



Marketing communication management for micro, small and medium enterprises in increasing community economic empowerment

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ABSTRACT

This literature review was conducted to explore the realm of marketing communications management in exploring its potential to increase the economic empowerment of communities in Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research analyzes primary and secondary qualitative data obtained from trusted sources such as scientific journals, books and online or offline news. The results of research analysis reveal that empowerment of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) is a key factor in improving the welfare of society as a whole. This study also found that MSMEs play a major role in contributing to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) from year to year. Increasing gross domestic product (GDP) has an impact on Indonesia's economic progress. Indonesia's economic development is very dependent on MSMEs, so it is considered important to empower MSMEs with effective marketing communications management to increase productivity and reach a wider market. By utilizing various communication methods such as advertising, online marketing, direct marketing, personal selling, sales promotions, and public relations, MSMEs can improve their overall marketing strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

The unpredictable nature of the Covid-19 pandemic at the regional level is hampering individual economic growth. To overcome this, the central government has shifted its attention to helping micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) throughout the country. Meanwhile, support in the form of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Village Funds, Provincial

Assistance, PKH, Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT), and other initiatives continue to be available. The ultimate goal of this effort is to improve the livelihoods of SMEs and encourage community economic growth.

Increasing business empowerment, especially MSMEs, is very important to raise the level of community welfare. However, the level of productivity of these businesses is still low, and there is a lack of creativity in increasing added value, resulting in product quality below standard. As a result, despite the potential for growth of SMEs as the main driver of the community's economy, they are currently experiencing stagnation (Aksoy, 2017).

The already worrying economic situation in Indonesia has been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. To overcome this, the government has shifted its focus to promoting MSMEs. These businesses have been hailed as the saviors of the country's economy, given their significant contributions in the past. By supporting these small businesses, the government hopes to ease the nation's economic burden (Pramudya Ananda, 2022).

Based on the data presented, it can be seen that MSMEs consistently make a significant contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from year to year. In 2019, MSMEs contributed IDR 7,034.1 trillion to GDP, showing an extraordinary increase of 22.9% from the previous year of IDR 5,721.1 trillion at constant prices. Based on current prices, the contribution of MSMEs to GDP rose to IDR 9,580.8 trillion, up 5.7% from the previous year's IDR 9,062.6 trillion. Meanwhile, MSMEs have played an important role in Indonesia's business sector by providing employment for 119.6 million people, which is 96.92% of the workforce. This figure shows an increase of 2.21% from 2018.

The backbone of the Indonesian economy is made up of MSMEs, as they make up almost all of the country's businesses. In fact, 64.2 million units or 99.99% of business actors in Indonesia are MSMEs, which can be broken down into 63.4 million micro businesses, 783,100 small businesses and 60,700 medium businesses. Surprisingly, large companies only account for 0.01% of the total business units in the country with only 5,500 units. Despite their small size, MSMEs employ the majority of the country's workforce, providing employment to around 3.6 million workers, which is equivalent to 3% of the total workforce.

Indonesia's economic growth plan includes empowering MSMEs to improve the welfare of its citizens. However, despite these efforts, MSME productivity levels are still low, and there is a lack of creativity to increase the value of their products. This stagnation has hampered the growth of MSMEs, which could actually be the main driver of the community's economy if adequate empowerment steps are taken.

The Bank Indonesia report shows that credit distribution to MSMEs as a percentage of GDP was 7.15% in Q1 2022. Although this figure experienced a quarterly decline, on an annual basis it increased by 7.04% in the same period in 2021. Ministry of Cooperatives and Business Small and Medium Enterprises said that the number of MSMEs in Indonesia reached 64.2 million in March 2021, contributing 61.07% to the country's GDP, or Rp. 8,573.89 trillion. These businesses are a vital source of employment, accounting for 97% of the workforce and receiving up to 60.42% of all investment in the country. Indonesian MSMEs play an important role in the country's economic growth (Awa et al., 2015). To increase productivity and expand their marketing reach, effective marketing communications must be built for the purpose of empowerment (Kotler, 2012). Effective management involves executive direction, administrative oversight, and conflict resolution, while maintaining ethical standards. Developing employees and mentoring talented individuals is also a key managerial responsibility. Sustainable and efficient service to the community is the main goal of management (Ayandibu & Houghton, 2017). Communication in organizations is the process of sharing information and understanding. Meanwhile, marketing involves obtaining desired products, services, and values through social and managerial processes. By developing skills in managing MSMEs and marketing their products effectively, business entities can encourage community empowerment (Chege & Wang, 2020).

