

# **The Role of Digital Marketing for MSMEs in Indonesia**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The success of Indonesian society is highly dependent on the success of micro, small, and medium enterprises. This sector is able to absorb a lot of labor and is able to open and provide business opportunities for people who will enter the world of micro to medium-scale businesses. The presence of micro, small, and medium enterprises can also be an alternative for consumers who need goods or services at more affordable prices. In order for competition between MSMEs and with business actors with larger capital to occur in a balanced manner, MSMEs certainly need a more strategy in terms of marketing. At this time, digital marketing is one of the effective solutions to help MSMEs in marketing their products. In the use of social media for example. Currently, MSME actors must have their social media accounts to make it easier to interact with customers or consumers. The reason is, not all MSME actors are skilled and utilize technology to increase their sales with digital marketing. This paper will explain digital marketing and provide a broad overview of marketing that is happening at this time.

## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the important things that business people must do to increase sales and ensure the existence of the company is marketing. No matter how much money the company has, how sophisticated and modern the equipment it has, or how good the quality of its products is, all of that will be in vain if it does not have effective marketing. If marketing is not going well, how can a business increase sales, generate significant returns on investment, and even make a profit? Therefore, marketing is often referred to as the "spearhead" of the company. How can a blunt spearhead reach a very precise target? Marketing is the procedure, approach, and activity of promoting products and doing it to the general public. Because humans are the subject of marketing and everyone has unique characters and desires, different communication techniques, approaches, and seduction techniques must be used to attract potential clients (Fadillah, 2022). Information and communication technology is used to its fullest, which has resulted in significant progress in the business world, especially in the industrial sector (Nirwana & Biduri, 2021).

According to a survey conducted in 2020, 175.4 million Indonesians actively use the internet. There are 272.1 million people living in Indonesia as a whole. This shows that 64% of

Indonesia's population has an internet connection. According to CNBC Indonesia, "There were 202.35 million or 76.8% of Indonesia's population online in January 2021" (Bestari, nd), business actors must be able to adapt to digital technology. This information should encourage business people to switch to digital marketing. But in reality, there are still many MSMEs that have not adopted digital marketing. This is due to the fact that companies often misuse it irresponsibly, negligently, and unintentionally because they do not know how to use it properly. Therefore, MSMEs fail and are unable to compete in the market (Az-Zahra, 2021).

The scope of the marketing industry has recently shifted due to the advancement of information technology. Traditional and conventional marketing communication strategies have now entered the digital era. Digital marketing is a term used to describe marketing efforts that utilize sophisticated digital technology. Digital marketing is interactive and integrated marketing that makes it easier for producers, market intermediaries, and potential consumers to communicate with each other. Social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok, and others, are types of media that are currently often used in digital marketing. Instagram offers a feature called a business account that makes it easy for businesses to create a profile there and use social media to improve business operations. Businesses can use this business account function to display their company profile, get information about their followers and posts, and promote posts to advance their goals on other social media platforms. MSMEs are labor-intensive companies that use simple technology, relatively small business capital, and do not require certain standards such as the level of education or knowledge (skills) of workers (Nurohman et al., 2021).

## **METHOD**

When compiling this paper, we used observation and data collection methods to understand several phenomena related to digital marketing in the MSME sector in Indonesia. We conducted surveys and took data from several previous studies as a basis for compiling this paper. However, we also realize that the data we use may be incomplete and continue to change over time. Therefore, we strive to always update the information we have and update the data we use to remain relevant and accurate. We also consider the data sources we use and ensure that the data is reliable and valid for use in our study.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Understanding Digital Marketing**

According to Sanjaya and Tarigan (Aisyah, 2022), digital marketing is a type of marketing that can be done by businesses using various media. For example, using media such as blogs, websites, email, adwords, and several other social media. Digital marketing is the process of organizing and practicing principles related to product offerings, costs, advertising methods, and distribution methods. According to this definition, digital marketing is an effort to create, grow, and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between customers and producers. E-marketing

refers to any commercial activity carried out globally via the internet with the aim of attracting new and existing clients, upholding the company's reputation, and creating a distinctive brand identity. Digital marketing plays a significant role in a company's ability to achieve success (Muhamad Ramadhan & Permana Yusuf, 2022). The idea behind digital marketing is to utilize various media, including television, radio, mobile devices, and the Internet, where the media will provide infographics about the various products marketed by the company, focusing on the brand of a particular good or service (Oktaviani & Rustandi, 2018).

