

Implementing Technology-Driven Inverted Marketing Funnel Strategy for Brand Activation: A Case Study of Imboost at the Indonesia Maternity, Baby & Kids Expo (IMBEX) 2025

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of a digital-first brand marketing strategy by Imboost, a supplement brand under PT SOHO Global Health Tbk, during the Indonesia Maternity, Baby & Kids Expo (IMBEX) 2025. Using the Inverted Marketing Funnel as the primary analytical framework, this paper critically evaluates how multi-stage digital touchpoints including social media marketing, paid advertising, Key Opinion Leader (KOL) engagement, online pre-order mechanisms, and post-event re-targeting – were deployed across three event phases (pre-event, during event, and post-event). A descriptive quantitative approach was applied, with sales realization data analyzed against predetermined targets. Results indicate that overall sales realization reached 70% of target, driven predominantly by online channels (55%) versus offline booth transactions (15%). The findings reveal a structural misalignment between the target audience positioning (children's products) and actual purchasing behavior (adult supplement dominance), suggesting that product communication strategy requires recalibration.

INTRODUCTION

The global MICE industry is undergoing a profound transformation driven by digital disruption. Trade exhibitions, once reliant on physical presence and traditional marketing collateral, are increasingly mediated through digital ecosystems that span social media platforms, e-commerce, and influencer networks (Getz & Page, 2016; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). For exhibiting brands, participation in large-scale expos is no longer merely a physical showcase it is a multi channel event where digital engagement before, during, and after the exhibition directly determines commercial outcomes.

In the Indonesian context, this shift is particularly pronounced. With over 200 million active social media users and a rapidly growing e-commerce sector, Indonesian consumers increasingly rely on digital touchpoints to make purchasing decisions including at physical exhibition events (We Are Social & Hootsuite,

2024). The Indonesia Maternity, Baby & Kids Expo (IMBEX) 2025, held at Jakarta International Convention Center (JICC) from 28–30 November 2025, exemplifies this hybrid event model, where exhibitor success is contingent not only on booth design and product quality but on the strategic of digital marketing strategy deployed across the consumer journey.

Imboost, a leading immune supplement brand under PT SOHO Global Health Tbk one of Indonesia's largest pharmaceutical companies with over 70 years of industry presence participated in IMBEX 2025 with a deliberate strategic objective to reposition the brand as a family oriented supplement (not just adult suplemen) and introduce Imboost Extra Kids to a highly targeted audience of parents and expecting mothers. The brand deployed an integrated digital marketing strategy structured around the Inverted Marketing Funnel progressing from Awareness through Consideration, Conversion, and Trial/Repeat.

Despite commendable execution, the overall sales realization reached 70% of target, with offline booth sales contributing a mere 15% against 55% from online pre-order channels. Post-event evaluation further revealed that adult products outperformed children's products a finding that challenges the initial brand communication hypothesis. This gap between strategic intent and commercial outcome provides a rich empirical basis for examining the effectiveness of digital marketing in MICE exhibition contexts.

This paper makes two primary contributions. First, it provides an empirical analysis of digital marketing strategy implementation in an exhibition setting through the lens of the Inverted Funnel framework. Second, it identifies structural limitations in audience segmentation and digital communication that constrained conversion rates, offering strategic recommendations applicable to exhibitor brands in similar MICE contexts.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Digital Marketing in MICE Events

The integration of digital marketing into MICE event strategy has been a growing subject of academic inquiry. Tafesse and Wood (2021) demonstrated

that exhibitor brands leveraging pre-event digital campaigns achieved significantly higher booth traffic and lead generation compared to those relying on onsite promotion alone. In the MICE literature, digital tools are increasingly categorized as 'pre-event amplifiers,' 'during-event activators,' and 'post-event retainers' (Rogers, 2021). Pre-event digital campaigns create anticipatory demand; during-event digital activations (live streaming, QR code engagement, real-time promotions) stimulate onsite conversion; and post-event re-targeting campaigns sustain brand recall and drive repeat purchase. This three-phase model aligns closely with the funnel framework applied in this study.

