

MSMEs Marketing Strategy with the Use of Social-Media in the COVID-19 Pandemic Era

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Abstract

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, commonly abbreviated as MSMEs, is one of the pillars of the economy in Indonesia. It is proven that the MSMEs sector has repeatedly survived various crises that hit Indonesia starting from the monetary crisis in 1998 and the global crisis in 2008. Entering 2020, the world is again experiencing a more severe crisis, namely the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis is seen as more severe because it has caused a worldwide health emergency that impacts other sectors, especially the economy. Restrictions on outdoor activities known as lockdowns have caused world economic activities to stop. This also impacts the activities of the MSMEs sector, which relies on economic turnover that comes from human activities. The MSMEs sector has been able to survive because of the direct marketing activities of individuals. The prohibition of gathering and opening a business openly (especially in the culinary sector) has had a significant impact on sustainability. Because of this, new marketing strategies for MSMEs sector players are needed to survive and even grow during the COVID-19 pandemic as it is today. Since the COVID-19 pandemic is imminent, this study aims to develop a marketing strategy for small businesses. This study employs a descriptive method and a qualitative approach. When the COVID-19 pandemic begins, UMPM must develop a marketing strategy that will allow them to continue to grow their business or at least to survive. There are eight reasons, namely a) Consumers are active on Social-Media; b) Easy contact with consumers; c) Increase Brand Visibility; d) The widest WOM container; e) Has Many Types of Platforms with Different Types of Consumers; f) Assisting in consumer targeting and retargeting; g) Using media more effectively, h) Increasing sales.

Keywords: *Marketing Strategy, MSMEs, Social-Media, COVID-19.*



A. INTRODUCTION

After almost two years, all countries in the world are struggling against the COVID-19 pandemic and together are facing extraordinary conditions because they affect the entire fabric of people's lives, both in the fields of health, economy, education, social and culture (Sarip et al., 2020). Many people have been infected with the virus in the health sector, both of which have recovered or died. According to the World Health Organization or WHO, the COVID-19 pandemic attacks humans physically and mentally (Ilpaj & Nurwati, 2020). The education sector has also been greatly affected by this pandemic. A learning ban made into a distance has made it difficult for students to receive lessons, plus parents are also bothered by having to understand the child's lessons because, at home, parents also function as teachers. Besides that, this pandemic has caused many children to drop out of school due to economic conditions and cannot receive lessons (Martorejo, 2020). In the economic field, the impact of the pandemic has

been extraordinary, starting from the fall in people's purchasing power and consumption, declining investment due to prolonged uncertainty, and the economic slowdown caused by declining and even cessation of exports (Yamali & Putri, 2020). In the socio-cultural field, this pandemic has caused unexpected social changes. This pandemic causes a growing sense of anxiety, suspicion, and loss of trust in those around us. Besides that, this pandemic has caused a loss of a sense of cooperation and has created a selfish nature in every community (Yanuarita & Haryati, 2021).

In Indonesia, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in the country's economic growth and development. One of Indonesia's financial partners is MSMEs, particularly for workers and the lower classes (Alfrian & Pitaloka, 2020). Because MSMEs can absorb jobs, unemployment is reduced because the workforce is unable to absorb them into the workplace, which is why MSMEs play a significant role in the efforts of community experts to overcome poverty and unemployment (Rudiatin & Ramadhan, 2018). Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) must continue to be pursued to increase their contribution to national income MSMEs play an important role in Indonesia's economic sustainability because they employ 96.87 percent of the country's workforce. There was a 60.34 percent increase in the GDP contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises in 2017 based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs. The percentage of MSMEs in Indonesia's exports is only 15.7%, which means that this contribution can still be increased. The fact that MSMEs grew during times of crisis in both 1998 and 2012 shows that they can survive economic crises (Pakpahan, 2020).