The world's digital economy is growing rapidly, requiring indirect advertising operations that have a significant social impact in terms of marketing and sales. With the help of digital marketing, this is possible. Digital marketing is an idea that includes four elements. The first is the idea of digital marketing idea generation that individuals tend to choose goods with lower prices. Second, the assumption that people like high-quality goods that are well-designed, operate well, and offer great benefits to customers. Third, the idea of consumer-driven concept selling, where consumers themselves have a tendency to choose things that have never been created before. This is true because our society is generally optimistic and interested in new goods. Fourth, mastering the guiding philosophy of the company, which states that the company is a corporate entity responsible for various comprehensive ongoing marketing initiatives aimed at ensuring client happiness. Fifth, the idea of socially conscious marketing, which states that businesses should always put the interests of customers or consumers first and consider them as the main party.

As technology advances, companies develop websites and use them for marketing. Several studies have shown the value of the Internet as a marketing tool. The type of advertising that utilizes online media is called viral marketing. Viruses that spread rapidly are called viral, and viral marketing is a word-of-mouth advertising technique that uses the Internet or Internet Word of Mouth (Harto et al., 2019). E-commerce, or trading via the internet, can now be used for activities such as buying and selling that were previously carried out face-to-face. (2017) (Setiawati et al.) Online trading is the latest development in business. In this case, including business activities, the digital world is anticipated to be a very urgent point for all human actions (Nurpratama & Anwar, 2020).

Product, price, customization, promotion, and place are the 5Ps that form the marketing mix when using media (Oktaviani & Rustandi, 2018). Through internet marketing, new prospects for traditional marketing can be realized along with the change of non-electronic platforms to electronic platforms (Sutejo, 2006). More than just bringing in customers, digital marketing can provide benefits for business owners. By using digital marketing, advertising costs can be reduced. Clients or customers are one of the most important elements of a successful business. Therefore, building solid relationships with customers is very important. This brings us to the next benefit of digital marketing: digital marketing can be a successful means of communicating with clients (Fahdia et al., 2022).

Digital marketing, which often consists of interactive and integrated marketing, makes it easier for producers, market intermediaries, and potential customers to communicate (Hadi &

Zakiah, 2021). Customers can more easily search and find information about products simply by surfing the internet thanks to digital marketing, which also allows businesses to better understand and meet all the needs and wants of their potential customers. Based on their search results, consumers become more independent in making decisions to make purchases. Regardless of time and place, digital marketing can reach every member of society.

## **Benefits of Digital Marketing**

The current increase in MSMEs in using digital marketing proves that this method has many benefits or uses for them. Here are the benefits of using digital marketing:

### **A. Connect with customers easily**

Digital marketing is very important for MSMEs today because it makes it easier for them to communicate with customers. Customers will feel appreciated and well served by business actors if communication is made easy. In addition, MSME companies can quickly and effectively market their new products to consumers if they release them. Either through currently popular social media platforms or other digital media.

### **B. Tracking consumer behavior**

Consumer behavior can also be tracked through digital marketing, which allows business owners to observe the state of the market in terms of what is popular and what the market needs. MSMEs can use elements of artificial intelligence, often known as AI (Artificial Intelligence), to observe or follow the current market situation. Here, artificial intelligence (AI) can help in digesting market data and even generating new market trends. C. Increase your market share

The main goal of digital marketing is to help MSMEs increase their market share and ultimately reach new potential clients. While traditional or old-fashioned marketing techniques can certainly capture a portion of the market, adopting digital marketing to achieve this is simpler, more effective, and faster.

### **D. Reducing marketing costs conventionally**

The amount spent on marketing through traditional media is quite large, and MSME businesses should not participate in this. You have to pay taxes, complicated permits, and other things that make it difficult will hinder the business activities being carried out by MSMEs. Digital marketing is not at all that difficult, expensive, and complicated and the benefits are more than conventional marketing.

### **E. Increasingly tight competition in the digital era**

For UMKM players, using digital marketing currently has added value. Not only does it follow the very rapid development of digital technology today, but it is also considered more competitive in its business efforts.

