

PENETRATING THE GLOBAL MARKET: EMPOWERING SALAK COMMODITY MSMES THROUGH STRENGTHENING REGULATION AND BUSINESS OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

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Abstract

Training to strengthen regulatory understanding and empowerment for MSME actors is a strategic effort to improve competence in the use of digital technology to strengthen and develop businesses. The activity, which lasted for three days, starting from Sunday, June 14, 2026 to Tuesday, June 16, 2026, aimed to equip participants with practical skills in the fields of regulation, planning management, financial management, food processing, hygiene and sanitation and operational efficiency. The material includes an understanding of regulations, business systems, healthy hygiene processing of products and export-scale business techniques according to market trends, so that it is expected to be able to increase the competitiveness, effectiveness, and sustainability of MSMEs in the midst of the challenges of globalization and digital transformation.

Keywords: MSME, Global Market, Regulation, Digital Technology

INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have become the main pillars in accelerating economic development and community welfare, both in developed and developing countries. On a global scale, this sector represents 90% of world trade and accounts for 40% of GDP in developing countries (World Bank, 2019). In Indonesia, the urgency of business is increasingly visible amid the challenges of weakening purchasing power and inflationary pressures. Although the national economy grew by 5.11% in the first quarter of 2024, the GDP structure is still highly dependent on household consumption of 54.93%. Therefore, strengthening the entrepreneurial sector may be a key solution to create new jobs, increase people's incomes, and maintain inclusive economic growth. However, this great potential is faced with the challenges of rapid digital change and globalization.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) of salak commodities in Padangsidempuan City are required not only to survive traditionally but also to be able to adopt digital technology. Understanding of regulations, mastery of digital tools and platforms for marketing, financial management, healthy product hygiene and operational efficiency for export scale are absolute needs to improve business competitiveness and sustainability in an increasingly competitive market. The success of this change is highly dependent on the quality of human resource competencies in it.

A strong entrepreneur must have a strong work ethic believing that business has meaning in life, not just as an alternative to making money. Without the right competencies and attitudes, digital transformation will only be a technical leap. Thus, systematic efforts are needed through comprehensive digital competency training. In response to this need, the development of entrepreneurial competencies is focused on mastery of concepts, organizational values, and practical skills in business activities. Through a structured learning approach from theoretical understanding to hands-on practice in everyday tasks—it is hoped that an adaptive entrepreneurial spirit will emerge. Collaboration between conducive government policies and digital capacity building among MSME actors will be key to driving the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the national economy in the future.

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

In addition to providing knowledge, this program aims to revamp and restructure MSMEs to make them more competitive, digital, and agile. By integrating strong soft skills with cutting-edge hard skills, MSMEs are expected to evolve from small-scale enterprises into key participants within an inclusive digital economic ecosystem.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The participants of this activity consist of 100 MSME actors in Padangsidempuan City who process snake fruit (*salak*) into various products, such as *salak* sponge cake (*bolu salak*), *salak* taffy (*dodol salak*), *salak* chips, and other *salak*-based food products.

TIME AND VENUE This training activity is scheduled as follows:

1. **Date:** June 14 – 16, 2026
2. **Time:** 09:00 AM – 03:00 PM WIB
3. **Location:** The Main Hall of the MUI Building, Padangsidempuan City.

This event is held in collaboration with the Family Welfare Movement (*Tim Penggerak PKK*) and *Muslimat NU* of Padangsidempuan City.

ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

Day 1

1. The opening ceremony was conducted by the Chairperson of the Family Welfare Movement (*PKK*), *Muslimat NU*, the Local Government of Padangsidempuan City, and representatives of the speaker team.
2. Presentation of Session 1: Comprehension of Business Regulations.

