

FLORIST'S MSME MARKETING STRATEGY IN INCREASING SALES AND BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in driving economic growth and equitable distribution of income. However, many MSMEs still face challenges in implementing marketing strategies, particularly amidst technological advancements and increasingly digital consumer behavior. This study aims to analyze the marketing strategies implemented by the MSME YDP Florist to increase sales and business competitiveness. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and literature studies. The results show that YDP Florist has implemented offline and online marketing strategies utilizing digital media. The implementation of appropriate and integrated marketing strategies has been proven to have a positive impact on increasing sales and business competitiveness. This research is expected to serve as evaluation material and a reference for other MSMEs in developing effective marketing strategies.

Keywords: *MSMEs, Digital Marketing, Marketing Strategy, YDP Florist*

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are a sector that plays a strategic role in the national economy. MSMEs contribute significantly to job creation, increasing community income, and strengthening regional economic structures. In Indonesia, MSMEs are the backbone of the economy because they are able to survive amidst various economic conditions, including crises. The government continues to encourage the growth of MSMEs through various policies and programs, such as providing access to capital, entrepreneurship training, and support for the use of digital technology. However, the sustainability and success of MSMEs are determined not only by external support but also by the ability of entrepreneurs to manage their businesses effectively, particularly in marketing aspects. Marketing is a key factor in determining the success of any business, including MSMEs. An appropriate marketing strategy can help businesses introduce products, attract consumers, and retain customers. Conversely, a weak marketing strategy can lead to low sales and make it difficult for products to compete in the market. Many MSMEs still face various obstacles in marketing activities, such as limited knowledge of marketing strategies, a lack of product innovation, minimal use of promotional media, and a limited understanding of consumer behavior and needs. These conditions pose a challenge for MSMEs to grow and survive amidst increasingly competitive business conditions.

The development of information and communication technology has brought about significant changes in the world of marketing. The digital era has transformed the interaction patterns between businesses and consumers, with information seeking, decision-making, and product purchases now largely conducted through digital platforms. Social media, marketplaces, and various digital applications have become the primary means consumers use to search for product information, read reviews, and conduct transactions. In Indonesia, social media usage is high, especially among the younger generation and Generation Z, who have made digital media a part of their daily lives. This situation opens up significant opportunities for MSMEs to utilize digital marketing as a strategy to increase business visibility and expand market reach. Digital marketing offers various advantages for MSMEs, including relatively lower promotional costs compared to conventional marketing, broader market reach, and ease

of direct interaction with consumers. Through social media such as Instagram and WhatsApp, MSMEs can display products visually, convey information quickly, and build more personal relationships with customers. Furthermore, utilizing marketplaces allows MSMEs to sell products without having a physical store, while also increasing consumer trust through review and rating systems. However, utilizing digital marketing also requires the right strategy, content consistency, and an understanding of the characteristics of the target market to have an optimal impact on sales. Florists in the MSME sector have distinct business characteristics compared to other MSME sectors. Florist products are generally perishable and are heavily influenced by specific moments or events, such as weddings, graduations, birthdays, and other major celebrations. Therefore, florists are required to be highly creative, provide prompt service, and have marketing strategies that adapt to consumer needs and tastes. Furthermore, competition in the florist sector is also increasing, both from local businesses and online sellers offering similar products at varying prices and designs. YDP Florist is an MSME specializing in selling flowers and floral arrangements in Lhokseumawe City. This business offers a variety of products, including flower bouquets, bouquet, snacks bouquet, money bouquet, air balloon bouquet and bloom box Flowers in a variety of sizes and designs. In running its business, YDP Florist utilizes offline marketing through physical stores and online marketing through social media and digital communications. Its strategic location, particularly near campuses, is one of YDP Florist's strengths in reaching consumers, particularly students and the surrounding community.

However, amidst an increasingly digital and competitive market, YDP Florist's marketing strategy still requires further analysis. Challenges such as limited promotional innovation, optimizing digital media usage, and managing customer relationships are crucial aspects that must be addressed to ensure the business's continued growth and competitiveness. Analyzing the implemented marketing strategy is crucial to determine the effectiveness of the marketing efforts in increasing sales and strengthening the business's market position. Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze the marketing strategies implemented by the YDP Florist MSME, the marketing media used, and the challenges faced in marketing activities. Furthermore, this study also aims to determine the impact of marketing strategies on increasing sales and business competitiveness. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical benefits as additional references in the field of MSME marketing management, as well as practical benefits for MSME actors in formulating and developing more effective marketing strategies in the digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are an economic sector that plays a strategic role in national development. MSMEs not only serve as job providers but also as drivers of local economic growth and improved community welfare. According to Law Number 20 of 2008, MSMEs are defined as productive businesses owned by individuals or individual business entities that meet certain criteria based on assets and turnover. Tambunan (2012) stated that MSMEs are generally characterized by small scale, use of simple technology, and traditional business management. Kuncoro (2010) added that MSMEs are independent businesses and not subsidiaries of larger companies, thus facing limitations in terms of capital, human resources, and market access. Nevertheless, MSMEs have advantages in terms of business flexibility and the ability to adapt quickly to changes in the business environment. In the context of florist MSMEs like YDP Florist, these limitations are often seen in marketing, product innovation, and the use of digital technology. Therefore, florist MSMEs require appropriate marketing strategies to increase sales and maintain business continuity.

