

## EVENT MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING BRAND ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF ALMAZ FRIED CHICKEN

**Tazkiyah Azizah<sup>1</sup>, Rinda Dwi Pradina<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup> Universitas Pembangunan Nasional ‘Veteran’ Jawa Timur, Indonesia

[tazkiyah\\_azizah.ilkom@upnjatim.ac.id](mailto:tazkiyah_azizah.ilkom@upnjatim.ac.id)  
[rinda\\_dwi.ilkom@upnjatim.ac.id](mailto:rinda_dwi.ilkom@upnjatim.ac.id)

### Abstract

Almaz Fried Chicken, a rapidly growing local culinary brand in Indonesia, has successfully employed an event marketing strategy to enhance consumer engagement and increase brand awareness. This study analyzes the event marketing strategy of Almaz Chicken at the Way Halim Branch in Bandar Lampung, aiming to foster brand engagement through Cooking Class activities. This research employs a qualitative case study methodology to examine how event-based marketing communication cultivates emotional, cognitive, and behavioral links between consumers and the brand. Data were gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation, including those from the store manager, employees, and event attendees. The results indicate that Almaz successfully utilized three key elements of event marketing ; Enterprise, Entertainment, and Excitement to create compelling and value-oriented events. These actions enhanced brand impression and impulsive purchasing behavior while also fortifying consumer loyalty and emotional connection. The research suggests that incorporating educational and social ideals into event marketing enhances the brand's perception as a socially responsible and community-focused entity. This research theoretically advances event marketing and brand engagement theory by situating experiential marketing within the context of the Indonesian culinary industry. It provides insights for local culinary businesses to develop interactive, instructional, and immersive marketing strategies that foster lasting consumer relationships.

**Keyword:** *Event Marketing, Brand Engagement, Cooking Class.*

### INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian culinary industry is growing rapidly amidst increasingly fierce competition. This is driven by the culinary subsector, which has contributed the highest GDP for seven consecutive years. The culinary sector has emerged as the leading contributor among sixteen creative economy subsectors, significantly impacting GDP with a contribution of 41% (Wibawati & Prabhawati, 2021). This phenomenon can be attributed to the emergence of culinary arts in

society as a fundamental approach to satisfying essential human requirements. Culinary entrepreneurs engage in market studies to grasp market needs and offerings prior to launching franchises. This approach serves as a strategy for business and marketing expansion within the culinary industry (Muthmainna, H., & Ariyanto, A., 2024). This has led to increased competition in the culinary field, with a growing number of participants and a diverse range of innovative products.

To navigate and excel in market competition, organizations adopt a range of strategies to maintain a competitive edge in their industry. Companies must strive to accurately meet market demand and consumer needs, while maintaining good overall relationships. Furthermore, companies also create product innovations to maintain market leadership. Organizations that continuously innovate can adapt to evolving consumer preferences, differentiate themselves from competitors, and dominate the market through consumer education and new product introductions (Kuncoro, W., & Suriani, W., 2017). Consequently, culinary entrepreneurs must design communication strategies that capture consumers' attention and foster long-term relationships.

Event marketing can build long-term relationships with consumers by creating hands-on experiences that foster emotional attachment and positive brand perceptions (Sharafutdinova, N., et al., 2019). The experiences showcased in event marketing can forge deep emotional connections, enhancing satisfaction, loyalty, and favorable perceptions of brand values. Consumer engagement in events fosters informal interactions, personal dialogue, and direct brand experiences, which, in turn, enhance loyalty and emotional ties between consumers and the organization. (Whelan, S., & Wohlfeil, M. 2006). As a result, event marketing effectively fosters meaningful and memorable engagements between consumers and brands. High levels of consumer involvement in an event, marked by excitement and participation, can improve brand image and increase the likelihood of securing sponsorship. Strategies in event marketing have demonstrated their effectiveness in enhancing brand visibility and fostering stronger consumer connections. Success hinges on choosing the right event type, crafting an unforgettable experience, and effectively leveraging social media at all stages—before, during, and after the event (Suryana, P. 2022).

