

# Branding and Digital Marketing: The Secret to Making SME Products Better Known and Sought After in Sawaru Village, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This Community Service (PKM) activity aims to improve literacy and understanding among Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Sawaru Village regarding the importance of branding in building product image and identity. It also provides practical training in creating attractive, consistent logos, packaging, and brand identities. Furthermore, this activity aims to improve MSMEs' ability to use digital media, such as social media (Instagram and Facebook) and marketplaces (Shopee and Tokopedia), for product promotion and sales. The activity's implementation methods include training, hands-on practice, and mentoring, conducted in a participatory manner involving local MSMEs. The results indicate that the training successfully improved MSMEs' understanding and skills in building branding and implementing more targeted digital marketing strategies. Participants were able to create brand identities, manage digital business accounts, and increase product exposure on digital platforms. This training also demonstrated that design and branding skills do not require high costs or complex technology. By leveraging simple digital tools and local creativity, MSMEs can create professional, competitive brand identities. Technically, this activity also fostered a spirit of collaboration among MSMEs by sharing design and packaging ideas, which serves as crucial social capital for the formation of a creative MSME community in Sawaru Village.

**Keywords:** Branding, Digital Marketing, MSME Products.

## I. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are a key pillar of the national economic system, playing a strategic role in driving economic growth, income equality, and job creation. MSMEs not only drive the urban economy but also serve as the backbone of the rural economy. In many rural areas, MSMEs serve as the primary source of livelihood for communities and a means of managing and developing local potential. Therefore, the sustainability and strengthening of MSMEs are crucial issues for sustainable economic development. Furthermore, MSMEs play a highly strategic role in driving economic growth in rural communities. MSMEs not only serve as a source of income for families but also as a means of creating jobs, reducing unemployment, and improving overall community welfare. In Sawaru Village, various MSMEs operate in food processing and handicrafts, and utilize local natural resources, all of which have significant potential to be developed into superior village products. Despite their vital role, many MSMEs still face various obstacles in developing their businesses. One of the main challenges often encountered is limited knowledge

and skills in managing a modern business, particularly in branding and digital marketing. This situation also occurs among MSMEs in rural areas, such as Sawaru Village in Camba District. Most MSMEs in the village still operate traditionally and have not yet optimally utilized digital technology to increase the competitiveness of their products. Many MSMEs still view branding as simply creating a logo, unaware that it is the process of building a product's identity, image, and value in consumers' eyes. As a result, MSME products lack visual appeal, a strong sense of uniqueness, and the ability to differentiate from similar products on the market. MSMEs in Sawaru Village generally still rely on conventional marketing methods, such as direct sales to consumers, word-of-mouth promotion, and participation in local exhibitions or bazaars. While these methods still play a role, their marketing reach is relatively limited and less effective amid increasingly fierce business competition. On the other hand, developments in information and communication technology have significantly changed consumer behavior, with people now seeking information and conducting transactions through digital platforms. If MSMEs are unable to adapt to these changes, their products are likely to be less competitive and struggle to grow.

One factor contributing to the low competitiveness of MSME products in Sawaru Village is a lack of understanding of branding's importance. Branding is not simply about giving a product a name or logo; it also involves building a product's identity, image, and value in consumers' minds. Without clear, strong branding, MSME products can be challenging to differentiate from similar products. Furthermore, unattractive, uninformative, and inconsistent packaging designs also hinder consumer interest in purchasing. Even high-quality products will struggle to attract market attention without a strong brand identity. In today's digital era, branding and digital marketing are two interrelated and inseparable aspects of business development. Digital marketing enables MSMEs to market their products more widely, efficiently, and measurably. Through digital technology, MSME products can be accessed by consumers across regions, regardless of distance or time. Furthermore, digital marketing provides MSMEs with opportunities to build two-way communication with consumers, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of market needs and preferences. Digital marketing is not simply the use of social media to promote products; it is an integrated, planned, and data-driven marketing strategy. This strategy encompasses the use of various digital channels, such as social media, marketplaces, websites, and digital advertising, supported by data analysis to measure the effectiveness of marketing activities. With the right approach, digital marketing can help MSMEs attract new customers, retain existing ones, and build long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. Utilizing social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok is one of the most effective digital marketing strategies. This Community Service (PKM) activity aims to:

- a. Increase literacy and understanding among MSMEs in Sawaru Village regarding the importance of branding in building product image and identity.
- b. Provide practical training to MSMEs on how to create attractive and consistent logos, packaging, and brand identities.
- c. Improve the ability of MSMEs to utilize digital media, such as social media and marketplaces, as a means of product promotion and sales.
- d. Promote the digital independence of MSMEs so that they can market their products independently.
- e. Build a local digital marketing network that connects MSMEs in Sawaru Village with consumers in the broader region.