- The Concept and Role of Marketing for MSMEs

Marketing is one of the primary functions in business management that determines the success of a business. Kotler and Keller define marketing as a social and managerial process that enables individuals and groups to obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value. This definition emphasizes that marketing is not solely oriented toward sales, but also toward creating value and satisfying customers. American Marketing The American Marketing Association (AMA) explains that marketing encompasses the activities, processes, and institutions for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for consumers and society at large. In the context of MSMEs, marketing plays a crucial role as a means of introducing products, building a business image, and fostering long-term relationships with customers. For florist MSMEs like YDP Florist, marketing plays a crucial role because flowers and floral arrangements are perishable and highly dependent on seasonal demand. Without an effective marketing strategy, florists can potentially experience declining sales and wasted inventory.

- **MSME Marketing Strategy**

A marketing strategy is an integrated plan designed to achieve a business's marketing objectives. This strategy includes determining target markets, selecting marketing media, and tailoring products to consumer needs. According to Kotler, a marketing strategy serves as a guide for companies in dealing with market changes and competition. In MSMEs, marketing strategies are heavily influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include human resource capabilities, business capital, creativity, and product innovation. Meanwhile, external factors include consumer behavior, competition, technological developments, and changing market trends. Therefore, MSMEs need a flexible and adaptive marketing strategy. YDP Florist, a florist MSME, has implemented both offline and online marketing strategies. However, the effectiveness of these strategies needs to be analyzed to determine the extent to which they can increase sales and competitiveness amidst increasingly fierce competition in the florist business.

- **Marketing Mix Mix) in UMKM Florist**

The marketing mix is a combination of marketing variables that companies use to influence consumer purchasing decisions. Kotler states that the marketing mix consists of four main elements: product, price, place, and promotion. For MSME florists like YDP Florist, the product aspect is very important because consumers tend to pay attention to the design, size, type of flower, and aesthetic value of the flower arrangement. Product variations such as flower arrangements... bouquet, snacks bouquet, money bouquet and bloom Boxes are one strategy to meet diverse consumer needs. Price is also a key consideration for florist consumers, particularly students and the general public. Pricing must be aligned with product quality and consumer purchasing power. Location factors include a strategic business location and easy access to purchases, both in-store and online. Meanwhile, promotions serve as a communication tool to introduce florist products and attract consumer interest, particularly through digital media.

- **Digital Marketing for Florist MSMEs**

Digital marketing is a marketing strategy that utilizes digital technology and the internet to reach a wide range of consumers. Social media platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp, as well as marketplace platforms, are widely used by MSMEs to market their products. Digital marketing allows MSMEs to reach consumers without geographic boundaries at a relatively lower cost than conventional marketing. For florist MSMEs like YDP Florist, digital marketing is highly relevant because consumers tend to search for bouquet design references on social media before making a purchase. Instagram serves as a visual medium for showcasing floral arrangements, WhatsApp serves as a communication and customer service platform, and marketplaces help expand sales reach. Optimal use of digital marketing can improve brand awareness, strengthen customer relationships, and increase sales. However, limited digital knowledge and skills often pose a challenge for florist MSMEs in managing digital marketing effectively. literature review that has been described, it can be concluded that marketing strategies and the use of digital marketing have an important role in increasing sales and competitiveness of MSMEs, especially MSMEs in the florist sector. This literature serves as a theoretical basis in analyzing the marketing strategies implemented by the MSME YDP Florist. By examining the implementation of the marketing mix and digital marketing at YDP Florist, this study is expected to provide an overview of the effectiveness of marketing strategies and become evaluation material for future business development.

METHOD 1. Types and Approaches of Research

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. This approach was chosen because the study aims to understand and analyze the marketing strategies implemented by the YDP Florist MSME in depth based on real-world conditions. Descriptive methods are used to describe the marketing phenomena implemented, the marketing media used, and the challenges faced by business actors.

2. Research Objects and Locations

The object of this study is the "YDP Florist MSME", which operates in the field of flower sales and bouquet arrangements. The study was conducted in Blang Pulo, Lhokseumawe City, the location where YDP Florist operates its business activities.

3. Research Subjects

The research subjects included "YDP Florist MSME owners and employees" directly involved in marketing and sales activities. These subjects were selected because they possessed relevant information regarding marketing strategy implementation and business development.

4. Data collection technique

Data collection techniques used in this study include:

"Interview", namely conducting direct questions and answers with the owner and employees of YDP Florist to obtain information regarding marketing strategies, promotional media, and obstacles faced.

