



The Strategy of the Sidoarjo Regency Cooperative Office in Efforts to Develop the Competitiveness of Micro and Medium Enterprises

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Abstract: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Sidoarjo Regency face various challenges in business development, particularly concerning product packaging and design. This study aims to enhance MSME owners' understanding of product design and packaging, provide education on packaging selection strategies, and develop product competitiveness through attractive packaging designs. The method employed is a direct training approach, beginning with socialization through the Cooperative Office's social media, participant selection, face-to-face training implementation, and post-activity evaluation. The training was attended by 30 selected MSME owners and conducted on November 28, 2024, in the meeting room of the Sidoarjo Regency Industry and Trade Office. The training results indicate that participants have acquired basic knowledge about product packaging and design, although still limited to its fundamental functions. Participants also gained a deeper understanding of the importance of product taste consistency in building customer loyalty and facilitating business management. This activity makes a significant contribution to improving MSME owners' knowledge of product packaging strategies and quality enhancement to increase competitiveness in the local market. For the future, it is expected that similar training can be held with a broader scope of materials and reach more MSME owners.

Keywords: Packaging; MSMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises); Competitiveness; Product Design; Training.

Introduction

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have a strategic role in the economy, both at the sectoral and national levels. One of the roles of MSMEs is to create jobs and support economic growth (Hidayat, 2022). One important sector that has potential is the food and beverage sector.

In Sidoarjo, MSME players are very mushrooming in various regions, but with the massive number of MSME players in Sidoarjo district, it is also good news for the economy in Sidoarjo Regency. With such great potential, business opportunities will be even greater, this makes people innovate in order to create business fields (M. Fathrezza Imani et al., 2022). With so many business opportunities, employment opportunities will also be created, with the new jobs available, it will

reduce unemployment and be able to strengthen the absorption of workers in the area (Maulida & Greece, 2017). However, many MSME players in the food and beverage sector still face obstacles in terms of quality standardization and product packaging.

One of the efforts in improving the competitiveness of MSMEs is through product curation. MSME product curation can be defined as the process of maintaining value and managing MSME products so that they can develop and compete in the future (Qibtiyah, 2024). Curation activities include steps to monitor and maintain the quality of an MSME product. Through this community service activity, the service team intends to provide a business development coordination meeting through product quality curation.

The government through the Office of Cooperatives and MSMEs has organized this food and beverage

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curation program as an effort to bring MSMEs to a higher level. In addition, the business development coordination meeting through product quality curation is an important platform to equip MSME players with relevant knowledge and skills.

This coordination meeting covered aspects of selecting quality raw materials, standardizing the production process, effective packaging, and taste assessment. This curation will be carried out by experts in their respective fields to improve the quality of a product. It is hoped that through this curation, MSME players can improve the quality and competitiveness of their products, so that they can expand their market share in the future.

Method

In this micro business competitiveness development activity, the implementation team consists of organizers that is the Sidoarjo Regency UMKM Cooperative Departmen. The implementation team consisted of resource persons as presenters of material and assistants who included the author himself. In the coordination meeting on micro business development through product quality curation, the method used was face-to-face training. This method was chosen because this product curation activity presents experienced resource persons to assess the MSME products. The stages of implementation are as follows.

Socialization stage

The socialization of this activity is carried out through social media platforms owned by the department of Cooperative, at this stage the business actors will register for participation in product curation activities. The schedule of activities is also included in the post.

Selection stage

Due to limited capacity, the number of participants will be limited. Therefore, selection is needed, business actors will be selected by looking at several aspects such as whether or not they have participated in similar activities before, this is done to reach business actors who have not participated in curation activities. Later, participants who pass the selection will be contacted via private message through whatsapp media.

Training implementation stage

The implementation of this activity will discuss the importance of maintaining product quality, the delivery of material will be carried out first before the resource person assesses MSME products. Product assessment will be carried out by tasting and looking directly at the products that have been brought by business actors.

Pada tahap ini juga aspirasi pelaku usaha akan ditampung sebagai bahan evaluasi kedepannya.

Evaluation stage

After all the activities are carried out, the team will conduct an evaluation by distributing questions about the training program. The indicator used is whether there is a change in knowledge about the material that has been delivered.

Result and Discussion

The participants of the activity came from the selection that had been carried out previously, in this activity 30 people were selected as participants who would take part in the business development coordination meeting through product quality curation. Participants were very enthusiastic and paid attention to all the material presented in this activity. The results in the field show that the understanding of business actors regarding the importance of selecting packaging, maintaining the quality of the taste of the product already exists, but only at the basic stage. There is still not much knowledge about how important packaging is and how to maintain the quality of a product.

The training was conducted for one day on November 28, 2024. This activity was held in the meeting room of the Sidoarjo Regency Industry and Trade Office. The schedule of activities is as follows (Table 1).

