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Promotion Strategy for Personal Development Training Services: A Qualitative Case Study of CV Duta Grooming Indonesia

Cici Asmawatiy[1*], Siti Aliyanti Al bushairi[2], Raden Roro Yulianti Prihatiningrum[3]

[1,2,3] Doctoral Program in Management Science, Faculty of Economics and Business, Lambung Mangkurat University, Indonesia
[1] Business Administration Study Program, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Administrasi (STIA) Bina Banua Banjarmasin, Indonesia.

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Abstract: Small training providers that introduce services unfamiliar to their local market must educate potential customers while operating with limited resources. This study examines the promotion strategy of CV Duta Grooming Indonesia, a personal development training provider founded in 2023 in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, focusing on the promotional tools used, the constraints faced in implementing them, and the efforts made to overcome those constraints. A descriptive qualitative design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the founder as key informant and two staff members, direct observation of promotional activities, and company documents, and were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings show that the company combines five promotional tools: advertising on social media (Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp), personal selling through proposals and visits to institutions, sales promotion in the form of seasonal discounts, public relations through content creators and educational content, and direct marketing through personal follow-up. Implementation is constrained by a promotion budget that is not separated from operating funds, a shortage of content creation staff, insufficient direct outreach to institutions, the founder's dual role as trainer and lecturer, and underuse of digital marketing tools. The company responds by planning a dedicated promotion budget, recruiting promotion staff, intensifying direct proposal distribution, restructuring the founder's time, and training staff in digital marketing. The study highlights that for resource-constrained service start-ups, the binding constraint on promotion is organizational capacity rather than the choice of promotional tools.

Keywords: Promotion strategy; promotional mix; training services; small enterprise; social media marketing.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

In an increasingly competitive economy, firms are required to market their products and services creatively in order to attract consumers and sustain growth. One industry that has grown in recent years is personal development training. Training services improve participants' skills and self-confidence for professional and personal purposes, and they often also help consumers build a professional image in the eyes of society. As public awareness of self-development rises, consumers have wider choices, so marketing attention shifts from merely delivering a product to ensuring that the service meets consumers' needs and expectations.

Promotion is the element of the marketing mix through which a firm communicates the value of its offering and persuades customers to buy (Ela elliyana et.al, 2022; Marlinah et al., 2023). Kotler and Armstrong (2016) identify five promotional tools: advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing. Firms must determine which combination is most appropriate so that promotional spending is effective and efficient, and the combination differs according to each firm's condition. Because the effects of promotion are not immediate, promotion must be carried out as a continuous process.

CV Duta Grooming Indonesia is a service company established on 5 June 2023 in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. It provides personal development training, including personal grooming, public speaking, service excellence, personal color analysis, and personal development programs. Several of its products, notably personal color analysis and personal grooming, are pioneering services in South Kalimantan with no direct

*Corresponding Author
Cici Asmawatiy *
Email: Ciciasmawatiy24@gmail.com.

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competitor, while public speaking and table manner training face only a few local competitors. As a provider of services that are still new to the region, the company faces the particular challenge of introducing concepts that are relatively unfamiliar to local consumers.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Company records show that demand is uneven across programs and months (Table 2). Personal development dominates private training, whereas workshop demand is concentrated in a few months. Some programs attract little demand, indicating that awareness of the company's offerings is still limited. When introducing relatively new training products in a region, the greatest challenge is to educate the market and build awareness of the value of the service. Small service firms, however, typically operate with limited budgets and staff, which may prevent them from executing promotion consistently. Understanding how such a firm combines promotional tools, what constrains their implementation, and how it responds is therefore of practical and academic value.

1.3 Research objectives

The study pursued three objectives:

1. To describe the promotion strategy applied by CV Duta Grooming Indonesia to market its training services.
2. To identify the constraints faced by the company in implementing its promotion strategy.
3. To identify the efforts made by the company to overcome these constraints.

