
THE VITAL ROLE OF BRANDING DESIGN IN ENHANCING BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS AND SUPPORTING MSME

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in design and printing services, as economic growth relies heavily on this sector. The study finds that branding, through appealing visual identity, is crucial for establishing emotional connections with consumers, enhancing customer trust, and entering new markets. A case study of the MSME Indiustrustsolo is utilized to illustrate the observation process, results, and discussion. The findings indicate that branding provides a strong foundation for long-term growth. A unique brand identity, through consistent design and active customer interaction, helps build a brand image that is easily recognizable and memorable to consumers. The importance of consistency in brand identity, both visually and in communication style, proves to be a key element in strengthening customer relationships and enhancing brand recall. The methodology employed in this research is qualitative, involving direct observation of the MSME Indiustrustsolo. The study aims to evaluate how branding can influence the competitiveness of MSMEs, particularly in the context of branding design as a key element in marketing products or services. This research demonstrates that effective branding strategies can be the key to MSME success in a dynamic market, enabling them to expand market reach, compete confidently, and achieve long-term success.

KEYWORDS

Branding Design, MSME, Brand Identity, Branding Strategy



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INTRODUCTION

One of the pillars of a country's economic growth is the MSME sector. MSMEs are the most important economic sector that plays a role in national economic growth (February 2018). MSMEs function to increase regional income by meeting the community's needs for products and providing job opportunities (Irawan & Affan, 2020). The Central Statistics Agency (2019) states that the number of MSMEs increased after the economic crisis in 2012 (Nur'aeni, 2018).

This is revealed by data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises. Currently, there are 65.4 million MSMEs in Indonesia, employing 114.7 million people, or about 56% of the Indonesian workforce. Additionally, MSMEs contribute more than 60% of the country's GDP (MSME Empowerment Report, 2022: 5). Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises also shows that the contribution of MSMEs to GDP has continued to increase even before the pandemic. However, due to the pandemic, this contribution decreased to 37.3% (MSME Empowerment Report, 2022: 13). Examples of MSMEs commonly found in this area include catering businesses, skincare companies, and laundry services.

According to Plakoyiannaki et al., Indriastuti, and Kartika, digitalization presents an opportunity for MSMEs to shift from traditional transactions to new trends through the application of technology. As a result of digitalization, many MSMEs have begun promoting their products and services through digital platforms in both image and video formats. Additionally, companies have opened online stores in marketplaces to help customers find their products. Berry Fauji, Director General of the Micro Business Promotion Department, Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises, stated that many MSMEs used market networks to sell their products during the pandemic (MSME Empowerment Report, 2022, p. 12).

Furthermore, the development of MSMEs can utilize branding design such as logos, packaging, banners, etc. Great products will be wasted without good branding and marketing strategies. Branded packaging can also serve as an advertising tool for consumers. Branding is characterized by targeting specific consumers. Distinctive features can include logos, packaging design, color schemes, and typography (Setiawati, 2019). When creating branding for your product, there are several factors to consider: unique, attractive, and easily recognizable design. Additionally, create a brand that is easy to recognize, remember, and pronounce by the public. Business actors must also pay attention to the distinguishing factors of their brand. A company's corporate brand must differ from other economic entities, even if the products are the same (Saiful, 2021).

RESEARCH METHOD

The research that has been carried out has been studied qualitatively using the observation method with the object of the research is one of the MSMEs engaged in design and printing services, namely Indiustrustsolo which is located at HTC (Hartono Trade Center) Floor UG B 23 Solobaru Jl. Ir. Soekarno, Dusun I, Madegondo, Grogol District, Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java. This study aims to find out how MSMEs before having a branding design and after having a branding design can affect in increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs considering that branding design is one of the most important elements when marketing a product or brand. Branding design plays a very important role in communicating benefits and gaining a competitive advantage in order to build connections with consumers and make it a patented identity of a product or brand. This study uses observation as the main method and focuses on collecting information directly from Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). During the observation process, this study carefully observed and recorded everything done by MSMEs as the object of research. The main objective of this observation stage is to gain a deeper understanding of the important elements related to branding design, marketing, and how MSME actors interact with the market or consumers as a whole. Using this observational method, the study seeks to capture context and nuances that may not be able

to be expressed by other methods, allowing for a more thorough analysis of the role of branding design in marketing strategies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussions we get in the observation of services in the field of design and printing printing. Branding plays a central role in building Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), providing a strong foundation for long-term growth and success. First of all, branding creates an identity that distinguishes MSMEs from their competitors. Through unique and consistent designs, including logos, colors, and other design elements, MSMEs can build an image that is easily recognizable and remembered by consumers. This strong identity is the foundation for building deep brand awareness among customers, opening up opportunities for continued consumer loyalty.

Branding plays a role as a tool to build customer trust. By conveying business values through branding design, MSMEs can create an emotional connection with consumers. The professional and reliable impression generated by branding helps overcome skepticism and increases customer trust in the product or service offered. This trust is a solid foundation for fostering long-term relationships, ensuring customer retention, and supporting organic business growth.

In addition, branding can help MSMEs enter the market more effectively. With a well-formed brand identity, MSMEs can face competitive challenges with more confidence. Professional branding design simplifies the marketing and promotion process, allowing businesses to reach a wider audience. High brand awareness can also open the door to partnership and investment opportunities, supporting business expansion and global market penetration. Thus, branding is not only an additional element, but an essential strategy in building the sustainability and success of MSMEs in a dynamic market.

