

MARKETING STRATEGY TRAINING FOR MSMEs IN LHOKSEUMAWE CITY

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Abstract

Many MSMEs in Lhokseumawe City still lack effective marketing management, and many women in the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) are unemployed. This demonstrates the potential for entrepreneurship development in Lhokseumawe City. The purpose of Community Service is to motivate the community to become interested in entrepreneurship by utilizing existing potential. The targets are MSMEs, unemployed housewives, and PKK women. The benefits of Community Service are expected to encourage MSMEs and housewives to become entrepreneurial, to be able to start and run businesses, and to assist the government in reducing unemployment. The methods used for implementing community service activities include training, lectures, and discussions. Community service activities will be implemented in the even semester of 2024-2025.

Keywords: *Community training, marketing, micro-enterprises*

INTRODUCTION

Lhokseumawe City is currently experiencing such rapid progress that it has significantly grown various businesses in both the formal and informal sectors. Many businesses have emerged, initially intended as pastimes for MSMEs, the community, and Family Welfare Movement (PKK) members, and have now become their primary source of income. The prolonged economic crisis has also contributed to the growth of these formal and informal sectors, as layoffs have shifted to self-employment. MSMEs are the smallest entities in an economy. Initially, these businesses were simply a way to fill spare time, but they have proven to be beneficial in terms of employment, spearheading marketing for larger industries, and indirectly contributing to increased regional revenue. For MSMEs, the practice has traditionally been synonymous with side hustles or pastimes. In terms of capital, some still rely on their own capital, preventing them from optimally expanding their business. Similarly, their product marketing still relies on traditional sales methods. Many MSME products are still sold using makeshift fasteners from the ceiling or on hangers, leaving buyers unaware of their products. We can see that if marketing is implemented simply, there's concern that MSME products will become less well-known to the public, resulting in stagnant or even declining sales. Therefore, considering this management approach, training and implementation of sound marketing strategies for small businesses are needed to increase revenue and support the management of small industrial products, particularly those in Lhokseumawe City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

MSMEs

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are a sector that plays a strategic role in national economic growth, job creation, and income equality. According to Tambunan (2019), MSMEs are the backbone of the economy in developing countries due to their contribution to employment and gross domestic product (GDP). In Indonesia, the MSME sector contributes more than 60% to national GDP and employs over 97% of the active workforce (BPS, 2023). The definition of MSMEs is regulated in Law Number 20 of 2008, which explains that micro-enterprises are productive businesses owned by individuals or individual business entities with a maximum net worth of IDR 50 million, small businesses have a net worth of more than IDR 50 million up to IDR 500 million, while medium-sized businesses have a net worth of more than IDR 500 million up to IDR 10 billion. A similar definition is also recognized in international literature, where MSMEs are seen as small business entities with limited resources but have high innovation potential (Ayyagari, Beck & Demirgüç-Kunt, 2011).

The development of MSMEs requires a comprehensive strategy that includes capacity building, technology adoption, and increased competitiveness through innovation. According to Kamboj and Rahman (2015), innovation capability is a key factor linking marketing strategy to MSME business performance. Innovation in products, services, and business models can create added value and increase customer loyalty. Meanwhile, Tran et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of community-based marketing strategies for MSMEs, especially in rural areas. This approach allows MSMEs to leverage local social networks to strengthen product promotion and distribution at low cost. Research by Widjajanti (2021) also shows that collaboration between MSMEs increases marketing effectiveness and expands markets through resource and information sharing. Furthermore, the government plays a crucial role in creating an ecosystem that supports the growth of MSMEs. According to the OECD (2020), effective policies for MSME development include increasing access to financing, managerial training, supporting digitalization, and simplifying regulations.

Marketing strategy

A marketing strategy is a comprehensive plan designed to achieve an organization's marketing objectives by selecting target markets and developing an appropriate marketing mix (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This strategy emphasizes not only promotional aspects but also encompasses decisions related to product, pricing, distribution, and marketing communications. According to Cacciolatti and Lee (2016), a marketing strategy is a set of actions that direct an organization's resources to create and maintain a competitive advantage through market understanding and the development of appropriate marketing capabilities. Furthermore, Kamboj and Rahman (2015) emphasize that an effective marketing strategy is the result of a combination of a company's internal capabilities, market orientation, and a dynamic external environment. Thus, a marketing strategy serves as a bridge between market analysis and the implementation of marketing tactics aimed at creating customer value and superior company performance (Lagat & Frankwick, 2017).

Furthermore, collaboration between business actors is a crucial strategy for MSMEs to expand their networks and increase marketing efficiency. Widjajanti (2021) found that collaboration between MSMEs in Blora Regency increased competitiveness through promotional synergy and resource sharing. This collaborative model aligns with the concept of community-based marketing, where the strength of local networks is leveraged as a low-cost yet impactful marketing strategy. Furthermore, Kamboj and Rahman (2015) emphasized that networking and collaboration are key marketing capabilities that directly impact business performance. Collaboration also helps MSMEs expand access to markets, technology, and social capital.

