

Empowering MSMEs in Puguh Village through Digital Marketing Training and Google Business Profile Optimization

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Abstract

*The utilization of Family Medicinal Plants (TOGA) serves as a community empowerment strategy to support health promotion and disease prevention efforts. TOGA gardens function not only as sources of traditional medicinal ingredients but also as educational tools to enhance public knowledge regarding the benefits of herbal plants. This community service initiative aimed to establish a Family Medicinal Plant (TOGA) garden as a learning resource while fostering community self-reliance in utilizing medicinal plants found in the local environment. The activity took place on November 15–16, 2025, in Puguh Village, Boja District, Kendal Regency. Implementation followed the Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach, comprising stages such as site preparation, soil cultivation, planting medicinal species, installing plant identification signs and educational banners, and providing community guidance. The plants cultivated included red and green betel, red and green *Binahong*, cat's whiskers (*Orthosiphon aristatus*), lemongrass, ginger, turmeric, aromatic ginger (*kencur*), Java ginger (*temulawak*), *Kitolod* flowers, aloe vera, guava, and butterfly pea flowers. The results indicate a positive community response to the TOGA garden, as it provides an accessible learning platform for understanding medicinal plant usage. Beyond beautifying the Village Hall grounds, the garden is expected to increase public knowledge of traditional medicine, support the conservation of herbal plants, and sustainably strengthen community health self-reliance.*

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Google Business Profile, MSME Empowerment, Puguh Village

Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are a key pillar of the national economy, proven resilient in supporting local community welfare (Purwana et al., 2017). However, in the current era of digital transformation, MSME competitiveness is heavily determined by business owners' ability to leverage information technology for marketing activities (Wardhana, 2021). Conventional marketing—relying solely on word-of-mouth promotion or limited local reach—is becoming ineffective in the face of increasingly competitive market dynamics (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

Puguh Village, located in Boja District, Kendal Regency, possesses diverse MSME potential, ranging from the culinary sector to handicrafts. Yet, field observations reveal that the majority of MSME owners in Puguh Village still face challenges regarding limited digital literacy. A lack of knowledge concerning branding strategies, the creation of engaging visual content, social media usage, and the utilization of digital map-based platforms like Google Maps acts as a major barrier to expanding consumer reach (Tjiptono, 2020). Consequently, many high-quality products from Puguh Village have yet to penetrate markets beyond the Boja District area.

Addressing these issues requires an intervention based on education and practical guidance to bridge the digital divide experienced by local MSME owners (Afandi et al., 2022). This community service program is specifically designed to impart both theoretical understanding and practical skills regarding digital marketing and the use of Google Business Profiles. Through this program, MSME owners in Puguh Village are expected to enhance their business visibility in the digital realm, build a professional brand image, and sustainably expand their market share (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Methods

This community service activity was conducted on November 9, 2025, in Puguh Village, Boja District, Kendal Regency. It was carried out by a Student Community Service (KKN) team from UIN Walisongo Semarang, targeting MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise) owners in Puguh Village.

The method employed for this activity was the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which positions the community as active subjects in the learning and problem-solving processes (Stringer, 2014; Afandi et al., 2022). The program implementation stages were systematically designed as follows:

1. Preparation and Needs Analysis Stage: The service team mapped MSME profiles in Puguh Village to identify initial digital literacy levels and marketing challenges faced by business owners (Stringer, 2014).
2. Socialization and Education Stage: Delivery of interactive theoretical material regarding the importance of digital marketing, basic branding concepts, and digital marketing communication strategies (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).
3. Workshop and Hands-on Training Stage: Participants received direct guidance in practicing graphic design using Canva, smartphone-based product photography

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techniques, Meta Business Suite operation, and content performance analysis via insight features (Wardhana, 2021).

4. Google Business Profile Assistance Stage: Intensive one-on-one guidance for registering business locations on Google Maps, entering operational data, uploading product photos, and managing customer review features (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

5. Evaluation Stage: Assessment of the activity's success was conducted by measuring the improvement in participants' understanding and the success rate of publishing verified business profiles on Google Maps (Afandi et al., 2022).

