

## Optimizing Marketing Strategies for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through Digital Marketing Training

Muhammad Misbahul Afandi<sup>1</sup>, Wuri Astiwi<sup>2</sup>, Helena Anggraeni Putri<sup>3</sup>, Nur Wahyuni<sup>4</sup>,

Eka Kevin Alghiffari<sup>5</sup>, Deny Hadi Siswanto<sup>6</sup>

Mercubuana Yogyakarta University, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

Sanata Dharma University, Indonesia<sup>2,3</sup>

Ahmad Dahlan University, Indonesia<sup>4,5</sup>

Muhammadiyah Mlati High School, Indonesia<sup>6</sup>

Correspondent: [ppg.helenaputri62@program.belajar.id](mailto:ppg.helenaputri62@program.belajar.id) <sup>3</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** The objective of this training activity is to enhance the skills and understanding of the community regarding digital marketing. The training consists of three phases: pre-activity, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. It includes relevant materials, practical exercises, and evaluation tests, and was attended by 30 participants from the general public and MSME practitioners in Sleman Regency, held on July 26-27, 2024. The results show that 97% of participants passed the test, while 3% did not pass due to absence during the exam. The highest score achieved in the digital marketing training was 97.5 (by one participant), the lowest was 70 (by two participants), and the average evaluation score for each participant was 80.94. Overall, the training was successfully conducted and met the expected objectives.

**Keywords:** MSMEs, Training, Digital Marketing



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## INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and rapid technological advancements, digital marketing has become a crucial tool in the business world, including for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (Hidayati & Yansi, 2020). In Indonesia, MSMEs play a significant role in the national economy, contributing substantially to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and job creation. However, despite their vital role, many MSME operators have yet to fully leverage digital technology to enhance competitiveness and reach broader markets (Buteau, 2021). This challenge is also evident in Sleman, a regency within the Special Region of Yogyakarta, where many MSME operators still rely on traditional marketing methods with limited reach and efficiency.

A primary challenge faced by MSMEs in Sleman is the lack of knowledge and skills in utilizing digital technology. Field surveys indicate that most business operators do not fully understand digital marketing concepts, from creating engaging content to using social media and e-commerce platforms for selling their products. Consequently, business growth potential is hindered, as

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marketing is confined to local or nearby communities. By leveraging digital marketing, MSMEs could access a wider customer base, even at national and international levels (Abukari et al., 2023).

Digital marketing training for MSMEs is a strategic step to address these challenges. The training offers not only theoretical understanding but also hands-on practice that business operators can implement. Through comprehensive training, MSME operators can learn various aspects of digital marketing, such as social media use, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and marketing strategies through other digital platforms (Pranata et al., 2024). Additionally, this training helps MSME operators more accurately identify target markets, making marketing campaigns more effective and efficient.

Optimizing marketing strategies through digital marketing training is crucial in the face of increasing business competition, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era (Carter, 2021)(Pisriwati, Hardi, et al., 2024). The pandemic has altered consumer behavior, with more people turning to online platforms for their daily needs. This shift presents an opportunity for MSMEs in Sleman to expand their market reach through digital channels. However, without adequate knowledge, this opportunity might be missed. Therefore, digital marketing training is not only relevant but also urgent.

Furthermore, government and relevant institutions play a vital role in supporting the optimization of marketing strategies for MSMEs. For instance, the Sleman local government could collaborate with universities or training institutions to organize ongoing training programs for MSME operators. Such training should not only focus on technical aspects of digital marketing but also on developing managerial capacity, enabling MSME operators to plan and execute marketing strategies aligned with market conditions.

The importance of digital marketing in supporting MSME growth is also backed by studies showing that businesses active in the digital realm tend to experience significant sales increases (Redjeki & Affandi, 2021; Siswanto, Alghiffari, et al., 2024). Social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, as well as e-commerce sites like Shopee and Tokopedia, have become effective mediums for connecting producers with consumers. Thus, MSME operators in Sleman who participate in digital marketing training are expected to enhance their competitiveness, not only in local markets but also on national and global scales.

Ultimately, optimizing marketing strategies through digital marketing training is expected to bring significant changes to MSME operators in Sleman. Besides increasing revenue and expanding market reach, this training will encourage MSME operators to be more adaptive to technological changes and consumer behavior (Mustafa et al., 2023). With a better understanding of digital marketing, MSMEs in Sleman are anticipated to continue growing and contributing more to the regional and national economy.