## **a) Digital Marketing Subcategories**

Digital marketing is used by businesses in a variety of ways. The different forms of digital marketing that businesses use to promote and increase product sales are explained here. (2022, Aisyah)

- A. Website. The appearance of the website shows the professionalism of the management team. This makes the website very important in showing the professionalism of the organization because it helps consumers and the larger community in understanding the company's operations, serves as an efficient promotional medium, and is easily accessible to the general public.
- B. *Search Engine Marketing*  
The goal of digital marketing is to increase the visibility of a website in search engine results. Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) are two subcategories of search engine marketing.
- C. *Search Engine Optimization* is an internal effort by business management to conduct Search Engine Marketing in a relatively longer and cheaper period of time.
- D. Search Engine Marketing is a company's effort to collaborate with other parties, at a lower cost but faster, to make the company's website easy to find in search engine systems.
- E. Marketing using social media. Companies use digital marketing strategies to spread content through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter at little to no cost - or even free - in an effort to strengthen their brand.
- F. Internet marketing. Online advertising is a strategy used by businesses to promote themselves on the internet in exchange for payment. Although more expensive than previous media, it is an effort to spread information and reach customers more quickly and satisfactorily.
- G. Email marketing. Through email marketing, businesses can also inform the public about the latest information related to promotions of goods and services, price reductions, new features, and other information.
- H. Marketing through video. By using user testimonials for the company's products in a video marketing strategy, the company aims to present the brand, build relationships, and increase sales.

b) Definition of MSMEs

MSME is an independent business operated by an individual or company in the economic sector. (Diana et al., 2022). The 1945 Constitution, which was later strengthened by MPR Decree No. XVI/MPR-RI/1998 concerning Economic Politics in the Framework of Economic Democracy, states that Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) must be empowered as an important component of the people's economy because they have a strategic position, role, and potential to realize a more balanced, developed, and equitable national economic structure. In addition, the definition of MSMEs stipulated by Law Number 9 of 1999 and revised by Law Number 20 Article 1 of 2008 includes Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises due to their increasingly dynamic development conditions. The definition of MSMEs is as follows:

- a) Micro Enterprises are productive businesses owned by individuals and/or individual business entities that meet the criteria for Micro Enterprises as regulated in this Law.
- b) Small Business is a stand-alone and profitable business run by an individual or business entity that does not meet the definition of Small Business as defined by this Law and is not a subsidiary, branch of a company, or company owned, controlled, or part of either directly or indirectly a Medium Business or Large Business. Examples of Small Businesses: Individual landowners involved in agriculture with labor; wholesale market traders (agents) and other collectors; craftsmen working in the food and beverage, household equipment, clothing, and handicraft industries; chicken, duck, and fishery farms; and small cooperatives.
- c) Medium Enterprises are independent productive economic enterprises, carried out by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of companies owned, controlled, or are part of either directly or indirectly with Small Enterprises or Large Enterprises with the amount of net assets or annual sales results as regulated in this Law.
- d) Large Enterprises are productive economic activities carried out by business entities with net assets or annual sales results greater than Medium Enterprises. This definition includes state-owned or private national enterprises, joint ventures, and foreign enterprises carrying out economic activities in Indonesia.
- e) The business world consists of Micro, Small, Medium and Large Enterprises domiciled in Indonesia and carrying out economic activities in Indonesia.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are defined as independent productive business units, which operate in all economic sectors and are carried out by individuals or individual business entities. Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are currently one of the economic forces that support the economic strength of Indonesia and the regional area as a whole (Waqfin et al., 2021). Initial asset value (excluding land and buildings), average annual income, or number of permanent employees are usually recommended as the dividing line between micro enterprises (UMI), small enterprises (UKA), medium enterprises (UM), and large enterprises (UB). However, based on these three assessment methodologies, the definition of MSMEs varies from country to country. Therefore, it is difficult to compare the significance or function of MSMEs in different countries. Distinguishing MSMEs from SEs, SEs from MEs, and MEs from MEs is not generally accepted. Although many companies in this category do not employ salaried workers - often referred to as entrepreneurs in the literature - MSEs typically employ 5 (five) or fewer permanent employees. An SME (small and medium enterprise) can employ anywhere from 100 people or less, as in Indonesia, to 300 or more, as in China. Many countries use the value of fixed assets (excluding buildings and land) and turnover in addition to the number of employees when classifying SMEs. Definitions of SMEs vary across industries, as in Thailand, India, and China, or even across government departments in many other Asian countries.