Shardlow believes that empowerment is the effort of individuals, groups or communities who are committed to living for a prosperous standard of living in the future, always in accordance with their capabilities (Chege & Wang, 2020). Empowerment aims to inform and encourage individual or group activities to become independent. Independence here means fostering creative and innovative entrepreneurship in supporting the development of micro, small and medium enterprises, as well as management capabilities. Modern management systems, both in terms of funding, production and marketing, or the ability to manage e-commerce through various e-commerce platform applications, and the ability to manage promotions through social media platforms, boost MSMEs (Fanida et al., 2020).

Similar research entitled "Entrepreneurship Management and Marketing Communication Training for MSMEs" was conducted by (Sulistiyanto et al., 2021). Although previous research has examined the subject on a global scale, including the variables of entrepreneurship training and marketing communications management, in this research, the subject focuses more on marketers' communications management and its impact on community empowerment. The aim of this research is to analyze efforts to empower the community's economy, especially SMEs. Based on this background, researchers are interested in taking a similar theme entitled "MSME Marketing Communication Management in Increasing Community Economic Empowerment".

Law of the Republic of Indonesia no. 20 of 2008 concerning MSMEs sets the criteria for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). According to Article 1 Chapter 1 of the Law, a micro business is "a productive business owned by an individual or individual business entity that meets the criteria for a micro business outlined in the same Law" (Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan Republik Indonesia, 2008). Independent businesses that are not included in large companies or micro businesses that meet standard small business criteria are considered small businesses. Likewise, a medium-sized enterprise operates as a separate entity and is not a subsidiary of a micro or small enterprise which meets the legal requirements for a medium-sized enterprise.

Across the world, MSMEs are praised for their contribution to economic progress and progress. In developed countries, they are critical as they employ a large proportion of the workforce and substantially increase GDP (Bayraktar & Algan, 2019). However, SMEs often face two big challenges, namely insufficient funds and limited human resources. Insufficient funds can hinder business growth, and obtaining loan funds from banks or non-bank institutions often proves difficult due to strict administrative requirements (Santoso, 2022). Additionally, many small businesses in Indonesia, usually traditional family-run businesses, do not have good bookkeeping practices, making it difficult for them to obtain financial assistance from outside parties.

Small and medium-sized businesses are usually family businesses, with weak marketing networks and limited reach. Consequently, this results in low market penetration and results in limited output, which ultimately impacts product competitiveness. Product quality can also be affected due to these weak marketing capabilities.

In the process of implementing company functions, of course management communication occurs between superiors and subordinates, between the company and its customers, especially in marketing its goods or services. It should be understood that marketing communications management itself is a collaboration between companies to manage corporate communications, the results of which help market the company's products or services and make them acceptable to customers.

Kotler & Keller (2016) explains that marketing communications management is knowledge that needs to be learned to be able to receive all information communicated through the marketing area, to achieve marketing goals and to be able to protect and grow value well by looking at all aspects such as: communication strategy, Potential Segmentation, Media Planning, Message Creative and Visual Effects, Communication Costs and Advertising Expenditures, Marketing Communication Research, Future Business Concepts, Serving Quality Consumers.

The Company's success in carrying out its activities in general and marketing activities in particular cannot be separated from its efforts to face and adapt to developments in the environment in which the Company is located. This is because there are many factors and aspects that influence the success or failure of companies in general and marketing in particular as a result of the company's ability or inability to face a rapidly changing environment. Thus, the level of inability or inability to deal with environmental influences can produce opportunities or challenges for companies in carrying out company activities and marketing activities in general (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

The Big Indonesian Dictionary defines empowerment as the process or act of empowering, with the English equivalent being the term "empowerment". Empowerment involves nurturing the potential of communities to enable them to operate independently. It promotes individuals as active agents who can lead themselves towards a better future. Based on (Hamid, 2018) Economic empowerment is the activation of resources to increase productivity, thereby expanding human and natural resources to improve people's lives.

