

Leveraging Digital Marketing For Traditional Grocery Businesses

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Abstract. *This study examines the implementation of digital marketing strategies in a traditional grocery distributor in Malang, Indonesia, operating with conventional methods. The research, conducted from June to September 2023, follows an action research methodology encompassing identification, design, implementation, and evaluation stages. The initial identification phase, through interviews and observations, highlighted the distributor's limited customer reach, necessitating a digital marketing approach for market expansion. The subsequent design phase involved creating tailored content for social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, including product photos, videos, and storytelling in captions. The strategy implementation stage saw these plans executed, with significant content posted across platforms and the successful integration of an e-catalogue and Google Business for enhanced online visibility. The project evaluation revealed increased customer engagement on social media, indicating effective strategy implementation. However, challenges in quantitatively assessing direct sales impact due to the distributor's traditional operation model were noted. The study suggests that while immediate sales increases were not definitively measured, the strategy laid the groundwork for future growth and market expansion. The research highlights the importance of digital marketing for traditional businesses in adapting to the digital era and underscores the necessity of establishing clear KPIs for effective strategy evaluation..*

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, Grocery Distributor, Social Media*

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced digital age, the incorporation of digital marketing methods into conventional business models has emerged as a crucial determinant of their success and long-term viability. This article examines a case study of a conventional grocery distributor in Malang, a city renowned for its abundant cultural legacy and thriving commercial environment. The distributor, known as XYZ for anonymity purposes, mainly specializes in wholesale amounts of local food and beverages. They have traditionally relied on conventional techniques of management and marketing.

Traditionally, the grocery delivery in Malang has used direct and personal interactions, with minimal use of technology. This approach, although promoting human relationships, has presented notable constraints in terms of extent, expandability, and effectiveness. Given the current era where digital platforms are transforming how consumers behave and what they

anticipate, the distributor's commitment to conventional methods has resulted in a pressing requirement for incorporating digital technology (Othman et al., 2022).

With this distributor, the researchers went on a transformative journey with the goal of implementing a comprehensive digital marketing plan. This strategic shift was primarily focused on using the power of social media and digital advertising, tools that have transformed how organizations connect with their customer base (Levy et al., 2022). A thorough process of selecting relevant digital platforms, developing interesting content, and deploying targeted advertising to reach a bigger and more varied audience was involved in the implementation (Wicaksono, 2023a).

The primary goal of this study was to scientifically validate the impact of digital marketing methods on increasing local consumer involvement. The level of connection and interest customers have with a brand is reflected in engagement, a crucial indicator in the digital marketing area (Clarence & Keni, 2022; Habib et al., 2022). Increased involvement is frequently associated with increased customer loyalty, higher revenue, and improved brand reputation. The researchers intended to confirm the notion that digital integration would dramatically increase customer engagement levels by examining data before and after the installation of digital marketing tactics.

A bigger goal of this study was to set a standard for businesses in the area that do similar things. The Malang grocery distributor's successful use of digital marketing techniques in a traditional business setting could be a good example for other businesses in the area. It could possibly inspire them to make similar digital changes, which would make the local business community more competitive and better at using technology (Jones & Rowley, 2011). For this change to happen, a thorough study of the distributor's current customer base, market trends, and the usefulness of digital platforms was carried out. To build a strong online footprint, key social media platforms were found and used. There was also focused digital advertising that was meant to reach more people and better engage the customers that were already there.

Digital marketing is an imperative for conventional distributors, including the grocery distributor in Malang, due to a multitude of compelling factors. To begin with, the dynamic consumer environment, propelled by progress in technology, has notably transformed consumer purchasing patterns and anticipations (Kingsnorth, 2022). Contemporary consumers, particularly the younger demographic, are progressively becoming more dependent on digital platforms to procure information and execute purchasing deliberations. They place a premium on convenience, speed, and an extensive selection of options, which are qualities that conventional distribution methods frequently fight to offer. Conventional distributors

encounter the obstacle of restricted market penetration and visibility within a digitally-dominated consumer environment. These distributors run the risk of obsolescence in the absence of a robust digital presence, which would prevent them from connecting with a substantial portion of prospective consumers who engage with brands primarily through online platforms. In addition, digital marketing provides consumers with unparalleled data-driven insights regarding their preferences and behaviors (Rogers, 2021; Wicaksono, 2023a). Conventional distributors are able to customize their products and services, forecast market developments, and arrive at well-informed judgments, thereby fostering increased client loyalty and satisfaction.

