

DEVELOPING A FREIGHT FORWARDING MARKETING STRATEGY TO ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMERS FOR PT SAFE LOGISTICS INTERNATIONAL

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Received : 01 October 2025
Revised : 10 October 2025
Accepted : 30 November 2025

Published : 19 December 2025
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/morfai.v6i1.4603>
Publish Link : <https://radjapublika.com/index.php/MORFAI/article/view/4603>

Abstract

This study investigates the root causes of PT SLI's slow customer acquisition and formulates a practical marketing strategy aligned with the firm's operational capacity and the evolving external environment. The research rests on three key assumptions: market shifts and customer expectations shape acquisition challenges, the company possesses internal capabilities suitable for a differentiation strategy, and structured marketing combined with digital enhancements can strengthen competitiveness. Based on these premises, the study aims to analyze the dynamics of the B2B freight forwarding market, evaluate internal and external factors affecting PT SLI's marketing performance, and propose an applicable plan to expand its customer base. A qualitative case study method was applied, using open-ended questionnaires distributed to representatives of three manufacturing firms to obtain insights into customer expectations, forwarder selection considerations, and common service issues. Additional information was collected through informal interviews with PT SLI's Director, supplemented by secondary data from academic literature, industry reports, logistics indices, and company documents to support triangulation. The analysis employed multiple frameworks, including STP, PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, competitor analysis, RBV, Value Chain, SWOT, and TOWS. Findings indicate several opportunities in Indonesia's growing manufacturing sector, government efforts to streamline trade processes, and rising logistics demand. However, PT SLI faces strong competitive pressure, high supplier bargaining power in global shipping lines, and increasing digital demands. Internally, the company benefits from strong relationships with shipping lines, reliable documentation abilities, consistent operations, and customer loyalty. Its main weaknesses lie in the absence of formal marketing, limited digital presence, fragmented workflows, and reliance on senior employees' tacit knowledge. TOWS analysis suggests differentiation as the most suitable strategy, supported by operational standardization, digital upgrades, marketing renewal, and improved knowledge management. The study contributes to understanding strategic development in traditional logistics firms and offers PT SLI a feasible roadmap for sustainable growth.

Keywords: *Freight Forwarding, B2B Logistics, Customer Acquisition, Marketing Strategy, Differentiation Strategy*

INTRODUCTION

The logistics and freight forwarding industry plays an important role in ensuring smooth flow of trade activities regardless whether it is domestic or international because of globalization which requires efficiency and speed in the distribution of goods. According to the World Bank on the Logistics Performance Index (2023), Indonesia is ranked 63rd out of 139 countries with 3.0 score. In addition, statistics from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that the value of exports in Indonesia in 2023 has increased by 15.2%, whereas the value of imports has increased by 12.6% compared to the previous year. Freight forwarding companies link the gaps between the goods shippers and transport operators and are responsible for the documentation, clearing customs, transport routes, and ensuring the timely and cost-effective delivery of goods (Balasubramaniam & Sasirekha, 2025). In the business-to-business (B2B) context, the freight forwarding companies have more complicated problems. Corporate clients require clear and consistent information and long-term relationships with logistics service providers. Competition among the companies is more competitive, and especially with the rise of service providers who are more aggressive in introducing their capabilities and creating the professional image of service. In the absence of a targeted marketing strategy, companies tend to rely on sporadic and undocumented marketing strategies, which limit their efforts in reaching new customers even though their operational abilities are adequate.

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PT Safe Logistics International (PT SLI) is a freight forwarding company that has been in business for more than two decades and known as a competent freight forwarding company in handling different types of domestic and international shipments. The company has proven stable revenue growth over the past four years, indicative of success in retaining important customers. However, based on preliminary observations by the researcher who is directly involved in the company's operations and discussions with the Director of PT SLI, the increase in revenue has not been accompanied by growth in the number of new customers. The customer base of the company is stagnant and operational activities are dominated by two major customers who are consistently providing repeat orders in significant volumes.

This situation shows that PT SLI does not have a structured marketing system now. Marketing activities are being undertaken with no long-term planning and are not backed up by clear mechanisms for reaching and following up with potential customers. The company has no consistent approach towards introduction of services, communicating the value proposition or building the portfolio that can increase the credibility of the company in the eyes of the prospective. As a result, even though SLI's operational capabilities have been demonstrated by close relationships and successful processing of routine shipments from long-standing clients, the company has been unable to take advantage of these strengths to grow its customer base. This problem highlights the fact that the marketing aspect is a critical point that needs to be reviewed by PT SLI. Without a targeted and systematic marketing strategy, opportunities for expansion will continue to be limited and the company's position in the market will become increasingly susceptible to the pressures of competition. Therefore, this research is needed to develop a relevant and applicable marketing strategy for PT SLI to expand the company's customer network, visibility of the service and the company's competitiveness in the freight forwarding industry.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative research design based on a case study of PT Safe Logistics International (PT SLI). This method has been selected since the study seeks to comprehend deeply the factors behind stagnation in the acquisition of new customers in the company even though the company has experienced growth in revenue over the last few years. This question needs in-depth knowledge that is not only involved in looking at the internal situations inside the company but also on how its potential clients in the targeted industries perceive it. This type of research starts with the identification of business problems in PT SLI. The data collection is performed in two- primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected using open questions on questionnaires that are administered to respondents of three manufacturing companies that have been identified as relevant as the target market. Under this method, we will get first hand insights into the needs and preferences and perceptions of industrial customers about freight forwarding service.

