Proposed Marketing Strategy for Branding Consultancy in Bandung (A Case of POT Branding House)

Kanishka Andhina[1], Ira Fachira[2]

[1,2] School of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: Brand Awareness and perception of a consultancy is an important aspect to have in a way to expanding new business and targeting new clients. In order to do this, local branding consultancy have to own their brand awareness and conduct a measurement survey to the targeted SME to exposing their current position. This paper will present the analysis of brand awareness and brand expectation of branding consultancy by using quantitative semantic scale survey to the local SME in Bandung to know if the brand awareness and expectations factors have direct impact to POT Branding House hiring requirements. The results show 1) POT Branding House brand awareness is low, thus these SMEs are not fully aware of this consultancy to be able to hire them, 2) Digital presence is one of the crucial judgments towards a brand, POT Branding House digital presence is also low and need a higher performance 3) Price, product offer, portfolio and skills are factors that are important to be included. From those interpretation, the researcher formulated a marketing mix that includes promotion (to represent digital presence), price, product offer, and physical evidence (portfolio) to the implementation plan that will be spread out into two years of operation.

KEYWORDS: Branding consultancy, Brand awareness, Brand expectation, Marketing mix.

INTRODUCTION

Industries in Indonesia has significantly impacted by the storm of Covid 19 pandemic. People are forced to stay at home due to the community activity restriction (PPKM) that being implemented in 2020. (BKPM, 2020). Other than the adjustment in day-to-day living, Indonesia citizen were also forced into witnessing a mass layoff due to the business shut-down, bankruptcy, and other transitions caused by Covid 19. This phenomenon has shifted people in Indonesia to find a solution to keep surviving by developing small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It is reported by Ministry of Investment of Indonesia in the first quarter in 2020 that the applicants for NIB (Business Identification Number) especially for SME was recorded the highest in February 2020 as much as 38,995 applicants. (BKPM, Ministry of Investment, 2020).

As SMEs growing in 2020, the business of agency in Indonesia that offers product service for SME and bigger businesses has also grown significantly since 2016. The relationship between these two businesses is that SMEs use the product service from agency and consultancy to promote their product to be seen by mass market while agency and consultancy offered their product service for SME to be accounted as their client and partner. For newcomers' business, they usually would spend extra budget to understand their business with different outputs, from strategy to execution. While for established SMEs, they usually need a marketing activity to maintain their product relevancy.

One of the local consultancies in Bandung, POT Branding House, had the same experience of a turmoil during the pandemic. The significant loss in revenue has caused their business to operate slower than before. Pandemic has given POT Branding House a new challenge to maintain existing clients and find new prospected clients. However, POT Branding House has a goal to save their financial situation by growing the revenue in 2023. By looking at the growth of SMEs in Indonesia, POT Branding House could target newcomers and grown SMEs to be accounted as their listed clients or partners and have a continuous relationship with these businesses.

After years of operation, POT Branding House still had not done a proper marketing in many levels to support their business which caused them to have a low level in brand awareness. They also wonder of the perception of new businesses and SME in Bandung towards them because they need to understand on what items that directly impact the SME to be able to hire them as a professional partner.

To understand what and how the marketing strategy must be developed, the researcher should be able to answer POT's Branding House confusement by answering these questions:

1) What kind of expectation factors from SME's hiring requirements that are important for POT Branding House that can be leveraged in their service business?

2) What kind of strategies to use to reach SME clients for POT Branding House to level up their business growth?

In this paper, the researcher will discuss the factors that might have direct impact to the strategy of a branding consultancy, such as brand awareness and expectations. The factors will be analyzed and will be used as a ground thinking to form a marketing strategy that fits with POT Branding House business to reach more clients in the year of 2023.

BUSINESS ISSUE

Just like any other growing business, POT Branding House is also having a business issue. The most highlighted and crucial issue is the limited list of potential client's due to Covid 19 pandemic that stretched a domino effect to other factors. Small clients that are accounted to POT account is having a lower range of billings, the highest that POT could receive from previous local client was IDR 300.000.000 for two years that could only pay internal management for six months. Usually, the total clients that POT could achieve per year is eighteen to twenty-five accounts on average with a budget spending starting from IDR 90.000.000 to IDR 150.000.000 per project. The projects usually lasted for about two to five months campaign project and not one of them is a fixed client. However, to balance out their financial situation, POT Branding House must have at least five to ten fixed clients with a continuous contract or retainers.

