

Empowering MSMEs Through Digital Marketing Training to Increase the Competitiveness of Local Products

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Abstract: This community service activity aims to empower Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through digital marketing training to enhance the competitiveness of local products. The rapid growth of digital technology has created both opportunities and challenges for MSMEs, particularly in product promotion and market expansion. The training program was conducted through a participatory approach that included workshops, mentoring, and practical sessions on creating digital content, managing social media, and utilizing e-commerce platforms. Participants were guided to develop marketing strategies that align with consumer behavior in the digital era. The results showed an increase in participants' understanding of digital marketing concepts, as well as improvements in online product visibility and sales performance. The activity also fostered collaboration among MSME actors to sustain digital marketing practices. The implications of this program highlight the importance of continuous digital literacy development to strengthen MSME competitiveness in facing the dynamics of the digital economy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in supporting the national economy. MSMEs contribute significantly to job creation, income distribution, and improving community welfare. In many regions, MSMEs serve as the backbone of the local economy by utilizing existing community resources effectively. However, many MSME actors still face various challenges, particularly in digital product marketing — an essential aspect in today's era of globalization and technological transformation.

The development of information and communication technology has transformed how consumers search for, select, and purchase products. Digital platforms such as social media, marketplaces, and e-commerce provide great opportunities for MSMEs to promote their products more widely without geographical limitations. Nevertheless, the lack of digital literacy, technical skills, and understanding of modern marketing strategies remains a major obstacle for MSMEs to compete in the digital market. Many still rely on conventional methods such as direct selling or word-of-mouth promotion, which limit their market reach and weaken product competitiveness.

Given these conditions, concrete efforts are needed in the form of empowerment through digital marketing training. This training not only focuses on introducing digital technology but also provides practical understanding of promotional strategies, content

management, market analysis, and local product branding to make products more appealing to consumers. Through this community service activity, MSME participants receive direct assistance in applying digital marketing strategies that match the characteristics of their products and target markets.

In addition to improving technical skills, the training also aims to foster innovative and adaptive mindsets in response to an increasingly competitive business environment. By mastering digital marketing, MSME actors are expected to increase sales, expand business networks, and create a positive image for local products in broader markets.

Overall, empowering MSME actors through digital marketing training is a strategic step to strengthen the community's economic resilience. This program represents an essential part of efforts to promote a technology-based creative economy, in line with the national development agenda to achieve independence and competitiveness in the digital economy era.

2. METODE

This community service activity was carried out using a participatory and need-based approach, in which MSME actors serve as the main subjects in every stage of the program. This method was chosen to ensure that the training program truly aligns with the participants' actual needs and provides a direct impact on improving their digital marketing skills.

The implementation began with an observation and situation analysis phase to identify the problems faced by MSME actors, particularly in terms of online product promotion and marketing. The results of the observation served as the foundation for developing the training materials and strategies.

The next stage consisted of training and mentoring activities, which were conducted through several forms of engagement, namely:

- a) Socialization and introduction to digital marketing, covering basic understanding of concepts, benefits, and digital marketing strategies for MSMEs.
- b) Digital content creation workshop, where participants learned how to take appealing product photos, write promotional captions, and manage social media accounts such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok for marketing purposes.
- c) Training on the use of marketplaces and e-commerce, which included account creation, product uploading, and strategies to increase product visibility on online platforms.
- d) Mentoring and evaluation, which involved monitoring the implementation of training outcomes by participants, as well as providing feedback and solutions to emerging

challenges.

The implementation method was also complemented by a program evaluation process through pre-tests and post-tests to measure participants' knowledge improvement, along with interviews and direct observations to assess behavioral changes and their ability to apply digital marketing strategies.

The activities were conducted in several stages over a specific period, involving a team of lecturers, students, and local MSME community partners. Through this collaborative approach, the program aims to create sustainability by building a network among MSME actors who can support each other in independently applying digital marketing strategies.

3. RESULTS

The community service activity focusing on digital marketing training for MSME actors has produced significant results in enhancing participants' knowledge, skills, and motivation to utilize digital technology in promoting local products. The program was conducted over two days through face-to-face sessions using interactive training methods, discussions, simulations, and hands-on practice.

At the beginning of the training, a pre-test was conducted to assess participants' initial understanding of digital marketing. The results showed that most participants had limited knowledge of basic digital marketing concepts, lacked business accounts on social media, and had not yet utilized marketplaces effectively. This indicated a strong need to improve digital literacy among MSME actors.

