

Empowering Micro Enterprise in the Knife Manufacturing Industry through Digital Promotion

Farid Wajdi¹⁾; Wyke Kusmasari²⁾; Muhammad Nurhaura Huddin³⁾

¹⁾ faridwajdi@unsera.ac.id, Fakultas Teknik, Universitas Serang Raya

²⁾ kusmasari.wyke@gmail.com, Fakultas Teknik, Universitas Serang Raya

³⁾ m.nurhaura.h@unsera.ac.id, Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Serang Raya

Article Info:

Keywords:

Micro business,
Digital promotions,marketing
Knife, craftsmen.

Article History:

Received : September 29, 2023
Revised : Apr 01, 2024
Accepted : Apr 02, 2024

Article Doi:

10.22441/jam.v9i2.23264

Abstract

The knife craftsman located in the village of Parakan Panjang, Cadasari, Pandeglang Regency, still rely on traditional product marketing methods. The aim of this activity was to assist the knife craftsman in adapting to the current digital era. The development of this knife craftsman's business began with observation and interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of their current business operations. The outcome of this activity was the creation of a new business name to strengthen the products produced by the craftsman and the development of digital promotional materials to be disseminated through existing digital channels such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and other platforms like WhatsApp status updates. By introducing digitalization to micro and small businesses, such as this knife craftsman, it is hoped that micro and small businesses in Indonesia can thrive and adapt to the new digital business environment.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Indonesia, like many developing nations, faces the persistent and multifaceted challenge of poverty (Id & Chudasama, 2020). To tackle this pressing issue, the government and various stakeholders have recognized the crucial role that micro and small enterprises (MSEs) can play in fostering economic growth and poverty alleviation. Among the diverse array of MSEs, those engaged in knife manufacturing

occupy a unique niche, situated in the village of Parakan Panjang, region of Cadasari, Pandeglang Regency, Indonesia. Through their craftsmanship and entrepreneurial spirit, not only contribute to job creation but also play a vital role in reducing poverty levels within their communities. The knife manufacturing enterprise specializes in the production of a range of knives designed for various culinary applications. These knives are accurately crafted to excel in tasks such as slicing meat, peeling bananas, and serving as reliable general-purpose kitchen tools. At the heart of this operation are two dedicated artisans who work each day to meet the demands of their clientele. In response to market fluctuations and the ever-changing needs of their customers, they occasionally put in extra hours to ensure that their products consistently meet the highest standards of quality and functionality. The material used for the knives manufacturing is employed from used leave springs of truck vehicles. The material is made from carbon steel 1% which is hard and in the same time have high flexure characteristic (Venkatesan & Devaraj, 2022).



Figure 1. Traditional knife manufacturer in Cadasari

In terms of distribution, this enterprise currently employs two primary channels. Firstly, they supply their knives to the central market “Pasar Rau”, a hub of trading activity where their products find their way into the hands of chefs, homemakers, and culinary enthusiasts. Secondly, they also cater to specific requests from resellers who recognize the exceptional craftsmanship and utility of these knives. In essence, this knife manufacturing enterprise represents a harmonious blend of traditional craftsmanship and adaptability. Their commitment to quality, coupled with their willingness to adjust to market dynamics, positions them as a formidable player in the traditional knife industry. As we explored deeper into their story, we uncover not only the artistry of knife making but also the entrepreneurial spirit that drives their success in an ever-evolving culinary landscape. As information, the knives produced by craftsmen in the kampung Parakan Panjang are highly favored, particularly by meat vendors at the central market “Pasar Rau”, due to its durable blade material that resists dulling and maintains longevity. Furthermore, the material employed is resistant to rust, thus, visually, the knives appear clean, hygienic and appealing. The use of carefully selected materials from discarded truck leaf springs possesses its own uniqueness when applied in knife production. By utilizing these discarded truck leaf springs, the knife craftsmen in Parakan Panjang, Cadasari also contribute to recycling used items, thereby reducing waste from obsolete vehicle components. Several knife products

crafted by the artisans in the Parakan Panjang, Cadasari, Pandeglang, can be observed in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Knife products ready for distribution

