

# Increasing Marketing (Distribution) of Isal Cookies Products Using the Whatsapp Application

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## ABSTRACT

Marketing development is one of the main challenges faced by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in improving competitiveness and reaching a wider market. The article used a situational approach from a community service program, which aims to improve the marketing and distribution of Isal Cookies MSMEs products through the use of the WhatsApp application. The strategy used by the author is the data collection method, which is to collect information from the population and samples that have been selected directly. Through hands-on training and mentoring, this program helps businesses understand and optimize the use of WhatsApp Business as an effective marketing tool. These activities include setting up business profiles, managing product catalogs, and communication strategies with customers. The results of this activity show that the utilization of WhatsApp Business can improve marketing efficiency and product distribution, as well as expand market reach. This approach is expected to be a model that can be adopted by other MSMEs to utilize technology to improve their business performance.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in the Indonesian economy, both in creating jobs. However, one of the main challenges faced by MSMEs is limited access to a wider market. Many MSME players, including Isal Cookies, still rely on conventional marketing methods such as door-to-door sales and ordering through in-person store visits. These methods are often inefficient and limit the growth potential of the business due to the limited information received by consumers regarding the products offered (UKM 2020).

In digital era, the utilization of information and communication technology is becoming increasingly important in improving the competitiveness of MSMEs. One platform that can be utilized is WhatsApp Business, which offers various features to support marketing activities and product distribution more effectively. WhatsApp Business allows businesses to create product catalogs,

communicate directly with consumers, and provide more complete information about available products (Cahyadi, W., & Putra 2021).

Mrs. Isal, the owner of a home-based cake business located on Jl. Binjai-Kuala Gg. Johar, Langkat, currently runs a product offering system through two methods: selling products from house to house and allowing buyers to come directly to place orders. This business model is pre-order, where products are made based on orders received previously. However, this strategy has limitations as the information available to buyers is very limited. Consumers do not fully understand the menu available and the prices offered, which can cause delays in the cake production process. This condition indicates the need to optimize marketing through a more efficient platform, such as WhatsApp Business, to improve access, to information and ease the ordering process for consumers.

The purpose is to explore the use of WhatsApp Business as a tool to improve marketing and distribution of Isal Cookies MSME products. Through a community service approach, this research provides training and assistance to business actors in optimizing the use of WhatsApp Business. Hopefully, by utilizing this technology, Isal Cookies can expand its market reach, increase marketing efficiency, and provide a better shopping experience for consumers.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Distribution***

Distribution is an important process in the supply chain that encompasses all the activities required to deliver products from the producer to the end consumer. This process involves various distribution channels, logistics, and inventory management. In the context of MSMEs, distribution often faces challenges such as limited distribution networks, high logistics costs, and lack of adequate infrastructure (Kotler, P., & Keller 2016).

For Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), product distribution is often done in a simple and limited way. MSMEs often rely on direct distribution methods such as door-to-door sales, sales at local markets, or through their own physical stores. These methods can limit market reach and efficiency in the distribution process (Schindler, R. M., & Dibb 2020).

MSMEs that do not utilize digital technology tend to face obstacles in expanding their distribution reach. Utilizing digital technology, such as messaging applications and e-commerce platforms, can improve the efficiency of MSME product distribution. Applications such as WhatsApp Business allow businesses to manage communication with customers, process orders, and provide product information more efficiently (Yulianti, E., & Nugraha 2020).

### ***Digital Marketing***

Digital marketing refers to the use of digital technologies and online platforms to promote products and services. It includes various channels and techniques, including social media, and online advertising. (Kotler, P., & Keller 2016) state that digital marketing offers the opportunity to reach a wider audience at a relatively lower cost compared to traditional marketing methods. Digital marketing allows businesses to target audiences more precisely and measure campaign results more accurately.

Digital marketing offers various advantages, including a wider reach, the ability to target specific audiences, and accurate measurement of results (Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick 2019). However, there are also challenges, such as the need for technical skills, potential privacy concerns, and intensifying competition (R. Miller 2021). Therefore, it is important for businesses to continuously update their knowledge of digital marketing and utilize technology wisely

MSMEs often face challenges in utilizing digital technology for marketing. (Schindler, R. M., & Dibb 2020) suggests that MSMEs need to develop a digital marketing strategy that fits their size and resources. This strategy includes the use of social media, email marketing, and analytics tools to measure results and make data-driven decisions. Training and support in the use of digital tools such as WhatsApp Business can assist MSMEs in effectively implementing digital marketing strategies (Abdurrahman, M., & Supriyanto 2022).

### ***WhatsApp Business***

WhatsApp Business is an app specifically designed to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) manage customer communications more efficiently. Launched in 2018, the app offers additional features compared to the personal version of WhatsApp, including business profiles, catalog features, and automated messaging tools (WhatsApp, 2023). WhatsApp Business aims to make it easier for businesses to interact with customers, promote products, and manage orders. WA Business has many features that will spoil business people.