Additionally, digital marketing creates a more equitable environment by enabling smaller, conventional distributors to effectively contend with larger organizations. Digital tools enable these distributors to expand their reach to a more extensive audience without requiring considerable investments in physical space or substantial increases in expenditures for traditional advertising (Kannan & Li, 2017). Digital marketing channels, including email marketing and social media, offer scalable and economical platforms for communicating directly with customers, promoting brands, and engaging with them. Furthermore, digital marketing serves as a facilitator for targeted advertising, allowing distributors to precisely target particular demographics. This results in the optimization of marketing expenditures and an enhanced return on investment. Additionally, the capacity to interact directly with consumers via digital channels strengthens customer relationships by encouraging feedback and repeat business. Digital marketing provides traditional distributors with a means to expand their operations and strengthen their connections with customers, while also ensuring their survival in an ever more digital environment (ASI et al., 2022).

The primary objective of this study is to determine the extent to which digital marketing can assist a local Malang grocery distributor, which previously relied on conventional methods, in strengthening its relationship with local customers (Firmansyah et al., 2021). Through social media and digital advertisements, the research intends to determine whether or not the distributor's business attracts a greater number of local residents. This research also aims to demonstrate the efficacy of digital marketing for similar businesses, thereby inspiring them to adopt these contemporary approaches. The distributor anticipates that by transitioning to digital marketing, it will not only gain a larger consumer base but also serve as a model for other regional enterprises to emulate.

Insights and conclusions drawn from this research are anticipated to provide practitioners, academics, and policymakers with a significant asset concerning the convergence

of digital marketing and conventional business models. Through the provision of a thorough examination of the obstacles, tactics, and results linked to the integration of digital marketing within a conventional business environment, this article seeks to shed light on the way forward for analogous organizations commencing their digital transformation endeavors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital marketing, at its core, refers to the use of digital channels to promote and sell products or services (Kingsnorth, 2022). This includes a wide range of activities conducted over the internet and electronic devices, such as social media marketing, email campaigns, search engine optimization (SEO), and online advertising (P. Kotler et al., 2019). The essence of digital marketing lies in its ability to reach a vast audience quickly and in a targeted manner, a significant leap from traditional marketing methods that often rely on broader, less specific outreach like print ads or billboards (P. Kotler et al., 2021). The efficiency of digital marketing is rooted in its data-driven approach, where strategies are developed and adjusted based on real-time data about consumer behavior, preferences, and engagement. This allows for more personalized and effective marketing efforts, catering to the specific needs and interests of different customer segments.

A fundamental aspect of digital marketing is its interactive nature, offering two-way communication between businesses and consumers (Wicaksono, 2023a). Platforms like social media allow for direct engagement with customers, fostering a more personal and responsive relationship (M. Kotler et al., 2017). This level of interaction is pivotal in building brand loyalty and trust, as consumers feel heard and valued. Additionally, digital marketing provides measurable results, such as website traffic, click-through rates, and conversion rates, enabling businesses to evaluate the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns and make informed decisions. The adaptability of digital marketing is also key, as it allows businesses to quickly respond to market trends and changes in consumer behavior, maintaining relevance in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Overall, digital marketing represents a dynamic and versatile approach to connecting with and understanding today's consumers, essential for any business looking to thrive in the digital age.

This study's theoretical underpinning is based on an analysis of digital marketing applications in the context of local distributors using traditional methods. The inclusion of digital marketing methods marks a paradigm shift for local distributors, particularly those entrenched in old practices. This transformation necessitates not only the adoption of new technologies, but also a shift in marketing philosophy. The shift to digital marketing needs an

awareness of the digital consumer journey, which differs significantly from traditional consumer paths. It entails making use of digital channels like social media, email, and search engines to create a more dynamic and responsive marketing environment. This technique allows local distributors to reach a larger customer base, interact with customers in real time, and adapt quickly to market developments (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015).

