

## DIGITAL MARKETING FOR MSMEs IN THE ERA PANDEMIC COVID-19

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### Abstract

In this era of the covid-19 pandemic, business actors, especially MSMEs, are required to survive in facing conditions that are different from usual. The limited condition of business actors in marketing their products directly in the field is currently still not effective because the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing and the government will certainly limit all activities in public places. Therefore, MSME business actors must replace these marketing strategies with more effective strategies such as digital marketing. The research method used in this study uses descriptive qualitative and uses secondary data sources from several literatures such as journals and books related to the problems being discussed. The results of this study are MSMEs in Indonesia in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital marketing marketing strategies for MSMEs, branding for MSMEs, implementation of social media and e-commerce for marketing media .

**Keyword:** Digital Marketing, MSME, Marketing Strategy

### INTRODUCTION

Currently, all countries are experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic, including Indonesia. This situation is a big problem for Indonesia. Because not only the health sector is the main problem, but the economic problem is also experiencing very serious problems (Istiatin and Marwati, 2021). The problem of this economic downturn is caused by a decline in community economic activity in the pandemic era. This decline will certainly have an impact on the tourism, industry and trade sectors, as well as on the business sector (Alfin, 2021).

In this era of the COVID-19 pandemic, business actors are required to survive in facing conditions that are different from usual. Conditions require restrictions in all sectors. Of course, there needs to be a strategy in dealing with these conditions. The limited condition of business actors in marketing their products directly in the field is currently still not effective because the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing and the government will certainly limit all activities in public places. Therefore, business actors must replace the marketing strategy with a more effective strategy. Like opening their stalls online / called e-commerce trading. E-commerce itself is a transaction activity between individuals in which there is an exchange of values which

the process uses digital technology. So it can be concluded that e-commerce is a transaction activity in the form of buying and selling products using electronic/computer media between individuals or groups (Alfin, 2021).

The existence of these MSMEs is very helpful in improving the community's economy and it is proven that this MSME sector is the strongest hit by the economic crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the increasing number of MSME actors certainly helps the Government program to help overcome poverty, especially in reducing the unemployment rate. Because every MSME usually needs workers to empower the surrounding community in an effort to improve the regional economy. In addition, it is also able to motivate in developing regional potential in facing the era of globalization.

Currently technology is developing very rapidly in the world. The development of technology in Indonesia is no less rapid. There are 132 million internet users in Indonesia, almost half of whom are social media users or around 40% and more than 106 million people use social media every month. Internet users in Indonesia are dominated by millennials and generation Z; a generation born in the digital era, where smartphones and online shopping have become part of their daily lives. Brands looking to engage with these connected consumers need to understand what drives them, and how to create engaging experiences for brands that can be experienced both online and offline.

Social media has a big influence on business growth in Indonesia, especially online-based businesses. User-generated content is becoming increasingly important in today's digital era. This content accounts for 65% of media usage time for the average consumer globally. In addition, consumer reviews are the second most important thing that can affect the marketing process of a product (Suhardi, et al, 2021).

Digital marketing, on the one hand, makes it easier for businesses to monitor and provide all the needs and desires of potential consumers, on the other hand, potential consumers can also search for and obtain the desired product information only by exploring the virtual world so as to facilitate the search process without leaving the house (Fadhilah and Pratiwi, 2021). Digital marketing is able to reach all people wherever they are without being hindered by geographical or time restrictions, even during this Covid-19 pandemic. Community needs can be met without worrying about having to interact with other people directly (Hadi and Kiki, 2021).

### **Research Method**

The method used is descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research method is a research method to reveal or explain a fact or event, situation, phenomenon, variable and situation that occurred during the research by presenting what actually happened. Qualitative descriptive is used to understand and provide a clear picture of the problems related to this research, and analytical methods are used so that the authors can arrange this research in a systematic form.

This study uses secondary data as the source. Secondary data is data obtained from existing sources. In collecting data, researchers used library research techniques (library studies). This technique seeks to collect data related to the problems discussed in this study through various literatures. Examples of secondary data include; books, journals, news, company financial reports, magazines, and so on. So the references in this study were taken from books and journals (Sugiyono, 2017).

