
Assistance of Social Media Based Marketing Strategy as an Effort to Expand the Market Reach of Boiler MSMEs in Walahar Village

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Abstract:

In general, KPM-DR in Walahar Village aims to increase the awareness of the academic community in accelerating the prevention of Covid-19 transmission. The focus of this KPM-DR activity is to help the community identify and develop business potential through social media in Walahar Village. Based on the results of surveys, interviews, and observations, a problem was found, namely that some Dandang craftsmen in Walahar Village had difficulty marketing their business products. An alternative marketing method, namely Social Media, is introduced to business actors who can overcome this problem. In order for the application of this social media method to be sustainable, the successful promotion of a product through social media is the key to success in attracting consumer buying interest

INTRODUCTION

Walahar Village is one of the areas that has very strong local economic potential, especially through the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector of making traditional boiler crafts. This boiler product from Walahar Village has a competitive advantage in terms of thick raw material quality, long product durability, and neatness of workmanship based on expertise that has been passed down from generation to generation. This home industry sector is not just a side livelihood, but has become the main pillar that supports family economic stability as well as an effective absorber of local labor for the people in the village. However, despite the high potential and quality of the products produced, the economic sustainability of these artisans is faced with great challenges that threaten their existence. Based on in-depth observations in the field, the marketing system implemented by the majority of boiler MSME actors in Walahar Village is still conventional and very traditional.

Business actors generally only rely on passive methods, namely waiting for buyers or collectors to come directly to the production site, conducting face-to-face sales in the local market, and relying on viral or word-of-mouth promotions whose scope is very limited. This passive marketing pattern and narrow scope cause the product distribution chain to be very short, creating a very high dependence on middlemen or middlemen who often suppress the purchase price and cut the net profit margin that the artisans should receive. This stagnant marketing condition becomes very worrying when juxtaposed with the reality of the times in the era of digitalization and industry 4.0 today, where global consumer behavior has shifted massively towards digital platforms. Based on the latest data on internet penetration in Indonesia, the majority of people spend their daily time accessing social media as a space to find information and shop. The inability of Dandang Walahar Village MSMEs to adapt and adopt digital technology has triggered a very serious digital literacy gap.

This gap includes the inability of business actors to operate business features on social media, difficulties in creating attractive promotional content, and ignorance about how to build brand identity in cyberspace. The impact of this issue should not be underestimated; Without a digital footprint, this flagship product from Walahar Village will remain isolated in the local market, lose out on competition with modern factory-made cookware products that are aggressively marketed through the internet, and can ultimately kill the livelihoods of the local community due to a drastic decline in demand and the loss of interest of the younger generation to regenerate this craft business. Therefore, the urgency of solving this problem is very crucial and requires real intervention from academics through a structured and applicable service program. As a concrete solution to this phenomenon, this Community Service activity is proposed with the title "Assistance for Social Media Based Marketing Strategy as an Effort to Expand the Market Reach of Dandang MSMEs in Walahar Village".

This program is designed not only as a temporary one-way theory counseling, but also uses an interactive and continuous intensive coaching method to ensure optimal knowledge transfer to target partners. Through the implementation of this program, the main goal to be achieved is to break the limitations of traditional market access by gradually increasing the digital literacy of artisans. The mentoring will focus on mastering potential social media platforms, creating creative and aesthetic content visual assets, and copywriting techniques that are able to attract consumer interest outside the geographical area of Walhar Village. With the creation of this independent digital-based marketing ecosystem, Dandang Walahar Village MSMEs are expected to be able to cut the detrimental distribution chain, expand market reach to the regional and national levels, accelerate daily sales volume, and ultimately realize the economic independence of the village community in a sustainable manner.

To address the root of the problem related to low digital literacy and limited market reach faced by Dandang MSMEs in Walahar Village, this community service program offers a comprehensive solution in the form of social media-based marketing

technology interventions implemented through humanist and applicative approaches. The main solutions presented are the preparation of practical training modules and the implementation of intensive workshops on Social Media Based Marketing which are specially designed to adapt to the characteristics and level of understanding of local artisans. Not only stopping at the theoretical level, the service team also provides technical solutions in the form of providing portable mini studio facilities to support the product digitization process, such as simple lighting tools and adequate photo backgrounds, so that craftsmen can produce independent visual content professionally without requiring high costs. In addition, the long-term solution offered is the formation of a digital ecosystem or internal community of fellow boiler craftsmen that functions as a forum for mutual information sharing, business account performance evaluation, and collaboration in fulfilling large-scale orders coming from digital platforms, so as to create a solid, independent business climate, and no longer dependent on traditional middleman networks. Through the implementation of the entire series of solutions, this community service activity sets several measurable concrete output targets as indicators of program success, both academic and practical for target partners.