The concept of digital integration in business models, which has been increasingly stressed in academic literature, is central to this discourse. Digital integration for conventional local distributors means the intentional incorporation of digital solutions into their existing business structures (Wicaksono, 2023b). This includes creating an online presence, digital advertising, content marketing, and using analytics to make data-driven decisions. In a digital-centric consumer market, such integration is critical for increasing exposure and accessibility. Furthermore, digital integration allows these organizations to collect and analyze consumer data, providing insights into consumer preferences and behavior patterns (Kannan & Li, 2017). This data-driven strategy helps businesses adjust marketing campaigns, optimize resource allocation, and improve customer experience. Academic research emphasizes the value of a systematic and structured approach to digital integration, highlighting the relevance of alignment with overall corporate objectives and customer expectations (M. Kotler et al., 2017).

Finally, an important area of investigation is the function of digital marketing in providing competitive advantages for local distributors. Local distributors frequently suffer money, labor, and technological infrastructure limits, as opposed to larger firms with significant resources. However, digital marketing provides cost-effective and scalable options that help level the playing field. Local distributors may efficiently reach and engage their target audience by utilizing focused advertising, content marketing, and social media engagement tactics (P. Kotler et al., 2021; Levy et al., 2022). This personalized strategy boosts not only marketing effectiveness but also consumer loyalty and retention. Furthermore, the agility and flexibility provided by digital marketing platforms enables these organizations to quickly adjust to changing market conditions, which is critical in retaining competitive relevance. Thus, the theoretical investigation of digital marketing in the context of local conventional distributors provides a thorough grasp of its transformational potential and strategic use in improving business performance.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study is action research, a hands-on approach that emphasizes active participation and practical implementation. Central to this

methodology is the creation and management of social media accounts on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, alongside the development of a landing page using Linktree and an electronic catalogue (E-Catalogue). These digital tools were selected to enhance the online presence and accessibility of the distributor's products and services. The choice of platforms like TikTok and Instagram was strategic, aiming to leverage their widespread popularity and diverse user base. Linktree served as an effective tool to consolidate multiple online resources, providing a one-stop solution for customers to access all relevant links, including the E-Catalogue which showcased the distributor's product range in an organized and user-friendly format.

The creation of content for these platforms was guided by a thorough SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. This analysis was instrumental in tailoring the content to highlight the distributor's strengths, address potential weaknesses, capitalize on market opportunities, and mitigate any threats (Wicaksono, 2023b). The SWOT analysis was underpinned by a detailed segmentation of the distributor's customer base. Understanding the customer segments is crucial in creating targeted and relevant content. For this distributor, the primary customer segments included small-scale retail stores, medium-volume purchasers, and local residents within the 30-40 year age range. This demographic, typically possessing a high school or higher level of education and a middle-range income, formed the core target audience for the digital marketing efforts.

The content creation process was meticulously planned to resonate with the identified customer segments. Emphasis was placed on crafting messages and visuals that appealed to the lifestyle, interests, and needs of the target demographic. The content strategy aimed to strike a balance between showcasing the product range and engaging the audience with relevant, informative, and entertaining material. This approach was designed to not only attract the attention of potential customers but also to foster a sense of community and loyalty among the existing customer base (Stone & Woodcock, 2014).

The research was conducted over a period from June to September 2023, encompassing several key phases. The initial phase, conducted in June, focused on the identification stage. This involved a comprehensive analysis of the existing market scenario, customer demographics, and the distributor's current marketing strategies. The aim was to identify gaps and opportunities where digital marketing could be effectively implemented to enhance the distributor's reach and engagement with its target audience.

