

The Digital Advertising Strategy in order to Maintain Home Business Branding in The Times of Pandemic: Existed in The Times of Crisis

M. M. Purwaningwulan

Communication Science Department, Faculty of Political and Social Science,
Universitas Komputer Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia
melly.maulin@email.unikom.ac.id

Abstract. Pandemic condition has test the stability of the brand that has been built by the company. This research aimed to in-depth-analyze the Digital Advertising Strategy in order to Maintain Home Business Branding in The Times of Pandemic: Existed in The Times of Crisis. The research was conducted with a qualitative approach. The most appropriate method for this research was descriptive. Data collection was conducted through observation and in-depth interviews. Research informant is a home businesses and the expert of marketing communication. The result showed that the most widely used digital advertising is Instagram. Instagram is used for branding because followers and interactions has not optimal yet. To increase sales of home business usually cooperate with online applications. The cooperation mechanism uses profit sharing or commission calculations as well as sales promotions. Home businesses that have more capital will use digital advertising to maintain sales with attractive promotions. The conclusion of this research is that the home businesses must be able to distinguish between marketing and branding, during a pandemic, digital advertising strategies are used to show the primacy of product benefits and add attributes to products related to the pandemic. This research has an impact on the development and selection of the right Digital Advertising Strategy for online businesses so that they can survive during and after a pandemic.

1. Introduction

When the government is trying to optimize Indonesia's economic conditions, the Covid-19 pandemic comes with all its negative effects. As we now know, the impact of this pandemic is very influential in all aspects, especially on the health and economic conditions of the country. With the Covid-19 pandemic, it is undeniable that Indonesia's economy is currently in a state that is arguably "very unstable". Covid-19 has succeeded in changing the habits that we do every day at home, at school, at work, on the road, and anywhere else. The community is made seemingly helpless, because our steps are limited by the presence of Covid-19, which makes us unproductive which has an impact on the economic problems of families, communities, regions and the country [1]

In Indonesia, most of the new businesses established are micro-scale businesses, namely productive businesses owned by individuals and / or individual business entities with assets of up to 50 million rupiah and a turnover of up to 300 million rupiah per year (Ministry of SMEs and Cooperatives, 2009)

Although on a micro scale, in the aggregate the existence of these businesses is able to support the social and economic life of a country through their contribution to job creation and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In general, factors such as limited access to capital, limited market access, limited technology, difficulty obtaining quality raw materials at affordable prices, complicated bureaucracy, taxes, limited resources, weak managerial abilities, and low quality of human resources and mastery of technology is seen as a factor that causes the growth of small businesses (Tambunan, 2002; Davidson, 1989) [2]

Micro-scale businesses are increasingly creative and use the internet as a medium for doing business. Basically, online business can be defined as trading activity, both goods and services, which is carried out using the internet as a liaison between sellers and buyers. From this definition, several main elements can be drawn, namely trade, goods or services, and the internet. Business can be likened to a child who must be nurtured and cared for in order to grow and develop. Starting by mapping the market, having a strong customer base, and knowing what advantages it has so that the company's revenue will increase. As the business grows, the complexity will increase. The challenge is to consistently maintain regular customer satisfaction, manage company revenues well, ensure the company runs effectively and efficiently, and face emerging competitors [3]

In this modern era, the company's marketing strategy requires development that is more than just a quality or competitively priced product or service, namely an effective communication process to maintain harmonious relationships with consumers. No matter how good the marketing strategy plan is designed according to the conditions and industrial competitive position of a product or service, but if the marketing strategy is not communicated effectively and efficiently, consumer knowledge which results in the demand for products or services offered by the company will also not occur effectively (Jatmiko, 2014) [4]

On the other hand, for small businesses, product branding is very difficult. Especially if the product you choose has quite a lot of big competitors, the branding process will be more difficult to do. Even though it's difficult, it doesn't mean that branding can't be done. Branding is a communication activity to maintain and strengthen a brand with the aim of providing perspective to everyone who sees it. Branding itself is closely related to terms, signs, symbols, visual characteristics, image, character, perspective, credibility, and impressions in the minds of customers on the products offered. The presence of branding alone will help every business owner to be more different and stand out from competitors. Benefits of branding for companies:

1. Attract consumers to buy your product
2. Increase customer loyalty to your product or business
3. Opening opportunities to set a high selling price
4. Highlight the superiority of the product compared to competitors
5. Product differentiation [5]

Social media is still a very interesting platform to explore. Business people use social media as a means to be able to introduce and market their products to consumers. Apart from following trends, the use of social media in marketing can reduce the relatively expensive promotional costs. That way business actors can allocate their costs for other purposes related to production or distribution.

