

Optimizing MSMEs: Google My Business Strategy to Increase the Visibility of Pematang Siantar MSMEs

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to increase the business visibility of MSME actors in Pematang Siantar City through the use of Google My Business. The methods include identifying needs, preparing materials, recruiting trainers, conducting theoretical and practical sessions, and evaluating. Of the 40 participants, most had shops and stalls that could have been more optimal in online marketing. The activity results showed that the training increased participants' understanding and skills in digital marketing, especially using Google My Business. Evaluation involves participant feedback, measurement of results, and recommendations for improvement. This activity concludes that the training has succeeded in having a positive impact on MSME actors in Pematang Siantar City, improving their digital skills and providing recommendations for further training to be more effective.



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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and technological advancement, the digital world has become an integral part of everyday life. Digital technology has changed how we communicate, work, shop, and form interpersonal relationships. Our reliance on digital technology for everyday tasks has not only changed the way we collaborate and organize but has also changed the nature of innovation itself. Information and communication technology, including the internet, has developed rapidly and has become a new medium in everyday life (THAI, 2022) (Ananto, 2022) (Lynch & Farrokhi, 2022). Digital media, especially search engines like Google, have become the primary means for consumers to find information about

the products or services they want. Consumers allocate their search efforts across different types of word of mouth (WOM), such as face-to-face communication, Internet opinion sites, and social media platforms (Bartschat, Cziehso, & Hennig-Thurau, 2022). Increased internet access has provided consumers with many information sources and data types to use in their decision-making processes (Golovacheva, Smirnova, Alkanova, & Bogatyreva, 2022). With the increasing use of the internet, business in the online realm is not only an option but a necessity, especially for MSME players to remain competitive.

The benefits of Google My Business for MSMEs are very significant in increasing business location promotion and product marketing. In a study, training and utilizing

Google Business features have helped MSMEs in Dangdang Village, Cisauk District, and Tangerang Regency to increase their product marketing targets. Through this training, MSMEs are given a sufficient understanding of the use of Google Business in a good and attractive way to maximize the positive impact of Google Business in terms of promoting business locations and marketing products to the wider community. In addition, Google My Business also provides benefits in increasing visibility and ease for customers to find MSME businesses. Research conducted by Google My Business helps business owners get close to their consumers by developing a business online for free, increasing visibility in search engines, and providing important information about the business. With Google My Business, MSMEs can be more easily found by potential customers and increase the chances of getting more sales. In addition, Google My Business also provides insights about customers and helps business owners understand customer preferences and needs. Research conducted by Google My Business provides insights about customers that can be used to develop more effective marketing strategies. By understanding customer preferences, MSMEs can optimize their products and services to meet customer needs better. In addition to the benefits already mentioned, Google My Business also provides benefits regarding business appearance on Google Maps. Research conducted by Google My Business allows businesses to show the position of their place of business on Google Maps. This makes it easier for potential customers to find and visit MSME businesses. Overall, Google My Business significantly benefits MSMEs in promoting business locations, marketing products, increasing visibility, understanding customer preferences, and business appearance on Google Maps. By making good use of Google My Business features, MSMEs can increase the success and growth of their business. (Thoyyibah, Haryono, & Hardi, 2022)(Ary, 2022)(Santaria, Ardulat, & Ary, 2022)(Ary, 2022)(Vijaya, Muchlis, Azizah, & Miftah, 2022)

In Pematang Siantar City, many MSME players have businesses in the form of shops and stalls, but when searched through search engines, their businesses are challenging. This shows that MSME players in

this city still need to maximize the potential of digital media in marketing their businesses. The use of digital media, especially in digital marketing, is one solution that can help increase the visibility of their business. Previous trainings, such as digital marketing training for MSMEs, have shown positive results and have had a significant impact on MSME actors in increasing their business visibility.

To solve these problems, we offer digital marketing training that focuses on utilizing Google My Business and optimizing it. This training is designed to provide understanding and skills to MSME actors in Pematang Siantar City on how to maximize the visibility of their business on the Google search engine in an effective way.

The purpose of this community service activity is to help MSME actors in Pematang Siantar City increase the visibility of their business on the Google search engine by utilizing Google My Business. Through methods consisting of preparation, implementation, and evaluation, we hope that MSME players can utilize digital media optimally and compete in today's digital era.