The Inverted Marketing Funnel Framework

The traditional AIDA (Attention-Interest-Desire-Action) model has been progressively supplanted by more granular funnel models in the digital marketing literature. Kotler et al. (2021) proposed the '5As' framework (Aware-Appeal-Ask-Act-Advocate), which acknowledges the recursive and non-linear nature of the modern digital consumer journey. The Inverted Marketing Funnel, as applied in this study, adapts this structure to event marketing contexts, compressing the consumer journey into four stages: Awareness, Consideration, Conversion, and Trial/Repeat. Critically, the 'inverted' metaphor implies progressive narrowing not all consumers who become aware of a brand will convert to purchasers.

Digital marketing's role is to reduce friction at each stage while maximizing the proportion of consumers who progress down the funnel. For MICE exhibitors, this means deploying stage-specific tactics broad-reach content at Awareness, credibility-building content at Consideration, urgency-driven promotions at Conversion, and relationship marketing at Trial/Repeat (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022).

Social Media Marketing and KOL Engagement

Social media platforms particularly Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook have become dominant channels for pre-event brand communication in Southeast Asia. Hudders et al. (2021) established that KOL (Key Opinion Leader) endorsements on social media yield significantly higher engagement and purchase intent among niche audiences (e.g., parenting communities) compared to conventional celebrity advertising. KOLs derive their persuasive power from perceived authenticity and audience alignment, factors that are especially salient in health and wellness product categories (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

In the Indonesian pharmaceutical and supplement market, KOL marketing has emerged as a primary driver of brand awareness among millennial parents precisely the demographic targeted at IMBEX 2025. Research by Sokolova and Kefi (2020) found that micro-influencers (10,000-100,000 followers) in parenting niches generate higher conversion rates than macro-influencers, due to elevated audience trust and perceived relevance.

Online Pre-Order as a Conversion Mechanism

The use of online pre-order mechanisms in conjunction with physical events represents an emerging hybrid commerce model that is particularly well-

suited to the Indonesian digital commerce landscape. Indonesia's e-commerce sector is among the fastest-growing in Southeast Asia, with consumer familiarity with pre-purchase and pre-order systems deeply embedded in platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Lazada (Databoks, 2023). This infrastructure makes online pre-order a natural extension of event marketing strategy, enabling brands to convert digitally-engaged consumers before they physically attend an exhibition.

The phenomenon of *jastiper* (*jasa titip*, or 'titipan service') whereby personal shoppers purchase exhibition products on behalf of remote buyers – further illustrates how Indonesian consumers have indigenously adapted digital-physical commerce to overcome geographic barriers. Ramadhani and Handayani (2022) analyzed *jastiper* behavior in Indonesian online marketplace communities and found that trust, promotional exclusivity, and product scarcity are the primary motivators for consumers engaging *jastiper* services at trade events, underscoring the importance of well-communicated, event-specific promotional offers as a prerequisite for this conversion channel's effectiveness.

However, pre-order and *jastiper* effectiveness are contingent on the clarity of promotional communication. Research by Kusumawati et al. (2021) on e-commerce promotional framing in Indonesia found that specific, price-anchored promotional messages (e.g., 'Rp89.000 dari Rp120.000') generated purchase intention scores up to 37% higher than generalized percentage-discount claims ('diskon hingga 40%'). This has direct implications for digital pre-event campaigns where promotional ambiguity reduces the consumer's ability to make an informed pre-commitment decision.

Consumer Behavior at Exhibition Events

Consumer behavior at trade exhibitions is shaped by a distinctive combination of experiential motivation, social influence, and promotional sensitivity (Kirchgeorg et al., 2021). Studies on exhibition attendance in Southeast Asia indicate that purchasing decisions at family-oriented expos are heavily influenced by promotional value, product trial availability, and peer recommendations – factors that intersect with all four stages of the digital funnel (Han & Verma, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a case study approach supported by descriptive quantitative analysis to examine the implementation of an inverted marketing funnel strategy in Imboost's participation at IMBEX 2025. The case was selected because it provides a relevant context for analyzing digital marketing practices within a healthcare brand activation program conducted in a large-scale MICE exhibition environment.