Advertisers are enthusiastically integrating social media into their advertising programs to drive digital engagement. For example, stating "digital engagement is key to us," sports brand Adidas recently announced it will focus its marketing efforts exclusively on digital and social channels (McCarthy 2017). The effectiveness of such digital engagement programs is usually assessed with social media monitoring tools providing quantitative metrics, such as the number of likes, shares, comments, opens, views, followers, or clicks, as indicators of level of engagement or valence of engagement (positive or negative comments). Growth among these engagement metrics is often thought to stem from creative execution of ads. With A/B testing, for example, various colors, calls to

action, background images, photos, and the like are juxtaposed to examine which option best stimulates engagement (Scheinbaum 2016).

Previous conceptual articles on the phenomenon of social media (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Kietzmann et al. 2011; Zhu and Chen 2015) have categorized social media platforms along several dimensions. For instance, Zhu and Chen (2015) developed a typology based on two characteristics of social media: nature of connection (profile based versus content based) and level of customization of messages (the degree to which a service is customized to satisfy an individual's particular preferences). Together these two defining characteristics lead to four categories of social media:

1. Relationship represents social media platforms that are profile based and consist mostly of customized messages; this category includes platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn.
2. Self-media platforms are also profile based but offer people the chance to manage their own social media communication channels. A typical example is Twitter.
3. Creative outlet platforms are content based and allow users to share their interests and creativity, for example, YouTube and Instagram.
4. Finally, collaboration platforms are also content based but allow people to ask questions, get advice, or find the most interesting news and content of the day [6]

This study intends to analyze how home business players are trying to survive in the pandemic era by using digital advertising, are there any specific strategies being carried out and what are the business opportunities during the pandemic.

From the explanation above, the following problems are formulated:

1. What are the obstacles faced by the home business during the pandemic?
2. How is the promotion carried out through digital advertising in maintaining home business branding during a pandemic?
3. What are the opportunities for the home business during and after the pandemic?

2. Method

Research used qualitative methods with descriptive approach was expected to get information and data the way it is, about The Digital Advertising Strategy in order to Maintain Home Business Branding in The Times of Pandemic . Research, qualitative research method is the research method used to examine an object in the natural condition, (as the opposite of experiments) where researcher are a key instrument, data collection techniques performed in triangulation, data analysis was inductively, and qualitative research results emphasizes the meaning rather than the generalization [7]

The related subject with this research was a home businesses and the expert of marketing communication. Researcher take some of those informants to be sample of this research because they considered to have more information than others. Informant sampling technique of this research was purposive sampling technique. Research informants consisted of business people from different business fields. The selection of informants used purposive sampling technique or deliberate selection with some considerations.

Table 1. Research Informants

No	Full Name	Brand/Business Field
1	Lucky Lestari	La Manda/Herbal Health Drink
2	Yulie Krisianti	Mister Fat's Kitchen/Zuppa Soup & Pasta
3	Angga & Ines	Invistation/Custom Souvenir and Travel Prayer Mat

4	Hirni Kifa Hazefa	Leader of PD IPEMI (Ikatan Pengusaha Muslimah) Bandung
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Data collection techniques used by researcher in this study was adjusted to the focus and objectives of this research:

1. Literature Study

An attempt to obtain information by reviewing the appropriate reference to the research, such as collecting and studying data which derived from documents that related to the object of this research. Researcher collecting data from various books and scientific works in accordance with the subject of this research and to complete the data that was obtained from the field.