Speaker I: Comprehension of the Domestic Workers Protection Act in Business

To maintain legal compliance, protect workers' rights, and reduce the likelihood of disputes, corporate and business actors must be well-aware of labor laws. Law No. 13 of 2003 concerning Labor, which has been updated and modified by Law No. 6 of 2023 on the Enactment of the Job Creation Perppu into Law, currently serves as the primary foundation for this regulation. Specifically, Law No. 2 of 2026 concerning the Protection of Domestic Workers mandates clear employment agreements. Employers must understand their rights and responsibilities to operate a compliant business. The protection of domestic workers is now strictly regulated under Law No. 2 of 2026. This legislation mandates clear employment contracts, a minimum working age of 18, humane working hours, fair compensation, holiday allowances (THR), social security, and protection from exploitation.

Primary Legal Structure

The employment relationship between employers and domestic workers is comprehensively regulated by the following:

- a. **Law No. 2 of 2026 on the Protection of Domestic Workers:** Provides a comprehensive legal framework that guarantees both the employer's obligations and the domestic worker's rights.
- b. **Minister of Manpower Regulation No. 2 of 2015 on the Protection of Domestic Workers:** Prior to the enactment of the more detailed law, this regulation served as the initial operational guideline regarding rights and obligations.

Rights of Domestic Workers Under the Latest Law:

Under Law No. 2 of 2026, domestic workers are officially recognized as formal workers. The rights that must be fulfilled by employers include:

- a. Receiving fair wages and protection from violence.
- b. Religious Holiday Allowance (THR), leave, and rest periods.
- c. Provision of healthy food, proper accommodation, and social security (such as BPJS Ketenagakerjaan).

Rights of Employers:

As service recipients, employers are also protected under the Domestic Workers Protection Act. Employers have the right to humane treatment, protection from threats of violence, and confidentiality regarding their family matters.

Speaker II: Comprehension of Worker Regulations in Business

A strategic solution to a traditional problem faced by MSMEs namely, funding is providing legal certainty regarding capital sources that can be accessed quickly and without discrimination. Furthermore, it is expected that the partnership models regulated by the government, as stipulated in Article 26 of Law No. 20 of 2008 concerning Partnership Models for MSMEs, will enhance the potential and role of MSMEs in driving national economic growth.

MSMEs hold a strategic position, role, and potential to build a more advanced and equitable national economic structure, as they represent a vital component of the grassroots economy. Through the creation of a conducive environment, provision of business opportunities, support, protection, and extensive business development, MSMEs are empowered comprehensively, optimally, and sustainably. This enhances the position, role, and potential of MSMEs in achieving economic growth, equity, community income enhancement, and poverty alleviation.

Facts demonstrate that the MSME sector generates significantly more employment opportunities than large corporations can absorb. Consequently, MSMEs are expected to continue making maximum contributions to combating unemployment, which tends to increase annually. The central government, local governments, the business community, and society at large must collaborate to implement this empowerment in a sustainable and synergistic manner to improve the institutional capacity and role of MSMEs in the national economy. All regulations related to MSMEs work together as a coherent unit to support this legislation in empowering small businesses.

Q&A Session

Following the presentations, a Question and Answer (Q&A) session was held between the speakers and the training participants.

Day 2.

Speaker III: Soft-Skill Basic: Concepts of Teamwork and Finance

Teamwork is defined as a collaborative effort to achieve a shared vision by uniting diverse perspectives. It is closely intertwined with team dynamics, which refer to the psychological interaction patterns among members that dictate group productivity and cohesiveness. Key Elements of a Successful Team:

- a. Clear and transparent communication.
- b. Shared responsibility for one another's tasks.
- c. Mutual trust and support among members.
- d. Alignment of objectives (focusing on the same goal).
- e. Respect for individual differences in expertise.

Strategies for Uniting and Developing a Team

Building a solid team requires consistent steps, such as setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) targets, leading by example, and decentralizing decision-making. Furthermore, providing training (personal development) and regular evaluations is crucial to maintaining members' competence.

Conflict Management and Feedback Culture

- a. Conflict Resolution: Conflict should not be avoided; instead, it must be managed constructively through open discussions, seeking practical solutions (rather than assigning blame), and utilizing neutral mediation when necessary.
- b. Feedback Culture: Regular feedback allows the team to make swift course corrections. This establishes a space for members to voice their opinions, ensuring issues are detected and resolved early before escalating.