Cooking classes represent a significant avenue for event marketing within the food sector. Cooking classes serve as a source of entertainment while also delivering an educational experience and encouraging direct interaction between participants and the brand. This interaction enhances positive brand perceptions and cultivates consumer loyalty (Lee, S. 2023). Cooking classes can elevate brand value, showcase local products, and foster emotional connections between participants and food brands by offering multisensory experiences and encouraging active involvement. Furthermore, cooking lessons significantly contribute to the formation of shared experiences, enhancing participants' satisfaction and perceived quality of life. This could lead to the emergence of culinary tourism destinations that highlight local culture and uniqueness (Chang, J., et al. 2020). Additional studies indicate that cooking classes can enhance brand loyalty in culinary marketing. Experiences that actively involve consumers and create lasting memories, such as cooking classes, have demonstrated the ability to cultivate enduring loyalty to local food products and associated destinations (Di-Clemente, E., et al., 2020). Moreover, effectively crafted

event marketing, like cooking classes, has the potential to enhance purchase intent and foster favorable perceptions of sponsors, particularly when participants exhibit enthusiasm, engagement, and a strong understanding of the product or brand. Marketing events that incorporate practical experiences and casual interactions have demonstrated a significant impact on customer engagement with brands. Consequently, cooking classes are viewed as a powerful event marketing approach for enhancing brand visibility within the culinary sector.

Brand engagement is recognized as an early indicator of successful brand communications, as consumer engagement demonstrates that a brand's message has been received, processed, and triggered positive emotional and behavioral responses. Research shows that consumer engagement with a brand encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, all of which play a role in building long-term relationships and brand loyalty (Hollebeek, L. 2011). The connection between consumers and the brand (self-brand connection) is a key factor driving this engagement, and strong engagement has been shown to mediate the relationship between that connection and consumer loyalty. Effective brand communications, whether through managed or user-generated channels, can enhance brand equity and engagement, ultimately contributing to a brand's long-term success. Research also shows that brand engagement can be mediated by factors such as value congruence, psychological ownership, and self-connection with the brand, all of which strengthen consumers' relationships with the brand (Kumar, J., & Nayak, J. 2019). Therefore, building and maintaining brand engagement is a key strategy for creating competitive advantage and sustainable business growth.

Almaz Fried Chicken is a rapidly growing local culinary brand in Indonesia, actively implementing event marketing strategies to strengthen consumer interactions and increase brand engagement. By conducting interactive cooking classes, the brand not only delivers a participatory consumer experience but also creates opportunities for consumers to interact directly with the product, chefs, and brand community. This aligns with the definition of event marketing as engagement-driven marketing communication in marketing literature (Setiawan, R., Wibisono, D., & Purwanegara, M. S., 2022). This strategy enables Almaz to go beyond simply delivering promotional messages to building emotional and experiential connections with consumers, thereby strengthening loyalty and deepening consumer engagement with the brand. Almaz Fried Chicken's cooking classes serve as educational, promotional, and interactive experiences that directly engage consumers with the products offered. Thus, cooking classes are an effective medium for Almaz Fried Chicken to communicate product advantages while expanding brand reach through an interactive and participatory approach.

Most studies have emphasized the impact of cooking class-based event marketing strategies on brand awareness and consumer engagement. However, there is still little empirical research that specifically addresses the success of cooking class-based event strategies, especially for local culinary businesses in Indonesian regions such as Lampung Province. For example, research on Increasing Brand Awareness Through "Dim-Fun Cooking Class" and "Taigersprung Jalan-Jalan" Events at a restaurant in Semarang demonstrated that cooking class increased brand awareness.

Still, The research was confined to the city's setting, and the brand had not yet achieved widespread recognition in the region. (Anandita Shabrina, A., & Ratri Rahmijai, L., 2025).