In line with (Hendriadi et al., 2019; Supriyanto, 2022), where this digital marketing training assists MSMEs in enhancing the capabilities of MSME entrepreneurs in utilizing digital marketing, as evidenced by the increase in product orders through online platforms. The training includes several activities, culminating on the second day with a final session in which participants take an exam

covering the topics discussed during the previous sessions. Upon successfully passing the exam, participants are awarded a certification of expertise.

Overall, this article will discuss the importance of digital marketing training in optimizing marketing strategies for MSMEs in Sleman, as well as the role of various stakeholders in supporting these efforts. The goal of this training is to improve the skills and understanding of the community regarding digital marketing. The training is expected to have a positive impact on MSME business growth and serve as a crucial step in addressing the challenges of the increasingly dynamic digital era.

## **METHOD**

The Digital Marketing training was conducted over two days, on Friday, July 26, 2024, and Saturday, July 27, 2024, held offline at the residence of the Sleman Regent. The target participants for this event included the general public and MSME practitioners, aiming to enhance their skills and understanding of digital marketing and assist them in obtaining competency certification in the field. The training was attended by 30 participants. The stages of the training implementation included:

### **Pre-Activity**

In the pre-activity stage, various preparations were carried out, such as event planning, creating and distributing flyers on social media, preparing the participant attendance list, and setting up the room and necessary equipment. On Wednesday, July 24, 2024, a technical meeting was held via Zoom to brief participants on the preparations, requirements during the event, and how to fill in their personal details.

### **Implementation**

The training took place over two days. On the first day, participants received digital marketing materials and engaged in hands-on marketing practice. On the second day, they took exams and underwent evaluations with assessors. As Walt Disney once said, "The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing," and the participants embodied this spirit by applying their new knowledge right away.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

During the monitoring phase, participants practiced using tools such as Keyword Tool, Google Trends, and Facebook Ads. A Q&A session was also provided to clarify any remaining questions. The evaluation on the second day involved assessing the results of the evaluations to ensure participants' understanding and competency in digital marketing.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This community service activity involves a digital marketing training specifically aimed at the public, particularly MSME practitioners. The training aims to assist participants in obtaining competency certification in digital marketing. The stages of the implementation of this activity are described as follows:

### **Pre-Activity**

Before the event commenced, various preparations were made, including organizing the schedule and creating flyers, which were then distributed through the team's social media channels. Once all participants were registered, an attendance list was created. The pre-activity phase also involved conducting a technical meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, July 24, 2024, at 14:00 WIB. This meeting aimed to provide participants with guidance and an overview of the required preparations, necessary equipment, and how to fill out personal details. Participants were also given access to a Google Drive folder containing training materials and a Google Classroom platform for completing tasks required to qualify for the assessment. Additionally, attendance for the technical meeting was tracked via a Google Form. Finally, the organizing committee prepared the training equipment, including arranging the venue, setting up the projector, and other necessary supplies.

The digital marketing training took place over two days. On the first day, participants received both theoretical and practical training. The training content was divided into two sessions: the first session focused on Digital Marketing Mindset and the second session on Social Media Marketing. The activities on the first day began at 08:00 AM with an opening session led by the instructor, followed by the delivery of the training material.

### **Implementation**

#### *First Session*

The digital marketing training was conducted over two days. On the first day, participants received both theoretical and practical training, while the second day was dedicated to exams and evaluations with an assessor. The training content was divided into two sessions: the first session, titled Digital Marketing Mindset, and the second session on Social Media Marketing. The activities began at 08:00 WIB with an opening by the instructor, followed by the delivery of the first session's material.

The Digital Marketing Mindset material emphasized the importance of focusing on the business objects being marketed and highlighted that, as entrepreneurs, it is crucial not to be selective about clients in the early stages of the business. This approach helps entrepreneurs understand the potential challenges they might face. Five core mindsets in digital marketing were discussed, including goals, strategies, products, research, and business models (Shankar et al., 2022).

In the business world, the initial step is to set clear, specific, and measurable goals for the client. These goals must be well-defined to enable the company to plan appropriate actions. For example, if a client's goal is to increase revenue by 20% within one year, all strategies and actions will be

directed towards achieving this target. Clear goal definitions provide direction and focus for all business activities (Florêncio et al., 2023).

After setting goals, the next step is to design an effective strategy to achieve them. A business strategy encompasses a comprehensive plan that includes various operational steps and tactical decisions, such as managing profits into cash flow. This strategy ensures that profits are not only used for current needs but also as capital for long-term business growth. It involves smart resource allocation, good financial management, and optimization of business operations (Suwarno et al., 2023).

Next, the company must determine which products to market to achieve these goals. The chosen products or services should align with the needs and desires of the target market. This process involves in-depth analysis of existing products and the development of new innovations that might appeal more to consumers. Decisions about products should consider the company's competitive advantages and emerging market trends.