#### c) Objectives of MSMEs

Article 5 of the MSME Law outlines the objectives of MSME empowerment, including:

- a. Realizing a balanced, developing and equitable national economic structure;
- b. Growing and developing the capabilities of MSMEs to become strong and independent businesses; and

- c. Increasing the contribution of MSMEs to regional development, job creation, income equality, economic growth, and poverty alleviation.
- d) Characteristics of MSMEs
  - a) Micro Business
    - The type of goods/commodities is not always constant; sometimes it can vary (Lathifah Hanim 2018).
    - The place of business is not always permanent, it can move at any time
    - Not doing basic financial management
    - Not separating family and business finances
    - Human resources do not have adequate entrepreneurial spirit;
    - The average level of education is low;
    - Generally cannot access banks; however, some may be able to access non-bank institutions;
    - Generally do not have a business license. For example, market traders or street vendors
  - b) Small business
    - The goods/commodities produced are usually fixed and difficult to change.
    - Buildings/locations are usually stationary and do not move around.
    - Although still simple, financial administration is already carried out in a general manner.
    - The distribution of business and household funds has begun.
    - Create a financial balance sheet for the company.
    - Have a NPWP as well as a business license and other legal requirements.
    - Entrepreneurial experience is possessed by human resources.
    - Some people can meet their capital needs from banks.
    - The majority fail to carry out effective business management, including business planning. For example, wholesale market traders (agents) and other intermediary traders.
  - c) Medium Enterprises
    - Has improved management and structure, with a clear division of responsibilities between production, marketing and finance departments.
    - Has implemented an organized accounting system for financial management to facilitate audits, evaluations, or examinations, including by banks.
    - Has complied with management and labor organization regulations.
    - Have legal requirements, such as permits from surrounding properties.
    - Has obtained funding from banking sources.
    - Having human resources that are trained and educated in general. As an illustration is a mountain stone mining company that produces artificial marble.
- e) Production and Marketing Problems in MSMEs

Problems that often hinder MSMEs from developing include not only the inability to manage a business (poor management skills), but also constraints on company functions, especially in the areas of production and marketing. Sri Handini 2019 MSMEs usually struggle with the following problems in terms of production and marketing:

- a) Lack of access to reliable supplies of high-quality raw materials. MSMEs sometimes use high-quality raw materials, but often they use raw materials that do not meet industry standards.
- b) Simple production methods that do not meet expectations result in low quality; for example, making bread by hand (rather than by machine) results in unclean and shortlasting goods.
- c) Values that can provide satisfaction to customers are not given enough attention. For example, taste, odd size, bad color, no brand, and so on.
- d) Limited capacity for promotion, resulting in a lack of market recognition of the product. This has an impact on the low ability of MSMEs to compete in the market. Customers who are already interested in MSME products eventually switch to other products that can meet their needs.
- e) The tendency to dominate small markets due to the lack of ability to compete with large businesses that have superior production and distribution networks.
- f) Because customers tend to have deeper knowledge about products and businesses, SMEs are less equipped to read market prospects. When this happens, it is not uncommon for the products provided to not match what consumers want and anticipate in the market.
- g) Consistency and continuity of products to meet market demand are not maintained, so that when consumers need the product, the product is not available in the market due to various things that hinder the economic activities of the MSMEs themselves. Production and marketing issues really need attention.

As is known, this sector is where most of the MSME activities take place. Therefore, the development of digital marketing is expected to help MSME companies overcome challenges related to selling their products successfully and efficiently. Because they feel unable to dominate the market or even compete with other MSMEs operating in the same industry, this sector is sometimes the main reason for MSME players to change their business.

#### f) Effective Digital Marketing Strategies to Increase Sales

Before discussing digital marketing strategies, we need to discuss the theory of new media. The term "new media" refers to media that has developed as a result of technical advances and has features that provide a number of benefits over traditional media or "old media", which were previously often used. The term "new media" refers to three different concepts:

- a) New textual encounters By using new media, people can experience things in a completely new way that they have never experienced before. These new experiences can be entertainment, pleasure, or changes in media consumption habits.
- b) Different ways to depict the world Audiences can enjoy new media regardless of time, place, or cost, and new media offers new ways to show the world in a more realistic way.



- c) Modified relationship between topics and media technologies New media enables advances that combine features from different media and encourage better user-media interactions.

