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IMPLEMENTATION OF SECI FRAMEWORK IN LCF PROCESS FOR INCREASING THE MARKET SHARE IN UNILEVER INDONESIA

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Abstract

One of the biggest FMCG companies in the country is Unilever Indonesia, which has already operated in Indonesia for more than 80 years. They have established their leadership in the Indonesian market since they have huge penetration even in the rural areas, and they have designed logistical and supply chain systems, especially in general and traditional trade and markets. However, since the 2010s, Unilever has faced huge competition, especially from local competitors in particular the home care, beauty, and personal care business categories. In the span of 10 years, their market share declined by almost 3.5%, while other small local manufacturers increased it by almost 7%. The study aims to identify the current product communication and claim regulatory and compliance review discussion called Local Claim Forum (LCF) flaws and loopholes, including the improvement area, propose the improvement plan for the LCF process, and propose the implementation timeline for the LCF process. The data analysis method(s) used are qualitative data analysis using thematic analysis. The study found that 1) effective communication is the main part to be improved in the socialization framework. 2) Knowledge and information documentation are the main concerns that need to be addressed in the externalization framework. 3) IT utilization and digital cloud storage are the main action plans for improving the Combination Framework. 4) LCF guidelines and additional training are needed to improve the internalization framework of the process.

Keywords: SECI Framework, LCF Process, Market Share, FMCG.

Introduction

The characteristics of an FMCG company are a high turnover rate, high volume, and a generally high margin. The overall market size depends on the population of the area; hence, Indonesia is always considered one of the biggest emerging markets for FMCGs. Since the market size is usually limited to the population, the competition between manufacturers and companies is tight and fierce. Hence, companies also need to focus and put maximum effort into marketing fast-moving consumer goods to attract and entice consumers.

Indonesia has one of the largest markets for beauty and personal care products in the world, with 6.9 trillion USD, and is still growing at a rate of 6.7% per year. Moreover, the food category in the FMCG industry in Indonesia is also growing at a similar rate of 6.11%

per year. These gigantic market sizes were mostly taken by only a few major players like Unilever, P&G, Indofood, Mayora, Wings, Beiserdorf, and Johnson & Johnson. However, due to digitalization and borderless access, the other small local manufacturers market share increased it by almost 7%, because they were able to sourcing the product and marketing it strategically.

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Claim and communication on FMCG used to bring the competitive advantage by creating broad differentiation. The focus is to emphasis the features or characteristics that make the company's product stand out against its competitor. In particular, the company attracts consumer to the specially designed product and innovation. By having the differentiation from the generic consumer goods product, the companies can charge at the higher and premium price to increase their revenue.

The main example is body wash product. Soap mainly is just a soap which its main function is to cleanse. If the company claiming that the soap is also giving additional benefit that is not only do the cleansing, but also moisturizing, it can differentiate the soap product from the competitor. They can make claim like "moisturizing soap" or "nourishing soap, which can attract the consumer to buy and pay the soap at the higher price.

In Indonesia, over claiming are highly prohibited and monitored by the government through BPOM. Company needs to have strong supporting data or document behind every claim, since it is very closely related to the consumer protection and fraud. Each of the FMCG companies are also open to challenge and complaint related to the other's companies' product claim, if it violates the regulations.

Unilever has their own claim and communication generation process via knowledge discussion and sharing called Claim Forum (LCF) with main internal stakeholders consist of Regulatory Affairs and Legal Team, Research and Development Team, and Marketing Team. To increase the product claim and communication quality, and market respond time, evaluation of the knowledge management process in LCF is necessary using the SECI Framework with the proposed improvement plan.

Method

This study will be continued using qualitative techniques to gather insight and discovery from the internal stakeholders of the claim and communication generation process called LCF. The main stakeholders are the LCF members, which consist of the Marketing Team, R&D Team, and Legal Team. The qualitative data is gathered using semi-structured interviews and then analyzed by thematic analysis.

The data analysis method(s) used are qualitative data analysis using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis (TA) is a technique for methodically locating, classifying, and providing insight into patterns of meaning (themes) throughout a dataset. A flexible approach like thematic analysis enables the researcher to concentrate on the data in a variety of different ways. Using TA, we can appropriately concentrate on analyzing meaning across the entire dataset or conduct a thorough investigation into a specific facet of a phenomenon that is happening in the LCF. We can report the obvious or semantic meanings in the data, or we can investigate the latent meanings—the assumptions and concepts that lie beneath what is

Result and Discussion

Qualitative Data Analysis using Thematic Analytic

After the data collection, the author conducts the qualitative data analysis using thematic analysis. The analysis is done separate from each stakeholder to observe each perspective; hence we can develop one general solution for all of the stakeholders.