There are several features in WhatsApp Business:

1. Catalog feature. This feature has the function of making it easier for users to display the goods and services offered. So, buyers are easier to see. You can provide information or hide items if they are out of stock
2. Cart feature. Usually used by customers to buy the products they want. So, buyers can choose products easily and put them into the feature and connect in the business person's chat room.
3. Label feature. the function is to manage chats so that it is easy to respond to potential buyers or consumers. The cool thing is, with this feature you can categorize various questions from old and new customers.
4. Business profile. Here, you can include information about your business. For example, website, email, marketplace links, and so on to convince potential customers or buyers.
5. Automatic message feature. The function makes it easy for users to reply to messages with special timing. Including providing greetings and other information.

Research by (Abdurrahman, M., & Supriyanto 2022) showed that MSMEs that adopted WhatsApp Business experienced improvements in marketing efficiency and product distribution. In addition, (Setyawan 2022) reported that the use of WhatsApp Business assisted MSMEs in improving interactions with customers and expanding their market reach. This study emphasizes the importance of training and support in making effective use of WhatsApp Business features.

## **2. METHOD**

The article used a situational approach from a community service program. It began with a qualitative approach and a systematic literature review (Marliyah, Dharma, B., & Syarbaini 2023). The approach is carried out through mentoring and training activities for Isal Cookies MSMEs in an effort to increase the marketing and distribution of their products using the WhatsApp application. This activity involves needs analysis, technical training on the use of WhatsApp, and evaluation of the results of application implementation in product distribution. The population in this study is all MSME actors in the Jl. Binjai-Kuala Langkat area, while the sample selected purposively is Isal Cookies MSMEs, which already have products but have not been optimal in their marketing through digital platforms. This sample was chosen because of their relevance and readiness to adopt new technologies in marketing activities.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

Based on the problems experienced by MSMEs businesspeople Isal Cookies is still a lack of knowledge in the use of social media in the form of WhatsApp Business in online promotions. So from the results of training that has been done in the use of WhatsApp Business provides benefits, including achieving increased efficiency in marketing and distribution of their products. After-training and mentoring, MSMEs business entrepreneurs Isal Cookies can properly manage their business profiles and effectively manage product catalogs. This allows MSMEs Isal Cookies to establish better communication with their customers through WhatsApp Business application.

## Discussion

In addition, by using the WhatsApp application as a marketing tool, Isal Cookies MSMEs are also able to expand their market reach. The existence of direct access through WhatsApp Business makes it easier for Isal Cookies MSMEs to sell their products to customers who are outside their area which is usually difficult to reach. This helps Isal Cookies MSMEs to increase sales and gain a wider market share.

### 1. Activity Achievements

#### a) WhatsApp Business Account Design Essentials

The creation of a WhatsApp Business account design is expected to be a forum for Isal Cookies MSMEs so that their products can be known by the wider community and increase sales turnover. The design of the WhatsApp Business application that has been created, then this is what it looks like after being implemented into the following display form:



Figure 1. Profile page

In figure 1 above is the display of the WhatsApp Business profile page of Isal Cookies, Consumers can open the WhatsApp Isal Cookies profile first to start ordering.



Figure 2. Booking page

In figure 2 above is the catalog display of Isal Cookies, On this page Consumers can choose the products in the catalog and consumers can add their choice to the cart by clicking the (+) button

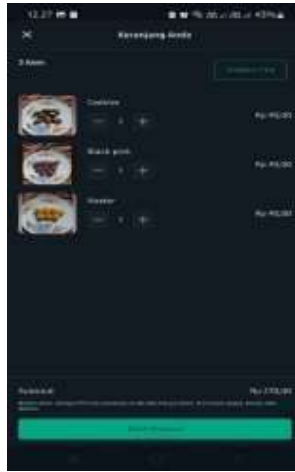


Figure 3. Payment page

In figure 3 above is the display on the payment page. On this page, buyers can see the selected items and buyers can see in full the value of the request that must be paid later.

b) Promote the Account created

After creating a WhatsApp Business account, promote the account to phone contacts that Isal Cookies has used the business account feature so that it is easier to order.

The distribution of socialization and technical guidance on the use of WhatsApp Business is in addition to increasing engagement between business owners and customers. Customers place an order through the WhatsApp Business application, where the type of product and price are already listed on this application, and take the order (pick-up) according to the agreement made with the seller. With this application, business owners feel helped, and the economy continues to spin. Because if previously they only sold at stalls or sold from friends, now they can make direct transactions with customers, business owners can update the products and prices they have. In fact, through WhatsApp Business, consumers can receive information instantly regarding the latest products or new promotion.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The use of the WhatsApp Business application as a marketing and distribution tool has proven to be effective in improving the business performance of Isal Cookies MSMEs. Through training and mentoring, businesses have successfully leveraged WhatsApp Business features to improve communication with customers, manage product catalogs, and optimize their business profiles. As a result, there is an increase in interaction with customers, an expansion of market reach, and a significant increase in sales. These findings show that the adoption of digital technology can be an effective strategy for MSMEs to overcome marketing challenges and increase their competitiveness. This approach can be used as a model that can be adopted by other MSMEs to encourage their business growth through technological innovation. Thus, the development of digital skills among MSME actors is very important to support the sustainability and growth of the small and medium business sector.

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