

## Research Article

# Utilization and Effectiveness of Agro-industrial Digital Marketing in Malang Raya

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### ABSTRACT

In the digital era, the agro-industrial sector has transitioned from conventional marketing to digital marketing. One of the agro-industry companies in Malang Raya, ALE, focuses on processing fruits and vegetables into healthy snack chips. The company engages in various digital marketing activities, including sales through e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, and Lazada, and promotional efforts on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram. This research aims to analyze (1) the utilization of digital marketing, and (2) the effectiveness of social media promotion based on engagement rates. The study employs both primary and secondary data, incorporating qualitative and quantitative forms, which are analyzed descriptively using a case study approach. Data collection methods include interviews, observation, and content analysis. The findings highlight the advantages of e-commerce channels, sales strategies like bundling and live streaming on e-commerce platforms, and storytelling and sales promotion strategies on social media. Additionally, the engagement rates on ALE's TikTok (12.71%) and Instagram (4.50%) indicate a high engagement rate level, with values exceeding the 2.72% benchmark, demonstrating the strong effectiveness of these platforms as promotional tools for the company.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, technology has evolved into a fundamental necessity for most individuals (Farida et al., 2021). One significant indicator of this technological advancement is the widespread use of the internet. The internet serves as a highly efficient communication medium that is borderless, real-time, and cost-effective. Additionally, it is the fastest and most effective means of disseminating information and data (Uno, 2019). According to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), internet users in Indonesia reached 73.7%, or approximately 196.7 million people, in 2020. By 2024, this figure is projected to increase to 79.5%, equivalent to 221.8 million users. This reflects a 5.8% increase in internet penetration over the past five years.

The advancement of the internet in this era has facilitated its application across various sectors, including finance, government, education, law, e-commerce, healthcare, transportation, fisheries, plantations, agriculture,

and business (Fauzi et al., 2023). Digital transformation is essential for businesses to remain competitive, achieved by leveraging the internet to create added value and meet increasingly complex customer demands (Harto et al., 2023). The rapid development of technology, digital platforms, and the internet has had a profound impact on marketing. Global marketing trends have shifted from traditional methods to digital approaches (Syukri & Sunrawali, 2022). Digital marketing, which involves the use of digital media such as the internet, mobile devices, and other online platforms, promotes products, services, or brands. It comprises interactive and integrated marketing strategies that enable interactions between producers, market intermediaries, and potential consumers (Robby Aditya & Rusdianto, 2023).

Agro-industry, or agricultural industrialization, is a sector well-positioned to benefit from digital marketing. The application of digital marketing in agro-industry is a strategic approach to enhance the sales of processed agricultural products. It also involves the use of data and analytics to understand consumer behavior, design more effective marketing campaigns, and boost sales (Sekali, 2023). Digital marketing encompasses all marketing efforts that utilize the internet and digital platforms, including search engines, marketplaces, social media, websites, and email. These channels facilitate communication between producers or marketers and consumers or buyers, thereby streamlining buying and selling activities (Gawade, 2019).

Malang Raya, a region in Indonesia, holds significant potential for agro-industrial development, with 50.46% of its population reliant on agriculture, which serves as the foundation for a robust agro-industrial sector. The government has implemented strategies to support agro-industrial growth in this region by fostering small, medium, and micro industries, which have strong potential to absorb labor (Bappekab Malang, 2009). Consequently, with over half of the population engaged in agriculture, the region demonstrates considerable potential for agro-industry development.

The implementation of digital marketing in agro-industries by the Agriculture Office in Grobogan Regency, East Java, demonstrated that digital marketing enables agro-industry players to enhance product visibility and accessibility, strengthen supply chains, and generate sustainable added value for the local economy. Similarly, Gumilang (2019), Intan et al. (2019), and Susanto et al. (2020) emphasized that the effective use of social media and digital marketing can significantly boost industry sales. Additionally, digital marketing strategies on social media enhance product value and competitiveness. Utilizing marketplaces as platforms for buying and selling also serves as a strategic approach to expanding market reach and increasing sales.

One of the key advantages of digital marketing is its significantly lower cost compared to traditional marketing methods. This cost reduction allows businesses to offer more competitive prices, thereby attracting a larger customer base. Additionally, digital marketing leverages internet technology, providing consumers with easy access and convenience, enabling them to make purchases anytime and anywhere through their devices (Sulaksono & Zakaria, 2020). The impact of digital marketing on product promotion is substantial, as it can increase both sales volume and company profits (Fadhilah & Pratiwi, 2021).