METHOD

Solutions Offered

The challenges faced by MSMEs in Lamper Tengah Village include the lack of a community-based organization and the lack of marketing support. Furthermore, the Community Empowerment (PKM) team assists partners in resolving these challenges. The community-based organization is formed through mentoring and outreach. For marketing, they use socialization and mentoring methods, including marketing strategy socialization.

Approach method

Mentoring: This activity involves brainstorming to broaden mindsets about the importance of forming groups or forums in the form of associations and implementing sound management systems. Furthermore, counseling will cover marketing and management aspects.

Activity

The activities in this community service are as follows:

- Partner field survey
- Team preparation (lecturers and students) and group division.
- Preparation of materials
- Mentoring and counseling
- Marketing aspects: training in preparing marketing plans.
- Evaluate all activities.
- Activity results report
- Publication

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Activities

The Community Service Team was supported by various resources in carrying out all activities and steps in accordance with the training program offered. The training in this community service activity was successful due to the support of various related parties who were willing to cooperate well, namely the partners (targets). The successful collaboration also occurred because the root of the problem was obtained from the partners themselves. The implementation of the activity took place in the even semester of 2024-2025. The activities were carried out in the form of face-to-face training and mentoring. The implementation of the activity took place on the Bumi Persada University Campus in Lhokseumawe City.



Figure 1, Implementation of Activities

PROBLEM SOLVING

To resolve all the problems faced by partners, training and mentoring activities were carried out in various stages. The first stage of the initial activity of the Community Service Team was to consult with the head of the UKM group mentor in Lhokseumawe City to find out the type of training material and determine the date of the training and mentoring. This consultation activity was carried out on Monday, April 21, 2025. After the consultation was carried out, the second stage of the core activity of the community service implementation, namely training and mentoring, was carried out on Monday, April 28, 2025, at 10:00-12:00 for training and mentoring at 13-15. This activity was carried out to resolve and answer existing problems, namely:

1. The first problem is how to develop a marketing strategy for small businesses (MSMEs) in Lhokseumawe City.

Namely by providing training on the types of marketing strategies that are useful for small businesses, for example explaining the types of promotional strategies such as word of mouth, advertising on Facebook, Instagram, radio and so on for small businesses which are really needed because business actors feel they have never done promotions. This training was conducted at the Bumi Persada University Campus in Lhokseumawe City with the aim of making small business owners aware of the importance of promoting even simple things. So that the products produced by small businesses can be known to the wider community and then increase their sales turnover. The training was held on April 28, 2025, at the Bumi Persada University Campus in Lhokseumawe City from 11:00-12:00. The training continued with practical exercises on how to create simple promotions using various mass and individual promotional tools such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The first session was held at 14:15. The positive thing is the enthusiasm of the participants who participated in this training, so it is hoped that the material provided can motivate these small business owners to promote the products they produce with the promotional tools that have been taught.

2. The second problem is how to increase income through improving quality and differentiation for small businesses (MSMEs) in Lhokseumawe City.

Namely by providing training on producing tempe burgernice and American resoles with tofu and tempeh as the basic ingredients which are useful for small businesses as a product differentiation effort. This training was conducted at the Bumi Persada University Campus in Lhokseumawe City with the aim of making these small business owners aware of the importance of product differentiation even with simple things. So that the products produced by small businesses can be known to the wider community and then increase their sales turnover. The training time was held on April 28, 2025 at the Bumi Persada University Campus in Lhokseumawe City at 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM. Training with practical methods for making simple promotions and training on making tempe burgernice and American resoles is expected to motivate these small business owners to promote the products

produced with the promotional tools that have been taught and increase income from alternative products with basic ingredients that are easy to find. The SME participants demonstrated their enthusiasm for the product diversification training. Supported by culinary practitioners and nutritionists, the participants practiced making tempeh burger and American risoles. The basic ingredients used are readily available for SMEs. Therefore, readily available, affordable, hygienic, and nutritious ingredients can bolster the public's image of purchasing SME products.

CONCLUSION

Through this community service program, it was concluded that the outreach program on Marketing Strategies for MSMEs in Lamper Tengah Village, Semarang City, increased the insight and knowledge of MSMEs in developing their businesses. Participants responded enthusiastically during the outreach and training. This was evident in the lively questions and discussions during the outreach. This demonstrated a strong interest and desire among participants to market their products and develop and manage their businesses effectively. The recommendation is that follow-up to this community service activity is necessary. By implementing marketing strategies for MSMEs in Lamper Tengah Village, Semarang City, the participants in the training and outreach can further develop and organize their businesses.

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