

Digital Business and Marketing Training for Residents of RT 008 RW 010, Semper Barat Subdistrict, Cilincing District, North Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

This community service initiative aimed to strengthen digital marketing skills among RT 008 RW 010 residents, Semper Barat Subdistrict, North Jakarta. Many participants, mainly informal micro-entrepreneurs, had previously relied on conventional marketing methods and had minimal exposure to digital platforms. The training introduced them to tools such as Instagram, WhatsApp Business, Canva, and Shopee through a hands-on, participatory approach. Results showed significant improvements in digital literacy, content creation abilities, and confidence in promoting products online. Several participants successfully posted their products and received engagement from new customer segments. The program also fostered peer collaboration and addressed digital inclusion in underserved communities. While technical limitations such as device familiarity and internet access remained, the training demonstrated the potential of higher education institutions in supporting digital empowerment at the grassroots level.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, SMEs, Social Media, Digital Literacy

I. Introduction

The advancement of digital technology in recent years has reshaped how people communicate, market products, and build businesses. Digital platforms, particularly social media and e-commerce have emerged as powerful tools allowing small-scale entrepreneurs to reach customers far beyond their neighborhoods. Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasize that the digital economy has created new opportunities for businesses to engage customers directly, manage relationships efficiently, and promote products with minimal cost. However, these opportunities are not evenly distributed. Many residents still rely on conventional marketing methods in urban communities such as RT 008 RW 010 in Semper Barat, North Jakarta. Through early observations and community dialogues, it became evident that most home-based business owners continued to promote their products through word-of-mouth, printed flyers, or small-scale neighborhood exposure. These traditional approaches are increasingly less effective in an environment that demands digital presence and agility (Aaker, 2013).

One of the significant barriers to digital adoption is the lack of familiarity with digital platforms. Many residents had never used Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok for business purposes, let alone set up accounts on

Shopee or Tokopedia. As Kurniawan (2020) points out, the digital gap among MSMEs in Indonesia is often rooted in low exposure to digital literacy and minimal access to structured training or mentorship. This gap is even more pronounced in informal urban sectors, where small entrepreneurs must juggle limited time, tools, and technical know-how. Additionally, many residents expressed discomfort and uncertainty around content creation. They found it challenging to take compelling product photos, design visuals, or write promotional captions that resonate with online audiences. According to Susanti and Heryanto (2019), social media marketing depends heavily on attractive and authentic content, skills that require tools and creative confidence.

The absence of prior training also emerged as an explicit limitation. Few participants had ever been involved in any digital business workshops, leaving them unprepared to navigate today's competitive online environment. As Maulana (2021) notes, targeted training and mentorship are critical in empowering MSMEs to make the digital shift effectively. Without adequate guidance, even motivated entrepreneurs are likely to fall behind. This context formed the basis for designing a digital business and marketing training program tailored to the local community's needs. The initiative aimed to introduce basic digital tools and provide practical, hands-on learning experiences that participants could immediately apply in their businesses. As Putri and Ramadhani (2020) suggest, community-based digital marketing training is most effective when it is contextual, participatory, and directly linked to the daily realities of small entrepreneurs. Importantly, the program was also grounded in the values of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which includes community service as a core responsibility. By involving lecturers and students in the field, the program enabled the academic community to share its knowledge meaningfully and learn directly from the people it seeks to serve (Sugiyono, 2017). This reciprocal model ensures that education does not remain isolated in institutions but becomes a living force for social transformation. The digital marketing training conducted in Semper Barat was not just about teaching skills—it was about empowering people. It gave voice and visibility to local entrepreneurs, helped them overcome hesitation, and created a path for sustainable, digitally-enabled economic growth. By bridging the digital divide, initiatives like this can help communities thrive in an increasingly connected world.

II. Literature Review

2.1. Digital Marketing and Small Business Growth

Digital marketing has transformed how small businesses interact with customers, offering tools to build brand awareness, reach broader markets, and boost sales. Kotler and Keller (2016) define digital marketing as using internet-based platforms to deliver promotional content and create customer engagement. This approach offers cost-efficient alternatives to traditional advertising for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Hidayat (2022) emphasizes that digital marketing reduces dependency on physical stores and enables businesses to operate flexibly and responsively.