Also, informal communication with the Director of PT SLI serves as the source of internal information to see the true state of the company, marketing hardships, and existing operational trends. The data received is then interpreted in a number of steps. The first one is the market analysis that consists of segmentation, targeting, and positioning analysis. The second step is the external analysis based on the PESTEL, Porters Five Forces and competitor analysis to study the industry environment that influences the competitiveness of the firm. The third step is internal analysis based on the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Value Chain in order to listed internal sources of company strength and possible sources of company advantage. The findings of these three categories of analysis are synthesized into a SWOT analysis which is further developed into a TOWS Matrix which will give strategy alternatives. The formulation of marketing strategies of PT Safe Logistics International, which are the most relevant and feasible strategies at the time, is formed based on the strategy alternatives at the time.

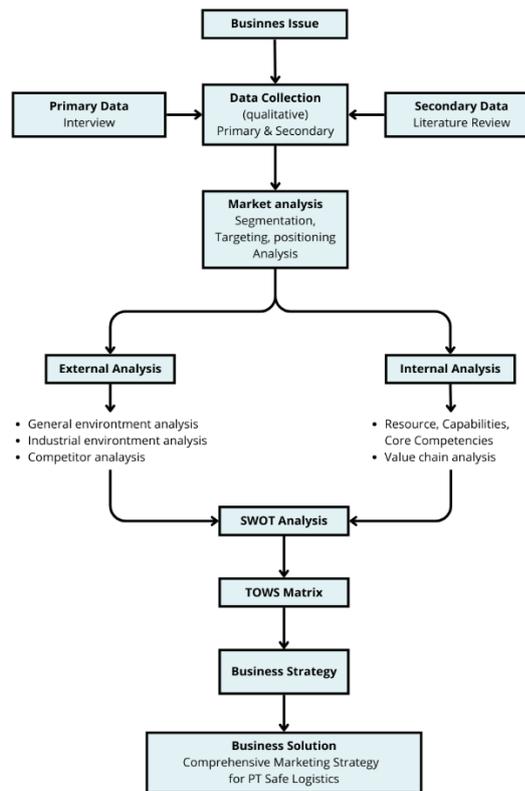


Figure 1. Research Design

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Market Analysis (STP)

A. Segmentation

1. Geographical

The customers of SLI are mostly situated on the Java Island which is in Jakarta, Banten, Tangerang, and Purwakarta. This area is the hub of manufacturing industry activities and is a concentrated export- import route via Tanjung Priok Port. There are also numerous engineering and industrial component firms in the area which demand a regular and constant logistics service and thus the area is the most relevant geographical segment to SLI.

2. Demographic

Demographically, the target customers of SLI are B2B companies involved in manufacturing industry, industrial engineering, suppliers of electronic components, and industrial equipment. The firms in this category are mostly medium-scale to large-scale, their import-export operations are routine and need high-level accuracy in documentation. This works in line with the operational capabilities of SLI, which has much experience of industrial freight forwarding services.

3. Behavioral

Industrial customers usually have medium to large volume routine shipments behaviorally and demand consistent services with minimum risk involved. They prefer forwarders who are able to offer prompt communication, cost transparency at an initial cost, clarity in processes and precision of documents. According to the results of the questionnaires, the vendor is often changed when the forwarder is not quick enough to react, does not give the definite information about the shipment status, or implements the additional costs that were not clarified at the very beginning. This trend means that service certainty and responsive communication are the primary considerations in forwarder selection behavior among industrial companies.

4. Psychographic

Industrial customers are psychographically conservative risk takers who are focused on stability in operations. They want forwarder partners that are reliable, consistent in service delivery, fast in communication, and able to give them a feeling of security in the process of logistics coordination. These

principles resonate with the fact that SLI prioritizes the accuracy of documentation, the clarity of its information, and building long-term relationships as its service offer.

B. Targeting

The target market of SLI consists of component manufacturing corporations and industrial engineering and industrial equipment suppliers with stable volumes of import-export requirements. This segment is chosen as it aligns well with the operating experience of SLI, especially the work in the area of handling customs documents, full container load activities, and door to door operations. Also, there is good profitability potential in this segment based on repeat shipments along with good growth prospects based on the rising national manufacturing activities. The results of the questionnaires confirm the choice of the segment in which the potential customers highly value the speed of communication, cost transparency, and the consistency of the services as the primary factors that are primarily considered in building the marketing strategy of SLI.

C. Positioning

PT SLI identifies itself as a trusted and responsive freight forwarding service provider to manufacturing and industrial engineering firms that need consistent shipment services with low risk. The company provides end to end services to pick up goods, documentations, clearance of customs, coordinate the shipping, and lastly deliver. The difference between SLI and its competitors is that it has a 20-year experience and is able to handle documents accurately, communicates quickly and personally, and has positive working relationships with shipping lines. Questionnaire survey also validates that not only is responsiveness and ability to sort out operational problems are valued by industrial customers and so it is a fundamental aspect of SLI positioning in the freight forwarding market.