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Thematic Analytic of Regulatory Affairs and Legal Team

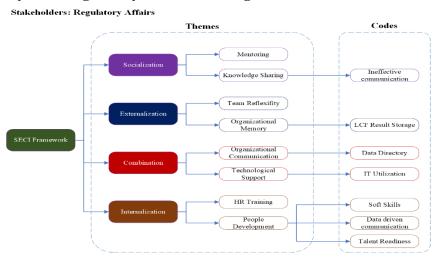


Figure 1. Thematic Analysis Diagram of Regulatory Affairs and Legal Team

For the regulatory team, the main problem was coming on the Combination and Internalization area from the SECI Framework. To summarize, the factors are as follows:

1. Ineffective Communication

Mostly the problem was coming from the data owner that they are not fully understand the data, hence the communication is not on point and based on assumption. The seniority also felt by the regulatory team that makes them is hard to be challenged if there is disagreement.

2. LCF Result Storage

The project to make the formal documentation of the LCF is not consistent. Some initiatives had been made but formal execution with real result is not fully done. The urgent needs are on the uniform format on the documentation, the supporting data location, and the PIC as the main responsibility for storing the information.

3. Data Directory

After the data being stored, when being challenged by BPOM or competitor, Regulatory Affair and Legal team are the on who are facing the regulators. To defend the challenge, they need all of the supporting data in addition to the project history for gaining the learning from previous experience. They are struggle with finding the data needed on time and gather more information as the support data for defending the challenge.

4. IT Utilization

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As one of the biggest FMCG company in Indonesia, the company should have the capital to invest on the IT system for the LCF. The aim is having the storage and the combination of the LCF discussion recapitulation and supporting data being digitalized. Almost all aspect had been successfully digitalized, hence the IT utilization of this project is very feasible.

5. People Development

The issue raised by the RA team for the R&D team are they are able to communicate the product technical data effectively. They think that the R&D team are either not having the correct skill set for data driven and effective communication or they are unable to provide and fully understand the data in time before the LCF was conducted. In addition, the RA team has not raised major concern for the Marketing Team in terms of the communication, but they raised in overall, we need suitable soft skills and data mastery before joining the LCF session.

Thematic Analytic of Research and Development Team

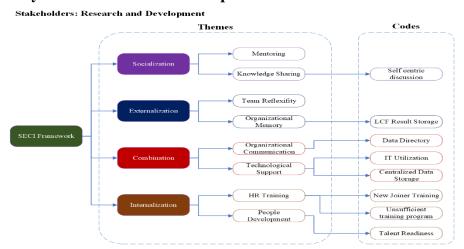


Figure 2. Thematic Analysis Diagram of Reasearch and Development Team

For the research and development team, the main problem was coming on the Combination and Internalization area from the SECI Framework. To summarize, the factors are as follows:

1. Self-centric discussion

One issue that bothered the research and development team are the marketing team that is usually very self-centric. They often come to the LCF without any preparation in reading the product technology and government regulation, and yet forcing their marketing claim into the product.

2. Data directory

This issue similar with the Regulatory Affairs and legal team where they found very hard to find the records of the previous LCF history and supporting document. This issue will slow down the response time from them when the challenge from BPOM or competitor come, and they need to provide the supporting document.

3. IT Utilization

Similar with the concern from the Regulatory Affairs and Legal Team, they are also feeling that there is underutilization of IT system for helping the overall LCF process for both the discussion and the data storage.

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4. Centralized data storage

Data accessibility is one of the most important aspects for reducing the response time by the Research and Development Team when handling the LCF or challenge, in addition to improve self-capability by gathering and reading a lot of the product technology data and information. Scatter information can waste a lot of precious time while it can be allocated to the learning itself.

5. HR training

In this section, there are two codes factor that is bothering the Research and Development Team which are the new joiner training and insufficient training for talent prior to entering the LCF session. They are lacking the soft skills required especially on the communication aspect and the overall common goals of the LCF for risk assessment, not forcing the idea or winning the argument.