One of the agro-industrial companies in Malang Raya that has implemented digital marketing is ALE, which specializes in processing fruits and vegetables, particularly producing fruit and vegetable chips. ALE recognizes the substantial potential of digital marketing when utilized effectively. Currently, the company relies entirely on digital marketing channels, such as e-commerce platforms, to distribute its products to consumers. This approach is favored for its low capital requirements and extensive reach. Stating that e-commerce involves the buying, distributing, selling, and marketing of products and services via the internet, offering a broad consumer base, eliminating geographical barriers, and allowing activities without time constraints.

In its promotional activities, ALE utilizes digital marketing, particularly social media, as a key promotional tool. Zulvikar et al. (2023) found that social media plays a crucial role in helping companies disseminate information about their products or services. However, it is also essential to assess the effectiveness of social media as a promotional medium. Ramadhan et al. (2023) demonstrated that using engagement rate analysis for marketing optimization provides valuable insights into the performance of a company's social media account.

This study aims to examine the utilization of digital marketing by ALE and assess the effectiveness of the company's social media through engagement rate analysis. The objectives are to evaluate the implementation of digital marketing and to analyze the performance of the company's social media in terms of engagement.

## METHOD

This study employs a descriptive analysis method utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Agustini et al. (2023) define the qualitative descriptive method as an analytical approach that examines social life within real-world settings, focusing on natural, broad, complex, and detailed situations. Similarly, Kusumastuti & Ahmad Mustamil Khoiron (2019) highlight that the qualitative descriptive method incorporates data from observations, interviews, or document analysis. This method offers flexibility in addressing complex realities, illustrates the relationship between researchers and respondents, and allows for problem refinement. The

qualitative descriptive analysis in this study aims to address the research objective of evaluating the company's digital marketing utilization. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with the managing director of ALE.

In contrast to qualitative research, Abdullah et al. (2021) define quantitative research as a systematic scientific investigation of various aspects and phenomena, including the causal relationships among them. This research approach entails a structured examination of phenomena through the collection of measurable data, employing statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. Quantitative methods are utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of social media in digital marketing by calculating the engagement rate percentage. The data consist of upload insights from the relevant social media platforms, including the number of likes, comments, saves, and shares recorded from January to June 2024. To calculate the engagement rate per upload, this study employs Mackenzie Taylor's formula (Taylor, 2023).

$$\text{engagement rate} = \frac{\text{Likes+Comment+Saves+Shares}}{\text{Total number of Followers}} \times 100 \quad (1)$$

Subsequently, this study employs the range of engagement rate value established by Arman and Sidik, (2019)) to interpret the quality of the engagement rate, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 1. Range of Egagement Rate Value

Number of Followers	Average of Engagement Rate	Range of Engagement Rate	Quality of Engagement Rate
>300K	1,72%	<1,72 1,72-2,72 >2,72	Low Engagement Rate Good Engagement Rate High Engagement Rate

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Analysis of Digital Marketing Utilization

Established in 2016, ALE is an agro-industrial company specializing in the processing of fruits and vegetables. The company offers a range of products, including fruit chips, vegetable chips, and traditional souvenirs from Malang. Initially positioned as a provider of local souvenirs, ALE has since shifted its branding to emphasize its role as a producer of healthy snacks. The company's vision is to become the leading brand in the healthy snack category, focusing on products made from real fruits and vegetables. ALE differentiates itself from competitors by offering a diverse selection of fruit and vegetable chips, with its flagship product being the Mix Fruit and Vegetable Chips. This product allows consumers to sample various types of chips, crafted with careful consideration to ensure that the combinations maintain a cohesive theme. One of ALE's best-selling items is its tropical fruit chip mix, which exemplifies this thoughtful approach to product development.

At the onset of its establishment, ALE did not initially employ digital marketing as a channel for sales and promotion. Instead, the company opted to place its products in conventional gift shops as an introductory strategy to penetrate the market. However, this approach yielded unsatisfactory results. Challenges in collecting payments from these retail partners disrupted the company's cash flow and led to financial losses. This experience highlighted the significant weaknesses of traditional distribution methods, particularly regarding operational control and efficiency.

To address these challenges and ensure business sustainability, ALE sought a more innovative and sustainable solution. Following a comprehensive evaluation, the company transitioned to digital marketing as its primary channel for sales and promotion. By leveraging digital platforms, ALE was able to connect directly with consumers, eliminating intermediaries while enhancing brand visibility through personalized and measurable interactions with its target audience.

