

PARE CHIPS BUSINESS TRAINING: Increasing Competitiveness in the Digital Age

Muhamad Zen

Universitas Batanghari, Indonesia
cuankidunia@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the pare chips sector have great potential to support the local economy. However, challenges in the rapidly developing digital era require understanding and adaptation of appropriate business strategies. Therefore, this service activity aims to provide business training to SME owners of bitter melon chips in order to optimize their business competitiveness in the digital era. The main purpose of this community service activity is to increase the understanding and skills of UKM owners of bitter melon chips in dealing with the digital era. We strive to provide participants with a better understanding of leveraging digital platforms, online marketing strategies, technology-based business management, and using digital tools to increase productivity. The implementation of this activity involves several methods including presentation of entrepreneurial material, question and answer, practice and guidance. The results of this activity include increasing the understanding and skills of SME chips pare owners in implementing business strategies in the digital era. They are able to leverage social media, increase online visibility, manage inventory more efficiently, and increase their business productivity. In addition, the collaboration between the UKM owners of bitter melon chips that was established during this activity allows for the exchange of experiences and learning between people. Some of the participants even reported a significant increase in their sales after taking this training.

Keywords: Business Training, Pare Chips, Digital Era, Business Understanding, Competitiveness, SMEs

INTRODUCTION

The pare chips industry is one sector of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that has great potential in supporting the local economy. Bitter gourd chips are products that have a high selling value and have a wide market, both at the local and national levels. However, in facing technological developments and changing consumption patterns in an increasingly digital society, business owners of bitter melon chips are faced with a number of challenges that need to be overcome (Susanto, et al., 2021; Nurpratama & Anwar, 2020).

First, the digital era has changed the way consumers find and buy products (Arsi, et al., 2023). More and more people are turning to online purchases, and businesses need to

have a strong digital presence to compete in this increasingly competitive market (Trisila, et al., 2022).

Second, inventory management and management of business operations are increasingly complex, especially with increasing demand and product variations (Hidayati, et al., 2018). Therefore, bitter melon chip business owners need to understand how to effectively manage stock, monitor inventory, and plan production.

Third, business actors need to understand and master effective online marketing strategies to reach a wider market and retain loyal customers (Dewi & Mahyuni, 2022).

In this context, bitter melon chips business training that focuses on increasing competitiveness in the digital era is very important (Nurcahya, et al., 2021). This kind of training can provide business owners with the necessary understanding and skills so they can take advantage of the opportunities offered by digital technology and overcome the challenges faced in the bitter melon chip business.

With increased understanding and skills in digital business management, business owners can optimize their operations, increase online visibility, and increase the competitiveness of the bitter melon chip business (Irfani, et al., 2020; Sholawati, et al., 2020). In addition, this training can also support local economic growth by empowering SMEs in this sector and creating additional jobs. Therefore, planning and implementing bitter melon chips business training in the digital era is an important step to support local economic growth and development (Firmansyah, et al., 2022).

Given the importance of digital marketing in the world of business and professional development, learning and mastering this skill is a very wise move (Mavilinda, et al., 2021). This helps both businesses and individuals to stay relevant, compete and succeed in the ever-evolving digital era (Syukron, et al., 2022). Here are some reasons why learning digital marketing is so important:

1. **Changing Consumer Paradigm.** Today's consumers are increasingly dependent on the internet and digital media to find product and service information. Therefore, understanding online consumer behavior is key to reaching and influencing the right audience.
2. **Optimizing Online Visibility.** Studying digital marketing helps businesses or brands to increase their visibility on online platforms. This includes strategies such as SEO

(Search Engine Optimization) and content marketing to appear higher in search results, making it easier for potential customers to find (Rachmawati, et al., 2023).