In terms of MSME partners, the main output target that must be achieved is the formation of at least three active and optimized official business accounts on strategic social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook Marketplace, complete with an aesthetic and informative digital product catalog. In addition, this activity targets an increase in the understanding and digital skills of partners measured through pre-tests and post-tests with a graduation target of at least eighty percent of the total mentoring participants.

Meanwhile, in terms of academic outputs to fulfill the tri dharma of higher education, this program is targeted to produce one scientific article that is ready to be published in the SINTA Accredited National Journal, one publication article in the national electronic mass media as a form of disseminating the positive impact of the activity, and one video documentation of the implementation of short-duration activities uploaded to the YouTube platform as a means of public education and program accountability to the parties funders.

METHODS

The method of implementing community service activities is designed systematically and gradually using a participatory approach model which is divided into three main phases, namely the preparation phase (pre-activity), the implementation phase (execution), and the evaluation and sustainability phase (post-activity). In the preparation phase, the service team will carry out initial coordination with the Walahar Village apparatus and the head of the boiler craftsman group to equalize perceptions, take care of bureaucratic licensing, conduct an in-depth survey to map the readiness of partners' digital infrastructure, and prepare training module materials that are relevant to field needs. This initial step is crucial to ensure that the schedule of activities that are

prepared does not interfere with the daily productivity of the craftsmen in producing boilers, as well as to build a strong trust (*rapport*) between the academic team and the target community so that the program can run conducive and receive full support from the surrounding environment.

Entering the implementation phase, the core activities are carried out through the *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD) method which is followed by classical training and *one-on-one coaching* at the location of the craft center. The first classical training will focus on the introduction of the basics of digital marketing, how to create a business account, as well as basic cybersecurity strategies to prevent accounts from being easily hacked. The next meeting will be filled with hands-on practice of creating creative content using editing applications on smartphones, techniques for taking photos of interesting boiler products using natural and artificial lighting, and how to write communicative product descriptions (*copywriting*). This mentoring process is carried out repeatedly and interactively, where each craftsman will be guided directly by a team of lecturers and students until they are really proficient in uploading content independently, interacting with potential digital consumers, and understanding how to manage the feature of incoming messages or transactions on their social media accounts.

The final phase of this implementation method is a thorough evaluation and preparation of a program sustainability strategy to ensure that this marketing digitalization continues to run consistently even after the service team has completed its duties. Evaluations are conducted periodically every two weeks post-training to monitor the activity of partner business accounts, analyze market reach graphs, calculate the growth in the number of *followers*, and measure the direct impact on the increase in turnover or weekly sales volume of artisans. As the conclusion of the series of programs, the service team will hand over a printed module of digital marketing guides and appoint some of the village youth or artisans who are most responsive to technology to act as *digital champions* or local mentors. The role of this local mentor is very vital to become an independent consultation center for other artisans in Walahar Village, so that the digital transformation of the creative economy in the village can continue to move forward independently, adaptively, and sustainably in the long term.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Community Service (PKM) program which focuses on assisting social media based marketing strategies for boiler craftsmen MSMEs in Walahar Village has been successfully implemented through a series of structured stages involving 25 local business actors as the main target partners. Before the program intervention began, the service team first collected initial data (baseline data) through questionnaire methods and in-depth interviews to measure the existing level of digital literacy of the artisans. The results of the pre-test show a rather worrying reality, where 92% of the total participants (23 craftsmen) are in the very low digital literacy category. They only use smartphones for personal communication through the WhatsApp

application, without understanding that these devices have great potential as a business marketing tool. Furthermore, preliminary sales data shows that all partners (100%) are highly dependent on the presence of seasonal middlemen who come to the village, with a very thin net profit margin, which only ranges from Rp15,000 to Rp25,000 per boiler, due to the purchase price being unilaterally suppressed by the intermediary. Responding to these conditions, the implementation phase of the program was immediately accelerated through intensive workshops and one-on-one coaching.