PESTEL Analysis

A. Political Factors

Policies that have a direct effect on the freight forwarding sector still continue to strengthen the national logistics ecosystem within the Indonesian government. Indonesia National Single Window (INSW) is a program that expedites the export-import licensing and clearance processes by integrating the cross-ministerial system (Ministry of Transportation, 2024). Also, the development of port infrastructure, e.g. Tanjung Priok and Tanjung Perak, enhances the capacity and efficiency of distribution of goods. These policies open possibilities to SLI to increase speed of service and to decrease the lead time of operation.

Conversely, the forwarding business is highly controlled by PPJK licensing provision, competent workforce provision and stringent customs standards (Directorate General of Customs and Excise, 2023). These stringent rules are used to shut out the new entrants and this works to the advantage of SLI since 2003, it has been a player. All in all, the political factors are more likely to offer favorable opportunities to SLI in terms of ensuring its competitive standing.

B. Economic Factors

The expansion of the manufacturing sector in Indonesia is the primary source of the demand of forwarding services. BPS (2024) states that the manufacturing sector remains to be the biggest contributor to GDP and stimulates the importation of raw materials and other technicalities. This establishes stable opportunities of SLI, which targets industrial clients. Also, more than 70% of national forwarding operations are mainly carried out through sea freight (Mordor Intelligence, 2024), which complies with the fact that Full Container Load (FCL) services are the specialization of SLI.

Nevertheless, there are also unstable economic forces in this industry. The margins of forwarders may be impacted by changes in freight rates, fuel prices, and port expenses around the globe, particularly in medium-sized businesses such as SLI. Inflation and exchange rates are quite stable, but the cost volatility is a threat which should be addressed. Hence, the economic factors offer opportunities in terms of market expansion, but threats in the form of cost volatility as well.

C. Social Factors

The customers in the industrial sector particularly manufacturing sector and engineering industry are very demanding in terms of service. They require quick communication, cost disclosure, accuracy of the document, and reliability of the process because any minimal delay may interfere with their production or delivery time. The degree of trust in forwarders is also highly significant since the industrial companies are characterized by a low risk aversion (ALFI, 2023).

The responses of the questionnaires verify or confirm these assumptions that respondentiveness is the most important criterion in forwarder selection, rather than price or digital characteristics. The industrial customers are interested in forwarders that are responsive to a need, quick-handling in matters and capable of giving regular updates on the processes. Such a trend demonstrates that SLI can have a great chance to develop service differentiation in terms of communication and operation reliability.

D. Technological Factors

The freight forwarding sector is actively developing the field of technology, deploying Transportation Management Systems (TMS), the digital processing of documents, GPS tracking, and customer portals through which clients can track the condition of the shipments independently (McEasy, 2024). The more modern industry has also adopted the concept of online booking in shipping lines and online system integration like digital Delivery Orders as a standard of service.

In the case of SLI, the technological advances will create a chance to offer better customer experience and boost service efficiency. GPS tracking is already implemented in SLI through the trucking operations but the information is still presented in a manual way. With the help of using simple systems, including shipment status portals or automatic notifications, SLI will be able to become more professional at service without making any significant investment. Technology is not a significant threat to SLI, despite the rising trends in digital, since its market segment places more importance on swift response, rather than digital.

E. Environmental Factors

The shipping industry has been stimulated to use low-emission fuels and clean technology by the global regulations, including IMO 2020 and IMO 2050 targets (IMO, 2023). The investments made in clean technology by shipping lines can raise freight rates thereby affecting the selling prices by forwarders such as SLI. This environmental factor will be a cost issue that must be used in pricing strategy.

Conversely, sustainability is yet to be a leading priority concern to SLI local clients. The current customers continue to consider forwarders in terms of reliability and speed of service rather than on the issues of emissions and sustainability. Therefore, the environmental factors have moderate effects on SLI as far as cost aspects are concerned but not vital to the demand aspect.

F. Legal Factors

Tax policies are a very important factor in the competitiveness of forwarders. The introduction of freight forwarding services with a 1.1 per cent VAT rate (PMK No. 11/2025) is a considerable cost bait to such companies as SLI since the distinction is considerably smaller than the overall 11 per cent. This renders the price offerings of SLI competitive in corporate tenders.

Also, active customs rules make forwarders possess high compliance ability. The tariff modifications, prohibited/restricted goods regulations (Iartas) or the updates of the clearance system will necessitate SLI to constantly enhance the internal skill level to avoid delays or document-making mistakes (DJBC, 2024). The experience that SLI has had since 2003 is an added value which new entrants may find hard to imitate.

Table 1. Summary of Pestel Analysis

Factor	Category	Key Issue Summary
Political	Opportunity (+)	INSW increases efficiency; strict PPK regulations create entry barriers that benefit SLI.
Economic	Opportunity (+) / Threat (-)	Manufacturing growth supports demand; fluctuating freight rates & fuel prices squeeze margins.
Social	Opportunity (+)	High expectations for responsiveness & accuracy → opportunity for SLI service differentiation.
Technological	Opportunity (+)	Digitalization trends (TMS, portals, GPS) can improve efficiency and service professionalism.
Environmental	Threat (-)	IMO regulations increase freight costs; impact on SLI pricing.
Legal	Opportunity (+)	1.1% VAT increases price competitiveness; SLI compliance is a competitive advantage.

