

# Developing Marketing Strategy for Used Car Business Post Pandemic (Case Study of Mobil88 Semarang)

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#### Abstract

The used car industry has a fairly good market in Indonesia. 2020 the used car market collapsed due to Covid-19 but began recovering in 2021. Unfortunately, Mobil88 Semarang did not experience this sales surge, instead seeing a 42% sales loss in 2021. The main problem is the ineffectiveness of Mobil88 Semarang's marketing strategy, which results in low brand awareness and market penetration. Therefore, this research aims to develop a creative, effective, and competitive marketing strategy for developing Mobil88 Semarang. This study included external and internal analysis, which will be summarized in the SWOT analysis. This study will employ both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative approach is utilized to collect in-depth data by interviewing the head of the Mobil88 Semarang branch, existing customers, and potential customers of Mobil88 Semarang. The data obtained from qualitative methods were analyzed using open coding. In addition, a quantitative approach using a questionnaire is applied in this study to validate several concerns. Creating a buyer persona, leveraging social media platforms, and developing cashback programs are among the recommendations for Mobil88 Semarang to solve the company's main issues.

Keywords: marketing strategy; social media; used car business.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Cars are one of the most important inventions of modern times. It was invented by a German engineer named Karl Benz. According to (Sarnita Sadya, 2023), retrieving data from The State Police of the Republic of Indonesia (Polri), cars are the second most popular type of motorized vehicle in Indonesia as of December 31, 2022. Cars also become an integral part of modern society and have profoundly impacted the social economy, environment, and culture. For instance, cars are frequently viewed as a symbol of confidence, power, social status, and competence (Garling and Steg, 2007).

The used car industry itself has a fairly good market in Indonesia. As stated by the COO of Mobil88, the used car market, which had fallen due to Covid-19, started to move in a positive direction in 2021. However, Mobil88 in Semarang did not experience this sales surge. In comparison to total sales in 2020, Mobil88 Semarang saw a 42% decrease in total sales in 2021. This can occur due to a variety of factors, such as the number of competitors in the form of companies or individuals, which makes the competition much tougher, lack of suppliers, and a lack of creative and effective marketing or sales strategies, which leads to a poorness of brand awareness. These factors were stated openly by the head of the Mobil88 Semarang branch during the interview. As a result, more competitive advantage is required to increase brand awareness so that Mobil88 Semarang can emerge as the first choice in people's minds. Brand awareness is critical for increasing market penetration and is favourably influenced by social media, communications, attractiveness, spread, credibility, entertainment, and influencers (Nguyen, 2020).

PESTLE analysis and Porter's Five Forces analysis were applied in this research as part of the external analysis. PESTLE analysis is a business and strategic planning tool that examines external factors affecting an organization's performance (Rastogi and Trivedi, 2016). PESTLE stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental factors. Meanwhile, Porter's Five Forces

which Michael Porter developed, is a simple but effective strategy for identifying the primary sources of competition in the industry. Porter's Five Porter analysis is used to analyze the company's external environment based on competition among similar companies, the threat of new entrants, the threat of substitute products, the bargaining power of buyers, and the bargaining power of suppliers (Porter, 1979). This research aims to create a creative, effective, competitive marketing strategy for developing Mobil88 Semarang.

# **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach since the primary goal was to get as much information as possible from the respondents. According to Creswell (2013), the qualitative approach is suitable when the subject needs to be examined, a complicated, deep understanding is required, and the researcher wants to understand the background or settings of participants. Therefore, this study utilized an in-depth interview with the internal staff and customers as the qualitative method since it allows the researcher to examine from two perspectives. An in-depth interview method was also employed to gather spontaneous information and opinions from respondents. The interviews in this study are separated into two distinct categories: interviews with internal members and customer immersion interviews.

This study used a semi-structured interview, where the interview style contains a pre-planned list of questions but with the flexibility to alter the questions based on the responses given by the respondents. The sampling approach used in this study is judgemental sampling since it allows the researcher to choose members of the Mobil88 Semarang team with a thorough awareness of the brand's business and operational aspects. Besides the researcher also chose interviewees depending on whether or not they have made transactions at Mobil88 Semarang to obtain detailed and more elaborate responses from the respondents.