Primary data were collected through direct participation and observation during the author's internship as a Brand Marketing Intern at PT SOHO Global Health Tbk. Data collection instruments included structured sales reporting (target vs. realization by channel and phase), observational field notes, and participation in internal post-event evaluation meetings. Secondary data were

obtained from company documents, the official SOHO Global Health website, IMBEX 2025 event documentation, and peer-reviewed literature on digital marketing and MICE management. Secondary data were obtained from company documents, official publications, event documentation, and scholarly literature related to digital marketing and MICE management.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics through target-versus-realization comparisons, while qualitative findings were examined through thematic analysis based on the Inverted Marketing Funnel framework. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings follows a convergent mixed-methods logic (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), enabling a holistic assessment of strategy effectiveness.

The study focuses specifically on digital marketing initiatives implemented to support Imboost's participation at IMBEX 2025, particularly in generating awareness, engagement, and conversion throughout the event journey. As a single-case study, the findings reflect a specific organizational and event context and therefore have limited generalizability. Additionally, the analysis is constrained by the availability of campaign performance data and the absence of comprehensive platform-level digital analytics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital Marketing Funnel Implementation: A Three-Phase Analysis

Imboost digital marketing strategy at IMBEX 2025 was structured around the Inverted Funnel, deployed across three temporal phases: pre-event, during event, and post-event. Table 1 summarizes sales performance across channels and phases, while Table 2 maps funnel stages to specific digital tactics and KPIs.

Table 1. Sales Target and Realization by Phase

Phase	Sales Channel	Target (%)	Realization (%)
Pre-Event	Online Pre-Order	100%	55%
During Event	Offline Booth	100%	15%
Total	Combined	100%	70%

Source: PT SOHO Global Health Tbk internal report (2025); processed by author

Table 2. Digital Marketing Funnel Mapping

Funnel Stage	Digital Tactic	KPI/Metric	Target Audience
Awareness	Social media posts, paid ads (Meta Ads), teaser content	Instagram and tiktok reach impressions	Broad audience ; parents & families
Consideration	KOL/influencer reviews, product education content, online Q&A	Engagement rate; story views; saves	Intent level audience
Conversion	Online pre-order link, jastiper (personal shopper) program, promo bundles	Pre-order completion rate (55%)	Purchase ready segment
Trial & Repeat	Post-event follow-up, re-targeting ads, loyalty content	Repeat purchase	Existing buyers; brand advocates

Source: PT SOHO Global Health Tbk internal report (2025); processed by author

Pre-Event Phase: Awareness and Consideration via Digital Channels

The pre-event phase (approximately four weeks prior to IMBEX 2025) constituted the Awareness and Consideration stages of the funnel. Key digital tactics deployed included: (1) organic social media content on Instagram and Tiktok promoting the Imboost Extra Kids product line and announcing IMBEX participation; (2) paid advertising (Meta Ads) with audience targeting parameters aligned to parenting demographics; (3) KOL partnerships with micro-influencers in the parenting and health niches; and (4) preorder system was implemented using Google Forms. The effectiveness of the awareness stage can be seen from the pre-order realization rate, which reached 55% of the target. This result indicates that the campaign was able to generate consumer interest, although the overall conversion remained below expectations. One possible reason is that the promotional content focused more on general discount messages rather than providing clear product prices and specific savings information. As a result, consumers may have been interested in the promotion but lacked sufficient motivation to complete a purchase.

The use of parenting focused KOLs also helped increase brand visibility and reach the target audience before the event. However, the actual contribution of these influencers to pre-order performance could not be measured due to the lack of engagement and conversion tracking data. Without metrics such as click-through rates, link visits, or influencer-specific conversions, it is difficult to determine which content or influencer generated the highest impact.

These findings suggest that future digital marketing campaigns for MICE events should combine influencer marketing with clearer promotional communication and stronger performance measurement systems. The use of tracking links, dedicated landing pages, and campaign-specific analytics would provide more accurate insights into consumer behavior and campaign effectiveness.

During-Event Phase: Conversion Through Omnichannel Integration

The during event phase operationalized the Conversion stage of the funnel through a dual channel approach: offline transactions at the exhibition booth and continued online sales facilitated through the jastiper (personal shopper) program. Total realization during this phase reached 70% of target, comprising 55% online and 15% offline.