METHOD

Partners in implementing this activity are MSME actors in Pematang Siantar City. They are owners and managers of small and medium enterprises domiciled and running their businesses in the urban area of Pematang Siantar City. From the data obtained, around 40 MSME actors have registered and will be actively involved in this training activity. Most of them have businesses in the form of shops and stalls that have yet to maximize their online potential in marketing their products or services. This training will be held at the Muhammadiyah Da'wah Building in Pematang Siantar City, a strategic place that is easily accessible to MSME actors.

The community service process includes several stages, including preparation, implementation, and evaluation. (Anisyah & Sugiyanto, 2021). At the preparatory stage, an approach is made to the target group and the necessary materials and tools (Anisyah & Sugiyanto, 2021). The stages of preparation are as follows: *Identify Needs*: Before implementation, the team will conduct a small

survey to identify the basic needs and level of understanding of MSME actors related to digital marketing. *Material Preparation:* Based on the identification results, the team will compile appropriate and relevant training materials, primarily focusing on utilizing Google My Business. *Coach Recruitment:* The team will select trainers experienced in digital marketing to ensure the quality of training.

The implementation stage of community service includes implementing planned activities (Anisyah & Sugiyanto, 2021). The implementation stage plan is as follows: *Opening:* The activity will begin with a welcome and a general introduction to the purpose and benefits of the training. *Training Session:* MSME actors will be given material on the basics of digital marketing and how to utilize Google My Business optimally. *Hands-on Practice:* After the theoretical session, participants will be allowed to practice the knowledge they have gained directly.

Finally, the evaluation stage is carried out to assess the impact and effectiveness of community service activities (Anisyah & Sugiyanto, 2021). The evaluation stages are as follows: *Feedback from Participants:* After the training, participants will be asked to provide feedback on the material and implementation methods. *Outcome Measurement:* The team will assess the extent of improvement in understanding and skills of MSME actors post-training. *Recommendations for Next Training:* Based on feedback and evaluation results, the team will develop recommendations for improvement in the next training. With this systematic implementation method, it is hoped that community service activities can provide optimal benefits for MSME actors in Pematang Siantar City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Preparation

Before starting a training, careful preparation is essential to ensure the success

In remarks from the committee as well as a general introduction to the purpose of this training. In this speech, the head of the implementation team also explained the urgency of sMSMEs today to switch to digital marketing.

Training Sessions

and effectiveness of the training. One important first step in this stage is "Needs Identification." Through the initial survey conducted by the team, we can dig into more profound information about what MSME actors really need, as well as their level of understanding related to digital marketing today. Thus, the training that will be provided can be tailored to their actual needs, not just limited to theory or general practice.

After identifying these needs, the team will move on to the "Material Preparation" stage. In this stage, the information obtained from the survey will be processed and compiled into a structured curriculum or training syllabus. Training materials must be structured to be relevant to the needs of MSME actors and easy to understand. The main focus is how to make effective use of Google My Business, which can help them increase the visibility of the venture in search engines.

Furthermore, in the "Coach Recruitment" stage, the team selects individuals competent in digital marketing. An experienced trainer not only has in-depth knowledge but also can deliver the material in a way that participants can understand. The selection of the right trainer will ensure that the message and purpose of the training can be conveyed well to MSME actors.

B. Implementation

The implementation of training is at the heart of this whole process. This is a time when all the preparations that have been made are translated into concrete actions to empower MSME actors.

Opening

When participants arrive, the activity will begin with an opening session. The opening began with a speech from the head of the implementation team to partners and participants as information and objectives of implementing this activity and the benefits that MSME participants will obtain.

In the digital transformation journey of MSMEs in Pematang Siantar City, the training session became an important milestone. Here, MSME players will be guided through a digital marketing maze, starting from the basics to more complex concepts. This training is designed not only as a transfer of knowledge

but also as an interactive and engaging learning experience.

In this session, the speakers explained each point conveyed not just through text but also illustrated with informative graphs, explaining diagrams, and relevant images. The goal is to facilitate understanding, enrich perspectives, and build connections between theory and practice.