## II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

MSMEs are a key pillar of the Indonesian economy. According to Law Number 20 of 2008, MSMEs are defined as productive businesses owned by individuals or individual business entities that meet specific criteria based on assets and turnover. MSMEs play a strategic role in creating jobs, reducing unemployment,

and improving community welfare, particularly in rural areas. In villages like Sawaru Village, MSMEs are generally based on local potential, such as food products, crafts, and processed natural resources. However, limited market access, low marketing literacy, and minimal use of digital technology are significant challenges in developing village MSMEs. Therefore, appropriate marketing strategies are needed to ensure that village MSME products are competitive and widely recognized.

## 2.2. Branding Concept

Branding is the process of building a product or service's identity and image so it can be recognized and differentiated from competitors. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), a brand is a name, term, symbol, design, or a combination of these that aims to identify goods or services and differentiate them from competitors. Branding focuses not only on visual appearance but also encompasses the values, personality, and promises a product makes to consumers. In the context of MSMEs, branding plays a crucial role in building consumer trust and increasing product sales value.

### a. Branding Elements

Branding elements are the components that shape brand identity. Some of the main elements of branding include:

1. Brand Name, as the primary product identity.
2. Logo, as a visual symbol that represents the product.
3. Colors and Typography, which reflect the brand's character and personality.
4. Tagline, as a short, memorable message.
5. Brand Image, which is the consumer's perception of the product. Consistent use of branding elements is crucial for consumer recognition and recall.

### b. The Role of Branding for MSMEs

Branding provides many benefits for MSMEs, including:

1. Increasing brand awareness
2. Building consumer trust
3. Providing added value to products
4. Helping MSMEs compete with larger-scale products

Research by Hidayat (2019) indicates that MSMEs that consistently implement branding experience greater consumer interest in purchasing and higher customer loyalty than MSMEs that lack a clear brand identity.

## 2.3. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a marketing activity that utilizes digital technology and the internet to reach consumers. According to Ryan (2017), digital marketing encompasses all marketing activities conducted through digital media such as websites, social media, email, and search engines. Digital marketing is an effective solution for MSMEs because it can reach a broad market at a relatively low cost and allows direct interaction between businesses and consumers.

- a. Types of Digital Marketing  
Some forms of digital marketing commonly used by MSMEs include:

1. Social Media Marketing (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok)
2. Marketplaces (Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada)
3. Content Marketing (photos, videos, product storytelling)
4. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
5. Digital Advertising
6. Social media is the primary choice for rural MSMEs because it is easy to use and inexpensive.

- b. Benefits of Digital Marketing for MSMEs

Digital marketing offers various benefits, including:

1. Expanding market reach
2. Increasing product visibility
3. Reducing promotional costs
4. Increasing sales
5. Facilitating communication with consumers

#### 2.4. Branding in Digital Marketing

Branding and digital marketing are two complementary concepts. Branding provides identity and value, while digital marketing serves as a medium for conveying that value to consumers. According to Tjiptono (2018), modern marketing strategies must integrate branding into every digital activity to ensure consistent and easily understood messages. In digital marketing, branding is realized through:

- a. Social media visuals
- b. Communication style
- c. Consistent content, interactions with consumers

Branding consistency in digital media can increase consumer trust and loyalty.

#### 2.5. Village MSMEs and the Challenges of Digitalization

Village MSMEs face challenges such as limited human resources, low digital literacy, and unequal internet access. However, technological developments and the growing use of smartphones have created significant opportunities for village MSMEs to market their products digitally in Sawaru Village.

### III. Research Method

The implementation method for this Community Service (PKM) activity was designed to be systematic, structured, and participatory to achieve its objectives effectively. The approach used focused not only on theoretical delivery but also emphasized practical aspects and mentoring, enabling MSMEs to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in their daily business activities. This activity was held over three consecutive days at the Sawaru Village Hall, Camba District, involving 25 local MSMEs from various business types, including food processing, handicrafts, and local agricultural products. The centralized implementation of the activity at the Sawaru Village Hall was chosen based on effectiveness, efficiency, and ease of coordination with the village government and local MSME groups. Furthermore, this location was deemed

capable of fostering a conducive, participatory learning environment, enabling participants to interact with one another, share experiences, and build networks among MSMEs. The implementation method for this PKM activity consisted of four main stages: preparation, training, mentoring, and activity evaluation.