2. Field Study

a. Interview

Interview were conducted directly (face-to-face interview) with students of Indonesia who came from different universities and gender. The form of the interview was structured interview, which all of the questions compiled in advance on the list, so that the question will not deviate from the research purpose.

b. Observation

The process of observing and recording about the symptoms of the research systematically. Observation became one of the data collection techniques when it is in accordance with research objectives, planned and recorded systematically, and its reliability and validity were controllably.

c. Documentation

Data collection by taking data from records, documentation, administration in accordance with the research problem. In this case, the documentation was obtained through documents or archives of the research object.

d. Internet searching

Data collection by equipping or searching the data needed through the internet

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

a. Barriers Faced by the Home Business During the Pandemic

There are three problems faced by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) during the corona virus pandemic. First, the problem from the demand side. People's purchasing power has decreased due to the corona virus pandemic. This has made the level of demand for products produced by MSMEs to fall in the last few months. Second, MSME players also experience problems with access to capital. The problem is, banks are considered to prefer to use their funds to buy government securities (SBN) rather than channelling credit to MSMEs. Third, MSMEs do not have the ability to finance their businesses. This happened because the business capital ran out. Meanwhile, the level of demand in the market has fallen. Thus, MSMEs run out of capital because there is no circulation of funds. Production activities are disrupted, they have difficulty with capital, there are no buyers but they have to pay for employees who cannot stand for a long time, and eventually they collapse. However, apart from the three problems of MSMEs during this pandemic, there are actually classic problems that still occur in MSMEs. Some of the classic problems are that the majority of MSMEs are not legally incorporated, MSMEs do not have financial reports, MSMEs tend to have low ability to use technology, and marketing problems.

"Business actors in various fields have experienced a very sharp decline. Especially in the early days, you were not allowed to leave the house at all so that consumers were hard to find. The ones that get the most impact are the fashion industry, beauty salons, make-up artists / MUAs, wedding organizers, catering. Especially in the city of Bandung, fashion business actors who have shops must close and lay off their employees, or reduce their employees in the production department and some even stop production, so they make a strategy by switching to other business fields, such as penetrating into the food sector. Businesses that can still survive are daily meals at affordable prices, for example with adjusted portions" (Interview with Hazefa, November 9, 2020).

This is as stated by Hazefa as Entrepreneur Association in Bandung, that food and beverage business have felt these obstacles. According to Lucky Lestari, "It is undeniable that my business has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Sales are decreasing, especially at the start of the pandemic" (Interview with Lucky Lestari, November 9, 2020). Along with that, Yulie Krisianti explained that, "The impact of the pandemic, not being able to sell directly (offline) like on Car Free Day and Catering for weddings was quiet. Now there are still pandemic orders but the income has decreased because offline is OFF" (Interview with Yulie Krisianti, November 6, 2020).

b. Promotion Conducted through digital advertising in maintaining the branding home business during the pandemic

With the high number of Instagram users, more and more business people are using Instagram to promote their products. Instagram marketing is doing marketing activities using all the facilities provided by Instagram with the aim of increasing sales and establishing more lasting communication with customers (customer relationships). The concept of Instagram marketing is trust, through Instagram, business people can build trust by conveying messages in the form of the following information:

1. Include as much information about the profile as possible (as long as it doesn't disturb privacy)
2. Enter the address and contact person who can be contacted
3. Include several names of partner companies (if any)
4. Become a member of the famous people's page
5. Post something useful
6. Include convincing presentation photos
7. Delivery of messages

Instagram is used for brand branding because followers and interactions are still not maximal. To increase sales of home business in cooperation with online applications. The cooperation mechanism uses profit sharing or commission calculations as well as sales promotions. Home businesses that have more capital will use digital advertising to maintain sales with attractive promotions. The use of social media for promotional media should be professional, as according to Hazefa, that "Social media as a promotional media must also have knowledge, this will be useful if you really know how to optimize social media. Quite helpful but must be followed by good and trustworthy service. Being more creative during a pandemic is mandatory, don't wait but pick up the opportunity with the right marketing strategy" (Interview with Hazefa, November 9, 2020).

Hazefa further emphasized that, "Even so, entrepreneurs who are already established with online marketing, so selling online is not a new thing for him. Moreover, having a special online marketing team. For those who were not familiar with online marketing before the pandemic, this is very difficult because they have to learn first and adapt" (Interview with Hazefa, November 9, 2020).

