

The Effectiveness Of Using Whatsapp Business And A Website In Supporting Business-To-Business Sales At PT Baja Kurnia

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of WhatsApp Business and a website in supporting business-to-business (B2B) sales at PT Baja Kurnia. This study uses a qualitative, descriptive approach based on data from in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The informants consisted of Ibu Datik as a Purchasing representative of PT Baja Kurnia and Gilang and Irham as customers. The data were analyzed through coding and theme identification to understand the utilization and perceptions of both digital media. The results show that the website primarily functions as an initial information medium for introducing the company, products, specifications, and supporting information, while WhatsApp Business plays a more dominant role in direct communication, price and product availability inquiries, offering, negotiation, ordering, transaction confirmation, production and delivery monitoring, and post-transaction services. Both media are perceived positively, with the website providing clear information and a professional impression, while WhatsApp Business is considered practical, easy to use, and responsive. However, the website still requires improvements in visual presentation and the completeness of product and price information. Overall, the website and WhatsApp Business have different but complementary functions, and their integration can support the B2B sales process and strengthen long-term customer relationships at PT Baja Kurnia.

Keywords: WhatsApp Business, website, business-to-business, sales, marketing communication.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped B2B marketing, compelling companies to leverage digital media for responsive communication that enhances value creation and sales effectiveness (Shashi et al., 2025). Social media is now integral to this shift (Dwivedi et al., 2021), as evidenced in Indonesia, where 180 million users engage on social platforms (We Are Social Indonesia, 2025) and 63.52% of digital businesses utilize them for marketing (Databoks, 2022). Driven by customer preferences for rapid, accessible communication, companies are adopting hybrid sales systems (Kanuri et al., 2022). Key to this integration are company websites, which serve as credible information hubs essential for B2B lead generation (Shashi et al., 2025), and WhatsApp Business, which facilitates real-time, personalized customer engagement and CRM (Kumar, 2025; Shengale, 2025; Sayudin et al., 2024; Jannah, 2023). Combining the website's comprehensive product details with WhatsApp's direct communication capabilities optimizes the B2B sales process.

At PT Baja Kurnia, a metal component manufacturer, preliminary interviews reveal a distinct functional divide: the website primarily drives initial company awareness and product discovery, while WhatsApp Business dominates ongoing communication, transaction acceleration, and execution. While prior studies confirm the general benefits of digital tools on customer engagement and marketing performance (Sayudin et al., 2024; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2026; Shashi et al., 2025), research specifically analyzing the integrated effectiveness of WhatsApp Business and websites in B2B manufacturing sales remains limited. Addressing this gap, this study analyzes the effectiveness, distinct roles, and utilization patterns of both platforms in supporting B2B sales at PT Baja Kurnia, providing critical insights into digital media optimization in the manufacturing sector.

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this study is to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of utilizing a website and WhatsApp Business as digital marketing tools to support business-to-business (B2B) sales and strengthen customer relationships at PT Baja Kurnia. Specifically, this research aims to: (1) analyze the implementation of these digital platforms in facilitating B2B sales processes, including marketing communication and product information delivery; (2) examine customer perceptions regarding their utility for communication and customer service; and (3) assess their overall effectiveness in driving B2B sales growth and fostering robust customer relationships within the industrial business context.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Marketing Digital

Marketing leverages digital technologies to create, communicate, and deliver value, integrating interactive consumer engagement and data collection (Kotler & Keller, 2022; Zahay, 2021). Utilizing components like SEO, SEM, and social media (Kumari, 2024), it has evolved from 1990s basic web campaigns (Morokhova et al., 2023; Swami, 2023) to interactive social platforms (Ugolkova, 2021), ultimately becoming a strategic, AI-integrated capability for customer relationship management (Buddha et al.; Na et al., 2025; Ponzoa & Erdmann, 2021; Xiuli & Gu, 2024). Within this ecosystem, online advertising targets promotions to enhance brand awareness and market reach (Kotler & Keller, 2022), while the company website serves as a boundary-less, official channel for corporate communication (Troise & Camilleri, 2021; Bagurkina & Rokhlina, 2024). Evolving from static pages to dynamic, interactive Web 2.0 platforms (Kumar, 2025; Teadi, 2023; Zapsha & Zaitsev, 2026), modern websites function as integrated digital hubs connected to CRM and e-commerce (Ergeshov et al., 2026; Gashema & Alain, 2023). These sites build brand identity (Martini et al., 2022; Riskiyah et al., 2024; Torgunakova & Torgunakov, 2023), where user satisfaction and e-trust are driven by usability and information quality (Khatun et al., 2026; Saoula et al., 2023), though implementation quality varies across firms (Ergeshov et al., 2026; Torgunakova & Torgunakov, 2023).