This strategic pivot proved advantageous. By effectively utilizing digital marketing, ALE significantly improved product visibility, expanded its market reach, and reduced reliance on traditional retail outlets. Furthermore, the company developed a more flexible and responsive marketing strategy that adapted to evolving market trends, ultimately enabling it to operate independently and thrive within the industry.

## E-Commerce

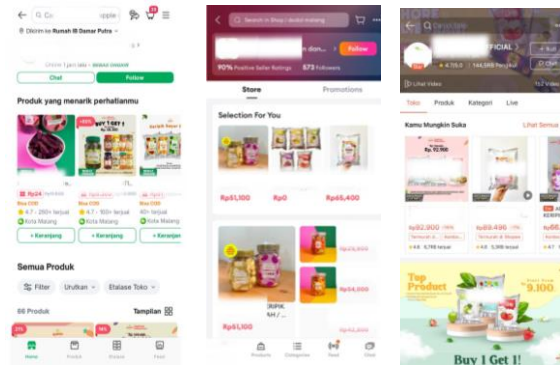


Figure 1. The Appearance of Ale company's online store on e-commerce platforms

ALE Company has fully integrated a digital marketing strategy, operating exclusively online without any physical stores. This approach encompasses all business activities, including promotion, sales, and product distribution. ALE relies on prominent e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, and Lazada to streamline sales and distribution processes efficiently.

The choice of these platforms is strategic, driven by a careful analysis of consumer behavior. According to data from Similar Web, in 2024, Shopee, Tokopedia, and Lazada rank as the top three e-commerce platforms in Indonesia, with Shopee leading, followed by Tokopedia and Lazada. By aligning with these highly trafficked platforms, ALE not only expands its consumer reach but also benefits from the trust and popularity these platforms hold among Indonesian consumers.

Being present on these major platforms allows ALE to enhance product visibility and reach a wider audience. Furthermore, ALE leverages digital marketing tools provided by these platforms, including promotional features, sales analytics, and customer review management, which contribute to a superior consumer experience. These tools allow ALE to optimize brand exposure and increase sales potential.

This comprehensive digital strategy positions ALE to expand its market reach and strengthen its competitive edge in the digital marketplace. By continuously innovating and using digital technologies, the company can effectively meet consumer needs while optimizing its operational efficiency.

### Advantages of E-Commerce Digital Marketing Channels

In utilizing e-commerce as a sales platform and connecting with consumers, ALE Company has identified five key reasons for choosing digital marketing:

- a. **Expanded Consumer Reach:** E-commerce removes time and location barriers between sellers and consumers. Unlike physical stores, e-commerce allows customers to place orders at any time, ensuring continuous order processing. Putri et al. (2021) found that e-commerce significantly enhances market reach in the digital era. By doing so, e-commerce not only increases market access but also boosts sales, enhances customer loyalty, and improves operational efficiency, ultimately strengthening business competitiveness.



Figure 2. Reach of Ale company's online store on the e-commerce platform: Shopee

- b. **Cost Efficiency and Simplified Financial Management:** E-commerce has drastically reduced inventory and store-related costs for ALE. Instead of investing in physical stores, the company can allocate resources to digital marketing efforts, such as setting up a studio for live-stream sales. Karimah et al. (2022) emphasize that e-commerce reduces costs, simplifies payment transactions, and streamlines transaction records. Moreover, e-

commerce eliminates the need for intermediaries, which shortens communication chains and further reduces operational costs.



Figure 3. Inventory of ALE company's live streaming selling studio

**c. Enhanced Customer Relationships:** E-commerce platforms like Shopee, Tokopedia, and Lazada provide chat features that facilitate direct interaction between customers and companies, allowing for personalized customer experiences. Otalvaro (2019) describes this as "one-to-one marketing," where personalized marketing strategies focus on individual customer experiences. Octa (2022) also highlights that one-to-one marketing personalizes interactions, making customers feel like they are receiving exclusive attention. This approach increases customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention. By using one-to-one marketing, ALE tailor's product offerings to specific customer segments, fostering deeper relationships through continuous, personalized engagement.



