AGRIPRENEURIAL DIGITAL BRANDING STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING BELL PEPPER BRAND EQUITY IN THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ERA

Arsiyanti LESTARI[1*], Siswantini SISWANTINI[2], Kiky SORAYA[3], and Tiurida Lily ANITA[4]
[1,2]Marketing Communication, Communication Department, Faculty of Digital Communication and Hotel & Tourism, Bina Nusantara University
[3]English Department, Creative Digital English, Faculty of Humanities, Bina Nusantara University
[4]Hotel Management Department, Faculty of Digital Communication and Hotel & Tourism, Bina Nusantara University
Email corresponding author: arsiyanti.lestari@binus.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The era of digital technology transformation is redefining the global agribusiness lanscape with millenial youngpreneur, shifthing the focus from selling raw commodities to marketing value-added, branded agricultural products. Like bell paper cultivation, as a high-value horticultural commodity, requires digital branding strategies and firm market differentiation strategies by using the RACE models. This study aims to anaylize and formulate an adaptive digital branding framework for bell pepper agripreneurs managed by young farmer to build brand equity and bypass conventional – multi-tiered distribution channels based on Reach, Act, Convert and Engage (RACE) models. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with design research of case study through literature reviews, in depth semi structure interview, and digital agribusiness tren observation. This findings indicate that reach, act, convert and angage integrating smart farming technologies, storytelling-based content marketing for branding, supply chain transparancy as digital traceability, and omnichannel distribution across the four RACE funnel stages enhance brand equity and competitiveness and brand trust accross both business to business and modern business to consumer segments.

Keywords: Agripreneurial, Brand Equity, Digital Branding, Digital Transformation, Horticultural Agribusiness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital tranformation driven by industry and society has exerted a profound impact on the global agricultural sector in Indonesia, especially in West Jawa. Agribusiness entrepreneurship known as agripreneurship, is no longer confined solely to optimizing on farm productions efficiency, it has increasingly shifted toward off-farm strategic management particularly in the marketing field and branding to build brand equity (Kotler and Keller, 2022). The agricultural sector is undergoing a demographic and technological shift characterized by the rise of young agripreneurs. This young farmers bring innovative mindsets, commitment to sustainability, and high levels of digital literacy.

An agripreneur is an agricultural entrepreneur that someone who blends traditional farming with modern business strategy, technology, and a startup mindset to transform food systems. Instead of simply growing crops for subsistence, agripreneurs view agriculture as a dynamic, scalable business designed to solve supply chain bottlenecks, create value, branding, and boost for food security (Ellakiya and Asokhan, 2021). Gaonkar and Naik (2020), framed agripreneurship as a vital shift toward modern agribusiness, placing high tension on technology adoption, branding and value additional. It showed that how agripreneurs transform small landholding into business competitive, creating local economic opportunities. Most of all, the value addition of agripreneur is avoided selling raw commodities at rock bottom prices by processing, packaging, or branding produce by turning raw fruit or vegetables into other final products such as cold-pressed juice or raw coffee into artisan roasted beans. Focuses on modern agri-entrepreneurship as tech-literate, risk tolerent innovators using product diversification or differensiate to strengthen rural economic resilience. (Jyoti et al., 2024).

The intentional process of giving business a human identity online, and transforming everyday digital interactions into long-term customer trust, namely digital branding. Digital branding is the art of shaping the business perceived across the digital lanscape, turning digital touchpoint into meaningful customer relationship; develop long-term trust, recognition, emotional and experiences by establishing interactive co-creation and communication between brands and consumers (Rawles, 2017; Swaminathan et al., 2020). Kertajaya and Setiawan (2021), highlighted that effective digital branding must combine high tech data tools with authentic delivery hyper-personalized brand experiences. By establishing user engagement across digital platform actively co-creates brand value, brand equity and shapes public

perception in real time; whereas digital brand value is no longer owned solely by the brand or company, but co-created via interactive social media engagement with active consumers (Cheung, Pires and Rosenberger, 2023).

