

## **Branding a digital project for tourism industry through digital marketing**

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### **Abstract**

With the introduction of advanced Internet technologies, new channels for reaching target audiences have emerged. Digital branding is now an integral component of all businesses, regardless of size or industry. The increasing importance of digital branding has altered how businesses promote their products to both existing and prospective customers. In the tourism industry, where customers have instantaneous access to information about the most recent deals and lowest prices, the need for digital branding is greater than ever. Today, digital branding is indispensable to the success of all tourism-related businesses. This paper investigates the fundamental determinants of digital branding and their significance in the tourism industry.

**Key words:** Digital branding; digital marketing; internet branding; tourism; social media

## INTRODUCTION

With the introduction of Internet technology, the branding rules have been rewritten globally. How consumers interact with brands has been revolutionized by the internet. It is transforming the economics of branding and rendering many of the function's conventional strategies and structures obsolete. The previous method of conducting business is unsustainable for marketers (Edelman, 2010). Today, digital branding is one of the primary areas of emphasis for businesses around the globe. It began as a means of communication and has since evolved into not only an additional source of revenue, but also an essential tool for establishing and sustaining long-term relationships with the various market participants. As the Internet's defining characteristic, interactivity has enabled a new level of connection between all market participants. Internet users interact not only with one another but also with their favorite brands. This has opened the door for brands to communicate directly with their users and better understand them.

The intangible characteristics of tourism products result from the inability of the consumer to evaluate them without traveling (Akbar, 2020). As a result, online suggestions/recommendations can be used as evidence prior to booking travel products and factored into decisions in order to reduce the risk associated with the process. They frequently also shape the destination image of a tourist area in the minds of potential visitors, influencing their decision to purchase tour packages (Jeong & Jang, 2011). On social media, people develop a sense of community; consequently, they trust online comments in order to determine the best travel options, consumers use social media to research potential destinations, visualize images, and read about others' prior travel experiences (Sicilia & Ruiz, 2010). Tourism marketing researchers and practitioners pay close attention to how tourists are influenced by interactions with other consumers.

One of the primary reasons for the success of digital branding is that it enables companies to monitor user behavior in real-time. Digital campaigns can be tracked in terms of their reach, engagement, and conversion (Jaya, 2020). This has given marketing research an entirely new meaning in order to better comprehend customer needs. Thus, the necessity of incorporating digital branding into the business's overall marketing strategy will only aid in the achievement of marketing and business objectives by allowing brands to gain insights into consumer behavior and better meet their needs (Kaur, 2017).

## METHOD

### Target Participants

Student and public who have MSMEs Business and interested in learning about Digital Branding

### Location of Event

The Offline Class: How to Branding a Digital Project activity was carried out in Gudankena Coffee and Tea Samarinda.

### Method Used

Education to students and public with such form also advocacy from the expert of digital marketing as speakers. The method used in this activity is the Training method. The implementation of service is carried out in four stages, namely:

### Organizing

In carrying out this offline class agenda, we collaborate with a third party, namely Duta Wisata Samarinda as the organization responsible for organizing this offline class agenda. This agenda was created starting from the problem of community MSMEs when doing digital branding projects, the application was not right so that the impact of branding was not optimal. Therefore, we held an offline class with the title How to Branding a Digital Project by inviting an expert in the field of digital marketing in the hope of helping the community in providing knowledge and a deeper understanding of the branding methods applied in digital project so that they can achieve the desired target.

## **Material**

The material presented in the Offline Class was about branding a digital project based on three aspects, namely: Digital marketing, Content Marketing, and Tourism Marketing.

### **Digital Marketing**

Digital Marketing uses application technology media to position personal, corporate, and product brands, increase brand equity, and develop products and processes. It's also used for consumer research because it provides direct contact with customers through social media, blogging, and online communities (Bång A, 2015). Digital marketing is closely tied to consumers, especially young people, because it's integrated into their media and social lives (Kurniati, 2015). Digital marketing affects brand awareness, information access, opinions, attitudes, purchasing behavior, post-purchase communication, and evaluation to improve the company's competitive position and increase sales. Digital marketing strategies and tactics affect online review volume, valence, and hotel performance (De Pelsmacker, 2018). An effective digital marketing strategy in today's market is supported by research (Bång A, 2015). Internet digital marketing evolves. Marketing Evolution 1.0 sells without considering consumer needs. Marketing 2.0 is consumer-oriented, referring to centralized management decisions and Decentralized Marketing Systems (Busca, 2020). Marketing 3.0 is human-oriented, with democratic marketing systems and centralized management decisions (Busca, 2020). Marketing 4.0 blends online and offline tactics to engage customers.

### **Content Marketing**

With the help of intermediaries in any media, content marketing can help consumers convey messages from producers that have the following qualities: credibility, shareability, usefulness or fun, interest, relevance, and uniqueness on the brand (Kingsnorth S, 2016). Content marketing is the practice of creating and distributing content that is relevant, attractive, and engaging to a clearly defined and understood target audience in order to pique the interest of potential customers. Brand awareness, product confidence, new customer prospects, increased customer loyalty, and the testing of new product ideas are all aided by the use of content marketing (Baltes, 2015). Content marketing keeps audience engaged, increases brand loyalty, and spreads it across all media channels. Several previous studies, among others, have demonstrated the significance of content marketing. When it comes to making purchases, most customers believe that product content marketing helps them make better choices (Baltes, 2015).