Coronavirus pandemic has sparked negative perceptions of various businesses, particularly those in the MSME sector, by the beginning of 2020. The coronavirus pandemic has had a negative impact on the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The coronavirus pandemic has a direct impact on Indonesia's economy, which is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This includes the creation and income of SMEs, the number of workers who must be reduced, and other factors (Rosita, 2020). Due to the lack of digitization, the difficulty in obtaining technology, and the lack of understanding of the methodologies that must be used in business, MSMEs need to be flexible and adaptable in managing the Coronavirus pandemic (Thaha, 2020). Of course, positive steps must be taken immediately for the Indonesian national economy. By developing MSME activities by the government, it is hoped that economic growth can be improved. To develop MSME activities (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), human resources are needed who have a strong spirit and mentality and are supported by supporting facilities and infrastructure (Rosmadi, 2021).

On April 17, 2020, the Cooperatives and MSMEs Office received reports from more than 37,000 MSME actors who were affected by the coronavirus pandemic (Setiawan, 2020). The difficulties faced by MSMEs during the pandemic were divided into four

categories, according to information made public. First, fewer transactions occur as a result of fewer buyers coming from outside the area. As a result of a decline in agreement rates, there are significant capital challenges. Another obstacle to product distribution is the lack of development for distribution in some areas. Because they are small businesses, MSMEs rely on the advantages of raw materials from other industries for their raw material needs. MSME actors are most concerned about the decline in sales, which is one of the four issues they've identified. As a result of the lack of human resources, providers, and options for updating business models, the pandemic's impact on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is considered far more significant (Febrantara, 2020).

During the pandemic, not a few MSMEs experienced a business crisis. Therefore, MSME actors need to have a survival strategy to be safe from the crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Marketing through social media through internet-based media is the right step that business people must take (Arifqi & Junaedi, 2021). Therefore, the strategy carried out by these business people must be carried out correctly so that the products sent can be known by the wider community by providing clear and trusted data by customers. Social media applications have provided various facilities to carry out promotional activities such as advertisements, vouchers, etc. Not only that, but MSME actors can also share it through their social media accounts, so they can attract the attention of potential consumers to make transactions with MSME actors (Dwijayanti & Pramesti, 2021).

The implementation of digital marketing by utilizing the website Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Shopee, and Gojek to market their products aims to strengthen branding and as promotional media. Because there are product catalogs that are sold equipped with product descriptions and explanations of prices so that the products in the catalog can be recognized by consumers (Raharja & Natari, 2021). Technology has broadened people's perspectives on online marketing and has pushed the boundaries in the direction of a new concept of digital marketing that is more scalable and has a great deal of potential for organizations to capitalize on. However, only a small number of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) in Indonesia are taking advantage of digital marketing, accounting for approximately 17 percent of the total. In order for the government and all those involved in this sector to be able to take full advantage of the digital marketing concept in order to increase turnover and assist MSME actors in surviving the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a separate note to them. As a result, the authors are interested in researching marketing strategies that will be used in conjunction with social media during the COVID-19 epidemic.

B. METHOD

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative research, which means that the information was gathered through the use of words and pictures rather than numbers (Moleong, 2018). According to Bogdan and Taylor (1990), qualitative

research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data from people and observed behavior in the form of written or spoken words. Primarily, data were gathered through unstructured interviews with information sources (key informants and informants), and secondary data, which contained formations and theories that were used to support the research conducted, were also gathered and analyzed. Secondary data is obtained from a variety of sources, including books, magazines, field results, and the internet. Data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusions are all carried out using a qualitative descriptive model, which is used throughout the procedure.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

At the divisional level, a business strategy is a strategic plan to build and strengthen a company's products and services competitive position in the industry or market served by the division. It's possible for businesses to grow and develop as long as their operations adhere to the concepts of efficiency and productivity. Establishing a business firm is a surefire way to maximize profits. Implementing a marketing strategy that hits all the right marks in terms of product quality, price, and competitiveness is the first step toward winning the competition (Yuliana & Pujiastuti, 2018).

