International Journal of Sustainable Applied Sciences (IJSAS)
Vol. 4, No. 10, 2026: 1477-1484

The Role of Community Engagement in Implementing Social Media-Based Digital Branding Strategies to Enhance Brand Awareness (A Study of Ayam Goreng Masala)

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A R T I C L E I N F O
Keywords: Community Engagement, Digital Branding, Social Media, Brand Awareness, MSMEs, Masala Fried Chicken.

Received : 19, August
Revised : 24, September
Accepted: 26, October

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A B S T R A C T
This project aims to examine and analyze the role of community engagement in implementing a social media-based digital branding strategy to boost brand awareness for the MSME "Ayam Goreng Masala." Project implementation focuses on building and maintaining relationships between the MSME and its customers, social media audience, and partners through active, ongoing communication. The project methodology involves observation, documentation, social media monitoring, engagement evaluation, and partner coordination. Community engagement activities extend beyond audience interaction to support social media management, crisis management, the evaluation and approval of project deliverables, and online reputation management. Project results indicate positive interaction on Instagram and TikTok; notably, an Instagram post from August 31, 2025, garnered 14,628 views, 60 likes, 2 comments, and 6 saves. Reputation monitoring also revealed predominantly positive audience responses, alongside inquiries regarding products and business location. These findings demonstrate that community engagement plays a vital role in strengthening audience relationships, safeguarding reputation, and boosting brand awareness for the Ayam Goreng Masala MSME.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.59890/ijsas.v4i10.91
ISSN-E: 3025-5597
http://ijsasjournal.my.id/index.php/ijsas

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in the Indonesian economy yet continue to face challenges regarding marketing, branding, and consumer relationship management in the digital era. The rise of social media offers MSMEs opportunities to reach a wider consumer base while fostering two-way communication with their audiences.

In the context of digital branding, social media success is determined not merely by the volume of published content but also by an MSME's ability to cultivate active, enduring relationships with its community. Community engagement plays a strategic role in establishing, maintaining, and developing relationships between the MSME and its customers, social media audience, and business partners. Through active interaction, MSMEs can enhance customer loyalty, expand market reach, and build a positive brand image and reputation.

Ayam Goreng Masala is a culinary business that utilizes social media as a platform for promotion and marketing communication. Within the scope of this project, community engagement activities encompass partner relationship management, social media financial management, crisis management, project outcome evaluation and approval, and online reputation management. Consequently, this article focuses on the role of community engagement in implementing digital branding strategies to boost brand awareness for Ayam Goreng Masala.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Branding

Digital branding is the process of building a brand identity and image through digital media. In the context of MSMEs, digital branding is used to introduce products, build an image, increase brand awareness, and expand relationships with consumers.

Social Media

Social media serves as a medium for interactive communication, enabling the exchange of information between MSMEs and their audiences. Instagram and TikTok are used to convey information, foster interaction, monitor audience responses, and expand the reach of brand communication**.**

Community Engagement

Community engagement encompasses various activities aimed at building and maintaining relationships between an organization—or an MSME—and its relevant communities. In the "Ayam Goreng Masala" project, community engagement focuses on communicating with audiences and partners, while also covering social media management, crisis management, the evaluation and approval of project outcomes, and online reputation management.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to a consumer's ability to recognize and recall a brand. In this project, the growth of brand awareness is assessed through trends

in engagement, reach, audience response, and the effectiveness of social media in introducing Ayam Goreng Masala to the public.

Online Reputation Management

Online reputation management encompasses the monitoring, management, and protection of public perception regarding a brand in the digital realm. This process involves monitoring user comments, messages, and feedback, as well as providing appropriate responses to various forms of interaction on social media.

Crisis Management

Social media crisis management is used to handle situations that could potentially lead to misunderstandings or impact the image of MSMEs. This is managed through communication and the provision of appropriate information to the audience, ensuring that relationships and trust are maintained.

METHODOLOGY

This project employs a hands-on social media management approach for the MSME "Ayam Goreng Masala." Implementation involves observing business conditions and social media activities, documenting operations, monitoring engagement, evaluating content performance, and maintaining coordination and communication with the partner.

The project focuses primarily on community engagement. Activities include building and maintaining relationships with the audience and partners, monitoring social media interactions, addressing audience information needs, managing online reputation, supporting crisis management, evaluating project outcomes, and assisting with the management of social media-related financial aspects. The distribution of tasks and targets indicates that analyzing social media performance and sales financial reports are also integral parts of the project management.

Evaluation is conducted by tracking views, likes, comments, shares, and saves on Instagram and TikTok, as well as observing audience responses and perceptions. The evaluation results are then used to assess the effectiveness of social media management and serve as a basis for communication with the partner.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Implementation of Community Engagement

Community engagement at Ayam Goreng Masala was implemented through communication and coordination with the MSME owner. Activities included content planning, content implementation, information delivery, negotiation, and follow-up activities. Regular communication was maintained to ensure effective cooperation and minimize misunderstandings.

Community engagement was also implemented through interactions with social media audiences. Responding to comments and questions became an important activity in establishing closer relationships between the brand and its customers.