1.4 Research questions

Consistent with its qualitative design, the study did not test hypotheses but addressed the following questions:

i. RQ_1: Which promotional tools does CV Duta Grooming Indonesia use to market its training services, and how are they implemented?

ii. RQ_2: What constraints hinder the implementation of the company's promotion strategy?

iii. RQ_3: What efforts has the company made to overcome these constraints?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework

2.1.1 Marketing Mix and Promotional Mix

The marketing mix is the set of controllable tactical marketing tools that a firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). For services, the traditional elements of product, price, place and promotion are extended to include people, process and physical evidence, because services are intangible, inseparable from their providers, variable in quality and perishable (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Within this mix, the promotional mix is the specific blend of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing that a firm uses to communicate customer value persuasively and build customer relationships (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

2.1.2 Promotion Strategy

Promotion strategy is the planned and directed use of promotional tools to deliver marketing messages to target audiences in order to shape perceptions, interest and purchase decisions (Tjiptono, 2017). Thackeray et al. (2007) argue that promotion is more than information dissemination and must be aligned with the other elements of the marketing mix, such as product, price and place. The choice of tools depends on factors including the nature of the market, the product, the stage of the product life cycle and the available budget (Pride & Ferrell, 2014). For intangible services that customers cannot evaluate before purchase, promotion plays a heightened role in reducing perceived risk and making the offering tangible through evidence such as testimonials and demonstrations (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

2.2 Elements of the promotional mix

2.2.1 Advertising

Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). It must do more than inform; it must persuade audiences to act. Social media platforms now allow small firms to advertise at low cost and to target specific audiences.

2.2.2 Personal Selling

Personal selling is face-to-face, two-way communication between a seller and prospective buyers aimed at introducing a product, building understanding and making sales (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Tjiptono, 2017). It is particularly relevant for business-to-business services, such as training for government agencies and companies, where trust and customization matter.

2.2.3 Sales Promotion

Sales promotion consists of short-term incentives that encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service, such as discounts, bundles and seasonal offers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). Its purpose is to stimulate a faster or stronger market response and to attract new customers.

2.2.4 Public Relations

Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on which its success depends (Cutlip et al., 2006). In the digital era, public relations increasingly operates through social media, where

collaborations with content creators and educational content build publicity and brand identity.

2.2.5 Direct Marketing

Direct marketing involves engaging directly with carefully targeted individual consumers to obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting relationships (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). Stone and Jacobs (2008) note that direct marketing now extends beyond physical mail to personalized e-mail, text messaging and database-driven social media interaction, which can improve retention and accelerate conversion.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative design. Qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior (Moleong, 2013). The design is appropriate for describing in depth how a single firm formulates and implements its promotion strategy in its natural setting. The research was conducted at CV Duta Grooming Indonesia in Banjarmasin in July 2025.

3.2 Data sources and informants

Primary data were collected directly from the research subjects through in-depth interviews and observation. Secondary data consisted of company documents such as training modules, program brochures, activity reports and internal records, together with books, journal articles and news. Informants were selected purposively on the basis of their direct involvement in promotion. The key informant was the founder and chief executive, who leads the company's promotion, supported by two staff members (Table 1).

Table 1: Research Informants

Code	Position	Role in the study	Interview date
KI	Founder/CEO and lead trainer	Key informant	2 July 2025
I1	Treasurer	Informant	20 July 2025
I2	Secretary	Informant	19 July 2025

3.3 Data collection

Data were collected using three techniques. First, semi-structured interviews were guided by three core questions corresponding to the research questions: the promotion strategies used, the constraints encountered, and the efforts made to overcome them. Second, direct observation was carried out on the company's promotional activities, including its social media accounts and outreach materials. Third, documentation was used to examine company records, promotional materials and demand data.

3.4 Data analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), in which analysis proceeds concurrently with data collection through three interacting components: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. Interview transcripts were reduced by summarizing core statements and grouping them into themes based on the five elements of the promotional mix, the constraints and the efforts. Findings from the interviews were compared with observation and documents, a form of source and method triangulation, before conclusions were drawn.

4. Results

4.1 Company profile

CV Duta Grooming Indonesia was founded on 5 June 2023 by a nationally and internationally certified trainer who acts as the company's main trainer. Its vision is to give all segments of society an understanding of attractive and appropriate appearance; its mission includes educating the public, disseminating personal grooming information through social media and workshops, and conducting training in schools, government agencies and private companies. The company has grown into a pioneer of personal color analysis in Kalimantan, serving students, socialites, civil servants, private employees and organizations. Its lean structure comprises nine core staff (founder/CEO, treasurer, secretary, three specialist trainers, a creative team member, an innovation and strategy officer, and a driver) and six freelancers engaged for large events.