The data were analyzed using open coding by finding, labelling, and categorizing emergent concepts or themes. In this study, coding was done by looking for useful information based on the respondent's keyword. Two variables were taken from the responses of the respondents. The first variable is "New Insight," by doing this interview; the researcher intends to gather new, more in-depth knowledge from both internal members of Mobil88 Semarang and customers. At the same time, the second variable is "Reason," which also becomes a significant variable since the researcher intends to obtain an explanation from the customers' point of view regarding the factors that finally led them to buy a used car at some businesses.

In addition, a quantitative approach was also implemented in this research. This quantitative technique employs a survey method, with questionnaires as the primary research tool. The benefits of using a quantitative approach with a questionnaire include the ability to quickly and effectively collect large amounts of data. The purpose of this questionnaire is to assist researchers in validating the general desires of customers. Therefore, the questions in this study will be generated based on the findings of the previous interview, which was conducted using a qualitative approach. A minimum sample size of 200 was utilized for this research project since it complies with the sort of survey carried out, which is problem-solving.

Social media analysis is also carried out by tracking, measuring, and analyzing data from Instagram. Instagram is the only social media platform that Mobil88 Semarang uses to promote its business, so some analysis is required to gain insights from its Instagram account. By doing analysis, Mobil88 Semarang can retain the good results they have achieved while also evaluating and improving the still lacking aspects. The analysis includes numerous statistics, including follower growth rate, engagement rate per post, and most active times.

# C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Based on an interview with the head of the Mobil88 Semarang branch, Mobil88 sales were stagnant even before the start of Covid-19. Covid-19's effects were felt in 2021 when Mobil88 Semarang experienced

a quite drastic decline in sales because Mobil88 itself was still confused about how to adapt during the pandemic. This can happen because of several weaknesses and threats that Mobil88 Semarang has recognized. Besides, based on the findings of customer immersion, researchers were able to get a "reason" for why they wanted to acquire a used car and why they bought it at that location, either at Mobil88 Semarang or other dealers. Furthermore, the researchers also obtained "new insight" from customers' experiences purchasing used cars at several dealers.

Quantitatively, of 254 participants, 232 have ever bought a used car. Based on the survey results using a questionnaire, 81.5% of respondents had received information about used cars from social media. Meanwhile, 62.9% of respondents got information about used cars from other people (word of mouth). This aligns with Mobil88 Semarang's marketing media, which prioritizes social media and word of mouth as their primary marketing strategy. Furthermore, 58.6% of respondents ranked price as the most important factor in purchasing a used car; where this can become a significant hurdle for Mobil88 because, as mentioned Lastly, businesses that offer products or services that are distinct from competitors became the most significant aspect that a business should highlight when selling used cars, which was chosen by the majority of respondents with 34.1%.

For Instagram analytics, Mobil88 Semarang has an average follower growth rate of 0.69%, whereas according to data from Hootsuite, the average Instagram account has a monthly follower growth rate of 1.69%. Therefore, Mobil88 Semarang's follower growth rate is considered low. In addition, with 3896 followers by the end of 2021, Mobil88 Semarang qualifies for the nano-influencers category and should have an engagement rate of roughly 4.8%. Meanwhile, the engagement rate per post of Mobil88 Semarang is 0.28%, which is very far from the statistics. Lastly, followers of Mobil88 Semarang are most active on Wednesdays from noon to midnight, with a peak between 6 and 9 p.m.

# Buyer Persona

The researcher recommends that Mobil88 Semarang create a buyer persona so the company has a clearer target audience and understands what its customers want. Because according to the findings of an initial interview with the head of the Mobil88 Semarang branch, Mr A, he is still unaware of Mobil88 Semarang's specific target market. Mr A stated that most Mobil88 Semarang buyers were men aged 30 to 50. As a result, the researcher has recommended the buyer persona shown below.

