
GROWING INSIGHT IN PUBLIC RELATIONS MARKETING IN HOUSEWIVES WHO ARE OWNERS OF SMALL MICRO BUSINESSES IN BULUSAN SEMARANG CITY

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Abstrak: Untuk dapat berproses menjadi wirausahawan tangguh dan handal, diperlukan *hard skills* dan *soft skills*, hal ini juga diperlukan oleh usaha mikro-kecil. *Marketing public relations* diperlukan sebagai pengetahuan untuk membuka wawasan bagi setiap wirausaha agar dapat berkembang, karena pengetahuan tentang *marketing public relations* akan menunjang kesuksesan dalam memproduksi dan memasarkan produk melalui citra produk dan citra usaha. Berdasarkan pengamatan pada usaha skala mikro-kecil di Kelurahan Bulusan Kecamatan Tembalang Semarang, kinerja usaha yang belum optimal berkaitan dengan keterbatasan pengetahuan tentang terciptanya citra produk dan citra usaha untuk menjalin hubungan dengan konsumen dan memahami kebutuhannya. Dengan kegiatan menumbuhkan wawasan tentang *marketing public relations* diharapkan mereka menjadi tahu peran strategis dan pentingnya citra produk dan citra usaha, sehingga akhirnya mampu memasarkan produk/jasa untuk memenuhi kebutuhan konsumen secara berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *wawasan marketing public relations, citra usaha, citra produk*

Abstract: To be able to become a strong and reliable entrepreneur, hard skills and soft skills are needed, this is also needed by micro-small businesses. Marketing public relations is needed as knowledge to open insight for every entrepreneur so that they can develop, because knowledge about marketing public relations will support success in producing and marketing products through product image and business image. Based on observations of micro-small scale businesses in Bulusan Subdistrict, Tembalang District, Semarang, suboptimal business performance is related to limited knowledge about creating product images and business images to build relationships with consumers and understand their needs. By developing insight into marketing public relations, it is hoped that they will become aware of the strategic role and importance of product image and business image, so that they will ultimately be able to market products/services to meet consumer needs in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: *insight into marketing public relations, business image, product image*

Introduction

Bulusan Village in Tembalang District has an area of ± 304,072 Ha. Geographically, it is a highland/hill area, divided into 7 RWs and 40 RTs with 2,027 family heads. The economic potential of Bulusan Subdistrict can be described through the composition of the population

and the livelihoods of the population, as well as the composition of business actors in the area.

The composition of the population in Bulusan Village, Tembalang District based on livelihoods can be seen in the following table

Table 1. Population composition based on livelihood

No	Types of Livelihood	Amount
1	Farmers / Farm Workers	133
2	Trader	236
3	Businessman	2
4	Industrial Workers	49
5	Construction workers	248
6	Transportation	33
7	PNS / TNI/ Polri	524
8	Retired	324
9	Etc	4.248

Sumber : Tembalang Dalam Angka 2023

Meanwhile, the composition of business types in Bulusan Village, Tembalang District can be seen in the following table

Table. 2. Types of Business in Bulusan District in 2023

No	Type of business	Amount
1	Cooperative	5
2	Market	0
3	Shop	27
4	Stall	44
5	Roadside stall	76
6	Street vendors	0
7	Small industry	4
8	Domestic industry	4
9	Excavated Mine C	1

Sumber : Tembalang Dalam Angka 2023

In the table above, the types of boarding/room rental businesses have not been recorded, but from the results of observations made by the Community Service Team, it was found that there are quite a lot of boarding/room rental businesses. Based on this phenomenon, it is possible that there is data bias in data sourced from BPS regarding the type and number of business actors in Bulusan District. So it is necessary to clarify from policy makers whether boarding/room rental businesses in the Bulusan Subdistrict area or even in Tembalang District can be categorized as a business venture so that the development of business actors can also reach residents who own boarding/room rental businesses.

When compared with the total population (6,429 residents) in Bulusan District, the number of business actors/entrepreneurs in the area is very minimal. Compared to the number of heads of families (2,027 families), the number of business actors is also too small. This is

an indication that the population's interest in the entrepreneurial sector still needs to be grown, considering that the economic potential in most of the Tembalang District area is relatively large due to the growth of the area. It is a campus and residential area. It's just a shame that the BPS data does not provide the number of rental/boarding house businesses in Bulusan Subdistrict, because from monitoring there are relatively many businesses of this type in Bulusan Subdistrict, of course this rental/boarding business is one of the economic potentials in the area. Many business opportunities/potential in this area are captured by business actors who are not residents of Bulusan Subdistrict, so that residents of Bulusan Subdistrict only become consumers or only rent out land for other people to open their businesses.