6. Talent Readiness

This section is like the follow up result from the lack of the HR training that creates lack of talent readiness. On major point that the LCF personnel should have the right chemistry when joining the forum, but most of new joiner are lack of it.

Thematic Analytic of Marketing Team

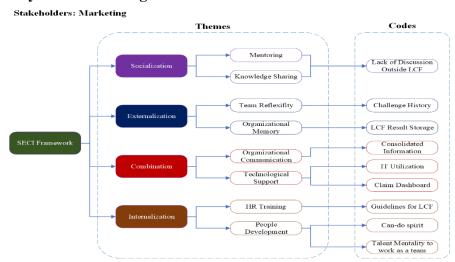


Figure 3. Thematic Analysis Diagram of Marketing Team

For Marketing Team, which are also mainly the project leader, they raised concerns more than the other stakeholders. To summarize, the factors are as follows:

1. Lack of Discussion Outside LCF

The marketing team feels that outside the LCF session, they feel very hard to get the explanation or mentoring from both the Regulatory Affairs and Legal Team, in addition to the Research and Development Team. Hence, mostly it is not often the Marketing Team entering the LCF session prepared.

2. Challenged History Data

They feel they are lacking the accessibility to the history of the internal product that is being challenged. Usually, the Regulatory Affairs and Legal Team with the Research and Development Team solve the challenge issue without involving the Marketing Team. Hence, they are not exposed with the product challenged defense process.

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3. LCF Result Storage

This factor is the same between all of the stakeholders where there is no official format or guidelines and system on how to store the LCF discussion result to be monitored again in the future.

4. Consolidated Information

The Marketing Team which are usually are the project leader, tend to be more generalist among all LCF stakeholders. Hence, they need to see the overall pattern and simplified information for helping them taking the decision based on the LCF previous discussion and the availability of the product supporting document.

5. IT Utilization

This factor is also the same between all of the stakeholders where there is underutilization of the IT system for helping / supporting the overall process of the discussion and data storage.

6. Claim Dashboard

The dashboard that the marketing requested is the visualization system of the consolidated information and history of previous LCF which was presented in more graphical manner. They believed that dashboard-like visualization can enhance the overall knowledge absorption from the team and speed up the learning process before taking any big decision.

7. Official Guidelines for LCF

Since the LCF is being done sporadically, without any official format and method, having one is a great idea. We can put what to be expect during the session and the objective and key result (OKR) for each session.

8. Risk Taker Mentality

The Marketing Team feels that both of the Regulatory Affairs and Legal Team and the Research and Development Team are more conservative when taking the decision. The Marketing Team demands bold claim to win the market.

9. Chemistry as a team

This is the follow up and result from the difference in styles among the stakeholders while the Marketing Team which is bolder compared to the other stakeholders that is more conservative. The Marketing Team feel like an outsider and facing the other stakeholders during the LCF session.

Summary of Data Analysis

Based on the secondary data analysis using PESTEL and SWOT-TOWS, we can draw the general conclusion that we are encouraged to conduct study for improvement based on the entire PESTEL analysis. The improvement of the claim and communication become essential to produce the successful product because the inflation forced FMCG companies to raise their

selling prices. Furthermore, according to the SWOT-TOWS Analysis, an updated LCF system can help achieve W-O strategies, specifically those related to controlling bureaucracy and data storage, as well as W-T strategies, particularly those related to managing knowledge management. The findings of the study can also be used to improve S-O strategies for targeted innovation and communication that can aid in seizing market opportunities by utilizing a company's strengths.

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Moreover, the qualitative data indicate some area of improvement based on the SECI Frameworks. The stakeholders have some identical opinion about the area of improvement in Externalization and Combination area in the framework, especially in the LCF data storage management system and lack of utilization using the IT system. In addition to that, each of stakeholders had their own concern and area of improvement that they feel needed to be made. For the Regulatory Affairs and Legal team, their major concerns are at the ineffective knowledge sharing and communication during the LCF process by the Research and Development Personnel, while the Research and Development team want centralized data storage for their technological product supporting document. Lastly, the Marketing Team who are mainly acting as the project leader raised more concerned especially on the consolidated information and the visualization of the consolidated information itself to help them making decision easily.

We can conclude the findings and the analysis from the problem in the LCF session in the scope of SECI framework in the following tables. There are factors that are raised by all stakeholders and others are raised by specific stakeholders only.