	Utilitarian	Hedonic
Gender	Man	Man
Age	20+ years old	20+ years old
Location	Area of Semarang City	Area of Semarang City
Income	Rp 2,000,000 - Rp 10,000,000	More than Rp 10,000,000
Objectives	<ol> <li>Have a private car at an affordable price</li> <li>Have a private car for mobility (daily commuting or work)</li> <li>Cost-effectiveness (gasoline, maintenance)</li> <li>Feel safe and comfortable</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Have a middle to upper-class car but at an affordable price</li> <li>Want to customize the car</li> <li>The desire to experience a specific model or brand</li> <li>Nostalgia</li> <li>Experiential action</li> </ol>
Usage	Daily	Daily, occasionally

Table 1. Mobil88 Semarang's Buyer Perso	na
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Source: processed data, 2023

# Leveraging Social Media Platforms

# Instagram

According to a GWI survey, the top five social media platforms used by Indonesians between the ages of 16 and 64 in 2022 are sequentially Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Telegram. Meanwhile, according to a DataIndonesia.id report based on Napoleon Cat statistics, the number of Instagram users in Indonesia as of April 2023 was 109.33 million. This statistic increased by 3.45% from the previous month, reaching 105.68 million users. As a result, adopting Instagram as Mobil88 Semarang's marketing channel was an appropriate choice because Instagram ranks second in the popularity of social media platforms, allowing Mobil88 access to a bigger market. However, given the findings of the Instagram above analytics, a change in how Mobil88 Semarang uses Instagram reels to update and promote their content more frequently. This is because reels are posts with the highest engagement rate on Instagram.

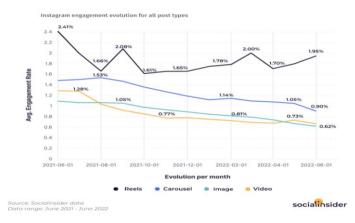


Figure 1. Instagram Reels Engagement by Followers Source: Social Insider

Aside from that, researchers advise Mobil88 Semarang to use Instagram advertising on an occasional basis. These advertisements may reach a large audience by appearing in feeds, stories, reels, and explore. Instagram may estimate the range of reach that will be reached by picking a suitable audience. Therefore, the researcher suggests limiting the target audience to men aged 21-60 who live in Semarang City and are interested in used cars and the automotive industry.

Ads on Instagram can be priced according to the desired budget, with a minimum charge of IDR 29,999 per day. Based on the target audience's characteristics, Instagram will estimate the overall reach that may be attained within the set budget. Researchers recommend that content using ads on Instagram should be displayed for a week, costing IDR 734,972 with a projected reach of 27,000 - 70,000. Mobil88 Semarang must pay IDR 2,939,888 for 4x advertisements from July to December. It is expected that sales at Mobil88 Semarang will increase by one unit every month as a result.

Meanwhile, with the average profit in the used car market between 3% and 5%, the researchers opted for 4% as the expected profit. Aside from that, secondhand cars priced at IDR 100,000,000 are the most popular in general. Consequently, researchers calculated Mobil88 Semarang's profit at 4% of the transaction price of IDR 100,000,000. Thus, Mobil88 Semarang's additional gross profit is IDR 24,000,000, and its net profit is IDR 21,060,112.

## TikTok

Due to the monotonous marketing strategy and the limited marketing channels used by Mobil88 Semarang, the company's sales are moving stagnant and experiencing a drastic decline in 2021. As a result, the researcher recommends that Mobil88 Semarang start utilizing TikTok. Because TikTok is Indonesia's fourth most used social media platform, Mobil88 Semarang can use the TikTok application to promote its products and increase its brand recognition. TikTok had 113 million users in Indonesia aged 18 and above as of April 2023, surpassing Instagram in user numbers.

Researchers recommend that Mobil88 Semarang use post promotion, which allows Mobil88 Semarang to choose the objective for advertising their content on TikTok. Five objectives are available: boost video views, boost website visitors, get followers, obtain more messages, and increase profile views. Furthermore, TikTok includes a function that allows creators to broadcast these contents to a specified target audience; thus, creators may select age, gender, location, and interest to be more aimed at the intended target audience. It is hoped that by delivering interesting and original information, the audience will get interested in the content, the account, and the business before becoming more aware of Mobil88 Semarang. As a result, the researcher suggests that the target audience for Mobil88 Semarang is men aged 18 and above who live in Semarang and are interested in vehicles and transportation. Besides, TikTok is very easy to utilize for content creators. TikTok has several simple editing tools and does not require creators to use other software or programs. This makes TikTok special because viewers are entertained, and creators do not have to spend much time creating content. The content shared can also vary, such as videos with varying duration or a slideshow of images.

