

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING FOR BRAND AWARENESS TO IMPROVE MARKETABILITY IN MSMES

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ABSTRACT

Technological advancements and internet penetration have provided MSMEs with new opportunities to expand their market presence and strengthen their brand position. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the role of digital marketing for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to build brand awareness and interact with customers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify alternative digital marketing options that are effective and relevant for MSMEs in order to build strong brand awareness and increase their competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market. The research methodology employs a literature review to determine the current trends and developments in digital marketing. Through social media, email marketing, influencer marketing, e-commerce platforms, creative advertising, and the use of video advertising, the findings of this study can provide alternative digital marketing strategies. By implementing technology, MSMEs will be able to maximize their use of current digital marketing trends in an effort to increase consumer brand awareness of products and to bolster the competitiveness and marketability of MSME products.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this age of globalization and technological development, competition in the business world is intensifying, particularly for Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs). In many nations, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of the economy, accounting for the vast majority of employment and serving as a crucial agent of social inclusion. However, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) also encounter a variety of obstacles that can affect their business continuity and growth [1], [2]. Internet and social media make information more readily available to consumers in the digital age. Consequently, MSMEs that are able to optimize their digital marketing will be able to reach a larger audience, develop relationships with potential customers, and increase their market competitiveness. Although MSMEs are believed to be able to stimulate the Indonesian economy, the shift from conventional to digital marketing behavior is not mirrored by the presence of MSME actors who employ digital marketing.

One of the main challenges faced by MSMEs is competitiveness in an increasingly global and digital market. With advances in information technology and the internet, consumer behavior has changed drastically [3]–[6]. Consumers are now more likely to seek product or service information through digital platforms such as websites, social media and mobile applications. Brand presence in the digital realm is very important, and this is the starting point for the role of digital marketing for MSMEs. Other obstacles faced, for example, are a lack of understanding of the importance of digital marketing, a lack of knowledge about information and communication technology [7] as well as good ways to use and utilize social media, impatient to get immediate results, and a lack of understanding to create interesting "posts" [8]. Unfortunately, there are still many MSMEs that have not optimally utilized the potential of digital marketing [9]. They may face constraints related to technological know-how, limited resources, or a lack of understanding of effective digital marketing strategies. As a result, MSMEs' brand awareness may be low,

and their competitiveness may be undermined by competitors who are more proactive in leveraging digital media.

The use of digital technology-based marketing concepts is the hope for MSMEs to develop into centers of economic power. MSMEs can use social media as a digital marketing tool. This study aims to identify effective and relevant digital marketing strategies for MSMEs in order to build strong brand awareness and increase their competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market. [10]–[15]. In addition, the research contribution is able to identify and analyze the most effective digital marketing strategies in increasing MSME brand awareness. A digital marketing strategy can cover various elements, such as social media, online advertising, content marketing, email marketing, and so on. By understanding the most effective strategies, MSMEs can direct their marketing efforts more precisely and efficiently. Another aim of this research is to provide concrete and practical recommendations for MSMEs on how they can improve their digital marketing efforts. These recommendations include using the right digital platforms and channels, engaging content strategies, target audience approaches, and other tactics that can help MSMEs achieve better results in their marketing efforts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a marketing strategy that relies on internet technology and digital media to promote products, services or brands to target audiences. In the ever-evolving digital era, traditional marketing has transformed into more dynamic and interactive marketing. Various digital platforms such as websites, social media, email, search engines, and paid advertising are the main means for marketers to reach audiences more efficiently and on target. Digital marketing also leverages data analysis and performance measurement tools to understand consumer behavior, monitor campaign results and optimize marketing strategies. With a targeted and data-driven approach, digital marketing provides great opportunities for companies and businesses to build brand awareness, attract new customers, and increase engagement with existing customers. This makes digital marketing an integral part of successful marketing efforts in achieving success in this digital era. Digital marketing has the advantage of presenting a more precise target audience and more measurable results compared to traditional marketing [16]–[19]. By leveraging data and analytics, digital marketing can provide in-depth information about consumer behavior and enable marketers to better optimize campaigns. In this digital era, digital marketing has become an integral part of the marketing strategy for many companies and businesses in interacting with customers and increasing their brand presence in the market.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the level of consumer understanding and recognition of a brand or company. It measures the extent to which consumers recognize, remember, and know the existence of a particular brand when they are presented with similar products or services. Brand awareness is an important element in marketing strategy, because strong brand awareness can provide a competitive advantage for companies [9], [20]. There are two types of brand awareness that are commonly known: a) Unaided Awareness: This is the level of consumer understanding of the brand without any assistance or guidance. When consumers are asked to name a brand from a particular product category, they can easily name a brand they know without any help or advice from brand choice. b) 2. Aided Awareness: This is the level of consumer understanding of the brand with the help or guidance of the brand choices provided. When consumers are asked to name brands from a particular product category, they may need assistance or guidance in naming brands they know. Brand awareness is important because it forms the foundation for brand perception and consumer purchases [21]–[25]. With a high level of brand awareness, consumers tend to have more trust in the brand and are more likely to choose products or services from that brand. In addition, brand awareness also plays a role in influencing consumer decisions and provides an advantage in a competitive market.