Digital branding served as a strategic solution to make strong brand equity, streamline distribution and establish direct brand loyalty with both customers business to business and business to consumers. Digital branding also emerges as a notable strategy to transform bell peppers from an unbranded commodity into a high-value branded product. Through digital capabilities, agripreneurs can directly communicate technical advantages to target consumers (Pramadhika, 2025). So then, digital branding strategy is a steps processes for developing, communicating, and scaling identity across online spaces. In assence, a strong strategy turns websites, apps, emails, and social media profiles into an interconnected ecosystem to execute brand equity, brand trust, drives emotional resonance, and turns casual browsers into loyal customers. This would be clear brand identity, content branding, storytelling, and omnichannel marketing; including the digital transparency / traceability (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2022).

The core pillars of digital branding strategies is referred to as RACE (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) models. This practical of customer-centric framework designed by Dr. Dave Chaffey to help business plan, manage and scale their digital branding and marketing across fully customer journey into actionable stages of turning brand awareness into measureable loyalty.



The bell pepper is a high-value horticultural commodity targeting niche markets, such as the hotel, restaurant and Catering (HORECA) sector, modern supermarkets, and health-conscious middle to upper class consumers. Despite its high profitability potential, bell pepper producers frequently struggle with price volatility, heavy reliance on intermediaries and a lack of product differentiation in end markets. However, agricultural SME's frequently face challanges related to limited market reach and weak brand equity.

Brand equity is just like a premium commercial value that a product derives from its brand name that compared to its generic, unbranded equivalent. The value collects overtime by way of consumer perceptions, experience, reputation, psychological attachments associated with the brand. Then customer based brand equity is putted in by four primary dimensions, which are brand awareness, brand association, percieved quality and brand loyalty (Gutierrez at al., 2024; Paschina, 2025). Therefore, this paper investigates how young farmers can leverage their digital branding capacities to design a comprehensive and sustainable digital branding strategy and establishing a cohesive framework by using Reach, Act, Convert and Engage models adjusted for bell pepper agripreneur is crucial for maintaining market compotetitiveness in the digital age.

2. METHOD

This study utilizes a qualitative approach using a descriptive analytical method, along with research design of case study. Qualitative research is used to exemine the condition of object in a natural setting, where is the researcher acts as the key instrument in the data collection process. The data obtained generaly consist of descriptive information derived from interviews, observations and documentation (Sugiyono, 2023). A descriptive qualitative is selected to gain an in-depth understanding of how digital branding strategies executed using RACE models, and how this process contributes the formation of brand equity. Data collection was carried out through in-depth semi-structured interview, digital lanscape observation by assessing active digital branding practices spreaded by horticultural young millenial agripreneurs across digital channels assets such as social media platforms, official website, and e-commerce storefronts that operated by the target SME's. By employing a qualitative approach, this study expected to provide deeper insight and comprehensive description of the digital branding strategy phenomenon, drawing upon the experiences and research informants explanation that implemented RACE models within the context of digital branding activities.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To build sustainable brand equity the agriprenuers must adopt a structured digital branding funnel. Integrating digital branding with RACE framework provides a systemic roadmap for transforming paprica from an unbranded commodity into a high value, digital traceable product.The development of a digital branding strategy for bell pepper agripreneurs in the digital tranformation era relies on the four primary operational pillars, those are Reach, Act, Convert and Engage (RACE). In the first step of Reach, this stage is to build brand awareness by creating brand

positioning and identity as foundational in digital branding, such as defining a clear unique selling proposition. The bell pepper cultivated using modern technology like climate controled greenhouses or hydroponic system posses distinct physical attributes, such as vibrant uniform colors, thick flesh, and extended shelf life. Besides that they arranged brand differentiation by emphasizing pesticide-free standard, environmental sustainability, and hyguebie post handling. They also build brand architecture as visual identity. Developing a professional brand name of Milfa.id, logo and eco friendly packaging color scheme that projects a premium market image. This is inline with research that conducted by Azis and Suryana, (2023) and also Gutierrez at al., 2024; Paschina, 2025.