3. **More Precise Targeting.** Digital marketing allows you to segment your audience very precisely. This means you can target your ads only to people who share certain interests or characteristics, which can increase the efficiency of your campaigns.
4. **Measure Results Accurately.** One of the great advantages of digital marketing is the ability to measure results very accurately. You can see how effective your ad was, how many people saw it, how many interacted, and how many made a purchase. This allows you to optimize your strategy based on real data.
5. **Improved Adaptive Skills.** The digital world is constantly changing rapidly. Studying digital marketing allows you to develop adaptive skills and learn something new. This is critical in keeping your business or career relevant in a rapidly changing environment.
6. **Cost Efficiency.** Digital marketing is often more cost efficient than traditional marketing such as television or print advertising. This allows even small businesses with limited budgets to compete effectively.
7. **Improved Career Opportunities.** For individuals, studying digital marketing can open up a wide range of career opportunities. Positions such as digital marketing specialist, social media manager or digital marketing analyst are highly sought after by companies today.
8. **Global Expansion.** Digital marketing allows businesses to reach global markets more easily (Vernia, 2017). This opens the door for international growth and expansion.

The business potential of bitter melon chips is very promising, especially because bitter melon chips have several attractive advantages for business people. Here are some potential bitter melon chips businesses to consider:

1. **Health and Delicacy.** Pare, or also known as bitter melon, has many health benefits. Bitter melon chips that are properly prepared can be an alternative to healthy snacks because they are rich in fiber, vitamins and minerals. This potential is attractive to consumers who care about a healthy lifestyle.
2. **Various Snack Options.** Pare chips can be processed into various flavors, such as salty, spicy or sweet. This allows you to offer consumers a wide range of product choices, thereby covering a wide range of taste preferences.

3. Raw Material Available. Pare is a plant that is easy to find and is available throughout the year, so that the supply of raw materials can be guaranteed relatively easily. This helps maintain production consistency.
4. Relatively Affordable Prices. Pare is a raw material that is generally affordable, so that the cost of producing bitter melon chips can be managed properly, which in turn can affect the selling price of the product.
5. Potential Marketing. Pare chips marketing potential is very large. Apart from local markets, you can also explore regional and even national markets. In the digital age, online marketing can enable you to reach customers across the country.
6. Creativity in Products. You can develop innovative products based on bitter gourd chips, such as bitter gourd chips with various spices and flavors, organic bitter gourd chips, or bitter gourd chips with added health value.
7. Expansion Opportunities. If your bitter melon chip business is successful, you may consider expanding your business by adding other products related to healthy food or snacks.
8. Continuity. In an era where health and sustainability are major concerns, healthy and environmentally friendly bitter gourd chips can attract the attention of a market that is increasingly concerned about this issue.

METHOD

The method used in community service is carried out through the following activities:

1. The lecture method is used to convey material related to the background of information technology development trends until the emergence of digital era marketing techniques, the benefits of on-line marketing techniques, the tools needed for on-line marketing, as well as strategies for implementing online marketing.
2. The method of discussion and question and answer is to provide opportunities for participants to better understand matters related to on-line marketing.
3. Demonstration method, in which service members under the supervision of an instructor provide examples of various on-line application platforms currently available on mobile-based social media.

At the end of the training activity an evaluation is carried out to determine the extent to which the participants' understanding of the material provided. This evaluation is important to find out whether the PKM implemented achieved the target or not.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of community service activities in the form of "Pare Chips Business Training" on Sunday, January 29, 2023, was successful and yielded positive results. Following are the details of the implementation of activities:

1. Implementation date. The training activities were held on Sunday, January 29, 2023, which was the day previously scheduled.
2. Activities Running Smoothly. The training went smoothly and orderly. The implementation team managed to prepare all the materials and equipment needed before the activity started. The training room is also ready with adequate facilities.
3. Participant Enthusiasm. The trainees showed a high level of enthusiasm. They actively participated in the discussion and asked many questions. This enthusiasm reflects their interest in learning and improving their bitter melon chips business.
4. Digital Marketing Materials. Explanation of material about digital business was well received by the participants. They show great interest in understanding how to utilize digital platforms to grow their bitter melon chips business. These materials help them to better understand concepts such as online marketing, inventory management, and digital strategy.