### 3.1. Preparation Phase

The preparation phase is a crucial initial step in ensuring the success of the Community Service Program (PKM) program. During this phase, the implementation team conducts preliminary activities to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the condition of MSMEs in Sawaru Village and the challenges they face. The first activity in the preparation phase is field observation and identification of MSME challenges in Sawaru Village. Observations are conducted directly by visiting MSME businesses, observing production and marketing processes, and holding informal discussions with them. Through these activities, the implementation team can identify key challenges, such as a limited understanding of branding, poor product packaging quality, suboptimal use of digital media, and limited ability to create engaging, effective promotional content. Next, the implementation team coordinates with village officials, MSME group leaders, and other relevant parties. This coordination aims to obtain support and permits for the program, determine its schedule and location, and collect data on training participants. Good coordination with village officials and local partners is expected to increase participant participation and ensure the program runs smoothly. During this preparation phase, the implementation team compiled and prepared training materials for delivery to participants. The materials were developed based on observations and analyses of MSME needs, ensuring they were relevant, applicable, and aligned with field conditions. The training materials covered basic branding concepts, the importance of brand identity, logo and packaging design, digital marketing strategies, the use of social media and marketplaces, and practical digital promotional content creation. The team also prepared training modules, presentation materials, design examples, and guides on using digital applications such as Canva and social media platforms.

### 3.2. Training Phases

The training phase is the core of this PKM activity, where participants gain hands-on knowledge and skills related to branding and digital marketing. The training was conducted over three days, using interactive lectures, discussions, case studies, and simple practical exercises, ensuring that participants gradually and in-depth understood the material. On the first day, the training focused on branding. The material presented covered the definition of branding, the role and benefits of brands for MSMEs, and the importance of branding in increasing product competitiveness. Participants also gained an understanding of the key elements of branding, including brand names, logos, taglines, colors, and packaging design. This session encouraged participants to understand that branding is not just about visual appearance; it also reflects the value, quality, and character of a product in consumers' eyes. In addition to the presentation of material, the first day also included discussions and sharing of experiences regarding the current state of branding for participating MSME products. Participants were allowed to showcase their products, including their packaging and brand identity. This discussion aimed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the participants' product branding and provide initial feedback that can serve as a basis for improvement. The second day of the training focused on digital marketing. In this session, participants were given an understanding of the basic concepts of digital marketing, the differences between conventional and digital marketing, and the benefits of digital marketing for MSME development.

## IV. Results and Discussion

Branding training for MSMEs in Sawaru Village, Camba District, was conducted as part of a community service program to improve local businesses' capacity to build their image, identity, and product

competitiveness. Branding was chosen as the primary focus of the activity because, in the context of modern marketing, brands serve not only as visual identities but also as representations of value, quality, and trust instilled in consumers. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), branding is the process of giving meaning to a product or service by creating strong, positive, and unique associations in consumers' minds. Therefore, strengthening branding for MSMEs is a strategic step to increase product added value and business sustainability. The implementation of branding and digital marketing activities for MSMEs in Sawaru Village yielded various positive results. MSMEs from various business types, including processed food, craft products, and local natural products, participated in this activity. In general, MSMEs demonstrated strong enthusiasm for participating at each stage of the activity, from the presentation of materials to hands-on practice. The primary outcome of this activity was an increased understanding of the importance of branding for MSME business development. MSMEs began to understand that branding is not only about logos, but also encompasses product identity, business storytelling, packaging quality, and consistent product appearance. Several MSMEs successfully identified more attractive and memorable brand names and began implementing simple visual identities on their product packaging. Furthermore, the activity's results were evident in MSMEs' improved ability to use digital media as a marketing tool. Most participants were able to create and manage their business social media accounts, such as Instagram and Facebook, and utilize WhatsApp Business to communicate with customers. MSMEs also began to understand how to take more compelling product photos, write clear product descriptions, and develop straightforward promotional content that attracts potential customers.

