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The Implementation of Convergence and Promotion Strategies by “Bola” as the Oldest Sport Newspaper in Indonesia

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Abstract

Sometimes, the new era can be cruel. A lot of research explains that old media like newspaper are trying so hard to survive for the consumers, however the consumers are changing their habit by searching the news from the online media. This case makes the newspaper circulation is going down so fast and some newspaper already closed. This “tragedy” also impacts in Indonesia, that the number of newspapers is greatly reduced, especially sports newspaper. BOLA as the oldest sports newspaper in Indonesia are still survive to fulfill the wishes of the oldest and their loyal consumers. This research describes some secret of the existence of BOLA, which are the adaptation of the convergence strategy and the optimization of the promotion strategy. The results of this research know that BOLA is using three convergence strategies by Grant (2009) in some different ways. They are not closing the old media like the newspaper, even they start to build the digital website that have a different perspective of sports news. The strategy is the newspaper are still created for the oldest consumers, but they are also giving the new and young consumers the digital media from bolasport.com. However, BOLA used 8 parts of promotion strategy theory from Kotler (2009), that the biggest attentions to grab new consumers are from the special events. This research is based on qualitative method, and using deep interview with four persons from BOLA to find the data. Two interviewees from newsroom to cover the convergence data and the others from marketing division for knowing the promotion. The biggest benefits that can be showed from this research are the way of survival that can be used by other media, especially sports newspaper.

Keywords: Sports Newspaper, BOLA, Convergence, Promotion, and Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Print media is the oldest compared to other mass media, but with the advances in information and communication technology industry turned out to have a considerable impact for the print media. With the increasing popularity of the internet, print media is facing a decline in readership and market penetration. More and more readers now are turning to the online version of the newspaper (McQuail, 2010). Based on data released by one of the company's telecommunications services solutions provider Ericsson Mobility Report in 2017 shows that internet customers in Indonesia keeps increasing. In fact, according to the report, Indonesia is on the order of a third of the whole country in Southeast Asia and Oceania. This increase reached ten million users during the first quarter (Q1) of the year 2017 (Nur Zuhra, 2017). On January 2017 Research Company We Are Social returns announced their latest report related the development of internet use around the world. As a result, they call Indonesia as the country with the largest growth in number of internet users in the world to reach the figure of 132.7 million users at the beginning of the year 2017 (Nur Zuhra, 2017).

This is an era when internet penetration getting higher, media based on ink and paper began to be tested. Each year, Serikat Pekerja Surat Kabar Indonesia (SPS) or a Newspaper Publisher formerly States record number of print media, along with the profits and daily print run. This data includes daily, weekly, tabloids, and magazines. Since 2008 to 2014, daily print run shows the trend is raising, even though the number of media up and down. In 2008, the total is recorded daily print run reached 7.49 million. In the year 2014, the total print run has reached 9.65 million. However, the rise was stopped in the year 2014, because in 2015 the daily print run begins to decreased, just reaching 8.79 million, down 8.9 percent from the previous year. The decline of the daily print run in 2015 is experienced also by weekly, tabloid, and magazines (Anshari, 2017).

One of the oldest newspapers in Indonesia Sinar Harapan Daily, confirm the serious problems that encounter business media in Indonesia. In January 1st 2016 they officially declared bankrupt. Before the afternoon newspaper that being broke, several other companies have already shut down some lines of print, such as Hi, Tabloid Soccer, Indonesia Finance Today, Chip, Tech Life, T3, What Hi Fi, reader's Digest, Bloomberg Business Week, my friend, Fortune, Gaul, Car Guide, The Jakarta Globe, Koran Tempo Daily and include BOLA ("Sederet media cetak yang tutup lapak," 2017). But not all the print media being broke, because some there are which make the online versions of his despite its news content equal to that reported in the Print Edition, so that if readers want to know the news outside of the Print Edition, they can access it via its online media.

BOLA newspaper is one of print media who also had to give up because of the internet, new media and also there is a fault management in the face of the digital world. As quoted from Simaepa (2016) that is, on June 7, 2013, in the midst of the siege of reading free information via the internet, management of BOLA thus publish the daily sphere. BOLA newspaper raised in 1988, then in 1997 developed into two times in one week, namely Tuesday and Friday, up to the year 2010 published three times Monday, Thursday and Saturday also in 2013 appears daily published Monday until Saturday. No less than three years, the daily newspaper is trying very hard to survive in the print media business.