The company offers four main program lines: personal color analysis, service excellence, public speaking and personal development, the last covering personal grooming, personal style, table manner and beauty classes. Demand recorded by the company over one year is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Demand for Training Services by Program and Format (January–December)

Program	Private training (requests)	Workshops (requests)	Peak months
Personal Color Analysis	9	37	Workshops: Aug (10), Jun (9), Jul and Dec (7)
Personal Development	31	1	Private: Nov (7), Jan and Aug (4)
Service Excellence	10	0	Private: Jan and Nov (2)
Public Speaking	10	2	Private: Nov (3), Sep and Dec (2)
Total	**60**	**40**	

Note: Totals computed from the company's monthly demand records. Source: CV Duta Grooming Indonesia.

Private training demand is spread across the year and dominated by personal development, while workshop demand is concentrated from June to August and in December. No workshop requests were recorded from January to April, and several programs attracted few requests, consistent with limited market awareness of a young firm.

4.2 Promotion strategy (RQ_1)

The interviews show that the company deliberately combines several promotional tools. The founder summarized the approach as follows:

> *"To promote our training services we use several strategies: advertising our services, sales promotion through collaboration with selected institutions, which is not paid but involves them, selling our services directly to institutions, giving price discounts, and promoting through our social media accounts."* (KI)

Staff interviews confirmed and elaborated these practices. The treasurer emphasized testimonials and influencer endorsement, and the secretary described proposals and multi-platform content:

> *"We collect testimonials from participants who have attended our training, and we cooperate with local public figures and influencer accounts that are relevant to our target market. The founder also uses her personal network to promote our training."* (I1)

> *"We send training proposals to companies, agencies and organizations that may need training for their staff, and we use Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok and Facebook with attractive and informative content."* (I2)

Based on the interviews, observation and documents, the company applies five promotional tools, summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Implementation of the Promotional Mix at CV Duta Grooming Indonesia

Promotional tool	Implementation	Channels and evidence
Advertising	Posts informing consumers about the benefits of training and price discounts	Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp; observed Instagram advertisements
Personal selling	Visits to government agencies, companies and organizations, presenting training details, benefits, costs and methods; presence at workshops and events	Door-to-door visits, training proposals
Sales promotion	Special discounts and attractive training packages in certain periods, e.g., Ramadan	Promotional flyers on social media
Public relations	Collaboration with content creators who experience and share the training (e.g., personal color analysis); educational content and testimonials	Instagram and TikTok content, influencer accounts
Direct marketing	Personal follow-up with former clients and prospects; brochures and special offers at local events and education fairs	WhatsApp messages, telephone, visits, printed brochures

Source: Authors' own analysis, 2026

The strategy reflects the company's market position. Because several of its services are new to the region, promotion relies heavily on visible evidence, namely testimonials, content creators' experiences and documentation of training activities, to make an intangible service tangible to prospective customers. Institutional clients are approached through personal selling, while individual consumers are reached mainly through social media.

4.3 Constraints in implementing promotion (RQ_2)

All informants reported that promotion has not run optimally. The founder pointed to time, staffing and budget:

> *"The constraint is time, because I am not only a trainer here but also a lecturer, so my time is divided. Staff to create content are limited, so content is not yet optimal, and the budget for promotion, including collaboration with local influencers, is still limited. Door-to-door outreach to institutions has also not been optimal."* (KI)

The treasurer added that existing videos were too formal and mostly recorded during training sessions, and that paid digital advertising had not been used because funding came from personal funds and training revenue. The secretary noted that promotion was still handled largely by the founder and that tools such as automated e-mail marketing, customer relationship management (CRM) and an interactive website had not been used owing to limited funds and technical skills. Five constraints emerged from the analysis:

1. **Limited promotion budget.** Promotion funds are not separated from general operating funds, preventing paid promotion such as Facebook, Instagram or Google Ads and collaboration with local influencers.
2. **Shortage of promotion and content creation staff.** Promotion is often handled by a single person, limiting the production of consistent, varied and engaging content.
3. **Insufficient direct outreach to institutions.** Door-to-door promotion to agencies, companies and organizations has not been carried out intensively, although it is considered effective for building trust and long-term cooperation.
4. **Limited time and the leader's dual role.** The founder's roles as lead trainer and lecturer reduce the time available for strategic planning and continuous execution of promotion.
5. **Underuse of digital marketing technology.** Tools such as e-mail automation, CRM and a website are not used optimally because of limited technical skills and funds.

