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Digital Marketing Strategy Of Msme Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep Products During The Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Covid-19 in 2020 had many impacts on several sectors, one of which was the economic sector. Uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in MSME business actors experiencing a decrease in income. For this reason, MSMEs must have a strategy to survive during the Covid-19 pandemic. Digital marketing strategy is a form of business to promote and introduce a brand and product using digital media. This is the right step to survive during this pandemic. This study aims to determine the digital marketing strategy for UMKM Mentari Citra Lestari to be able to survive during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study uses a qualitative method by selecting a case study. The results of the study show that these MSMEs are implementing digital marketing strategies to survive the Covid-19 pandemic with several strategies, namely 1) Implementing social media marketing, using Instagram and Facebook as marketing media by utilizing photos and videos. 2) Implementing content marketing, these MSMEs use marketing content to help introduce products through features adopted from social media, using messages that are packaged creatively using interesting photos, captions, hashtags and videos.

Keywords : MSME, Digital Marketing, Social Media,Content Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Mentari Citra Lestari is a micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) that has managed to survive and implement various new strategies to recover its income through digital marketing. The serious impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been felt by Mentari Citra Lestari, which has been in operation for 9 years and was founded by Ratnawati Mentari as the owner, who had never experienced such a

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drastic decrease in revenue. However, the pandemic has resulted in a significant drop in income, with hardly any customers coming in.

As a result, Mentari Citra Lestari has adopted a product marketing strategy to attract customers through social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Social media is defined as a group of internet-based applications that create the ideological foundation and Web 2.0 technology, allowing users to create and exchange user-generated content (Stockdale et al., 2018). Digitalization plays a vital role in helping micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to survive and even achieve significant growth amidst the economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A study by Alfrian and Pitaloka (2020), entitled "Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprise Survival Strategies in the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia," identified four survival strategies for MSMEs, namely: 1) marketing through digital platforms, 2) strengthening human resources, 3) implementing creative and innovative innovation, and 4) improving customer service. It is hoped that with these strategies, Indonesian MSMEs can withstand the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objectives

This study aims to describe the digital marketing strategies employed by Mentari Citra Lestari to sustain its business and become more responsive to changes in the business climate, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will use a qualitative method, selecting a case study as the research approach to comprehensively and complexly understand what happens in the field when the researcher observes behaviors, perceptions, actions, and so on, and then applies them through easily understandable words to become reasonable. This qualitative research aims to understand a specific problem or case experienced by the research subjects. In this study, we examine individual/group/event behavior with important issues to obtain answers regarding the implementation of digital marketing strategies to survive the pandemic.

The determination of informants in this study is through purposive sampling technique. According to Sugiyono (2017), purposive sampling technique selects data sources based on certain considerations. This study uses 6 informants, namely the Owner, Employees, and Customers of Mentari Citra Lestari SMEs. After presenting the data, data validation is carried out. To validate the data obtained from field interviews, triangulation technique is used with informant sources, which means comparing and testing the credibility of information conducted through interviews with

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the author during the qualitative research in the field. The analysis process in this study includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, data verification, and finally drawing conclusions.

DISCUSSION

Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is a small micro business that processes various processed milkfish products. The establishment of Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep MSMEs was in July 9th, 2014, in a remote hamlet located on the coast, named Biringkassi Hamlet in Bulu Cindea Village, Bungoro District, Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency. Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep MSMEs produces boneless milkfish, commonly referred to as BATARI. However, this boneless milkfish is usually further processed into various products such as milkfish floss, milkfish nuggets, milkfish bone snacks, milkfish floss and milkfish brain cake.

Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep MSMEs was established to make it easier for the community to consume boneless fish. The number of bones in milkfish is 164 bones. Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep MSMEs aims to improve the welfare of employees, help government programs, especially in the field of agriculture development, and reduce the number of unemployed people in Indonesia. Customers who want to buy Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep MSMEs products can come directly to the location or place an order through social media or e-commerce.

In this research, the researcher collected digital marketing sales data from January 2021 to December 2021. From the sales data, the company's sales increased. The sales data trend for the last 1 year (January 2021 to December 2021) is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sale Trend from January 2021 to December 2021

Month	Sales (Pcs)	Percentage Change(%)
January	602	0%
February	615	2%
March	645	5%
April	715	11%
May	745	4%
June	800	7%
July	829	4%
August	870	5%
September	1031	19%

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October	1227	19%
November	1328	8%
December	1339	1%
Total	**10746**	**85%**
Average	**896**	**7%**

Source: Data processed, 2022

Based on Table 1, the highest sales occurred in December 2021 with a total of 1339 pcs, while the lowest sales occurred in January 2022 with a total of 602 pcs. It can be observed that over the past year from January to December 2021, the sales results of digital marketing carried out by Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep have fluctuated. This can be seen in Figure 1 which shows the trend of sales of Mentari Citra Lestari's products.