Critical Thinkers (Critical Thinking)

A critical thinker is an individual who does not merely accept raw information but logically analyzes, evaluates, and synthesizes it to reach a rational conclusion.

- a. Key Characteristics: Objective (free from emotional bias), analytical, skeptical of ambiguous assumptions, open-minded, and self-reflective of one's own values.
- b. Intellectual Perseverance: The mental fortitude to remain focused and persistent when solving complex problems, even when faced with boredom or difficulties. Its key elements include self-discipline, resilience, and an internal motivation to pursue the truth.
- c. Urgency: This skill is vital in the workplace for driving innovation, filtering out misinformation in the digital era, and supporting deeper personal development.

Basic Communication Skills

Communication is not merely speaking; it is a two-way process involving the effective transmission and reception of information.

- a. Transmitting Information (Effective Communication): Focuses on clarity, conciseness (avoiding jargon), rapport building, choosing the appropriate media, and utilizing non-verbal body language.
- b. Receiving Information (Listening & Comprehending): Involves *Active Listening* (giving full attention and seeking clarification), empathy to understand the speaker's emotions, open-mindedness, and media literacy to distinguish between facts and opinions.
- c. Feedback & Adaptation: The skill to provide constructive criticism, the willingness to accept suggestions from others, and the flexibility to adjust communication styles to different audiences.

The Accounting Cycle: From Transactions to Financial Statements

The accounting process consists of a series of systematic stages designed to ensure that all financial activities are recorded accurately and accountably.

a. Recording Phase

This stage serves as the initial foundation where all economic activities are collected and classified. Transaction Source Documents: Documentation of every transaction, both internal (such as interdepartmental memos) and external (such as third-party invoices, receipts, or purchase memoranda). Journalizing: The process of recording transactions chronologically.

- 1) *General Journal*: Used for non-routine transactions.
- 2) *Special Journals*: Used for high-frequency transactions (such as purchase, sales, cash receipts, and cash disbursements journals) (Yuliana, 2018).
- 3) Posting: The process of transferring data from the journals to the General Ledger. This includes the *General Ledger* (account summaries) and *Subsidiary Ledgers* (specific details, such as individual customer or supplier accounts).

b. Summarizing

Once recorded, the data is summarized to ensure balance and accuracy before the report is compiled. Compile the balance sheet: list the balances of all ledger accounts to check the similarity of total debits and credits; Keeping an Adjustment Journal: Recording income or expenses that have occurred but have not been recorded so that the balance reflects actual conditions (e.g., depreciation of assets or rental costs); prepare worksheets: Tools to facilitate the preparation of financial statements; Closing Journal: Closing the nominal account (income and expenses) at the end of the period so that the balance is zero for the next period; Finally, the balance sheet after closing: Make sure that the real account (assets, liabilities, capital) remains balanced after the nominal account is closed (Winarto, 2020).

c. Financial Statement Presentation

The final stage in which financial information is communicated to stakeholders.

- 1) Income Statement: Shows financial performance (income vs. expenses) in a period.
- 2) Capital/Equity Change Report: Describes the change in the owner's capital position.
- 3) Financial Position Report (Balance Sheet): Describes the position of assets, debt, and capital on a specific date.
- 4) Cash Flow Report: A report on the company's cash source and usage.
- 5) Reverse Entry: Optional, done at the beginning of the next period to simplify the recording of recurring transactions.

Product Development: From Idea to Value Solution, i.e. product development is not just about creating new goods, but a strategic process to bring together creativity and organization to effectively address market needs. 4 Key Benefits: Why Is It Important?

- 1) Superior Quality: Engage your audience early on through feedback to improve features.
- 2) Satisfaction & Loyalty: Relevant products create loyal customers.
- 3) Sharp Competitiveness: Competitor research ensures your products have a Unique Selling Point.
- 4) Risk Mitigation: Identify issues early on to prevent post-launch failures.