Like Instagram, TikTok promotion may be adjusted to fit any budget, with a minimum cost of IDR 15,000. TikTok will also estimate reach based on the budget supplied and the target audience's attributes. Researchers recommended that TikTok advertising should be displayed for one week per content. As a result, Mobil88 Semarang would have to spend Rp. 714,000 for a week to advertise its content on TikTok. Mobil88 Semarang might also expect an extra 9,237 - 38,335 video views and 229 - 2,006 profile views for this amount. There are 5x arranged ad usage on TikTok from July to December. Thus, the total cost of TikTok advertisements for Mobil88 Semarang is IDR 3,570,000. As a result, sales at Mobil88 Semarang are expected to grow by one unit every month. Mobil88 Semarang will gain an additional IDR 24,000,000 in gross profit and IDR 20,430,000 in net profit, based on the same estimates as on Instagram.

## Content Pillar for Instagram and TikTok

Title: "Revving Up Your Used Car Experience" Target audience: Men aged 20-60

Overview:

Instagram and TikTok may provide a wonderful chance for Mobil88 Semarang's audience to engage with them, promote their products, and build brand loyalty. By creating a content pillar based on "Revving Up Your Used Car Experience," Mobil88 Semarang may leverage various social media channels to educate, entertain, communicate, and sell its products. This content pillar includes a variety of content themes and formats that cater to the interests and demands of used car buyers.

Theme	Sub-Theme	Point of Interest
General content	Car Reviews & Testimonials	1. Photo or video reviews of car models.
		<ol> <li>Share testimonials from pleased customers about their interactions with Mobil88.</li> </ol>
		<ol> <li>Highlight the distinct features, performance, and reliability of various cars.</li> </ol>
	Highlight Inventory	<ol> <li>Display high-quality images or videos and descriptions of the available used cars.</li> </ol>

## Table 2. Content Pillar for Instragram and Tiktok

Theme	Sub-Theme	Point of Interest
		2. Highlight one-of-a-kind or uncommon cars in the inventory.
	Warranty and After-Sales Service	Emphasize any warranties or after-sales services that are provided.
	Financing Assistance:	Highlight any special offers, low-interest rates, or flexible payment options that make it easier for customers to afford their desired vehicles.
	Online Service	Describe how the Mobbi app works and demonstrate the simplicity of buying a car online by utilizing the app.
Educational content	Expert Tips & Ask the Expert	<ol> <li>Give practical advice on purchasing and selling used cars.</li> <li>Host live Q&amp;A sessions for followers to ask questions regarding buying and selling used cars.</li> <li>Invite guest experts to participate in live interviews.</li> </ol>
Promotional content	Seasonal or Holiday contents	<ol> <li>Offer special promotions, discounts, or giveaways corresponding to various seasons or holidays (Eid, Christmas, New Year).</li> <li>Feature-themed content such as "Best Used Cars for Eid Road Trips" or "Holiday Car Gift Ideas."</li> </ol>
Entertainment content	Quiz and Challenge	<ol> <li>Run contests or quizzes related to car knowledge.</li> <li>Challenge followers to share their favourite car-related memories or experiences.</li> </ol>
	Car Comparisons	<ol> <li>Make an entertaining video or graphic comparing two different used car models.</li> <li>Highlight unique features and let the audience vote for their favourite.</li> </ol>

Source: processed data, 2023

#### **Cashback Programs**

Cashback is an offer in which the client receives a percentage of cash, virtual cash, or items under certain purchase conditions stipulated by the cashback organizer. According to (Afonso Vieira et al., 2022), the cashback strategy may be separated into generation and redemption. Cashback generation enables customers to save money for future use. On the other hand, cashback redemption allows customers to use the money to pay for things, lowering the price. Cashback offers will be able to attract new clients while also maintaining current customers. Customers who receive cashback as a deposit are more likely to return to the same store to retrieve the reward they have already earned. Furthermore, employing cashback as a promotional technique may be an extra feature differentiating one company from another. According to (Alamsyah & Saino, 2021), the cashback campaign may drive or persuade customers to purchase.