Following the identification phase, the design stage commenced, extending from late June to July. This phase involved the development of a tailored digital marketing strategy,

incorporating the insights gained from the initial analysis. The strategy included plans for social media presence, content creation aligned with the identified customer segments, and the setup of the necessary digital tools like Linktree and E-Catalogue. Once the strategy was developed, it was presented to the distributor's owner for approval and consultation. This ensured that the strategy was aligned with the overall business objectives and had the buy-in from the top management. Subsequently, from August to September, the strategy was implemented. This phase involved the active management of social media accounts, content dissemination, and customer engagement initiatives. The final stage of the project, carried out in September, was the evaluation phase. This involved analyzing the outcomes of the digital marketing strategy against the set objectives to assess its effectiveness and identify areas for further improvement.

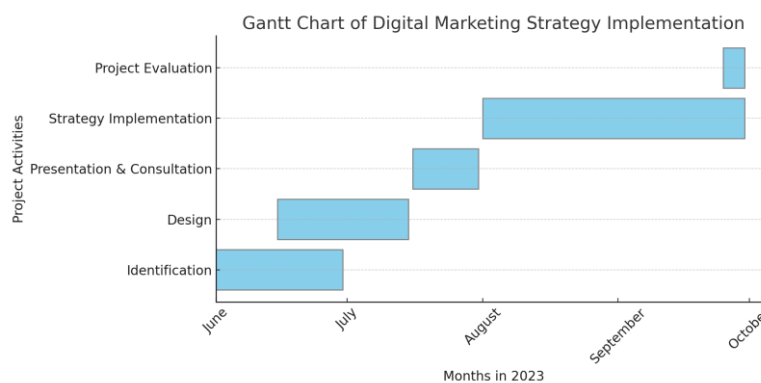


Figure 1. Schedule

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Identification Stage

The first stage of the research, focusing on the identification of issues, commenced with in-depth interviews and observations involving the owner of the distributor. Established during the tumultuous period of the pandemic in 2020, the company managed to navigate through the challenges and has since evolved to possess its own warehouse located in Mulyorejo, Malang, East Java. This phase of the study aimed to gather insights into the distributor's operations, market position, and challenges. The interviews with the owner were pivotal in understanding the history, business model, and the evolution of the distributor since its inception. Observations at the warehouse provided a practical perspective on the daily operations and customer interactions, offering a tangible sense of the business environment.

Through this initial phase, a key issue was identified: the distributor's customer base remained limited to the immediate area surrounding Mulyorejo. Despite having established a solid foundation and surviving the initial startup challenges, the distributor faced the pressing need to expand its market reach beyond the local vicinity. The limitation in customer reach was

seen as a significant barrier to growth, particularly in an era where businesses are increasingly looking to expand their influence and operations on a wider scale. This localized customer base, while loyal, presented a constraint in terms of the business's potential growth and scalability (Levy et al., 2022).

The findings from the identification phase underscored the necessity for a new strategy aimed at market expansion. The distributor, having established a strong local presence, now required a strategic push to penetrate new markets and attract a broader customer base. This situation highlighted the importance of exploring new marketing channels, especially digital platforms, which could enable the distributor to reach beyond its current geographical constraints. The need for a digital marketing strategy was evident, presenting an opportunity to leverage online tools and platforms to connect with a wider audience, thus addressing the issue of limited customer reach identified in this initial stage of the research.

Design Stage

The second phase of the research, the Design Stage, was essential in shaping the digital marketing strategy for the distributor. This phase involved the meticulous planning and creation of content for various social media platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, and the integrated use of a Linktree landing page (Anggraini & Sukaris, 2023; Setiawan et al., 2023). The content design was a critical element in ensuring the success of the digital marketing initiative, as it directly influenced how the audience perceived and engaged with the brand.

Central to the content strategy was the inclusion of both photos and videos of the products. Visual content is known for its high engagement rates on social media, and in the context of a local distributor, it served a dual purpose. Firstly, it showcased the products in a visually appealing manner, highlighting their quality and variety. Secondly, it provided a tangible connection between potential customers and the products, especially important for an audience that may not have had the opportunity to physically interact with the products. The use of storytelling in captions accompanied these visuals, which added a personal touch to the posts. Storytelling in social media marketing is a powerful tool to create an emotional connection with the audience. For this distributor, the stories revolved around the origin of the products, the journey of the business since its establishment in the pandemic, and how these products fit into the everyday lives of the customers.