Porter's Five Forces Analysis

A. Threat of New Entrants

The freight forwarding market of Indonesia continues to show interest since export-import activities are rising and manufacturing as one of the few sectors consuming logistics services are developing. Despite these growth potentials, entry barriers are still very high. New companies have to meet the standards of regulations like PPJK, customs and tough documentation. Moreover, manufacturing companies that are the main target of SLI have a tendency to select forwarders with good track records and well proven technical skills and thus new entries cannot be able to earn market confidence immediately. The digital development has actually opened the market to a greater span particularly when it comes to forwarders who are concerned with basic deliveries. Nevertheless, services that need precise documentation, intensive coordination and operational risk management do need to have experience that is not readily duplicated by new entrants. Thus, the threat of new entrants can be defined as medium, as the barriers to entering the industry are still rather high.

B. Bargaining Power of Suppliers

Shipping lines, port operators, and parties directly concerned with the customs operations are the main suppliers in the forwarding industry. The world shipping companies like ONE, CMA-CGM, MSC, and Maersk control the shipping rates, space capacity in containers, and the sailing schedule. Oligopolistic market structure makes forwarders to have low bargaining positions particularly where there is high demand and low supply of container space. The circumstances in the ports and the legislation on customs are also the factors that influence the proper functioning of the forwarder services and are out of control of the company. PT SLI has long term relationships with some shipping lines that usually assist in space allocation when the market is tight. SLI also possesses its own trucking fleet that minimizes reliance on other vendors. But in general, bargaining power of suppliers remains large and thus, bargaining power of suppliers remains in the high category.

C. Bargaining Power of Buyers

The bargaining power of industrial customers like manufacturing firms is very high due to a wide range of forwarders. Vendor switching is not as difficult due to low switching costs. Price, communication process, cost transparency and service consistency are also becoming a critical issue among the customers. The questionnaire results have revealed that forwarder switching usually takes place when the response is sluggish, no updates are reported in a understandable manner, and there are other extra expenses that were not reported initially. The needs of the manufacturing companies, however, are not based on price only. They require forwarders with reliability guarantees, document accuracy and ability to solve problems when there are problems within the operations. A large number of customers will prefer to have a long-term relationship with forwarders who have been found to be consistent. Consequently, service based differentiation room is still large despite the high number of options customers have. In general, the buyer bargaining power is medium.

D. Threat of Substitutes

The alternatives to forwarder services include keeping logistics in-house or direct booking with shipping lines. Nevertheless, both of them involve extensive volumes of shipping, special knowledge, and the high level of internal resources. The majority of medium-sized manufacturing businesses, which are the target target of SLI, lack the organization to manage the customs, export-import documentation, and operational risks separately. Such digital services like instant quoting are also evolving, but they should be used in case of simple deliveries. Even with complex services like FCL import and export, the customers would still require personal contact, direct communication, and problem-solving services by the operational team of the forwarder. According to these factors, the threat of substitution falls within low level specially to the industrial customers who need the integrated services like those offered by PT SLI.

E. Competitive Rivalry

Freight forwarding industry has a high level of competition since it has a large number of players in global, national, and local companies. DHL and Kuehne+Nagel are international firms that have technological advantages and networks so that local forwarders win by price and intimate relationships with customers. Moreover, there is also a competitive diversity brought by digital-based logistics platforms due to rate information transparency and facility of booking. Customers are likely to change suppliers in case of service problems like slow response, absence of updates, or other expenses that were not described at the onset. This demonstrates that service standards are a very decisive factor in competition. The number of

players and high customer expectations make the competition level of this industry rank under the high category.

Table 2. Summary of Porter's Five Forces

Force	Level	Impact to SLI	Reason
Threat of New Entrants	Medium	Threat	Market is attractive but regulations, experience requirements, and manufacturing customer demands remain strong entry barriers.
Bargaining Power of Suppliers	High	Threat	Shipping lines control rates & capacity; good relationships help but control remains with suppliers.
Bargaining Power of Buyers	Medium	Mixed	Many forwarder options, but service quality & documentation create differentiation opportunities for SLI.
Threat of Substitutes	Low	Opportunity	Complex shipping and documentation needs keep manufacturing customers dependent on forwarders.
Industry Rivalry	High	Threat	Many global & local players, strong price wars, consumers easily switch if service is inconsistent.

External Analysis Results

The results of external analysis from PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, and competitor analysis yield a number of opportunities and threats that affect the position of PT Safe Logistics International (SLI). These factors form the basis for understanding external conditions that need to be leveraged or monitored in subsequent strategy formulation.

Table 3. Summary of External Analysis Results

External Factor	Category
Political	Opportunity
Economic	Opportunity
Sociocultural	Opportunity
Technological	Threat
Environmental	Threat
Legal	Opportunity
Threat of New Entrants	Threat
Bargaining Power of Suppliers	Threat
Bargaining Power of Buyers	Threat
Threat of Substitutes	Low Threat
Industry Rivalry	High Threat

Overall, the macro environment provides many opportunities for SLI, particularly through political stability, logistics market growth, manufacturing sector development, and tax policies that support the forwarding industry. On the other hand, the greatest pressures come from industry forces, especially the high bargaining power of suppliers (shipping lines), intense competition among forwarders, and increasingly rapid digitalization demands. Environmental and technological factors also present additional risks that need to be anticipated. Although some threats are quite significant, external opportunities are still more dominant and can be maximized by SLI by strengthening core services, improving digital capabilities, and maintaining long-term relationships with customers and shipping line partners.

