

A COMMUNITY SERVICE INITIATIVE: ENHANCING SCHOOL BRANDING AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH DIGITAL MARKETING TRAINING AT SMAN 1 MONTONG TUBAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper explored the implementation of a Digital Marketing Community Partnership Program at SMAN 1 Montong Tuban to enhance the school's branding and engagement. Despite its long-standing presence, the school lacked an active social media presence and effective promotional strategies, making it less visible to prospective students and parents. The primary issues identified included the absence of an integrative online promotion system, unattractive visual design, and limited social media management skills among school staff. To address these challenges, the program introduced digital marketing awareness training, emphasizing the role of social media as a promotional tool. The initiative was carried out through a series of workshops, hands-on training, and social media management sessions. As a result, the school successfully created and managed official Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok accounts, leading to improved school branding and greater online engagement. This study highlights the importance of digital literacy in education and demonstrates how structured digital marketing training can enhance institutional visibility.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, School Branding, Social Media Management, Community Engagement, Community Partnership Program*

I. INTRODUCTION

SMAN 1 Montong is located in a hilly teak forest area, facing significant infrastructure challenges. In the past, the school lacked essential facilities such as internet access, a fence, clean water, and reliable electricity. Frequent power outages and obsolete, broken computers further hindered the learning process. Additionally, the remote location, with no access to public transportation, posed difficulties for both teachers—99% of whom were honorary—and students, affecting them psychologically and logistically.

Established on February 22, 2008, SMAN 1 Montong initially operated under one roof with SMAN 1 Singgahan. The school shared a building with SMPN 1 Montong and temporarily borrowed classrooms from Montongsekar Elementary School, which was unoccupied at the time. Over time, the school worked diligently to improve its infrastructure, culminating in its official institutionalization on February 22, 2012, under the Establishment Decree Number: 188.45/37/KPTS/414.012/2012. Gradually, the school managed to secure clean water, internet access, and a perimeter fence, creating a more conducive learning environment for students and teachers.

The advancement of information technology plays a crucial role in various fields, including education, business, administration, communication, and governance. The internet, in particular, has become an essential tool for accessing information, including digital marketing. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have gained immense popularity and serve as effective means for school branding and promotion. According to Hia et al. (2020), schools must utilize internet technology and websites for marketing and branding, as digital advancements have made it easier to disseminate information to the public in an engaging and accessible manner.

Digital marketing can provide accurate and up-to-date information, making schools more attractive to prospective students and their families. In addition, real-time and comprehensive promotion of student enrollment programs (PPDB) enhances school branding efforts, especially in the digital era. Many schools aim to manage their social media presence effectively, either by hiring professional digital marketers or training staff members to handle social media accounts internally. While outsourcing to professionals ensures quality management, it can also lead to dependency, limiting a school's ability to manage

its online presence independently. Therefore, empowering school staff to create and manage their own social media accounts using digital marketing strategies is essential for long-term sustainability and optimization.

To address these needs, SMAN 1 Montong initiated a community service program focused on digital marketing training. The rapid development of technology and information has significantly influenced various aspects of life, both at the individual and organizational levels. Organizations, including schools, must adapt to these changes to maintain and enhance their presence. The internet, particularly social media, has become a crucial source of information, shaping modern society.

Despite recognizing the importance of digital marketing, SMAN 1 Montong had not previously implemented any structured digital marketing initiatives. The school had long planned to establish a social media presence but lacked the necessary expertise. As part of its community service efforts, the institution prioritized digital marketing training to equip teachers and staff with relevant skills. This initiative aimed to align digital marketing strategies with educational activities, implementation, evaluation, and student recruitment goals. Consequently, a socialization program was conducted to introduce digital marketing training at SMAN 1 Montong Tuban, marking a significant step toward integrating technology into school promotion and branding.

II. METHODOLOGY

The objective of this community service activity was to develop the digital marketing skills of the entire school community at SMAN 1 Montong Tuban. The primary target of this initiative was teachers, ensuring that they could identify existing challenges and contribute to institutional policy-making regarding digital marketing implementation.

The program was carried out in several stages. In the planning stage, observations and interviews were conducted to assess the school's digital marketing needs and determine the appropriate approach for the Community Partnership Program (PKM). The preparation stage involved coordinating with the internal team to design a structured implementation plan, dividing tasks among team members, and selecting qualified trainers. During the execution stage, the activities were conducted using an interactive and participatory approach, where teachers received continuous mentoring and coaching as part of the public partnership program. Additionally, a formal proposal for the community service

activity was developed to ensure structured implementation. The program also included digital marketing training sessions, where participants gained hands-on experience in managing social media platforms and online branding strategies. The entire process was carefully documented to evaluate the program's impact and serve as a reference for future initiatives.