The reach phase focuses on maximizing brand visibility across target market segments to establish initial awareness of premium paprica. In conventional agriculture, farmers as producer remain invisible behind intermediaries ; digital reach restores brand ownership to the agripreneur. Agricultural entrepreneurs targeted search engine and social optimization by optimizing the digital presences using localized and attribute specific keywords or hashtag like hydroponic pesticide-free paprica, fresh capsium HORECA supplier. SEO not only targeted social media advertising directs content toward middle to upper class household decision makers and procurement within a defined delivery radius; but also impression volume, scope, cost per mille, and website traffic.

Professional business to business (B2B) in the HORECA segments and retails tried to digitalize prospecting, and reach is executed through experts network such as LinkedIn and targeted other digital communication purposed executive chefs, hotel purchasing managers, and restaurant owners. Content higlights consistency of supply, standarized grading size of A or B, and climate controled green house production. These are mapping for paprica digital branding to maximize brand exposure and brand equity going to HORECA and premium customers. Drive traffic to website or social media pages by using paid, owned and earned medias are very important in the second stage of Act by inspiring interaction thru storytelling and digital traceability. The act phase encourages content interaction and build product trust, also prospective buyers to inteact with the brand, building initial trust and validating product differentiation before purchase. This is to encourage target audience to interact, read content or sign up for newsletters to generate online leads. Through content branding and storytelling as conceptualized aims to attract and retain target audiences by delivering valuable and relevant content (Pulizzi, 2014).

In bell pepper agribusiness content storytelling strategies includes smart farming vibilities, nutritional and culinary /snacks education such as: producing recipe reels, crispness – preservation tips, and nutritional infographics highlighting high vitamin and antioxidant content. They also created behind the scenes transparency by sharing short form videos in their instagram reels and tiktok platform, sharing authentic footage, seadling management, showcasing smart farming technology, automated fertigation, and also pristine harvesting procedures, and hygienic post-harvest handling to build consumer trust. Not only that, they worked agripreneur profiling as well. Featuring the profile of youth farmer and modern agricultural entrepreneurship to break traditional farming streotype and build professional trust. They are also using brand promise and brand voice by adopting a professional educational, transparent, and dynamic tone that reflects youth leadership and modern expertise via key message about the brand itself.

Agripreneurs published short-form video content into instagram story and reels, website, youtube and tiktok demonstrating the technological sophistication of their operations. Showing automated fertigation, precise climate control, and clean harvesting practices demystifies the production process and visually proves the quality claims (Pulizzi, 2014). Through their posts drive their visitors and prospective clients to participate in the website and social channels, consume the content, and or submit leads. They are also using whatsup for business automating chat flow for onboarding B2B clients. This whatsup business is designed to automatically quality inbound the hotel, restaurant and cathering leads, deliver technical brand product speficication, and capture sample requests before routing qualified accounts to dedicated sales performa.

They make social media campaign digitally that posted into their instagram that allowing bell pepper farmers to interact with both B2B buyers and B2C healt-conscious consumers. This campaign is designed for educational storytelling and building trust by strategically aligning campaign tactics so targeted brand equity can achieve as well. For examples, visually proves farm cleanliness, environmental controls, premium brand products of tricolors paprica – red, yellow and green, and organic bell pepper for healthy food. Social media campaign take into consideration paprica farmers to move away from unbranded, price volatile commodity branding and transition toward a high value, digitally traceable direct to market brand. With value based messaging, they also emphasizing premium attribute of pesticide free, hydroponic, sustainable zero waste product, organic healthy food that shift from a price taker bound by local marlet rates to a price maker.

The interactive QR based digital traceability is also very important as packaging features a high visibility quick response (QR) code to modify into sales, consumers will interest and intention to purchase. In the digital market,

transparency is very essential for building the brand trust. To elevate brand equity and product credibility, Agripreneurs integrate the quick response (QR) codes onto retail packaging. Scanning directs consumers to a landing page displaying the exact timestamps and batch numbers, farm location and cultivation techniques, food safety and quality certification. Implementing digital traceability has been proven to elevate perceived product quality and increase consumers willingness to pay. On pack scannable QR codes linking directly to harvestwater purity logs, and good agricultural practices (GAP) certification for the product paprica. When scanned by a consumer in the supermarket or a chef in kitchen, it triggers an interactive sustainability metrics whereas achieved water savings via closed loop drip irrigation. This transparency also picked up sense value and directly supports premium price positioning.

