Empowering Medan MSMEs through digital marketing training

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Abstract
This article examines the implementation of community service programs aimed at improving the digital marketing capabilities of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Medan City. Focusing on collaboration with Lazismu Kota Medan, this study uses a three-stage approach: partner problem identification, training implementation and evaluation. Through meetings and surveys, the service team determines the training needs of MSMEs, which cover important aspects of digital marketing. The training was held at the Muhammadiyah Da'wah Building with interactive lecture methods, Kahoot application-based quizzes, and group discussions. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the training was carried out through pre-test and post-test, resulting in a significant increase in participants' digital marketing understanding. These results show that digital marketing training is effective in increasing the ability and confidence of MSMEs in digital marketing, providing important implications for the development of MSMEs and the local economy of Medan City

Keywords: MSME; Digital marketing; Capacity building

Pemberdayaan UMKM Medan melalui pelatihan pemasaran digital

Abstrak
Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat yang bertujuan meningkatkan kemampuan digital marketing Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) di Kota Medan. Berfokus pada kolaborasi dengan Lazismu Kota Medan, studi ini menggunakan pendekatan tiga tahap: identifikasi permasalahan mitra, pelaksanaan pelatihan, dan evaluasi. Melalui pertemuan dan survei, tim pengabdian menentukan kebutuhan pelatihan UMKM, yang mencakup aspek penting digital marketing. Pelatihan dilaksanakan di Gedung Dakwah Muhammadiyah dengan metode ceramah interaktif, kuis berbasis aplikasi Kahoot dan diskusi kelompok. Evaluasi efektivitas pelatihan dilakukan melalui pre-test dan post-test, menghasilkan peningkatan signifikan dalam pemahaman digital marketing peserta. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa pelatihan digital marketing efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan dan kepercayaan diri UMKM dalam pemasaran digital, memberikan implikasi penting bagi pengembangan UMKM dan ekonomi lokal Kota Medan.

Kata Kunci: UMKM; Pemasaran digital; Peningkatan kapasitas

1. Introduction

Medan City, as one of the economic centers in North Sumatra, has great potential in the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). MSMEs in Medan play an important role in the local economy, given their significant contribution in employment and income distribution. However, the challenges faced by MSMEs in this city are quite diverse, ranging from limited access to a wider market to lack of knowledge

about effective digital marketing strategies. In today's digital era, the ability to utilize digital technology is the key to increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs (Dewi & Mita, 2023; Rahmawaty et al., 2023; Urbano et al., 2023).

Analysis of the situation shows that the majority of MSME owners in Medan have not fully utilized digital platforms as a means of promotion and sales. Most still rely on traditional methods such as direct marketing or through conventional networks. This results in their limited market reach and difficulty in competing in a wider market, especially in the face of competition from large companies that already have access and resources for digital marketing.

According to previous research, training in the field of digital marketing has been shown to improve the ability of SMEs to compete in the modern marketplace. Digital marketing training helps MSMEs expand their market reach, increase business visibility, and increase sales. By mastering information technology and leveraging digital marketing strategies, SMEs can communicate on a global scale and change the way they do business with customers. Digital marketing training provides scalable support for small industries, allowing them to market their products or services to consumers more easily (Afandi et al., 2023; Ellitan, 2023; Sasa et al., 2021). Another study shows that digital marketing training can indeed improve the knowledge and skills of MSME owners in utilizing social media and online platforms for marketing. Several papers highlight the effectiveness of such training in improving participants' knowledge and skills in digital marketing. The training covers various aspects of digital marketing, including marketing strategies through social media, search engine optimization (SEO), quality content and online brand management. The goal is to help MSMEs expand their market reach, increase business visibility, and ultimately increase sales. Training activities include explanations, tutorials, discussions, and practical exercises to ensure participants understand and can apply digital marketing techniques. The evaluation results show participant satisfaction and increased knowledge and skills in digital marketing. Therefore, digital marketing training is a valuable solution for MSME owners to increase understanding and utilization of social media and online platforms for marketing purposes (Afandi et al., 2023; Arum et al., 2023; Pratama et al., 2023; Supriatna et al., 2022; Wibowo et al., 2022). This, in turn, contributes to increased sales and market reach. This study, along with other relevant research, provides the theoretical basis for the proposed interventions in this devotion.