III. RESULTS

The community service program was conducted as part of fulfilling the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, aiming to enhance participants' understanding of online media as an effective marketing tool. This initiative focused on improving digital literacy, particularly in digital marketing, through the use of popular social media platforms. Designed specifically for students and teachers at SMAN 1 Montong Tuban, the training equipped participants with the necessary skills to adapt to the evolving digital landscape.

Through this program, students and teachers enhanced their creativity and digital marketing abilities, enabling them to promote their products and skills more effectively. Additionally, the initiative encouraged responsible social media use, helping students build a professional and constructive online presence. By mastering these skills, students developed strong digital portfolios, offering several advantages. First, digital marketing skills became a valuable asset for their future careers. Second, the program provided a platform to showcase achievements and talents, contributing to the school's reputation. Third, it strengthened school branding, increasing the institution's visibility. Lastly, the initiative aimed to boost student enrollment by leveraging social media and digital marketing strategies to attract prospective students.

Digital Marketing Training

Promotion through digital media, such as Instagram, has become a key form of online marketing communication. This approach aims to disseminate information, persuade audiences, and generate interest in products or services offered by companies or institutions through online platforms and internet networks (Novianti & Mulyana, 2018). According to Purwana, Rahmi, & Aditya (2017), digital marketing has evolved beyond merely promoting goods and services through digital channels. It now encompasses broader aspects, including

attracting consumers, building brand preference, engaging audiences, maintaining customer loyalty, and ultimately increasing sales.

Alfaqih (2018) highlights that digital learning systems require adequate infrastructure and technology support, such as computers, internet access, servers, and interactive media. Similarly, effective digital marketing and promotional activities also depend on appropriate digital tools and visually appealing content. Recognizing this, the principal of SMAN 1 Montong understands the critical role of social media platforms—including TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp Story—in promoting the school. However, this community service program specifically focused on optimizing Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, as identified through school observations and discussions.

A key issue that emerged was the disorganized appearance of the school's Instagram feed, making it a priority concern for improvement. To address this, design training was provided to teachers, equipping them with skills to enhance the school's digital presence. The impact of this training was evident through significant improvements in the school's social media feeds, particularly on Instagram. The transformation before and after the training demonstrates the effectiveness of the initiative in strengthening the school's digital marketing efforts.



Figure 1. Training Activity

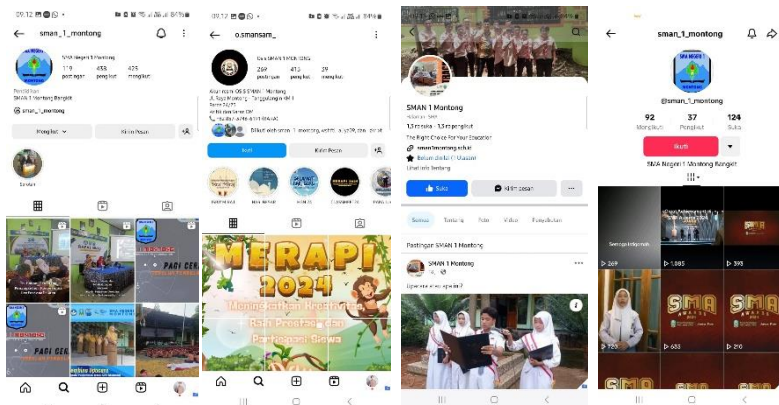


Figure 2. Instagram, Tiktok, and Facebook feeds

Providing Training in Making Publication and Copywriting

Digital media coverage of school activities—whether student achievements, indoor events, or outdoor programs—plays a crucial role in promoting the school in a subtle yet effective manner. Consistently sharing news about school activities serves as a testament to the institution’s quality and professionalism, particularly in its public relations efforts to engage with the community. The Principal of SMAN 1 Montong Tuban is dedicated to ensuring that every teacher possesses the ability to write and publish well-structured news articles. This enables the school to effectively communicate student activities to parents and the wider public.

Educational institutions must be managed professionally, applying modern management principles to meet the evolving needs of local, national, and international communities. Schools should not only focus on improving the quality of education but also actively engage in strategic educational marketing to enhance their visibility and reputation (Rahmani, 2017). The following are examples of successful school activities that have been published in the media after the digital media training program:



Figure 3. Media Activities and Achievements

The role of promotional media in schools is crucial for effectively delivering information about the institution's strengths, with website design playing a key role in attracting readers (Firgia et al., 2021). Stassen et al. (2020) emphasized that a well-structured website significantly influences the school promotion process,

moving beyond traditional word-of-mouth methods to digital platforms (Nurfauziah, 2021).