According to Simaepa (2016), the management of BOLA is less responsive to the internet, as well as its content which is still guessing-style score, no longer sought after by readers brought up by him. In a nutshell, both tabloids or daily just shoves the entrance for the reader to know the football information. When this generation is already big, which then are sensitive to the development of the internet, they prefer the other readings are creative and unique.

As for the data there are many printed media-oriented sports news in Indonesia like Soccer Superball, and Top Skor are being bankrupt because they can compete in a good way in the new media era (Anshari & Prastya, 2014). In their research suggests that in the new era, all the print-oriented sports newspaper need to growth and try to use internet as the successful key. The research also indicates that there are two print media still in contention, one of them is BOLA. In the brief observation that has researchers do, until 10th March 2018 BOLA is still published. BOLA is the first sports media and became a pioneer in sports-themed media which is managed well and easy to get the acceptance.

The phenomenon that BOLA newspaper is still exist and surviving on the internet era in Indonesia, make researchers interested in knowing how the media can survive in the midst of the convergence that makes print media increasingly eroded and the individual commandments themselves began to fall, especially seen from the activities the promotion does. Promotion is one of the things that are very important because it is related to the benefits that will be retrieved by the company. The company certainly should be able to design the proper promotion mix in achieving the objectives of the company, as for one of the purposes of the company are able to attract consumers to buy the products offered. In addition, researchers also want to how strategy convergence that BOLA applies in the existence as the oldest sports print media in Indonesia in the face of the digital age media.

This becomes interesting because Indonesia is known as the third countries in the world that the population is very love to see and know anything about football. Also, these purposes of research can capture the context of how one of print media can be surviving by combining technological advances to embrace Indonesia society. This research gives an outline of the main issues that are sourced to the existence of a media strategy in the digital age, do the problem formulation is: How BOLA newspaper apply the promotion and convergence strategies to survive in the digital age?

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Strategy of the Media Existence

According to Flew (2008) the concept of existence in human social life, and especially the most important is the state of existence of himself or herself. The existence can be interpreted as something that is considered of mankind is not static but always be moving. The media that it can still maintain its existence should keep moving and dynamic to follow the movements of the age.

Regardless of the differences in predictions that print media will continue to grow or not, certainly the phenomenon of the print media collapsing is an early warning for the industry to immediately devise some best strategies for maintaining their existence in the midst of an

increasingly tight competition. The development of the new media era is marked by the rise of online media has led to a growing industry than print media such as newspapers and magazines (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). The print media at the beginning of the era of the Reformation had sprouted a tub of mushrooms in the rainy season due to the opening of the tap is freedom of the press through a press law number 40 of the year 1999, now start decreased because they can't compete with the new media.

At least there are some strategies that should be done by the print media industry to achieve that end. However, especially from some of the strategies that are, first, the print media should do the convergence technology (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, 2009). This is important because of the way the public in consuming media has changed drastically. The presence of smart phones, making the community no longer dependent on newspapers, magazines, television, and radio, to consume information. With the development of smart phones, all forms of information from conventional media, it can be accessed with ease, as if all the information is there in the grip (Jenkins & Thornburn, 2003). In addition to the convergence of technology, efforts to maintain the existence of the print media is to strengthen its content. One that can be done to these goals is by applying the current investigative journalism is still not popular enough performed by online media, as well as familiarize editors to produce in-depth coverage of the work.

Promotional Mix

According to Kotler and Keller (2012) definition of promotion is a means by which companies seek to inform, persuade and remind consumers either directly or indirectly, on the products and brands they sell. Promotion is one of the factors determining the success of a marketing program. No matter how good a product, when consumers have never heard of the product and not sure that it would be useful for them, then they will never buy it. As for promotional activities can be done in several ways with the promotion mix. Kotler & Keller (2012) suggested that the promotional mix includes eight elements, including personal selling, public relations and publicity, sales promotion, direct marketing, advertising, events and experience, interactive marketing, and word of mouth marketing.