#### 4.1. Initial Conditions and Pre-Training Observation Results

Prior to the training, the community service team conducted field observations and a pre-test to map the initial conditions of MSMEs in Sawaru Village. Observations indicate that most MSMEs still operate traditionally across production, packaging, and marketing. The products produced generally lack a clear brand identity, such as a brand name, logo, label, or attractive packaging. Product packaging remains functional and straightforward, without consideration for aesthetics or marketing communication. In terms of conceptual understanding, pre-test results indicated that only about 20% of participants understood branding as a means of product differentiation from competitors. Most participants believed that branding was relevant only to large companies and not particularly important for small businesses. This finding aligns with the research of Rahayu and Day (2017), which found that low marketing and branding literacy remains the main obstacle for rural MSMEs in increasing product competitiveness. Furthermore, the marketing system used by MSMEs in Sawaru Village is still dominated by direct sales and word-of-mouth promotion. While these methods are quite effective locally, they have limitations in reaching a broader market. This indicates that MSMEs in Sawaru Village have good product potential, but have not yet been matched by adequate branding and marketing strategies.

#### 4.2. Implementation of Branding Training and Improving Participant Understanding

Branding training was conducted on the first day of the program through interactive lectures, group discussions, and case studies. This method was chosen to encourage active participation and facilitate understanding of basic branding concepts. The training materials covered the definition and function of branding, the elements that form a brand, and strategies for building a strong, recognizable product identity for consumers. During the training session, the resource person explained that branding plays a strategic role in creating perceived value in consumers' minds. Aaker (1997) stated that a strong brand builds brand equity, a set of assets and liabilities associated with the brand, name, and symbol that can add or subtract from a product's value. Brand elements such as logos, colors, slogans, and packaging serve as visual cues that help consumers recognize and remember the product. Participants were also provided with examples of local and national brands that have been successfully built.



**Figure 1. A community service team member displaying MSME products in Sawaru Village, Maros.**



**Figure 2. MSME participants listen to a community service presentation in Sawaru Village, Maros.**



**Figure 3. The Community Service Team poses for a group photo during the presentation.**

#### 4.3. Impact Analysis

Based on the post-training evaluation, conducted through a post-test and brief interviews with participants, several key findings emerged.

- a. 85% of participants felt they better understood the importance of logos and packaging in attracting consumers.
- b. 70% of participants stated that the new appearance of their products received a positive response from local customers.

- c. 60% of participants planned to immediately print the new packaging designed by the training for use on products they would market.

These findings indicate that practice-based training was highly effective in improving rural MSMEs' visual branding skills. Participants' increased understanding of the functions of logos and packaging not only affected cognitive processes but also influenced their entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors. MSMEs began to realize that packaging and visual identity are not merely product accessories but strategic elements that can create a professional impression and increase sales value. Psychologically, changes in product appearance positively impacted MSMEs' self-confidence. Products with more attractive logos and packaging made participants feel more confident in offering their products to consumers. This self-confidence is a crucial factor in fostering motivation for creative entrepreneurship, particularly in rural areas that have traditionally relied on traditional marketing methods. With increased motivation and confidence, MSMEs become more open to innovation and change. Furthermore, the positive response from local customers to the new product's appearance indicates that consumers are beginning to perceive MSME products as higher quality and more competitive. This aligns with the concept of consumer value perception, where packaging and visual design influence consumers' initial assessments of product quality. Thus, visual branding serves as a communication bridge between producers and consumers, helping build a positive image of local products. The plans of most participants to print new packaging also indicate a commitment to implementing the training outcomes in practice. This commitment is crucial as an indicator of the sustainability of the community service program's impact. The training goes beyond increasing knowledge and encourages changes in business behavior toward a more professional and market-oriented approach. Overall, the impact analysis shows that the practice-based visual branding training holistically improves rural MSMEs' capacity, encompassing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. This program fosters a creative entrepreneurial spirit and opens up opportunities for developing more competitive MSMEs in the dynamic digital economy.

## V. Conclusion

The Community Service (PKM) program in Sawaru Village has successfully increased the capacity of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to build branding and implement digital marketing strategies in a more targeted and sustainable manner. Through structured, practice-based training, MSMEs gained a better understanding of the importance of brand identity and were able to implement it through logo creation, packaging design improvements, and digital media management to promote their products. In addition to improving technical skills, this activity encouraged MSMEs to shift their mindset toward the importance of branding and digital marketing as long-term strategies for maintaining business sustainability and increasing the competitiveness of local products. The use of simple, easily accessible digital tools, combined with creativity and local wisdom, has proven effective in creating a professional, competitive brand identity. Thus, this PKM activity contributes to strengthening the digital independence of rural MSMEs and supporting sustainable local economic development.

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