For third step is convert. This stage do optimizing commercialization across business to business and business to consumer channels. The convert phase focuses on driving actionable transactions, converting engaged prospects into paying clients, and bypassing multi-tiered distribution channels. For B2B channel conversion like HORECA and modern retail require frictionless direct communication. Agripreneurs take automated WhatsApp business catalogs and dedicated website, email procurement portals. Prospect clients can review digital products specification sheets in the PDFs version, includes also free sample crates, and negotiate recurring supply contracts directly with the farm, securing higher profit margins for the agripreneur. Thereafter about B2C channel as end user and retail consumers, the alteration is driven via social commerce, for instance TikTok shop, Instagram shop, and integrated local e-commerce plaforms as tokopedia, shopee. Offering curated tricolors paprica of red, yellow and green, combined with time sensitive promotional pricing increased average order value and accelerates impulsive buying. Secure direct automated whatsup business catalog and specs sheets for B2B recurring contracts, alongside instagram and tiktok shop bundles as tricolor packs for retail impulse purchase.

Morever, omnichannels distribution for branding agripreneur sturctured by their digital channels to specific target market segments for building brand equity and brand trust as well.

Table 1. Structure digital channel based on target segments

Target Segment	Digital Channels	Content strategy / Deliverable
1. Business to Business (B2B) – HORECA and Retails	Linkedin, Official website, whatsup business, Email	Digital products catalogs, Technicak specs, steady supply guarantees, free sample requests
2. Business to Customers (B2C) – End Consumers	Social media – Instagram, Tiktok, Facebook, X, Youtube, Marketplaces – e-commerce (such as tokopedia, shopee), PADI UMKM, web-store, instant messaging application	Inteactive visual content, storytelling, promotional multi-packs, user review, user generated content, and social proof.

Based on the table above, for B2B segments of hotel, restaurant and cathering (HORECA) and modern retails which be in accordance with Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2022 that utilize the linkedin, profesional websites or official website, email and digital product catalogs. However for B2C of end consumers, they are using social media platform, e-commerce / marketplace and webstore, also the instant messaging application by creating the interactive content storytelling.

For last step of Engage, this is fostering long term customer equity and advocacy in both B2B and B2C end user. The engage phase focuses on after sales relationship to secure loyalty and repeat order, foster brand equity and advocacy and build long term trust. Agripreneurs provide institutional buyers with dedicated account support, automated re-ordering schedules based on historical usage, and seasonal price stabilization guarantees. This reliability turns one off buyers into long term contract partners, include B2B contract renewals, client lifetome value. They are also making B2C community and user generated content (UGC) to retain retails customers, distribute post purchase culinary digital content such as bell pepper storage tips with maximazing shelf life up to 21 days and healthy recipes. Encouraging customers to share post in their social media platform about their culinary creation, food cuisine, food dish using a branded hashtag creates user generated content that feedbacks into reach phase, creating a self-sustaining market. Then re-sharing those posts as social proof.

4. CONCLUSION

Digital transfromation offers an opportunity for bell pepper youth millenial agripreneur to escape traditional commodity market traps. Structuring digital branding strategy using Reach, Act, Convert and Engage (RACE) models, built on clear brand positioning and identity, consistent content storytelling, supply chain transparency by