The design of the content also considered the specific characteristics and best practices of each chosen social media platform. For instance, TikTok's content was designed to be more dynamic and engaging, leveraging the platform's preference for short, captivating videos.

Instagram content focused on high-quality images and stories, utilizing the platform's diverse features like posts, stories, and reels to maximize reach and engagement (Setiawan et al., 2023). The Linktree landing page was designed to be user-friendly and informative, providing a central hub for customers to access all relevant online resources, including the E-Catalogue and direct links to social media profiles.

In summary, the Design Stage was a critical step in the research, focusing on creating a cohesive and engaging content strategy across various digital platforms. By combining visually appealing product displays with compelling storytelling, and tailoring the content to suit the specificities of each social media platform, the stage set the foundation for an effective digital marketing campaign. This approach aimed not only to attract a wider audience but also to foster a deeper connection between the brand and its potential customers.

Presentation and Consultation Stage

The Presentation and Consultation Stage marked a significant milestone in the research, as it involved presenting the designed digital marketing strategy to the owner of the distributor for feedback and approval. This stage was crucial as it ensured that the digital marketing plan was aligned with the overall business goals and expectations of the distributor. The presentation encompassed all elements of the Design Stage, including the planned content for social media platforms, the use of storytelling, and the visual marketing strategy involving photos and videos of products.

During this stage, an important addition was suggested by the owner: the registration of the distributor on Google Business. This recommendation emerged from the recognition of the importance of local visibility in digital spaces. A Google Business account would allow the distributor to significantly enhance its local presence, making it easier for potential customers to discover and access information about the distributor, including its location, operating hours, and contact details. This tool is particularly effective in reaching local customers who use online search engines to find businesses and services in their area. The inclusion of the distributor on Google Business was seen as a complementary aspect of the digital marketing strategy, extending the reach of the distributor to a broader audience while also catering to the immediate local community.

The response from the owner regarding the proposed design and content for the social media platforms was predominantly positive. The majority of the content designed in the previous stage was approved, indicating a strong alignment between the research team's digital marketing strategy and the owner's vision for the business. This approval was a testament to

the thoroughness of the research and strategy design, which considered not only the digital marketing best practices but also the unique aspects and values of the distributor.

In summary, the Presentation and Consultation Stage was a collaborative effort that not only validated the majority of the proposed digital marketing strategy but also enhanced it with the integration of Google Business. This stage demonstrated the dynamic nature of developing a digital marketing strategy, where feedback and practical insights from business owners play a critical role in refining and optimizing the approach for maximum effectiveness.

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Strategy Implementation Stage

During the Strategy Implementation Stage, the carefully crafted digital marketing plan was put into action, marking a significant phase in the project. This stage involved the execution of the content strategy across different digital platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, and the integration of an e-catalogue through a Linktree landing page (M. Kotler et al., 2017).

On TikTok, the distributor's account saw the creation and posting of a diverse range of content. This included 45 story contents, 12 reels, and 9 feed posts. Each piece of content was designed to engage the audience, leveraging TikTok's unique format and user base. The stories provided quick, engaging glimpses into the distributor's offerings and operations, while the reels allowed for more creative and in-depth storytelling. The feed posts served as a more permanent showcase of the distributor's products and brand message.

Similarly, the Instagram account was also actively managed, with a substantial amount of content being posted. This included 95 story contents, 11 reels, and 10 feed posts. The Instagram stories were used for timely updates and direct engagement with the audience, while the reels offered an opportunity to present the products and brand story in an engaging and visually appealing format. The feed posts provided a consistent visual representation of the brand and its products, fostering brand recognition and loyalty.

A significant achievement in this stage was the successful creation of an online e-catalogue, facilitated by the use of a Linktree landing page. This e-catalogue became a central feature for showcasing the entire range of products offered by the distributor. The landing page provided a user-friendly interface, allowing customers to easily navigate through the different product offerings and access detailed information. The integration of the e-catalogue with the Linktree landing page ensured that customers had a seamless experience moving from social media platforms to viewing the products in detail.