In the previous years of operation, POT Branding House has faced an ups and downs in getting new businesses and profits. The growth of POT business can be evaluated through this graph below. In 2017 to 2018, POT Branding House is having a growing phase, and in 2019 they are having an internal transition (management and operation). In 2020, pandemic hits and POT is having a crashing moment, followed by recovery phase in 2021 and 2022.
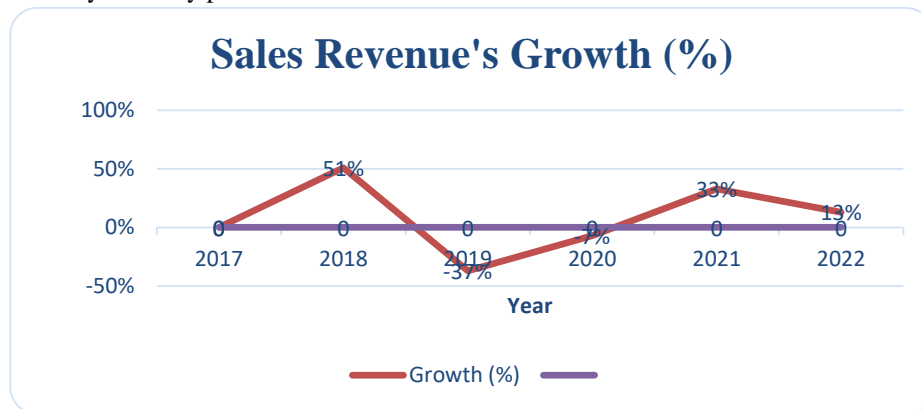
Graph I. Sales revenue's growth for POT Branding House for the last 5 years

From the graph above, the growth in sales revenue has significantly dropped in the year of 2019 to 2020, then it spiked in 2021 because of economic recovery in POT Branding House's business but it is still lower than the high peak in 2018. In late 2019 to early 2020, POT Branding House had a huge investment spending on operational expenses to rent a new office. For the year 2021 - 2022, they are still managing to get back to level up their business by slowly taking back the postponed projects. In 2023, based on the interview with POT Branding House BOD and management, they aim to higher the sales revenue up to 30%. That is why they are eager to get more clients to achieve their 2023 goals to growing the business from inside out.

In terms of the business, POT Branding House evaluated their business prospect in the year of 2023-2024. From the company's data, POT Branding House must target the right industry that is their specialty, to grow and expand their business revenue. These industries archived in POT Branding House is quite a lot and believed to generate more sales, which is under **Lifestyle category** such as **Fashion, F&B (café, restaurant & food product), Health & Beauty.** Second best position comes from **Media** and **Service Provider industry**. In terms of product offers from POT Branding House, the highest demand product from POT Branding House is brand strategy, **diagnosis & insight and audience understanding,** which contribute quite number of sales. For brand expression, there are three items of **visual identity design, design & art direction and campaign activation** that contributes significant number to POT branding house business.

By looking at the data from sales per client and sales per product, it can be sure that industry that POT Branding House should be focusing is Fashion, F & B, Health & Beauty, Media and Service Provider. However, for product hero, POT Branding House could start focusing on Diagnosis & Insight and Audience Understanding under the umbrella of Brand Strategy and Visual Identity Design, Design & Arti Direction and Campaign Activation under the umbrella of Brand Expression. This data could be a benchmark for POT Branding House to exposing their strength in this area and to promote more about their products. This goal is indeed should be supported with a strategy such as marketing activity and promotion that could directly impact their potential revenue stream.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this paper, the researcher needs to identify some of the theories that will be applied in this paper and discussed. These theories include: 1) Service Marketing 2) Brand Awareness 3) Client's Behavior 4) Brand Positioning and 5) Brand Expectation.

1) Service Marketing

POT Branding House is considered as a B2B service business which targeting other SME or business as their customers. The term of service itself defined as economic activities performed by one party to another. Often time-based, these performances bring about desired result to recipients, objects, or other assets. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016). The service type that POT Branding House offers is brand strategy and brand expression service which included in the branding and marketing service. In exchange for money, time and effort, service customers expect value from access to labor, skills, expertise, goods, facilities, networks, and systems. However, they do not normally take ownership of the physical elements involved (Edvardsson, Gustafsson, & Roos).

