

VISUAL STRATEGIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: UTILIZING COMMERCIAL PHOTOS TO ENHANCE MARKET ACCESS FOR MSMES

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Article history:

Received: June 2025

Revised: June 2025

Accepted: June 2025

ABSTRACT In the digital era, the ability to produce attractive commercial product photos is an important factor in expanding market access. However, the reality in the field shows that many Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) do not understand good product photo production techniques and have not optimized their use in digital marketing strategies. Limited knowledge of basic product photography techniques, lighting, coloring, visual composition, and the use of social media as a promotional tool are the main obstacles that limit the competitiveness of MSMEs amidst increasingly tight market competition. Objective: to provide intensive training to MSMEs on commercial photo production based on simple but effective techniques to increase market access. Methods: This community service was carried out on Sunday, June 22, 2025 involving 25 local MSMEs. Activities include material presentation, discussion, direct practice, evaluation. Evaluation is carried out from the results of the photos produced compared to before receiving training. Results: The results of the study showed an increase in advertising photos produced by MSMEs which were then uploaded on social media so that they were more attractive to customers. The hope is to be able to increase product sales not only locally but also internationally because of unlimited digital access. Conclusion: Product commercial photography training is able to improve product content so that market share becomes wider. Recommendation: collaboration with the marketplace in the future can help MSMEs to increase global market access, with the ability to produce attractive visual content

KEYWORDS: *Market Access, Commercial Photography, Digital Marketing, SMEs*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology in the past two decades has significantly transformed and reshaped the business landscape. Conventional marketing based on face-to-face interactions and print media is now beginning to shift towards digital marketing that relies on social media, websites, and online marketplaces (Cheren, 2022). Amid these changes, the ability to present

engaging visual content is becoming increasingly important. One of the most influential forms of visual content is commercial product photography, which can attract consumer attention, build trust, and strengthen brand image (Lestari et al., 2025).

On the other hand, many Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia, including in the target service area, still face significant challenges in adopting digital marketing (Ambardi et al., 2024) Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs (2023) shows that around 60% of MSMEs in Indonesia have not fully optimized digital platforms to expand their markets (Anwar et al., 2024). One of the reasons is the limitation in producing engaging marketing content, particularly in terms of professional product photography (Lestari & Sudarmaji, 2024).

This problem is exacerbated by the limited understanding of MSMEs regarding the importance of visual aesthetics in influencing consumer purchasing decisions(Pereira et al., 2023). Many MSME products actually have good quality, but are less appealing to potential consumers because they are displayed with mediocre photos, inadequate lighting, unsupportive backgrounds, or angles that do not showcase the product's advantages (Ajiva et al., 2024). This condition leads to limited market access and results in the low competitiveness of local products amidst increasingly fierce competition.

2. METHOD

This community service activity is carried out through a participatory-based approach, where partners are actively involved in all stages of the program. The implementation method is designed in several interconnected phases to ensure the transfer of knowledge and skills occurs effectively. Here are the steps that the team will undertake:

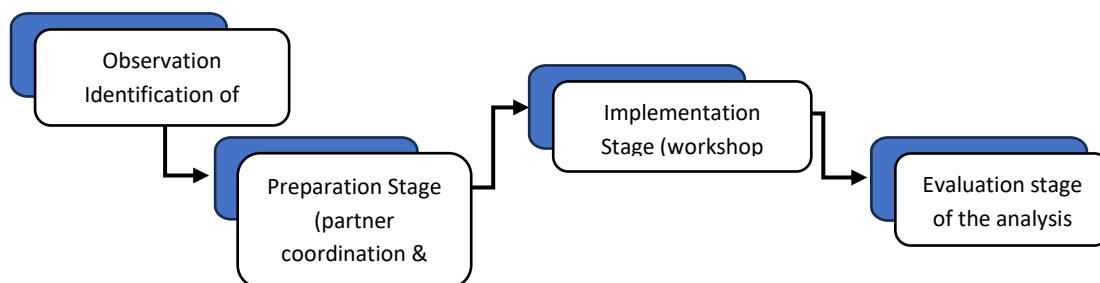


Image 1. Implementation Method Flow

Based on the flowchart of the activity implementation method above, here are the detailed descriptions of each stage of the activity:

1. The first stage is observation and problem identification.

At this stage, the service team will conduct observations on the issues faced by MSMEs in their efforts to increase sales.

2. The second stage is preparation.

At this stage, the service team will coordinate with partners to determine the training schedule, identify specific partner needs related to commercial photo production, and prepare training materials that match the participants' level of understanding (Poirier et al., 2024). In addition, the preparation of simple aids such as portable mini studios, light reflectors, and basic editing software is also carried out to support the learning process.

3. The third stage is the implementation of training and workshops.

The training will be provided in the form of a combination of theory and practice. The theory session will cover the basic principles of product photography, lighting techniques, visual composition, and visual marketing strategies on digital platforms (Lestari, 2024). The practical session will focus on hands-on practice of photographing each partner's products using the available tools, accompanied by technical guidance from the implementation team. Participants will be invited to try various shooting techniques, lighting setups, and simple photo editing.