There are several goals of community empowerment, as follows (Hamid, 2018), are empowerment actions seek to grow community strength through motivation, encouragement and promotion of self-awareness to realize potential. The aim of empowerment is to improve the community's economy effectively so that it is able to generate greater income and high added value. To achieve this, there must be a joint effort to increase community access to increased value production. There are four main components: resource availability, technology accessibility, market entry, and demand access. Empowerment, at its core, is the act of unlocking a community's potential, enabling it to function more independently. It is important to note that individuals are not objects but rather individuals who are capable of guiding themselves towards better outcomes. Empowering society economically is essentially mobilizing economic resources to encourage productivity and increase the availability of resources needed for human survival. (Hamid, 2018).

To build stronger communities, empowerment is the foundation. This is the process of fostering motivation, awareness and development of potential in individuals, encouraging them to realize their abilities. The aim of empowerment is to improve the economic status of the community by enabling them to generate better income and increase added value. This can be achieved by facilitating access to four critical elements – resources, technology, markets and demand – that are essential to enhancing the ability to create added value (Santoso, 2022).

Despite being the backbone of the economy, the stagnation in the growth of these enterprises, as highlighted by the data, indicates a need for focused research and intervention. The study's implications are multifaceted, with an overarching need to address the low productivity and lack of creativity within MSMEs. The government's efforts, such as Direct Cash Assistance and various support initiatives, are commendable, yet the data reveals that further steps are essential. The research should delve into the factors hindering productivity, exploring the impact of limited funds, weak marketing networks, and inadequate management practices. Additionally, the study should scrutinize the effectiveness of current empowerment strategies, especially in the context of marketing communications management, as emphasized by scholars such as Kotler and Keller. By understanding and addressing these challenges, the research aims to provide insights that contribute not only to the revitalization of MSMEs but also to the broader goal of community economic empowerment. The anticipated findings could guide policymakers, business leaders, and practitioners in devising more targeted and effective strategies to enhance the productivity, competitiveness, and overall impact of MSMEs in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive research method, through the use of two categories of qualitative data, namely primary and secondary. Qualitative research is carried out to build

knowledge through understanding and discovery. In this research, researchers create a complex picture, examine words, detailed reports from studies that have been carried out previously. Data sources were collected through comprehensive library research techniques, which include trusted offline and online sources such as scientific journals, books and conference reports (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The collected data underwent careful discussion and linking, to ensure coherence and accuracy. This study focuses on MSME actors in Indonesia, using non-probability sampling as a sampling technique. This is done by collecting all possible data taken as a sample based on the researcher's discretion. Data is collected through observation, interviews and research, then analyzed to draw conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The origins of marketing communications management were driven by the need to align customer information needs with well-coordinated marketing campaigns. The critical element of consistency was identified as critical to preventing the perception of wasted expenditure in developing marketing communications strategies (Etuk et al., 2014).

Various factors play a role when ensuring the success of a product in today's market. With high access to digital resources, consumers are critical and demand comprehensive product information. They research carefully before making a purchase, comparing and contrasting products, looking for reviews from other consumers that can attest to the quality (Gunawan & Sulaeman, 2020). The proliferation of social media platforms has facilitated the easy dissemination of information among consumers. Good quality products spread like wildfire, while substandard products are sure to take a hit (Juwita et al., 2020). Some marketing communication methods that will be used are:

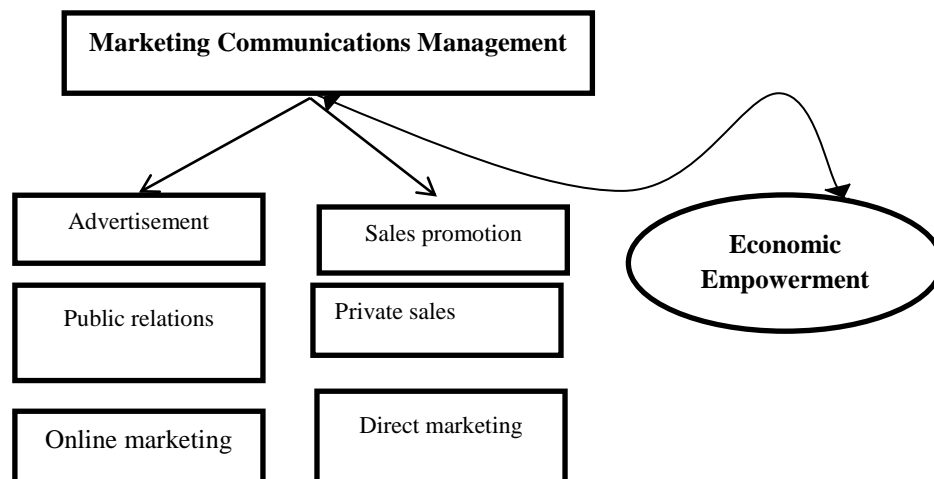


Figure 1. Marketing communications management

Each of these components can be run independently and have different roles.