Internal Analysis

A. Resource-Based View (RBV)

Resource-Based View (RBV) considers the company as a set of resources and capabilities that are unique and may be transformed into its competitive advantage on the condition that they are Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Organized (Barney, 1991). When applied to PT Safe Logistics International (SLI), resources

are classified under two broad categories, namely, tangible resources and intangible resources, which makes the RBV analysis.

1. Tangible Resources

a. Financial Resources

PT SLI is in a stable financial position with a steady increase in revenue in the last five years. The cash flow of operations is processed without any limitations, finances are paid to suppliers in due manner, and working capital requirements are met with the use of internal capital. It has no bank loans or credit facilities like overdrafts and therefore the company is very healthy in terms of funding structure and financial risk is minimal.

b. Organizational Resources

The organizational structure of the company is lean, but functional with 26 employees spread over operations, documentation, marketing, finance, and field operations divisions. This organization facilitates prompt coordination in the process of dealing with FCL shipments and the export-import documentation. The work of the office proceeds with the assistance of the Zahir based accounting system of invoices and financial reports.

c. Physical Resources

SLI has a relatively high fleet size (representing a medium-size forwarder company) comprised of 10 head trailers, 9 short trailers, and 4 long trailers, which are GPS-monitored. Secondly, the company has operated land (yard) of about 1, 000 m² in Cakung-Cilencing area that can host up to about 20 trailer heads. Even though the company does not have a warehouse, this is not a major limitation since the main SLI services are through Full Container Load (FCL), whereby goods are collected at the customer warehouses to the port without any need to be stored. Third-party warehouses are not necessary in the large part of Less Container Load (LCL) ships, thus it does not hamper operations.

d. Technological Resources

SLI uses technology in the form of GPS fleet tracking, Zahir to manage invoices and finances, and communication within the office using WhatsApp and office phones. SLI, however, has not yet an inbuilt digital platform like a customer portal or tracking dashboard which is now becoming a norm at certain modern forwarding companies since it helps in giving customers real time visibility. The company web site is also old and has not been used as a marketing channel or service information center.

Table 4. Tangible Resources

Category	Resources
Financial	Strong internal capital; stable cashflow; no debt; smooth vendor payments
Organizational	Functional organizational structure; Zahir-based accounting
Physical	10 head trailers; 9 short trailers; 4 long trailers; GPS fleet; 1,000 m ² yard; operational office
Technological	GPS monitoring; Zahir; WhatsApp & phone communication; website not optimized

2. Intangible Resources

a. Human Resources

SLI has experienced human resources, including three documentation staff who master export-import customs procedures, a management team with more than 20 years of experience, and field personnel accustomed to handling industrial shipments. The knowledge transfer process is still 100% tacit, without formal SOPs or structured training systems. Onboarding new employees requires approximately one month to understand export processes and up to three months for imports. In addition, there are approximately 5-6 senior employees (director, operations manager, senior documentation staff, and finance team) who serve as the organization's knowledge centers.

b. Innovation Resources

The process of innovation in SLI is informal and comes as a result of experience and habits that have been acquired over many years. Templating of internal documents, troubleshooting and negotiation techniques with shipping lines, specific case handling all are based purely on tacit knowledge of the senior employees. Since there is no formal record keeping, the company runs the risk of losing valuable competencies in case key employees quit the company. This is because the process of improvement is slow and unrecorded since there are no systems of knowledge transfer or intentional innovation.

c. Reputational Resources

SLI has a good standing as a forwarder with correct documentation, delivered promptly, and reliable in the eyes of the manufacturing industry customers. During the company life of over 21 years of presence, the company has long-term customer relationships with a number of major customers, particularly within the Japanese sector and the chemical manufacturing with a very high rate of repeat orders. Nevertheless, this image has not been best used to promote due to the lack of official testimonial publications, case scenario and online branding efforts.

Table 5. Intangible Resources

Category	Resources
Human Resources	5-6 senior staff holding tacit knowledge; expert documentation; slow onboarding; no SOPs
Innovation Resources	Informal innovation; undocumented; high knowledge loss risk
Reputation Resources	Strong reputation in manufacturing sector; long-term relationships; high repeat orders; branding not optimized

B. Value Chain Analysis

Value Chain Analysis is the mapping operation of the key and support activities that generate customer value in PT Safe Logistics International (SLI). Through this analysis, there are parts that can be considered as an operational strength and weak points that are to be developed to enhance the competitiveness of the company.