Moreover, the distributor's presence on Google Business was effectively utilized, connecting the location with Google Maps and integrating it with the Instagram account. This integration enhanced the distributor's online visibility, making it easier for local customers to find and engage with the business.

The content strategy implemented during this stage was categorized into two types: functional content and emotional content. Functional content involved direct promotional material, such as hard-selling tactics through the product catalogue. This type of content was straightforward, focusing on the products' features, prices, and availability. On the other hand, emotional content involved soft-selling approaches, such as incorporating quotes and storytelling elements in social media posts. This content aimed to create an emotional connection with the audience, building brand affinity and loyalty.

Overall, the Strategy Implementation Stage was a comprehensive effort that utilized various digital platforms and content strategies to enhance the distributor's online presence and customer engagement. The combination of functional and emotional content, alongside the integration of digital tools like Linktree and Google Business, provided a multi-faceted approach to digital marketing, catering to both the practical and emotional aspects of consumer engagement.

Project Evaluation Stage

In the Project Evaluation Stage, the effectiveness of the implemented digital marketing strategy was assessed, though with certain limitations. One of the key challenges faced during this stage was the lack of significant data regarding sales increases from the distributor. This was primarily attributed to the distributor's continued reliance on traditional business methods, which made it challenging to accurately track and attribute increases in revenue directly to the digital marketing efforts. The traditional method of operation, while familiar and established, posed limitations in terms of data collection and analysis, essential components for a comprehensive evaluation of digital marketing impacts.

However, despite these challenges, there was a noticeable increase in customer engagement as a result of the social media promotional campaigns. This was a positive indicator of the digital marketing strategy's effectiveness in reaching and engaging potential new customers. The increase in engagement was evident in metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and views on the distributor's social media platforms. This heightened engagement is a critical first step in the customer acquisition process, as it often precedes actual sales. It indicated that the distributor was successfully capturing the attention of its target audience, an essential factor in expanding its customer base.

The conclusion drawn from this stage was that while the ultimate goal of increased sales was not fully realized within the evaluation period, the digital marketing strategy had been successfully implemented and was beginning to yield results in terms of customer engagement.

The lack of baseline data and specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the digital marketing campaign made it challenging to measure the full impact of the strategy quantitatively. This highlights the importance of establishing clear KPIs and baseline metrics prior to implementing a digital marketing strategy, especially in a traditional business setting (Primasiwi et al., 2021). Such metrics are crucial for a more accurate and comprehensive evaluation of the strategy's effectiveness, particularly in terms of its contribution to sales and revenue growth.

Overall, the Project Evaluation Stage suggested that while the digital marketing strategy was on the right track, a longer evaluation period and more robust data collection methods would be necessary to fully assess its impact on sales. The increased engagement on social media platforms, however, was a promising sign that the distributor was expanding its reach and resonating with a broader audience, laying the groundwork for future business growth.

Discussion

The implementation of the digital marketing strategy for the traditional grocery distributor in Malang has had several notable impacts, as observed in the various stages of the project. Firstly, the Identification Stage brought to light the critical need for the distributor to expand its market reach beyond the local vicinity. The realization that the customer base was geographically confined illuminated the potential for digital marketing to tap into a wider audience. This stage was instrumental in setting the direction for the subsequent phases, highlighting the importance of adopting digital strategies to stay relevant in an increasingly online marketplace.

In the Design Stage, the creation of tailored content for social media platforms marked a significant shift in the distributor's marketing approach. The use of photos, videos, and storytelling in the content strategy was aimed at engaging a broader audience, which was previously unattainable through traditional marketing methods. This stage underscored the potential of digital content to not only showcase products but also to build a brand narrative that resonates with consumers. The positive response from the distributor's owner to the majority of the proposed content indicated alignment with the business's goals and a willingness to embrace new marketing methods.