Table 1. Summary of Qualitative Data Analysis

			•	
Stakeholders	Socialization	Externalization	Combination	Internalization
All Stakeholders	N/A	LCF Documentation	IT Utilization and Data Directory	Talent Readiness and LCF guidelines training
Regulatory Affairs and Legal Team	Ineffective communication	N/A	N/A	Data driven communication
Research and Development Team	Forcing opinion during discussion	N/A	Centralized data storage	Insufficient training program
Marketing Teams	Lack of mentoring	Data / Challenge History	Consolidated information and dashboard	Chemistry and can-do mentality

Business Solution Proposal Socialization Issues Solution

There are 2 main issues coming from the socialization part of the framework, which are the communication that is not effective and lack of mentoring outside the LCF. For overcome these issues, there are 2 main business solution that is proposed:

a. STATE Framework Tools for Effective Communication

The tool was developed by Kerry Patterson, et al. in 2002. The STATE Framework, which stands for Share your facts, tell your story, ask for other's path, talk tentatively, and encouraging testing, is a five-step process for engaging in productive dialogue during high-stakes conversations. Each step in the framework is designed to help individuals communicate their perspective in a way that is clear, respectful, and open to feedback. By sharing your facts and telling your story, you can help the other person understand your perspective and avoid misunderstandings. Sharing objective and verifiable information can establish a common ground for the conversation and prevent arguments based on subjective interpretations. Telling your story can help personalize the conversation and create a connection with the other person, making it easier to discuss challenging topics. By starting the conversation with clear and transparent information, you can set the stage for a productive dialogue that is focused on finding a mutually acceptable solution.

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In addition to these benefits, the STATE framework can also help manage strong emotions, address conflicting perspectives, and build dialogue safety. By providing a structured approach for navigating high-stakes conversations, the framework can help individuals engage in productive dialogue and resolve conflicts effectively.

b. Informal Cross Category Mentoring

Informal mentoring outside of the LCF is also very important as part of the preparation before entering the actual forum and increasing the capability or knowledge prior to the LCF. The main factors for conducting the informal mentoring are initiating the conversation and be available for the mentee. By setting the expectation of the mentoring, this activity can be happened to help improving the quality of the conversation during the LCF. The one who need mentoring the most are the marketing team, who are the one that needed to initiate the conversation and the external affairs and legal team also the research and development team need to be available for the explanation mentoring session.

Externalization issues Solution Proposal

The main issue of externalization process is the documentation of the LCF result. Now, it is very sporadic without any official procedure on how to put the LCF discussion result in writing. Documentation procedure is much needed and developed with the following key points:

a. Documentation PIC

Research and Development Team is the one proposed to be the PIC to document the LCF result. The most complex and complicated information are the product technical scientific knowledge and the overall product benefit. Hence, R&D team is the one among the LCF participant to be able on capturing the helicopter view of the situation.

b. Documentation Format

The format of the documentation must be fixed and agreed by all of the LCF participant. Uniform format is much needed since it helps us to read and taking the point from the documentation faster. The documentation must include the key themes of the discussion,

the date of the discussion, context of the discussion, and the supporting document that will be used to make some claims.

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c. On Point Summary and Conclusion

There should be one pager summary or the conclusion that stating the overall decision of the discussion. It needs to be stated clearly, the risk is **low, medium, or high** and the decision taken based on the risk assessment.

Combination Issues Solution Proposal

This is the area that are lacking the most from the LCF process, which are the IT utilization and the data directory for whole overall stakeholders. They are also demand for centralized storage location and the consolidated data with attractive visualization. Hence, the comprehensive solution for Combination Area of SECI Framework are:

a. Crowd Sourcing Cloud Storage

With a lot of availability of the cloud storage system and application, it is quite strange that some of the LCF recapitulation document and supporting data on each individual's personal computer. The quick fix for utilizing IT into the solution of the problem is trying to centralize all of the supporting data into the cloud storage. Here are the steps proposed for implementing the Cloud Storage

1. Choose the Cloud Storage Service

There are several cloud storage services available in the market, like Google Drive, Dropbox, or OneDrive. We need to involve the IT department to determine which services that fulfill of the criteria met by the IT department, especially on the data security area, to be used by the LCF team.

2. Create and Systemize the Shared Folder

The next important things to be settled is the hierarchy of the folder. To make it accessible with ease, fixed folder hierarchy need to be determined and documented hence the user won't be confused and can understand the file and document placement in no time.

