements. The findings align with Firmansyah's (2020) concept of the marketing communication mix, emphasizing that an integrated approach combining advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing is essential to achieving effective communication outcomes.

In conclusion, C&F's strategic use of Instagram exemplifies how brands can leverage social media platforms to establish meaningful consumer relationships, enhance digital presence, and sustain long-term competitiveness. This study also highlights the importance of visual storytelling, influencer collaboration, and interactive engagement in the evolving landscape of digital marketing communication.

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