3. METHOD

In research on the Role of Digital Marketing for Brand Awareness in Improving MSME Competitiveness, the literature review research method involves analyzing and synthesizing information from previously published sources. Conduct a literature search using academic databases, journals, official websites, and other sources [26]–[30] pertinent to the topic of study. Identify important concepts, findings, and arguments concerning the function of digital marketing for brand awareness and MSME competitiveness. Create a comprehensive picture of the role of digital marketing in enhancing MSMEs'

brand recognition and competitiveness by synthesizing or integrating findings from multiple sources. Describe the interrelationships and relevance of the findings to the research topic. This method of conducting a literature review makes it possible to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic without conducting new empirical research. Through a literature review, this study can provide valuable insights and inform effective digital marketing strategies for MSMEs to increase brand awareness and competitiveness.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Development of MSMEs in Utilizing Digital Marketing Today

Utilization of Digital Marketing for Brand Awareness in Increasing the Competitiveness of MSMEs has become the main focus in recent years. Technological developments and internet penetration have opened up new opportunities for MSMEs to reach a wider market and strengthen their brand position. Developments related to digital marketing for brand awareness and increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs cannot be separated from the role of social media which has become the main platform for MSMEs to build brand awareness and interact with customers. MSMEs use social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn to publish content, advertise products or services, and respond to questions or feedback from customers.[31]. The existence of digital marketing content for MSMEs which shows the importance of marketing content in an effort to build brand awareness. They create relevant and engaging content, such as blog articles, videos, infographics, or podcasts, to grab the attention of potential customers and educate them about the products or services they offer. Quality digital marketing content can help MSMEs build authority in their industry and attract a relevant audience.

The rise of E-commerce applications in supporting digital marketing for MSMEs, with increasing e-commerce adoption and the presence of online markets. MSMEs that previously only had physical stores can now take advantage of e-commerce platforms such as Shopify, Tokopedia, Bukalapak, or Shopee to sell their products online.[32]. Presence in the online market also allows MSMEs to reach consumers in various regions, even beyond national borders, which can significantly increase their brand awareness and exposure.

Digital advertising techniques using influencer marketing have become an effective tool for MSMEs to promote their brands. Through paid advertising on platforms such as Google Ads, Facebook Ads, or Instagram Ads, MSMEs can reach the right audience and drive traffic to their websites or social pages.[33]. Smart and targeted use of digital advertising can help increase brand awareness and lead to better results in increasing competitiveness.

Advantages of Digital Marketing for MSMEs in Consumer Brand Awareness and Increasing Selling Power