2) Brand Awareness

As stated in the book of Strategic Marketing by Keller brand awareness consists of two definitions: brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition stands for consumer's ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue or when they are exposed with the brand associations. Meanwhile brand recall is consumer ability to retrieve the brand from memory when given the product category, the needs, the purchase or even its usage. (Keller, 2012). It is believed that to measure brand awareness, the research supposed to know the depth and the breadth of the object. Depth of brand awareness measures how easy for clients/costumers how likely it is to think about brand element to come to mind while breadth of brand awareness measures the range of purchase and usage situations when the brand elements come to mind. (Ranfagni, n.d.). The depth of the brand can be measured by having an interview with the clients to know what they think about the brand, while the breadth can be executed through surveys to measure how far people know about the brand.

3) Brand Positioning

Philip Kotler defines brand positioning as "the act of designing the company's offering and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customer's minds or finding the proper location in the minds of a group of consumer or market segment. (Keller, 2012). The important aspect of a brand's position in a product category is how similar or different the brand is perceived to be in comparison with other brands in the product category. (R.Bettman, 1989). Because this research surrounds B2B business characteristic, another research that discussed B2B brand positioning is by Khurram and Lundén (2021) that described the important to analyze brand positioning to formulate a business strategy. They mentioned that pricing strategy is a common important strategy that used in service feature, but our brand positioning could also be correlated to the competitor's brand positioning and can be revised based on competitor's actions (Khurram & Lundén, 2021).

4) Brand Expectation

Brand expectation has a mutual definition with customer expectation towards the brand. In general, expectation is a set of ideas about product, service, or brand. It is something that the customer has in mind when a brand comes to mind. (Toor, 2020). There are few examples of expectations that is usually considered and mentions by customers: 1)Lower prices: customers tend to demand high-quality products and premium at lower prices across the board. 2) Increased selection: product selection would be beneficial for customer/client because they would need options. 3) Efficient delivery systems: in the case of service marketing, the access of delivery system could be done through easier material sending via e-mail, transfer data or cloud bank. 4) Increased access to product information.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted by qualitative and quantitative descriptive approach using primary and secondary data. Quantitative data are expressed as numbers or in other quantity terms and processed by statistical methods. (Grønmo , 2020). While qualitative data is well suited to explain straight forwards and first-hand description of the facts of phenomena, event, or experience. (Turale, 2020). Literature study is used to collect data or sources related to this study. The literature that is used to analyze POT Branding House's case about the business theories in this thesis ranging from brand image, client expectation, brand awareness. The literature of the study is also done by studying journals and similar research. Websites and reports provide information about the phenomenon that will help the researcher to observe the discussion that is stated in external analysis. The information helps to gathering data to discuss competitor analysis of POT Branding House. The second process is to conduct an external and internal analysis. External analysis will be using secondary data from company's file and archive, publications, references and observation. While internal analysis will be using both primary and secondary data. Primary data being taken from questionnaires to the 140 SMEs that matches the criteria and the secondary data is being taken by interviews of 10 SME amongst 140 SMEs. Data analysis from external analysis would contribute to the result and summary for POT Branding House external factor, meanwhile internal analysis's data processing would be taken as a result of the questionnaire that is combine with the secondary data. After all the data is gathered, researcher would use SWOT analysis as the summary analysis to create a proposed solution with the additional analysis using TOWS analysis. Lastly is an implementation plan for the realization strategy for POT Branding House.

A. Survey Analysis
1) Brand Awareness Survey
Table I. Data Display of Brand Awareness Survey Result

Brand Awareness	Strongly Unfamiliar 1	Unfamiliar 2	Neutral 3	Familiar 4	Strongly Familiar 5	Mean
Familiarity with branding consultancy	0%	1%	10%	24%	65%	4,53
Familiarity with the job desc of branding consultancy	2,5%	9%	17%	31%	41%	3,8
Familiarity with the service and product of branding consultancy	6%	7%	26%	29%	32%	3,8
Familiarity with branding consultancy in Bandung	10%	16%	30%	30%	14%	3,3
Familiarity with the impact of branding consultancy to the brand	5%	10%	20%	39%	26%	3,7
Familiarity with POT Branding House Logo	57%	11%	9%	7%	16%	2,14
Familiarity with the name of POT Branding House	26%	8%	12%	22%	32%	1,3
Digital presence affecting the assessment of branding consultancy	0%	2%	11%	42%	45%	4,3
Digital presence affecting the assessment of branding consultancy	0%	2%	11%	42%	45%	4,3

From the survey above, the result of the brand awareness from branding consultancy is quite diverse. The highest score of 4,53 said that the respondents are familiar with branding consultancy. Meaning that they are aware about this service. Their familiarity about the job description and product service of branding consultancy accounted for 3,8 score means that respondents already aware about the means of branding consultancy and what they offer. Although, the respondents are not familiar with POT Branding House name or even logo, which accounted for 2,14 and 1,3 which showing that the awareness of this brand is very low. It is quite contradicted with the fact that respondents are aware about branding consultancy in Bandung which accounted for 3,3 score, but they do not

aware with POT Branding House existence. This result has proven that POT Branding House brand is not even near respondent's knowledge.

