

## **Integrity with Digital: From Transparency to Customer Loyalty**

We live in a world where almost everything we do is publicly known, due to the strong internet connectivity in the digital age. The digital age has brought millions of people online, making the human race more connected than at any time in our history.

Internet penetration in Malaysia currently stands above 85% this year. No doubt the internet has undoubtedly brought us many great things and transformed the way we do business through various channels, including social media, which is probably the fastest way to reach consumers. Social media has created transparency and authenticity, or lack of it, in featuring businesses.

This topic discusses how integrity is applied within the companies, internally amongst the staff, and the engagement with the customers and stakeholders. Social media has created a world that's more "connected" than ever. It means, consumers now have direct access for information and that's exactly where integrity and transparency begin for the business.

Transparency creates trust and longevity in business relationships, enabling consistent servicing and improving productivity. Building an organic and authentic relationships with customers means upholding integrity as its best practices. There is no secrecy, even when a product is defective and a recall is announced, customers will not mind because of the trust established between them and the business owners. Managing the customers' expectations through honesty builds your brand and business reputation in the long run, producing more positive impact rather than focusing on the product defect.

Consumers want to continue doing business with companies that displays integrity and transparency, without any hidden information or false advertising. The more transparency business owners are, the greater the trust they form with their customers. In other words, customers will make sure businesses are honest with their products and services at all times, through the various platforms that forms customer experiences.

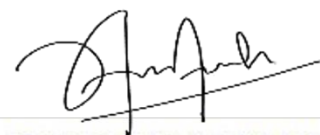
Transparency goes beyond the consumers, it is also required within the organization, amongst all staff, between management and the people on the ground and also within the supply chain. There needs to be clarity, understanding and total transparency at the end to end process of the business. Everyone in the company must have the same values, focused on ensuring the best possible services is given to their customers, from information, visuals to FAQs. What customers often appreciate is responsiveness to questions and the messaging that reflects the honest truth. This allows customers to speak highly of your products and services.

Today, technology has helped all marketing platforms to reach their targeted consumers effectively and some of them are almost free. Emails, corporate websites, direct messaging, social media and telemarketing are often used. This being said, the messaging on all platforms has to be consistent. Message consistency is another element of transparency that elevates integrity.

With the right company policy, best practices and forward-looking leadership, customer loyalty can be achieved and retained.

“Customers should be number one, employees’ number two, and then only your shareholders come at number three.” – Jack Ma, co-founder and former executive chair of Alibaba Group

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