Once the products are established, the next stage is to conduct research to analyze the target market, market size, trends, and market potential. This research is crucial for understanding who the potential customers are, their behaviors, and the opportunities and challenges in the market. With accurate data, the company can formulate effective marketing strategies and prioritize product and service development to better meet market needs (Kafka et al., 2024) (Yogyanto et al., 2024).

Finally, to ensure that the business strategy runs smoothly, the company needs to design an efficient business model. One tool that can be used is the business model canvas, which helps companies understand and manage various critical aspects such as cost structure, revenue sources, customer relationships, and distribution channels. Effective management of this business model helps in making quicker and more precise decisions and maximizing opportunities to achieve the set targets (Adesina et al., 2024);(Siswanto, Alghiffari, et al., 2024).

In digital marketing, there are three main methods to acquire customers. First is "free traffic", which involves attracting customers without spending on advertising. This can be achieved by leveraging free platforms like social media, such as Twitter, or using marketplaces to reach potential customers. Free traffic relies on organic reach, quality content, and active interaction to attract users naturally, without additional advertising costs (Putri & Siswanto, 2024).

Second is "paid traffic", where companies or individuals pay for quicker and broader access to potential customers. Paid traffic is typically done through digital advertising platforms like Facebook Ads or Google Ads. Paid ads allow advertisers to target specific audiences based on demographics, interests, and behaviors, increasing the chances of conversions and business growth more efficiently. However, it requires careful budget management.

The third method is "buyer/customer acquisition cost", which involves gaining customers by offering incentives such as giveaways, cashback, or discounts. This strategy is often used to attract new customers or encourage repeat purchases from existing ones. Although it requires an investment, this approach can build customer loyalty and increase sales volume directly, as many consumers are motivated by special offers or the opportunity to gain additional value.

The instructor explained two main strategies in digital marketing: the funnel and flywheel models. The funnel strategy focuses on categorizing customers into three stages based on their engagement with the business: cold, warm, and hot. Cold customers are those who are new to the product or service, warm customers are those who have interacted with the business through various stages, and hot customers are those considered potential buyers ready to make a purchase. This approach helps businesses devise specific steps to guide prospects through each stage until they become buyers.

On the other hand, the flywheel strategy is suited for service-oriented entrepreneurs who may not yet be able to comprehensively manage all customers (Astiwi et al., 2024). This strategy places customers at the center, with ongoing satisfaction and interactions being key to business growth. The flywheel focuses on creating positive experiences for customers, encouraging them to stay engaged in the business cycle, either by continuing to use the service or recommending it to others (Razak, 2023).

### *Second Session*

In the second session, the instructor addressed a highly relevant topic in the digital realm: Social Media Marketing. Social media marketing plays a significant role in enhancing brand awareness, loyalty, and brand authority. With millions of active users on various social media platforms daily, businesses have a substantial opportunity to reach a broad and diverse audience. Social media marketing also facilitates two-way interaction between the brand and consumers, creating a more personal and immersive experience. An effective marketing strategy will maximize this potential, enabling companies to build a strong and positive image in the minds of consumers.

The first step in implementing Social Media Marketing is to set clear goals (Kedi et al., 2024). These goals can vary depending on business priorities. Common objectives in social media marketing include branding and revenue generation. Branding aims to build the company's image, increase consumer engagement, and foster brand loyalty. On the other hand, revenue-focused goals are centered on increasing sales and acquiring new customers. By setting clear goals, companies can develop a more targeted and effective content plan to achieve the desired outcomes.

Once goals are established, the next step is to define the target audience for marketing efforts. The instructor emphasized the importance of creating a buyer persona, which is a fictional representation of the ideal audience based on real data. Buyer personas can be developed through data analysis, customer surveys, and in-depth interviews (Nugraha et al., 2024). Understanding the demographics, interests, and behaviors of the audience allows companies to create more personalized and relevant marketing strategies, ultimately improving engagement and conversion rates. Social media analytics tools and consumer surveys are crucial in this process to gain accurate insights into the target audience.

Another key point discussed in this session was creating engaging and relevant social media content. Content is the core of any digital marketing campaign, and the instructor highlighted the importance of content variety to maintain audience interest (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). Content can be educational, entertaining, interactive, inspirational, or promotional, depending on the goals

and target audience. For example, educational content can help establish brand authority in a specific industry, while interactive content, such as polls or quizzes, can enhance user engagement. Marketers are also advised to regularly research trending content using tools like Google Trends or Twitter Hashtag Trends to stay relevant in the eyes of their audience.