In this research, all business people use Instagram media, for example Yulie Kristianti with her Instagram business @misterfatskitchen. In addition, to maintain sales she uses an open order system through WhatsApp, then registers on the online food order platform, namely Go Food and Grab Food. "Plans for the future to be more active in managing Instagram and collaborating with wedding organizers in order to receive orders for weddings more regularly" (Interview with Yulie Krisianti, November 6, 2020).

Likewise, with products under the La Manda brand, "Because from the beginning we intended to sell online. Instagram does not cost much to promote, and has a wider reach (Interview with Lucky Lestari, November 9, 2020).

c. Home Business Opportunities During and After the Pandemic

The new habit adaptation allows the business to start running again. The existence of a health protocol will shape a different business behaviour. The Corona pandemic has also created new consumption patterns. This can certainly be a new business opportunity after the pandemic. For example, as explained by Hazefa, "The fashion businessmen switched to making cloth mask products at the start of the pandemic because the price was quite expensive, but the more people who made masks, the price decreased again and their sales decreased. Home entrepreneurs that can survive are those who have implemented good business management because all business risks have been counted for a long time before a pandemic storm occurs and have prepared them with adequate budget allocations" (Interview with Hazefa, November 9, 2020).

It turns out that not all businesses during the pandemic have decreased, there are businesses when the pandemic has become more conical and progressive. products or services that are really needed by the market. Think realistically, what items can sell in the market, yes, that's what products are sold. However, switching business fields is not easy either" (Interview with Hazefa, November 9, 2020).

According to Angga & Ines, the owner of the Invistation brand, which is engaged in Custom Souvenirs and travel mats, "Alhamdulillah, for some business models, pandemics may be a problem or even a disaster, but what we get is that business during the pandemic (current situation) is a blessing and a gift. For most people, online business may be the first or only choice during the pandemic, because of the rules of guarding distance and at home (PSBB) actually makes consumer choices narrow to online shopping, and this opportunity is here for anyone who can utilizing it, including "us" at Invistation, increases and gains in production, sales and turnover occurred during a pandemic" (Interview with Angga and Ines, November 11, 2020).

Then Angga and Ines added that, "For future strategies, due to the high demand during the pandemic, Invistation plans to accelerate speed and increase production quantity. The solution is, God willing, add production machines, add human resources while continuing to innovate and improve product quality" (Interview with Angga and Ines, November 11, 2020).

Lucky Lestari even during the pandemic succeeded in developing its products by producing herbal drink (jamu) "Jamu Djadoel" with the properties to ward off the corona virus, "Developing the products offered, maximizing promotions through online and wanting to penetrate the marketplace" (Interview with Lucky Lestari, November 9, 2020).

3.2. Discussion

Home businesses fall into the category of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Now the home business is very mushrooming. This is due to the benefits that business actors get when doing business from home, such as minimizing the rent budget for places, streamlining capital budgets and the

freedom to manage working time. To have a home business, there are conditions that must be considered, namely managing and having a Home Industry Food Production permit or PIRT. This licensing is important, especially for food or beverage type product businesses [8]

The keys to running a start-up are flexibility and adaptability. At this stage of business development, rapid changes will often occur in pursuit of product perfection, so that if you are unable to remain deft in responding to it, the business will find it difficult to survive. After running for several years, the relationship with consumers is getting stronger, the company's management team is getting more solid, and income has stabilized. At this stage, the business can be said to be well-established. Many business people are complacent when they enter this stage because the challenges they face are relatively easy to overcome. Especially for pandemic conditions, there are several things that must be considered in using digital advertising:

Do market research. Do in-depth research on how a market works and find out what market needs other market players have still missed during a pandemic. The first way to find out market needs is to ask consumers directly. This method may seem simple but it is the easiest way. By asking directly to consumers, they can find out what problems our products can solve.

In using a social media platform as an online shop, the number of followers or friends will be very influential. The greater the number, the greater the number of people who know the product. For that, one must create a good image on social media accounts.

Insert interesting content, upload testimonials from satisfied customers, and pay attention to the aesthetics of the uploaded images and videos. Can collaborate with other accounts to run mutually beneficial campaigns.