Personal selling is the direct communication (face-to-face) between seller and prospective customers to introduce a product to prospective customers and establish customer understanding of product so that they will then try and buy it. Cutlip, Center, & Broom (2011) suggested that the personal selling is a process that helps and persuading one or more prospects, to purchase the product, in the form of goods or services, or to act in an idea through the use of the presentation oral. Gane (2008) added that there were some of the main tools in community relations marketing promotion, namely: publication. The material of publications includes annual reports, brochures, articles, company magazines, periodic reports, as well as audio visual material. The company can draw attention to a new product or other marketing activities by organizing special events such as news conferences, exhibitions, contests, competitions, and a Memorial Day.

Through sales promotions, the company can attract new customers, affecting its customers to try new products, encourage customers buy more, attacked the promotional activities of competitors, increasing impulse buying (purchase without a plan before), or seeks closer

cooperation with retailers (Gane, 2008). Types of sales promotions are some promotional tool alternative sales oriented towards the consumer: coupons, deals, premium, and contest, and loyalty programs, point of purchase, price cuts, and placement product. Direct marketing is a marketing system that is interactive, which utilizes one or more advertising media to cause a measurable response or transaction at any location.

In direct marketing, promotional communication is indicated directly to individual consumers with the goal of keeping the messages addressed consumers are concerned either by phone, mail, or by coming directly to the place (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2011). Direct marketing is the use of direct channels .

For reaching out and hand over the goods and services to customers without the use of intermediary marketing. These channels include direct mail, catalogs, telemarketing, interactive TV, kiosks, internet sites, and moving equipment (mobile device).

Advertising is a form of impersonal communication that are used by the company's goods or services. The role of advertising in marketing is to build awareness to the existence of the products or services offered, increasing consumer knowledge about the products or services offered, persuading prospective consumers to buy or use of such products or services, and company distinguish itself with other companies that support the positioning of a product or service (Gane 2008).

Kotler & Keller (2012) also wrote that events and experience is an activity and company-sponsored programs designed to create interactions daily or special brand-related interactions with consumers, including arts, entertainment and sports causes of the event or activity to be less formal. As for the types of events and experience are sports, entertainment, festivals, art, charitable activities, and the activity on the streets.

According to Kotler & Keller (2012) interactive online marketing online programs and activities are designed to engage customers or prospects and directly or indirectly raise awareness improve image or create sales of products and services. As for channels of interactive marketing can be through the company's website and online advertising. Word of mouth communication is a form of communication that engages individuals in sharing information with others in verbal form, including face-to-face, telephone and internet (Gane, 2008). Communication of the word of mouth is more persuasive because the sender of the message does not have an interest at all over the actions of the recipient after that.

Media Convergence

The development of digital technology is pushing the conventional media to do convergence. The convergence of media is one of the development of mass media which involves many factors technology in it. Media convergence occur because driven by advances in technology, particularly online media, the function of the media and media competition. The convergence of media is a program that can accommodate multiple media channels so that the same content can be accessed via multiple media. Because the function of the media is the same but each having different character. With the convergence of industrial structure is achieved it will be a strong and broad target (Albarran, Olmsted, Svlvia, Wirth, 2006).

In the convergence of journalism is known the existence of the three models according to Grant (2009) convergence newsroom, newsgathering, and convergence of content. First, the convergence newsroom. In this convergence of different platform journalist, e.g. from newspapers, online, and television to unify itself in one space the news production. Their task in accordance with its media platform. Second, is the convergence of news gathering. In running this model, a journalist required for being able to reach the level of multitasking.

Through specialized training, journalists need to be able to do the job done by the media with other platforms in a single group. For example, a print reporter should be able to make the news for print, online, and at once for television. It also demanded to take photos or video. Third, the convergence of Content. The news is finally presented in the form of multimedia, which is a combination of text, images, audio, video, blogs, podcasts, or slide show. The options are growing. Today, the convergence of content was very young or new starts. However, we can peek at the future through the innovative website

Citing the Grant and Wilkinson (2009) in his book *Understanding Media Convergence* says the two wrong becomes a factor or digitize media convergence are digital network infrastructure development costs become lower. Also, there are advances in digital technology that the daily cost is becoming increasingly cheaper, so convergence actually helps with the business or economic media. Model convergence media of Grant was also related to the business of media and somehow related to apply in the media themed sport that are falling down and began to be abandoned by their loyal readers (Boyle & Haynes, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researchers tried to explain on the basis of the results of the findings of existence strategy of the media represented by this mix of promotion as well as the convergence strategy, that applied by BOLA in maintaining their life in the middle of the rise of online media. The approach that used in this study is a qualitative approach to the types of descriptive research (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011) to explain the application of the concept of the promotional strategy and the convergence strategy of BOLA.