The 8 Steps of Idea Transformation (Roadmap)

- 1) Brainstorming: Finding solutions to real-world problems. *Note: As only 1 out of 7 ideas typically succeeds, think outside the box.*

- 2) Idea Screening: Selecting ideas based on technical feasibility, market demand, and alignment with business goals.
- 3) Business Analysis: Calculating profitability, forecasting sales volume, and mapping out financial risks.
- 4) Product Roadmap: Compiling a strategic navigation document containing timelines, key features, and resource allocation.
- 5) Prototyping: Creating a visual or functional product simulation as a testing tool prior to mass production.
- 6) Market Testing: Conducting market experiments (such as A/B Testing) to observe real consumer reactions within specific demographics.
- 7) Commercialization: Full launch! This stage involves mass production, digital marketing campaigns (Ads/Social-Media), and the execution of sales strategies.
- 8) Performance Evaluation: Monitoring sales data and post-release feedback for continuous development and iteration.

In essence: A successful product is the result of disciplined cross-team collaboration following a structured process, while remaining agile and flexible toward customer feedback.

Product Development Tips

1. Study Market Trends

Market trends reflect consumer habits, desires, and purchasing behaviors. Numerous free reports, digital tools, and analytics are available to evaluate and assess customer behavior alongside industry trends. By combining this data with social observation, you can formulate accurate forecasts or predictions regarding how specific demographics might respond to a design or product.

2. Conduct Competitor Research

The first step in researching your competitors is determining where your product stands within product classifications. Knowing whether a product is considered an everyday commodity or a luxury item helps you identify your true competitors. Compare pricing, product availability, marketing tactics, and product placement in stores. This information is invaluable for developing and conceptualizing launch strategies, marketing plans, and selling prices.

3. Be Flexible and Patient

It is essential for inventors, entrepreneurs, and business owners to remain flexible and patient when developing products for launch or sale. Even individuals with highly successful product ideas occasionally need to adjust their designs or plans to achieve their goals. If you have a product or prototype that addresses a consumer challenge or meets a specific market need, staying adaptable will help you bring the ideal product to life.

Q&A Session

Following the presentations, a Question and Answer (Q&A) session was held between the speakers and the training participants.

Speaker IV: Human Resources (HR) Development

Human Resources (HR) represent a company's most vital asset, encompassing both the mental and physical strengths of individuals. The core components of HR include:

1. Workforce & Experts: Productive individuals (aged 15–64) and those possessing specialized skills.
2. Leaders & Entrepreneurs: The driving forces who set the company's direction and business developers who create employment opportunities.
3. Producers & Consumers: Individuals who produce goods/services and those who consume them.

Strategic Objectives of Human Resource Development

Human resource development through education and training aims to elevate the overall quality of the workforce:

1. Enhancing Productivity: Driving performance through training results in higher output and multiplied profits.
2. Reducing Product Defects: Ensuring employee reliability through skill assessments prior to field entry, thereby minimizing costly and fatal errors.
3. Time and Work Efficiency: Training employees to become highly skilled so that tasks are completed to high-quality standards efficiently and without delay.
4. Cultivating Leadership Traits: Fostering leadership to ensure employees are independent, decisive, capable of making sound decisions, and self-reliant.

5. Building Strong Morale: Instilling core values of honesty, humility, and hard work. Strong morale cultivates a conducive work environment that boosts the overall work ethic.
6. Improving Reciprocal Benefits: Elevating worker quality through human resource development automatically leads to better compensation and superior reciprocal returns (Marbun et al., 2019).