Currently, there is a lack of studies connecting event marketing to brand engagement within Lampung's local culinary sector, including companies such as Almaz Fried Chicken. This situation suggests that empirical research on the efficacy of event marketing via cooking classes in enhancing brand engagement for local culinary brands in Lampung remains scarce. This region possesses unique market characteristics and consumer dynamics, requiring research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effective implementation of this strategy inside local culinary enterprises. This research is essential as it enhances theoretical comprehension of event marketing tactics pertaining to local culinary brands in Lampung. This research not only advances brand engagement theory academically but also offers practical ideas for culinary entrepreneurs to create instructive, interactive, and experiential events that enhance brand engagement.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Event Marketing Theory**

Event marketing is characterized as engagement-oriented marketing communication, wherein brands orchestrate or endorse an event to promote active consumer involvement in direct interaction with the brand (Setiawan, R., Wibisono, D., & Purwanegara, M. S. 2022). In this model, factors such as event content, event involvement, and event-brand image congruency are proven to be key determinants in building brand engagement among attendees. Studies demonstrate that well-planned event marketing can not only increase brand awareness but also influence how people behave, such as whether they are inclined to make a purchase, their level of loyalty, and how frequently they discuss it. Cooking Classes are a real form of event marketing in the food or service business. They allow brands to offer hands-on, educational, and fun experiences that enable people to understand, try, and genuinely connect with the brand.

### **Brand Engagement**

Brand engagement denotes the degree to which customers cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally attend to, respond to, and interact with a brand (L. M. D. O. Wimalasena C. 2024). The literature substantiates that brand engagement serves as a vital mediator between marketing strategies, especially event marketing, and brand outcomes such as loyalty, advocacy, and customer retention. Moreover, significant brand experiences and direct customer encounters with brands have been demonstrated to enhance brand engagement. This study will consider brand engagement as a crucial variable to be improved through the implementation of the Almaz Fried Chicken brand's event marketing Cooking Class.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing a case study technique to thoroughly examine the event marketing strategy implemented by Almaz Fried Chicken to enhance brand engagement through cooking class activities. The case study was selected since it enables researchers to examine phenomena comprehensively and contextually within real-world scenarios (Yin, 2018). The research site is the Almaz Fried Chicken branch in Way Halim, Bandar Lampung City, selected due to its organization of culinary class activities. Moreover, Almaz Fried Chicken's Way Halim Branch is a trailblazer, as it is the inaugural establishment in Lampung Province. The research informants were 3 to 4 individuals picked purposefully, including the store manager, the store personnel who conducted the cooking class, and the consumers who attended the event. The selection of informants employed a purposive sampling method to gather pertinent and data-rich information, aligning with the research topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data were gathered through comprehensive interviews, participant observation, and documentation of the cooking class event, as well as consumer reactions to the employed marketing strategy. Interviews included open-ended inquiries to thoroughly investigate the informants' viewpoints, experiences, and evaluations. Observation facilitates situational comprehension and relationships that transpire throughout culinary class activities (Moleong, 2017).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Almaz Chicken Lampung Culinary Class Activities

According to interviews and observations, Almaz Fried Chicken Lampung inaugurated its establishment on November 1, 2024, in Jalan Ki Maja No. 12, Perumnas Way Halim, Kedaton District, Bandar Lampung City. The restaurant operates daily from 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM WIB, accommodating up to 62 patrons, with a focus on client comfort and satisfaction. From a managerial standpoint, Almaz Fried Chicken possesses a professionally organized structure comprising 14 employees: one store manager overseeing overall operations, one store leader acting as field coordinator, six cashiers managing customer transactions, five kitchen personnel responsible for food production, and one customer service officer (CSO) tasked with ensuring customer satisfaction. This framework and allocation of responsibilities illustrate that Almaz Fried Chicken has established a practical and systematic operational model to facilitate its business functions and promotional initiatives.