This research will include data in the form of explanations of the resource persons. The data can be derived from the interviews, field notes, photographs, videotape, personal documents, notes or memos, and other official documents. The unit of analysis that is examined is the head daily editorial and head of marketing division. Where researchers conduct interviews with 2 resources which consists of; Riemantono as head editor-in-Chief of BOLA that play an important role in every movement of the content in newspaper.

In addition, researchers also interviewed Bernard Sitorus as the head of marketing of BOLA which explains the details about their steps in making the BOLA still exist. In addition to using the data the results of the interviews, researchers also use study examining the document with all kinds from official website as well as social media.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The Implementation of Promotion Strategy in BOLA.

BOLA newspaper has consumer segmentation, as seen from the sex, then the BOLA reader's majority are male. BOLA's company profile also mentioned that in terms of age, of BOLA readers ranged in ages 20 to 29 years old. In carrying out its business for over 31 years, BOLA uses eight elements in promoting the promotion mix of BOLA itself. Elements of personal selling are done by using Sales Promotion Girl as the person in charge to do the promotional of newspaper. These promotional activities carried out by means of direct sales by holding Sales Promotion Girl that offers BOLA to prospective customers especially in some special events or in daily events.



Figure 1. The activities of the Personal Selling BOLA by sales promotion girls.

In carrying out promotional activities, BOLA used the public relations and publicity to keep good relations with parties outside the company (public). The continuity of good relations with the various parties is important one of these is the community, by organizing various activities including BOLA Goes to Campus, watching football match together, or gathering community

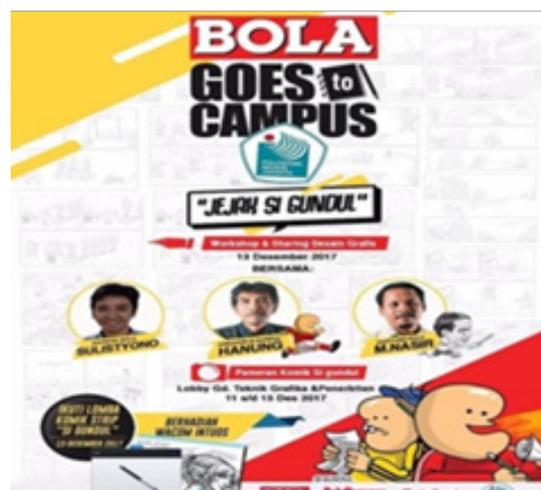


Figure 2. Event of BOLA Goes to Campus's poster.

BOLA also using sales promotions by utilizing a variety of tools, including sales promotion through the quiz was given the name “Surefire Predictions”, coupons, vouchers, and discounts informative rather than persuasive.



Figure 3. Coupon in the form of free tickets Indonesian Football Match.

Direct marketing is done by BOLA that offers direct to consumer potential candidates to buy the BOLA newspaper. This is similar to that expressed by Benhard Sitorus in interview excerpts are as follows:

“...should be, so the duty to do direct marketing department this is a CAD. The Department offers direct to audience CAD potential to purchase the BOLA”.

To offer a product to the potential consumers for BOLA, the promotion division using multiple channels such as email, SMS, television, radio, and websites. BOLA newspaper also using a barter system for advertising to promote its products. The barter system is between the advertising media, including BOLA exchange to advertise in other media. For example, BOLA advertises radio Sonora on some special edition of BOLA and otherwise the radio Sonora advertises BOLA through the broadcasts and giving some special sports programs.



Figure 4. The broadcast process of BOLA on the Radio Sonora FM

BOLA also organizes events and experience in the form of programs or activities such as sports, entertainment, as well as charitable activities. As for the example of sporting activities namely BOLA rolling out event CFD (Car Free Day), such as the poster below:



Figure 5. Design poster of Car Free Day event.

