

## DIGITAL BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION IN MODEST FASHION: A CASE STUDY OF ASH SCARF

Zenitha Kurnia Putri<sup>1</sup>, Rita Anggraini Rahayu<sup>2</sup>, Budi Eko Soetjipto<sup>3</sup>

Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

Corresponding Email: [zenitha.kurnia.2404139@students.um.ac.id](mailto:zenitha.kurnia.2404139@students.um.ac.id)

Received : 23 March 2025

Revised : 31 March 2025

Accepted : 16 April 2025

Published : 27 May 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijerlas.v5i3.3040>

Link Publish : <https://radjapublika.com/index.php/IJERLAS>

### Abstract

This article investigates the digital transformation journey of Ash Scarf, a local modest fashion brand in Indonesia. Applying qualitative methods, including interviews, field observations, and digital content analysis, the study explores how Ash Scarf adapted to a rapidly shifting digital landscape. Key findings highlight the brand's strategic use of social media, e-commerce platforms, and digital analytics tools to enhance customer engagement and operational agility. Situated within broader theories of digital capability, strategic marketing adaptation, and customer co-creation, the case demonstrates how small enterprises can harness digital tools for survival, expansion, and long-term competitiveness.

Keywords: *Digital transformation, fashion brand, e-commerce, social media marketing, SME strategy, customer engagement*

### INTRODUCTION

In today's volatile and technology-driven environment, the ability to adapt through digital transformation is crucial for businesses of all sizes. For small and medium enterprises (SMEs), this transformation is often both challenging and necessary. Ash Scarf, a modest fashion brand from Indonesia, offers an illuminating example of how a local brand with limited initial resources can leverage digital platforms to expand its reach, enhance customer relations, and streamline operations. The modest global fashion market has experienced significant growth, valued at approximately USD 277 billion in 2020, and is projected to continue expanding. In Indonesia, with its predominantly Muslim population, the modest fashion sector is a thriving industry. However, digital disruption and the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the need for businesses to undergo digital transformation. For SMEs like Ash Scarf, digitalization was not merely an opportunity but a necessity for survival. This paper explores Ash Scarf's digital journey, identifying key enablers and obstacles through the theoretical lenses of digital transformation capability and customer-centric strategy. Empirical insights from interviews and field observations demonstrate how a small enterprise can successfully navigate digital disruption, providing lessons for other SMEs.

### METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative case study approach aiming for a rich, context-specific understanding. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews conducted with Ash Scarf's founder, two creative team members, and customer service representatives; direct observations monitoring digital marketing campaigns, live customer interactions, and content production processes; and digital content analysis of Instagram, TikTok, and e-commerce store activities. Data were thematically coded using a hybrid approach, combining pre-determined categories such as "platform adaptation" and "customer feedback loop" with emergent codes like "agile product design." The validity of findings was reinforced through triangulation and member checking with key informants.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ash Scarf transitioned from offline to fully online operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instagram and TikTok became key marketing tools, emphasizing storytelling, community building, and visual aesthetics. The brand

implemented a consistent visual identity through color palettes, brand hashtags, and influencer collaborations. User-generated content campaigns, such as #HijabUntukSemua, reinforced brand authenticity and inclusivity, while interactive content like polls and live sessions increased audience engagement significantly. Partnerships with Shopee and Tokopedia enabled Ash Scarf to broaden its market reach beyond regional boundaries. The brand utilized real-time analytics dashboards for better stock management, tracking sales performance by product category, and analyzing customer purchasing patterns. A dedicated customer service team was established for prompt responses via WhatsApp Business and Instagram Direct Messages, which improved customer satisfaction levels. Ash Scarf also explored e-commerce features such as flash sales, voucher promotions, and live-selling events to boost traffic and conversion rates.

The brand adopted a "listen-and-create" model where customer feedback on social media posts heavily influenced product design. Weekly reviews of Instagram and TikTok engagement metrics informed decisions on launching new collections, choosing fabric types, or adjusting product pricing. Pastel-colored scarves were introduced after analyzing trends showing higher engagement on posts featuring softer hues. Seasonal trend analyses helped Ash Scarf align its offerings with evolving consumer preferences, demonstrating proactive market responsiveness.

Internal capability building was pivotal to sustaining digital transformation. Ash Scarf invested in training its team members on basic graphic design, copywriting, and paid advertising strategies. The organization maintained a flat structure that empowered quicker decision-making and enhanced innovation. The team adopted agile practices, running short experimental marketing campaigns to test new strategies, analyze results, and refine future initiatives. This agility provided Ash Scarf with the resilience to adapt swiftly to algorithm changes and market shifts.