2) Client Expectations

The survey result for this section contains factors that are directly impacted client's expectation towards POT Branding House as branding consultation. As mentioned in the chapter II about client expectation, there are certain factors that are usually generalized such as price, which is also mentioned in the survey, service, and people's experience. This table below showcases four important factors of client's expectation towards POT Branding House. The highest score of (1) 4,53 accounted for price, (2) 4,17 score for portfolio, (3) 4,07 score for type of service and product, last but not least (4) is pointed for people which covered the experience and skills for about 4,04 score.

Table II. Data Display of Client Expectation Survey Result

Client Expectation	Strongly Unfamiliar 1	Unfamiliar 2	Neutral 3	Familiar 4	Strongly Familiar 5	Mean
Type of service and product	2%	6%	15%	35%	42%	4,07
Price	0%	1%	10%	24%	64%	4,53
Experience & Skills	0%	0%	26%	44%	30%	4,04
Portfolio	1%	0%	29%	20%	50%	4,17

B. SWOT Analysis

1) *Strengths (Internal Analysis)*
   (S1) POT Branding House provides diversity in products
   (S2) POT Branding House has skilful human resource
   (S3) POT Branding House owns curated process
   (S4) POT Branding House provides flexibility in client service

2) *Weaknesses (Internal Analysis)*
   (W1) POT Branding House has uncompetitive price
   (W2) POT Branding House lacks of digital presence
   (W3) POT Branding House lacks of marketing activity
   (W4) POT Branding House lacks of activities to boost human resource performance
   (W5) POT Branding House's absent in marketing team

3) *Opportunities (External Analysis)*
   (O1) SME's growth
   (O2) Post-pandemic economy recovery
   (O3) The rise of digital promotion
   (O4) Branding & Marketing Needs
   (O5) Client's loyalty

4) *Threats (External Analysis)*
   (T1) The growth of competitor
   (T2) Product substitute from competitor
   (T3) Marketing activities from competitor
   (T4) Better listed clients in portfolio

C. TOWS Matrix
1) *Strength-Opportunity Strategy*
   (SO1) Product development based on customer's survey result and historical data from company
   (SO2) Support a customer-client program experience for client's retention approach
2) *Weakness-Opportunity Strategy*

   (WO1) Set up pricing strategy to adjust current situation
   (WO2) Provide digital marketing strategy to reach new-born SMEs
   (WO3) Conduct internal trainings to support talent's performance
   (WO4) Develop dedicated marketing team to support POT's strategy
3) *Strength-Threat Strategy*
   (ST1) Focus on talent development internally to compete with competitor
4) *Weakness-Threat Strategy*
   (WT1) Focus and build portfolio development both online and offline

BUSINESS SOLUTION

From the analysis above, the proposed solution for POT Branding House to gain awareness and revenue is by making a progress of marketing mix, ranging from building digital presence to attract new clients, develop a pricing strategy to catered newborn SME, portfolio development and update to build a trust between new clients and POT, and promoting hero products as the highlight of the service. These strategies can be done by doing marketing mix strategy that believed can be done simultaneously and gradually to achieve the target.

A. *Price - Pricing Strategy*

To include all types of business segment, one thing that POT Branding House must do is to set a right price for a right client. Pricing strategy is believed to be the most flexible elements of the marketing mix that interferes directly and in a short term over the profitability and cost effectiveness. (Toni, Milan, Saciloto, & Larentis, 2016). Based on the experience of Covid 19 that affecting all of the operation, POT Branding House could adopt a dynamic pricing strategy which constantly change due to the current demand for the item or even current situation. This dynamic pricing is also suitable for newcomer business to start with a small number in billing and gradually expand based on the needs. By doing this, POT Branding House also set their standard to competitor's point that is believed could help them gain more clients.