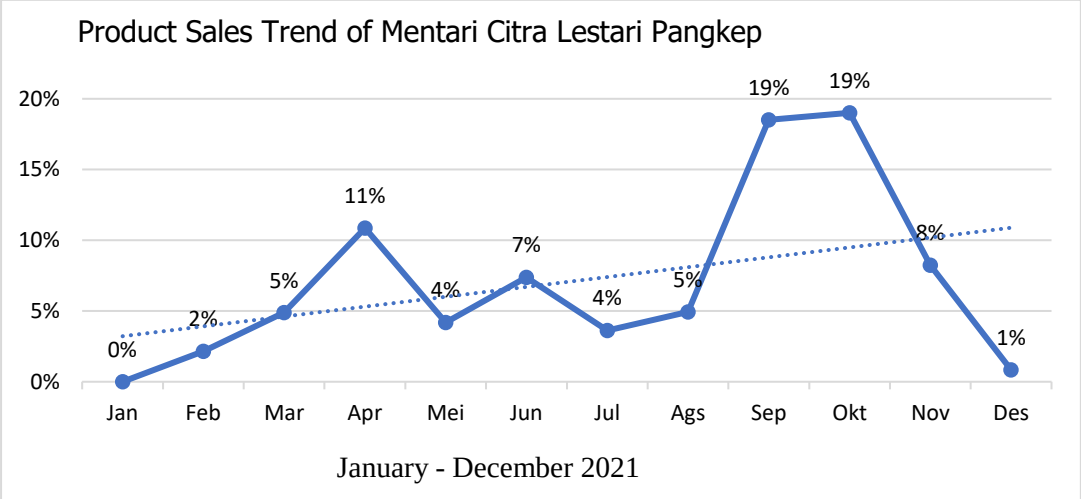


Figure 1. Sales Trend Result of Citra Lestari MSMEs

Based on Figure 1, it can be observed that the sales of Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep's products fluctuated over the course of one year. In February 2021, sales increased by 2% from the previous month, from 602 units to 615 units. In March 2021, there was a 5% increase, followed by an 11% increase in April. In May, sales decreased by 4%, but rose again by 7% in June. In July, there was a 4% decrease, followed by a 5% increase in August. Sales increased by 19% in both September and October, and rose by 8% in November, but decreased by 1% in December.

The highest sales occurred in September and October, which was due to the high demand for Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep's products. Many consumers found it easier

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to purchase from the MSME due to the utilization of digital marketing, especially since people still have hesitations about direct interaction with large crowds at traditional markets. The lowest sales occurred in January, which was due to the difficulty of Mentari Citra Lestari Pangkep in acquiring a supplier for ikan bandeng, while still attempting to optimize the use of digital media for its marketing system.

Digital marketing, known as an activity of promoting products or services using digital media, is an essential need for business owners in today's era. In executing digital marketing, MSME players are expected to continuously learn and remain open-minded towards technological advancements. Digital marketing also involves selecting appropriate media and communication methods that are adjusted to the chosen target market segment or consumer base, to make the marketing efforts more effective.

Currently, digital marketing has become the primary option for MSMEs, including Mentari Citra Lestari, due to its wide coverage, economical benefits, interactive features, ease of use, and ability to attract new customers. Hendrawan et al.'s (2019) study showed that digital marketing has a positive and significant impact on the performance of MSME sales. A user-friendly digital marketing approach that can reach a broad range of consumers will become the main platform for marketing, with traditional brick-and-mortar stores serving as a complementary feature.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Mentari Citra Lestari was already known among the local community, especially among consumers who favored processed seafood products. Initially, the MSME relied on offline sales for its revenue, but with the pandemic, it had to start conducting activities online, including marketing and promoting its products. Mentari Citra Lestari is one of the businesses that has survived by changing its business strategy, specifically in terms of how it sells and markets its products. One effective way it has done so is by maximizing the use of digital marketing, such as utilizing social media (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp), Tokopedia, and Google My Business as marketing media for its products in order to survive during the pandemic. Results from interviews regarding the implementation of digital marketing strategies to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic were divided into two categories: social media marketing and content marketing.

Sosial Media Marketing

Mentari Citra Lestari mostly uses Instagram and Facebook. The reason they chose digital platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to promote their products is because of their wider reach. Additionally, customers and potential consumers can find out information about products and ongoing promotions. This MSME uses social media as a means of interaction, such as customer engagement in product selection

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and services provided, as well as providing intensive and effective product quality education and introduction through social media.

Content Marketing

Content marketing has become the main focus of Mentari Citra Lestari, considering the importance of content on social media, marketplaces, and search engines as part of digital marketing.

The content marketing strategy implemented by this MSME during the COVID-19 pandemic includes:

1) The MSME applies this strategy to attract customers by creating creative messages in the form of content such as captions, attractive photos, and posting them on social media such as Instagram and Facebook. The content is in the form of product videos that are then broadcasted through social media so that they can be viewed by customers who follow Mentari Citra Lestari's social media.
2) The MSME uses influencers to promote its products and new branches in the form of videos posted on social media.

CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has created new problems in various fields and has had an impact on the economy, resulting in a decrease in income for business owners. Mentari Citra Lestari implemented digital marketing strategies to survive during the pandemic, including: Implementing social media marketing and using it as a tool to evaluate a product or service,

Implementing content marketing by introducing products through features adopted from social media, using creatively packaged messages with attractive photos, captions, hashtags, and videos. In addition, Mentari Citra Lestari is expected to implement and develop mobile marketing, where this strategy helps with more effective marketing processes by sending information about promotions in the form of automatic customer messages via WhatsApp, SMS, or other mobile marketing platforms.

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