The right business strategy to market products during the COVID-19 pandemic is through electronic media, where producers and consumers do not meet directly in one place but have a very wide marketing reach. And that the use of information technology through internet-based social media is the right strategy to market unlimited production while taking into account the company's balance sheet. Internet-based media is an instrument in conveying data from individual to individual or a collection of individuals to achieve a single goal and a common goal. All things considered, as revealed by Nasrullah & Rulli (2018) in the book social media states that social media can be seen from the progress of the relationship between humans and gadget media. Internet-based media is a media platform that highlights the presence of consumers who work with them in their training and collaboration; internet-based media can be seen as a social media (facilitator) that strengthens relationships between consumers only as social bonds.

In the business world in the era of globalization, products featuring two workforces and products can take advantage of advances in data technology—internet-based media results from data technology that provides ideal benefits for business people. With internet-based media, business people can clarify product details, quality, and prices so that buyers can more freely choose the merchandise they need according to their abilities. In the business world in the era of globalization, products featuring two workforces and products can take advantage of advances in data technology—internet-based media results from data technology that provides ideal benefits for business people. With internet-based media, business people can clarify product details, quality, and prices so that buyers can more freely choose the merchandise they need according to their abilities (Irmawati, 2011).

According to Santoso (2020), social media promotion is a type of broadcast used to create attention, recognition, memory, and even activities for a brand, product, business, individual, or association either directly or indirectly by using a tool. For example, from the social internet, publishing content to blogs, microblogging, and person-to-person communication. New internet technologies make it easier for everyone to create and especially offer their substance. Posts via internet-based media such as Instagram, Facebook, tweeter, or recordings on YouTube can be replicated and viewed by many people for free. Sponsors don't have to pay large amounts of cash to distributors or wholesalers to place their ads. Now public relations can create interesting and seen content by many people.

With internet-based promotional media, it is easier for business people to cooperate with their consumers on the internet. The costs incurred are not too large, and there is no time limit as long as you are connected to the internet. Internet-based media play a role when promoting companies train single associations with consumers and give companies the freedom to reach consumers. Promote companies train single associations with consumers and give companies the freedom to reach consumers. Advancements called product-specific tools have been made where it is easier and faster for advertisers to promote their products. This is due to the emergence of various new media that can reach buyers more quickly and widely. Traditionally, progress is all the exercises companies do to deliver and lift their products to an objective market (Kotler, 2004). Promotion is a fundamental component of promotional efforts. Various driving instruments are currently intended to increase the acquisition of certain products or services more quickly and prominently by buyers or merchants (Kotler & Keller, 2007).

The use of social media by MSMEs has a number of benefits, including product galleries, data collection on supplier and distributor needs, consumer surveys, and consumer monitoring. Additionally, social media can be used as a discussion forum, to aid decision-making, to respond to consumers, to track consumer needs, to serve as a marketing and advertising medium, and to serve as a suggestion for personal contact with consumers. The numerous benefits of utilizing social media in the development of MSMEs are a significant motivator for MSMEs to continue utilizing social media to grow their business, increase product sales, communicate with consumers, and expand their market network. This is consistent with previous research, which indicated that MSMEs' perceptions of the benefits of information technology were a major factor in their decision to use information technology media (Elvina, 2015).

The term "Social Media Marketing" refers to the process of creating promotional content for various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Social media is widely regarded as an extremely effective tool for increasing sales conversions. Regardless of the products or services offered to consumers, social media is a critical component of any digital marketing campaign. Here are eight reasons to experiment with social media marketing for SMEs.

1. Consumers are active on Social-Media.

Almost everyone in today's digital society has a Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or other social media account. "Digital Around the World 2019" estimates that more than 150 million Indonesians out of the country's 268 million people use social media. They spend at least three and a half hours and 26 minutes a day on social media. In 2021, there will be 3.1 billion people using social media worldwide, based on current trends. Social media is an excellent way for small businesses to market themselves, because consumers spend most of their time on it. There is a great opportunity to reach consumers at any time and in any place with this many activities. Connecting with customers via social media is a great way to grow your business.