Advertising is a form of paid impersonal communication regarding an organization or company, product, service or idea by a particular sponsor. It is said to be impersonal because it is simultaneously spread on a large scale through mass media, and consumers tend not to respond directly (Kahrilas et al., 1986). Advertising not only helps inform about the company's products or services, but also serves to remind, differentiate and influence customers or potential consumers about the company's products or services. (Kartajaya et al., 2004).

With the use of advertising, companies can slowly integrate their brand image to a wider audience. So that consumer trust will be realized automatically, but the challenge is that consumers often have to protect themselves from advertising. If you are watching TV and there are advertisements, you can immediately change channels without advertisements. As with other mass media, the advertising section is often ignored by wise consumers who are indifferent and start to ignore advertising (Katyal & Xaviour, 2015).

To market products, billboards have become a popular form of mass media. Rather than using traditional hard sell tactics, ads are integrated into stories or special news features so that viewers or listeners are unaware of their presence. Seeing or listening is advertising (Kusumawati, 2021). In fact, most of these ads are presented as useful content that media consumers are looking for (Setiawati & Kartini, 2018)

Today, advertising has infiltrated the film scene, providing ample opportunities for other MSMEs to get free promotions. However, to make the most of a mass media team, one must learn to capture their attention, offer something unique and valuable, and ensure they are satisfied with the MSME product. However, "ad-free" moments like these are important to take advantage of, as emphasized by (Mukhtar et al., 2020).

With the advent of social media, advertising is no longer the rigid juggernaut it once was. Now, every person or company, whether big or small, can utilize social media as a cost-effective platform for promoting products. Social media, as a mass communication channel, gives anyone the opportunity to advertise through their accounts. As a result, anyone with an extensive social media friend list can increase the chances of their posts being featured in ads (Mutula & Van Brakel, 2006).

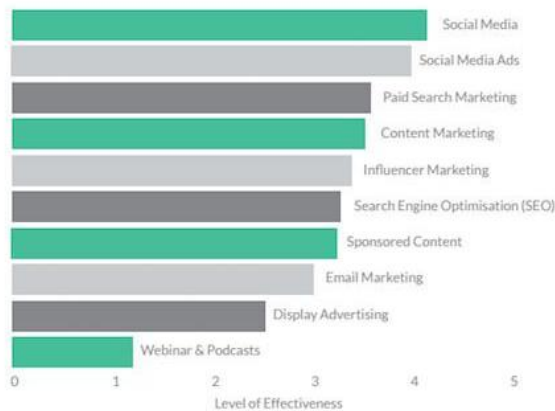


Figure 2. Effectiveness of digital marketing channels

GetCRAFT, one of the content marketing platforms, recently published research highlighting the progress of digital and content marketing in Indonesia in 2017. This study specifically explores the growth trend of companies using digital activities and content marketing as their primary strategy (Get Craft, 2020).

An important discovery is the current trend of social media as the most efficient marketing channel, however, B2B companies will prioritize a content marketing approach this year. According to the visual representation of preferred digital marketing channels, social media takes the lead.

Promotion is a marketing technique that focuses on selling products or services to customers and dealers with the goal of generating sales. The following approach uses incentives for a strong sales force, which aims to persuade distributors and consumers to make purchases, thereby speeding up the sales process (North & Smallbone, 2010)

Meanwhile, the incentive view is a prominent promotional feature, which is considered an accelerator for maximizing sales. By considering the target market, promotions can be utilized by MSMEs to offer free withdrawals or other promotional offers. Such services can be obtained through specialized agencies or even students (Chege & Wang, 2020).