1. Primary Activities

a. Inbound Logistics

The SLI inbound logistics starts with the reception of Shipping Instructions (SI), invoices, and packing lists by customers through email. The documentation team reviews all these documents then to verify the accuracy of data and then the vessel booking process is done. The process of making bookings is conducted via the online section of the shipping line where one can now quickly confirm a booking provided that there is still space available. In the case of FCL consignments, the stuffing activity is performed in the entire warehouse of the customer hence SLI does not necessitate internal warehouse facilities. The inbound operations are well governed, but reliance of vessels in the high season is still an operational risk that needs to be addressed in advance.

b. Operations

The operational activities of SLI are based on the control of FCL import-export, such as coordinating shipping lines, trucking planning, and finishing the paperwork. The operational procedures are stable since SLI has its own fleet of trucks that have real-time GPS, which is used to track the shipments. The most difficult is during the high season when space in vessels is minimal and the operations staff has to engage in intense communication with shipping lines to ensure space is obtained. Problem solving initiatives are implemented in a short period either by use of phone or direct meetings. But the majority of practices continue to be based on tacit knowledge of seasoned employees and hence new staff onboarding takes approximately one month to export and three months to import.

c. Outbound Logistics

Outbound logistics involves providing shipment status reports and billing. Status of shipments is manually reported via WhatsApp or phone communication with reports of container positions throughout inland transportation. Zahir software is used to prepare invoices and send them to their e-mail. The outbound process is not entirely digitalized, but the administrative flow is easy

since it is straightforward. SLA are also applied by some of their clients and not by others, leading to varying degrees of administrative formality among the businesses.

d. Marketing & Sales

The internal marketing team of SLI exists, although marketing operations are not yet directed and specific as the firm lacks a formal and structured marketing strategy. The marketing team is more concerned on basic quotations, relationship management in direct communications, and follow up on customer requests that come in. The majority of new opportunities rest on the contacts of the director, recommendations of the customers, and business acquaintances, and the active marketing is at its lowest level. The company site was also not updated and has not been used as an informational channel or customer acquisition channel. This fact slows down the process of acquiring new customers despite the fact that the company has high and stable quality of services in its operations.

e. Service / After-Sales

SLI offers after sales support by actively communicating with its customers particularly in instances where there are delays or operational challenges. The staff will always make attempts to explain and find solutions to emerging problems, and this strategy is positively viewed by consumers. Unofficial reviews are typically provided in the form of direct dialogue either on the phone or WhatsApp. One of SLI strengths is the responsive after-sales service which helps to retain the customers at a high rate.

Table 6. Support Activities

Primary Activity	Description (SLI Context)
Inbound Logistics	Receiving documents (SI, invoice, packing list), vessel booking process, coordinating pickup from customer warehouse, trucking allocation, stuffing scheduling.
Operations	Document handling (PEB/PIB), document verification, coordination with shipping lines & depot, container handling, solving operational issues.
Outbound Logistics	Journey monitoring, manual status updates to customers, delivery of DO and final documents, container handover.
Marketing & Sales	Quotation activities by marketing team, quotation follow-up, maintaining customer relations, prospects from referrals & director's connections.
Service (After-Sales)	Delay reporting, troubleshooting assistance, responsive communication, complaint handling, follow-up checks to customers by director.

2. Support Activities

a. Firm Infrastructure

SLI has a small and lean organizational structure, and majority of the SOPs remain informal and not formally written. The inter-divisional coordination is good, but work system is not integrated at all particularly between operations and finance. It causes the workflow to be reliant on manual communication, which puts a risk of inconsistency of information among employees.

b. Human Resource Management

SLI has a simple recruitment process and mostly it is done by connections and internal networks since the requirements of workforce are not very common. The training is not yet formalized and hence, all the training is done in the form of learning by senior mentoring (learning by doing). This translates to a relatively long onboarding process and in the case of complicated import processes. The majority of the core competencies of the company are based on tacit knowledge of senior staff, and thus the probability of knowledge loss is rather high unless identified, and documented in the nearest future.

c. Technology Development

Technology utilization at SLI includes real-time GPS on the trucking fleet and use of Zahir for financial administration and invoicing. The booking process to shipping lines is also done through each carrier's website. However, SLI does not yet have an integrated digital system such as a customer portal, online document repository, or tracking dashboard that most competitors

generally have. This causes information delivery to customers to still be manual and potentially hinder service efficiency.

d. Procurement

The procurement processes are primarily the operational vehicles and fleet maintenance requirements. The maintenance is performed with the help of a standard workshop which also includes the purchase of spare parts. The procurement of technology and office infrastructure is also an easy task and on-demand basis, with the assistance of in-house technicians with computer equipment issues.

Table 7. Summary of Support Activity

Support Activity	Description (SLI Context)
Firm Infrastructure	Lean organizational structure, finance & ops not yet integrated, invoicing through Zahir, own operational office & yard.
Human Resource Management	Recruitment via connections, no formal training, 1-3 month onboarding due to complex documentation, very high tacit knowledge.
Technology Development	Real-time GPS, Zahir for billing, shipping line booking via carrier websites, no customer portal/tracking dashboard yet.
Procurement	Fleet maintenance via regular workshop, spare parts purchased at workshop, IT vendor for PCs & internet, routine operational needs purchases.

Internal Analysis Results

The internal analysis outcomes based on RBV and Value Chain indicate that the key strength areas of PT Safe Logistics international are good relationships with shipping lines, own trucking fleet with real-time GPS, good documentation capacity, and good reputation and loyalty of industrial customers that it has developed during a period of over twenty years. Constant FCL service capacity, responsiveness, and operational competence in dealing with export-import processes is also value driver that distinguishes SLI among the numerous other local forwarders. Conversely, the internal weaknesses are seen in the lack of an established marketing strategy, over reliance on tacit knowledge of the senior staff, lack of integrated digital system to serve the customers and inadequate formal documentation of its SOP slowing down on boarding process. The interdivisional system of work is not completely integrated, and marketing operations are still based on the relations of the director, which complicates the ability of the company to find new customers. Competitiveness is also restricted by the technology gap and a lack of a customer portal in comparison with more modern forwarders.