Reflecting on the main business issues faced by Mobil88 in the form of an ineffective marketing strategy, the researcher proposes a cashback program called "CarCoin" that is expected to increase Mobil88 Semarang's market penetration and brand loyalty, as well as "AutoCash Trade-in" that is expected to boost market penetration. Besides, the profit often received from purchasing and selling used cars is between 3% and 5%, depending on the vehicle's general condition (Angelia, 2022). Considering the profit obtained, the researchers divide the "Carcoin" cashback distribution based on the price range of the cars into three categories: 1) The first category occurs when a person sells or buys a car at Mobil88 Semarang for IDR 100,000,000 - IDR 250,000,000. At this price range, the researcher suggests that Mobil88 Semarang can offer cashback in the form of a deposit of IDR 1,000,000 that can be utilized for subsequent transactions; 2) Next are cars with a price range of IDR 250,000,001 - IDR 400,000,000. The researcher suggests that Mobil88 Semarang can acquire a new or higher-class used car. Consequently, researchers dare to give a slightly larger percentage of cashback because there are not as many enthusiasts as in the first price segment; and 3) Clients who spend more than IDR

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400,000,000 will earn a cashback of IDR 5,000,000. A firm can have a better profit margin in this price range, and there is not much demand; thus, the company's earnings will not be significantly reduced.

This cashback is only available to individuals who sell their car and buy a car at Mobil88 Semarang. Customers who sell their car at Mobil88 Semarang in compliance with the above criteria will get cashback in the form of a deposit, which may be used for future sales transactions at Mobil88 Semarang. Meanwhile, customers who purchase a car from Mobil88 Semarang can use the cashback to sell a car they did not purchase from Mobil88 Semarang or sell a car they purchased from Mobil88 Semarang with a minimum usage requirement of 2 years. This restriction was established to discourage clients from engaging in rapid purchasing and selling activity where the car's market price has not changed. Aside from that, customers who previously received cashback for purchasing a car from Mobil88 Semarang can utilize the cashback when making another purchase from Mobil88 Semarang.

Furthermore, Mobil88 provides a trade-in service for people who want to exchange their car for another used car. This trade-in service will still get cashback which clients may use immediately when purchasing a car from Mobil88 Semarang. However, because one of the goals of cashback is to generate repeat orders that cannot be fulfilled during trade-in transactions, the researcher develops a different scheme than the cashback buying and selling outlined above. The researcher only designates two categories for "AutoCash Trade-in": 1) The first is when people sell their cars at Mobil88 for IDR 100,000,000 - IDR 250,000,000. In this category, when a customer buys a car at a lower price than what he is selling, the customer is entitled to a cashback of IDR 500,000.

Meanwhile, if the customer buys a car at a higher price than the one he is selling, the customer will receive a cashback of IDR 1,000,000; and 2) The second category is when people sell their cars for more than IDR 250,000,000. They are eligible for a cashback of IDR 1,000,000 if they purchase a car at a lower price than they sell. Whereas, if they buy a car at a higher price than what they are selling, they will get a cashback of IDR 1,500,000.

These cashback programs will be advertised through social media and print media to reach a larger audience. The chosen social media platforms are Instagram and TikTok, which are the primary focus for Mobil88 Semarang. Additionally, printed media in the form of banners will be deployed and put on some main roads. Mobil88 Semarang must promote the cashback programs at least three times using Instagram and TikTok promotion. This program is attempted to run from July until December, and this advertising runs throughout the first week of the cashback program and one week before major holidays (Independence Day and Christmas). Therefore, according to prior budget projections, one-time Instagram advertising costs IDR 734,972 for seven days. Meanwhile, a fee of IDR 714,000 is required for the same period to promote one piece of content on TikTok. As a result, the total cost of advertising this cashback program on social media is IDR 4,346,916.

In terms of the banners, the Semarang city government has laws in place that manage reclaim tax. The banner's location and size determine the amount of this tax. According to Semarang Mayor Regulation No. 43 of 2011, the tax levied for applying reclaim is 25%. In addition, the roads where the banner will be placed are included in the category of central business areas with a reclaimed rental value (NSR) of IDR  $25,200/m^2/week$ . Therefore, the tax imposed for the four roads is the same, which is IDR  $6,300/m^2/week$ . Researchers also recommend that the area of the banner should be  $6m^2$  since this is the smallest requirement for installing a banner. As a result, each banner hung on the four routes will be subject to a tax of IDR 37,800. Since Mobil88 Semarang should employ the banners for seven weeks until the end of August, the total tax required to put up the banner for seven weeks is IDR 1,058,400. Furthermore, the cost of producing

one 6m<sup>2</sup> banner is roughly IDR 100,000. As a result, by putting one banner each on the four major roads, the production cost is around Rp. 400,000. So the total costs incurred to advertise this cashback program using banners is IDR 1,458,400.

