

TRAINING ON THE USE OF INSTAGRAM AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATION TOOL FOR MSMEs IN TEBET DISTRICT

Chendi LIANA^{1*}, Fatimah BILQIS², Abdul Harif SISWANTO³, Andhika RAHARDJA⁴
^{1,2,3,4} *Sahid University, Jakarta, INDONESIA*
**chendiliana@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in supporting local economies in Indonesia. However, many MSMEs still face significant challenges in utilizing digital platforms effectively, particularly Instagram, as a strategic marketing communication tool. This community service program was designed to enhance the digital marketing capacity of MSMEs in Tebet District through four structured stages: socialization, training, mentoring, and evaluation.

The program began with socialization to identify participants' needs, analyze their current practices, and establish a baseline of digital literacy. The training stage provided knowledge of digital marketing communication strategies, content planning, and the use of Instagram features such as Stories, Reels, and Insights. Mentoring and assistance offered continuous guidance and personalized feedback, enabling participants to apply new knowledge in practice. Finally, evaluation measured improvements in skills, confidence, and content engagement while gathering feedback for future development.

Results showed that MSMEs demonstrated significant progress in creating structured content schedules, designing consumer-oriented messages, and managing two-way communication with their customers. Businesses also reported increased engagement, stronger customer interactions, and more effective use of limited resources. These outcomes highlight that Instagram, when strategically managed, can serve as an affordable yet powerful tool for enhancing brand visibility and customer loyalty.

In conclusion, the program successfully achieved its objectives by equipping MSMEs with practical digital marketing competencies. The initiative emphasizes the importance of community-based interventions in fostering digital literacy, entrepreneurial resilience, and sustainable local economic growth.

Keywords: Community Service, MSMEs, Instagram, Digital Marketing Communication, Tebet District

1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of Indonesia's economy, contributing more than 60% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbing around 97% of the workforce (Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, 2023). Despite this significant role, many MSMEs continue to face challenges in marketing and business development, particularly in adapting to digital platforms.

The rise of digital technology and social media platforms has transformed the way businesses communicate with their customers. Instagram, in particular, has become one of the most widely used social media applications for marketing communication, with more than 100 million users in Indonesia as of 2023 (Statista, 2023). Its visual orientation, interactive features, and popularity among young consumers make it a powerful tool for promoting products, building brand identity, and engaging with customers (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021).

However, despite Instagram's potential, many MSMEs have not yet maximized its use due to limited digital literacy and lack of skills in managing social media as a strategic communication tool. Research by Hadi & Nugroho (2022) shows that Indonesian MSMEs that actively utilize social media experience higher customer engagement and improved competitiveness compared to those relying solely on conventional marketing strategies. Similarly, a report from McKinsey (2021) emphasizes that digital adoption among MSMEs is key to economic resilience, particularly in the post-pandemic recovery era.

In Tebet District, South Jakarta, many MSMEs still rely on traditional marketing approaches, such as word of mouth or offline sales promotions. These methods, while valuable, are insufficient in reaching broader audiences in today's digital marketplace. There is an urgent need to strengthen MSMEs' digital marketing capacities to help them expand market reach, build stronger customer relationships, and sustain business growth.

Therefore, this community service program was designed to provide practical training on the use of Instagram as a marketing communication medium for MSMEs in Tebet District. By focusing on hands-on learning, this program aims not only to increase participants' knowledge but also to empower them with applicable skills that can directly impact their business operations. The urgency of this program lies in equipping MSMEs with digital communication competencies that are essential for their survival and competitiveness in the digital economy era.

2. METHOD

This community service program applied a participatory and experiential learning approach, which emphasizes active involvement and hands-on practice to maximize knowledge transfer and skill development (Kolb, 1984). The implementation consisted of four stages: socialization, training, mentoring and assistance, as well as evaluation and sustainability.

The first stage was socialization, where the program was introduced to MSMEs in Tebet District. This stage was crucial for identifying participants' needs, understanding their current digital marketing practices, and collecting baseline data on digital literacy levels. According to Rogers (2003), the process of socialization and communication is essential in facilitating the diffusion of innovations, as it allows participants to build awareness and reduce uncertainty regarding new practices. In this program, socialization ensured that the training modules were contextually relevant to MSMEs' actual challenges.