Therefore, treatment is needed for existing small and micro business actors, by providing various additional knowledge and skills so that these business actors can be perceived by their environment as successful business actors. Based on observations and initial data collected before determining the type of treatment that will be given to housewives who operate micro-small businesses in Bulusan Subdistrict, there were findings of obstacles to the development of these business actors. Then, based on the priority scale, the Service Team chose to provide treatment with the topic of marketing public relations, bearing in mind the obstacles in marketing products/services for business actors in Bulusan District, among others, because the product/service image and business image have not yet been formed, so that there is a good understanding from consumers. and potential consumers regarding product/service specifications, product/service advantages, producer bona fides and so on. Marketing Public Relations is a planned activity through communication that has been informed correctly and appropriately which can increase consumer sales and can increase consumer awareness by building trust in a situation where prices are increasingly competitive (Safitri, Safira Dwinawati & Sa'diyah El-Adawiyah, 2023)

After a more in-depth study, the service team found several problems which were thought to be obstacles to the growth and development of micro and small businesses in the Bulusan Subdistrict area. Problems in the growth and development of micro-small businesses in Bulusan Village can be identified as follows:

1. The business market potential in Bulusan Subdistrict and the higher education center in Tembalang District has not been optimally explored and developed by micro-small businesses in Bulusan Subdistrict
2. After starting entrepreneurship by opening a micro-small business, business actors still face obstacles related to its management and development.
3. Human resources have not been created among housewives in micro-small businesses, who recognize their own potential and have not been able to utilize it, including not utilizing various soft skills.
4. The strategic role of marketing public relations to support marketing is not yet known and recognized by household business actors in Bulusan Subdistrict so they have not utilized it in business management.

From the problems identified and currently being faced by business actors in Bulusan Subdistrict, they can be narrowed down to one focus problem that requires immediate handling. The problems faced and urgent are those that are directly related to breakthroughs in marketing products, considering that the majority of business actors stated that they were

experiencing difficulties in selling/marketing their products. Even though they have attended several training courses on home entrepreneurship, it turns out there are other obstacles that still hinder marketing. These obstacles are related to consumers and potential consumers understanding more about the products/services and businesses provided by micro-small businesses in Bulusan District. To build the image of the product/service, it is necessary to use marketing public relations. Marketing Public Relations is considered effective in creating brand awareness and a positive image which can ultimately increase company sales and profits (Rahmat, Zulkifli, 2022)

Therefore, this problem will be attempted to be resolved through community service activities which are planned in the form of activities to develop insight into marketing public relations as a follow-up to community service activities that have been carried out for household business actors in Bulusan Subdistrict. Specifically, this community service activity has objectives including:

1. Improving the quality of partner human resources by increasing partners' knowledge and skills in business management, especially in the marketing aspect.
2. Develop understanding and teach the application of marketing public relations in a simple way so that marketing performance increases
3. Encourage the use of social media to build relationships between partners, consumers and potential consumers.

Method

In its implementation, an approach method is needed so that the strategies used to achieve the activity objectives can take place effectively and efficiently. The approach method in community service activities can be described as follows:

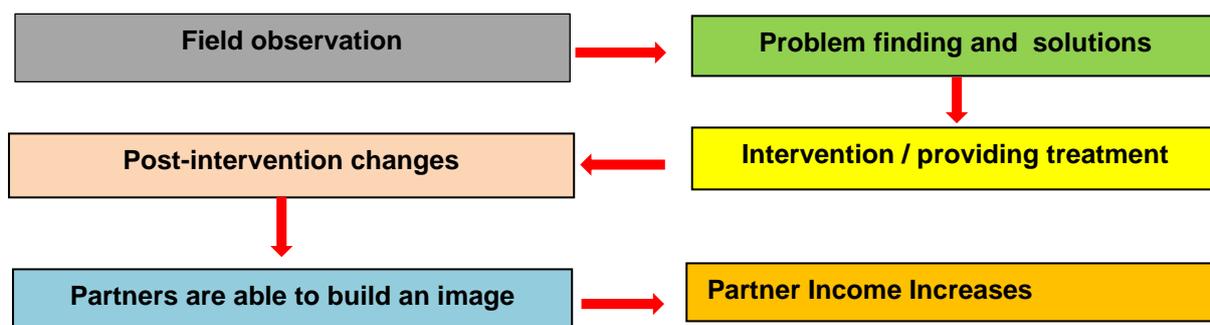


Figure 1
Approach Method

The activity began by conducting direct observations of micro-small business actors accompanied by Bulusan Village officials, so that several problems could be identified. Then, based on the priority scale, one problem is selected with the topic of marketing public relations, and a solution is determined. At the implementation stage, treatment is given to partners in the form of intervention, so that changes occur in partners after the intervention is carried out. Based on a good understanding of the form of change that occurs, partners can start building a product/service image and business image. In the end, this will make marketing and sales more successful, thereby increasing partner income.

Partners, namely housewives who run micro-small businesses, were targeted, coordinated by the Head of Bulusan Subdistrict, totaling 21 people who have various fields of micro-small businesses. Partner participation is realized in the form of participating in the entire series of community service activities until completion. Based on information obtained from Bulusan Subdistrict, regarding the implementation of micro-small business empowerment activities that have been carried out by other institutions some time ago, partners' enthusiasm for participating in the activities was relatively good, not only as listeners but they also actively carried out interactive dialogue. Thus, it can be concluded that partners' interest in obtaining facilitation that can lead to business progress is relatively good. Such a partner's attitude is an added value because it makes opportunities for self-development very wide open.

This approach method is the basis for developing a selected problem solving technique that will help achieve the activity objectives. This problem solving technique will be able to produce changes in partners after treatment. With this problem solving technique, partners will be able to feel the direct effects of the intervention. The problem solving technique used can be described visually through the following image.



Figure 2
Problem Solving Techniques

In the picture above, it can be seen that the service team intervened with partners, namely housewives who run micro-small businesses in the form of empowerment, by trying to develop marketing public relations insight, so that they can achieve the goal, namely building a product/service image and business image. In the end, the image of the product/service and the image of the business will drive marketing success.

What kind of changes do partners experience after participating in this service activity? Through these activities, it is predicted that there will be changes in the perceptions, insights and skills of partners regarding the strategic role of marketing public relations. These changes are outlined as follows:

Table. 3. Changes after service activities

No	Items	Before the activity	After activities (Outcomes)
1	Knowledge and skills in conducting marketing public relations	Do not yet have knowledge and skills in this field	Have knowledge and try to apply marketing public relations to their respective businesses
2	Submission and absorption of product/service and business information	Less/ineffective and efficient	Effective and efficiency
3	Customer service	Less/unsatisfactory	satisfying

Results

The activity begins by giving a pre-test to partners before they start participating in the entire activity process. The pre-test is intended to determine the partner's condition regarding marketing public relations before receiving treatment, so that the condition shows the existing condition. Through the pre-test, partners' knowledge, insight, skills and competency will be reflected before participating in the activity. The questionnaire used in the pre-test will also be used at the end of the activity to carry out the post-test. The following are the partner pre-test results

Table 4. Pre-test results (tabulation)

No	Statement	No	Not enough	Good	Amount
1	Have knowledge about the correct definition of micro-small businesses as well as information about micro-small businesses	19	2	0	21
2	Insight/knowledge regarding the use of communication technology to support marketing	18	3	0	21
3	Knowledge of public relations for marketing (marketing public relations)	21	0	0	21
4	Knowledge of steps/how to create/build a product image and business image	21	0	0	21
5	Knowledge of the strategic role of trust from the environment/business partners (stakeholders)	18	3	0	21

Meanwhile, the process of community service activities can be carried out in 2 stages. Stage 1 is directly related to the activity topic (marketing public relations), while stage 2 is a support that can make achieving goals easier.

A. Stages for solving problems in the field of marketing:

- Counseling and training on marketing public relations, which will be able to change partners' mindsets about the importance of building networks with consumers or potential consumers, as well as building an image
- Inviting practitioners to present best practices related to marketing public relations, so that partners are more motivated.
- Open follow-up consultations after counseling/training, so that if partners experience problems in applying the material received during counseling/training, they can consult with the Community Service Team
- The service team monitors until the end of the service period

B. Stages for utilizing communication technology as support

- Encourage the use of social media for productive purposes related to partner businesses
- Provide examples of the use of social media to support business activities
- Provide an understanding of the importance of updating partners' social media, so that information and communication with stakeholders produces productive networks.