3. Standardize the File Naming and Organization

To make it simpler to find and access the documents, use a consistent folder structure and file naming convention. Use the date and subject of the LCF as the file name, for instance, and arrange the files according to the date or subject.

4. Assign Roles and Permission

To ensure that only authorized users can access or modify the documents, assign roles and permissions. You might, for instance, grant some users read-only access while granting others full editing rights. Continuing the previous solution on the LCF documentation PIC, my proposal is the R&D team is the one leading the management of the cloud storage, since most of the document was coming from the R&D team.

5. Keep the Document Up to Date

Assign someone the responsibility of auditing the overall document storage, and make sure all of the data are promptly uploaded to the cloud storage folder. This helps to ensure that everyone has access to the most recent information and lowers the possibility of misunderstandings or miscommunication.

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b. Communicated and published directory handbook

After the point A established, the directory then must be made based on the folder hierarchy that had been made. The next most important thing is communicating the directory using the intranet communication and internal website. The directory had to be made visible and accessible to all of the stakeholders.

c. Data Visualization Dashboard

To accommodate the stakeholders that are very busy and only have some minimum time to access the data, attractive visualization of the data can be the solution. These are the example of the attractive visualization showing the latest trend. The next action plan is tweaking the way on visualizing the summary of the risk and document into attractive visual presentation



Figure 4. Example of Visualization Data Proposed by Marketing

d. Digitalized LCF Discussion

The long-term goals creating crowd sourcing website that can help to become the discussion tools with collaborative online proofing and instant storage tools with fixed method directory. The perfect example is the online proofing tools from BLUE that usually used for reducing the complexity of packaging and label design. Using the web-based apps, the reviewer can basically put approval and comment for each detail of the design. The visual is very user friendly and easy to manage. The result can be stored instantly using the digital generated file names, and very easy to be accessed.



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Figure 5. The User Interface of BLUE Web Apps

Taking the inspiration from the BLUE web apps, the future goals is we can create similar apps that has the following feature to help solve the problem:

- 1. Attractive and User-Friendly Visual
- 2. Online proofing and ease to access
- 3. Can directly comment, attached data support, and regulatory information directly on the claim on pack or advertisement.
- 4. Approve or reject the risk decision of a claim whether it is low, medium, or high.
- 5. Instantly store the document using unique digital generated name for future searching and reference.

e. Internalization Issues Solution Proposal

The last part is the Internalization part of the SECI Framework. The main issues that are raised by all of the stakeholders are talent readiness and the LCF guidelines. In addition, chemistry between the LCF member and additional training for the stakeholders were also the problems raised by some of the stakeholders. Hence, to solve the problem, here are the proposed solutions:

LCF Guidelines

The formal guidelines must be created to help prepare the stakeholders prior entering the LCF discussion. The guidelines must be including:

- 1. Purposes and objective of the meeting
- 2. Usual agenda and attendees
- 3. Meeting Norms
- 4. Technology and Equipment
- 5. Follow up action after the LCF.

By having the fix guidelines, the goal is the stakeholders that enter the LCF has clear expectation and do/don't during the meeting which can help prepare the talent to settle and adjust their communication style during the discussion.

On Boarding Training

Any new joiner who joins a company needs to go through onboarding training. Onboarding serves to assist new hires in quickly assimilating into the company, becoming acquainted with its culture, policies, and procedures, and comprehending their role and

responsibilities. This procedure boosts new hires' comfort and confidence in their new roles while also boosting their productivity and success over the long term.

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Furthermore, while mostly the on boarding training is more onto the general part of the company profiles and job description, we proposed to have dedicated on boarding session related to the LCF discussion process. The on boarding must be held by both of their line manager and the respective stakeholders. This also can help to build the chemistry at the very beginning of their journey within the company.

Refreshment Workshop or Mentoring

The final proposal is reoccurring workshop or mentoring for the stakeholders that is involved in LCF discussion. The theme of the workshop can be varied, depend on the demand and the needs of the participants, but the aim is to improve the capability of the stakeholders prior entering the LCF session. Refreshment of the LCF guidelines can be also shared regularly during this workshop / mentoring session.

The other benefit that we can take from this solution is if we can manage to make it into the fun way and more engaging, by adding some or several outbound-like activity, it can also increase the chemistry between the team.

