

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY: CASE STUDY AND BEST PRACTICE FOR MSMEs IN RIAU PROVINCE IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract: *This research is motivated by the importance of digital marketing strategies in the digital era in increasing product sales to MSMEs in Riau Province. This research aims to explain digital marketing strategies for MSMEs in Riau Province in the digital era. This research uses qualitative methods using Miles and Huberman analysis. This research was conducted on MSMEs in Riau Province where the informants were owners, employees and customers who were determined using purposive sampling. Data collection techniques were carried out using observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. The research was carried out for one month, where the research will be analyzed using the Miles and Huberman method, namely: collecting data, data reduction, data display, and verification. The results of this research explain 1) A case study of digital marketing strategies for MSMEs in Riau Province in the digital era explains that the strategies implemented are marketing via social media, quality content, special promotions on social media, collaboration with local influencers and active customer service, and 2) Best practice digital marketing strategies for MSMEs in Riau Province in the digital era include understanding target markets, building online marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, collaboration with local influencers and email marketing.*

Keywords: *Digital marketing strategy, best practice, MSMEs, digital era*

1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Riau Province are one of the most important sectors in economic growth . MSMEs in Riau Province include various types of businesses in various economic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, crafts, carpentry, culinary, tourism and service technology. The growth of MSMEs in Riau Province is supported by several factors such as government support, the Riau Provincial Government and local regional governments have provided various types of support, such as training, funding, and various assistance programs for MSMEs. This includes capital assistance, entrepreneurship training, and business coaching. Potential for natural resources, Riau Province has abundant natural resource potential, including agricultural, plantation, fisheries and forestry products. This creates great opportunities for MSMEs involved in these sectors to grow and develop (Suryani, 2018).

Product diversification, MSMEs in Riau Province have diversified in developing products and services. They utilize local natural and cultural resources to create unique products that attract local consumers and tourists. Access to Local and Regional Markets. The availability of extensive local and regional markets, including customers within and outside Riau Province, has supported the growth of MSMEs. Several local products in Riau Province have also gained popularity outside the region . Increased internet access and information

technology have provided opportunities for MSMEs to market their products online and reach a wider market (Martina, Hasan, & Wulandari, 2021).

Increased entrepreneurship education and training in Riau Province has helped prospective entrepreneurs and MSME owners to understand good business principles and best practices. MSMEs in Riau Province often collaborate with other parties, including the government, large companies, and financial institutions, to increase access to necessary resources and support. MSME products that reflect local culture and traditions often have their own appeal, attracting the attention of tourists and consumers who appreciate products with cultural and traditional values (Fahdia et al, 2021).

MSMEs in Riau Province have an important role in creating jobs, supporting the local economy, and preserving regional cultural heritage. They also contribute to meeting the needs of local consumers and encouraging regional economic growth. Local governments and MSME supporting institutions have made efforts to provide support and training to MSMEs so that they can develop and compete in an increasingly competitive market, especially by utilizing technology and digital marketing strategies in the digital era (Sarfhah, Atmaja, & Verawati, 2019).

Apart from these supporting factors, on the other hand, MSMEs in Riau Province are faced with the challenges of the digital era which has brought major changes in the way consumers search for, buy and interact with products and services. Therefore, MSMEs in Riau Province need to adapt to these changes in order to remain competitive in an increasingly competitive market. MSMEs in rural areas may face limited internet access and technological resources. This can be an obstacle in implementing an effective digital marketing strategy. Riau Province has great potential in certain sectors, such as fisheries, agriculture and tourism. MSMEs in these sectors can take advantage of extensive market opportunities through digital marketing. Currently, many competitors from inside and outside Riau Province use online platforms to reach customers. MSMEs need to compete effectively in the digital realm to maintain and increase their market share (Putra, & Iriananda, 2020).

MSMEs can face these challenges in the digital era by implementing digital marketing strategies. A digital marketing strategy is a series of plans and actions designed to utilize digital platforms and information technology to promote products, services or brands online. Digital marketing strategies aim to achieve various business goals, such as increasing online visibility, attracting potential customers, expanding market reach, increasing sales, and building relationships with consumers. Digital marketing strategies must be adapted to business goals and target audience characteristics. It also requires a deep understanding of digital technology, market trends, and developments in online consumer behavior. An effective digital marketing strategy can help businesses increase visibility, grow sales, and create strong relationships with customers in an ever-changing digital era (Fuadi, Akhyadi, & Saripah, 2021).

A digital marketing strategy is very important for MSMEs because with a digital marketing strategy, MSMEs can increase their visibility in cyberspace. This allows them to be found by potential customers who are looking for their products or services online (Wardhana, 2015). Digital marketing is often more economical than traditional marketing such as print or television advertising. MSMEs with limited budgets can take advantage of digital platforms at lower costs. In digital marketing, MSMEs can target their audience very specifically based on demographics, interests, location and behavior. This helps in optimizing marketing efforts and produces better results (Syifa et al, 2021).