Issues Faced by The Knife Craftsmen

The knife manufacturer in Cadasari, Pandeglang Regency, is a representative of the MSE landscape in Indonesia. The enterprise is family-owned and have been honing their craft for generations. With their commitment to quality and tradition, they have become an integral part of the local economy. This sector is particularly significant because it not only serves as a source of livelihood for *some* families but also preserves the cultural heritage of knife craftsmanship in Indonesia. At present, the knife craftsmen in Cadasari do not possess a business name; they are identified solely by the nickname of the owner, "Pisau Mang Udin." Consequently, it is imperative for this group of knife craftsmen to establish an official business name to facilitate recognition by customers. These knife craftsmen are, in fact, part of a broader network of artisans interconnected within a supply chain. Firstly, there are suppliers of semi-finished knife materials, typically sourced from truck leaf spring materials. Secondly, there are artisans specializing in crafting knife sheaths. These artisans cater primarily to meat vendors who require sheaths for their knives.



Figure 3. The craftsmen use simple tools to produce knives

While the knife manufacturing MSEs in Cadasari have a rich heritage and a loyal customer base, the digital age presents new challenges and opportunities. The

widespread adoption of digital technology has transformed the way businesses operate and connect with their audiences. To remain competitive and tap into a broader market, MSEs must embrace modern marketing strategies, especially in the digital market channels, through digital promotion. Currently, these knife artisans have yet to venture into the digitalization and employ digital channels for promotion. While the owner of this knife crafting business possesses internet-connected communication devices, they have not harnessed digital technology to its full potential. Consequently, there is a compelling need to utilize the available digital technology for the promotional requirements of this knife crafting enterprise.

The Purpose of Community Service Activities

The community service activities conducted at the knife manufacturing enterprise in Cadasari were aimed to develop the digital marketing strategies tailored to the unique context of MSEs. It explores how the enterprise can leverage digital marketing to expand the market reach while preserving their traditional craftsmanship. By adopting innovative marketing techniques, such as social media marketing, search engine optimization, and content creation, these MSEs can not only compete effectively in the digital marketplace but also contribute to the economic growth of their region and the reduction of poverty levels. In summary, the knife manufacturing MSEs in Cadasari, Pandeglang Regency, exemplify the resilience and entrepreneurial spirit of MSEs in Indonesia. To thrive in the digital age and further their contributions to poverty alleviation, these enterprises must embrace modern marketing strategies. This article serves as a guide to help them navigate the digital landscape while staying true to their rich traditions and craftsmanship.

Literature Review

In the contemporary digital age, businesses across the globe, regardless of their size or scale of operations, have been granted unprecedented access to a vast and diverse global audience. This remarkable transformation in the business landscape is primarily attributed to the advent and proliferation of digital marketing (Bist et al., 2022). Digital marketing is a multifaceted approach that harnesses the power of various online channels and tools to promote products or services, connect with potential customers, and ultimately drive business growth. While this paradigm shift benefits businesses of all sizes, its impact is particularly profound for micro enterprises (Kano et al., 2022).

Micro enterprises, often characterized by their limited resources and manpower, have long grappled with the challenge of competing in an increasingly digital marketplace. Historically, they relied on traditional marketing methods, which could be costly and had limited reach. However, the rise of digital marketing has democratized the promotional playing field (Kano et al., 2022). Now, micro enterprises can harness the immense potential of digital marketing to enhance brand visibility and effectively engage with potential customers. This marks a fundamental shift in the dynamics of business promotion.

Within the broader umbrella of digital marketing, digital promotion stands out as a critical component. Digital promotion includes a spectrum of techniques and strategies aimed at bolstering a brand's online presence and attracting and retaining customers (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). These techniques span various online

platforms and channels, including social media marketing, content creation, and search engine optimization (SEO).

1. **Social Media Marketing:** Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, provide micro enterprises with powerful tools to connect with their target audience. By leveraging these platforms, businesses can share their brand stories, showcase products or services, and engage with customers in real-time conversations. The interactive nature of social media fosters brand loyalty and customer trust.
2. **Content Creation:** Content remains king in the digital marketing realm. Micro enterprises can produce high-quality, informative, and engaging content in the form of blog posts, articles, videos, infographics, and more. This content serves as a valuable resource for potential customers, positioning the enterprise as an industry authority and fostering customer loyalty.
3. **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** In an era where customers turn to search engines like Google to find products and services, appearing prominently in search results is vital. SEO techniques enable micro enterprises to optimize their digital content for search engines, ensuring that their brand and offerings are readily discoverable by potential customers.