2. Easy to Connect with Consumers

The majority of social media users log into their accounts to find the most recent entertainment and information. If they are directly exposed to advertisements, they will be less receptive to them. However, this does not preclude you from marketing your product to them. Consumers are more receptive to product messages on social media platforms, according to recent research. Consumers are more receptive to marketing messages delivered through social media because social media allows for greater interaction and the promotion of brands from a variety of perspectives. Social media is a channel that allows businesses to interact with customers in a fun and convenient manner. Instead of simply sending out direct marketing messages, you can use social media to make connections with people who have personalities similar to yours. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) can discuss brand concerns on Twitter, ask questions on Instagram Stories, and more.

3. Increase Brand Visibility

Provide a clear and attractive profile that describes the brand personality. This platform helps increase visibility, thereby increasing brand recognition. So that people who are not familiar with your brand can recognize it easily—coupled with uploading interesting content that will add brand value in the eyes of target consumers. For example, new consumers discover your brand on social media. They may not have heard of it before. However, through clear and engaging content, they can learn more about the brand and the value it provides. This same situation can apply to existing consumers. Having seen social media content can increase interest in making repeat purchases.

4. Widest Word-Of-Mouth Container

Word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful marketing media for any business, including SMEs. Not only is it free, but it helps build trust very effectively. In many ways, social media has become a broad medium for word-of-mouth marketing. Consumers usually believe more and buy something after hearing reviews from their closest people or favorite influencers. Consumers can easily leave reviews and recommend products and services to friends and family on social media.

5. Having Many Types of Platforms with Different Types of Consumers

Social media also has many types of platforms with their respective audiences. With a little marketing analysis and innovation, you can strategically target different consumers on each platform. Instead of just publishing promotional content on mainstream media for all to see, it is better to use various social media platforms to reach the appropriate target market. Create a clear list of consumer demographics that include gender, age, location, interests, brands they follow, hobbies, and so on. The more detailed, the better. This information will provide more insight into which platforms to use and help tailor content on each platform if you choose to take full advantage of them.

6. Assisting in Targeting and Retargeting Consumers

Businesses without clear targets will waste resources ineffectively. Social media makes it possible to tailor promotional content to target consumers, deliver the content, and then retarget the portion of the audience that doesn't convert into consumers. For example, Facebook allows you to target users based on location, purchase history, pages followed, and even education level. With advanced targeting capabilities, social media can help target ideal consumers.

7. Using More Cost Effectively

Signing up and creating a free account on any platform makes marketing through social media the cheapest way to go. This marketing tends to demand investing more time in creating and publishing content and engaging audiences than money. This time investment still produces a significant impact on the business. However, if you decide to use paid advertising, social media makes it easier to start small. This is especially suitable for SMEs who usually start with a small fee.

8. Increase Sales

At the end of the day, the effectiveness of social media marketing is determined by its ability to generate sales leads. According to statistical data, 70 percent of sellers acquire new customers through social media platforms. It is very effective to interact with potential customers on a regular basis in order to convince them to purchase the product and turn them into customers.

By implementing digital marketing, of course, MSMEs can continue to operate without making face-to-face transactions. Especially during a pandemic and in this New Normal era, most people prefer to stay at home rather than spend time outside the house. Choosing to stay at home makes people more often do social media activities, one of which is online shopping. One of the advantages of digital marketing as a sales strategy is to analyze consumer needs and behavior to match the desired target. In addition, with digital marketing, the sales costs incurred will be cheaper because they can use social media as a cheap and effective marketing medium. Thus, we all hope that MSMEs in Indonesia will continue to grow rapidly and remain the backbone of the economy for Indonesia.

D. CONCLUSION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which have been the pillar of the economy in Indonesia, have not been spared the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These business actors, dominated by the lower middle class, have been significantly affected, mainly due to the absence of people's activities on which the economic cycle is based. It is necessary to develop a marketing strategy in the MSME sector by utilizing information technology that is growing very rapidly today. The use of various social media platforms has proven to improve or at least be able to survive during the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, the author describes the basis for the author in using social media as a marketing strategy for the MSME sector, namely a) active consumers on social media; b) Easy contact with consumers; c) Increase Brand Visibility; d) The widest WOM container; e) e) Has Many Types of Platforms with Different Types of Consumers; f) Assisting in consumer targeting and retargeting; g) Use media more effectively, h) Increase sales.

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