The disproportionate contribution of online versus offline channels (55% vs. 15%) warrants critical examination. However, Imboost data suggests that pre-established digital intent (consumers who had already encountered the brand online and pre-committed to purchase) outperformed in-event discovery as a conversion driver. This finding is consistent with Bonfanti et al.'s (2023) argument that in hybrid exhibition models, pre-event digital campaigns function as the primary conversion mechanism, with booth presence serving an experiential reinforcement rather than primary sales role.

The 15% offline realization is partly attributable to structural event factors specifically, booth location in Hall A, the venue's lowest-traffic zone. Research on exhibition design confirms that booth location is one of the strongest predictors

of visitor contact rate and purchase probability (Smith & Saker, 2021). For Imboost, the combined effect of sub-optimal booth positioning and afternoon-skewed visitor patterns (exacerbating morning dead-time) created an offline conversion environment that was structurally disadvantaged relative to the brand's digital reach.

Table 3. Challenges, Drivers, and Strategic Recommendations

No	Challenge	Strategic Recommendation
1	Booth in Hall A (end of venue) with low foot traffic	Prioritize high-traffic zones; negotiate premium placement in future events
2	Peak hours concentrated in afternoon/evening; mornings were quiet	Deploy flash sales and activations during off-peak hours to stimulate traffic
3	Promo only stated 'discount up to 40%' without specific product pricing	Include clear price anchoring and product-level deals in pre-event digital campaigns
4	Competition from brands like Blackmores; year-end budget constraints for consumers	Develop competitive promo benchmarking; tailor bundles to value-conscious segments

Source: Author's analysis based on field observation and post-event evaluation (2025)

Post-Event Phase: Evaluation and Strategic Implications

Post event evaluation revealed three key findings that fundamentally challenge the strategic premise of Imboost IMBEX 2025 participation:

First, the best selling product was Imboost Extra Vit C & D3 Effervescent an adult-oriented supplement rather than any product from the Imboost Extra Kids line, which was the primary communication focus. Parental attendees at IMBEX, while interested in children's health products, may have prioritized their own supplement needs when confronted with compelling Buy 1 Get 1 promotions on adult products.

Second, the Buy 1 Get 1 promotion was identified as the most effective conversion mechanism—a finding that validates price-sensitivity as a dominant purchase driver in the Indonesian health supplement market. This aligns with consumer behavior research by Ailawadi et al. (2021), which established that bundle promotions consistently outperform percentage discount offers in generating trial purchases for wellness products, particularly in price conscious markets.

Third, the dominance of adult products over children's products suggests a misalignment between the brand's positioning objective (introducing Imboost Extra Kids) and the product-communication strategy deployed. While IMBEX's audience profile (parents, expecting mothers) is theoretically receptive to children's health products, the communication strategy did not sufficiently address the consideration gap the persuasive work required to shift a consumer from 'aware of Imboost Extra Kids' to 'motivated to trial/purchase Imboost Extra Kids' in an event setting.

Structural Analysis: Why Digital Strategy Partially Underperformed

Synthesizing the above findings, the digital marketing strategy at IMBEX 2025 demonstrated effectiveness at the Awareness and Consideration stages but encountered structural friction at Conversion and Trial stages. Four interconnected factors explain this pattern:

- 1) **Promotional Communication Ambiguity:** The deployment of generalized discount claims ('up to 40%') across social media reduced the strategy's ability to generate pre-committed purchase intent. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022) specifically identify price ambiguity as a high-dropout factor at the Consideration-to-Conversion transition. Future strategies should present specific, product-level promotional offers supported by price anchoring and scarcity messaging.
- 2) **Audience-Product Misalignment:** While the brand targeted a parenting audience, the product introduced (Imboost Extra Kids) was newer and less established than adult variants. Consumer adoption of new supplement products requires a higher consideration investment than re-purchase of established products (Kotler et al., 2021). The digital content strategy should have allocated greater weight to product education including clinical benefit communication, safety credentials for children, and trial sampling mechanisms to close the consideration gap.
- 3) **Booth Location and Offline-Digital Integration:** The structural disadvantage of Hall A placement underscores the need for tighter integration between digital and physical strategies. Brands in low-traffic zones should deploy geo-targeted digital advertising within the event venue itself (e.g., IMBEX app notifications, WhatsApp broadcast to registered attendees) to drive directed traffic to their booth—a tactic that was not evidently deployed in this instance.
- 4) **KOL Impact Measurement Deficit:** Without trackable attribution metrics (UTM parameters, influencer-specific discount codes), it is impossible to quantify the KOL strategy's contribution to pre-order conversion. This measurement gap represents both a strategic blind spot and a research gap. Future MICE digital marketing deployments should implement integrated marketing measurement systems that enable attribution modeling across all digital touchpoints.