The second stage was training, which consisted of several components. The basic training provided fundamental knowledge on digital marketing communication strategies and Instagram optimization. A subsequent planning workshop guided participants to develop structured content schedules, design audience-appropriate content, and manage two-way communication effectively. Training activities were based on the principles of adult learning (Knowles, 1980), which highlight the importance of problem-centered learning, self-directed engagement, and relevance to participants' real-life needs. To further strengthen learning outcomes, training was supported by multiple resources including video tutorials, blogs, and online applications, enabling independent and continuous learning outside of the sessions.

The third stage was mentoring and assistance, aimed at providing continuous guidance and individualized support. Mentoring has been recognized as an effective method in entrepreneurial capacity building, as it allows participants to practice skills with feedback and adapt strategies according to their specific contexts (St-Jean & Audet, 2012). In this stage, MSMEs were supported in creating content schedules, producing engaging posts, and managing interactions with consumers. Personalized feedback ensured that each participant was able to refine their digital marketing strategies effectively.

The final stage was evaluation and sustainability, which focused on measuring the improvement of participants' skills and confidence, as well as collecting feedback for future program development. According to Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006), evaluation in training programs should assess not only immediate learning outcomes but also long-term behavioral changes and organizational impact. In this program, the evaluation stage was designed to capture both short-term improvements and the potential for sustainable digital marketing practices among MSMEs in Tebet.

Through these four structured stages, grounded in relevant educational and communication theories, the program ensured that participants were not only introduced to digital marketing concepts but also empowered to apply, practice, and sustain Instagram as an effective marketing communication tool for their businesses.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The community service program engaged six selected MSMEs from Tebet District, each representing different sectors such as food, beverage, healthy products, and fashion. These MSMEs included Al-Meerah, Dapoer Keju Demplon, Kolang Kaling Enyak, Fitcakee, MW Official, and Gue Harga Pas. Their diversity reflects the wide range of business models and target markets in the area, providing a comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by local entrepreneurs in adopting digital marketing through Instagram.

The first stage, socialization, successfully established a common understanding of the program objectives and identified the digital marketing gaps among the participants. Most MSMEs already had Instagram accounts, yet their utilization remained limited to posting products sporadically without a clear communication strategy. This finding resonates with previous research by Ahmad et al. (2018), which highlighted that while many MSMEs in developing countries adopt social media, they often lack the strategic planning necessary to maximize engagement and sales. By conducting a needs analysis and baseline survey, the program ensured that subsequent interventions were tailored to the specific challenges of Tebet MSMEs.



Figure 1. Socialization the program

Source: Personal documentation

The second stage, training, provided participants with knowledge and practical skills in digital marketing communication. During this stage, MSMEs learned to design structured content plans, optimize their use of Instagram features such as Stories and Reels, and create audience-centered content. The training also emphasized two-way communication, enabling participants to respond to consumer inquiries and feedback in real time. This aligns with the findings of Taneja and Toombs (2014), who argue that interactive engagement on social media fosters stronger customer relationships and improves brand loyalty. The training was further supported by digital learning materials such as video tutorials and blogs, which allowed participants to continue learning independently.



Figure 2. Training with participant

Source: Personal documentation

The third stage, mentoring and evaluation, played a significant role in translating theory into practice. MSMEs were guided in creating and publishing Instagram content with the assistance of Sahid University students. This collaboration not only strengthened the capacity of the MSMEs but also provided valuable experiential learning opportunities for students. Each uploaded content was subsequently evaluated in terms of visual quality, message clarity, and audience engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares. The feedback loop encouraged MSMEs to continuously refine their strategies. Research by Jones, Borgman, and Ulusoy (2015) emphasizes the importance of mentoring and feedback in the digital marketing learning process, as it helps small businesses overcome knowledge gaps and adapt strategies to dynamic market conditions.