Figure 4. Appearance of the chat feature on the e-commerce platform of ALE company

**d. Facilitating Evaluation and Improvement of Purchasing Decisions Through Customer Reviews:** E-commerce platforms provide a rating and review feature that enables customers to share their transaction experiences. This feature allows companies to evaluate their performance based on direct customer feedback, helping them address issues and improve customer satisfaction. Positive reviews and ratings can also influence the purchasing decisions of future customers. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010), customer reviews and ratings play a significant role in shaping buying interest by providing credible and relevant information. This feedback mechanism helps companies assess their performance and improve their products or services to better meet customer needs. The purchasing decision is a critical stage in the consumer decision-making process, where customers decide to buy based on the value and credibility of the information provided by previous customers.



Figure 5. Appearance of the customer review feature on the e-commerce platform of ALE company

e. **Minimizing Fraud and Fictitious Orders:** E-commerce platforms serve as a trusted intermediary between sellers and buyers, ensuring secure transactions. These platforms hold payments during the transaction process, releasing funds to the seller only after the customer has received the product. This system helps prevent fictitious orders, as the order is only processed after payment is made. Additionally, many platforms offer a Cash on Delivery (COD) option, which provides customers with an extra layer of security by allowing payment upon receipt of the product. However, e-commerce platforms also implement protective policies for sellers, such as penalizing customers who reject COD deliveries multiple times. Article 1513 of the Civil Code further reinforces this by stating that buyers must pay the agreed price at the specified time and place. These legal protections and platform policies ensure the security and integrity of e-commerce transactions.

### Sales Strategy on E-Commerce Platforms

#### a. Bundling

Bundling is a marketing strategy that combines two or more products and offers them at a lower price than if purchased individually. This approach is increasingly popular as it provides benefits to both producers and consumers (Irfan & Suasana, 2021). For example, Figure 6 "Storefront A" shows a Shopee listing that offers a bundle of 150 grams of tropical fruit mix chips and 100 grams of original vegetable mix chips with a free 40-gram garlic chips package. This bundling strategy successfully boosts sales, not only of the primary product but also of other items with slower sales. Offering free products in smaller packages serves as a consumer trial, potentially leading to repeat purchases. Harahap (2021) similarly argues that bundling adds value for consumers, enhancing their purchasing interest.

Figure 6 "Storefront B" illustrates a similar strategy on Tokopedia, where ALE offers a bundle of original or spicy okra chips with a free fruit or vegetable chip. In contrast, Figure 6 "Storefront C" on Lazada features a bundle of four chip packages, offering a lower price compared to buying individual pieces. Regularly updating storefronts with new and varied product combinations keeps customers engaged with ALE's offerings on e-commerce platforms. Research by Witarsana et al. (2022) supports the effectiveness of bundling strategies, demonstrating a positive impact on purchasing decisions. Combining products into one price is an effective way to increase sales volume, as customers are drawn to the cost savings. Irfan and Suasana (2021) also found that bundling has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing behavior.

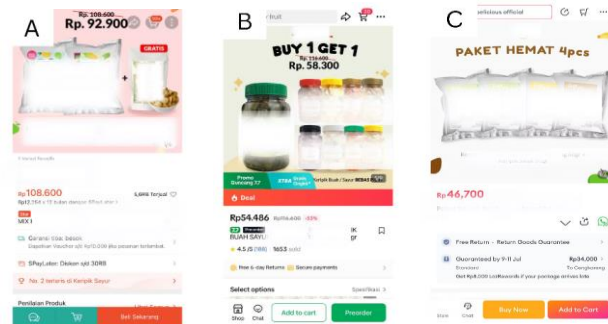


Figure 6. Storefront appearance on the e-commerce platform of ALE company

#### b. Live Streaming selling

Live streaming selling, also known as direct selling via social media, represents a significant innovation in digital media by facilitating real-time and interactive engagement between sellers and customers (Suhyar & Pratminingsih, 2023). ALE Company regularly utilizes this feature on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee and TikTok, in collaboration with Tokopedia. Through live streaming, sellers can showcase and demonstrate products in real time, while customers can respond directly, fostering interactive two-way communication. This dynamic interaction allows ALE to offer exclusive promotions or discounts that differ from the regular storefront prices, effectively encouraging viewers to make purchases during the live sessions. Rahmawati et al. (2023) found that live streaming selling simplifies transactions for consumers, as it allows them to view products in real time and consider the ratings and reviews from previous buyers.