Theoretical Contribution: The Digital-MICE Funnel Model

This study's findings support the development of what we term the Digital-MICE Funnel Model—a conceptual extension of the Inverted Marketing Funnel adapted to exhibition event contexts. The model proposes that in hybrid MICE events, digital channels function as the primary conversion engine (rather than secondary support), with physical booth presence serving as experiential validation for digitally pre-committed consumers. This represents a significant departure from traditional exhibition marketing theory, which frames the booth as the primary point of commercial exchange.

The Digital-MICE Funnel Model has four implications for exhibitor brands: (1) digital pre-event campaigns should be conversion-oriented, not

merely awareness-oriented; (2) online pre-order mechanisms should be presented as equal (or superior) purchase channels alongside offline booth transactions; (3) post-event digital re-targeting should be planned from the outset, not reactively; and (4) measurement infrastructure (analytics, attribution) should be embedded in strategy design, not retrospectively assessed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper examined the implementation and effectiveness of Imboost's digital marketing strategy at IMBEX 2025 through the analytical lens of the Inverted Marketing Funnel. The study demonstrated that digital marketing—encompassing social media, paid advertising, KOL partnerships, and online pre-order mechanisms—contributed significantly to overall event sales performance, accounting for 55% of total realization. However, total performance reached only 70% of target, reflecting structural challenges at the Conversion and Trial stages of the funnel.

Critical analysis identified four primary constraints on performance: promotional communication ambiguity, audience-product misalignment, booth location disadvantage, and inadequate digital measurement infrastructure. These findings carry implications not only for Imboost's future exhibition strategy but for the broader field of MICE event marketing, where the convergence of digital and physical engagement increasingly demands a digital-first, data-driven approach.

According to the results, various strategic actions are suggested to enhance the efficiency of upcoming exhibition involvement. Product offerings in various price ranges must be systematically organized and assessed using quantifiable metrics, such as visitor engagement, lead generation, conversion rates, and sales results. Distinct QR codes must be integrated into every promotional medium to monitor visitor reactions and produce dependable information on promotional efficiency. For derivative products, initial marketing strategies should highlight product knowledge, especially its features, advantages, and competitive strengths. WhatsApp broadcasts can also be used to share pertinent information and advertise programs during exhibitions, as long as the recipients have consented.

Regular assessments ought to be carried out via surveys with current and prospective customers. The obtained data can aid in future choices regarding exhibition tactics, market placement, and customer interaction. Additional studies are suggested to explore the impact of QR code tracking, product education, and communication via WhatsApp on visitor engagement, purchase intention, conversion rates, and the overall effectiveness of the exhibition.

FURTHER STUDY

Future research should empirically test the Digital-MICE Funnel Model in the setting of healthcare and consumer brands involved in family-focused exhibitions. Experimental or quasi-experimental approaches could be utilized to assess the effectiveness of specific product promotions against general incentives, especially Buy One Get One (BOGO) deals and percentage-off discounts. The evaluation of the model must utilize quantifiable measures throughout the

marketing funnel, such as message reach, click-through rate, booth attendance, conversion rate, average transaction value, and repeat purchases over the 30, 60, and 90 days post-exhibition. This long-term evaluation would offer a deeper insight into both the short-term and lasting impacts of exhibition-centered digital marketing techniques on consumer behavior.

Additional studies should investigate the impact of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) by employing trackable links and distinct promotional codes to connect consumer reactions and purchases to specific promotional sources. Factors related to KOLs—such as the number of followers, engagement rates, alignment between the brand and KOL, characteristics of the audience, and type of content—must be examined to assess their potential in predicting purchase conversions. Future research could also explore consumer trust, perceived credibility, and purchase intention as mediators, along with product category and consumer traits as moderators. These research avenues would enhance the empirical credibility and general applicability of the Digital-MICE Funnel Model while aiding in the creation of more quantifiable, focused, and impactful exhibition marketing approaches.

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