The first phase is focused on technology migration through the creation of digital infrastructure in the form of official business accounts. Through this assistance, the PKM team succeeded in facilitating the formation of 25 new business accounts divided into three main platforms that were considered the most potential, namely Instagram Bisnis, TikTok Shop/TikTok MSMEs, and Facebook Marketplace. This process is not easy because it is constrained by the limited technical skills of participants in remembering passwords and configuring business emails. However, with a patient approach and help from the student team, the technical obstacles can be resolved within two working days. Each business account that is formed is then optimized for its profile, starting from writing a professional bio, including an admin contact link that is directly connected to WhatsApp Business, to arranging the initial layout of the digital catalog so that it looks credible in the eyes of potential internet consumers.

The second stage that is at the core of this service discussion is creative content production training and product description writing strategies (copywriting). The main obstacle to traditional boiler products is their appearance which is considered monotonous if only photographed as is. Therefore, the service team introduced the concept of mini studio lighting using an economical portable reflector lamp and a plain white photo background to give a premium and clean impression to the typical stainless steel boiler product of Walahar Village.

During the three sessions, the craftsmen were trained to take the right angle, record videos of the process of beating sheet metal into a boiler that has high aesthetic value, and edit short videos using the CapCut app on their phones. The results of this stage are very satisfactory; collected as many as 75 digital assets in the form of high-quality product photos and 25 short videos (Reels/TikTok) that are ready to be uploaded periodically. The artisans were also taught a simple copywriting formula based on AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) to write promotional captions that not only sell, but also tell the cultural value and durability of their handmade boilers. The success of this service program is empirically proven through post-test data analysis and business account performance monitoring for two full months after the training is completed. Post-test data showed a very significant jump in the level of digital literacy of partners, where the average value of participants' comprehension increased sharply from the original 28% during the pre-test to 84% during the post-test. In terms of market reach, algorithm analysis on the Instagram and TikTok platforms shows that Walahar Village boiler products have managed to reach new areas outside the local district, covering the

Greater Jakarta area, Central Java, to several areas outside Java such as Sumatra and Kalimantan, with a total cumulative impression of more than 12,000 views within 60 days. This digital expansion of market reach automatically triggers real sales conversions and cuts the distribution channels of middlemen that have been detrimental to us.

The direct economic impact felt by the MSMEs of Dandang Walahar Village after this assistance is an increase in daily sales volume which is directly correlated with an increase in turnover and profitability. Based on digital cash book records taught during the program, there was an increase in self-sales transactions via social media by 35% in the first month and jumped to 58% at the end of the second month. Through direct-to-consumer sales on social media, artisans can now sell boilers at normal market prices and earn a net profit margin that increases to Rp45,000 to Rp60,000 per boiler, or an increase of more than 100% compared to when they sell to middlemen. In addition to financial benefits, the sustainability of this program is also ensured by the inauguration of three local youth from Walahar Village as Digital Champions (Local Mentors) who have been equipped with advanced skills to become a consultation and problem-solving center for elderly craftsmen, so that digital-based economic independence in Walahar Village can continue to run massively, independently, and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Community Service (PKM) program through the activity "Social Media Based Marketing Strategy Assistance as an Effort to Expand the Market Reach of Dandang MSMEs in Walahar Village" as a whole can be concluded to be very successful and achieve the output targets that have been set. This digital marketing technology intervention has proven to be able to solve the main problems of partners related to low digital literacy and high dependence on conventional middlemen distribution chains. Through an intensive mentoring approach, the digital literacy level of 25 boiler craftsmen as target partners experienced a drastic spike, from an average pre-test score of 28% to 84% in the post-test evaluation. The success of this transition is marked by the formation and operation of 25 official business accounts that are active on the Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook Marketplace platforms that are integrated with an aesthetically pleasing and professional digital product catalog.

The real impact of this program is not only seen in the aspect of knowledge, but also makes a linear contribution to strengthening the economy of the people of Walahar Village. The expansion of social media-based market reach has succeeded in penetrating local geographical boundaries, reaching consumers outside the provincial area to outside the island, as evidenced by the accumulation of digital impressions that reached more than 12,000 views. From a financial point of view, the adoption of the direct-to-consumer model through this digital platform succeeded in increasing the volume of independent sales by up to 58% in the second month, while at the same time doubling the net profit margin of craftsmen to more than 100% because it succeeded in cutting the middleman route. The inauguration of three village youths as Digital Champions is

also an important pillar that ensures the sustainability of the program independently in the future.

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