Interactive marketing's element in the promotional mix is also applied by BOLA in an attempt to do the promotion. As for the media used in interactive marketing this is through social media like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.



Figure 6. The display of BOLA's Facebook Homepage.

For the word of mouth elements, in 2005 up to 2017 BOLA ever used this type of marketing by using some athletes such as Bambang Pamungkas who is a football player and the former captain of Indonesian national football team. These athletes will be making a testimonial will be making a testimonial demonstrated to prospective consumers about the superiority of BOLA as the one and only

sports newspaper in Indonesia, compared to other sports print media or other sports media.

In addition, athletes will also recommend and encourage prospective consumers to start buying and reading the BOLA. The tight business competition faced by companies in particular industrial company in mass media, make the company must perform a wide variety of ways to win the competition so that his business can keep going with well, that is one with the promotion.

All promotional elements are applied by BOLA in accordance with expressed by Kotler & Keller (2012:478) that includes eight promotional mix elements, including personal selling, public relations and publicity, sales promotion, direct marketing, advertising, events and experience, interactive marketing, and word of mouth marketing. Thus, the BOLA implements all of the elements in its promotional activities.

The Implementation of Convergence Strategy in BOLA.

The Model of convergence media strategy by Grant (2009) was also related to the business of media. By doing the convergence of media the company can press the production costs and also their human resources. As the merger of the space production of some platforms, and journalists should be multitasking, they need to be able to work on more than one platform or line of work. Hence convergence is also used as a form of emphasis costs by media.

In the newsroom convergence, there are different platform journalists: newspapers, online, and television to unify itself in one space the news production. BOLA has already done some changes to be able to continue to survive as the largest sports media. BOLA doing the convergence where the current media already had multiple platforms by working with other companies that are still one group with *Kelompok Kompas Gramedia*, such as radio channel is teaming up with Sonora FM and the television who work with Kompas TV.

The convergence create BOLA became biggest sport newspaper, trusted in many platforms in the field of media can also help the development of sports in Indonesia. It also conducted for survival in the digital age that is currently going on. One way with air-multiplatform because that way BOLA can follow the market and can maintain the newspaper existence. The following image shows the changes in the BOLA:



Picture 7. The form of multiplatform in BOLA

In addition to performing with various newsroom convergence platform BOLA newspaper also do convergence by holding events with invite also invited communities in the newspaper. Convergence newsroom also utilized the BOLA to do promotions and sales. With so many platforms certainly, BOLA can do to better utilize promotional platform. That strategy shows in the interview with Marketing Manager of BOLA, Benhard Sitorus:

“... sure, we took benefit from social media, because of the large user traffic, we utilize the total followers, for example we started the promotion in the afternoon hours, promo products for instance will rise with this cover, theme, poster or Special Edition, While the regular content, if the content is usually a longer hot due to its real time as digital media ...”

Social media platform also used by BOLA to improve sales promotion of newspaper by using a great traffic from social media then presents a compelling news footage that will be published in print media as well as increase the number of readers by also presenting the news content that is being hot in social media. Convergence newsroom is also used by BOLA to attract advertisers. Ads that get in on BOLA is shown in the two platforms or cross platform. So, ads in the media would be aired in another media platform that owned by BOLA and that becomes more valuable from attracting advertisers to advertise on their media. BOLA harness their convergence strategy to become the attraction of the medium in attractive markets also towing the advertisers. BOLA still utilize their multiplatform to become an attraction for advertisers in BOLA where they do bundle advertising by way of serving ads on two platforms at once that made the ad becomes more widespread coverage both from the region or target market.

In running the convergence of newsgathering, a journalist required for being able to reach the level of multitasking. Through specialized training, a journalist needs to be able to do the job done by the media with other platforms in a single group. For example, a print reporter should be able to make the news for print, online, and at once for television. It also demanded to take photos or video. BOLA also apply this kind of convergence strategy. The journalist of BOLA is no longer just looking for news only to print but should be multitasking with the other media, like the online media: bolasport.com which also relate to the platform from the newspaper.