The community service will focus on providing digital marketing training to MSME owners in Medan City. The main objective of this training is to improve the knowledge and skills of MSME actors in using effective digital marketing strategies. Thus, it is expected that they can expand their market reach, increase sales, and ultimately increase their competitiveness in an increasingly global market. The training also aims to reduce the digital divide between MSMEs and large companies, providing fairer opportunities for MSMEs to develop and compete.

This service activity will involve collaboration with Lazismu Kota Medan, an organization that has an extensive network with MSMEs in the region. By working together, it is expected to achieve more effective results and have a direct impact on improving people's welfare. This training will use a participatory approach, where participants will be actively involved in the learning process. This approach not only improves theoretical understanding, but also practical skills in the application of digital marketing strategies. Through this method, it is expected that the participants not only

acquire knowledge, but also develop the necessary skills to implement effective and innovative digital marketing strategies. The benefits of this training are expected not only to be limited to increasing sales, but also increasing the confidence and adaptive capacity of MSME players in facing changes in the digital market.

In addition, the program also aims to build networks between MSME actors, enabling them to share knowledge, experience, and best practices. In the long run, this network will help in creating a stronger and more sustainable MSME community in Medan City. This network will also be a platform for MSME owners to support each other, especially in facing challenges related to the use of digital technology in their business.

This article will not only contribute to research in the field of MSME empowerment through digital marketing, but will also provide practical insights for practitioners and policy makers. The findings of this service are expected to add to the corpus of knowledge about effective strategies to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs in the digital era. In addition, the results of this activity will also provide valuable information on how digital marketing training can be adapted and applied in other areas with similar characteristics.

This activity aimed at improving the digital marketing capabilities of MSMEs in Medan City. Overall, this dedication aims to not only provide short-term solutions to the problems faced by MSMEs, but also form the basis for the development of sustainable long-term strategies. Thus, this activity is expected to have a significant positive impact on improving the quality of life and welfare of the community in Medan City, especially for MSME actors.

2. Method

The implementation method is divide into three main stages: preparation, training implementation and Evaluation (Hayati et al., 2022; Muadz & Riyanto, 2022).

2.1. Preparation
This involves meeting with Lazismu leaders to understand the conditions and needs of MSMEs in Medan. This discussion provides insight into the issues faced, including barriers to digital marketing and specific needs for upskilling. In addition, direct interviews were also conducted with several MSME owners to collect further data on training needs, current level of understanding of digital marketing and training time preferences.

2.2. Training implementation
Based on the results of the identification of needs, training materials are prepared to cover important aspects of digital marketing that are relevant to MSMEs. The training activity is scheduled for Thursday, December 14, 2023 at the Muhammadiyah Da'wah Building, Jl. Mandala By Pass, Medan City. Methods used include interactive lectures, group discussions, and Kahoot app-based quizzes to increase attendee understanding and engagement. In addition to theory, participants are also invited to practice directly through practice and making digital marketing strategies for their businesses.

2.3. Evaluation

Evaluation is carried out by providing pre-test questions before training and post-test after training to measure the increase in participants' knowledge. It gives an objective picture of the effectiveness of training. After the training, feedback is collected from participants to assess which aspects of the training are most beneficial and which areas need improvement for future sessions.

This method is designed to ensure that community service activities are not only relevant and beneficial for MSMEs in Medan, but also provide a solid foundation for continuous improvement in their digital marketing capabilities.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Identify partner issues

In the process of identifying partner problems, the service team held a series of intensive meetings with the leadership of Lazismu Medan City. The main purpose of this meeting was to understand in depth the specific challenges and needs faced by MSMEs assisted by Lazismu. Through focused discussion and constructive exchange of ideas, several key issues were identified, which laid the foundation for the design of the training program.