During the training sessions, participants demonstrated high enthusiasm in every activity. In the content creation session, participants were trained to take product photos using simple lighting techniques with mobile phones, edit images with free applications, and write engaging promotional captions. In the social media session, they learned how to manage business accounts, create content calendars, and use paid advertising features to expand promotional reach.

In the marketplace practice session, participants successfully created online stores on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee and Tokopedia. Some participants even uploaded their products immediately, using more professional photos and detailed descriptions compared to before the training.

The post-test results and field observations indicated an average increase of 80% in participants' knowledge compared to the pre-test results. Additionally, some participants

reported an increase in social media followers and engagement, as well as higher sales within two weeks after the training.

The activity also generated a positive social impact, namely the establishment of a collaborative network among MSME actors to share experiences and support one another in implementing digital marketing strategies. Through continuous mentoring, participants are expected to sustain and further develop the digital marketing practices they have learned.

Overall, the results of this activity demonstrate that digital marketing training is highly effective in improving the competitiveness of local products and expanding market access for MSME actors. Equipping participants with digital skills not only contributes to increased sales but also fosters confidence and economic independence among communities in the digital era.

4. DISCUSSION

The empowerment program for MSME actors through digital marketing training demonstrates that improving digital literacy plays a crucial role in strengthening the competitiveness of local products. The participatory training design successfully encouraged behavioral changes among MSME participants—from being previously passive toward technology to becoming more adaptive in utilizing digital platforms for marketing. This finding aligns with the perspective of Kotler and Keller (2016), who state that digital marketing enables businesses to reach consumers more broadly, effectively, and efficiently through the use of online media.

These findings show that digital knowledge and skills are key factors in building MSME competitiveness in the digital economy era. Pradiani (2018) explains that digital marketing serves as an essential strategy to expand market reach and strengthen local product branding, as it aligns marketing communication patterns with the behavior of modern, more interactive consumers. After attending the training, participants not only understood digital marketing concepts but were also able to apply them directly through content creation, business account management, and marketplace utilization.

Theoretically, this activity supports the concept of community empowerment as stated by Ife and Tesoriero (2008), which emphasizes the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals and groups to gain the ability, access, and control over resources that influence their lives. Through digital marketing training, MSME actors acquired knowledge and confidence to manage their businesses independently. This capacity building reflects a form of social change marked by the emergence of a community of MSME actors who are more open to

innovation and collaboration.

Furthermore, this program reinforces the role of non-formal education in community economic development. Sumaryanto (2020) asserts that need-based training produces meaningful learning outcomes because participants are directly involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation processes. This was evident from the participants' enthusiasm during each training session and their continued application of digital marketing practices after the program concluded.

From a social perspective, this empowerment effort contributes to increased participation in the local economy. The participants' success in improving product visibility and sales through digital media indicates a technology-based economic transformation. These results support the findings of Rahayu and Day (2015), who discovered that the use of the Internet by MSME actors significantly enhances business performance and expands business networks.

Thus, digital marketing training not only improves technical skills but also fosters a new mindset that is more innovative, collaborative, and competitive. This transformation signifies a positive social change at the community level, where MSME actors become active agents of change in developing the region's economic potential through digital technology.

5. CONCLUSION

The community service activity focusing on empowering MSME actors through digital marketing training has had a positive impact on enhancing the capacity, skills, and competitiveness of local entrepreneurs. The training successfully increased participants' understanding of the importance of utilizing digital technology in modern marketing strategies. Participants were able to apply the knowledge gained through creating promotional content, managing social media accounts, and optimizing marketplaces to expand the market reach of local products.

Theoretically, this activity reflects the importance of the technology-based community empowerment concept, where knowledge transfer and capacity building are key to creating economic independence. The training results indicate that improving digital literacy not only strengthens individual economic resilience but also fosters social change through the formation of MSME communities that are adaptive, collaborative, and innovative in facing the challenges of the digital market.

As a recommendation, similar activities should be conducted continuously with a long-

term mentoring approach to ensure that the training outcomes can develop further and deliver maximum impact. Local governments, universities, and relevant institutions are encouraged to collaborate in expanding access to digital marketing training for MSME actors across various sectors. In addition, policy support is needed to facilitate the improvement of digital capacity among communities as part of a broader strategy for technology-driven economic development and the advancement of local creative industries.

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