The strategy certainly can reduce the cost of improvements to the way of BOLA journalists who should be able to overlook the multitasking and also ship via multiplatform owned, for example, when covering the World Cup news BOLA will send one journalist to write the football news for the newspaper and also the online media and sometimes the journalist will be able to announce the results and the situation in the field by broadcasting the news on Sonora radio, as claimed by Benhard Sitorus:

“... we got efficiency in systems of newsroom, so reporters are should be multitasking by sending sports news not only for the print media, but also needs to cover the online media and sometimes the broadcast media also, three media in one report. “

The journalist required to be able to do multitasking reports because there are many platforms of BOLA and the reporter also should be able to also fill and update the news on the other platform. So, not only just take snapshots and in-depth news for print, but also video to

digital media. The newspaper also has many journalists, so every day they also need to send many news for the other platforms. The following figure will reinforce the statement:



Figure 8. The News on bolasport.com and newspaper wrote by BOLA journalist Suci Rahayu.

Last one, the convergence of content. The news is finally presented in the form of multimedia, which is a combination of text, images, audio, video, blogs, podcasts, or slide show. The options are growing. Today, the convergence of content was very young or new starts. However, we can take a peek of the future through an innovative website. BOLA keep its existence with one way, namely by presenting news content fixes deeper but not detached from the side of the news feature. So, besides the news presented should still have a lot of information as well as in-depth but must also keep providing entertainment or entertainment.

BOLA also did a survey on customer satisfaction in the convergence of the content to know the extent to which customers love the content served by the newspaper. The survey can improve the content by listening and read some criticism and suggestions from the customers either through social media: Facebook and twitter or via personal email and chat platform like WhatsApp.



Figure 9. The survey on BOLA Facebook's page.

BOLA in the convergence of content received advice as well to determine the content or themes to be presented or aired both in their print media as well as in digital media. So, the later theme news in accordance with the wishes of the majority of readers and subscribers. BOLA also utilize social media in doing the convergence of content as the largest and oldest sports media. Riemantono as the chief editor says that BOLA takes a lot of benefits from media social media and also utilizes YouTube account:

"... the millennial generation is facing, which is not only more often access information from mobile and tablet there are also too much access from social media that we tried. After using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, we also using YouTube as the channel. "

BOLA is using social media to be able to sustain its existence especially among the millennial generation is the generation that is accessing the news or information via gadgets like laptops, smartphones, tablets and more. At this time BOLA began more serious to make use of social media that make the viewer, visitors or followers is currently growing quite significantly. In fact, BOLA Management (2018) also formed a team of multimedia for social media from the newspaper to handle the circulation of the news that currently more active on social media and YouTube account.

BOLA also works with Sonora radio for making a quiz over the radio then the answer can be given through the social media. The YouTube channel also presents information by referring many sports influencers in Indonesia such as athletes, the sports presenter, and sports journalist to influence the audience in the video display through the YouTube channel. The convergence of BOLA is also impacting on the business side especially from the advertisers.

CONCLUSION

For old media like newspaper, there are several ways to survive in this digital age. But whatever it is, the first key is try to join in the new era by combining internet into the media and the company. However, internet is the potential key to survive in the media industry in this new era. BOLA as the oldest sport themed newspaper in Indonesia are trying so hard to continue their legacy for their loyal readers in the print media industry. First of all, BOLA survives to

become the sport media that only focused on the newspaper area for giving information to the public. Until two years ago they gave up by the reality that nowadays internet is the highway to survive in this industry. By that time, BOLA tries to adapt the new technology on their product.

Form that moment, BOLA try to apply the convergence strategies for their product. By using the theory from Grant (2009), BOLA already applying the theory by make a good combination with other medias like, Sonora Radio, Kompas TV, Kompas.com as their brother in the Kompas Gramedia group. BOLA also adapt the newsroom convergence, newsgathering and the content by optimize their journalist. Every reporter in BOLA needs to create and report a news for many platforms such as BOLA the newspaper, Bolasport.com (the online media), and all BOLA's social media. The greatest advance of BOLA is the creation of Bolasport.com as their digital platform that give another dimension and level of the new.

In the other hand BOLA also applying the promotion strategy by showing some different range of promotion of their product for their customers. Social media became the key to promote the newspaper from different angle for different target market. In the old days, BOLA is famous for the old people, but nowadays by applying the social media and interactive online marketing, BOLA try to reach the young readers. By develop their product into another platform, BOLA also grab some new kind of advertisement. The advertiser is happy to sell their product in BOLA, because their product can be seen in several media at once.

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