Atmoko explained that *the Instagram application has five main menus which are all located at the bottom, which are as follows:*

1. Home Page, displays a timeline of the latest photos from fellow users who have followed.
2. Comments, photos on Instagram can be commented on using the comments column.
3. Explore, is a display of popular photos that most Instagram users like.
4. Profile, on the profile page we can find out in detail about user information, be it ourselves or other fellow users.
5. News Feed, displays notifications of various activities carried out by Instagram users. There are several sections that should be filled in to make the uploaded photo more informative (Atmoko 2012: 28)

The following parts are described in (Atmoko, 2012: 52), namely:

1. Title, making the title or caption of the photo more to strengthen the character or message to be conveyed in the photo.
2. Hashtag, a label in the form of a word prefixed with a hash (#) symbol. This feature is important because it makes it very easy for users to find photos on Instagram with certain labels.
3. Location, Instagram maximizes this technology by providing location features. So that each photo uploaded will display the location where it was taken.

Atmoko also stated that even though Instagram is called a photo sharing service, Instagram is also a social network. Because through Instagram, individuals can interact with fellow users. Here are some activities you can do on Instagram:

1. Follow, allows us to follow or make friends with other users who we find interesting to follow.

2. Like, if you like a photo in the timeline, don't hesitate to like it. First by pressing the like button at the bottom of the caption next to the comment. Second, by double tap (double tap) on the photo that you like.
3. Comments, like likes, comments are part of the interaction but are more lively and personal. Because through comments, users express their thoughts through words. We are free to provide any comments on photos, be it suggestions, praise or criticism.
4. Mentions, this feature allows us to call other users. The trick is to add an arroba sign (@) and enter the user's Instagram account (Atmoko 2012: 59) [9]

The role of branding is a buffer for marketing activities so that brands become more unique and stand out from the rest. In a pandemic condition like today, there are facts that must be known by business people, first, pandemic conditions test the stability of the brand that has been built, in this case what must be done is to sharpen the benefits of the product for consumers. For example, herbal medicine, we can provide more value by providing a tagline such as, "keeping you extra from the Covid-19 19 Virus". The second fact, the pandemic conditions force business people to "swerve", for example, when we already have a product, we can add a label to the brand, for example food products with the label "accompany your days at home".

Small and medium enterprises need to be careful of the traps that are all I, I am the cheapest, I am the best, I am the most practical. Too often talk about product advantages, saying our product is better than other stores. What must be understood is the difference between marketing and branding. Marketing, business people must listen to consumers' words, while branding must listen to their conscience.

It is undeniable that during the pandemic, home businesses prefer to concentrate on marketing. Businesses need a short-term strategy for day-to-day business operations, medium-term to assess the problems that will occur as well as anticipatory and long-term steps considering, this outbreak will have an impact on the country's economy which will affect business conditions as well. Communication is one of the important keys in business management during a crisis. Therefore, ensure that communication with employees and all parties is maintained. The existence of increasingly advanced technology makes human work easier, including communication matters. Operational activities are an important factor in the continuity of a business. In a crisis, it is necessary to see what parts are affected and plan steps to protect it. For example, F&B entrepreneurs will definitely find it difficult to manage their inventory considering the food ingredients they buy have the potential to expire.

4. Conclusion

At the beginning of the pandemic, the most obstacle faced by business people was the decline in sales which was caused by not being able to interact directly with consumers which was then followed by a decrease in consumer purchasing power. Digital advertising is the most effective alternative to increase sales while maintaining product branding. The most used medium is Instagram. However, due to the limited number of followers, business people collaborate with online applications and market place to maintain sales. For business people who already have good management, they can actually survive a pandemic, and can even increase their sales. A pandemic can at the same time be an opportunity for business people to strengthen their product branding by means of product development and also by sharpening the benefits and product attributes associated with pandemic conditions. Business people can start seriously designing operational plans, medium and long term so that they are better prepared to face any conditions in the future

Suggestions from this research, with good product potential, business people are more consistent and more serious in developing creative promotional content on social media, so as to maximize product marketing and branding.

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