Overall, the implementation of this pare chips business training succeeded in achieving its objectives. The enthusiasm of the participants and the smooth running of the activities is a positive indication that this training has provided significant benefits. It is hoped that the understanding gained by participants about digital business will help them develop their pare chip business, increase competitiveness, and achieve success in the ever-evolving digital era.

Material Explanation

Selling digital products involves a series of steps that must be followed carefully to achieve success in online business. The following are general stages in selling digital products:

1. Target Market Determination. Identify and clearly define who your target market is. Who are your potential customers? What are their characteristics, preferences and needs? Create a buyer persona to better understand your target market.
2. Product or Service Selection. Decide which product or service you will sell digitally. Make sure the product or service has market potential and has advantages that you can offer customers.
3. Pricing Strategy Preparation. Determine the price of your product by considering production costs, desired profit, and competitive prices in the market. You can also consider various pricing strategies, such as special offers or discounts.
4. Creation of a Website or Sales Platform. Create a professional and easy-to-use e-commerce website or selling platform. Make sure the website has an attractive appearance and is functional. Make sure your website is also responsive, so that it can be accessed properly from various devices, including smartphones.
5. Content Management. Create relevant and high-quality content for your website. This includes product descriptions, product images, and customer reviews. Create informative and engaging content to grab the attention of potential customers.
6. SEO optimization. Do SEO optimization to increase your website's visibility on search engines like Google. This involves using relevant keywords, good meta descriptions, and improving site speed.
7. Payment System Integration. Make sure your website has a secure and convenient payment system for customers. Integration with a trusted online payment provider like PayPal or Stripe can be a good choice.
8. Digital Marketing. Use a variety of digital marketing strategies, including online advertising, social media marketing, email marketing, and PPC (Pay-Per-Click) campaigns, to promote your products. Analyze the results of your marketing campaigns regularly and adapt your strategy based on the data you obtain.
9. Good Customer Service. Make sure you provide good customer service, including quick responses to customer questions and concerns. Consider providing multiple channels of communication, such as live chat or phone support.
10. Order Fulfillment and Delivery. Set up an efficient order fulfillment system. Make sure the product is delivered to the customer according to the promised time. Provide shipping tracking information to customers to monitor their order status.

11. Continuous Evaluation and Improvement. Keep track of your business performance and sales results digitally. Take corrective actions based on data and customer feedback to improve sales processes and customer satisfaction.

In selling products digitally, the main key is understanding and meeting the needs of your customers, and continuously adapting to changes in the fast digital business environment. By planning and executing each stage properly, you can achieve success in selling products online.

CONCLUSION

Pare chips business training with a focus on business strategy in the digital era has succeeded in having a positive impact on bitter melon chips SME owners. This increases their business potential, supports local economic growth, and allows them to take advantage of opportunities in the ever-evolving digital age. The continuation of activities like this will strengthen the position of SMEs in facing the challenges of the digital era, as well as contribute to a stronger local economy. Technically this activity contributes in terms of:

1. Increased Understanding and Skills. This training activity succeeded in increasing the understanding and skills of bitter melon chips business owners in facing the challenges of the digital era. They now have a better knowledge of online business strategy, inventory management and use of technology.
2. Utilization of Digital Platforms. The trainees have learned how to utilize digital platforms, such as social media and online marketplaces, to promote their products. This has significantly increased the visibility of their business.
3. Collaboration and Exchange of Experiences. This activity creates opportunities for pare chips business owners to collaborate and exchange experiences. This allows them to learn from each other and improve their business practices.
4. Increased Sales. Several participants reported a significant increase in sales after attending this training. They are able to adopt effective online marketing strategies and reach a wider market.
5. SME Empowerment. This activity has empowered small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the pare chips sector. They are now better equipped to compete in an increasingly digital and competitive business environment.

6. Local Economic Impacts. Increasing the competitiveness of the bitter melon chips business has the potential to have a positive impact on the local economy. This creates jobs, increases income, and strengthens the position of SMEs in the business ecosystem.

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