Human Resource Development Methods

To build a reliable and competent workforce, companies must implement various systematic development methods. The following are the 7 primary methods:

1. Training: Includes *internal training* conducted within the office environment using in-house instructors or professional partners, and *external training* where employees are sent to external institutions to gain new knowledge. This process is mandatory for new employees before they begin their duties.
2. Apprenticeship / Mentorship: A hands-on guidance process for new employees to help them understand the actual working environment. The objective is to provide practical insights and technical skills before they are assigned to work independently.
3. Education: A long-term investment that involves providing scholarships or opportunities for formal education (e.g., upgrading from an Associate to a Bachelor's degree). This is often more effective than hiring new talent, as the current employee's performance and loyalty have already been proven.
4. Job Rotation: Transferring employees across different divisions to combat burnout, evaluate team mismatches, and help them discover their true passion. Rotation also ensures operational continuity when other employees are absent or resign.
5. Comparative Study (Benchmarking): Evaluating and comparing internal working systems against the standards of more successful companies (e.g., benchmarking marketing systems). The goal is to adopt best practices to maximize productivity.
6. Competency Assessment: Formal examinations (either internal or certified through national bodies like BNSP) to measure worker quality. This method encourages senior employees to continuously learn and adapt to the latest technology or production policies, rather than relying solely on old habits.
7. Outbound / Team Building: Off-site activities aimed at refreshing the mind from routine boredom. Through group dynamics and games, outbound training fosters teamwork, quick thinking, leadership, and strengthens camaraderie across all organizational levels.

Functions of Human Resource Development

Structurally, HR development serves three primary functions throughout an employee's lifecycle within a company:

1. Procurement Function: Focuses on the beginning of the employee journey, which includes: analyzing the quality and quantity of staffing needs; sourcing talent effectively to secure qualified candidates; selecting applicants and placing them appropriately (*the right person in the right place*); and providing orientation through initial education and training.
2. Maintenance Function: Aims to sustain the performance of existing employees by: providing economic incentives (bonuses/allowances) and non-economic benefits (work facilities/comfort); and cultivating peace of mind so that employees can focus on their tasks, thereby maintaining stable job performance.
3. Separation Function (Employment Termination): As the final phase, HR development is also responsible for professionally managing the termination of employment. This occurs if an employee consistently fails to meet company standards or can no longer align with the organization's growth direction, even after various training interventions have been provided.

Q&A Session

Following the presentations, a Question and Answer (Q&A) session was held between the speakers and the training participants.

Day 3

Speaker V: Hygiene in Business – "Healthy Business Management"

The application of hygiene standards to structures, machinery, personnel, and raw materials is known as hygienic business management. Obtaining a Sanitation Hygiene Certificate (SLHS/SHWC) from the local Department of Health is a legal requirement for culinary and food businesses to protect consumer health and ensure regulatory compliance.

Managing a sanitary business involves the following key components:

1. **Work Environment and Equipment:** To prevent cross-contamination, the production environment must be cleaned regularly, utensils washed with soap and running water, and raw materials stored using the First In, First Out (FIFO) method.
2. **Personnel Hygiene:** Employees are required to wear masks, aprons, hairnets, and clean attire. Furthermore, workers must routinely wash their hands with soap, particularly prior to handling food.
3. **SLHS Submission:** Business owners must submit their SLHS applications through the OSS (Online Single Submission) system. Following submission, validation and an Environmental Health Inspection (IKL) will be conducted on-site by the local Department of Health. The comprehensive guidelines regarding food industry licensing and requirements stipulated in the Minister of Health Regulation No. 1096 of 2011 serve as the regulatory framework for catering and food services.

Key Elements of Sanitation Business Administration

Utilize these principles to ensure that business activities remain safe and hygienic:

1. **Personal Hygiene:** Employees must wash their hands with soap and running water before and after handling items. They must wear standard Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, masks, aprons, and hairnets. Smoking is strictly prohibited in the production area, and workers must be in good health and wear clean clothing.
2. **Cleaning of Workspace and Equipment:** Ensure the production area has adequate ventilation and sufficient lighting. Production machinery, containers, and cooking utensils must be routinely disinfected and washed with soap. The processing area must be kept free of pests (rodents, insects), and covered trash bins must be utilized.
3. **Product & Raw Material Management:** Maintain raw materials at appropriate temperatures (perishable products must be refrigerated). Implement the First In, First Out (FIFO) principle, ensuring materials are used in the chronological order they were received. Packaging must remain clean, airtight, and tightly sealed until the product reaches the consumer.