In today's fast-paced and hyper-competitive business landscape, digital promotion is not merely advantageous for micro enterprises—it's an absolute necessity for survival and growth (Rathore, 2020; Sunday et al., 2021). Several factors underscore the urgency of adopting digital promotion strategies:

1. **Broadening Audience Reach:** Digital promotion allows micro enterprises to transcend geographical boundaries and reach a global audience. This expanded reach opens up new markets and customer segments previously inaccessible through traditional marketing methods.
2. **Effective Customer Engagement:** Digital platforms facilitate direct and real-time communication with customers. Micro enterprises can engage with their audience, address queries, and provide personalized experiences, fostering strong customer relationships.
3. **Boosting Sales and Revenue:** A well-executed digital promotion strategy can significantly increase sales and revenue. By enhancing brand visibility and engaging effectively with potential customers, micro enterprises can drive conversions and achieve sustainable growth.

In conclusion, digital promotion is an indispensable aspect of modern business operations, particularly for micro enterprises operating in fiercely competitive sectors. Its cost-effective nature, coupled with its potential for broadening audience reach, effective customer engagement, and revenue growth, makes digital promotion a strategic imperative for micro enterprises seeking to thrive in the digital age. In an era where the digital landscape continues to evolve, businesses that embrace and master digital promotion are poised for sustained success and resilience in the face of dynamic market forces.

METHOD

In order to enhance the visibility of the knife crafting products produced in Cadasari, it is essential, based on the current situation, to undertake promotional improvements for the knife crafting business. Firstly, the knife crafting business needs to establish a recognizable business name and maintain a location that is easily

identifiable to customers. Secondly, in the pursuit of crafting highly effective digital promotion strategies tailored explicitly to micro enterprises operating within the knife manufacturing industry, an all-encompassing and particular approach was diligently applied. Recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities inherent in this niche sector, we embarked on a multifaceted journey that entailed in-depth interviews with esteemed industry experts and astute entrepreneurs. The primary objective of this journey was to extract insights into the relationship between the manufacturing and marketing facets of the knife manufacturing trade. This dual perspective was instrumental in shaping digital promotion strategies that would not only resonate with the industry's craftsmen but also captivate and engage their intended target audience.

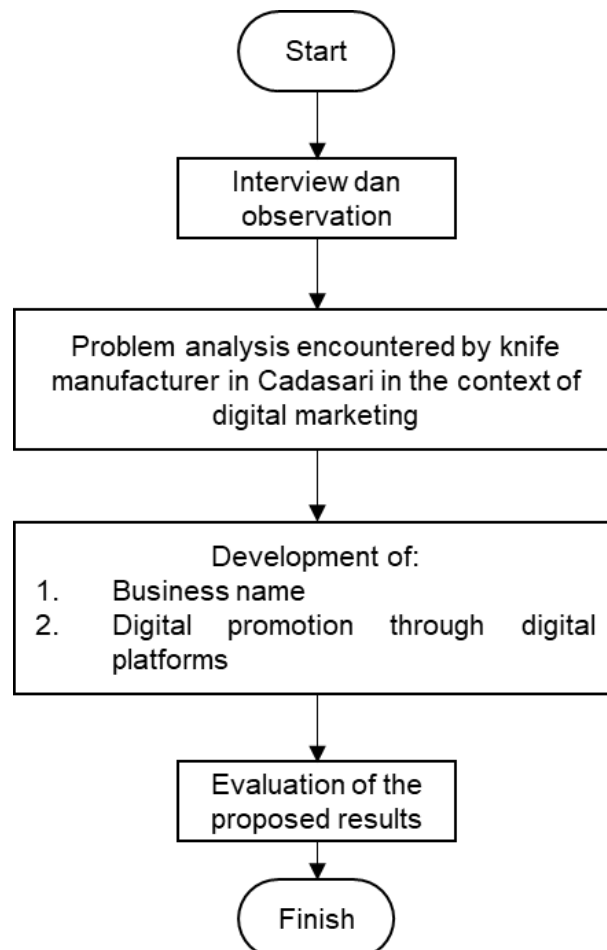


Figure 4. The sequence of activities in developing new business name and digital promotion for knife craftsmen