The visualization of the implementation of this service activity can be seen in the following pictures:



Figure 3
Implementation of activities

At the end of the activity, participants (partners) were asked to take a post-test by filling out a questionnaire. The post-test results are presented as follows Tabel 5. Hasil *post-test* (tabulasi)

No	Statement	No	Not enough	Good	Amount
1	Have knowledge about the correct definition of micro-small businesses as well as information about micro-small businesses	0	1	20	21
2	Insight/knowledge regarding the use of communication technology to support marketing	0	2	19	21
3	Knowledge of public relations for marketing (marketing public relations)	0	2	19	21
4	Knowledge of steps/how to create/build a product image and business image	0	2	19	21
5	Knowledge of the strategic role of trust from the environment/business partners (stakeholders)	0	3	18	21

Discussion

There needs to be follow-up entrepreneurial empowerment activities to resolve the problems still being faced, namely by introducing and empowering soft skills to support entrepreneurial success. The problems faced and urgent are those that are directly related to breakthroughs in marketing products, considering that the majority of business actors stated that they were experiencing difficulties in selling/marketing their products. After they attended several training courses on home entrepreneurship, it turned out that there were other obstacles that were still hampering marketing. These obstacles are related to how to establish relationships with consumers and potential consumers to be more precise in providing products according to market demand and being able to market them to potential consumers. Soft skills cannot be taught but can only be developed through training (Lahope, Reffaldi Rezky, Worang, Frederik G. & Gunawan Emilia, 2020).

From the pre-test results it can be assumed that almost all participants have limitations in terms of knowledge of micro-small scale businesses, knowledge of opening up business opportunities, do not know the need to build a business image and product image, do not know marketing public relations, and how to gain the trust of stakeholders, which ultimately causing limitations in the development of the micro and small businesses they are involved in. Conditions become different when participants have completed the counseling/training, which is shown by the post-test results. If the pre-test results are compared with the post-test results, it can be interpreted that of the 5 indicators used as measurements, relatively all of them show the results of changes towards improvement in all partners.

In this way, the development of soft skills, including marketing public relations, through various means and methods is proven to provide benefits for the recipients.

If it is inventoried, there are several value benefits that partners get after participating in this community service activity, namely:

1. Additional knowledge of participants about micro and small businesses, so that their insight becomes broader and they become aware of opportunities for developing micro and small businesses, which is obtained through explanations, learning and training in

basic knowledge about micro and small businesses.

2. Participants will have knowledge and insight into marketing public relations in order to build a product image and business image, along with effective strategies to put it into practice.
3. Participants gain experience from business actors whose businesses have built product and business images. This was achieved thanks to additional learning material about prospective marketing public relations as well as best practices from other business actors.
4. Facilitated consultations for participants. The service team opens consultation facilities via the WhatsApp application to help participants who wish.

Recently, the role of public relations has changed with the implementation of marketing public relations (Trinh, Viet Dung, and Hoang Mai Nguyen, 2018). Therefore, this community service has chosen marketing public relations as a solution to bridge the gap in communication between business actors and consumers and potential consumers. Because it is hoped that with successful communication between business actors and their stakeholders through the use of marketing public relations, a product/service image and business image will immediately be built which will ultimately help the effectiveness and efficiency of sales and marketing activities. In its implementation, MPR is used by companies to improve communication with consumers and target markets, instill empathy and education in consumers, strive to provide solutions needed by society, create social benefit values, responsibility and responsiveness to situations, and also demonstrate care through donations. MPR is considered effective in creating brand awareness and a positive image which can ultimately increase company sales and profits (Rahmat, Zulkifli, 2022).

In the end, from this community service activity in Bulusan Village, there are several things that can be concluded, namely:

1. Housewives who are micro and small businesses are very enthusiastic about taking part in these community service activities and hope that these community service activities can be carried out periodically and continuously with different topics, and hope to include a larger number of participants. They provide input about several obstacles faced while managing the business, which require guidance to resolve.
2. The post-test results show that the activities carried out have achieved the planned objectives. There has been an increase in knowledge and motivation in managing micro and small businesses, understanding about marketing public relations, and understanding the importance of building stakeholder trust through image creation. With these results, the participants will have more opportunities to develop micro and small businesses which they manage with professional management
3. It is necessary to have various institutions that are connected and care about micro and small businesses, because micro and small business actors from among housewives in Bulusan Subdistrict have great potential for development.

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