Overall, social media marketing is a dynamic and continually evolving process. By setting goals, defining the audience, and creating relevant content, companies can build a strong online presence and foster deeper interactions with consumers. Effective social media marketing not only boosts brand awareness but also builds loyalty, contributing to long-term business growth. This session provided a clear understanding of how to optimize social media as a strategic tool in digital marketing, offering valuable insights for participants on leveraging digital marketing strategies to enhance product promotion on social media.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

On the first day of the training, which took place on Friday, July 26, 2024, monitoring sessions were held at 3:00 PM WIB. Participants were guided to practice directly with the assistance of the presenters. The practice included the use of Keyword Tool, Google Trend, and Facebook Ads, all of which were deemed highly beneficial for entrepreneurs, especially those new to the business world. The Keyword Tool helps entrepreneurs understand commonly searched keywords on social media (Putri et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Google Trend aids them in researching currently popular content. Facebook Ads provides a solution for entrepreneurs looking to market their products with a limited advertising budget (Grieve et al., 2021)(Pisriwati, Siswanto, et al., 2024).

During the practice session, participants had the opportunity to ask questions if anything was unclear. The presenters explained each step in detail, including the use of Facebook Ads, which requires entering data according to the target market such as location and age range. This is crucial for more targeted marketing. With intensive guidance, it is hoped that participants will gain a better understanding of the three digital marketing tools.

On the second day of the training, Saturday, July 27, 2024, evaluation began at 8:00 AM WIB. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the participants' understanding of the theories and practices that had been previously provided. The assessment was conducted by a professional assessor. Before undergoing an interview for BNSP-certified competency certification, participants were required to complete several tasks given during the technical meeting. These tasks were closely related to the training materials provided earlier.

The tasks included "My Business" where participants were asked to prepare a report on their ongoing business or business plan; "Business Optimization", which required participants to create engaging content for websites and social media; and "Business Assessment," which involved conducting research on businesses using specific keywords. The evaluation indicators used were: (1) Identifying company marketing elements; (2) Approaching potential customers; (3) Creating advertising plans; (4) Designing creative strategies and advertisements; (5) Designing media strategies and purchases; (6) Developing sales activity plans; (7) Executing sales skills; (8) Using computer devices; (9) Utilizing social media applications; and (10) Using website search engines.

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Based on these evaluation indicators, the results from the overall participant evaluation were obtained. The results of the assessor's evaluation of the participants are detailed in the table below.

**Table 1. Results of Digital Marketing Training Evaluation**

| No | Description                            | Total Participants |
|----|----------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1  | All participants                       | 30                 |
| 2  | Participants who took the exam         | 29                 |
| 3  | Participants who did not take the exam | 1                  |
| 4  | Participants who passed                | 29                 |
| 5  | Participants who did not pass          | 1                  |

Based on the evaluation results table, it is evident that there were 30 participants in the digital marketing training, of whom 29 attended the final evaluation exam, while 1 participant did not attend due to an issue on that day. It is also noted that the 29 participants who took the final exam passed, with satisfactory scores on each indicator. The success rate of the digital marketing training is then presented in the following diagram.

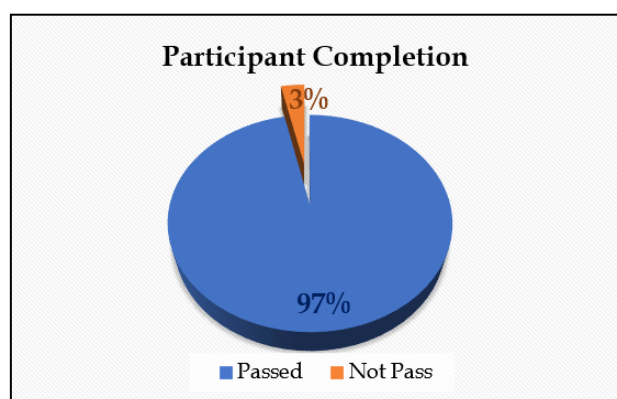


Figure 1. Diagram of Participant Completion Rates

Based on the diagram above, the proportion of participants shows that 97% of participants passed, while 3% did not pass. This is consistent with the findings (Giantari et al., 2022; Moradi & Dass, 2022)) and (Siswanto, Listyanti, et al., 2024) which indicate that digital marketing training has a positive impact, as evidenced by the passing rate of participants reaching over 70%. Additionally, the percentage for each evaluation indicator in this training is illustrated in the following table.