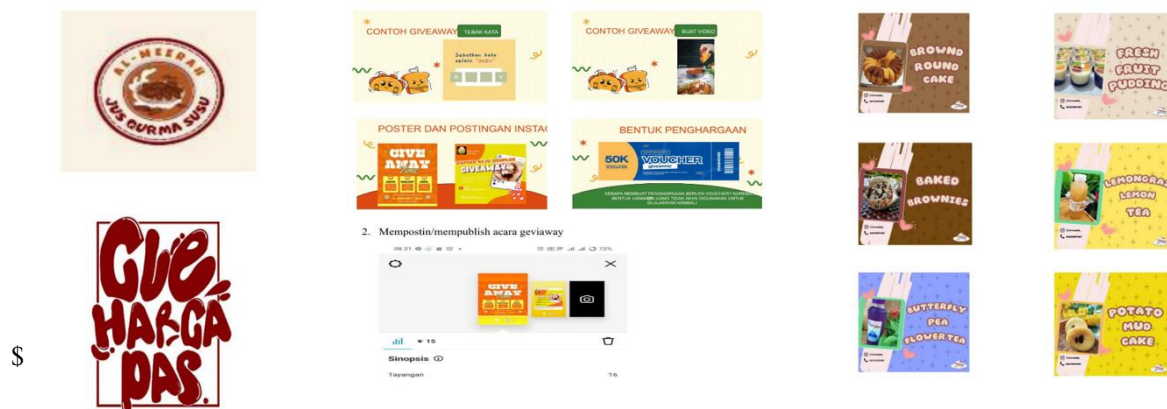


Figure 3. Instagram Marketing Communication Implementation

Source: Personal documentation

The evaluation results indicated measurable improvements in participants' ability to manage Instagram as a communication tool. For example, Al-Meerah developed more visually appealing product displays with clearer branding messages, while Dapoer Keju Demplon increased interaction with customers through Instagram Stories polls. Kolang Kaling Enyak experimented with seasonal promotional content during Ramadan, and Fitcakee highlighted its unique selling points in the healthy food market. Fashion-based MSMEs, MW Official and Gue Harga Pas, successfully integrated trend-based content that resonated with younger audiences. These practices not only increased followers but also improved engagement rates, showing that participants could implement strategic content planning effectively.

Overall, the program demonstrated that Instagram, when used strategically, can significantly enhance MSMEs' communication marketing practices. The socialization phase ensured relevance, the training phase built foundational and advanced skills, and the mentoring phase reinforced practical application with continuous feedback. The results confirmed that MSMEs could transition from ad hoc posting to a more structured, consumer-oriented digital marketing approach. This finding is consistent with Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), who stress that social media marketing requires both content quality and interactivity to achieve sustainable impact.

In conclusion, the program underscored the importance of structured interventions in strengthening MSMEs' digital communication skills. By integrating socialization, training, mentoring, and evaluation, the initiative not only improved the technical capacity of MSMEs but also fostered a mindset shift toward strategic digital engagement. This indicates that community service programs can serve as a catalyst for local economic empowerment through digital literacy, particularly in urban areas where competition is high and visibility is key to survival.

4. CONCLUSION

This community service program aimed to enhance the digital communication and marketing capabilities of MSMEs in Tebet District through structured socialization, training, mentoring, and evaluation activities. The findings demonstrate that the program successfully addressed the challenges faced by MSMEs in utilizing Instagram as a marketing communication tool.

First, the program improved participants' digital skills, enabling them to create structured content plans, design engaging posts, and leverage Instagram features such as Stories, Reels, and Insights more effectively. Second, it strengthened their ability to conduct data-driven analysis, allowing MSMEs to better understand consumer behavior and market trends. Third, the initiative enhanced two-way communication skills, fostering more meaningful interactions between MSMEs and their customers, which in turn improved customer experience and satisfaction. Fourth, the mentoring process provided practical guidance for optimizing limited resources and promotional budgets, helping MSMEs maximize impact despite financial constraints.

Overall, the program met its intended objectives by equipping MSMEs with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to manage Instagram strategically as a communication and marketing platform. As a result, the participating

businesses demonstrated significant progress in increasing engagement, expanding brand visibility, and strengthening customer relationships.

The outcomes of this initiative underscore the importance of community-based interventions in promoting digital literacy and entrepreneurial resilience. By empowering local MSMEs with practical competencies in digital marketing, such programs can contribute to greater business sustainability, competitiveness, and local economic development.

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