In addition to its impact, a school website serves as an engaging promotional tool, incorporating elements such as videos, photos showcasing achievements, learning demonstrations, alumni success stories, and other relevant content that enhances school branding (Par et al., 2022). The effectiveness of a school's promotional media, particularly through a well-designed website, contributes to the success of branding efforts, ultimately increasing student enrollment. Akmalia et al. (2020) found that after training sessions on school branding—covering the use of social media, photography tools, and promotional strategies—schools experienced a notable increase in student registrations. This highlights the importance of integrating digital marketing techniques into school promotion strategies to maximize their reach and impact.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results of the Digital Marketing Community Partnership Program at SMAN 1 Montong Tuban align with previous research emphasizing the importance of digital marketing and online promotion in educational institutions. The initiative significantly improved the school's branding by enhancing social media engagement and digital marketing skills among teachers and students. These findings are consistent with Novianti & Mulyana (2018), who highlighted that digital media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook serve as effective tools for marketing and public engagement, enabling institutions to attract a wider audience. The study also supports Purwana, Rahmi, & Aditya (2017), who described the evolution of digital marketing from simply promoting goods and services to a more comprehensive approach involving customer engagement, brand building, and consumer retention.

Additionally, the need for supporting digital infrastructure in learning and promotion, as emphasized by Alfaqih (2018), was also evident in this program. The principal of SMAN 1 Montong Tuban recognized the necessity of using platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook to improve the school's online presence, aligning with the argument that educational institutions must adopt contemporary digital tools to stay competitive. The before-and-after comparison of the school's Instagram feed demonstrated the effectiveness of digital training in

improving visual appeal and structured content, reinforcing Alfaqih's perspective on the importance of attractive and well-organized digital promotional materials.

The implementation of news publication training for teachers also aligns with Rahmani (2017), who argued that schools must be professionally managed using modern marketing principles to enhance their reputation and competitiveness. By equipping teachers with copywriting skills and strategies for promoting school activities online, the program successfully transformed school news into a promotional asset, helping to project a more professional image of the institution. This is further supported by Firgia et al. (2021), who emphasized that effective promotional media play a critical role in conveying school advantages and improving public perception.

Moreover, the impact of school branding efforts on increasing student enrollment was consistent with Stassen et al. (2020) and Nurfauziah (2021), who found that a well-structured school website and active social media presence significantly enhance promotional efforts beyond traditional word-of-mouth strategies. Similarly, Par et al. (2022) noted that promotional content featuring videos, success stories, and achievements contributes to an institution's credibility and attractiveness. The success of SMAN 1 Montong Tuban in increasing visibility and engagement after the digital marketing training aligns with these studies, demonstrating the power of strategic digital branding.

Furthermore, the findings support Akmalia et al. (2020), who found that digital branding efforts, particularly through social media, photography, and promotional campaigns, contribute to an increase in school enrollment rates. The improved branding of SMAN 1 Montong Tuban, following digital marketing training, reflects this trend, as the institution became more appealing to prospective students and their parents.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Community service activities carried out at SMAN 1 Montong Tuban have been running smoothly. Through this community service program, the target audience has felt the benefits of the community service program that has been carried out. Some things that can be realized include: (1) knowing how to create social media, digital marketing concepts, and marketing basics (2) being able to manage social media properly (3) being able to write news releases on student achievements (4) being able to create designs that have high artistic value (5)

understanding how to create a basic SEO website Google Algorithm, Page Speed and Crawl Budget. (6) teachers of SMAN 1 Montong have been motivated to do promotion.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to SMAN 1 Montong Tuban for their invaluable support and cooperation in the successful implementation of this Digital Marketing Training Program. Our sincere appreciation goes to the school principal, teachers, and staff, who warmly welcomed our initiative and actively participated in the program. Their commitment and enthusiasm greatly contributed to the smooth execution of each activity. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the students of SMAN 1 Montong Tuban, whose eagerness to learn and adapt to digital marketing strategies played a crucial role in the success of this initiative. Their creativity and dedication in applying the knowledge gained from this training have been truly inspiring.

Additionally, we acknowledge the support provided by the school administration, which facilitated the necessary arrangements, resources, and coordination to ensure that the program could be conducted effectively. Without their assistance, this initiative would not have been possible. Lastly, we express our appreciation to all parties involved, directly or indirectly, in making this community service program a success. We hope that this training will bring long-term benefits to SMAN 1 Montong Tuban by enhancing its digital presence, improving school branding, and fostering a culture of innovation in education.

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