According to Efendi (Aisyah, 2022) "new media" refers to a combination of computerization, digital, and communication technology connected in a network. Like media in general, new media acts as a channel for exchanging messages between senders and recipients. According to (McQuail, 2010), new media is basically media created from two fundamental factors, namely convergence and digitalization. Apart from having a number of advantages compared to traditional media, new media also differs from traditional media in several ways, including the following:

- a) Participation  
Direct communication with high frequency between sender and receiver of messages is made possible by new media.
- b) Social interaction  
Compared to traditional media, new media greatly enhances social relationships. New media users can communicate with other users more quickly, cheaply, and easily compared to traditional media, so it can be claimed that new media encourages more social engagement compared to traditional media.
- c) Autonomy  
New media users can actively engage in the social interactions that occur there. Traditional media only treats users as passive consumers, making it impossible to do this.
- d) Playfulness  
Traditional media does not have the variety and sophistication of game options that new media does.
- e) Privacy  
Because users can independently control the privacy setting features on new media, security options can be set more freely by users.
- f) Personalization  
Features in new media that allow users to organize their accounts with certain characteristics according to their preferences. Personalization of accounts, which is more than just describing the user's identity or thoughts, is a characteristic of new media that is not possessed by traditional media.

In this context, new media can be said to be the same as social media, both of which can support or improve the commercial efforts of MSMEs. Business actors must certainly maximize the use of social media considering how significant the potential of using social media is to boost MSME sales.

The term optimization comes from the root word "optimal" which means the best. Based on this meaning, the definition of optimization is an effort to make an object the best. Thus, optimizing social media means a way to make social media the most appropriate media, which in the context of digital marketing, to facilitate the delivery of product information to target consumers.

Referring to the quality of social media and the characteristics of the marketing media itself, there are two points of view that can be used to optimize social media as a digital

marketing medium. According to the first point of view, optimizing social media can be done by perfecting all forms of existing social media, such as social networking sites, blogs, microblogs, sharing sites, social bookmarking sites, and media that exchange materials (Nasrullah, 2015). News about products can be sold to reach a complete target market thanks to the integration of different social media platforms. However, it is important to choose the social media platform that will be used as the main media based on how much the general public uses it.

The reach of marketing messages distributed by a social media increases with the number of users. According to statistics collected by a national survey site, Jakpat.net, Youtube, Facebook, and Instagram are the most widely used social media platforms by the general public, followed by TikTok, Twitter, Pinterest, Linkedin, and Snapchat. The percentage of users of each social media is as follows:

Table 1: Social Media Users in 2021

No	Social Media Names	Percentage of Users
1	Youtube	82%
2	Facebook	77%
3	Instagram	77%
4	TikTok	43%
5	Twitter	30%
6	Pinterest	14%
7	Linkedin	11%

8	Snapchat	7%
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According to this ranking, Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube should be prioritized to be used as the main social media platforms for digital marketing. According to the targeted customer group for a particular item, the best way to utilize these three social media platforms will result in a very wide marketing reach. Thus, marketing specialization can be done in addition to expanding the target market to increase target consumer engagement. The main purpose of branding is to build a good reputation in the eyes of customers, or in line with the vision and mission of the business. According to Hopsoro et al. (2019), branding efforts are mostly focused on fostering communication between businesses and consumers.

Setting goals for each step in the social media marketing process is essential because it serves as a measure of how well social media optimization is working. For example, when identifying a market, setting realistic and achievable goals will result in a benchmark of market needs that must be met in terms of both quality and quantity; creating product features that the market wants, and the need to predict the path of market demand.

Overall, it can be said that social media can function well as a marketing channel by using its unique qualities and also the qualities of the marketing medium. In addition, it is important to ensure that the marketing messages distributed through social media are oriented according to the right stages, specifically with the aim of fostering a good perception of the brand, followed by persuasive messages that influence consumer purchasing decisions. If the above-mentioned scenario occurs, the use of social media as a source of information will be able to prevent the escalation of market volatility, which will ultimately result in greater profits for the project being worked on.

The increasing prevalence of social media use among the general public and the growing use of internet technology together represent a very valuable resource for those running a regular business. This situation is further complicated by the increasing prevalence of smartphones among the general public; as a result, more and more people will be involved in increasingly creative activities or initiatives (A, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

Digital marketing is a type of marketing carried out by businesses using various media. Planning and implementing concepts related to ideas, prices, promotional strategies, and product distribution are part of the digital marketing process. According to this definition, digital marketing is an effort to create, grow, and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between customers and producers.

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are defined as autonomous and productive business units operated by individuals or organizations in all sectors of the economy. The marketing industry is a major source of problems for MSMEs, so the marketing process inevitably has to adapt by using social media as a marketing tool or media (digital marketing). YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram are social media platforms that must be prioritized for use as the main media in digital marketing. In accordance with the target consumer group for certain

goods, the best way to utilize these three social media platforms will produce a very wide marketing reach.

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