

INSTAGRAM CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR HOSPITALITY BRAND IDENTITY: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF @VASAHOTEL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the content marketing strategy implemented by the Instagram account @vasahotel in strengthening Vasa Hotel Surabaya's brand identity. A qualitative approach with Krippendorff's content analysis was employed to examine 20 Instagram posts published between July 2025 and February 2026. The analysis was guided by Pulizzi's content marketing dimensions, namely content mission, content tilt, and platform suitability, and interpreted using Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism. The findings indicate that @vasahotel utilizes Instagram not merely as a promotional medium but as a strategic platform for brand identity construction. Through content mission, Vasa Hotel Surabaya communicates its positioning as a premium hospitality brand integrating business, cultural, culinary, and lifestyle values. Content tilt differentiates the brand by transforming promotional messages into artistic, experiential, and storytelling-driven content. Meanwhile, platform suitability is reflected in the effective use of carousel and reels formats that align with Instagram's characteristics and audience behavior. Overall, the study demonstrates that content marketing contributes to reinforcing Vasa Hotel Surabaya's identity as a modern, premium, and experience-oriented hospitality brand.

Keywords: Content Marketing, Brand Identity, Hospitality Industry, Vasa Hotel Surabaya

A. Introduction

The rapid development of information technology has transformed marketing communication practices, shifting them toward digital marketing strategies that utilize social media platforms to engage broader audiences interactively (Pah & Amalia, 2024). In Indonesia, social media has

become a strategic channel for organizations to establish relationships with consumers and strengthen brand presence. According to We Are Social, Indonesia had approximately 180 million social media users in 2025, representing 62.9% of the total population (Social, 2025).

Among various social media platforms, Instagram has emerged as one of the most widely used tools for digital marketing due to its emphasis on visual communication. The platform enables organizations not only to promote products and services but also to construct and communicate their brand identity through consistent visual narratives. Data from NapoleonCat indicated that Instagram users in Indonesia reached 121.5 million in January 2026, with individuals aged 25–34 constituting the largest user segment (NapoleonCat, 2026). This extensive usage highlights Instagram's potential as a medium for strengthening brand identity.

In this context, content marketing has become an essential strategy for creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain target audiences (Pulizzi, 2021). Beyond promotional purposes, content marketing facilitates emotional connections between brands and consumers while shaping audience perceptions of a brand. A strong brand identity enables organizations to differentiate themselves from

competitors and enhance brand recognition in increasingly competitive markets (Ramdhani et al., 2023).

The hospitality industry is one of the sectors that actively employs Instagram as part of its digital marketing efforts. Intensifying competition, particularly among five-star hotels in Surabaya, requires hotels to establish distinctive brand identities to remain competitive against international hotel chains. In this landscape, Vasa Hotel Surabaya, a locally owned five-star hotel, has demonstrated its competitiveness through various national and international recognitions while maintaining its position within the premium hospitality market. Through its Instagram account, @vasahotel, the hotel consistently publishes promotional content, collaborations, event-related posts, and food and beverage features that reflect the brand characteristics it seeks to communicate.

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Instagram content marketing in enhancing audience engagement. Sakti and Delisa (2024) found that educational, interactive, and user-

generated content contributed to higher follower engagement. Similarly, Septrian and Nirmala (2025) reported that content themes aligned with audience experiences strengthened relationships between brands and their followers. Nugroho et al. (2024) further emphasized that consistent visual and narrative strategies play a crucial role in establishing brand identity on Instagram. However, existing studies have primarily focused on engagement outcomes or brand identity within the beauty, media, and food and beverage sectors. Research examining how content marketing strategies reinforce brand identity in the hospitality industry, particularly within locally owned five-star hotels, remains limited.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to analyze the content marketing strategy employed by @vasahotel on Instagram in strengthening its brand identity. This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach, drawing upon Pulizzi's content marketing framework, which encompasses content mission, content tilt, and platform suitability, alongside

Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism. The study contributes to the growing body of digital marketing communication literature by providing insights into how content marketing strategies can reinforce brand identity within the hospitality sector.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative research design using content analysis to examine the content marketing strategy of the Instagram account @vasahotel in constructing Vasa Hotel Surabaya's brand identity. This approach is used to explore the meanings, patterns, and message construction embedded within visual and textual content in depth. The population of this study consists of all content marketing posts published on the @vasahotel Instagram account.