Having the right branding strategy can be the key to success for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Here are some branding strategies that can help strengthen the identity and increase the competitiveness of MSMEs:

1. Understand the Market and Customer Orders

Before designing a brand strategy, it is important to first understand the target market and deepen the market by understanding customer needs. It includes a detailed analysis of consumer behavior, market trends, and potential competitors. With a deeper understanding of their target audience, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) can develop more targeted steps to develop their brand identity. Additionally, MSMEs must focus on identifying the unique value they can offer to their customers.

Whether it's the highest product quality, personalized customer service, or This innovative approach to problems, this added value should be at the core of your brand strategy. Furthermore, brand design must be formulated to reflect these distinguishing characteristics, create a unique brand image and differentiate MSMEs in an increasingly competitive market. All brand designs should aim to attract attention and meet consumer expectations. By understanding the tastes and demands of the target market, MSMEs can develop designs that are relevant and attractive to potential consumers. Ensuring consistency in promised value, brand design, and customer experience provides a solid foundation for MSMEs to build a strong and successful brand identity in the market.

2. Create a Consistent Brand Identity

The importance of creating a consistent brand identity cannot be underestimated. Starting from visual elements such as logos and colors to communication styles, MSMEs must ensure that the identity accurately reflects their business values. This consistent design is not only memorable for consumers, but also the foundation in building a strong brand image. The importance of this consistency is evident in every aspect of your marketing, from your website, social media, to print media. By ensuring consistent brand messaging and aesthetics, MSMEs can strengthen customer relationships and enhance brand memory in consumers' minds. The consistency of brand identity is not only limited to visual elements but also communication styles. MSMEs need to consistently convey their brand messages across various marketing channels. This includes not only the words used, but also the tone of voice and the way the information is conveyed to consumers. By creating a message and style. consistent communication, MSMEs can build a trustworthy brand image in the eyes of consumers and provide the impression of high integrity and consistency in conveying value to customers.

3. Focus on Customer Experience:

Understanding and improving the customer experience is an important aspect of a micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) brand strategy. Branding design should not only focus on creating an attractive visual identity, but also building an emotional connection with consumers. The goal is to create significant added value and ensure a consistently positive atmosphere in every interaction, be it customer service, product purchases, or online interactions. By building deeper and positive relationships, MSMEs can give the impression that their brand is not just a product or service provider, but a partner who cares about the needs and satisfaction of their customers. To strengthen a positive reputation and provide real evidence of customer experience, MSMEs can take advantage of testimonials, reviews, and feedback. Showcasing customer success stories, collecting positive reviews, and responding appropriately to feedback can help build trust and validate the quality of the products and services offered. The use of these tools is not just an advertising tool, but also a way to build sustainable two-way dialogue and communication with consumers.

4. Take advantage of Social Media:

Social media has become an invaluable tool for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in their brand strategy. The effectiveness of social media in shaping your brand image is crucial, and an important first step is to understand which platforms are most relevant to your target audience. MSMEs need to carefully choose a platform that suits consumer characteristics to maximize consumer exposure and engagement. In addition, an attractive design is key to attracting attention with rich content on social media. Logos, colors, and other design elements should be used consistently, reflect the desired brand identity, and ensure high recall. But real success lies in active interaction with your followers. Build a loyal online community by responding quickly to comments, engaging in discussions, and creating conversation-sparking content. Deeper conversations open the door to deeper understanding of customer needs, provide space for immediate feedback, and foster emotional connections that can strengthen customer loyalty. MSMEs not only expand their brand reach by building an active and engaged online community, but also create an interactive platform to promote their products and services, making social media an important part of their overall brand strategy.

5. Maintain Product or Service Quality:

The success of a brand depends on a solid foundation in consistent product or service quality. Quality meets customer expectations and provides a satisfying experience that exceeds expectations. Improving the quality of a product or service is not just an ordinary operational action; It is an important strategic investment to maintain and develop a positive brand reputation. As a result, in a market full of fierce competition, a consistent customer experience is essential for building long-term trust and loyalty.

In a competitive market, the appeal and success of a brand depends on consistent quality. Consistent customer satisfaction with the goods or services helps build customer trust. This trust comes from the positive impression that consumers feel when interacting with the brand, apart from the final result. Therefore, high quality is not only the end goal, but also the cornerstone for brand attractiveness and progress, which helps to maintain market share and win the hearts of customers.

Therefore, it can be concluded that a close relationship between consistent quality and brand success is essential. A brand that can consistently maintain and improve its quality will be better able to compete and maintain its position in a dynamic market because investing in quality products or services not only supports customer satisfaction, but also builds a long-lasting foundation for consumer trust and loyalty.

CONCLUSION

By implementing the right branding strategy, MSMEs can strengthen their position in the market, attract consumer attention, and build a solid foundation for long-term business growth. In summary, the findings and arguments from our observations of design and printing services show that branding plays a central role in building micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and provides a solid foundation for long-term growth and success. A unique brand identity through consistent design and active customer interaction forms the basis for deep brand recognition and lasting customer loyalty. The right brand strategy provides opportunities for MSMEs to enter the market more effectively, compete with confidence, and expand their global footprint. By understanding the market, adding unique value, creating a consistent brand identity, focusing on customer experience, utilizing social media, and maintaining high quality of products or services, MSMEs can build dynamics market. Build a strong, trustworthy, and relevant brand identity for success.

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