One of the topics that will be in the spotlight is the use of Google My Business. In this discussion, participants not only heard theoretical explanations but were also presented with images of the interface display of Google My Business itself. This is a crucial step to concretize an abstract concept into something easily understood and applied.

The Google My Business interface will be displayed in detail. They are starting from how to register and manage business information to take advantage of features such as posts, photos, and reviews. Thus, participants not only get an overview but are also guided to understand how it works and the potential they can explore from this digital tool.

This visual approach is efficient in learning. Because many MSME players may be the first time to enter the world of digital marketing. Through images and visualizations, concepts that once felt foreign

and complicated become closer and more accessible for participants to understand.

Hands-on Practice

In the MSME training series, hands-on practical sessions are the key to internalizing knowledge. Following the principle of "learning by doing," this session ensures that participants act as not only recipients of information but also as active actors.

To start, the instructor will be the navigator who guides the journey of this practice. Through the projector, the instructor's computer screen will be shared in real-time with all participants. From here, you will see you take a step-by-step look at Google My Business. Every click, navigation, and feature will be explained in detail, ensuring participants can follow the process.

The advantage of this method is that participants can see firsthand the application of the theory they have learned before. It is not just about showing the process but also about building practical understanding.

After the demonstration session, it was the participants' turn to jump in directly. They can practice what they have just seen on their respective devices. This is the moment where theory meets practice, and knowledge begins to transform into skill.



Figure 1. Greetings and Information from the Head of the Implementation Team and Participants Practice the Google My Business Application Directly

During the practice process, instructors and training assistants will tour, providing personalized guidance. Any questions, doubts, or difficulties faced by participants will be responded to, and solutions sought. This individualized approach is essential to ensure that each participant gets the attention they need and can overcome any obstacles.

These hands-on sessions are not only about learning how to use digital tools but also about building participants' confidence in taking on digital challenges. With proper guidance and intensive practice, participants are expected to leave the session not only with new knowledge but also with skills ready to be applied to grow their business.

C. Evaluation

Evaluation is the final stage, but it is still essential. An in-depth evaluation is necessary to ensure that training objectives have been achieved and to identify areas that require future improvement.

1. Feedback from Participants

One of the most valuable sources of evaluation is direct feedback from trainees. Through feedback, we can understand the

extent to which the training material is following the needs of participants, the trainer's delivery method, and what may need to be adjusted to improve the quality of training in the future. Participants will be asked to fill out an evaluation questionnaire that covers several aspects, such as material relevance, delivery methods, and facility quality.

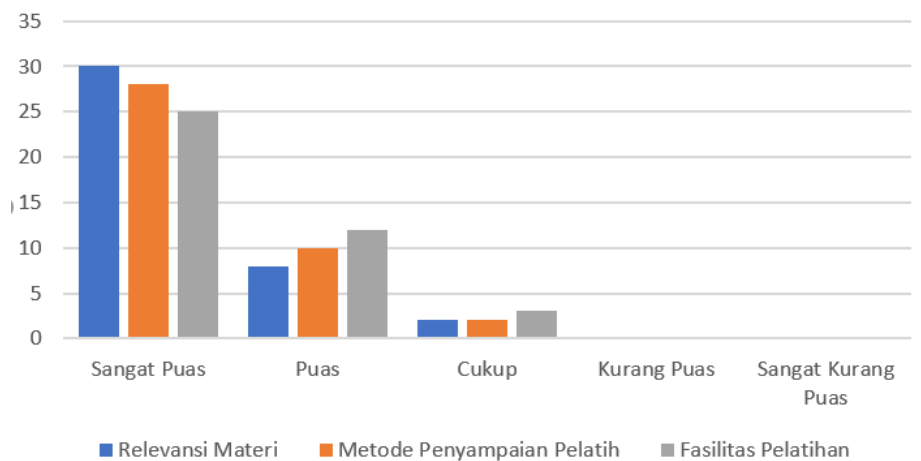


Figure 2. Participant Satisfaction Feedback Graph

Based on Satisfaction Feedback, participants provide an overview of their assessment of three essential aspects of training: Material Relevance, Trainer Delivery Methods, and Training Facilities. This graph shows participant satisfaction with several important aspects of training. Regarding Material Relevance, as many as 75% of participants felt very satisfied, while 20% felt satisfied, and 5% considered it sufficient. No one feels less satisfied or very less satisfied. It shows that the training material is highly relevant to their needs.