Our research journey commenced with the acknowledgment that in order to devise digital promotion strategies that genuinely resonate, we needed to immerse ourselves in the world of knife manufacturing. To navigate this landscape effectively, we sought the invaluable guidance of industry experts who have devoted their lives to the art of knife crafting. Their wealth of knowledge and insights proved to be an invaluable wellspring of information as we explored into the finer details of materials, techniques, and the cherished traditions that underpin this art form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our research activities have led to the development of a new business name for the knife manufacturing enterprise and customized digital promotion strategy that harmonizes seamlessly with the contemporary digital landscape. Furthermore, this strategy is tailored to provide to the audience of micro enterprises within the knife manufacturing sector.

Knife Craftsman Business Name

As previously explained, the knife crafting business in Cadasari did not possess a name. Through interviews and discussions with the owner, a new business name for the knife craftsmen was formulated as "Karismatik Pisau" (Charismatic Knives). This proposal was accepted by the business owner, who decided to create a signboard or banner that could be recognized by the local community. By giving the business a name, the knife craftsmen's enterprise could be easily identified by the local community and potential customers who would visit their knife-making establishment. The business name has a positive correlation with the uniqueness of the product (Tellis et al., 2019). Product identity can be represented by the business name used by these craftsmen, making it an initial step to strengthen brand equity for the distinctive knives produced by artisans in Cadasari, Pandeglang. Figure 5 shows various types of the knives produced by traditional knife manufacturing enterprise in Cadasari.



Figure 5. Various types of knives crafted in Cadasari

The business name is crucial and facilitates recognition by customers and prospective clients. The products crafted by these knife artisans exhibit exceptional quality, as they are crafted from robust materials. The adoption of this business name fortifies the position of the knife craftsmen's enterprise, as the product quality aligns with the strength of the business name itself (Saarikko et al., 2020). The assignment of a new business name for the knife craftsmen in Cadasari can be observed in Figure 6.



Figure 6. launching new business name for the knife manufacturing enterprise

Digital Promotion

One of the fundamental aspects of this tailored strategy is the *incisive* utilization of various digital platforms. These platforms have been strategically selected to maximize outreach and engagement among the target audience of knife manufacturing micro enterprises. The community service team developed a short video that can be broadcasted online through various social media channels highly favored by the public, such as Instagram, Youtube, TikTok, and other platforms, including WhatsApp status updates. Screenshots of the design of this short video for digital promotion can be seen in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Sample of video promotion

Instagram, renowned for its visual-centric nature, emerges as a potent tool for showcasing the artistry and craftsmanship embedded in every knife produced by these micro enterprise. Through carefully curated posts, captivating images, and compelling stories, micro enterprises can convey the essence of their brand, fostering a deep connection with their audience. YouTube, as a video-sharing platform, provides an ideal canvas for micro enterprises to offer in-depth insights into their knife manufacturing processes. Through high-quality video content, these enterprises can

not only demystify the art of knife making but also establish themselves as authorities in their field. Demonstrations, tutorials, and behind-the-scenes glimpses can all be leveraged to engage viewers and pique their interest. And the rapid rise of TikTok as a platform for short-form video content offers an exciting avenue for micro enterprises to create engaging and shareable content. Quick demonstrations, captivating snippets of craftsmanship, and interactive challenges can all contribute to heightened brand visibility and audience engagement.



Figure 8. Promotion initiation in a popular online social media platform

The ultimate objective of this tailored digital promotion strategy is not only to enhance brand visibility but also to foster meaningful engagement with the target audience. Through a combination of compelling storytelling, visually appealing content, and strategic use of hashtags and keywords, micro enterprises can establish a robust online presence. This presence will enable them to engage with existing customers and attract new ones, ultimately driving business growth. With this customized digital promotion strategy in hand, micro enterprises in the knife manufacturing industry are poised to embark on a journey of market expansion. By effectively harnessing the power of Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and other digital platforms, they can reach a broader audience, tell their unique stories, and establish themselves as trusted purveyors of artisanal knives.