A total of 20 Instagram posts published between July 2025 and February 2026 were analyzed, as these posts represented the three key dimensions of content marketing proposed by Pulizzi (2021), namely content mission, content tilt, and platform fit. The selected posts also demonstrated variations in visual presentation, message framing,

narrative approach, and content format, enabling a comprehensive understanding of how Vasa Hotel Surabaya strategically communicates and reinforces its brand identity through Instagram content.

Data collection techniques included non-participant observation, documentation of Instagram posts, and literature review. The researcher observed the content without direct involvement in its production process while systematically recording relevant visual and textual data. Data analysis was conducted using Krippendorff's content analysis framework, consisting of six stages: unitizing, sampling, recording/coding, reducing, inferring, and narrating. These stages were employed to systematically identify, categorize, and interpret patterns of visual style, message construction, and narrative strategies within the selected @vasahotel posts.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Strengthening The Hotel Identity with Content Mission Strategy

The Content Mission category shows that @vasahotel consistently uses strategic storytelling to

communicate its brand identity as a premium hospitality provider. The content positions Vasa Hotel Surabaya not only as accommodation, but as a lifestyle and experience-based brand that integrates business travel, cultural values, social responsibility, and luxury experiences.

Visually, the posts are dominated by cinematic composition, premium aesthetics, warm tones, and elegant framing, reinforcing an image of exclusivity and professionalism. The content consistently highlights themes such as business travel, cultural celebrations, CSR activities, culinary experiences, celebrity presence, and lifestyle moments.

In terms of messaging, the main finding is that the hotel is constructed as a lifestyle partner that responds to diverse guest needs, including business, cultural, and experiential demands. The captions strengthen this positioning by using persuasive, emotional, and sometimes poetic language to enhance meaning and audience engagement.

Overall, the Content Mission category confirms that Vasa Hotel Surabaya builds its brand identity through a consistent combination of

visual luxury, experiential messaging, and narrative-driven captions that reinforce its positioning as a modern and experience-oriented luxury hotel.

Figure 1. Luxury Experience Content



Figure 2. Guest Service Content



Vasa Hotel Surabaya's content mission strategy does not position Instagram merely as a promotional channel, but as a key medium for constructing a premium hotel brand identity. The strategy is implemented through several dominant themes, including professional business travel experiences, local cultural values and nationalism, collaborations with public figures, and exclusive culinary promotions. Collectively, these themes consistently shape the hotel's image as a modern five-star hospitality

brand that integrates lifestyle, business needs, cultural awareness, and experiential luxury.

The findings show that Vasa Hotel Surabaya positions itself as a business travel partner through storytelling that highlights the guest journey from arrival to full utilization of hotel facilities. This narrative is supported by premium and consistent visual presentation. Visual and narrative consistency plays an important role in strengthening brand recognition (Ningtyas & Amalia, 2024), while content must maintain a clear strategic direction (Pulizzi, 2021). In addition, digital storytelling enhances audience understanding of brand meaning (Abellia & Amalia, 2025), reinforcing the personality and relationship dimensions of Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism (Wardhana, 2024).

Furthermore, the hotel integrates local culture and national values through content related to Independence Day, National Batik Day, and full-day experiential storytelling. These contents demonstrate that the brand is not solely focused on luxury but also emphasizes cultural appreciation and shared values. Consistent brand

communication strengthens audience engagement and recall (Kurnia et al., 2025), while the use of national moments serves as an effective differentiation strategy (Fathoni & Amalia, 2025) and highlights the importance of message framing in communication strategy (Damayanti & Amalia, 2024). Cultural elements such as batik are presented not only as visual symbols but also as emotional and identity-building elements (Putri & Amalia, 2024), thereby reinforcing the culture, personality, and self-image dimensions of the brand identity framework (Wardhana, 2024).

