

Digital Branding Strategy Training to Enhance the Competitiveness of Local Products in Pananggahan Village

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Abstract

This digital branding strategy training was conducted to enhance the competitiveness of local products produced by UMKM actors in Pananggahan Village. Through this training activity, the community was introduced to the concept of digital branding, the use of social media for marketing, and techniques for creating engaging digital content. The results of the training showed a significant increase in participants' knowledge of digital marketing and digital branding. Some participants have started to implement digital branding strategies in their businesses, particularly through platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp Business. This training is expected to be the first step in the development of technology-based UMKM in the village.

Keywords

Digital Branding, UMKM, Local Products, Training, Competitiveness.

Introduction

The evolving landscape of marketing due to advancements in information technology requires business actors to be able to adapt digitally. Local products produced by rural communities have great potential in terms of quality and uniqueness, but they are not supported by effective marketing strategies. Pananggahan Village is one such area that has a variety of local products, such as traditional foods, handicrafts, and organic agricultural products. However, the competitiveness of these products remains low due to a lack of understanding about branding and digital marketing.

Digital branding is an important strategy for strengthening the position of products in the market. Through digital branding, business actors can reach a broader consumer base without geographical limitations. This training is conducted as a form of community service aimed at empowering the people of Pananggahan Village so they can manage and market their products through a digital approach.

Problem Formulation

1. What is the level of understanding of the people of Pananggahan Village about digital branding before the training?
2. What digital branding strategies can be applied by local business actors?
3. How effective is this training in improving the competitiveness of local products?

Objectives of the Activity

- a. To educate about the importance of digital branding.
- b. To train the community in using digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp Business for marketing products.
- c. To increase the competitiveness and reach of local products through digital branding approaches.

Benefits of the Activity

- a. The growth of awareness and digital branding capabilities among local UMKM actors.
- b. Local products from Pananggahan Village having a strong and attractive brand identity.
- c. Increased economic opportunities for the village community.

Literature Review

1. Digital Branding

According to Kotler & Keller (2016), branding is the process of creating a positive perception of a product or service through a name, symbol, or design that distinguishes it from competitors. Digital branding refers to this process carried out on digital platforms such as social media, websites, and online marketplaces (Chaffey, 2019). Digital branding strategies involve visual content, storytelling, and active engagement with consumers.

2. Competitiveness of Local Products

Competitiveness is the ability of a product to stand out and perform better than similar products in the market (Porter, 1998). Local products, especially those from rural areas, possess unique values that can serve as competitive advantages when properly packaged and marketed using strategic approaches.

3. The Role of UMKM in Rural Economies

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (UMKM) play a vital role in the economic development of rural areas. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Cooperatives and UMKM (2023), UMKM contribute more than 60% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (PDB) and provide over 97% of employment opportunities. Therefore, strengthening digitally-based UMKM is highly relevant to the context of rural development.

Methodology

A. RESEARCH METHODS

This training was conducted using a structured methodology to ensure that the material delivered would be well received by participants and easily implemented in daily life. The method used consists of several stages, combining both theoretical and practical approaches. The following are the stages implemented throughout the activity:

1. Preparation Stage

Before the training commenced, a preliminary survey was conducted to identify participants' backgrounds and their level of knowledge regarding digital branding. This step was crucial in tailoring the training materials to suit participants' needs. Additionally, the community service team prepared training materials in the form of presentations, modules, and step-by-step guides for managing digital branding.

2. Introduction and Material Overview

On the first day, the training began with an introductory session on the importance of digital branding for local products. Participants were introduced to the basic concepts of branding and the benefits of digital branding in enhancing product competitiveness in the global market. Participants were also introduced to various digital platforms that can be used for promotion, such as social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok), websites, and WhatsApp Business.

3. Material Delivery and Detailed Explanation

The training content was delivered in detail, covering the following topics:

- a. Introduction to Digital Branding: Understanding the key elements of digital branding, including logos, taglines, brand colors, and more.
- b. Digital Platforms for Branding: Utilizing social media, creating business accounts on Instagram and WhatsApp Business, and optimizing business profiles.
- c. Content Creation: How to create engaging visual content for social media, such as product photos, short videos, and infographics. The focus was on creating relevant and appealing content for the target audience.
- d. Storytelling and Copywriting: Effective storytelling techniques to communicate brand messages and build audience connection. This also included writing attractive and informative captions.
- e. SEO Techniques and Paid Advertising: Basic search engine optimization (SEO) strategies to increase product visibility on Google, and techniques for using Google Ads or other paid advertisements.

All materials were delivered interactively using case studies and concrete examples from successful local products that have implemented digital branding.