The Strategy Implementation Stage saw the practical application of the designed digital marketing strategy. The significant volume of content created and disseminated across platforms like TikTok and Instagram demonstrated the distributor's commitment to establishing a robust online presence. The use of both functional and emotional content was a strategic

decision to appeal to a diverse range of consumer preferences, blending hard-selling tactics with soft-selling approaches to engage customers effectively. Moreover, the integration of the e-catalogue and Google Business account enhanced the distributor's online visibility and accessibility, crucial for attracting local customers.

However, the Project Evaluation Stage highlighted some challenges in measuring the direct impact of these digital marketing efforts on sales. The lack of significant data regarding sales increases, due in part to the distributor's reliance on traditional business methods, posed a limitation in quantitatively assessing the success of the strategy. Nonetheless, the increased customer engagement observed on social media platforms was a promising indicator of the strategy's effectiveness in reaching and engaging potential customers. This suggests that while immediate sales increases were not definitively measured, the digital marketing efforts were successful in laying the groundwork for future growth and market expansion.

Overall, the project serves as a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of digital marketing strategies in a traditional business setting. While the full extent of the impact on sales remains to be seen, the increased online engagement and positive response to the digital content indicate a successful initiation into digital marketing. This transition is crucial for the distributor's long-term growth and competitiveness in a digital-driven market. The project also highlights the importance of setting clear KPIs and establishing robust data collection methods for a more effective evaluation of digital marketing strategies.

Table 1. Summary

Stage	Key Activities	Outcomes/Impacts
<i>Identification</i>	Interviews and observations with the owner; identification of limited customer reach.	Recognized the need for market expansion beyond local vicinity.
<i>Design</i>	Creation of tailored content for social media; positive response from the owner.	Shift in marketing approach, alignment with business goals.
<i>Implementation</i>	Posting content on TikTok and Instagram; integration of e-catalogue and Google Business.	Enhanced online presence and customer engagement.
<i>Evaluation</i>	Observed increase in customer engagement; challenges in measuring direct impact on sales.	Laid groundwork for future growth; highlighted need for clear KPIs.

CONCLUSIONS

The research project focusing on the implementation of a digital marketing strategy for a traditional grocery distributor in Malang provides valuable insights into the transformative potential of digital marketing in traditional business settings. The project encompassed several

stages, from identifying the need for market expansion to designing and implementing a tailored digital content strategy across various social media platforms. The significant shift from traditional marketing methods to a dynamic digital marketing approach marked a pivotal transition for the distributor. The integration of digital tools, such as social media platforms, Google Business, and an e-catalogue, significantly enhanced the distributor's online presence and customer engagement. This transition was crucial, considering the evolving consumer behaviors and the increasing importance of digital channels in today's market landscape.

However, the project also highlighted some challenges, particularly in evaluating the direct impact of digital marketing on sales. Due to the distributor's continued reliance on traditional business methods, there was a lack of substantial data to quantitatively assess the increase in sales. Nonetheless, the observed increase in customer engagement on social media platforms was a promising indicator of the digital marketing strategy's effectiveness. This increased engagement, particularly among potential new customers, suggests that the distributor successfully captured the attention of a broader audience, a critical step toward market expansion and growth.

In conclusion, the project illustrates the importance of digital marketing for traditional businesses looking to expand their market reach and adapt to the digital era. While the direct impact on sales requires further evaluation, the increased online engagement and positive response to the digital marketing efforts indicate a successful initiation into the digital realm. The project underscores the need for traditional businesses to embrace digital marketing strategies, not only to survive but to thrive in the increasingly competitive and digital-centric business environment. It also highlights the necessity of establishing clear KPIs and robust data collection methods to effectively measure the impact of digital marketing strategies.

For future research, it is recommended to focus on developing a more comprehensive and quantifiable method of evaluating the impact of digital marketing strategies on sales and overall business performance, particularly for traditional businesses. This could involve establishing clear baseline metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) before the implementation of digital marketing initiatives, enabling a more accurate measurement of their effectiveness. Additionally, exploring the long-term effects of digital marketing on customer loyalty and retention, as well as its impact on different segments of the market, would provide deeper insights. Incorporating a comparative study of businesses that have and have not adopted digital marketing strategies could also offer valuable perspectives on the tangible benefits of digital transformation in the traditional business sector.

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