One important finding is that most MSMEs in Medan have limited knowledge about digital marketing. They recognize the need to understand and utilize digital platforms, but are constrained by a lack of access to relevant information and training. This is the main obstacle in developing and expanding their business in the digital era. The meeting revealed an urgent need for training that is not only theoretical, but also practical and appropriate to the local business context. MSMEs expressed a desire to learn about effective online marketing strategies, including the use of social media, SEO, email marketing and digital advertising. They also emphasize the importance of training that can be applied directly to their business, with case examples and best practices relevant to market conditions in Medan.

The profile of MSME actors who will attend the training is also a concern. The majority are owners of small and medium-sized businesses operating in the retail, culinary, and service sectors. They generally have diverse educational backgrounds, but most have no experience in digital marketing. This presents its own challenges in compiling training materials that are easy to understand and apply. From the results of identifying these partner problems, the service team was able to design a more focused training program, which not only responds to the specific needs of MSMEs in Medan but also provides a solid basis for improving their ability to face the challenges of the digital market.

3.2. Training implementation

The implementation of digital marketing training for MSMEs, scheduled for Thursday, December 14, 2023, at the Muhammadiyah Da'wah Building in Medan City, Jl. Mandala By Pass, is an important step in the community service process. This training is designed to provide insight and practical skills about digital marketing, especially to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs in Medan City.

The training session begins with exposure to the material delivered through the lecture method. The training materials cover various essential aspects of digital marketing, including an introduction to the basics of digital marketing, the use of social media for

business, SEO (Search Engine Optimization) techniques, and online advertising strategies. The presenters, who are experts in the field of digital marketing, present these topics in an easy-to-understand manner, ensuring that participants from various educational backgrounds can follow well (Figure 1).

Figure 1. presentation of digital marketing materials

To increase engagement and ensure understanding of the material, training sessions also utilize interactive quizzes based on the Kahoot app. This quiz is designed to test participants' knowledge of the concepts that have been delivered and to provide immediate feedback on their understanding. The use of technology in this training not only makes the sessions more interesting, but also helps participants in understanding and remembering the material better.

After the lecture and quiz sessions, participants were divided into small groups for material discussion. In this session, participants are given the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have gained in a more practical context. They are asked to design a digital marketing plan for their business, using the strategies they have learned. Each group then presented their plan in front of other participants, allowing for an exchange of ideas and constructive feedback from presenters and other participants.

The implementation of this training succeeded in creating an interactive and supportive learning environment, where participants not only acquired theoretical knowledge, but also developed practical skills in planning and implementing digital marketing strategies. Through a combination of lectures, interactive quizzes, and group discussions, this training provides a solid platform for MSMEs in Medan to develop their digital marketing skills and apply them in their business.

3.3. Evaluation
Evaluation of training activities is an important aspect to measure the success and effectiveness of the program. In this order, the evaluation was carried out through pre-test and post-test approaches to 40 participants who attended digital marketing training.

Before the start of the training session, participants were given pre-test questions to measure their initial knowledge level about digital marketing. The pre-test questions are designed to assess participants' basic understanding of various aspects of digital marketing such as basic concepts, social media, SEO, and online advertising strategies. The average score obtained from the 40 participants was 45.61 out of 100, indicating that there is considerable room for improvement and learning (Figure 2).
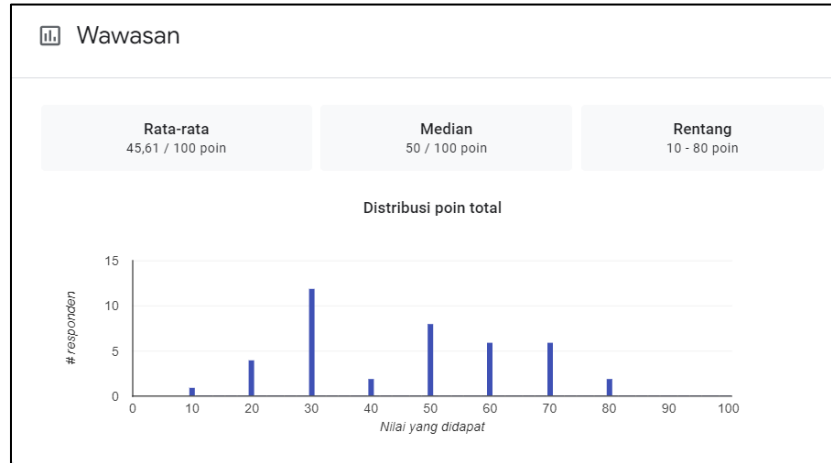
Figure 2. Pre-test results