Case Study: The "Kenanga" Snake Fruit (*Salak*) Home Industry

The home industry processed from snake fruit (*salak*) is a micro-scale home industry enterprise that transforms local fruit into candied products. The "Kenanga" *salak* commodity enterprise is a partner in the Family Welfare Movement (*Tim PKK*) activities located in Padangsidempuan City. Processing *salak* fruit into *salak* sponge cake (*bolu salak*), *salak* taffy (*dodol salak*), *salak* chips, and other food products is the primary enterprise pursued by this partner, which consists of 12 workers. This business serves as a vital priority to sustain their livelihood.

The production process—spanning from raw material procurement to packaging for distribution—is conducted manually and remains relatively simple. The production space is not well-organized, and they carry out the manufacturing process on-site. The Kenanga enterprise procures its raw materials from domestic traditional markets through daily cash purchases. Consequently, it is essential to deliver innovative solutions to address these home industry challenges. This involves efforts to scale up production and home industry management by enhancing the producers' capacity in hygienic product processing, creating attractive packaging, designing engaging product sticker labels, and establishing standardized product sizing.

Q&A Session

Following the presentations, a Question and Answer (Q&A) session was held between the speakers and the training participants.

Speaker VI: Technology and Export Market Development for MSMEs

Digital technology significantly expands the export market reach of MSMEs. Through marketplaces, social media, and data-driven research, small businesses can reach international buyers more efficiently. To optimize technology and ensure MSME products are export-ready, the following concrete steps should be implemented:

1. **Product Evaluation & Standardization:** Ensure that product quality meets international standards (including packaging, certification, and business legalities).
2. **Digital Market Research:** Utilize official platforms such as *SMEsta* (managed by the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs) for market research, training, and guidance.
3. **Leveraging Export Applications:** Utilize applications like *Bisa Ekspor* to study foreign trade ecosystems, identify target countries, and attract prospective buyers.
4. **Global Marketing:** Build professional websites in English and leverage global business directories.

Basic product processing technology enables MSMEs to transform raw materials into high-value products that meet international export standards (such as BPOM and HACCP). These methods ensure extended product shelf life during overseas shipping through dehydration/drying, vacuum packaging, preservation techniques, and digital logistics. The primary technological applications suitable for export products at the MSME level include:

1. **Drying and Dehumidification Technology:** For commodities such as coffee, spices, and fruit chips, cabinet or vacuum dryers are highly appropriate. This extends shelf life without using preservatives while preserving quality and aroma.
2. **Vacuum Packaging and Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP):** Utilizing vacuum packaging equipment to prevent oxidation and product spoilage during long-distance transportation.
3. **Digital Export Applications and Services:** Utilizing digital platforms to discover foreign buyers, translate languages, and manage export regulations.

The adoption and integration of information technology serve as primary drivers of growth and competitiveness for businesses capable of leveraging them. In recent years, the use of information technology in manufacturing, distribution, and service sectors has risen across most developed economies. It allows organizations to streamline inputs and manage production more efficiently, resulting in higher productivity. Furthermore, MSME sales are positively and significantly influenced by e-commerce adoption, which is driven by information technology integration.

There is a significant correlation between information technology application and corporate performance within MSMEs. Businesses in the industrial sector share a dynamic relationship driven by MSME innovation in specialized product manufacturing. When MSMEs integrate into industrial production networks, their presence serves as a vital framework for the manufacturing sector, generating output and driving industrial expansion. Therefore, boosting MSME productivity is essential to stimulate economic growth, particularly within the industrial sector, making the development of micro and small manufacturing industries crucial. According to the National Industrial Development Master Plan, small businesses will ultimately contribute significantly to the country's economy. Data indicates that MSMEs account for 16.37% of labor absorption in non-agricultural sectors.