Research on digital marketing strategies has been carried out by many previous researchers, such as research by Az-Zahra (2021) showing that MSMEs who implement digital marketing get higher sales. So MSME players prefer to market their products online. The strategy used in implementing digital marketing to market products is to use social media

such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp status, and live streaming on Facebook. The results also show that not only benefits can be obtained from implementing digital marketing, but MSMEs also often experience obstacles in implementing it. These obstacles include unstable internet connections, delivery delays, as well as fraudulent transactions and manipulation of admin numbers. Apart from that, research also conducted by Hasanah et al (2021) explains that there is great interest and desire for MSME players to market their production products through digital marketing so that they can develop and manage their businesses well. Digital marketing can make it easier for MSMEs to provide information and interact directly with consumers and expand marketing access. Furthermore, research also conducted by Paranoan, Palalangan, & Sau (2022) revealed that finding a strategy for implementing digital marketing in increasing the income of MSMEs from culinary products in Makassar and also providing benefits to the MBKM program as an application of entrepreneurship research in society.

Based on the background of the problem that the author has explained above and previous research, the author is interested in conducting research on Digital Marketing Strategy: Case Studies and Best Practices in MSMEs in Riau Province in the Digital Era. This research is more recent compared to previous research where this research was carried out by means of case studies and best practices on MSMEs in Riau Province which had never been researched before. The aim of this research is to explain digital marketing strategies for MSMEs in Riau Province in the digital era. It is hoped that the findings of this research will provide an overview for stakeholders about digital marketing strategies for MSMEs in Riau Province in the digital era.

2. METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods using Miles and Huberman analysis. According to Moleong, qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects, for example behavior, perceptions, motivations or actions. This research uses qualitative research methods to explore digital marketing strategies used by MSMEs in Riau Province. This research was conducted on MSMEs in Riau Province where the informants were owners, employees and customers who were determined using purposive sampling. Data collection techniques were carried out using observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. The research will be carried out for one month, where the research will be analyzed using the Miles and Huberman method, namely: collecting data, data reduction, data display, and verification.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

General Description of Research Locations

Riau has various MSME sectors, the general description of MSMEs in Riau Province is 1) Agriculture: MSMEs in Riau are included in the agricultural sector, such as oil palm, rubber and coconut plantations. The production of palm oil and rubber is the main commodity in this sector. 2) Fisheries: Riau also has MSMEs that operate in the fisheries sector, especially in coastal areas. Processing of fish, shrimp and other marine products is an important part of the MSME economy in this province. 3) Industry: MSMEs in the industrial sector in Riau can include the production of food and beverages, handicrafts and wood products. Many craftsmen and small food producers operate in this area, and 4) Trade: MSMEs in the trade sector include wholesalers and retailers, grocery stores, and traditional markets that sell various consumer goods, such as clothing, food, and daily products.

General Description of Research Informants

This research was carried out by conducting observations, interviews and documentation. The details of the respondents for this study are as follows:

Characteristics of Informants Based on Gender

Based on gender, the characteristics of the informants in this study are presented in detail in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Gender

Age	Amount	Percentage
Man	45	45
Woman	55	55
Amount	100	100

Source: Data Processing Results, 2023

Based on Table 1 above, it can be seen that the informants for this research are dominated by women, namely 55 people or 55%. Meanwhile, for those who are male, there are 45 people or 45%.

Characteristics of Informants Based on Role

Based on the generations, the characteristics of the informants in this research are presented in detail in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Characteristics of Informants Based on Role

Role	Amount	Percentage
MSME owners	40	40
Employee	30	30
Customer	30	30
Amount	100	100

Source: Data Processing Results, 2023

Based on Table 2 above, it can be seen that the majority of informants include shop owners, namely 40 people or 40%. Meanwhile, there are 40 employees and customers or 40%.

Characteristics of Informants Based on Type of Business

Based on the generations, the characteristics of the informants in this research are presented in detail in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Characteristics of Informants Based on Type of Business

Type of business	Amount	Percentage
Agriculture	30	30
Fishery	25	25
Industry	30	30
Trading	25	25
Amount	100	100

Source: Data Processing Results, 2023

Based on Table 3 above, it can be seen that the majority of informants, including the type of business, are agriculture and industry, namely 30 people each or 30%. Meanwhile, fisheries and trade are 25 people each or 25%.

3.2. Discussion

Case Study of Digital Marketing Strategy for MSMEs in Riau Province in the Digital Era

MSME Description: "Riau Heritage" is a local batik producer and retailer based in Pekanbaru, Riau. They produce various types of batik, including clothing, accessories and household items with typical Riau motifs. Digital Marketing Strategy implemented:

- a. Marketing Through Social Media: Riau Heritage is active on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. They upload high-quality product images with interesting and relevant descriptions. They also use hashtags related to batik and Riau culture.