In addition, collaborations with public figures such as Denny Sumargo in the “A Moment at Vasa” series function as a form of celebrity endorsement that strengthens the hotel’s exclusive and aspirational image. Public figures with strong personal branding can effectively shape audience perception in digital media (Ningtyas & Amalia, 2024), while content marketing serves to deliver relevant and valuable content to audiences (Adilla & Hendratmoko, 2023). The aspirational tone of captions further encourages audiences to imagine similar experiences, thereby strengthening

the personality dimension of the Brand Identity Prism.

Meanwhile, exclusive culinary promotional content such as the Whiskey Dinner at Chamas frames gastronomy as a premium lifestyle experience rather than simple event promotion. Content marketing in this context plays a role in building emotional connections between the brand and its audience through strong narrative and visual storytelling (Utami, 2025). Captions such as “smoke, whiskey, and feast” enhance sensory imagination and audience engagement, reinforcing Vasa Hotel Surabaya’s positioning as a hospitality brand oriented toward experience, lifestyle, and luxury, with a strong emphasis on the personality dimension of Kapferer’s Brand Identity Prism.

Overall, Vasa Hotel Surabaya demonstrates an adaptive and integrated communication strategy in strengthening its brand identity. Through cinematic visuals, experience and oriented messaging, and personal and inspirational narratives, the hotel successfully positions itself not only as an accommodation provider, but also as a lifestyle space, a business travel partner, and a modern hospitality

brand that still respects and celebrates Indonesian culture.

2. Artistic Element, Cultural, and Artistic Narrative as a Differentiation Strategy

The Content Tilt category shows that @vasahotel shifts from conventional promotional content to artistic, experiential, and narrative-based communication.

Visually, the content consistently applies cinematic and aesthetic approaches, including live cooking performances, gallery-style visuals, luxury food presentation, mindful dining, wedding storytelling, celebrity features, fine dining reinterpretations, immersive festive concepts, vlog-style content, chef storytelling, and seasonal (Ramadan) visuals. These elements emphasize experience, atmosphere, and visual luxury.

In terms of message, the posts prioritize experiential and symbolic meaning rather than direct promotion. Culinary content is reframed as performance and cultural expression, local dishes are elevated into fine dining experiences, events are presented as immersive experiences, and lifestyle content builds an aspirational image of the hotel.

Captions support this shift by using reflective, poetic, and storytelling language that strengthens meaning and emotional engagement, rather than merely describing the visuals. Some captions also function as interaction triggers to increase audience engagement.

Overall, the Content Tilt category indicates a consistent transformation of promotional content into experiential storytelling that reinforces Vasa Hotel Surabaya's luxury and lifestyle brand identity.

Figure 3. Luxury Culinary Content



Figure 4. Aesthetic Visual Gallery Content



Vasa Hotel Surabaya applies a content tilt strategy as a form of differentiation by transforming

promotional content into more artistic, experiential, and storytelling-based communication. This approach demonstrates that content marketing functions not only as promotion but also as a medium for building emotional value, audience engagement, and long-term brand experience (Pulizzi, 2021; Jeremiah & Michael, 2024).

The main differentiation is reflected through various visual and narrative approaches such as Japanese live cooking, modern art space representation, cultural symbols, emotional experiences, and aspirational storytelling featuring public figures. Live cooking is constructed as a culinary performance through “The Art of Live Japanese Cooking,” reinforcing the culture dimension by presenting tradition as an immersive experience (Jeremiah & Michael, 2024). Similarly, the hotel lobby is positioned as an art gallery, expanding the hotel’s function into a cultural and aesthetic space rather than only a hospitality facility.

In the cultural aspect, mooncake is represented as a symbol of togetherness and harmony rather than a seasonal product, strengthening its emotional and

cultural value. Meanwhile, “The Art of Noticing” and wedding storytelling shift the focus from service promotion to emotional and sensory experience, reinforcing the relationship dimension by building deeper emotional engagement with audiences (Jeremiah & Michael, 2024).

In the public figure strategy, the presence of Cinta Laura is used as an aspirational narrative to construct an exclusive lifestyle image. This approach is effective because public figures with strong personal branding can shape audience perception in digital media (Ningtyas & Amalia, 2024), while content marketing plays a role in delivering relevant and meaningful content (Adilla & Hendratmoko, 2023). This strengthens the reflection dimension, where audiences are encouraged to identify with the ideal lifestyle portrayed by the brand.