In summary, the results of our research manifest in the form of an accurately crafted and customized digital promotion strategy. This strategy is aligned with the current digital landscape and tailored with the unique audience of knife manufacturing micro enterprises. By harnessing the power of digital platforms and maximizing outreach and engagement, these micro enterprises are well-positioned to achieve their goals of enhanced brand visibility, customer engagement, and market expansion. Although there is still much to be done to maximize the existing potential of digital marketing, digital promotion, for now, can serve as a good starting point in adapting to the new digital environment. This is particularly relevant for micro and small business operators in Indonesia, and specifically for micro and small business operators in the Pandeglang Regency.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the comprehensive approach undertaken to develop tailored digital promotion strategies for micro enterprises in the knife manufacturing industry

has provided invaluable insights into the intricacies of this specialized sector. Through the collaborative efforts of industry experts, entrepreneurs, and researchers, a profound understanding of both the manufacturing and marketing processes was achieved.

The significance of industry expertise became evident as we explored into the world of traditional knife manufacturing. This sector, characterized by its rich heritage and artisanal craftsmanship, presented unique challenges and opportunities. The guidance of industry experts who have dedicated their lives to the art of knife crafting proved instrumental in unraveling the complexities of materials, techniques, and traditions that underlie this craft.

Our approach emphasized the confluence of manufacturing mastery and marketing finesse. By comprehending the manufacturing details, we were able to pinpoint the unique selling propositions and narratives that would set these knives apart in a competitive market. Extensive interviews and dialogues with industry experts enriched our understanding of the thorough processes involved in crafting these knives, from material selection to forging and finishing.

The development of effective digital promotion strategies for micro enterprises in the knife manufacturing industry signifies a journey of thoughtful engagement and awareness. By bridging the gap between manufacturing proficiency and marketing finesse, our goal is to integrate the enduring traditions of this craft while ensuring its continued relevance in the digital age.

The insights gained through this comprehensive approach serve as the foundation for digital promotion strategies that resonate deeply, engage authentically, and propel micro enterprises in this industry toward sustainable growth in the marketplace.

REFERENCES

- Bist, A. S., Agarwal, V., Aini, Q., & Khofifah, N. (2022). Managing Digital Transformation in Marketing: "Fusion of Traditional Marketing and Digital Marketing." *International Transactions on Artificial Intelligence (ITALIC)*, 1(1), 18–27. <https://doi.org/10.34306/italic.v1i1.86>
- Id, P. K. S., & Chudasama, H. (2020). *Evaluating poverty alleviation strategies in a developing country*. 1–23.
- Kano, K., Choi, L. K., Riza, B. subhan, & Dinda octavyra, R. (2022). Implications of Digital Marketing Strategy The Competitive Advantages of Small Businesses in Indonesia. *Startupreneur Business Digital (SABDA Journal)*, 1(1), 44–62. <https://doi.org/10.34306/sabda.v1i1.72>
- Peter, M. K., & Dalla Vecchia, M. (2021). *The Digital Marketing Toolkit: A Literature Review for the Identification of Digital Marketing Channels and Platforms BT - New Trends in Business Information Systems and Technology: Digital Innovation and Digital Business Transformation* (R. Dornberger (ed.); pp. 251–265). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48332-6_17
- Rathore, B. (2020). *Navigating Uncharted Topography: An Advanced Exploration of Digital and Social Media Marketing in Global Business Landscape*. 8(1).
- Saarikko, T., Westergren, U. H., & Blomquist, T. (2020). Digital transformation: Five recommendations for the digitally conscious firm. *Business Horizons*, 63(6), 825–839. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2020.07.005>

- Sunday, G., Eka, E., Nnana, A. N., & Olusegun, V. (2021). *E-marketing Strategies and Performance of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises : A New- normal Agenda*. 162–172. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jbms>
- Tellis, G. J., MacInnis, D. J., Tirunillai, S., & Zhang, Y. (2019). What Drives Virality (Sharing) of Online Digital Content? The Critical Role of Information, Emotion, and Brand Prominence. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(4), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919841034>
- Venkatesan, M., & Devaraj, D. H. (2022). Design and Analysis of Composite Leaf Spring for Light Motor Vehicles. *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science*, 2(1), 213–218. <https://doi.org/10.56726/irjmets31612>

Acknowledgement

The authors acknowledge the Research and Community Service Institute (LPPM) of Universitas Serang Raya for their support in this community service activity.