Results

The community service program held in Puguh Village, Boja District, Kendal Regency, on November 9, 2025, proceeded smoothly and was met with great enthusiasm from local MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise) operators. The series of activities was comprehensively designed to address digital marketing challenges through a phased and measurable approach. The discussion regarding the program's implementation is presented in the following seven key sections:

Analysis of Initial Conditions and the Urgency of Digital Literacy for MSMEs in Puguh Village

In the initial stage of the activity, the actual situation of MSMEs in Puguh Village was outlined, revealing that most still relied on conventional marketing methods. Reliance on limited face-to-face transactions made sales volumes vulnerable to stagnation, particularly as consumer consumption patterns shifted toward a digital orientation (Purwana et al., 2017). Through an interactive presentation, the service team raised awareness about the importance of digital marketing as an efficient means to bridge the gap between producers and consumers (Wardhana, 2021). Participants were encouraged to understand that digital transformation is no longer merely an option but a strategic necessity for local businesses to survive and compete in the modern market..



Instilling Basic Concepts of Branding and Product Visual Identity

The training proceeded with building an understanding of branding concepts and brand identity. Many MSME owners in Puguh Village previously viewed branding merely as assigning a name to packaging (Tjiptono, 2020). The community service team explained that branding encompasses defining the value proposition, product

uniqueness, and the consistent impression intended for consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). During this session, participants learned how to brainstorm memorable brand names, create catchy slogans, and align product identity colors to ensure strong visual appeal when promoted on digital media.

Smartphone-Based Product Photography Training

To enhance visual appeal in digital marketing, participants received training on product photography techniques using smartphone cameras. A lack of professional photography equipment was not an obstacle, as participants were equipped with fundamental techniques such as utilizing natural lighting, selecting shooting angles, using neutral backgrounds, and arranging product composition (styling) (Wardhana, 2021). Through hands-on practice, participants demonstrated the ability to produce product photos that were significantly cleaner, sharper, and more aesthetically pleasing, making them ready for upload to digital catalogs or social media.

Creating Promotional Content Using the Canva Application

After obtaining high-quality product photos, participants were trained to transform these images into digital promotional materials using the Canva application. Canva was selected due to its user-friendly interface and the availability of various ready-to-use design templates suitable for beginners (Wardhana, 2021). The community service team guided participants step-by-step in importing product photos, adding persuasive promotional text, and arranging layouts for digital flyers and social media posts. These skills enable MSME owners in Puguh Village to independently create advertising materials without incurring the cost of external graphic design services.

Leveraging Social Media, Marketplaces, and Meta Business Suite

The training also covered strategies for utilizing social media (such as Instagram and Facebook) and marketplace platforms as primary sales channels. Participants were introduced to Meta Business Suite tools to efficiently integrate and schedule promotional posts across multiple social media platforms simultaneously (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Furthermore, participants were taught how to interpret and utilize insights and web analytics features. By understanding these insights, MSME owners could identify audience demographics and engagement rates, as well as determine the optimal times ("prime time") to upload promotional content to reach a wider pool of potential buyers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Optimizing Google Business Profile and Google Maps for Local Marketing

A core component of this assistance program was the registration and optimization of Google Business Profiles (Google Maps) for each MSME. Utilizing this platform is crucial for enhancing local Search Engine Optimization (SEO), ensuring that business locations are easily discoverable by potential customers on Google Search (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). The student KKN (Community Service) team provided intensive guidance covering everything from pinpointing precise location coordinates, entering business operating hours, and listing official contact numbers to uploading product and premises photos and managing review features. Participants were taught the importance of responding to customer reviews professionally to build their online reputation and public trust.

Evaluation of Activity Impact and Program Success

Evaluation results indicated a significant improvement in participants' understanding and skills following the training. All participants who received direct assistance successfully registered and verified their business locations on Google Maps. The presence of business profiles on Google Maps, combined with improved social media content quality, directly boosted the digital visibility of products from MSMEs in Puguh Village. The positive response and the continued adoption of practices by business operators demonstrate that the implemented PAR approach successfully fostered a sense of ownership and digital independence among the community of Puguh Village (Stringer, 2014; Afandi et al., 2022)..

Conclusion

The community service program conducted by UIN Walisongo KKN students on November 9, 2025, in Puguh Village, Boja District, Kendal Regency, successfully enhanced the understanding and practical skills of MSME owners regarding digital marketing. Through comprehensive training covering branding, content creation using Canva, social media promotion management via Meta Business Suite, and Google Business Profile optimization, participants now possess more modern, structured, and effective promotional tools. The direct impact of this initiative includes the indexing of local business locations on Google Maps and the development of greater self-reliance among MSME owners in devising sustainable digital marketing strategies.

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