4. Practical Application

After the theoretical sessions, participants were invited to apply what they had learned. Each participant was required to:

- a. Create a business account on Instagram and WhatsApp Business.
- b. Complete their business profile with accurate information, including product descriptions and contact details.
- c. Create various types of content for their products, such as product photos, promotional videos, and captions highlighting product uniqueness.
- d. Simulate paid advertising on Instagram and Facebook, including identifying appropriate audiences for their target market.
5. Assistance and Mentoring
In this stage, participants received direct guidance from facilitators. Each participant was given time to complete content creation tasks and upload them to their social media accounts. Facilitators provided feedback and suggestions to improve the quality of their content.
6. Evaluation
Upon completion of the training, evaluations were conducted to measure the improvement in participants' knowledge and skills. This was done through pre-tests and post-tests, which included questions on digital branding concepts, digital platform understanding, and participants' content creation abilities. Participants were also asked to provide feedback on the training materials and the delivery methods.
7. Follow-Up
Following the training, participants were given opportunities to consult further with facilitators regarding any difficulties or questions that arose while applying digital branding strategies to their products. The community service team also conducted periodic follow-ups (via WhatsApp group or email) to monitor participants' progress in promoting their products on social media and to provide additional support if needed.
8. Training Schedule Overview (3-Day Program):
 - a. Day 1: Introduction to Digital Branding and the Importance of Branding for Local Products. This session also covered the basics of creating business social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook) and developing attractive profiles.
 - b. Day 2: Visual Content Creation and Storytelling Techniques. Participants learned how to take appealing product photos, write effective captions, and attract audiences through storytelling techniques.
 - c. Day 3: SEO Techniques for Branding and the Use of Paid Advertisements. This session introduced participants to SEO strategies and how to optimize product searches on digital platforms. It also provided guidance on creating effective paid ads on social media

Findings

1. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The three-day digital branding strategy training held in Pananggahan Village showed positive outcomes in enhancing the understanding and capabilities of local UMKM

(Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) actors in managing their brands and utilizing digital media for product marketing. This activity produced several key findings, which can be categorized as follows:

1. Preliminary Survey Results and Participant Profile

Before the training began, the community service team conducted a preliminary survey to assess the participants' backgrounds, their understanding of digital branding, and current marketing practices. The survey revealed the following data:

- a. 70% of participants did not understand the concept of digital branding.
- b. 80% of participants did not have dedicated social media accounts for their businesses.
- c. 65% of participants marketed their products only through conventional methods (word of mouth or direct sales at the village market).
- d. 90% of participants had never attended any digital marketing training before.

These findings emphasize the urgency of the training and highlight the low level of digital literacy among UMKM actors in Pananggahan Village, which ultimately affects the competitiveness of their products.

2. Training Implementation and Participant Response

During the training, participants demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm. Although some initially struggled with technical terms, the interactive and hands-on approach proved effective in helping them understand and apply the concepts.

1. Day One: Participants learned about the concepts of branding and digital branding, and why both are essential. They were encouraged to analyze their own product branding and consider how their products are perceived by consumers. The response was very positive, as many participants realized for the first time the importance of visual identity (logos, colors, slogans) in building customer trust.
2. Day Two: The focus was on visual content creation techniques, such as photographing products using a smartphone, simple editing using free applications, and writing captions using storytelling techniques. Participants practiced by photographing their own products and creating content to be uploaded to Instagram or WhatsApp Business.
3. Day Three: Participants were introduced to SEO basics, how to select appropriate hashtags, and features of paid promotion on social media. Some participants tried Instagram promotion using trial credit provided by the community service team.

Most participants were able to create business social media accounts and upload a minimum of three content posts during the training period.

3. Activity Documentation

Documentation of the activity showed that through structured and practice-based training, the rural community could gain tangible benefits for improving their businesses both in terms of knowledge and digital skills.



Figure . 1 Documentation of Digital Branding Strategy Training Activities to Increase the Competitiveness of Local Products in Pananggahan Village.

2. Discussion

The results of the training demonstrate that digital branding is highly relevant and applicable for UMKM actors in rural areas. The knowledge of branding, which has long been considered exclusive to large companies, is also essential for small businesses to compete on a wider scale. With proper guidance and easily digestible materials, UMKM actors can independently develop their brands.

These findings align with Porter’s (1998) theory of competitive advantage, where differentiation (through branding) can become a significant value addition. Furthermore, this training also shows that digital transformation in rural areas is not impossible, as long as it is supported by an adaptive training approach, adequate supporting facilities, and continuous mentorship.

Conclusion

The digital branding strategy training conducted in Pananggahan Village has had a positive impact on the understanding and capabilities of local business actors in utilizing digital platforms to enhance the competitiveness of their products. Through this training, participants gained knowledge on the importance of digital branding in building a strong brand image, as well as effective methods for leveraging social media and other digital platforms.

The implementation of appropriate digital branding strategies such as utilizing social media, creating engaging content, and optimizing websites and online stores has proven to increase the visibility and appeal of local products. Additionally, the training emphasized the importance of consistency in brand messaging, which strengthens consumer relationships and expands market reach.

As a result of this program, business actors in Pananggahan Village are expected to become more competitive in an increasingly digital market and to better leverage broader market opportunities. Therefore, the sustainability of training programs and continued mentoring will be crucial to ensure effective and long-term implementation of digital branding practices.

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