Table 8. Summary Internal Analysis Results

Internal Factor	Category	Description & Implication (Brief)
Partnership with Shipping Lines	Strength	Strong relationships provide stable space access & competitive rates → increases service reliability and becomes main differentiation.
In-house Trucking Fleet + GPS	Strength	Own fleet provides better operational control and faster response → more stable service than those using vendors.
Document & Customs Clearance Expertise	Strength	Expert documentation team reduces error and delay risks → increases industrial customer trust.
Industrial Customer Loyalty	Strength	High repeat orders and long-term relationships → stable revenue & strong switching barriers.
Stable Financial Condition & Internal Capital	Strength	Smooth cashflow and no debt → safe operations and high decision-making flexibility.
Lean Organizational Structure	Strength	Simple structure accelerates coordination → operational problems can be handled faster.
No Structured Marketing Strategy	Weakness	Marketing has no clear direction → new customer acquisition is very slow.
Dependence on Senior Tacit Knowledge	Weakness	Core knowledge not documented → long onboarding & high knowledge loss risk.
Limited Digital Capabilities	Weakness	No customer portal or integrated system → service still manual & digitally uncompetitive.
Non-Optimal Website	Weakness	Outdated website → low visibility and credibility for potential customers.
Finance & Operations Not Yet Integrated	Weakness	Manual workflow prone to miscommunication → lower efficiency than modern forwarders.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that affect the position of PT Safe Logistics International (SLI). These results are obtained from a summary of external analysis (PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, competitor analysis) and internal analysis (RBV and Value Chain). SWOT helps the company determine areas that need to be maximized and risks that must be anticipated in subsequent strategy formulation

Table 9. SWOT Analysis Results

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong relationships with shipping lines (more stable space & competitive prices). • Own trucking fleet complete with real-time GPS. • Export-import documentation expertise (accurate & fast documents). • Manufacturing industry customer loyalty (high repeat orders). • Stable & responsive operations, especially for FCL services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No structured marketing strategy. • High dependence on senior staff tacit knowledge (SOPs not yet documented). • Limited digital capabilities (no customer portal/tracking dashboard). • Non-optimal website as branding & information media. • Finance-operational workflow not yet integrated (many manual processes).
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing logistics demand from manufacturing sector (Java & export industry). • Indonesia's logistics market growth still large. • Technology development enables service digitalization (customer portal, tracking, automation). • Government policies supporting exports & licensing ease. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very intense competition from local forwarders & large global players. • High shipping line bargaining power (fluctuating rates & space). • Increasingly rapid digitalization needs, pressuring companies with manual systems. • Threat of new entrants from digital freight platforms. • Operational cost volatility (fuel, depot, port costs).

TOWS

TOWS analysis is used to formulate strategies based on the combination of internal factors (Strengths, Weaknesses) and external factors (Opportunities, Threats). The following matrix shows how SLI can leverage strengths, overcome weaknesses, utilize opportunities, and minimize threats.

Tabel 10. TOWS Matrix

SO Strategies	ST Strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand manufacturing industry market by highlighting FCL service reliability and strong shipping line relationships. 2. Optimize reputation and customer loyalty as a basis for strengthening expansion into similar industry segments. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen negotiation and coordination with shipping lines to reduce the impact of rate fluctuations and space limitations. 2. Improve operational service quality (speed, document accuracy) to face intense competition.
WO Strategies	WT Strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop basic marketing system (new website, company profile, presentation materials) to capture growing market opportunities. 2. Adopt simple digital tools such as customer portal or tracking dashboard to improve competitiveness. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create SOPs and process documentation to reduce knowledge loss risk and improve service consistency. 2. Establish minimal marketing program so SLI doesn't fall behind more digital competitors.

From the TOWS matrix, priority strategies related to SLI are:

1. Leverage the strength of shipping line relationships and document expertise to strengthen penetration into the manufacturing segment, which is the main market and continues to grow.
2. Develop marketing system and elementary digitalization (website, company profile, customer portal) to gain more competitiveness and use opportunities of market growth.
3. Develop SOPs and work documentation to reduce the reliance on the tacit and the consistency of operations
4. Improve coordination quality with the shipping lines to meet the competition and fluctuation in operations.

Proposed Marketing Strategy

A. Corporate-Level Strategy: Differentiation

Based on the results of the SWOT and TOWS analysis, the best fit main strategy for PT Safe Logistics International (SLI) is differentiation. This strategy is made choice because the B2B forwarding market, particularly in the manufacturing and chemical sectors, not only determines the price, but places a strong emphasis on service dependability, document accuracy, communication responsiveness and long-term consistency of shipping. SLI already have a strong foundation which includes close relationships with shipping lines, accurate documentation expertise, internal trucking fleet which allows full operational control, and reputation built over more than two decades. All these are sources of differentiation that are hard for other forwarders to imitate, particularly new competitors or small companies. Through a differentiation strategy, SLI can emphasize service quality, problem solving speed, and accuracy of customs processes as special values that offer sustainable competitive advantages - without having to get into price wars which might actually result in squeezing margins.