After the training is completed, a post-test is given to participants to measure the increase in their knowledge. Post-test questions are similar to pre-tests, but with a few additional questions to test their understanding of the newly learned material. The average score achieved by participants in the post-test was 76.59 out of 100, indicating a significant improvement compared to the pre-test score (Figure 3).
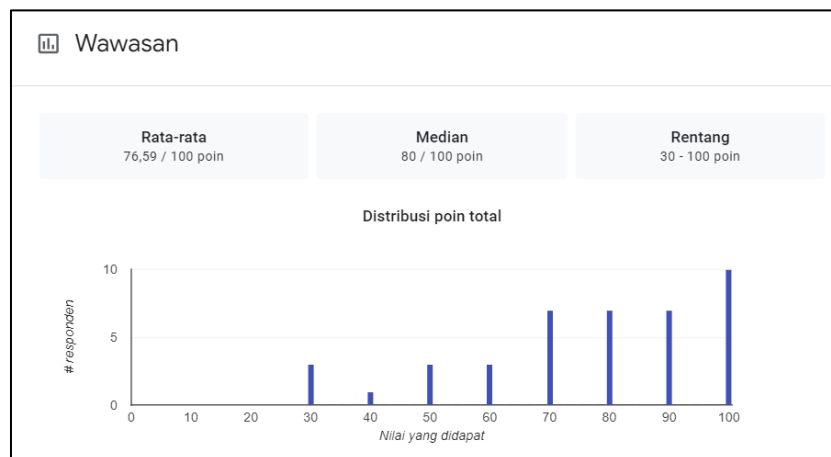

Figure 3. post-test results

Based on the data, the increase in the average score from 45.61 in the pre-test to 76.59 in the post-test shows the clear effectiveness of the training program in increasing participants' understanding of digital marketing. This increase reflects not only the absorption of theoretical knowledge, but also the development of practical skills that can be applied in their MSME businesses.

The conclusion of this evaluation is that the training has been successful in achieving its goal of improving participants' knowledge and skills in digital marketing. It provides a solid foundation for participants to implement effective digital marketing strategies in their ventures and increase their competitiveness in the digital market. This evaluation also provides valuable insights for the dedication team for future improvements and adjustments to training materials, ensuring that the training program remains relevant and effective.

4. Conclusion

Community service activities that focus on digital marketing training for MSMEs in Medan City have provided significant results and have a positive impact. Through a process consisting of problem identification, training implementation and comprehensive evaluation, this program has succeeded in achieving its goal of improving MSMEs' understanding and skills in digital marketing. This activity succeeded in identifying and addressing the main problem faced by MSMEs: lack of knowledge and skills in digital marketing. With tailored training to meet their needs, MSMEs in Medan now have the tools needed to develop and implement effective digital marketing strategies. The results of the evaluation showed a significant increase in participants' knowledge about digital marketing, from an average pre-test score of 45.61 to 76.59 in the post-test. This signifies that the training was successful in educating participants and enriching them with essential new skills in the digital age.

The implications of this service activity on the target community, namely MSME actors in Medan City, are very large. With increased capacity in digital marketing, MSMEs are expected to increase their visibility in the digital market, expand market reach, and ultimately increase sales and business growth. These skills are important not only for the individual growth of MSMEs but also for the development of the local economy of Medan City as a whole. Overall, this service activity was successful in achieving its goal to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs in Medan City through digital marketing training. This demonstrates the importance of focused and relevant education and training to support and strengthen the MSME sector. This activity also proves that with the right approach, MSMEs can overcome barriers in adopting digital technology and use these tools for sustainable growth and success.

Acknowledgement

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