### **MSMEs IN INDONESIA ERA OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The COVID-19 pandemic is certainly felt by the MSME sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many impacts, namely it is difficult to find employment, difficult daily needs to be fulfilled, income decreases and even no income (Suhardi, et al, 2021). There are four difficulties experienced by MSME actors during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely the first, there is a decrease in sales due to a lack of community activity. second, it is difficult to find capital or the term capital turnover is difficult given the declining sales. Third is the difficulty in finding raw materials because many MSMEs depend on the availability of raw materials in other industries. Fourth, the distribution of products is hampered due to restrictions on product distribution in certain areas (Amalia and Puspitaningtyas, 2021).

### **DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY FOR MSMEs**

A survival strategy needs to be done to deal with this Covid-19 pandemic condition. As for what is meant by a survival strategy, it is an effort made with a plan by an individual or group to solve the problems being faced, in this case in the form of actions or actions. Survival strategies are used to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, which makes various kinds of changes in life patterns (Panjaitan, et al, 2021). It requires cooperation from various parties in solving this problem. There are several ways carried out by the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. This is intended to restore the economy as before. These include the provision of social assistance to poor and vulnerable MSME actors, tax incentives for MSMEs, relaxation and restructuring of credit for MSMEs, expansion of MSME working capital financing, and e-learning training (Alfin, 2021).

Many business people have difficulty in marketing their products. This difficulty is due to restrictions on all human activities. There needs to be innovation or change in the marketing model. Considering the current condition of Indonesia in the 4.0 era which requires us to turn to technology (Nirwana and Biduri, 2021). This is a good momentum for business actors to use the internet to develop their businesses. But they must also maximize their performance in order to get maximum results. Given the intense competition that occurs in the internet world, they must also be creative and innovative so that later consumers can be interested in their products (Amalia and Puspitaningtyas, 2021). Because at this time the use of the internet has become a habit that cannot be abandoned. Especially considering the current pandemic conditions, business actors must be ready to use the internet, especially Digital Marketing if they still want to develop their business (Alfin, 2021).

Technological progress is something that cannot be avoided in today's life, because technological progress will run in accordance with scientific advances. Every innovation is created to provide positive benefits, provide many conveniences, as well as a new way of doing activities for human life. Especially in the field of technology, society has enjoyed many benefits brought about by the innovations that have been produced in the last decade. The benefits of the internet are increasingly felt for its users who cannot be separated from this internet world. For example, internet marketers, bloggers, bloggers, and now online stores are increasingly having a place in the eyes of consumers who are looking for certain goods. The Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kemkominfo) stated that currently, internet users in Indonesia have reached 82 million people. With this achievement, Indonesia is ranked 8th in the world (Purwati, et al, 2021).

Rapid technological developments can be used to develop a business. One of them is using digital marketing to communicate the marketing of its products as an effort to dominate the market. Basically the concept of digital marketing is to utilize a wide area such as television, radio and even the internet where the media will provide infographics about the products marketed by the company. Digital marketing can reach all people, anytime, in any way, anywhere. Of course, it is far superior to conventional marketing which is limited in time, location, and user reach because it only promotes its products directly in stores.

Digital marketing has become one of the media that is often used by business actors because of the new ability of consumers to follow the flow of digitalization, some companies are gradually starting to leave the conventional marketing model / and switch to modern marketing (Fauzi, et al, 2021). With digital marketing, communication and transactions can be done any time / real time and can be accessed throughout the world, one can also view various goods via the internet, most of the information about various products is already available on the internet, ease of ordering and the ability of consumers to compare one another. product with other products (Purwati, et al, 2021).

Digital marketing itself is a marketing activity that uses technology that has the aim of increasing consumer knowledge by adjusting to the needs they need. Digital marketing itself in today's era has become commonplace in all ages. Almost all age levels can access as they please. Therefore, it is a must for business actors to learn and understand digital marketing so that the maximum benefit can be taken (Suharti, et al, 2021). The way it works in digital marketing is by marketing through social media that we often use everyday such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and many others. This development will be increasingly rapid, therefore business actors must start using it as soon as possible and start switching to digital marketing (Alfin, 2021).