Deposits saved and can be utilized by customers in later purchases are included in one of the marketing expenditures for running cashback. Meanwhile, according to statistics from Mobil88 Semarang, their typical monthly sales are 7-8 units. With the cashback scheme that has been designed, the cost that needs to be spent for a cashback deposit per used car transaction is approximately 1%. Remembering that the typical profit in the used car buying and selling sector is between 3% and 5%, the researcher chose the middle value of 4%. Aside from that, reflecting on Mobil88 Semarang's inventory, which is largely made up of cars priced under Rp. 200,000, this price range aligns with the most popular used cars demanded by the public. As a result, researchers estimate IDR 100,000,000 as the average price of cars sold. Without this cashback program, with an average monthly sales of 8 units, an estimated profit of 4%, and an average selling price of IDR 100,000,000, the net profit that Mobil88 Semarang can obtain is IDR 192,000,000. However, with this CarCoin cashback program, Mobil88 Semarang's sales are projected to grow 1.5x - 2x over their average sales. An increase in sales of 1.5x is likely to occur in normal months when there is no promotion from Mobil88 Semarang. Meanwhile, a 2x rise is expected in August and December due to Instagram and TikTok advertising and other special promotions. Therefore, the estimated net profit is IDR 228,194,684, and the difference in net profit that can be obtained by running the CarCoin cashback program is IDR 36,194,684.

On the other hand, as a market penetration attempt, the auto cash trade-in program is intended to enhance monthly sales of Mobil88 Semarang by two units. Based on the proposed scheme, the researcher calculates the most profitable option for clients, in which IDR 1,000,000 cashback would be obtained directly by clients. The researcher also estimated an average price per car of IDR 110,000,000 associated with the trade-in activities. However, calculations regarding social media ads and banner costs are not included here because these calculations have already been inputted into the CarCoin program. In the end, the predicted net profit is IDR 204,000,000, and the difference in net profit that Mobil88 Semarang may obtain by performing the AutoCash Trade-in program from July to December is IDR 12,000,000. Thereby, the total difference in net profit that Mobil88 Semarang can obtain by applying these two cashback programs is IDR 48,194,684.

# D. CONCLUSION

As a company that buys and sells used cars, Mobil88 Semarang is not the only business in this industry. Numerous enterprises, both in the form of companies and individual businesses, compete with Mobil88 Semarang. Therefore, Mobil88 Semarang must proceed with caution in response to this. From 2020 until now, Mobil88 Semarang's sales trend has been stagnant, and even in 2021, Mobil88 Semarang has experienced a drastic 42% decline in sales. This is caused by the ineffectiveness of the marketing strategy implemented by Mobil88 Semarang, causing a decrease in brand awareness which leads to low market penetration, and finally, also inevitably affects the total sales of Mobil88 Semarang. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the marketing strategy of Mobil88 Semarang itself. Hence, the researcher has made three recommendations to solve the issues by considering the weaknesses and threats and optimizing existing opportunities: 1) Creating a buyer persona (Utilitarian and Hedonic); 2) Leveraging social media platforms (Instagram and TikTok) and developing its content pillar; and 3) Creating cashback programs (CarCoin and AutoCash Trade-in).

All of the recommendations mentioned above have specific reasons why it is being presented as a solution for Mobil88 Semarang. Furthermore, the solutions provided are expected to increase brand awareness and market penetration from Mobil88 Semarang, indirectly increasing sales from Mobil88

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Semarang. Of course, the proposed solutions also aim to generate more profit for Mobil88 Semarang. For the nominal value, the estimated additional net profit that Mobil88 Semarang could generate until the end of 2023 by implementing Instagram ads is IDR 21,060,112. Meanwhile, using the TikTok promotion, Mobil88 Semarang might obtain an extra net profit of IDR 20,430,000. Lastly, Mobil88 Semarang might increase the possibility of repeat orders by executing the cashback program and earning a net profit of IDR 36,194,684.

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