2.2. The Digital Divide in Urban Communities

Despite widespread internet access in urban areas, digital skills among marginalized communities remain uneven. Kurniawan (2020) notes that many MSMEs in Indonesia lack digital readiness due to limited exposure, low confidence, and minimal support systems. This "digital divide" restricts access to online marketplaces, digital payment systems, and even basic social media use for business purposes. Such barriers hinder innovation and income potential in underserved neighborhoods like Semper Barat. As Susanti and Heryanto (2019) argue, digital transformation risks becoming exclusive rather than inclusive without targeted interventions.

2.3. The Role of Content Creation in Online Marketing

Compelling content is central to the success of digital marketing strategies. Aaker (2013) highlights that digital branding relies on consistent, attractive messaging that resonates with specific audiences. However, small entrepreneurs often lack the tools and skills to produce persuasive digital content. Maulana (2021) found that many MSMEs struggle with visual branding, including product photography, video editing, and caption writing. These gaps reduce engagement and customer conversion rates, even when businesses can access online platforms.

2.4. Social Media and Marketplace Utilization for MSMEs

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp Business have become crucial in helping MSMEs interact with consumers. According to Wijaya (2019), these platforms provide free or low-cost promotional tools and allow for real-time customer feedback. Meanwhile, e-commerce platforms like Shopee and Tokopedia offer more structured access to digital transactions, product catalogs, and logistics services. Putri and Ramadhani (2020) found that MSMEs using social media and marketplaces report faster business growth than those relying on offline channels.

III. Research Method

This community service program employed a participatory action approach to enhance digital marketing skills among RT 008 RW 010 residents, Semper Barat Subdistrict, Cilincing District, North Jakarta. The program was initiated in response to observations that residents, many of whom run small-scale businesses, lacked the skills and confidence to utilize digital platforms effectively. The program was designed to provide hands-on training in digital promotion, content creation, and online marketplaces through collaboration between lecturers and students from Universitas Dian Nusantara. Before the training activities, the team conducted a preliminary needs assessment involving direct observation and informal resident interviews. This stage helped identify key obstacles, such as the unfamiliarity with social media marketing tools, limited smartphone use for business purposes, and low awareness of e-commerce potential. This assessment's findings shaped the training's content and structure, ensuring that it was tailored to the specific context and capabilities of the participants.

The training sessions were held over one day and divided into several modules covering fundamental digital marketing concepts. These included an introduction to social media business features (Instagram, WhatsApp Business), the basics of online marketplaces (Tokopedia and Shopee), and practical tools such as Canva for design and CapCut for video editing. Each session combined short presentations with live demonstrations, followed by guided practice, allowing participants to apply what they had learned immediately. To ensure effective delivery and engagement, the training was held in an accessible community location and facilitated in a relaxed, interactive setting. Participants were encouraged to bring their products and mobile devices to practice creating digital content in real time. The facilitators, consisting of lecturers and students, provided one-on-one assistance throughout the session. This setup promoted active learning and reduced the intimidation often associated with digital tools, especially for older or less digitally literate participants. In addition to skill transfer, the program emphasized confidence-building. Many participants, particularly women, expressed hesitation in using technology due to a lack of prior experience. The facilitators addressed this by fostering a non-judgmental environment and encouraging peer support. Practical achievements, such as setting up a business account or posting a product for the first time, were celebrated as milestones to build momentum and motivation for continued use after the program ended.

Post-training evaluation was conducted using both observation and informal participant feedback. The team noted visible enthusiasm, increased digital engagement, and the emergence of new marketing behaviors among participants in the days following the training. A WhatsApp group was established to extend

the program's impact for ongoing mentoring and resource sharing. This follow-up mechanism was intended to reinforce the skills learned during the training and to foster a sense of community among the participants as they began implementing digital strategies in their businesses.