way of digital traceability, and also integrated omnichannel approach. These structure not only enable to encourage brand trust, and develop brand equity, but also shortens agribusiness distribution channels. Youth-led bell pepper small medium enterprise to transition from unbranded commodities to offering high value-added branded products. The high digital literacy of young agripreneurs accelerates the implementation of modern storytelling, social media optimization and supply chain transparency. Those approach boosts consumer loyalty, brand equity and profit margins while shortening agribusiness distribution channels. Regarding recommendation, agripreneur need to maintain strictly alignment between digital branding and marketing. Also need to inovate the product into other disctinc products such as powder bell pepper, chips and so on. Expanding digital literacy training for communication and branding. Maintain product quality control alongside digital branding expansion to ensure brand promise matches product reality. Additionally, they necessary to push up not only search engine optimization (SEO), but also generative engine optimization (GEO) Tag as an evolution and innovation of SEO that focused on getting content cited by Artificial Intelegence tools.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors are grateful and thankful to Bina Nusantara University, in particular the Faculty of Digital Communication and Hotel & Tourism, and also Community Empowerment (CE) Binus University – Grant Year of 2026 with contract number of VRRTT-CE/KMG/VI/2026f, or supporting the authors in completing this paper. The authors also would like to thank all the informans of millenial farmers under Yayasan Alam Bangun Mitra Lestari – Koperasi KSPL in bell pepper village, Pasir Langu, Cisarua, Bandung, West Jawa; and all the community for the useful information provided to shape this article. The research funder is usually mentioned, including the contract number, as this will also be as documentation for the funder that the activity has been published.

5. REFERENCES

Alexander Tabares, Abraham Londoño-Pineda, Jose Alejandro Cano, and Rodrigo Gómez-Montoya. (2022). Rural Entrepreneurship: An Analysis of Current and Emerging Issues from the Sustainable Livelihood Framework. Economies. Vol 10(6):142. https://doi.org/10.3390/economies10060142

Azis, M., & Suryana, E. A. (2023). Digital marketing innovation in agricultural products to increase rural SME competitiveness. Journal of Digital Economy and Business, 2(1), 10–20.

Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2022). Digital Marketing: Strategy, Implementation and Practice (8th ed.). Pearson.

Cheung, M. L., Pires, G. D., & Rosenberger, P. J. (2023). Co-creating brand value through social media marketing: The role of consumer engagement. Journal of Strategic Marketing, 31(4), 789–812.

Darshan S. Gaonkar and Kalpita Ramnath Naik. (2020). Opportunities and Challenges in Agripreneurship in India. CLIO An Annual Interdisciplinary Journal of History (UGC CARE Journal) ISSN: 0976-075X Vol-6-Issue-8 (1s): 112-116

Elakkiya S., and M. Asokhan. (2021). Attitude of Agripreneurs towards Entrepreneurial Motivation - A Gender Analysis. Biological Forum – An International Journal Vol. 13 (4): 1041-1045

Jyoti, Rani, Seema, Khushbu, and Anju,. (2024). Navigating the Intersection of Agribusiness and Agri-Entrepreneurship: Performance, Challenges, and Opportunities. Archives of Current Research International. Vol 24(10): 287-299. DOI: 10.9734/acri/2024/v24i10932.

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2022). Marketing management (15th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

López-Rodríguez, C. E., Gutiérrez Bernal, L. G., & Páramo Renza, L. A. (2024). Measures of Brand Awareness: Bibliometric Analysis and Systematic Review. TEM Journal, 13(4), 3056–3067.

Paschina, S. (2025). Brand Equity Measurement Models: A Systematic Review. International Journal of Business and Management, 20(5), 1–15.

Pramadhika, M. R., Nisa, S. I., Kusnadi, M., Putri, N., Purnama, S. M., & Kosim, M. (2025). Product branding strategy for SMEs through digital marketing and social media optimization in the digital transformation era. Journal of Business, Islamic Economics, and Taxation, 2(3), 30–43.

Pulizzi, J. (2014). Epic content marketing: How to tell a different story, break through the clutter, and win more customers by marketing less. McGraw-Hill Education.

Rowles, D. (2017). Digital Branding: A Complete Step-by-Step Guide to Strategy, Tactics, Tools and Measurement (2nd ed.). Kogan Page.

Sugiyono. (2022). Metode penelitian kualitatif (Edisi ke-3). Alfabeta.

Swaminathan, V., Sorescu, A., Steenkamp, J. B. E., O'Guinn, T. C. G., & Schmitt, B. (2020). Branding in a Hyperconnected World: Refocusing Research and Practice. Journal of Marketing, 84(2), 24–46.