4.4 Efforts to overcome the constraints (RQ_3)

The informants described several responses. The founder committed to managing her time between teaching and the company more efficiently, intensifying the distribution of training proposals to institutions, and recruiting dedicated social media staff:

> *"I divide my time more efficiently between teaching at the campus and Duta Grooming so that promotion is not neglected. We pay more attention to distributing training proposals door to door, and I plan to look for dedicated staff to manage social media so that digital promotion becomes more consistent."* (KI)

The treasurer proposed allocating budget for promotion staff and strengthening educational content, while the secretary highlighted collaboration with beauty and men's lifestyle influencers, emphasizing unique added value relative to cheaper competitors, and internal digital marketing training. Table 4 maps each constraint to the corresponding effort.

Table 4: Constraints and Corresponding Efforts

Constraint	Effort	Expected outcome
Limited promotion budget	Allocate a dedicated promotion budget	Access to paid digital ads and influencer collaboration
Shortage of content staff	Recruit staff dedicated to promotion and social media	Consistent, creative and professional content
Insufficient direct outreach	Distribute training proposals door to door to agencies, institutions and companies	More personal communication and cooperation opportunities
Leader's limited time	Restructure the founder's time between teaching and the company	Promotion no longer neglected
Underuse of digital tools	Internal digital marketing training for staff	Self-reliant, structured and measurable campaigns

Source: Authors' own analysis, 2026

5. Discussion

5.1 An integrated but capacity-bound promotional mix

CV Duta Grooming Indonesia uses all five tools of the promotional mix described by Kotler and Armstrong (2016), but in a form adapted to a small firm. Advertising and public relations are almost entirely digital and organic, sales promotion is limited to seasonal discounts, and personal selling and direct marketing depend on the founder's personal network. This configuration is consistent with the view that the promotional mix differs according to firm conditions and budget (Pride & Ferrell, 2014). The reliance on testimonials and content creators' experiences reflects a typical response to the intangibility of services, through which firms provide evidence that reduces customers' perceived risk (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

5.2 Organizational capacity as the binding constraint

The constraints reported are internal rather than market-related: budget, staff, time and skills. The founder's dual role and the absence of dedicated promotion staff mean that the strategy, although comprehensive on paper, cannot be executed consistently. This supports the argument of Thackeray et al. (2007) that promotion must be aligned with the other elements of the marketing mix, including the people and resources that deliver it. For small service firms, the choice of tools is therefore less decisive than the organizational capacity to use them continuously.

5.3 Balancing personal and digital channels

The demand pattern in Table 2 suggests two distinct markets: individual clients who buy private sessions throughout the year, and institutional clients whose workshop orders cluster in particular months. Personal selling and proposals are suited to the latter, while social media and direct follow-up serve the former. The planned efforts, a dedicated budget, promotion staff, proposal distribution and staff digital training, address both markets. Consistent with Stone and Jacobs (2008), combining personalized direct communication with digital channels can improve retention and conversion, provided the firm has the capacity to maintain both.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

CV Duta Grooming Indonesia has implemented a comprehensive promotional mix comprising advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations through social media, and direct marketing, each selected according to its target market and operational capacity. Its implementation is constrained mainly by internal limitations: a promotion budget merged with operating funds, a shortage of content staff, insufficient direct outreach, the founder's limited time, and underuse of digital marketing tools. The company has responded with concrete initiatives, including a dedicated promotion budget, recruitment of promotion staff, door-to-door proposal distribution, better time management, and internal digital marketing training.

6.2 Recommendations

i. The company should allocate a promotion budget separate from operating funds, covering paid digital advertising, influencer collaboration, digital marketing tools and better visual content production.

ii. The company should strengthen its promotion team by recruiting staff with digital marketing and creative content skills, provide them with regular training, and delegate promotion responsibilities so that promotion does not depend on the founder alone.

iii. The company should expand direct outreach through proposals and active follow-up with target institutions, timed ahead of the months in which workshop demand peaks.

iv. The company should gradually adopt digital tools such as e-mail automation, CRM and an interactive website, and balance conventional and digital promotion to strengthen its competitiveness.

6.3 Limitations and future research

This study is limited to a single young company and three informants, all of whom are internal to the firm, so the findings reflect the company's own perspective. The effectiveness of each promotional tool was not measured. Future research could include customers' perspectives, compare several training providers, or measure the effect of specific promotional tools on demand and conversion.

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