Overall, Vasa Hotel Surabaya’s content tilt strategy successfully creates strong differentiation by transforming content into visual, cultural, and emotional experiences. The content functions not only as promotion but as storytelling that positions the hotel as a premium hospitality brand built on experience,

aesthetics, and a modern lifestyle identity.

3. Optimizing Carousel and Reels Formats as a Platform Suitability Strategy

The The Platform Suitability category shows that @vasahotel consistently adapts its content format to the features and user behavior of Instagram to maximize engagement and reach.

Visually, the use of carousel posts is optimized to create structured storytelling that encourages swipe interaction, increasing user engagement duration. Meanwhile, reels format is used for short, natural, and non-advertorial videos, aligning with Instagram's algorithm preference and audience behavior that favors fast, dynamic, and easily digestible content.

In terms of message, the content focuses on culinary and lifestyle experiences designed to attract attention, generate curiosity, and encourage audience interaction as well as potential real-life engagement with the hotel experience.

Captions are written in a concise, sensory, and emotional style that fits Instagram consumption

patterns. They function as a supporting element that strengthens the visual message and enhances audience imagination and engagement.

Overall, this category indicates that @vasahotel's content is well aligned with Instagram's platform features, algorithm, and user behavior, making it effective in increasing reach, interaction, and audience experience.

Figure 5. Carousel Content



Figure 6. Reels Content



Platform suitability in content marketing (Pulizzi, 2021) is essential in determining how effectively content is delivered and consumed on digital platforms. In this case, Instagram functions not only as a distribution channel but also as a space that

shapes content format, style, and audience engagement patterns. Thus, @vasahotel adapts its content to align with Instagram's user behavior and algorithmic structure.

The carousel post (15 July 2025) shows structured storytelling, where each slide has a specific role that guides users to swipe through the content. This increases interaction time and engagement (Nugroho et al., 2024). The caption supports this with short, sensory language like "the scent, the sear, the sizzle," matching Instagram's preference for concise and expressive communication.

The Reels post (19 July 2025) reflects alignment with Instagram's algorithm, which prioritizes short-form video for wider organic reach. Its natural and non-promotional style meets audience expectations for authenticity, consistent with platform-fit principles (Pulizzi, 2021).

From the Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer in Wardhana, 2024), these formats strengthen brand physique through visual consistency and enhance relationship by creating more personal and immersive experiences (Ayu & Kartika, 2024). Caption strategies, such as the Ramadan Hampers post (25 February 2026),

also encourage interaction through direct calls-to-action, increasing engagement and visibility within Instagram's algorithm (Laili & Saputra Dharma, 2025).

Overall, @vasahotel effectively utilizes Carousel and Reels as complementary formats carousel for structured storytelling and reels for immersive reach and reflecting a strong understanding of Instagram's ecosystem and audience behavior.

D. Conclusion

This study shows that the content marketing strategy implemented by @vasahotel on Instagram plays an important role in strengthening Vasa Hotel Surabaya's brand identity as an experience-based luxury hotel. The consistent content mission builds a premium lifestyle image that goes beyond accommodation to include business, cultural, culinary, and social experiences. The content tilt shifts communication from conventional promotion to more artistic, emotional, and storytelling-based content, creating differentiation and emotional engagement with audiences. Meanwhile, platform suitability is reflected in the effective use of

carousel and reels formats, which align with Instagram's characteristics and enhance interaction, reach, and user experience. Overall, @vasahotel's content marketing functions not only as promotion but also as a means of constructing a strong and consistent brand identity.

The study recommends maintaining experience-based storytelling, improving interactive content, and optimizing user-generated content while balancing visual aesthetics and information, as well as expanding to other digital platforms. The study is limited by its focus on a single Instagram account with 20 posts and a qualitative approach that may involve interpretive subjectivity. Future research is suggested to conduct comparative studies across luxury hotels or use quantitative methods to measure the impact of content marketing on engagement and brand awareness.

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