B. Strategic Themes and Main Solutions

To achieve strong and relevant differentiation, there are four key strategic themes that are the core of SLI's business solution. First, Operational Excellence which is improving the effectiveness of operational processes by formal SOP preparation, standardization of export-import workflows, integrating operational-finance coordination and optimization of vessel space management during peak season times. These improvements ensure consistency of service and reduce the reliance of senior staff's tacit knowledge. Second, Digital Capability Enhancement, which is under the direction of enhancing professionalism and customer experience. This step involves updating the company website, giving access to digital information such as shipment status and supporting documents and standardizing document templates to make administrative processes neater and efficient. Improved digital capabilities will make SLI more competitive in comparison to traditional forwarders who still rely 100% on communication via manual handling. Third, Marketing Revamp whereby it is building a more systematic marketing strategy. Marketing activities are not only to focus on quotations, but also to get the new customer by the clear industry segmentation, the professional marketing materials, the marketing team are front front role in the expansion of the customer network. Thus, SLI will not be completely dependent upon the connections of the director as the only source of prospects. Fourth, Knowledge Management & HR Development, which comprise tacit knowledge documentation, structured onboarding program preparation, and cross training between divisions. This mechanism is important to minimize the risks of losing core competencies, accelerate new employee learning, and build long-term organizational capacity.

C. Expected Impact

The implementation of this business solution is projected to produce several positive impacts for SLI. The company will have more stable and consistent operational processes, with smaller risks of document errors and miscommunication. Better digital capabilities provide a more professional and modern customer experience, while increasing the company's credibility in the eyes of potential new customers. More targeted marketing activities will expand the customer base and strengthen SLI's position in the manufacturing industry market. Meanwhile, better knowledge management and HR development will shorten onboarding time, improve internal capabilities, and reduce dependence on senior staff. Overall, this business solution strengthens SLI's differentiation foundation and positions the company to be more prepared for sustainable growth.

D. Implementation Plan & Justification

Strategy implementation has to be conducted in phases to ensure that the company can implement solutions well without disturbing day to day business. This implementation plan is based on main priorities, emerged in internal and external analysis, mostly related to digitalization needs, marketing strengthening

and organization capacity improvement. Each action plan is made realistic, has duration for its completion and involves relevant divisions so that the process of change can go on consistently. The implementation stages start from improvement of the internal foundation (SOPs, knowledge management), marketing to service capabilities. This phased approach is required so that SLI can minimise the risk of errors, maintain stability in the operation and ensure that each strategy will provide real impact on improving competitiveness.

Table 11. Implementation Plan

Plan	Duration	Starting Period
1. SOP Preparation & Knowledge Documentation	45 days	Feb – March 2025
2. Company Website Improvement (service information, profile, contact, credibility)	60 days	Feb – April 2025
3. Simple Customer Portal Development (status tracking + basic documents)	90 days	April – July 2025
4. Structured Marketing Strategy Preparation (segmentation-targeting-value proposition)	30 days	March – April 2025
5. Marketing Activation Program (targeted offers, referral program, consistent follow-up)	60 days	April – June 2025
6. Internal Training for Documentation & Operations (improvisation, case simulation, regulation updates)	30 days	April – May 2025
7. After-Sales Protocol Enhancement (delay report format, communication strengthening, standard response time)	21 days	May 2025
8. Shipping Line Performance Evaluation & Regular Negotiation	14 days	May 2025
9. Implementation Monitoring & Review (every 2 months)	Ongoing	Starting July 2025

CONCLUSION

The research results on PT Safe Logistics International (SLI) show that the company has a strong operational foundation, especially in Full Container Load (FCL) services, accurate customs documentation capabilities, long-term relationships with shipping lines, and manufacturing industry customer loyalty. These core advantages are strengthened by an owned trucking fleet with real-time GPS and a track record of over 21 years that creates high levels of customer trust. External analysis through PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, and competitor analysis reveals that the industry environment provides several important opportunities, such as logistics market growth, manufacturing sector stability, and government policy support in export-import activities. However, the industry also presents significant threats in the form of high shipping line bargaining power, increasingly tight competition among forwarders, and continuously increasing digitalization demands.

Internal analysis through RBV and Value Chain shows that the company's strengths are concentrated in service capabilities and customer relationships, while the main weaknesses lie in the absence of a targeted marketing strategy, high dependence on tacit knowledge, lack of formal SOP documentation, and limited digital capabilities such as the absence of a customer portal and integrated tracking system. The lack of integration between divisional processes also causes operational efficiency to not yet be optimal. Through the integration of external and internal results into SWOT and TOWS Matrix, the most suitable main strategy for SLI is differentiation, which is to maintain and strengthen service quality through documentation accuracy, response speed, personal relationships, and enhanced digital capabilities to add value for customers. This strategy is also supported by SLI's position as a forwarder that prioritizes reliability and close relationships with industrial customers. Overall, SLI has great opportunities to expand its market and increase competitiveness through strengthening core services, modernizing digital systems, and improving internal structures. The company is in a stable position to carry out gradual transformation to remain relevant amid the dynamics of the national logistics industry

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