DIGITAL BRANDING TRAINING TO IMPROVE PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES IN THE START-UP BUSINESS SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

The impact of the global crisis is starting to be seen at the national level due to the rapid spread of Covid-19. The COVID-19 epidemic has had a profound impact on the business sector, including micro, small and medium enterprises. Many business actors have laid off their employees and even temporarily closed their business activities. Given the circumstances and events mentioned above, it is very important for new business actors to continue to maintain consumer loyalty, with Brands playing the most significant role. The problem with today's entrepreneurs is that they continue to lack a fundamental understanding of brands. Beginning entrepreneurs are aware that brands are nothing more than logos and packaging. Another problem is that inexperienced business people do not know how to take advantage of the current digital era to activate brands in the minds of consumers. Start-up business players should exercise adequate branding to protect their trademarks from infringement and imitation by other commercial entities.

Keyword: Brand; Branding; Digital Branding

INTRODUCTION

Health issues and economic realities in Indonesia are directly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic phenomenon (Situmorang & Ginting, 2021). The impact of the global crisis is starting to be seen at the national level due to the rapid spread of Covid-19. The COVID-19 epidemic has had a profound impact on the business sector, including micro, small and medium enterprises. Many business actors have laid off their employees and even temporarily closed their business activities. According to 2021 data, the COVID-19 outbreak has impacted 163,713 MSMEs and 1,785 cooperatives, the decline in income being one of the causes.

The loss of income is also affected by working from home which is now referred to as Work From Home (WFH). As a result of the implementation of physical distance and the implementation of large-scale social restrictions (PSBB), business actors experienced a significant decrease in income (Zumaroh et al, 2020). Community restrictions have an impact on company activities, which have an impact on the economy. In addition to these effects, the presence of Covid-19 has reduced investor interest in the market, which has an impact

on market volatility (Nasution et al, 2020). At the very least, almost all socioeconomic classes are experiencing a slowdown, allowing people to easily adapt and change and engage in various activities. In addition to business actors, Covid-19 has forced several people to carry out business activities to survive. Because the business sector is one of the domains needed to revive the post-Covid-19 economic condition, business actors are encouraged to stay afloat. Strategies to survive in the COVID-19 economy include branding as well as supporting new ventures.

In the 19th century, the British used the word "brand" for the first time to describe a method of stamping animals and slaves by placing a hot iron on their bodies, later known as burn stamps. The term "brand" later gained popularity among German speakers with the same meaning, namely "brennen", or "marking with a hot iron stamp". A brand today is described as a self-identity that distinguishes people, things, and places. While branding is a communication activity, improvement and maintenance of a brand to provide context for those who face it (Sadiyah, 2021).

Kotler (2009) defines branding as a name, word, sign, symbol, design, or a mixture of these that is used to identify a product or service, or group of sellers, and to differentiate it from competitors. In

contrast, Landa (2006) asserts that the concept goes beyond the brand or trade name of a company or product. However, everything is related to the visible brand attributes, from the trade name, logo, visual features, image, credibility, character, and impressions, perceptions, and assumptions that customers have about the business. The definition of branding has evolved over time to include the various communication strategies used by organizations and companies to develop and strengthen their brands. For organizations and businesses, it refers to more than just a well-known brand or product. It also refers to how these companies and businesses are perceived by the public as the best.

Business actors play an important role in the current economic growth and development in both industrialized and developing countries, including Indonesia. The position of the business unit plays an important and strategic role in the national economy. Since the presence of business units is so common in the Indonesian economy, this situation is very likely to occur. Apart from contributing to Indonesia's growth and development, business units play an important role in overcoming the country's unemployment problem. The expansion of micro-enterprises has increased the number of employment and income opportunities.

Business units play an important role in the government's efforts to fight poverty and unemployment because they employ a large number of people. The growth of digital technology has also facilitated business unit actors.