- b. **Quality Content:** Riau Heritage creates informative and interesting content about batik, its history, how to care for it, and so on. They also share the stories behind their products to connect customers to local culture and stories.
- c. **Special Promotions on Social Media:** Riau Heritage holds contests, giveaways and other special promotions through their social media to increase customer engagement and encourage purchases.
- d. **Collaboration with Local Influencers:** They partner with local influencers who have a significant follower base to introduce their products to a wider audience.
- e. **Active Customer Service:** Riau Heritage responds quickly and professionally to customer comments and questions on their social media platforms, creating positive relationships with customers.

With a strong digital marketing strategy, "Riau Heritage" succeeded in achieving significant results:

- a. Significant increase in sales, both from local customers and customers outside Riau.
- b. Their e-commerce website is one of the main destinations for Riau handicraft products.
- c. Huge social media reach with thousands of active followers and followers.
- d. Increased awareness and appreciation of Riau's cultural heritage, helping to preserve handicraft traditions.
- e. Collaborations with local influencers and communities have resulted in additional exposure and a sales boost.

The success of "Riau Heritage" is an example of how MSMEs in Riau Province can achieve significant results through the use of smart and creative digital marketing strategies to promote their products and share valuable cultural heritage with the world. Digital marketing can provide great opportunities for local business growth and exposure, especially when focused on marketing products that have cultural and historical value.

Best Practice Digital Marketing Strategy for MSMEs in Riau Province in the Digital Era

Best practice digital marketing strategies that can help MSMEs in Riau Province achieve success in the digital era:

- a. **Understanding the Target Market** Before launching a digital marketing strategy, MSMEs must have a strong understanding of who their target market is. It includes the demographic characteristics, preferences, needs, and purchasing habits of potential customers.
- b. **Building Online Pricing,** Having a responsive and attractive e-commerce website is an important step. The website should be easy to navigate, contain complete product descriptions, and high-quality images. Make sure the website is optimized for SEO so that it is easy for potential customers to find when searching for related products.
- c. **Priority on Social Media,** Active on relevant social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest. Regularly post high-quality product photos, videos and interesting content. Use paid advertising on social media to increase reach and target the right audience.
- d. **Content Marketing,** Create and promote quality content about local products and culture. These can be articles, videos and infographics. Blogs on websites can be used to educate audiences about the history, techniques, or stories behind the MSME products.
- e. **Collaboration with Local Influencers,** Partner with local influencers who have an interest in local products or culture. Influencers can help promote products through the content they create or in the form of reviews and recommendations.
- f. **Email marketing,** Building a customer list by collecting email addresses of potential customers. Send regular newsletters with the latest news, special offers and interesting content.

The results of this research are in line with theories about digital marketing. According to Kotler (2010), marketing is a social and managerial process where individuals and groups get what they need and want through creating, offering and exchanging products or value with other parties. Online and social media marketing according to Kotler and Keller (2016) is a marketing communication activity that uses electronic media to attract consumers or companies in various forms (images, videos, writing, etc.) to increase awareness, company image, and to increase sales. The use of electronic media for a brand is communication that conveys information about suppliers and product use to consumers through online shopping that uses internet-based technology such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and other social media (Rachmadewi et al, 2021). Social media marketing is a type of internet-based marketing to achieve marketing goals by participating in the social media network (Anggia & Shihab, 2019).

The findings of this research are in line with the results of previous research, including research by Az-Zahra (2021) showing that MSMEs who implement digital marketing get higher sales. The strategy used in implementing digital marketing to market products is to use social media such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp status, and live streaming on Facebook. Apart from that, research also conducted by Hasanah et al (2021) explains that there is great interest and desire for MSME players to market their production products through digital marketing so that they can develop and manage their businesses well. Digital marketing can make it easier for MSMEs to provide information and interact directly with consumers and expand marketing access. Furthermore, research also conducted by Paranoan, Palalangan, & Sau (2022) revealed that finding a strategy for implementing digital marketing in increasing the income of MSMEs from culinary products in Makassar and also providing benefits to the MBKM program as an application of entrepreneurship research in society.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of Digital Marketing Strategy: Case Study and Best Practice in MSMEs in Riau Province in the Digital Era , the author can draw conclusions, namely 1) The case study of digital marketing strategy in MSMEs in Riau Province in the digital era explains that the strategy implemented is namely marketing via social media, quality content, special promotions on social media, collaboration with local influencers and active customer service, and 2) Best practice digital marketing strategies for MSMEs in Riau province in the digital era including understanding target markets, building online marketing, marketing in social media, content marketing, collaboration with local influencers and email marketing.

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