- Bundling Price > available for businesses that demand more than five products or make it as a package offer (or the ones that using phases and continuation projects + additional offer to collaborate with other service vendors for the maximum output)
- Professional Price > available for big businesses with higher spending that requires higher skills and working hours.
- Fit to needs Price Package > the price will be adjusted for the brand needs that based on urgency so the price will not be coming bulky. It is suitable for newcomer SMEs who does not want to spend big for the first project.

B. *People - People Development*

People development is a solution to answer the talent pool and perception about skillful human resource from client's perspective. POT Branding House is a company that cares about its members, and they are willing to invest in their human resources by starting to create a series of activities for internal members as well as client's relationship. The objective is for POT Branding House to always be relevant, up-to-date, and aware about the surroundings. It must start from the people in it and the support from the BOD of POT Branding House to make to happen. Here is some of the initial thoughts that can be implemented.

1) *Internal Development (Workers)*
1. Talent showcase. POT wanted to have the activity to show their creative skills by making collective creative showcase that can be promoted both online and offline.
2. Equalization in skill and understanding. This method will be implemented for senior members to give their knowledge and skills to be inherited to the junior members. Junior members then would have the ability to keep up and to have the same kind

of understanding about issues or problems as the senior members. So, if there is a vacant position in a department that the junior members in, they can easily take-over the task that is urgent to tackle.
3. Add a new department of marketing & pr and develop a dedicated person or team to handle external promotions and b2b partnership and relationship.

2) External Development (Clients)

1. Portfolio Showcase. The portfolio would include client's voice that is testimonial and thoughts about POT Branding House that will be placed into an online and printed portfolio, and final work and project that will be visualized. The objective is to build the trust and association of POT Branding House with the partnered clients.
2. Product Collaboration. This is a fun and refreshing collaboration with client that the output will be merchandise for POT Branding House and the partnered client. The objective of this activity is to build relationship with client and to have a historical proof that the two companies worked together in a successful project. This would also help POY Branding House to gain awareness by putting their logo in the product.
3. Client evaluation program for every finished project. By doing this, POT Branding House is open for critics and suggestions from clients to help them improve the talent skills, their work ethics, and relationship with the client itself.

C. Product - Product Strategy (Product Development)

After seeing the result of analysis from the past five years of operation as well as the survey result, POT Branding House has to adjust their product development, Previously POT Branding House divided their product into two categories: Brand Expression and Brand Strategy. In 2023, the product will be under three different categories which is Strategy, Design & Activation. The reason is because the activation product is supposed to be separated from initial launch phase that usually using strategy and design product categories. And also, because POT Branding House have targeted mature brand that only need activation, they considered to have Activation Category alone.

The product categories and each product items are basically the same type of product from previous years, but POT Branding House initially think to change the name and definition for easier understanding. The chosen products are also coming from the high-demand product that being analyzed previously from historical data and survey result. Here is the final product adjustment that POT Branding House will implement in 2023.

1. Brand strategy, it would cover strategy for new brand that needs direction and existing brand that needs innovation. The product that included in this category is brand diagnosis, audience insight research and brand strategy.
2. Brand expression, it would cover **asset development, identity development and design**. The implementation from this category would experiential depends on the needs of the brand. The product that included in this category is **brand identity design (visual & verbal), brand architecture, and branding implementation design**.
3. Finally for brand activation, it would cover the activity, launching and sustain phase of activity for brand that is already established. The product that included in this category is **communication strategy & campaign and activation (content & design production)**

D. Promotion - Digital & Marketing Strategy for POT Branding House

The digital presence is a broad concept that encompasses the company exposure of internet. (Haj-Boluri, Flensburg, & Svensson, 2014). Digital presence itself can be categorized into three levels of media: paid, owned, and earned. (Pauwels, Srinivasan, Rutz, & Bucklin, 2012). For the case of POT Branding House, the strategy would be heavily focused on the owned media or channel that being owned by POT Branding House. The channel assets that they currently have is website and social media.

1) Website Strategy

POT Branding House website under www.potbrandinghouse.com features a list of menu bar which is work section, journal section, about section, people, and contact section.

- **The work section** has all the information that clients supposed to have, but it needs to be updated with current work. It would be better if POT could divide the work based on year and put each one of the clients under the business category for easier research, complete with the story about how they manage and process the work on the project.