Figure 7. Digital marketing strategy of ALE company utilizing live streaming selling

### Social Media

ALE Company utilizes multiple social media platforms for promotion and customer interaction, including Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. The choice of these platforms aligns strategically with the company's target market—women aged 18-35 years. According to a survey conducted by NapoleonCat in January 2024, Instagram User in Indonesia 2024 numbered 89.9 million, representing 31.8% of the population, with women accounting for 54.9% of users. The largest age group of users is 25-34 years, with 35.8 million individuals. Additionally, there is a significant gender difference in the 18-24 age group, where women outnumber men by 12.5 million. TikTok's user base in Indonesia reached 127.5 million as of April 2024, the highest globally, with 63.1% of users aged 18-35 years (Santika, 2023). Furthermore, according to Annur (2024), 90.9% of Indonesian internet users aged 16-64 years actively use WhatsApp. With such extensive user bases across these platforms, ALE Company effectively ensures substantial customer reach.

### Digital Marketing Techniques on Social Media Platforms

The utilization of social media for promotional activities by ALE Company involves specific techniques aimed at achieving its digital marketing objectives, primarily positioning the brand as the leading choice for healthy snacks made from real fruits and vegetables. An analysis of the digital content shared on ALE's social media platforms reveals the application of several key techniques, including:

#### a. Storytelling

Storytelling is a widely used marketing strategy that fosters emotional engagement between consumers and products. By crafting compelling, relevant, and meaningful narratives, companies can connect product values to consumer experiences or aspirations. This approach not only strengthens the bond between the brand and its audience but also enhances consumer engagement, fosters a sense of connection, and ultimately influences purchasing decisions (Butcher, 2018). Storytelling enables effective communication and promotion, making products more relatable to consumers and influencing their buying choices. Furthermore, storytelling allows brands to convey their messages subtly yet powerfully, shaping consumer perceptions and preferences (Kurniawan, 2020). Based on these insights, ALE Company has successfully implemented storytelling techniques in its digital content on Instagram and TikTok, enhancing brand engagement and visibility.



Figure 8. Digital content with storytelling concept on social media of ALE company

In Figure 8, "content A," uploaded by ALE Company on their TikTok account on May 22, 2024, the company presents how okra, a vegetable known for its sliminess and difficulty in processing, can be transformed into crispy and crunchy vegetable chips using the vacuum frying method employed by ALE. Through storytelling, the content effectively promotes ALE's ability to produce healthy and delicious chips while minimizing nutrient loss during processing. Similarly, in "content B," uploaded on January 11, 2024, on ALE's Instagram account, the company narrates the journey of creating garlic chips. Initially met with skepticism, the product eventually went viral and achieved significant sales. The inclusion of garlic chips' health benefits further enhances the content's appeal. Supporting this strategy, Mavilinda et al., (2023) found that storytelling effectively increases consumer interaction with brands and products, contributing to improved purchasing decisions. By leveraging compelling and relevant narratives, ALE successfully engages consumers on an emotional level, fostering a deeper connection with their products. As a result, social media posts featuring storytelling strategies, particularly those covering trending topics, consistently achieve higher interaction rates on ALE's accounts.

b. Sales Promotion as Digital Marketing

Sales promotion is a widely utilized strategy among businesses. Kotler and Keller (2012) define sales promotion as a collection of short-term incentives designed to stimulate consumer or trader purchases more quickly and in greater volumes. Supporting this view, research by Putrinda Ratu and Tulung (2022) demonstrates that sales promotion in digital marketing significantly influences consumer purchasing interest in an effective manner. By employing various promotional methods, such as discounts, special offers, product bundling, and cashback, companies can directly capture consumer attention and drive purchasing decisions.

In Figure 4, "content A and B" illustrate the application of sales promotion in ALE's social media content. Both posts were uploaded during Ramadan, capitalizing on the festive moment of Eid Fitr. The sales promotion offered, such as a "buy 1 get 1 free" deal, highlights how customers can benefit by purchasing Eid snacks at a reduced price. Fauziah et al. (2019) further corroborate the positive impact of sales promotion, showing that it has a significant effect on boosting sales. Consequently, sales volume can experience a marked increase, reinforcing the effectiveness of sales promotion as a powerful tool to enhance sales performance and meet business objectives. Therefore, ALE's implementation of this strategy is both timely and beneficial for sustaining sales growth