Almaz Fried Chicken Way Halim employs a franchise business model, including a partnership structure that offers multiple investment packages, with one valued at IDR 700 million, which includes operating facilities that meet company requirements. The distinction between outlets is rooted in the execution of marketing strategies customized to the specific market features of each location. Upon its establishment, Almaz Fried Chicken Way Halim primarily aimed to serve students and university attendees, owing to its proximity to educational institutions. As the business progressed, its market reach extended to encompass Tanjung Senang, Way Kandis, Way Halim, and Sukarami. Consumer visitation patterns exhibit a consistent

temporal fluctuation, with surges occurring during lunch hours for office workers, after school hours for students, and in the late afternoon and evening for families. Almaz Fried Chicken Way Halim embodies a global vision and mission rooted in social and spiritual values, which include allocating 5% of profits to support the Palestinian cause, aiming to distribute 100,000 complimentary lunch boxes daily, generating tens of thousands of employment opportunities, constructing mosques and Islamic boarding schools as acts of charity, and maintaining a steadfast commitment to delivering exceptional customer service.

The Cooking Class organized by Almaz Fried Chicken is a component of the overarching initiative "One Month One Activity," a monthly engagement program launched by the marketing division to enhance community involvement through event marketing strategies. This program features various activities, including a coloring contest, a call to prayer competition, and a Juz 30 memorization contest. These activities are organized and communicated at the outset of each month via coordination and technical meetings. The Cooking Class event took place in early September, with school visits offering an economical instructional package priced at Rp 35,000, which included chicken rice, souvenirs, certificates, and game prizes. The principal target demographic for this initiative was kindergarten and elementary school pupils, and the execution was conducted in partnership with the Public Relations department of SD MIN 5 through strategic negotiations and restricted offers during September. The event took place in the Almaz Rajabasa venue, which can accommodate up to 160 participants. The primary aim of this activity is to provide both entertainment and education to children about the Food and Beverage (F&B) sector, particularly the process of frying chicken. This initiative enables participants to acquire proficient cooking skills, comprehend the technique for achieving optimal crispiness in fried chicken, and cultivate aspirations and interest in culinary professions from an early age.

## **B. Almaz Fried Chicken's Event Marketing Strategies for Enhancing Brand Engagement**

The implementation of IMC in the Almaz Fried Chicken Cooking Class program is evident through the integration of various communication elements, such as direct marketing, public relations, sales promotions, and social activities that mutually reinforce the brand message. This aligns with Migunani's (2022) assertion that the efficacy of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) depends on a company's ability to integrate diverse marketing communication modalities into a unified entity, thereby fostering brand recognition and loyalty. Almaz conveys its marketing message through school visits, giving economical educational packages, and supplying participants with mementos and certificates. All communication aspects are designed to enhance Almaz's brand image as one that not only markets fast food products but also exemplifies a dedication to education, religious principles, and social responsibility. This method aligns with the research findings of Setiawan et al. (2022), which suggest that consistent and emotionally resonant communication has a significant influence on brand engagement among young audiences.

According to Hoyle's (2002) Event Marketing theory, the efficacy of event-based marketing activities may be assessed through three primary dimensions: Enterprise, Entertainment, and Excitement. The three dimensions were distinctly evident in the execution of the Almaz Fried Chicken Cooking Class, as outlined below:

### **Enterprise**

This dimension refers to the organization's ability to plan and manage events effectively, achieving its objectives in a professional and efficient manner. Almaz exemplified the execution of this dimension by meticulously preparing activities with schools, formulating event itineraries, and coordinating internal teams. The initiative specifically targeted kindergarten and primary school children, as well as the educational community of Bandar Lampung. The partnership with SD MIN 5 Bandar Lampung exemplifies a pragmatic execution of a business-to-institution strategy designed to enhance brand visibility and promote products via an educational framework. The findings corroborate Getz's (2018) assertion that professionally organized events can provide sustained promotional prospects and enhance brand visibility within local communities.

### **Entertainment**

Entertainment is a crucial element in creating favorable brand experiences. In the Cooking Class, Almaz showcased a variety of engaging activities, encompassing icebreakers, interactive games, and kitchen tours. These exercises were both amusing and educational, engaging participants in the practical process of preparing fried chicken. Rahmawati and Yuswohady (2023) assert that contemporary customers are more inclined to form emotional connections with brands that provide authentic experiences (experiential value) rather than traditional promotions. Consequently, Almaz effectively utilized the entertainment aspect to enhance participant engagement and create a lasting brand experience.