For the Trainer Delivery Method, 70% of participants were delighted, and 25% were satisfied. Only 5% had enough, with no one feeling less satisfied or dissatisfied. This signifies the effectiveness and quality of the coach's delivery.

As for the Training Facility, 62.5% of participants were delighted, 30% were satisfied, and 7.5% felt adequate. Like the other two aspects, all of the participants felt satisfied. This shows that the facilities provided have met the expectations of participants.

Overall, this data illustrates a high level of satisfaction from the participants, with a high percentage in the "Very Satisfied" category in all aspects.

2. Measurement of Results

In addition to feedback, objective evaluation of the results achieved by participants is also critical. It can be done by giving a post-test or questionnaire that assesses the application of the practices taught in their daily business activities. With this, we can assess their improved understanding and skills post-training.

Table 1. Application Data

Aspects	Before Training	After Training
Ability to utilize GMB	20%	85%
Understanding marketing strategy	40%	90%

From the table above, it can be seen to illustrate the improvement of participants' abilities and understanding before and after attending the training. In the aspect of "Ability to utilize Google My Business (GMB)," there is a significant improvement. Before the training, only 20% of participants could utilize GMB effectively. However, after attending the training, there was a big jump until it reached 85%. Shows the effectiveness of the training in improving participants' expertise in utilizing GMB for their business interests.

Meanwhile, in the aspect of "Understanding marketing strategy," there was also a perfect improvement. Before the training, only 40% of participants had a good understanding of marketing strategies. After training, the figure rises to 90%. This signifies that the training not only improves technical skills in using tools such as GMB but also strengthens participants' conceptual understanding of the overall marketing strategy.

Both of these improvements show a significant positive impact of training, both in terms of improved practical skills and theoretical understanding.

Recommendations for Further Training

Based on feedback and evaluation results, the team will develop recommendations for the next training. For example, if it is found that most participants are facing difficulties in a particular aspect of Google My Business, then subsequent training can provide more focus on that aspect.

For example, if feedback shows that participants want further material on the use of social media in digital marketing, then this can be considered for future training materials.

Evaluation not only measures the success of current training but also provides a foundation for improvement and improvement of training quality in the future. With a systematic approach to evaluation, future training programs are expected to have a more significant impact on MSMEs in Pematang Siantar City.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Community service activities focusing on digital marketing training, especially using Google My Business for MSME actors in Pematang Siantar City, have been successfully carried out. Through structured stages,

namely preparation, implementation, and evaluation, this training provided relevant knowledge and skills to the participants. Preparation, which includes identifying needs, preparing materials, and recruiting trainers, ensures that the training content is following the needs of participants. The implementation, which consists of an opening, theory session, and hands-on practice, allows participants to not only understand the theory but also apply their knowledge practically. The evaluation process, including gathering feedback from participants, provides insight into the effectiveness of the training and areas for improvement.

Suggestions from the results of this activity are: (1) Material Enhancement: Based on feedback, there is room to improve training materials. Content enrichment with case studies that are more varied and relevant to local business situations can increase the relevance of the material; (2) Delivery Method: Although most participants are satisfied with the delivery method, it is good to continue to explore and apply more interactive and engaging teaching methods to maintain a high level of participant engagement; (3) Supporting Facilities: Improving the quality of supporting facilities, such as the availability of adequate technological devices and a stable internet connection, can help participants more easily participate in practical sessions; (4) Post-Training Assistance: Holding mentoring sessions after the training can help participants apply the knowledge gained to their daily business practices; (5) Collaboration with Others: Building cooperation with government institutions, business organizations, and the technology community can provide further support for MSME players to develop in digital marketing; (6) Continuous Evaluation: Conduct continuous evaluation of the impact of training in the medium to long term to ensure that the training provides sustainable benefits for MSME businesses. By paying attention to these suggestions, it is hoped that future training can be more effective and provide more significant benefits for MSME actors in Pematang Siantar City.

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