RACE Framework Theory

The RACE Framework (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) structures digital marketing planning around the customer journey (Rautela, 2021). 'Reach' builds awareness via SEO and social media; 'Act' encourages interaction and lead generation (Setiawan et al., 2023); 'Convert' drives transactions (Falovych et al., 2026); and 'Engage' fosters long-term loyalty. An extended PRACE model adds a 'Plan' phase for strategic analysis (Rautela, 2021). In this study, the RACE dimensions guide the interview protocol: exploring how the company reaches prospects via websites and WhatsApp (Reach), facilitates product interaction (Act), supports B2B negotiation and transactions (Convert), and maintains post-transaction relationships (Engage). This systematic approach aligns empirical findings with theoretical digital marketing stages, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of digital strategy effectiveness.

WhatsApp Business

WhatsApp Business is a professional communication application designed to enhance customer interaction and marketing efficiency. Distinct from the personal version, it offers business-specific features such as Business Profiles, Labels, Quick



Replies, Automated Messages, and product Catalogs (WhatsApp, 2026; WhatsApp Business, 2026). In B2B contexts, it facilitates rapid, clear, and personalized communication, supporting everything from product inquiries and quotations to post-purchase service, thereby functioning as a vital digital marketing and customer relationship management tool.

Business Performance

Business performance reflects an organization's success in achieving its goals through strategic management, operational efficiency, and market competitiveness (Kotler & Keller, 2022). In the modern era, digitalization, business model innovation, and digital technology adoption are critical for enhancing sales, expanding markets, and strengthening competitive positioning (Wang et al., 2023; Sharabati et al., 2024).

Website

Beyond basic information delivery, websites are pivotal for modern marketing, promotion, and customer relationship management (Challapalli et al., 2021). They expand business reach and integrate with e-commerce and other digital channels to provide seamless customer experiences (Herrada-Lores et al., 2025; Godara et al., 2024; Bîrzu, 2023). However, their effectiveness depends on continuous maintenance, optimal user experience, robust security, and consistent cross-channel integration, as poor management can negatively impact customer perception and transaction safety (Zhukovskyi, 2024).

Business-to-Business (B2B)

Business-to-Business (B2B) involves transactions between organizations, characterized by specific operational needs, formal decision-making, and long-term, interdependent relationships based on trust and service quality (Khazhenska, 2025; Anderson et al., 2022; Feike & Rösch, 2026; Cartwright et al., 2022). The B2B paradigm has shifted from short-term transactional exchanges to strategic, relational approaches emphasizing key account management and value co-creation (Chowdhury et al., 2023; Sandesh et al., 2023; Lundin & Kindström, 2023). Furthermore, digitalization has transformed the B2B customer journey, leveraging CRM, social media, and AI to enhance communication efficiency and foster integrated value networks, despite the complexities of managing digital business relationships (Saura et al., 2021; Marzi et al., 2023; Heikinheimo et al., 2024).



METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, cross-sectional case study approach to examine the effectiveness of WhatsApp Business and company websites in supporting B2B sales at PT Baja Kurnia, a metal component manufacturer (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The unit of analysis encompasses the entire B2B sales cycle, utilizing purposive sampling of three key informants: an internal purchasing representative and two industrial customers, interviewed in September 2026. Primary data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews guided by the RACE Framework (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) to map media usage across the customer journey, supplemented by direct observation and secondary documentation, such as company profiles and digital communication records. This multi-method approach ensures a comprehensive evaluation of how these platforms facilitate product information delivery, negotiation, and post-transaction relationship maintenance.

To ensure methodological rigor, trustworthiness was established through data triangulation cross-verifying internal and external perspectives, observations, and documents and member checking, where interview transcripts were validated by all participants for accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Dependability and confirmability were maintained via a rigorous audit trail documenting all research phases and repeated field observations. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to systematically identify, code, and categorize recurring patterns within the qualitative data (Saleh, 2023; Sugiyono, 2023). Key themes emerged regarding the website's role as an initial information hub, WhatsApp Business's function in transaction facilitation and customer service, and the overall impact on B2B sales performance, with final interpretations systematically linked to established theories in digital marketing and B2B dynamics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Description and Collection

This study utilized purposive sampling to select three key informants representing both internal and external perspectives of PT Baja Kurnia's B2B operations: one internal purchasing representative (ID) and two industrial clients (MG from PT Adhikarya, and MI). Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation, conceptually aligned with the RACE Framework (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage). Interviews were conducted online via Zoom between August 29 and September 7, 2026, lasting approximately 11 to 15 minutes each, and were recorded for transcription. Data triangulation was applied across these methods to ensure the comprehensiveness and validity of the findings regarding the utilization of the company website and WhatsApp Business in supporting B2B sales.