Justification of the Business Solution to Improve Market Share

Based on the discussion with the internal guidelines, here are the key element that is required to improve the market share and get the competitive advantage against the competitor:

1. Impactful Innovation and Communication

FMCG products that offer unique features or advantages are more likely to increase their market share because they can give them a competitive edge over competitor products. New product formulations and packaging mostly giving the winning formula for winning the market. Hence, claim on the product, packaging, and communication is very crucial for delivering the product benefit message to the consumer and convince them that the product is the answer to their daily needs and hurdle.

2. Market Responding Time

In order to increase market share, a company's reaction time is essential because it directly affects consumer loyalty and satisfaction. Consumers expect businesses to provide them with prompt and effective product in the hectic business world of today. Conversely, businesses that are receptive and aggressive in resolving customer demands can increase their consumer base and strengthen their position as market leaders. We can show our dedication to consumer and enhance their standing in the market by promptly responding to consumer questions and addressing problems. This, in turn, can lead to increased consumer loyalty, repeat business, and positive word-of-mouth, all of which can contribute to improved market share over time.

3. Brand Reliability

Reliability is coming from the brand that bringing the product On Time in Full. Usually, after launched in the market, the competitor and regulator will make challenge using warning letter if there any product benefit claim is not reasonable or proper. We can

defend the warning letter by providing the supporting document that our product is actually delivering the benefit claim written on the packaging and communication. Usually there are two scenarios where the response letter is rejected by the regulators: the company failed to share the appropriate supporting document, or the company failed to submit the response letter on time. Hence, the product will be ordered to be taken by the market and it will impact the brand power and brand reliability. In the end, the market share will also be impacted.

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Based on the quick qualitative discussion with the stakeholders, the author is observing the potential impact on each of the proposed solution to the market share. The summary of the discussion result is shown in the following table.

Table 2. The Impact of the Solution to the Market Share

Table 2. The impact of the Solution to the Market Share							
Framework	Business Solution	Market Share Element	Priority				
		Improvement					
Socialization	STATE Framework	 Impactful Innovation 	High				
	Tools	 Brand Reliability 					
	Informal Mentoring	 Impactful Innovation 	Medium				
Externalization	Documentation of	 Impactful Innovation 	High				
	Information	• Market Responding					
		Time					
		 Brand reliability 					
Combination	Crowd Sourcing Data	 Impactful Innovation 	High				
	Storage	• Market Responding					
		Time					
		 Brand reliability 					
	Data Directory	• Market Responding	High				
	Handbook	Time					
		 Brand Reliability 					
	Attractive Visualization	 Brand Reliability 	Low				
	Digitalized LCF	 Impactful Innovation 	High				
	Discussion	• Market Responding					
		Time					
		 Brand reliability 	Brand reliability				
Internalization	LCF Guidelines	 Impactful Innovation 	High				
		• Market Responding					
		Time					
		 Brand reliability 					
	On Boarding Training	 Impactful Innovation 	Med				
	Refreshment Workshop	Impactful Innovation	Med				

The priority was decided based on the direct impact on the process improvement of the LCF discussion. However, not all of the high priority project can be implemented directly due to the complexity and high resource investment needed, which may need approval from the higher-level management. It may impact the implementation timeline proposal that the quick fix will be implemented first, then will be followed the plan that will be long term solution of the problems.

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Conclusion

The research of exploring the implementation of SECI framework has brought the insight of the overall result of the improvement area that is needed for the company to gain the market share in the future. However, each of the SECI framework has some area to be improved, which as follows: 1) Effective communication is the main part to be improved in the Socialization framework. 2) Knowledge and information documentation is the main concern that is needed to be done in the Externalization framework. 3) IT Utilization and digital cloud storage is the main action plan for improving the Combination Framework. 4) LCF Guidelines and additional training is needed to improve the Internalization Framework of the process.

Furthermore, as claim can help improving the market share by strengthening the impactful communication and innovation, fastening the market response time, and increasing the brand reliability, there are proposed action plan by the author. The action plan is aligned with the SECI framework area that need to be improved and already assessed based on the priority. The high priority action plan that will be done in sequential manner are STATE Framework for effective communication, documentation of the information, crowd sourcing data storage, data directory handbook, LCF guidelines, and digitalized LCF session. While the medium and low priority action plan are informal mentoring, onboarding training, refreshment workshop, and attractive visualisation.

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