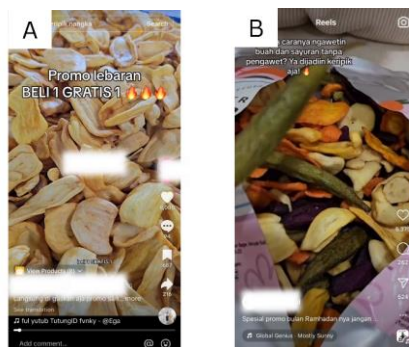


Figure 9. Digital marketing content with the concept of sales promotion

**Analysis of the Effectiveness Level of Social Media as a Promotional Media Based on Engagement Rate**

a. Tiktok

During the period from January to June 2024, ALE Company uploaded a total of 55 content pieces to its TikTok account. Using Taylor's engagement rate calculation formula, the data is presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Detailed data of uploads on Tiktok accounts of ALE companies from January to June 2024

No	Month	Total				Total of Followers	Eng.	Eng. Rate
		Likes	Comments	Saves	Shares			
1	Jan-24	1,231,096	11,807	75,410	17,450	612,100	1,335,763	218.23
2	Feb-24	612,208	4,847	38,815	9,238	612,100	665,108	108.66
3	Mar-24	877,407	5,329	42,393	8,905	612,100	934,034	152.60
4	Apr-24	506,995	2,626	28,688	4,433	612,100	542,742	88.67
5	May-24	562,736	2,911	26,157	5,311	612,100	597,115	97.55
6	Jun-24	191,399	1,669	8,734	1,722	612,100	203,524	33.25
<b>Rata-rata</b>		<b>72,397</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>4,004</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>66,775</b>	<b>77,787</b>	<b>12.71</b>



b. Instagram

Total konten yang diunggah pada akun instagram perusahaan ALE selama periode januari s.d. Juni 2024 adalah 85 konten. Dari rumus perhitungan engagement rate yang dikemukakan oleh Taylor maka dihasilkan data seperti pada tabel 3:

**Table 3.** Detailed data of posts on Instagram accounts of ALE companies from January to June 2024

No	Month	Total			Total of Followers	Eng.	Eng. Rate
		Likes	Comments	Shares			
1	Jan-24	419,394	3,842	28,319	290,670	451,555	155.35
2	Feb-24	92,484	4,214	12,579	290,670	109,277	37.59
3	Mar-24	239,105	5,857	11,630	290,670	256,592	88.28
4	Apr-24	21,243	913	822	290,670	22,978	7.91
5	May-24	170,734	2,895	7,624	290,670	181,253	62.36
6	Jun-24	86,444	1,525	2,634	290,670	90,603	31.17
<b>Rata-rata</b>		<b>12,111</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>290,670</b>	<b>13,085</b>	<b>4.50</b>

The average engagement rate of ALE Company's TikTok and Instagram accounts from January to June 2024 indicates a high level of engagement, with TikTok achieving 12.71% and Instagram 4.50%, both exceeding the 2.72% threshold for high engagement. These figures demonstrate the effectiveness of TikTok and Instagram as promotional tools for ALE Company. Miyata (2019) also supports this, stating that the effectiveness of social media as a promotional medium can be evaluated based on engagement rate metrics, providing valuable insights for company assessments.

## CONCLUSION

The utilization of digital marketing, particularly through platforms like e-commerce, TikTok, and Instagram, has proven highly effective for ALE Company in promoting its products and engaging with consumers. The high engagement rates on TikTok and Instagram, averaging 12.71% and 4.50%, respectively, highlight the success of the company's digital marketing strategy in reaching and interacting with its target audience. By employing compelling storytelling, impactful sales promotions, innovative bundling strategies, and consistent live streaming sales, ALE has effectively captured consumer attention and fostered ongoing relationships with its audience. This strong engagement has led to increased visibility and, ultimately, a positive impact on sales. Thus, ALE Company has successfully leveraged digital marketing to build strong branding and drive consumer engagement.

To further develop its business, several strategic recommendations can be made. One key step is content diversification. While ALE has succeeded with its current strategy, diversifying digital content can help the company reach a broader audience and increase engagement across different market segments. For instance, ALE could expand its content offerings by producing short videos in various formats. Tutorials on product usage, unboxing videos that showcase the consumer experience, and collaborations with micro-influencers in niche communities could effectively attract new audience segments previously untapped by ALE's marketing efforts.

Additionally, the creation of interactive content, such as polls, quizzes, or live Q&A sessions on social media, would not only enhance user engagement but also provide valuable insights into consumer preferences and needs. Expanding the content variety would help ALE maintain brand relevance, broaden its marketing reach, and ultimately increase growth opportunities in an increasingly competitive market. Content diversification would also enable ALE to adapt to emerging trends in the digital space, ensuring that it remains at the forefront of marketing innovation.

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