Digital marketing offers various channels and platforms that can be used to reach target audiences more efficiently and precisely. The use of digital marketing has several attractive advantages for MSMEs, namely First, digital marketing allows very specific targeting according to the characteristics of the desired audience. Marketers can set targets based on demographics, domiciles, lifestyles, or even consumer habits, so that messages and advertisements can be delivered more precisely on target. Second, the speed and responsiveness of digital marketing allows campaign results to be seen quickly. Marketers can see the effectiveness of campaigns in real time and take corrective actions or change strategies when needed. Third,[34]. This provides an opportunity for MSMEs or companies with limited budgets to stay competitive with big brands. Fourth, the reach of digital marketing is not limited geographically. MSMEs can access potential customers around the world without having to have a physical office in every place. Fifth, the flexibility of digital marketing allows access without time limits. Advertisements or marketing content can be accessed by consumers at any time, not limited by a certain time or time zone. Sixth, digital marketing provides the ability to measure results more accurately. Marketers can track website visitor numbers, conversions or other consumer behavior, enabling in-depth performance measurement and analysis[35]. Seventh, digital marketing allows personalization of marketing campaigns. Messages or advertisements can be changed and adapted to consumer preferences or behavior, thereby increasing the relevance and appeal of the campaign[2]. Finally, two-way interaction in digital marketing allows businesses to communicate directly with consumers. This allows for better relationship building and increases consumer confidence in the brand or product offered. With these advantages, digital marketing has become a very effective marketing strategy in achieving business goals[36], expanding the market, and increasing brand awareness. This makes it an attractive choice for MSMEs and companies in adapting to changes and competition in the ever-evolving digital era.

Alternative Digital Marketing Options for MSMEs in Technology Adoption

The implementation of digital marketing is the answer for MSMEs to overcome this challenge and take advantage of the new opportunities offered by the digital era. There are several digital marketing alternatives for MSMEs in adopting technology, so that MSMEs can optimally take advantage of current digital marketing trends in an effort to increase consumer brand awareness of products and support the selling power of MSME products[18]. Several digital marketing alternatives can be seen in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Example of Digital Marketing Implementation for MSMEs

- Based on Figure 1, several alternative digital marketing media for MSMEs can be explained, namely
- Utilization of Social Media for MSMEs, so that MSMEs can create business accounts on social media platforms that are relevant to their field of business, such as Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn. They can use these social media to share interesting content, product images, customer testimonials or special offers. In addition, interaction with customers through comments and private messages can help build closer relationships and increase engagement with customers.
 - MSMEs must have a website that is responsive and easily accessible from mobile devices. This website can be an attractive vitrine for the products or services offered and provide relevant information to potential customers. In addition, regular blogs can help MSMEs publish relevant and useful content to attract organic traffic to websites and can do email marketing to customers to provide information regarding product information, discounts, promos and more.
 - MSMEs can use email marketing to communicate with customers on a regular basis. They can send out newsletters with the latest product information, special offers, or business-related updates. Email marketing can help MSMEs build customer loyalty and increase engagement with them.
 - MSMEs can use digital advertising platforms such as Google Ads or Facebook Ads to target the right audience based on demographic, geographic or interest criteria. By using digital advertising, MSMEs can measure campaign performance precisely, such as the number of clicks, conversions, and ROI (Return on Investment).
 - MSMEs can create creative and interesting content to attract audience attention with video advertising. These can be videos, images, infographics or other interactive content. Attractive content will help MSMEs differentiate themselves from competitors and build stronger brand awareness.
 - MSMEs can take advantage of the presence of online marketplaces or e-commerce platforms such as Tokopedia, Bukalapak or Shopee to sell their products. Presence in the online marketplace will help MSMEs reach consumers across all regions, including beyond their geographic boundaries, thereby increasing brand awareness and product accessibility.
 - MSMEs can collaborate with influencer marketing or industry figures relevant to their business field. Endorsements from influencers who have a large and trusted follower base can help increase brand awareness and expand the reach of MSME products or services.

Understanding the implementation of effective digital marketing can help MSMEs build strong brand awareness, increase their competitiveness, and achieve success in this increasingly competitive and digital market.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study is that the use of digital marketing has afforded MSMEs numerous advantages in terms of brand awareness and competitiveness. MSMEs can reach a more targeted audience, increase consumer engagement, and expand their business reach by utilizing social media, creative content, digital advertising, and online marketplaces. By implementing technology, MSMEs can optimize their marketing efforts to achieve better results, enabling them to optimally utilize the current digital marketing trend to increase consumer brand awareness of products and support the marketability of MSME products. Through social media, email marketing, influencer marketing, e-commerce platforms, creative advertising, and the use of video advertising, the study's findings can provide alternative digital marketing strategies. Thus, digital marketing is the key to success for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the increasingly digital era.

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