- **Journal section** features editorial and stories from POT Branding perspective towards issues surrounding art and life. This page is a nice to have content addition that does not connected with client's work. But if POT Branding House wanted to build a unique approach to attract visitors to read the stories, this journal section could highlight case stories from world most unique art, design, and everything they find attractive. The journal section should also be categorized, including press and media coverage that talk about POT Branding House. So, the journal section could be the media outlet for all internal and external activities.

- **About section** might be the first page that visitors open to know about POT Branding House. The only thing that needed to work on is the client list that should be updated.

- **People section** would also be the page that visitors would like to know about who's behind the work. Things that needed to be updated is the list of professional workers in POT Branding House that still involved in the company and the professional description about each of the person and what makes them special in the field.

- **Contact section** has provided everything the visitors or prospected clients need, but one thing that should be updated is the job vacancy option for young talents who want to join the company instead of just put an internship program.

2)   Social Media Strategy

1. POT Branding House **Instagram account** is a platform that being used to show recent project and activities. To elevate its potential, POT Branding House could start to create:

a. Organic content post of recent project and activities 1 week after the project is done, this is to show how active and dynamic POT Branding House is.

b. Social media activity such as talent & skills challenge to encourage new talents to give a pitch and idea to POT Branding House, the winner would be the main collaborator for a project and would also get a certificate + prize.

c. Online and offline event exposure to attract more clients and visitors by collaborate with clients to showcase POT Branding House logo in every event banner or creative outputs. By doing this, POT would easily get the recognition they deserve and increase the awareness from public eye.

d. Actively post the content activities in POT Branding House internal to show the audience a glimpse of working in agency, how great the ecosystem is and how agile it is to work in this field. This would create a curiosity from audience about POT Branding House and hopefully, potential clients would fall into this content.

2. For **LinkedIn account**, POT Branding House must build a professional and work-related content to connect with other skillful sources and potential clients. Content that might works for POT is:

a. Workshop content to gather other agencies for an open discussion, this can be done virtually or offline.

b. Content of business case to show audience on how POT works and progress

c. Online course for audience who wanted to know about working in a creative and strategical field.

d. Business module or guide to give potential clients and audience knowledge about agency and its business

3. **Youtube account** for POT Branding House can be elevated by posting creative outputs with video, 3D or animation materials. They could also create a video of behind the scenes on making creative exploration for their clients. This could be a tutorial content type to teach audience a step by step on making a creative output in a strategical and creative manner.

4. For creative industry, most of the players are using **Behance** for a more eligible and sophisticated work. However, just like website and social media, the profile has not been updated with recent works. The strategy for Behance is to update the work output per quarter for a fresher look and information. Second step is to link the work outputs to other platform, especially website, where every information regarding the business is integrated in one media. Third is to name the work project with name of category business for easier scanning. By doing so, Behance platform would be more structured and organized.

E. Physical Evidence - Portfolio

POT Branding House's portfolio has to be spread into digital and printed portfolios. For this factor, the researcher suggest POT Branding House to print out all of client's material, no matter how small or massive the project is, and make it into a portfolio creative guidelines book that can be accessed through pre-order purchase. Not just a regular portfolio, this portfolio could be a product made by POT Branding House to increase client's awareness or even to attract new clients. By having this, POT would have a physical evidence of their work from time to time.

CONCLUSION

POT Branding House, a local based branding consultancy in Bandung, is on a fight to reach more clients in this post pandemic era. The issue is because during the pandemic situation, POT Branding House had lost quite number of clients and revenues. The loss of this would affect the whole business and operational system inside of POT Branding House. In order to achieve the goals, POT Branding House have to measure their brand awareness since there are so many newcomers in the business and new brands that are not yet familiar with the type of service that POT Branding House offers. POT Branding House is also struggling to get the right expectation from client's perspective about factors that have directly impacted to their business. From the survey, the result shows that POT Branding House is lacking in brand awareness and have to find a way to gain more awareness to attract new customers and clients. While for expectation survey, from client's perspective, the factors that have direct impact to the SME's hiring requirements are digital presence of POT Branding House as the first layer of judgment, price, brand portfolio, product, people and physical evidence. The work on these factors could help to leverage POT Branding House's business. The strategy to cover all of these items are marketing mix and has to be gradually starting from the marketing strategy to promote POT Branding House in a digital platform, this too will help to gain the awareness. Followed by pricing strategy, product adjustment, people's development both internal and external including client's relationship, and last but not least is physical evidence which represents the portfolio creation and update. It is believed that the effort on these factors could leverage POT Branding House business

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