Social Media Financial Management

Tabel 4. 1 Pendapatan dan Biaya UMKM Ayam Goreng Masala

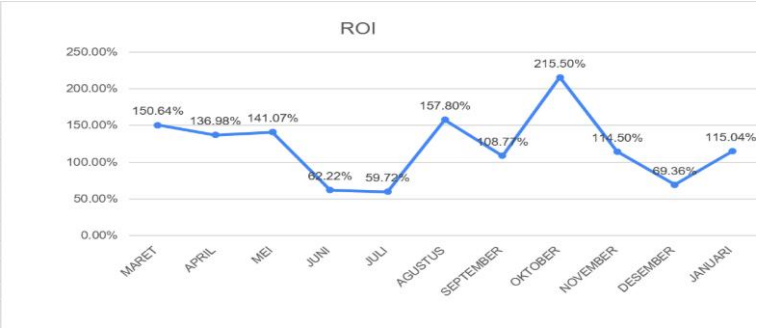
Bulan	Pendapatan	Biaya	Saldo akhir
Maret	Rp12.532,000	Rp5.000.000	Rp7.532.000
April	Rp14.219,000	Rp6.000.000	Rp8.219.000
Mei	Rp10.848,000	Rp4.500.000	Rp6.348.000
Juni	Rp8.111.000	Rp5.000.000	Rp3.111.000
Juli	Rp7.986.000	Rp5.000.000	Rp2.986.000
Agustus	Rp12.890.000	Rp5.000.000	Rp7.890.000
September	Rp10.439.000	Rp5.000.000	Rp5.439.000
Oktober	Rp15.774.000	Rp5.000.000	Rp10.774.000
November	Rp 10.725.000	Rp 5.000.000	Rp 5.725.000
Desember	Rp 8.468.000	Rp.5.000.000	Rp.3.468.000
Januari	Rp 10.725.000	Rp.5.000.000	Rp. 5.725.000
Total	Rp122.537.000	Rp55.500.000	Rp67.217.000

Sumber : Data Keuangan Ayam Goreng Masala

Financial management was conducted by recording revenue and costs during the project period. The financial data showed that total revenue from March 2025 to January 2026 reached IDR 122,537,000, while total costs amounted to IDR 55,500,000. The highest revenue occurred in October 2025 at IDR 15,774,000, while the lowest revenue occurred in July 2025 at IDR 7,986,000.

In January 2026, social media production costs consisted of internet data expenses of IDR 50,000, transportation expenses of IDR 25,000, and content production services of IDR 40,000, resulting in total production costs of IDR 115,000.

Return on Investment (ROI)



ROI analysis was conducted to measure the effectiveness of marketing expenditure in generating business returns. The project data show that the average ROI from March 2025 to January 2026 reached 120.93%, The highest ROI occurred in October 2025 at 215.48%, while the lowest ROI occurred in July 2025 at 59.72%.

These results indicate that digital marketing activities generally generated positive returns for the business. However, monthly variations in ROI indicate

that marketing effectiveness was influenced by sales performance and promotional activities in each period.

Crisis Management



Crisis management was implemented when audiences raised questions regarding the relocation of the business. The response was provided quickly and informatively to reduce misunderstandings.The implementation of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) helped minimize misinformation and maintain audience trust toward Ayam Goreng Masala.

Online Reputation Management



Online reputation management was conducted by monitoring comments, messages, and audience interactions on Instagram and TikTok. Most of the comments received were positive, while several users asked questions regarding products and business location. The monitoring process helped identify audience information needs and understand public perceptions of the brand. The evaluation showed a dominance of positive comments and no significant negative issues that affected the business reputation

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that community engagement plays an important role in connecting digital branding strategies with audiences. Communication with the MSME owner ensured that content and marketing activities remained consistent with the brand identity, while interaction with audiences helped establish closer relationships with consumers.

The engagement results on TikTok and Instagram indicate that visual and interactive content can attract audience attention. The project literature also indicates that visual content, social media marketing, and online interaction can contribute to strengthening brand awareness among MSMEs.

Therefore, community engagement does not merely function as a communication activity. It also acts as a bridge connecting content planning, partner relationship management, performance evaluation, crisis management, and online reputation management.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of a social media project for the MSME "Ayam Goreng Masala," driven by community engagement, has positively impacted brand awareness and audience engagement. Leveraging Instagram and TikTok has boosted interactions—such as likes, comments, shares, and saves—while simultaneously expanding product visibility and promotional reach.

Digital branding strategies have also yielded positive results for business performance. Between March and October 2025, the MSME recorded an average monthly net profit of IDR 6,912,375, peaking with a Return on Investment (ROI) of 215.48% in October 2025. These results demonstrate that digital marketing activities can drive sales growth and generate profits that far exceed investment costs.

Furthermore, the implementation of crisis management and online reputation management has helped maintain trust and a positive image for the MSME on social media. Effective communication between the project team and partners also contributed to the project's success in sustainably strengthening Ayam Goreng Masala's digital marketing efforts.

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