

## **GUIDANCE IN UTILIZING TIKTOK AS A DIGITAL MARKETING MEDIA TO INCREASE THE MARKET REACH OF SOTO PAK ZAINAL'S MSMES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Mentoring activities were carried out at the Soto Pak Zainal MSME as an effort to assist business actors in developing marketing and expanding market reach through the use of digital media. Mentoring was carried out through field observations and direct interviews with business owners to understand business conditions, implemented marketing patterns, and obstacles faced in using social media. Based on the results of these observations and interviews, students provided suggestions and recommendations for digital marketing strategies by utilizing TikTok social media as a promotional tool. The use of TikTok focused on presenting product visuals, the manufacturing process, and engaging and consistent content. Through this mentoring activity, it is hoped that Soto Pak Zainal MSME can increase market reach and have a better understanding of how to utilize social media as an effective and sustainable marketing tool.

**Keywords:** *MSMEs, Mentoring, Digital Marketing, TikTok, Culinary*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in the national economy, particularly in creating jobs and maintaining local economic sustainability (Nadeem and Riaz 2019). The existence of MSMEs also contributes to income equality and strengthening the local economy. However, many traditional culinary MSMEs still face obstacles in developing their businesses, particularly in marketing and utilizing digital technology (Sciences 2020). These limitations tend to lag behind businesses that have optimally implemented digital marketing strategies (Kelurahan et al. 2017).

The development of social media provides new opportunities for MSMEs to expand their market reach and attract a wider consumer base. One social media platform experiencing rapid growth in Indonesia is TikTok, a short-form video platform with powerful visuals and a fast content distribution algorithm (Montag, Yang, and Elhai 2021). This platform is considered effective for promoting culinary products because it can

display attractive food visuals, cooking processes, and live consumer reviews. Content presented authentically and creatively can increase consumer interest and trust in the products offered (Wang and Li 2021).

However, in practice, many culinary MSMEs have yet to fully utilize TikTok. Social media use is often carried out without targeted content planning and an adequate understanding of digital marketing strategies. As a result, the resulting content fails to reach a broad and sustainable audience. This situation highlights the importance of mentoring and providing appropriate marketing strategies for MSMEs in optimizing the use of social media as a marketing tool (Setyowati et al. n.d.).

The Soto Pak Zainal MSME is a traditional culinary business that has been operating for a long time and has a loyal customer base. However, its market reach is still limited to local consumers near the business location. Based on interviews and initial observations, it was discovered that digital promotions have not been optimally utilized to attract new consumers, particularly the younger generation and tourists. Therefore, the Soto Pak Zainal MSME is considered an appropriate target for mentoring activities in implementing digital marketing strategies through TikTok.

Based on these conditions, the activity was carried out with the aim of providing guidance and strategic recommendations to the Soto Pak Zainal MSME in utilizing TikTok as a digital marketing medium. The activity was conducted through field observations, interviews with business owners, and recommendations for content strategies tailored to the MSME's characteristics. This approach emphasized the active involvement of business actors in understanding the problems and offering solutions. This activity is expected to help the MSME expand its market and serve as a model for the development of other culinary MSMEs.

### **Problem**

Based on the limitations of the Soto Pak Zainal MSME in utilizing digital marketing, particularly through TikTok, the main problem is a suboptimal promotional strategy for reaching a wider consumer base. TikTok is still being used simply without focused content planning and a thorough understanding of digital marketing strategies, resulting in the resulting content being unable to consistently and sustainably attract audience attention. Furthermore, MSME owners' limited knowledge of TikTok's features and algorithms has resulted in the culinary product's promotional potential being underutilized to attract new consumers, particularly among the younger generation and

tourists. Therefore, mentoring and recommendations for appropriate digital marketing strategies are needed to enable Soto Pak Zainal MSME to optimize TikTok's use as a promotional tool and expand its market reach.

## **METHOD**

The activity was carried out at the Soto Pak Zainal MSME as a community service partner, with the aim of optimizing the use of TikTok as a digital marketing medium. Data collection was carried out through field observations, interviews with business owners, and documentation to identify initial conditions, marketing problems, and potential digital content development. Observations were conducted directly at the business location to understand operational activities and ongoing promotional practices, while interviews were used to explore the obstacles and needs of MSMEs in using social media. The data obtained were analyzed through data presentation and explanation to formulate recommendations for digital marketing strategies that are appropriate to the characteristics of MSMEs. Furthermore, the results of the analysis were used as a basis for providing mentoring and delivering recommendations for TikTok content strategies with active involvement, so that partners can understand and implement the recommended strategies independently and sustainably.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the community service activities indicate that the Soto Pak Zainal MSME has significant potential for development through digital marketing, particularly using the TikTok platform. Based on initial observations and interviews with the business owner, it was discovered that this MSME already has a consistent product, a distinctive taste, and a loyal customer base from the surrounding area. However, promotion remains conventional and limited to word-of-mouth marketing, resulting in under-expanding market reach. The use of social media, especially TikTok, has not been utilized in a planned and sustainable manner as a digital marketing tool.



**Figure 1.** Digital Marketing Presentation Process



**Figure 2.** Group Photo at the MSME Location

The problem identification results indicated that the main obstacle faced by partners was limited knowledge of content-based digital marketing strategies. The uploaded content lacked a clear concept, failed to consistently upload, and failed to capitalize on the power of visuals and storytelling, the hallmarks of the TikTok platform. Furthermore, MSME owners lacked a grasp of TikTok features such as hashtags, popular

audio, and audience interaction patterns, resulting in their content not reaching a wide audience.

Based on this analysis, the community service team recommended a digital marketing strategy tailored to the characteristics of the Soto Pak Zainal MSME. The recommended strategy included creating simple yet authentic content, such as videos of the cooking process, menu presentations, customer testimonials, and an introduction to the business's history and uniqueness. This content was aimed at highlighting the authenticity of traditional culinary products to attract consumers, particularly the younger generation. Furthermore, partners were provided with an understanding of the importance of consistent uploads, selecting the right posting time, and using visual and audio elements that align with TikTok trends.

The mentoring, conducted through active involvement, has had a positive impact on MSMEs' understanding of digital marketing. MSME owners are beginning to understand that TikTok functions not only as an entertainment medium but also as an effective promotional tool when used strategically. The results of this activity indicate that with appropriate mentoring, MSMEs are able to raise awareness of the importance of digital marketing and are increasingly open to implementing more creative and planned promotional strategies. Therefore, utilizing TikTok as a digital marketing medium has the potential to help Soto Pak Zainal's MSME expand its market reach and increase the competitiveness of its traditional culinary business.

## **CONCLUSION**

The community service activities carried out by the Soto Pak Zainal MSME demonstrated that the use of social media, particularly TikTok, has great potential as a digital marketing tool for traditional culinary businesses. The results of the activities indicated that the main problem faced by partners was the suboptimal use of TikTok due to limited understanding of digital marketing strategies and content planning. Through a participatory mentoring approach, partners gained an understanding of the importance of authentic, consistent content that is in line with the characteristics of the TikTok platform. The strategic recommendations provided are expected to help the Soto Pak Zainal MSME expand its market reach, attract new consumers, and increase its business competitiveness. Overall, this activity can serve as a practical reference for the development of other culinary MSMEs in optimizing social media as a sustainable digital marketing medium.

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