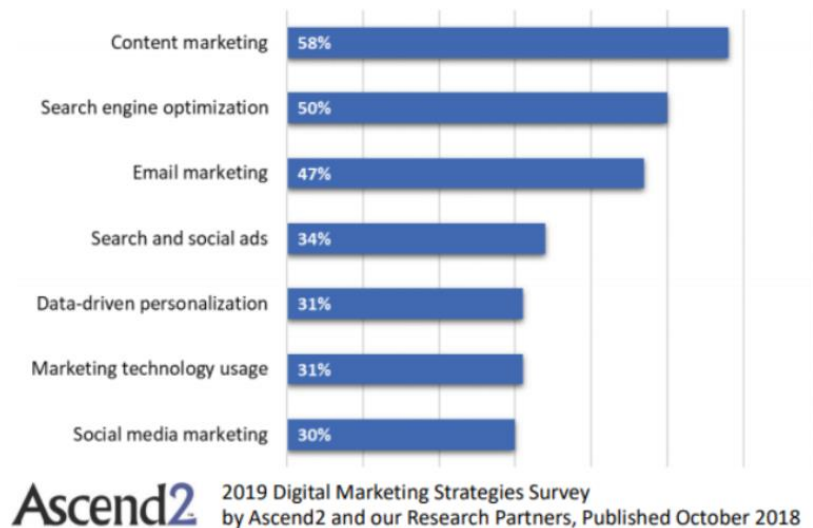


Figure 3. Digital marketing strategies survey

Based on Figure 3, digital marketing strategy survey data conducted by Ascend 2 in 2018 shows that content marketing received 58% of visitors or users, followed by search engine optimization at 50% and so on. (Ascend2, 2018). This shows that digital marketing can be used as a strategy to attract consumers. The phenomenon obtained from the digital marketing strategy survey is that consumers are faced with choosing what type of digital marketing is effective to use to market products. Several types of digital marketing include content marketing, search engine optimization, marketing, search and social ads, and social media marketing. The company's aim is to market its goods through digital marketing so that it can be effective in attracting potential consumers quickly, easily, precisely and widely.

To maximize promotions and expand reach to consumers, it is very important to choose effective promotional media. Defining a promotional mission, such as improving brand image, increasing sales, or building positive relationships with the community, is also important. This helps ensure that the product is widely accepted and trusted and preferred over competitors, even if competitors' products provide more attractive variants and promotions. Identifying the most suitable online and offline promotional media is also no less important, such as using digital marketing media. The synergy between these two media channels ensures successful promotional execution.

Public Relations refers to promotional techniques that address how the public views a product. This involves managing public perception to ensure public acceptance of the product. Public relations is a vital management function that fosters positive and profitable relationships between an organization and its audiences (Purnomo et al., 2020). These relationships can ultimately determine the success or failure of the organization (Nur Anggara Putra et al., 2021)

Effective communication plays a central role in achieving organizational goals through mutually beneficial interactions with various audiences. The core function of public relations includes planned internal and external communication facilities such as being a communicator or liaison between the organization or institution it represents and its public, building positive

relationships and mutualistic symbiosis with the public, as a back up management role supporting the management function of the organization or company and building company image in creating a positive image for the organization or institution (Nur Anggara Putra et al., 2021) In today's highly competitive market, it is important for small, medium, and micro businesses to incorporate public relations into their marketing communications strategies to win over consumers. As highlighted by (Putri et al., 2020) MSMEs can utilize social media platforms to carry out public relations functions previously reserved for large companies. For example, one can easily manage a fan page to promote their products and services, with the ultimate goal of gaining consumer acceptance. Such pages can effectively perform various PR marketing functions, thereby increasing brand recognition and sales.

Personal selling presents a unique opportunity for face-to-face interaction between buyers and sellers, facilitating sales. Through personal selling, sellers aim to persuade market goals in making purchases. This marketing communications medium is distinguished by its capacity for flexible exchange of information, often through product demonstrations or invitations to directly experience the services offered (Rahatmawati et al., 2020).

The conventional marketing technique of personal selling involves direct interaction between the marketer and potential customers, with the goal of promoting quick or repeat purchases. This can occur through direct sales by field agents, or through door-to-door sales. Products that require detailed explanation, demonstration, or repair/service benefit from private sales. In the banking industry, personal selling is a common practice carried out by all bank officials, from janitors and security officers to senior officials. Personal selling brings several advantages, such as: 1) banks have the advantage of meeting customers and potential customers directly, which allows them to provide detailed explanations about their products and services directly, 2) it is possible to collect valuable feedback about product shortcomings by engaging directly with customers, especially by reviewing their complaints. this approach can also provide insight into competitor products, 3) bank staff have the ability to influence customers through the various persuasive arguments they have, 4) facilitate strong relationships between financial institutions and their customers, 5) bank officers play an important role in shaping the bank's reputation by provide excellent and satisfying service and leave a positive impression on customers and create a situation where customers are required to listen, pay attention and respond to the bank.