What needs to be considered in content marketing, namely;

Audience. Set goals for the target audience, who will see content marketing. Create a close relationship with the audience or consumer. In other words, the social foundation, the audience, or consumers who provide feedback, share experiences using the product will attract other audiences.

Fill in content. Set an interesting topic, focus on quality content.

Widespread and plural. Use a wide variety of media and written content such as images, videos, infographics, checklists, audio content, webinars, and even live events. Extend the reach, not only on its website, based on Content Marketing Institute research showing that the most ineffective type of content is publishing on its website.

Experts. Experts are needed to create content, including strategy analysis, market analysis, branding, content creators, and other supporting personnel.

### **Tourism Marketing**

Tourism institutions engage in tourism marketing, which entails activities to innovate, communicate, deliver, and distribute tourist product offerings to customers, partners, and communities (Sadq ZM, 2019). Tourism marketing is a crucial aspect of designing strategies and communicating with the target market in mind. Tourism destination marketers and managers play a role in promoting sustainable actions and behaviors in tourism development (Mwinuka, 2017). Tourism marketing entails identifying and evaluating tourist product offerings, focusing on target tourists, determining market options (Morrison, 2019), concentrating on tourism products or services and their development, and implementing fair pricing policies and integrated distribution channels to target markets (Sadq ZM, 2019). Pay close attention to modifying the seven elements of the tourism marketing mix: tourism products, tourism product prices, tourism placement/distribution, tourism promotion, people/individuals, service delivery processes, and customer service.

An effective and efficient tourism marketing strategy must be planned. Three phases comprise the tourism marketing strategy: planning, implementation, and control (Svend, 2019). The planning phase includes needs analysis, research and analysis, and prognosis the implementation phase includes creative infusion, strategic positioning, marketing plan development and training, implementation (Chaffey D, 2017), as well as determining the budget and activity plan (Alsem, 2019); and the control phase includes evaluation and adjustment (Chaffey D, 2017), where this phase displays the feedback from the marketing process that has been carried out so that future adjustments can be made. Additionally, digital marketing collaboration is required to support the sharing economy. Sharing economy refers to the utilization of an internet platform optimized for collaboration with all stakeholders (Ganapati, 2018), in which communities and industries prioritize production to support the government's public services. Government develops tourism-related public policies for local communities (Ganapati, 2018).

### **Training**

After the material has been delivered by the speakers, there will be a training session which every participant will be divided into several group. Each group will be given a digital project case that needs to be discuss and planned. Then, they will present the digital project plan in front of another participant and the speakers.

### **Evaluation**

After the Offline class agenda was completed, we evaluated the activities by conducting an evaluation meeting with all the committees involved in designing this offline class agenda from the beginning to the implementation of the event. In the meeting, there were several things that became suggestions and criticisms to make the next offline class agenda more interesting.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Branding is a tool used to help us make our products or businesses known to more people. Coupled with the development of internet technology as it is now, making the use of branding more widespread, one of which is through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok. Social media already has an analysis system related to various statistics such as the number of visitors who visit the account page on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis, then the number of post likes, and can also show statistics on the development of followers on each social media account used. However, unfortunately, people who have MSME businesses, especially tourism, still don't know much about the right method of using branding when they have a digital project for their business, causing their branding not reach the previously planned target views of visitors and followers.

Based on this, we decided to create an event that can provide a deeper understanding of branding in digital projects. In planning, we collaborate with a third party, namely Duta Wisata Samarinda to support us in organizing the agenda that we will create. Then, we also held several virtual meetings for one month prior to the agenda of the event, to carefully prepare all the needs of the event, especially from the speaker's side. The search for speakers who are experts in the field of Digital Marketing is our main focus, with the help of Duta Wisata Samarinda we got the speakers we wanted. And in the end, the fixation meeting that we held created this branding training agenda with the name Offline Class: How to Branding a Digital Project which was held offline at Gudankena Coffee and Tea Samarinda in April 16th 2022, at 16.00 WITA.



**Figure 1.**  
Speaker & Committee

Offline Class: How to Branding a Digital Project invites an expert from the digital marketing field who is also the founder of Exotic Kaltim, namely Mirza Yonathan. The speaker delivered in-depth material on how to use the right digital branding method from three aspects, namely digital marketing, content marketing, and tourism marketing. The speaker gave some concrete examples of the proper application of digital branding, especially for MSME and tourism businesses in East Kalimantan.



**Figure 2.**  
Discussion Session

Further, when entering the discussion and question and answer session, many presenters and participants discussed various problems faced by them when implementing digital branding for each of the businesses they had run. Many of the participants were quite satisfied with the answers and suggestions given by the presenters regarding cases of branding application problems experienced by participants.





**Figure 3.**  
QnA Session

After the discussion and question and answer sessions were completed, the agenda continued with direct practice on the material that had been previously given, namely the application of branding in digital projects. This hands-on practice is done by dividing the participants into several groups. Then, the presenters gave a digital project to each group of participants with one hour of discussion time.



**Figure 4.**  
Digital Project Branding Group Presentations

After that, representatives from each group are required to present the results of their discussions regarding the digital project given to them. Then the results of the discussion from the best digital projects will later try to be applied to the nearest event from the Samarinda Tourism Ambassador to support regional tourism.

## CONCLUSION

Offline Class Training: How to Branding a Digital Project aims to provide the general public and students with an in-depth understanding of applying the right branding method to the digital projects being carried out. With this training activity, it is hoped that participants who have attended this offline class training can apply the knowledge gained to the business activities they are engaged

in, thus that the business they run can continue to grow and their brand can be recognized more by the society.

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