Resource limitations remained a persistent issue, with constrained budgets limiting the ability to invest in advanced digital marketing tools. Dependence on social media platform algorithms posed risks, as visibility could drastically fluctuate with minor algorithm updates. Moreover, at the early stages, Ash Scarf struggled with content production quality due to limited technical expertise, affecting brand perception. Nevertheless, a continuous learning culture within the organization allowed the team to progressively overcome these challenges, demonstrating that strategic perseverance can lead to sustainable growth despite initial setbacks.

### Embracing Digital Presence

Initially a home-based business, Ash Scarf shifted its marketing efforts fully online during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. The founder shared, "Saat pandemi, kami harus beralih sepenuhnya ke media sosial karena toko offline tidak bisa beroperasi" (Putri, 2024). Instagram and TikTok became the primary touchpoints for product promotion, customer feedback, and community engagement. Through visually appealing content, storytelling, and consistent branding, Ash Scarf built a loyal online following. Hashtag campaigns such as #HijabUntukSemua and user-generated content contests have helped establish brand authenticity.

### Integration of E-Commerce

Ash Scarf leveraged e-commerce platforms like Shopee and Tokopedia to expand its market reach. The integration allowed them to scale beyond local markets to a national customer base. Real-time dashboards and performance analytics enabled the team to track product performance, identify peak shopping periods, and monitor customer ratings. This move was complemented by setting up a dedicated online customer service via WhatsApp Business and Instagram Direct Message. The founder emphasized, "Respons cepat kami ke chat pelanggan itu penting. Kadang itu jadi penentu closing penjualan."

### Data-Driven Design Decisions

Digital transformation at Ash Scarf included informal yet effective analytics practices. The creative team routinely monitored Instagram and TikTok Insights to determine which styles, colors, or captions drew higher engagement. Weekly team discussions reflected on these metrics to inform upcoming product launches. A notable quote: "Kita cek mana konten yang paling banyak likes dan save-nya. Biasanya itu jadi inspirasi desain batch berikutnya" (Rahayu, 2024).

### Digital Literacy and Organizational Learning

The brand's adaptation was facilitated by internal learning processes, primarily through on-the-job digital skill development. Team members trained themselves in basic content creation, analytics interpretation, and social media strategy. Collaboration with influencers and brand ambassadors also played a crucial role in expanding visibility.

Importantly, Ash Scarf maintained a flat organizational structure, enabling rapid decision-making. This agility allowed the brand to experiment with various digital tools without bureaucratic hurdles.

**Summary of Key Digital Transformation Steps at Ash Scarf**

Figure 1. Digital Transformation Process of Ash Scarf



Table 1. Summary of Digital Transformation Strategies and Impacts

Area	Actions by Ash Scarf	Impact
Digital Presence	Instagram, TikTok campaigns, live interactions	Strengthened brand authenticity and customer loyalty
E-Commerce Integration	Shopee, Tokopedia, WhatsApp service	Expanded national reach, improved sales responsiveness
Data-Driven Development	Weekly engagement analysis	Faster trend adaptation and product relevance
Organizational Agility	Team training, flat hierarchy	Quick decision-making and experimental culture

Challenge Management	Learning culture for skill gaps, algorithm shift handling	Enhanced resilience in a digital environment
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**Managerial Implications**

The Ash Scarf case provides valuable insights for SMEs undergoing or planning digital transformation:

- a. **Leverage free digital tools** such as Instagram Insights or Shopee analytics before investing in complex software.
- b. **Develop a content calendar** based on past engagement trends and involve customers in co-creating future campaigns.
- c. **Invest in team upskilling**—especially in photography, caption writing, and customer response management.
- d. **Utilize micro-influencers** to extend brand reach in a cost-efficient way.

These strategies demonstrate that even with limited budgets, SMEs can compete by building digital agility and fostering customer-centric practices.

**CONCLUSION**

Ash Scarf’s digital transformation exemplifies how small enterprises can survive and thrive by strategically embracing digital tools. By aligning brand values with technology, engaging authentically with customers, and fostering internal digital capabilities, SMEs can not only adapt but also achieve sustainable growth. The Ash Scarf case offers a compelling blueprint for other SMEs aiming to navigate digital disruption through agility, learning, and customer engagement.

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