Table 1. The schedule of activities

Time	Agenda	Description
07.30-08.30	Registration and verification of participants	Team assisted by students
08.30-08.10	Opening	Team assisted by students
08.10-08.30	Remarks by the head of the cooperative and UMKM office	head of cooperative and MSME office
08.30-08.40	Remarks by the head of the MSME development sector	head of MSME development
08-40-10.00	Delivery of material containing how to maintain product quality, product packaging selection and other matters regarding product curation	Source
10.00-12.30	Product assessment	Source
12.30-13.15	Questions and answers	Source
13.15-13.30	Closing activities	Team assisted by students

Packaging or packing can be interpreted as a way to convey merchandise, packaging has a very important

role for a product (Widiati, 2020). Many MSME assume that packaging will only become waste and will add to the cost of production. In a package, many things are written or stated on the packaging, it is one of the important aspects to gain consumer trust. Gaining consumer trust can be an obstacle for business actors at this time, therefore business actors must be able to take advantage of everything that can be used to gain consumer trust (Novita, 2023). One way to gain consumer trust is through product packaging.



Figure 1. Delivery of material by resource persons.

The material presented in this activity is starting from a basic explanation of packaging, how to choose packaging for a product, the benefits of choosing the right packaging for a product. In addition to these things, the speaker also explained what things must be in a package such as: license number, food composition, production and expiration dates.

The presenters also interacted with the training participants to find out the problems when choosing packaging for their products.



Gambar 2. Resource persons evaluate the packaging of MSME products.

After the presentation of the material had been completed, the resource person approached the activity participants to see and assess the product packaging used for their products. When assessing the product packaging, the resource persons also provided suggestions and input to improve the packaging. The assessment is subjective and still in accordance with the material that has been delivered previously, namely regarding the selection of packaging and its design and the things that must be present in product packaging.

In addition to the packaging, the resource person also tasted the food and beverage products of the participants of the activity to be given an assessment of the quality of their products. At this stage, the resource person will ask about the composition of the food and drinks from the participants. This is to find out if there are any unauthorized ingredients or non-food grade ingredients that make up the product. In addition to assessing the composition of the product, the resource person also asked about how the food or beverage is managed. This is because mishandled food and poor personal hygiene can cause pathogens to grow and multiply in sufficient numbers to cause human disease (Marcela et al., 2024).



Figure 3. The resource persons assessed the packaging of MSME products.

The interviewee will also give an assessment of the taste of the food. At this stage, the trainees were very enthusiastic in asking questions about the shortcomings of their products.



Figure 4. Group photo with training participants

This activity was closed with a group photo between the implementation team and the training participants.

Evaluation Results

The results of observations during the training activities showed that the participants' understanding of the participants was already there but only limited to the use of packaging as a container for a product. Things like the aesthetic power of packaging, choosing the right type of packaging is useful for the product and can increase consumer purchasing power (Christine Suharto Cenadi, 2000). Through packaging is not yet fully implemented and known. The quality of product taste,

on average, the products of the trainees have met the minimum standards of the resource person, according to the resource person, the shortcomings of these MSME products are the lack of attention regarding the standardization of taste. Most MSME players still have difficulties in the consistency of the taste of their products. With the consistent taste of a product, it will lead to the progress factors of a business (Rahardjo, 2016). The key factor why flavor consistency in a product is necessary is that it can build customer loyalty, when consumers enjoy products with consistent flavors every time they buy them, they are likely to return and become loyal customers (Ni Luh Nurkariani, 2022). In addition to building customer loyalty, consistency of taste can also facilitate business management, consistency of taste will help standardize the production process and control product quality, this is very much needed if you want to create a business that has many branch outlets.

In this training activity, participants were very active in asking questions, the questions asked were about how important packaging is for a product, how to choose packaging for everyday food products but want to look modern, are there any special things that need to be considered when choosing a packaging.

The number of questions asked by the training participants showed that the participants were serious about participating in this activity. From the questions that have been asked, the team concluded that the basic things about packaging have been understood by the training participants, but the things that make the usefulness of packaging for a product are not fully known and implemented in their business.

In the future, participants hope that there will be further activities with more diverse material. The training activity ended with a photo session with the team and training participants.

Conclusion

The food and beverage product curation training activities organized by the Sidoarjo District MSME Cooperative Office have made an important contribution to improving the competitiveness of MSMEs in Sidoarjo District. Through this training, participants who are MSME players have gained a better understanding of the importance of packaging selection, maintaining product flavor quality, and other important aspects of product development. Although the participants already had basic knowledge of packaging and product design, this activity succeeded in deepening their understanding of the aesthetic power of packaging, the selection of the right type of packaging, and strategies to increase consumer purchasing power through packaging. The enthusiasm of the participants

was evident from their activity in asking questions and paying attention to the material presented. The training also highlighted the importance of product flavor consistency as a key factor in building customer loyalty and facilitating business management. The Cooperative Office sees great potential to improve the competitiveness of Sidoarjo District MSMEs in the local market by improving the quality of product packaging and design. In the future, it is hoped that similar training can be held with a wider scope of material and reach more MSME players who have not had the opportunity to participate in this activity.

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