### **Excitement**

This component prioritizes fostering passion and a profound emotional experience for participants. Observations indicated that the Cooking Class exercise elicited significant enthusiasm among the youngsters and their supervising teachers. Participants showed enthusiasm for involvement, while educators demonstrated interest in Almaz items, with 50% subsequently making purchases after the event. This phenomenon corresponds with the conclusions of Putri and Nugraha (2021), who asserted that pleasurable experiences during events can enhance purchase intention and fortify consumer brand attachment. Consequently, the excitement dimension is crucial in establishing a durable emotional bond between businesses and consumers.

Research findings demonstrate that Almaz Fried Chicken's event marketing strategy, executed via the Cooking Class activity, positively influenced brand engagement. This initiative enhanced brand recognition and established emotional bonds with consumers via significant, interactive experiences. Observations indicate that these activities enhanced spontaneous

purchasing decisions among mentor teachers, broadened market access to the family demographic, and fortified the company's social and religious reputation. This aligns with the findings of Susanto and Kurniawan (2022), which demonstrate that event marketing that integrates educational components and social values has a significant influence on brand loyalty within the food and beverage industry. The company aggressively showcased its distinctive fried chicken processing skills, disseminated information about the quality of raw materials, and imparted brand experience values to participants through these activities. This method enhanced consumer comprehension of the product while concurrently fortifying emotional and cognitive engagement between customers and the brand. Event marketing that integrates educational components and experiential interactions can enhance brand engagement, as consumers perceive themselves as actively contributing to the generation of brand value (Raharjo & Astuti, 2020).

Nonetheless, other obstacles emerged throughout its execution, such as an insufficient number of staff to manage a substantial participant base and a deficiency in direct parental engagement. Nonetheless, Almaz employed an indirect communication technique utilizing educational items and booklets that children brought home. This technique successfully broadened the brand's presence within the familial context. This strategy illustrates, from an IMC viewpoint, that every communication piece, whether direct or indirect, may work synergistically to foster enduring brand engagement (Schultz & Patti, 2022). Almaz Fried Chicken's event marketing strategy, exemplified by the Cooking Class activity, effectively integrated marketing communications principles with Hoyle's (2002) Event Marketing theory, both conceptually and empirically. The three primary dimensions Enterprise, Entertainment, and Excitement have been demonstrated to enhance brand perception, foster meaningful customer experiences, and deepen emotional engagement between the brand and its consumers. These findings underscore the importance of integrating strategic, experiential, and socially beneficial marketing to foster enduring brand engagement in the contemporary culinary sector. However, this study has limitations, including data collection that is limited to one branch and one type of activity, as well as limited insight from the perspectives of participants and teachers. Therefore, the generalization of the findings still requires further research on different outlets or types of events.

## CONCLUSION

This study finds that event marketing via cooking class activities significantly improves brand engagement for Almaz Fried Chicken in Lampung. The results indicate that cooking classes function as a strategic communication tool that enhances emotional, cognitive, and behavioral ties between consumers and the business. Utilizing Hoyle's (2002) three elements of event marketing; Enterprise, Entertainment, and Excitement. Almaz effectively converted promotional activities into significant experience events. These aspects enhanced consumer engagement, fostered

emotional connections, and stimulated impulsive purchasing decisions. The integration of educational and social values into the event elevated Almaz's brand image as a community-oriented and socially responsible entity, demonstrating how experiential events can surpass mere promotion to cultivate lasting brand alliances. This research theoretically enhances event marketing and brand engagement theory by providing empirical data from the comparatively underexamined context of local Indonesian cuisine. The study improves the understanding of how experiential marketing, particularly through culinary courses, operates as a form of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) that successfully links brand values with consumer experiences. This further validates the theoretical claim that direct and participative brand interactions significantly moderate the relationship between event marketing initiatives and brand engagement outcomes. Future research may quantitatively examine these relationships to improve the generalizability of this model across various local food brands in Indonesia.

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