Data Analysis and Theme Identification

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Transcripts were repeatedly read to identify keywords and concepts, which were then grouped into categories and overarching themes. The coding process yielded four primary categories: (1) initial information seeking via the website, (2) direct interactive communication and transaction via WhatsApp Business, (3) customer perceptions of media utility, and (4) post-transaction relationship maintenance.

Table 1. Summary of Data Coding and Key Themes

Main Theme	Key Categories	Representative Codes
Media Utilization in B2B Sales	Initial Information, Direct Communication, Negotiation	Introducing company profile, displaying products, inquiring about stock/price, price negotiation, production timeline.
Customer Perception	Information Clarity, Communication Ease, Responsiveness	Professional impression, practical communication, fast response, need for price transparency.
Effectiveness & Relationship	Transaction Efficiency, Post-Sales Service, Retention	Accelerating transactions, order confirmation, delivery monitoring, facilitating repeat orders.
Media Integration	Complementary Functions	Website as initial touchpoint, WhatsApp as transactional engine.

Based on the coding process, three main themes were identified regarding the effectiveness of website and WhatsApp Business integration:

Theme 1: Complementary Roles in the B2B Sales Journey

The findings reveal a sequential, complementary utilization of digital media across the customer journey. The website functions primarily as the initial touchpoint (Reach), providing company profiles and product specifications. As noted by the internal informant (ID), "*The website is used to introduce the company and display products,*" which clients (MG, MI) use to identify relevant offerings, such as specific Manhole products. Following this, the customer journey transitions to WhatsApp Business (Act/Convert) for direct, real-time interaction. Clients utilize WhatsApp to inquire about stock, negotiate prices, and discuss production timelines. ID confirmed that while the website initiates the process, "*WhatsApp is more efficient for negotiation,*" highlighting its critical role in accelerating B2B transactions and closing deals.

Theme 2: Customer Perceptions of Digital Communication

Customer perceptions of the two platforms are distinctly shaped by their respective functionalities. The website is perceived as a vital tool for building initial corporate credibility. MG noted that a *"neat and informative website gives the impression of a professional service system,"* fostering early trust before direct contact. However, clients suggested enhancements, such as more attractive designs and explicit pricing, to further accelerate decision-making. Conversely, WhatsApp Business is highly valued for its practicality and responsiveness. Both MG and MI emphasized that the *"fast response"* via WhatsApp is highly appreciated, making it the preferred medium for resolving specific, real-time B2B inquiries without the need for physical visits, thereby significantly enhancing the interactive customer experience.

Theme 3: Effectiveness in Transaction Efficiency and Relationship Retention

The integration of both media significantly enhances sales effectiveness and long-term B2B relationships. While the website drives initial customer acquisition, WhatsApp Business is critical for transaction conversion and post-sales engagement (Engage). Clients use WhatsApp for order confirmations, production monitoring, and delivery tracking, ensuring transparency throughout the fulfillment process. Crucially, this continuous interaction facilitates customer retention and repeat orders. MI stated, *"If we do a repeat order, it is definitely through WhatsApp Business,"* a sentiment echoed by ID, who emphasized that building good relationships via WhatsApp ensures recurring orders. Ultimately, the website acts as the digital storefront that builds initial awareness, while WhatsApp Business serves as the dynamic engine for negotiation, transaction execution, and sustained B2B relationship management.

The Use of Website and WhatsApp Business in Supporting B2B Sales

The integration of a company website and WhatsApp Business at PT Baja Kurnia demonstrates that digital media plays a critical, complementary role in the B2B sales process. The website primarily functions as an initial information hub, introducing the company profile, products, and services. As noted by the internal informant (Ibu Datik, 2026), the website is used to introduce the company and display products, which aligns with Shashi et al. (2025) regarding digital technologies supporting B2B lead generation. Customers utilize the website to identify available products before initiating direct contact. Following this initial 'Reach' stage, the customer journey transitions to WhatsApp Business, which serves as the primary channel for advanced communication, encompassing the 'Act', 'Convert', and 'Engage' stages of the RACE Framework. WhatsApp Business facilitates direct inquiries regarding stock, pricing, and specifications, enabling efficient price quotations and negotiations, aligning with Kanuri

et al. (2022) on how digital channels enhance communication efficiency. Furthermore, WhatsApp Business extends into post-purchase service, such as order confirmation and production monitoring, and serves as the exclusive medium for repeat orders. This continuous interaction fosters customer engagement and perceived value, supporting long-term B2B relationships (Sayudin et al., 2024; Brauer et al., 2025). Ultimately, the website and WhatsApp Business form a sequential, integrated ecosystem where the website builds initial awareness and WhatsApp Business drives transactional efficiency and relational continuity (Hendriyani et al., 2020; Novia et al., 2025).