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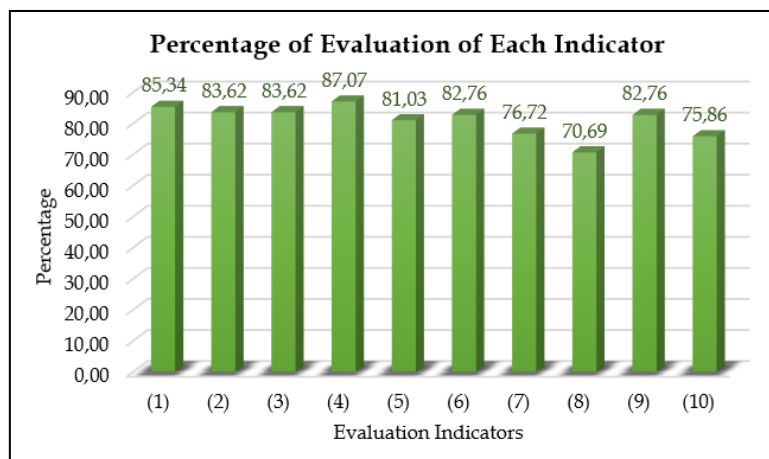


Figure 2. Percentage of Each Evaluation Indicator

Based on the diagram above, for the evaluation indicator of company marketing elements, the indicator for identifying marketing elements received a score of 85.34%. Meanwhile, approaching potential customers and advertising planning both received scores of 83.62%. Designing creative strategies and advertisements stands out with the highest score of 87.07%, while media strategy and purchase received a score of 81.03%. Sales activity planning scored 82.76%, and sales skills received a score of 76.72%. The use of computer devices scored 70.69%, with the use of social media applications and website search engines scoring 82.76% and 75.86%, respectively. The achievement scores of each participant can be seen in the following diagram.

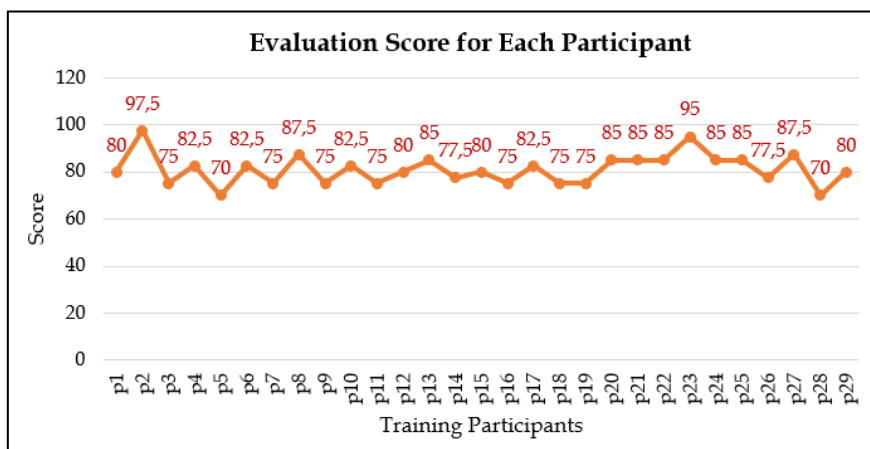


Figure 3. Evaluation Scores for Each Participant

Based on the diagram above, the highest score achieved by a participant in the digital marketing training was 97.5 (by one participant), while the lowest score was 70 (achieved by two participants). The average evaluation score for all participants was 80.94. This is consistent with the findings (Schumann et al., 2022; Wolf et al., 2023); (Siswanto, Samsinar, Alam, et al., 2024; Siswanto, Samsinar, Setiawan, et al., 2024), which indicate that the average score for each participant in the training exceeded 80.

During the digital marketing training, several issues arose, including punctuality problems among some participants, which led to delays in the schedule. To address this, participants who arrived on time were allowed to take the exam earlier with the assessor's approval, resulting in adjustments

to the interview schedule. Additionally, some participants delayed their task completion, and after the deadline passed, they were unable to attend the interview and were considered to have failed. Other challenges included the addition of unregistered participants, which forced the organizers to rearrange the room layout, and bad weather on the training day, which caused leaks in the training room and a temporary halt in activities until conditions improved.

## CONCLUSION

The training was conducted with the aim of enhancing the skills and understanding of MSME participants in digital marketing and assisting them in obtaining a competency certificate in this field. From the training held, it can be concluded that the event was smooth and successful, with 30 participants. Of these, 97% passed the test, while 3% did not pass because they did not attend the exam. The highest score achieved by a participant in the digital marketing training was 97.5 (by one participant), the lowest score was 70 (by two participants), and the average evaluation score for all participants was 80.94. Recommendations for future training include understanding participants' motivations to determine their needs and desires for similar activities and considering various aspects in choosing the training location to minimize disruptions and ensure participants' comfort in receiving the material.

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