Given the tastes and interests of business consumers, social media users can now be encouraged to frequently visit certain social networking sites such as Instagram thanks to the contemporary digital era (Destalia et al, 2020). Businesses today use the internet not only to promote goods but also to help create branding initiatives. Business actors can expand their business marketing tactics by embracing social media, claim Baskoro and Maulidian (2019). The issue of the belief that a digital branding strategy can really help win the heart and attract the attention of consumers in Indonesia, however, limits many businesses. In fact, by using this branding method, businesses can use their products to govern entire countries (Setiawati et al, 2019). Therefore, digital branding can be a part of brand planning and business strategy to differentiate a company from its competitors. All government operational strategies and programs are closely related to this condition (Rizqon, 2020).

One of the keys to successfully managing a new business unit is branding. Description of the brand or brand, paying special attention to the associations and perceptions of the target market. Economic companies battle each other to create brands. This is because the reputation of a brand in the community will have a greater impact on consumer purchasing power if viewed more positively. Using a sign or stamp and consumer associations on the stamp, the brand is a marketing concept. One of the variables that people consider when choosing goods or services is brand (Kurniawati et al, 2021).

Branding plays a role in the commercial success of a product. At this time, branding is considered very important or becomes the thing that makes marketing a brand successful. The development of the variety of available goods, which is quite rapid, is a contributing factor. The act of branding is needed to embed the brand in the consumer's brain. By convincing individuals that the brand is an asset, it creates the urgency of product branding in marketing. The brand value of a company is also highly regarded as an asset that must be preserved. Can not be separated from customer needs, brand value must be upheld. In addition, brands must be managed in a planned and strategic way if they are to ultimately meet consumer expectations (Putri, 2022).

Start-up business players must carry out adequate branding to protect their

trademarks from infringement and imitation by other commercial entities (Permata et al, 2019). In addition, effective branding will make it difficult for customers to switch from one similar product to another and vice versa because they already trust the brand and are aware of product quality (Kurniawati et al, 2021). Given the circumstances and events mentioned above, it is very important for new business actors to continue to maintain consumer loyalty, with Brands playing the most significant role. The problem with today's entrepreneurs is that they continue to lack a fundamental understanding of brands. Beginning entrepreneurs are aware that brands are nothing more than logos and packaging. Another problem is that inexperienced business people do not know how to take advantage of the current digital era to activate brands in the minds of consumers. Therefore, the aim of this course is to teach inexperienced entrepreneurs how to develop strong brands so that entrepreneurs can manage their businesses sustainably.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The activity was carried out by Lecturers of the University of Indonesia Membangun using the lecture, discussion, and assignment methods. Lectures are conducted to convey the material to be given. Discussions were conducted to clarify whether the material presented was still not understood. Assignments are carried out by providing examples of how to do exercises and working papers to participants. The participants of the activity are novice business actors in Bandung and its surroundings. The number of participants who attended the activities in this training was 7 (seven) new business actors who have Brands.

The training is carried out offline. The material provided includes brand awareness or brand awareness which is the ability of consumers to recognize and remember a brand, product or service. Brand awareness is important for businesses because consumers tend to buy products from brands they know. This training is given to increase production activities in the startup business sector so that they can survive and continue to develop their business activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The concept of this training is to provide material related to the theme of Branding to novice business actors, the Branding material consists of understanding and understanding of branding, types of branding, branding elements and how to build business brand awareness. Business actors must first understand what branding means to increase their business production.

Basically all the trainees already have a brand on each of their products. However, their understanding of the brand is still limited to the brand, even though the brand is not just a product brand, but also the meaning that is built in the brand so that consumers can remember it. Building a brand is not as easy as writing a brand/sentence on the packaging. But how to give promises to consumers and these promises can be proven and felt by consumers.

The training was opened with material on understanding the brand, the speaker explained that the brand is part of a business that allows people to easily recognize the identity of a company or product. Even big brands can be recognized just by looking at the color of the logo, hearing advertising jingles, and also slogans. This is done because the first step to be able to carry out branding activities is to first equate the perception between the resource person or the material provider with the training participants.

Figure 1. Resource Person Explains about Branding and the Origin of Branding

A brand is more than just a memorable logo, and also explains that building a brand can increase business value so that it is easy to get customers. The importance of a branding activity in business activities is to increase customer confidence in the products owned by entrepreneurs, with increasing consumer confidence in the entrepreneur's products, it is also expected to increase the production activities of novice entrepreneurs because more consumers will continue to use their products.