Customer Perceptions of Website and WhatsApp Business as Marketing Communication Media

Customer perceptions of PT Baja Kurnia's digital media are predominantly positive, shaped by the distinct utilities of each platform in delivering marketing communication. The website is highly regarded for providing clear, initial information that helps B2B buyers understand the company's offerings before direct engagement. Informants (Mas Gilang, 2026; Mas Irham, 2026) noted that a well-organized and informative website not only fulfills initial information needs but also projects a professional corporate image, thereby building early trust. This supports Kotler and Keller's (2022) assertion that marketing communication is essential for conveying information and building customer understanding. However, customers indicated a need for further website development, particularly regarding more comprehensive product details and pricing, to better align with specific B2B procurement requirements (Mas Irham, 2026; Zahay, 2021). Conversely, WhatsApp Business is perceived as a highly practical and efficient medium for two-way, interactive communication. Customers appreciate the platform's ease of use and the company's rapid response times, which are critical in B2B contexts where specific, real-time information is required. This responsiveness directly enhances the customer experience and aligns with Zahay's (2021) emphasis on interactive digital marketing. Viewed through the RACE Framework, the website effectively facilitates the 'Reach' stage by establishing a professional baseline of information, while WhatsApp Business drives the 'Act' stage by enabling seamless, real-time interaction, ensuring a cohesive customer communication journey.

Effectiveness of Website and WhatsApp Business in Increasing B2B Sales and Strengthening Customer Relationships

The effectiveness of PT Baja Kurnia's digital media is evidenced by the seamless facilitation of the entire B2B customer journey and the strengthening of long-term relational ties. The website effectively acts as the digital storefront, generating initial interest and providing the foundational product knowledge necessary for B2B buyers to

consider the company as a viable supplier (Kotler & Keller, 2022; Shashi et al., 2025). However, the actual conversion and relationship-building processes are heavily reliant on WhatsApp Business. The platform's ability to handle complex, multi-stage B2B transactions including detailed inquiries, price negotiations, production timeline discussions, and order confirmations demonstrates its critical role in the 'Convert' stage of the RACE Framework (Kanuri et al., 2022; Parveen & Kanimozhi, 2024). Informants (Ibu Datik, 2026; Mas Gilang, 2026; Mas Irham, 2026) agree that WhatsApp Business is significantly more efficient for these advanced interactions than the website. Furthermore, the effectiveness of WhatsApp Business extends deeply into the 'Engage' stage, which is vital for B2B customer retention. By utilizing the platform for post-transaction updates, such as production monitoring and delivery tracking, the company maintains continuous engagement and transparency (Sayudin et al., 2024). This sustained communication directly facilitates repeat orders, a cornerstone of B2B profitability and relationship longevity (Hendriyani et al., 2020; Shashi et al., 2025). The two media are highly complementary; the website opens the door, and WhatsApp Business closes the deal and nurtures the ongoing partnership (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Ultimately, the integration of these platforms creates a comprehensive digital marketing capability that not only accelerates the sales cycle but also builds enduring trust and customer loyalty in the B2B manufacturing sector.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that integrating a company website and WhatsApp Business significantly enhances B2B sales and customer relationships at PT Baja Kurnia by fulfilling complementary roles across the customer journey. The website serves as a professional initial information hub driving the 'Reach' stage, while WhatsApp Business dominates the 'Act', 'Convert', and 'Engage' stages by facilitating direct negotiation, transactions, and post-purchase support. To maximize this synergy, management must treat these platforms as a unified ecosystem, upgrading the website with comprehensive technical specifications and intuitive navigation, while standardizing WhatsApp communication through defined response protocols and systematic interaction documentation. Assigning specific KPIs to each RACE Framework stage will enable the company to transition these digital tools from basic communication channels into strategic, data-driven capabilities for sustained B2B relationship management.

Given the limitations of this qualitative, single-case study, future research should expand its scope by employing mixed-methods approaches and larger, more diverse samples across various industrial sectors. Subsequent studies could quantitatively measure the relationships between digital platform quality, customer satisfaction, and sales performance using RACE Framework metrics. Furthermore, investigating



mediating factors such as trust, customer engagement, and Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), alongside integrating granular platform analytics (e.g., website traffic behavior and WhatsApp feature usage) with actual transaction records, would provide a more robust, objective understanding of how digital media directly drives B2B sales performance and long-term retention.

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