IV. Results and Discussion

The digital marketing training held in Semper Barat was timely and deeply impactful for the community. This program introduced a new way of thinking and doing business in a setting where traditional sales methods were the norm. Many participants, most small business owners, homemakers, and youth, had little or no experience using digital platforms for commercial purposes. Their initial reaction was a mix of curiosity and anxiety, especially when asked to engage with unfamiliar tools. However, as the training unfolded, the atmosphere began to change. With clear guidance and a supportive learning environment, participants became more relaxed. Their willingness to explore grew stronger when they realized that digital tools like Instagram and WhatsApp Business were not as intimidating as they once thought. Their confidence grew steadily as they followed live demonstrations and then practiced independently. For many, this was their very first step into digital entrepreneurship.

A central strength of the training was its hands-on approach. Participants brought their products, from homemade food to fashion items, and learned to photograph them using their phones. They were taught how to enhance those images with Canva and pair them with compelling captions. By the end of the session, several participants had posted their products on social media for the first time. This active process transformed learning from a theoretical discussion into a meaningful, personal achievement. The excitement was palpable when participants began to see responses to their posts. One woman expressed surprise after receiving inquiries via WhatsApp from someone outside her neighborhood, something she had never experienced before. This was a moment of realization: the digital world had expanded her reach far beyond the borders of Semper Barat. It was no longer just about selling a product but about telling a story and building visibility. This outcome resonates with prior studies. Kurniawati and Cahyono (2022) emphasized that MSMEs who adopt digital tools improve their visibility and enhance their competitive edge in saturated markets. Similarly, Aaker (2013) noted that digital branding creates emotional connections with customers, especially when stories are presented authentically. The participants in this program were unknowingly tapping into that principle, learning to market not just with price and product, but with personality and presence. Moreover, the collaborative learning setting turned out to be a key enabler. Participants often helped each other, especially when one was stuck navigating an app or crafting a caption. The camaraderie made the learning process feel less like a formal class and more like a community effort. As suggested by Sugiyono (2017), participatory methods encourage more sustainable knowledge retention and foster mutual support among learners.

The training also encouraged participants to think more critically about their product presentation. For example, some realized their packaging needed improvement to look more appealing online. Through chat apps, others began to think about brand names, consistent visual themes, and customer service. These reflections marked a significant shift in mindset, from informal sellers to aspiring digital entrepreneurs. However, challenges were inevitable. Several participants had difficulty operating their phones, especially when switching between applications. Some were unfamiliar with basic functions like taking screenshots or uploading files. While facilitators provided one-on-one assistance, this issue highlighted the need for more basic digital literacy training before entering marketing topics. Another challenge was internet connectivity. While most participants had mobile data, the signal strength varied, and some struggled to download apps or upload their content in real time. These infrastructure limitations point to broader systemic issues in digital inclusion. Handayani et al. (2020) noted that digital transformation cannot succeed without supporting infrastructure, especially in low-income urban areas. Despite these limitations, the overall mood of the training remained optimistic. Participants appreciated that the training did not require expensive equipment, just a smartphone and a willingness to learn. They expressed enthusiasm to practice further and even requested

follow-up sessions to deepen their skills. A WhatsApp group was formed for ongoing mentoring and discussion, keeping the momentum alive beyond the event. Perhaps the most important takeaway was the shift in perception. What started as fear and hesitation gradually evolved into pride and excitement. Participants began to see technology not as a barrier, but as a bridge to new opportunities. This attitudinal change is crucial in ensuring that the knowledge gained continues to grow into lasting behavior and economic benefit.

V. Conclusion

This community engagement program demonstrated that practical, context-based digital marketing training can empower local micro-entrepreneurs, particularly in underserved urban areas like Semper Barat. The training improved participants' digital literacy, content creation skills, and confidence in navigating online platforms. While some faced technical and infrastructure limitations, the overall results showed positive behavioral shifts in marketing approaches. More importantly, the program provided more than knowledge; it gave the participants a renewed sense of agency. With mentorship, practice, and encouragement, even those unfamiliar with digital tools could visualize new business opportunities. This initiative highlights the vital role of higher education institutions in translating academic knowledge into real-world community impact through inclusive and empathetic outreach. Future programs should consider longer durations, periodic follow-up sessions, and partnerships with local institutions or digital platforms to build on this momentum. Sustainable digital transformation at the grassroots level requires continued guidance and supportive ecosystems.

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