The first step that needs to be done when you want to build a brand is research, this research activity aims to find out what the basic form and main objectives of the business of the training participants are. This research activity does look complicated, because it requires you to think about what has not been done. Most novice entrepreneurs will be confused in starting research activities, they cannot

determine what they should look for from the research activity, therefore the resource person explains several things that entrepreneurs need to think about, namely determining what kind of business they want to run in the future, entrepreneurs must also comfortable with the form of business you want to run, what products the entrepreneur wants to sell, whether the product you want to sell has the possibility of being liked by customers, whether there are many competitors in the business, and what kind of potential customers the entrepreneur is targeting.

After doing research and determining business goals, the next step is to discuss the importance of determining potential customers for the business. Starting with identifying who the audience or potential consumers are, entrepreneurs can easily develop strategies to market their products. In identifying consumers, there are several things that must be answered, namely who will buy business services or products, it can be seen from age and gender, then why consumers need products owned by entrepreneurs, what consumers like. By determining potential customers, it can make it easier for entrepreneurs to adjust the shape of the brand they want to build. For example, entrepreneurs target customers who like traveling or hiking, then later entrepreneurs can build business

brands that are closely related to nature such as green, trees/mountains, and others. All of these elements can be applied by entrepreneurs on websites, social media, and logos of their brands.

Figure 2. Resource Person Explains About Branding Applications in Beginner Business Activities

Entrepreneurs must be able to make something different from other entrepreneurs, sometimes by providing something different can actually attract the attention of consumers. The product or service that an entrepreneur offers must be unique enough to provoke the astonishment and curiosity of its consumers. Entrepreneurs can also create brands with unusual identities, for example making fried food products with organic and hygienic ingredients. Consumers certainly know that fried food is not a healthy food, but using natural ingredients without flavoring or chemical elements can be something new. However, the most important thing is that entrepreneurs must

consistently carry out promotions until their brands can be recognized by consumers.

As a business owner, determining the name of his business is important. This will affect the shape of the logo, product appearance, marketing methods and trademark registration. Business owners definitely want a store name that is difficult to imitate and even becomes an icon of the products they sell. Therefore, there are several ways that entrepreneurs can use to determine the name of their brand, namely create new words, entrepreneurs must also reframe unrelated words, use suggestive words, make acronyms of longer names, and combine the two words.

The next thing that must be done by novice entrepreneurs is to determine and create an attractive slogan for their business. The slogan is an important part in building a brand. Slogans can strengthen the identity of the business that entrepreneurs run. In addition, the slogan can also be a means of description of the brand itself. So that it can attract the attention of consumers. For example, the word "Whatever the food" is in the slogan of Teh Botol Sosro. Indirectly, the slogan explains that whatever food you eat, the best choice for the drink is Teh Botol Sosro. In determining the slogan, novice entrepreneurs do not need to be too dizzy. Don't make slogans that are too pushy. Like

adding words of invitation to buy the product. For example "Let's buy/Only This Product is suitable". Entrepreneurs can make it more interesting by adding personal words. For example, "Find your day with coffee A." In addition to product suitability, the words "find peace" can indicate a good relationship between the brand and its consumers.

The next thing to do is create a logo, a logo of a brand generally consists of a number of visual cues, such as shapes, symbols, numbers, and words. By having a logo, entrepreneurs can make it easy for people to recognize and even remember the brand of their business. Consumers will cancel to buy a product, because they see a logo from a store or business that is less convincing or seems perfunctory. This is one of the impacts of choosing a bad logo in an effort to build a brand. There are several things that can be done in starting to create a logo, namely by choosing a color, choosing a logo shape, and choosing a font. Knowing the meaning of colors will greatly help entrepreneurs to be able to create an identity for their business. For example, if an entrepreneur chooses white and black for a food business brand, it will usually look less attractive from the visual appearance. Color not only defines the logo's appearance of your business, but also conveys the feeling you want to

communicate and helps you keep it consistent in everything you do. One example is some advertisements from Telkomsel. Generally these ads consistently use the color red. So that the red color has become one of the identities of the company's brand.