4. The final stage is evaluation, monitoring, and reporting of results.

Collecting data related to the development of partner capabilities, the level of product photo usage in digital marketing, and the impact on market access (Wardati et al., 2024). Evaluation is conducted by measuring changes in the quality of product photos produced and their utilization on social media or marketplaces. The final report will include an analysis of the activity results, documentation, and recommendations for program follow-up.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the implementation of this service, the author and the team attempt to present the results that have been achieved. The initial presentation of the material was conducted to align perceptions and understanding regarding the importance of commercial photography in product promotion, especially in the culinary field, which is largely managed by MSMEs. This is important because initial understanding will be a significant step towards the success of this service. After the presentation of the material, a question-and-answer discussion session was opened, with the hope that participants would be able to express their problems and thus find solutions from this

community service activity. Then the participants were asked to practice with simple tools they had, namely using their respective smartphones to produce a product. In this practical activity, not all participants tried because only a few brought their products directly, and the committee had limitations in providing space or equipment for taking photos. With the improvement in product photo quality and digital marketing skills, it is hoped that partners can expand their market reach, increase sales, and compete with other products in the global market. This will contribute to the growth of their businesses and enhance the contribution of SMEs to the local economy. The presentation of the material was delivered by the speaker, Eni Lestari, M.I.Kom. In her presentation, she explained the basics of photography, how to take attractive photos for a product, and which social media platforms are suitable for promotional media. The activity was attended by 25 SMEs, the majority of which operate in the culinary field.



Image 2. Commercial Photo Production Materials

The presentation explains that commercial photo production is the process of creating photos for commercial purposes, such as advertising, marketing, and promotion. These photos must meet certain quality standards and be able to attract the attention of the intended target market. This process involves various stages, from planning to publishing, which serve to produce photos that effectively communicate the desired message. Photography is a combination of science, technology, and art. The harmonious combination of the three can produce an amazing work. Of course, with the skill and artistic touch of the photographer, a photo can become meaningful. Here, the speaker explains how to produce attractive commercial photos. There are 3 things to pay attention to: (1) Choose a Relevant Concept, where this concept will be the first step for a photographer. The concept should align with the product being photographed. (2) Pay Attention to the Details, to achieve maximum photo results, focus on the small details of each product being the subject. (3) Use Effective Lighting, lighting is the most important part of the photo-taking process, so this must be given great attention to achieve optimal results (Laksana & Hidayati, 2024).



Image 3. The speaker presents the material.

The participants are very enthusiastic because this training is indeed very important to increase the amount of marketing by showcasing attractive product photos and then uploading them through their respective social media accounts. The culinary business greatly needs visuals that look realistic and appealing because customers cannot directly taste the product. Here, the role of the photographer is very important because they must be able to convey the message from the owner of the culinary business that their products are very delicious, healthy, and safe. A single photo must be able to depict the taste of each culinary product owned by the MSME.

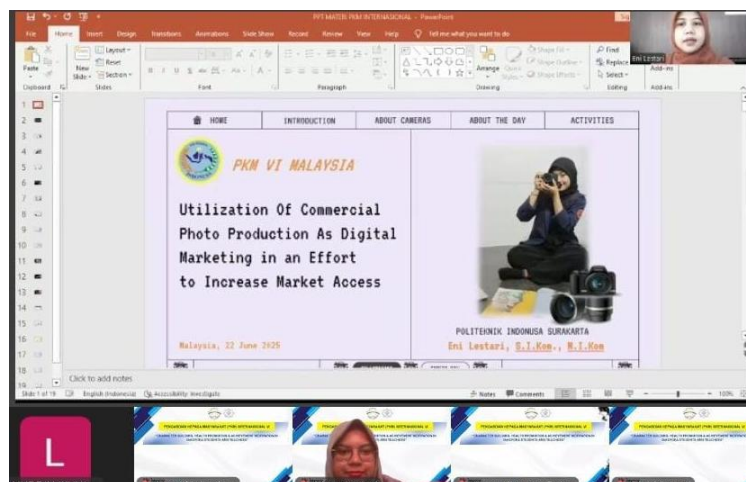


Image 4. Service material for commercial production photos to improve market access

In creating a commercial photo, techniques must be followed to achieve optimal results. An important aspect is the lighting technique, as lighting plays a crucial role in conveying the message of a product photo. In practice, the photography techniques that must be considered are

- (1) Lighting, which relates to the lighting conditions under which you take the photo. However, lighting is also influenced by shutter speed, ISO, and the lens used. Because most commercial advertising photography is done indoors, it is best to know exactly the available light. Adjust according to the client's request. If he wants the image to be a bit darker or brighter, then please take the photo like that.
- (2) Camera, that the most expensive camera is not a guarantee that the photos you produce will be good. Even if you use the latest high-tech camera, it will never be able to create the desired layout. Especially on the client's side. Therefore, you can use an ordinary camera that will support your work.
- (3) Composition, Speaking of composition, we are actually talking about shutter speed, ISO, and perhaps also the lens used. All of these factors will affect the results of the photos you take. Therefore, study good composition techniques.
- (4) Lens, the last one is the camera lens. Ideally, you should use a camera that allows for interchangeable lenses according to the photography needs at that time (Lestari et al., 2024) Because commercial advertising photography always involves different dimensions and subjects, prepare various lens options that can support the performance.

After mastering the material related to photography, additional material related to social media used as a tool for digital promotion. With the increased ability to create attractive displays, they are then uploaded to the owned social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or the currently very familiar marketplaces. Participants try to upload their photographic works to social media with added captions to provide more information about the products offered. The hope is that the combination of photography skills and understanding of social media can become a strategy to increase market access for MSME actors.

4. CONCLUSION

From this community service activity, the author attempts to conclude that the improvement in product photo quality and digital marketing skills is expected to expand the market reach of MSMEs, thereby increasing sales and competing with other products in the global market. This will contribute to the growth of their businesses and enhance the contribution of MSMEs to the local

economy. Improvement in the Quality of MSME Product Photos and Enhancement of Digital Marketing Skills on Social Media. After participating in the training, MSMEs will better understand how to optimize product photos for promotion on social media and marketplaces. They are able to utilize digital platforms more effectively, using high-quality product photos to increase engagement with potential consumers, and build a stronger brand identity through visual consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author expresses gratitude to Politeknik Indonusa Surakarta for supporting this community service activity, which has led to the completion of this journal article.

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