Online marketing is the marketing communication tool most used by MSMEs in the current digital era and social media. The newest middle class is social media users. So, like it or not, every MSME must adopt social media in their daily life (Setiawati & Kartini, 2018). This is done mainly to connect with the target audience or consumers. However, when using social media as a marketing communication tool, MSMEs must perform well and be more inclined towards online sales (Surahman & Yudhistira, 2022). It is very easy for the target group to leave MSME social media accounts (Surya et al., 2021) Online media communication marketing strategies are currently shifting towards consumer demand. If they want to be widely known on social media, the MSME team can act as consultants for customers by providing information, solutions and helping resolve complaints and consumer needs. The target audience understands the social media platforms that are used together and the demographics on each platform are also required to be important knowledge for MSME players when communicating (Syahza et al., 2021).

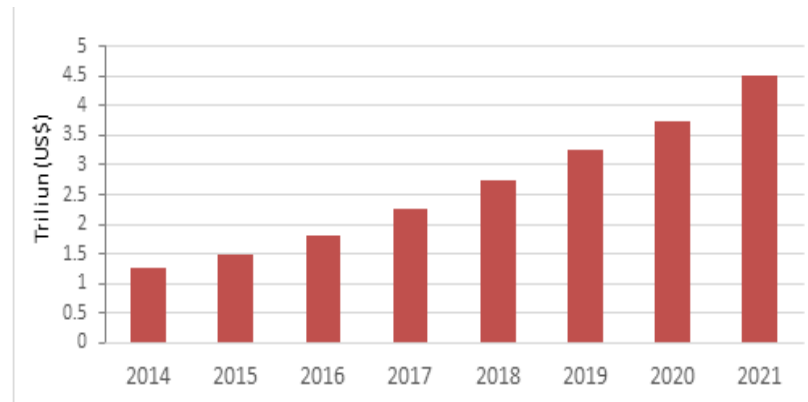


Figure 4. Economic growth in 2014-2021

The Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) revealed various benefits of the internet for the country's economic sector (Kementrian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian, 2019). Currently 45.14% of total internet users in Indonesia use the internet to compare prices. Meanwhile, 32.19% of users try to fulfill their shopping needs online, and 16.83% use the internet as a platform to sell their products. The remaining percentage uses the internet for work, looking for information, looking for work and banking transactions. At the global level, e-commerce transactions have skyrocketed, with an astonishing transaction record of US\$4.48 trillion or Rp. 60.467 trillion in 2021, according to Teknologi.id.

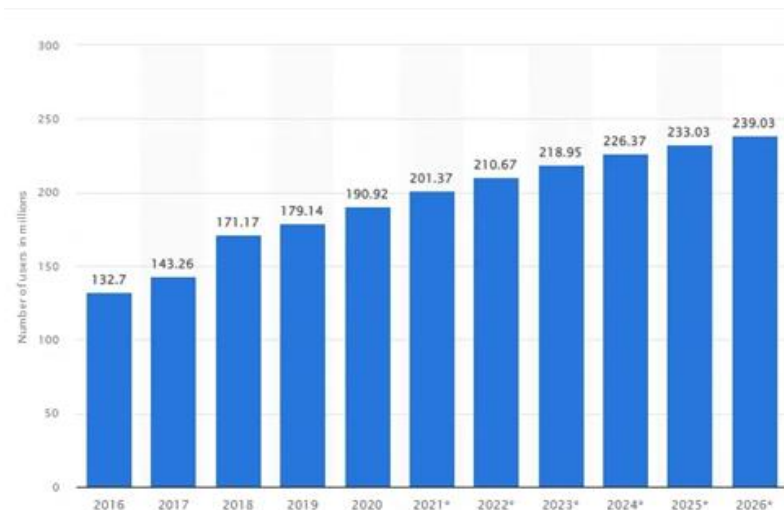


Figure 5. Active internet users in indonesia

The prevalence of online-based potential consumers is at an all-time high. From tracking social media trends to product review vlogs, people are spending more time surfing the internet. In Indonesia alone, the Central Statistics Agency reports 190.92 million active internet users, with estimates increasing to 239.03 million in 2026 (Annur, 2023). Interestingly, 6% of global internet users use online reviews as a purchase reference. Thus, utilizing the review column can be an effective way to build trust among potential customers.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can directly engage with their audiences through direct marketing. One effective method is to collaborate with operators and utilize SMS