"Observation", namely direct observation of marketing activities and business operations, both offline and online .

"Literature Study", namely collecting data through books, scientific journals, and other written sources related to MSMEs and marketing strategies.

5. Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained was analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis, which involved grouping, interpreting, and explaining the data from interviews and observations. The analysis was conducted by linking field findings to marketing theories described in the literature. review .

6. Data Validity Techniques

To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses "triangulation techniques", namely comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and literature studies so that the research results are more accurate and reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews and observations, YDP Florist, a small and medium-sized enterprise (UMKM), is a florist business established in 2022. Located in Blang Pulo, Lhokseumawe City, YDP Florist serves a variety of floral arrangements, including greeting cards, bouquets for graduations, weddings, birthdays, and funerals. The business is managed directly by the owner, assisted by several employees involved in production and marketing. Florist 's products are characterized by creative bouquet designs that can be customized to customer requests. This flexibility in design is one of the company's competitive advantages when competing with other florists in the area.

Subsection 1 Marketing Strategies Implemented

Florist 's marketing strategy combines conventional and digital marketing. Traditionally, YDP Florist utilizes word-of-mouth promotion and direct customer service at its business location. Friendly service and customized arrangements are crucial factors in maintaining customer loyalty.

Subsection 2 Benefits of Digital Marketing for YDP Florist

The implementation of digital marketing offers several benefits for YDP Florist , including expanding market reach, increasing promotional cost efficiency, and simplifying customer interactions. Consumers can easily access product information and place orders without having to visit the business premises. This has had a positive impact on increasing the number of orders, especially during special occasions like graduations and major celebrations. The primary marketing channels used by YDP Florist include Instagram and WhatsApp . Instagram is used as a visual promotional tool to showcase various bouquet types , designs, sizes, and prices. The content displayed includes product photos and videos tailored to specific occasions, such as graduations, birthdays, and other celebrations. Using Instagram helps build visual appeal and increase brand awareness . awareness) among consumers. WhatsApp is used as a direct communication medium with consumers, particularly for ordering, design confirmation, and customer service. This platform is considered effective because it facilitates two-way interaction between sellers and buyers. However, YDP Florist 's use of digital media remains rudimentary and unstructured, particularly in terms of promotional content consistency and the use of social media analytics features .

Subsection 3 Challenges Faced by YDP Florist

The research results show that YDP Florist faces several challenges in implementing its marketing strategy. The main challenges include "limited promotional innovation, suboptimal use of digital media, and increasing competition in the florist business ." Furthermore, the perishable nature of floral products is also a challenge, as products must be sold quickly to avoid losses. Limited human resources and time also impact the intensity of digital promotions. This results in the marketing strategy being unable to fully reach a wider market. The implementation of offline and online marketing strategies has had a positive impact on increasing YDP Florist's

sales, especially during certain events such as graduation season and celebrations. Social media helps accelerate the dissemination of product information and attracts new customers. Furthermore, responsive service via WhatsApp contributes to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, to sustainably increase its competitiveness, YDP Florist still needs to develop more innovative marketing strategies, such as improving the quality of digital content, utilizing paid promotional features, and expanding collaboration with marketplace platforms. With a more planned and integrated marketing strategy, YDP Florist has the potential to increase sales and strengthen its position amidst the competition among florist MSMEs.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the marketing strategy implemented by YDP Florist is in line with the marketing strategy concept proposed by Kotler and Keller, namely the importance of determining strategies that are appropriate to market and consumer characteristics. Product creativity combined with utilizing social media, especially Instagram and WhatsApp, helps YDP Florist in expanding market reach, increasing product visibility, increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs, and facilitating interaction with consumers. The research results show that the implemented marketing strategy has a positive impact on increasing sales, especially during special occasions such as graduations and celebrations. Furthermore, responsive service and a strategic location contribute to YDP Florist's competitiveness amidst increasingly fierce competition in the florist business. The findings of this study also support the theory of digital marketing for MSMEs, which states that utilizing digital media can help small and medium-sized businesses expand their market at a relatively low cost. YDP Florist has been able to leverage digital technology to adapt to changing consumer behavior, which increasingly relies on online media to find products and services.

Furthermore, the results of this study align with previous research that suggests digital marketing plays a crucial role in improving the sustainability of MSMEs. With the right marketing strategy and developing creative products, YDP Florist has been able to survive amidst increasingly fierce competition and increase its competitiveness in the local market. However, this study also identified several challenges, such as suboptimal use of digital media, limited promotional innovation, and the perishable nature of flower products. Therefore, YDP Florist needs to develop a more planned and innovative marketing strategy to sustainably increase sales and business competitiveness. Overall, the marketing strategy implemented by YDP Florist demonstrates that MSMEs can grow and sustain themselves if they optimize their product creativity and utilize digital media effectively. The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for other MSMEs in developing adaptive marketing strategies that are oriented towards consumer needs.

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