CONCLUSION

Phase 1: Legal Comprehension in MSME Product Development

Building a successful product requires a balance between creativity and an organized strategy through:

1. **Idea Screening:** Focus on real solutions. As only 1 out of 7 ideas typically succeeds, choose the options that are most technically and financially feasible.
2. **Analysis & Roadmap:** Calculate profitability from the outset. Establish clear launch schedules to manage team resources efficiently.
3. **Prototyping & Iteration:** Avoid moving directly into mass production. Use visual or functional prototypes to gather early feedback from prospective customers.
4. **Risk Mitigation:** Identify potential market barriers before product rollout to minimize financial losses.

Phase 2: Digitalization & Interaction Strengths (The Engine)

Digitalization is the ultimate engine driving speed, convenience, and limitless market access.

1. **The Power of Chat Columns (WhatsApp/Messenger):** *Responsiveness:* Message open rates reach up to 98%. Quick response times are the cornerstone of customer trust and *AI Automation:* Implement chatbots to deliver 24/7 service without losing a personalized touch.
2. **The Role of Academia:** Utilizing universities as an extension of research and strategic thinking to foster sustainable business innovation.

Phase 3: Campaign & Content Strategy 2026 (Growth)

Modern marketing is no longer merely about selling; it centers on building emotional connections.

1. **A. Authenticity as the Pillar of Modern Content:** 1) *Showcase behind-the-scenes footage and the human side of the business.* Customers trust authenticity over rigid, corporate advertisements; 2) *Short-Form & Live Videos:* Maximize TikTok and Reels to capture brief attention spans, and leverage Live Streaming for real-time customer interaction; 3) *Immersive Technology:* Utilize Augmented Reality (AR) to enable customers to try products virtually.
2. **B. Community and Data-Driven Marketing:** 1) *Community Forums:* Establish communication groups (e.g., WhatsApp/Telegram) to engage with customers rather than simply broadcasting digital brochures; 2) *Data-Driven Decisions:* Utilize customer behavior insights to deliver personalized and targeted promotions.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

1. Barriers to Soft Skills Training

Soft skills serve as the foundation, yet they are often perceived as abstract by MSME actors.

- a. Mindset Barriers: Many business owners feel that soft skills (such as communication, leadership, or time management) are less critical than technical skills or financial capital.
- b. Time Management Difficulties: MSME actors are typically "sole proprietors" who act as both owners and operators. Consequently, it is difficult for them to pause daily operations to participate in time-consuming training sessions.
- c. Cultural Barriers & Habits: Altering long-standing habits regarding customer or employee interactions frequently triggers internal resistance.

2. Product Development Constraints

Challenges within this phase generally pertain to standardization and idea execution.

- a. Market Research Access: MSME actors frequently develop products based on "intuition" rather than field data, which sometimes results in products that are less relevant to actual market demands.
- b. Prototyping Limitations: The financial cost of product trial-and-error is often perceived as too expensive. Fear of initial failure frequently deters them from pursuing innovation.
- c. Standardization & Certification: Maintaining consistent product quality and securing legal compliances (such as BPOM, Halal, or Intellectual Property Rights/HKI) are often viewed as complex and bureaucratic processes.

3. Digital Marketing Obstacles

This area highlights the most prominent digital divide.

- a. Digital Literacy Gap: A lack of understanding regarding social media algorithms, data analytics interpretation, or running effective paid advertisements (Ads).
- b. Content Limitations: MSMEs often struggle to consistently produce aesthetically pleasing visual content (photos/videos) due to a lack of adequate equipment or dedicated creative teams.
- c. Communication Management (Chat Traffic): Difficulties in managing a high volume of incoming messages or consistently providing rapid responses, which ultimately leads to lost sales opportunities.
- d. Marketing Costs: Limited budgets restrict their ability to compete with larger brands regarding Cost-Per-Click (CPC) rates or hiring influencer services.
- e. Recommendation: Continuous assistance and mentoring are required to ensure business actors fully grasp regulations, digitalization, technology integration, and sanitation/health standards.

Q&A Session

Following the presentations, a Question and Answer (Q&A) session was held between the speakers and the training participants.

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DOCUMENTATION

Hari 1 Kota Padangsidimpuan



Hari 2 Kota Padangsidimpuan





Hari 3 Pendampingan Workshop