broadcast services, which send targeted messages and advertisements directly to consumers either randomly or through a segment management system. Apart from that, joining an MSME community or forum is very important for future growth and development. This allows businesses to increase productivity and access production resources concentrated in one place, thereby reducing unnecessary costs. These resources may include technology, information, human resources, capital or other tools critical to business success (Tambunan, 2008).

MSME clusters with high levels of concentration and interaction offer opportunities for the exchange of information and experience. This facilitates the development of professional associations that enable the rapid dissemination of knowledge, ideas and best practices. Such associations can be formal and informal, further increasing the effectiveness of knowledge sharing.

Tight competition in city centers keeps MSMEs alert, motivating them to prioritize quality and competitiveness (Vrgovic et al., 2012). In this day and age, where information moves at lightning speed, it is very important for MSMEs to be part of the community. Being part of the MSME community facilitates the exchange of information and business learning, which can encourage business growth. Collaborating and networking within communities has proven to be more beneficial than conventional business development methods. In addition, community-organized activities enable MSMEs to fulfill their social responsibilities. An established community can quickly spread the word about a business, making word of mouth marketing a powerful tool for increasing success. Expensive advertising in mass media is not always necessary for many well-known brands. Word of mouth promotion can be a powerful marketing tool, because satisfied customers become natural sales agents (Yuswohady, 2012).

Direct marketing allows a more convenient way for companies to determine areas that need improvement or maintenance based on consumer feedback. The following are some of the benefits of direct marketing such as: 1) personalization in increasing the persuasiveness of messages conveyed outside of mass media, such as advertising, 2) direct marketing technology offers valuable tools for collecting relevant data about consumers, for example they can reveal which products they like or the price range of the product that is most in demand, 3) the product gets added value when undergoing the purchasing and delivery process beyond one location, 4) maintaining product quality can be ensured by the company or marketer remaining in control of the product until delivery.

Direct marketing offers great flexibility in terms of format and timing. Regarding format, it can be done through various channels, including media, to reach consumers. As for timing, it can be scheduled strategically so as not to disrupt important consumer activities, making it an ideal marketing mode.

CONCLUSION

The key to improving the quality of public services lies in empowering the business world, especially small and medium businesses. These companies, also known as MSMEs, have been important contributors to Indonesia's consistent GDP growth. To maximize their potential and reach a wider client base, MSMEs need effective marketing communications strategies, such as advertising, public relations, online marketing, promotions, personal selling and direct marketing. Using social media as a channel to promote company products is a viable option for small and medium businesses. By embracing marketing communications management, MSMEs can significantly increase productivity and achieve economic prosperity, maximize advertising through advertising media to reach more consumers, and use product relationships (page fans) to achieve various marketing public relations goals, so that consumers no longer accept the product. However, there are many benefits to be gained from selling to service companies and salespeople, one of which is familiarity with consumers. Businesses interact directly with consumers. Direct marketing makes it easy for businesses to know what needs repair or service just through marketing. Moreover, by investing in market research, MSMEs can gain valuable insights into consumer

behavior, preferences, and emerging trends. This knowledge is crucial for tailoring marketing strategies that resonate with the target audience, ultimately leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, understanding the competitive landscape through research allows MSMEs to position themselves effectively, identifying unique selling propositions and areas for improvement. Furthermore, the implications of integrating technology into marketing communications strategies cannot be overstated. With the advent of digital tools and analytics, MSMEs can precisely measure the impact of their marketing efforts, optimize campaigns in real-time, and allocate resources more efficiently. In terms of contributions, as these enterprises thrive, they become pillars of local economies, contributing to social stability and development. Additionally, the empowerment of MSMEs can lead to a more inclusive and diversified business landscape, reducing dependency on large corporations and promoting a healthier business ecosystem.

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