Digital marketing is the use of the Internet as a technology that can connect two-way communication between companies and consumers. Digital marketing facilitates sales promotion, such as the use of social media which is widely used by marketers. Marketing through digital marketing will have a wider reach and lower costs. The existence of social media is a means for consumers that can be used to disseminate information in the form of text, images, audio, and video with many parties, both between companies to consumers or consumers in the company.

### **BRANDING FOR MSME**

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have a role in maintaining the national economy. The government is currently intensively promoting MSMEs with various programs provided to MSME actors, both for business capital, training and business assistance. There are still many MSME actors who do not understand and build their product branding. Branding is a term for a name, symbol and design of a product. MSMEs must innovate in order to compete globally. There are many ways that SMEs can do to compete with similar competitors, namely by improving product quality, product design and branding, using technology in product marketing, and surveying consumer satisfaction (Supriatin, et al, 2021).

Often brand and branding mean the same thing. In fact, brand and branding have differences where a brand is a name, symbol and design, term or a combination of all of them. Brand is the identity of a product that can distinguish it from other company brands. While

branding is an activity to communicate a brand or brand to consumers in order to know, understand, and understand the meaning and value of a company's brand that is different from competitors (Prameswari, et al, 2021). Brand includes a symbol or logo that can identify a product and can be a benchmark for differences with other people's products so that it is easily recognized by customers when they want to buy a product in the future. Brand strategy is a plan of comprehensive action that is usually used by organizations or companies to determine and create a paradigm of a brand and to gain a competitive advantage on an ongoing basis (Airlangga and Lia, 2020) .

One of the main keys that must be considered in building a brand is the ability to choose a logo, packaging, other characteristics that can identify a product, supporting factors for MSME actors in building a brand consisting of awareness, marketplace, community and environmental factors. Brands are able to help MSMEs to gain efficiency in spending on marketing and activity expenditures (Amalia and Puspitaningtyas, 2021).

A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of all elements used to identify the products or services of a person or group of sellers from their competitors (Prameswari, et al, 2021). Brands function as a strong emotional bond between customers and consumers, the level of strategic options and the power that affects financially. Branding is very important in marketing a product by creating new designs on the packaging to make it look attractive (Airlangga and Lia, 2020) . In addition, taking photos and videos of products to be disseminated on social media and marketplace applications (Putri, et al, 2021).

Packaging is important because it can also be used as a promotional medium to attract consumers so that consumers decide to buy the product in question. Attractive packaging can affect consumer buying patterns, how the packaging design has an attractive packaging background image, as well as the packaging colors and fonts used which are useful for encouraging consumer shopping interest (Rezky, et al, 2021). With these data, it can be said that packaging is one of the things that influence consumer decisions to buy a product from business actors. Promotional activities with packaging design have a significant impact where marketing has increased (Prameswari, et al, 2021).

The use of technology can affect the development of a business. The appearance of the packaging needs to be considered in providing attractiveness to the product. Consumers make purchase choices based on their perceptions starting from the attractiveness of the visual appearance and the value attached to a product offered (Rezky, et al, 2021). Packaging design has variables consisting of 3 dimensions, namely graphic design, structure design, and product information. Graphic design is a visual decoration on the packaging surface which consists of four sub dimensions, namely: brand name , color, typography, and image. Physical design structures associated with the packaging consists of three dimensions, namely: shape , size, and materials (Prameswari, et al, 2021).

One of the functions of packaging is a medium for delivering messages to products through the information contained in the packaging design. Product information can help consumers in making purchasing decisions more selectively. Packaging dimensions play a role in producing attractive and aesthetic packaging (Prameswari, et al, 2021). The higher the attractiveness of the packaging, the more it will attract the attention of consumers. The function of packaging in general is protection, namely protecting products from external factors (eg weather, impact and so on), maintaining packaged products in a clean and hygienic

condition, utility, maintaining nutrition or the function of packaged products, facilitating distribution, making it more practical to carry, communication media, information media, and as a means of promotion or marketing to attract consumers ranging from variations in shapes, graphics, materials and so on. Design elements in a brand can provide an image, brand image, uniqueness as well as identity for the packaging brand. The positive image generated from a packaging allows the packaging to improve the good image of a brand or brand (Alfin, 2021).

## IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND E-COMMERCE FOR MEDIA MARKETING

The use of social media as a promotional medium is one solution in increasing income, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This makes the behavior of consumers change, which used to look for needs directly by visiting the desired place, now changing by looking for needs online. This of course must be followed by business actors so that they remain in their business. They have to open a new network that fits the current conditions. Namely by utilizing social media and e-commerce. Social Media can increase sales by more than 100% if the company updates information consistently through social media every day (Putri, et al, 2021).

More and more social media users can be used as opportunities for business actors to market their products through social media. This is a momentum in the transition of an offline business to an online business. In fact, 70% of creative businesses said that digital marketing would be the main target in marketing their products and their offline stores were complementary to their business. Because considering the convenience offered by digital marketing, it can attract many new consumers and can even reach or capture consumers with a wider share. However, the use of digital marketing requires high confidence and optimism. Because starting digital marketing requires trust from consumers. Because getting the trust of consumers is very difficult, especially for business actors who are just starting to use social media in doing business (Alfin, 2021).

The ways that business actors can do in fostering consumer trust through social media can be done by promoting continuously or repeatedly, updating the types and prices of goods being marketed intensively, so that consumers do not feel cheated and trust will arise later. designing photos or videos of goods to be marketed as well as possible so that consumers are interested in the products being marketed, using advertising provided by social media such as instagram ads or google ads in order to reach wider consumers, involving consumers in reviewing the products being marketed so that other consumers knowing the quality of the goods we market or displaying the results of the testimonials of the goods we market to social media so that they can be seen by potential consumers (Alfin, 2021).

E-commerce is a transaction activity such as sales, purchases of goods and services carried out through electronic systems, such as computers or the internet. With this E-commerce, it is hoped that it can help business actors in running their business in the midst of this pandemic. E-commerce itself is considered very helpful because considering the PSBB conditions that require staying at home, with E-commerce consumers will be more free and unlimited wherever they are can choose what they need. In addition, for E-commerce business actors, it will also be very efficient where business actors do not need to print catalogs because consumers can immediately see changes in the type and price of goods at any time. With the

update of the latest types of goods and prices, it is felt to be more transparent, making it easier for consumers to buy and demand the goods they need.

E-commerce can improve the performance and income obtained by MSMEs, this means that there can be a positive impact and a significant influence with the existence of E-commerce on MSMEs. However, this does not always run smoothly, where the presence of E-commerce can have a positive impact on MSMEs but is not followed by a significant increase in marketing performance. This is due to the lack of extensive knowledge of business actors. business actors need to develop the ability to use e-commerce so that the results obtained are also maximal. This can be done with assistance from third parties such as the government or practitioners who can assist business actors in increasing knowledge of E-commerce so that later they can maximize the results obtained. This of course must continue to be developed considering that this is the era of the industrial revolution which has undergone many changes towards digital. This is supported by the pandemic conditions that limit the movement of consumers. With the existence of E-commerce, it is felt that it has effectively become a way out for business actors who are expected to maintain business continuity.

With the existence of E-commerce such as Tokopedia, Shopee, Bukalapak, Lazada, and Blibli, it is very easy for MSME actors to run their business so that they can increase their income turnover and be able to survive in the era of the covid-19 pandemic. By using E-commerce they can reach consumers in various regions and expand marketing coverage. In addition, the use of Social Media and E-commerce can be more effective and efficient in running their business.

## CONCLUSION

In this era of the Covid-19 pandemic, MSME actors are required to survive in the face of different conditions than usual . promote their products directly in the store. Digital marketing is one of the media that is often used by business actors because of the new ability of consumers to follow the flow of digitalization. There are many ways that SMEs can do to compete with similar competitors, namely by improving product quality, product design and branding, using technology in product marketing, and surveying consumer satisfaction . With the existence of E-commerce and social media, it is very easy for MSME actors to run their businesses so that they can increase their income turnover and be able to survive in the era of the covid-19 pandemic.

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