In building a business brand, novice entrepreneurs are required to be able to build brand awareness, brand awareness or brand awareness is the ability of consumers to recognize and remember a brand, product or service. Brand awareness is important for businesses because consumers tend to buy products from brands they know. After brand awareness is built, the product will be increasingly known, various ways can be done in building brand awareness in its business unit, including by participating in events / bazaars / expos, becoming sponsors, using influencers such as celebrities or public figures, and making merchandise by displaying business logo/brand. Awareness is the familiarity that the market has about a brand, whether it's a tagline, logo, color, merchant, and others. A brand has gained awareness from the market when it can be recognized or remembered.

Figure 3. Resource Person Explains Practically Using Branding in Increasing Starter Business Production

One of the basic components in a business that will interact directly with the market is a logo. The logo will appear on everything related to the business unit, from posters, official websites, packaging, social media, even business cards and advertising content. Therefore, creating an attractive logo that is easy to stick to the market's memory is the right awareness strategy for novice entrepreneurs. In addition to the logo, the tagline is an important component as a representation of the brand. Creating an attractive tagline will make it easier for the market to recognize the value carried by the Brand. So that when the tagline is read or mentioned, the market can immediately associate it with the entrepreneur's brand. Choose a simple tagline that is closely related to everyday life.

Currently, social media is used very actively by many people and levels of society. In this digital era, the social media market has skyrocketed, therefore

embracing the market through digital platforms is an effective way to increase brand awareness. One way is to maximize content in digital advertising on social media platforms. The website is one of the most frequently used by the market to check the validity of a brand. When the website looks well-maintained and friendly, the market will also feel more confident about getting to know the brand more. Create a website that is suitable to be accessed by computers, laptops or smartphones, with content that represents all the information needed by the market about brands and other interesting information.

Furthermore, entrepreneurs must also be active in expos and bazaars, this method is very effective to 'greet' the market. By participating in events, entrepreneurs will get the opportunity to be known by the public. Even though the pandemic is still hampered, entrepreneurs don't need to worry because the implementation of the bazaar and business expo has begun to be carried out online, making it even more difficult for novice entrepreneurs to follow. Or novice entrepreneurs can collaborate with older entrepreneurs to participate in the market, collaboration with other trademarks will help novice entrepreneurs to increase their business awareness, because the businesses they invite to collaborate have wider promotional stalls.

Next is to provide promos on their business products, examples of promos are discounts, cashback, and giveaways. Using promos is considered effective in increasing market curiosity and desire to interact with a business brand, the more consumers who are interested it will increase business production, because more and more consumers are using these business products, therefore promo activities are also very dependent on product quality. business, if the products and promotions are good, the production will increase.

Business collaboration can also be done not only with other entrepreneurs but also with influencers or better known as influencer marketing. This is a promotional method that will utilize the influencer's platform as a means of brand promotion. This will help you increase brand awareness, because influencers can reach more people, and already have the trust of their followers on social media. This simplifies the process of delivering brand values. Increasing brand awareness cannot be done in a short time, because market awareness of a business brand must be fostered consistently. Therefore, investing in awareness of a brand is a strategy that is implemented in the long term.

CONCLUSION

Based on the training that has been carried out, in increasing the production of a business, novice business actors must carry out digital branding in their business activities. Branding can be used by novice business actors to synergize with stakeholders such as the government and investors. To be able to attract the attention of investors, novice business actors must be able to build a brand image of their business. Many entrepreneurs do not yet have a brand. The knowledge of novice entrepreneurs about branding is still relatively low, this is due to the lack of training on branding. Branding training must be carried out repeatedly so that novice entrepreneurs continue to get the latest knowledge about branding activities that are in accordance with existing business developments.

The results of the implementation of this program are considered very beneficial for novice entrepreneurs, business actors are starting to build a brand image of the business they have, another positive development is that novice entrepreneurs are getting used to using information technology as a medium for branding the products they offer to their consumers. This resulted in increased production and market expansion as had been expected. In the future, there will be training programs from various other aspects such as financial, production and human resource management training.

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