

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL MARKETING PROMOTION STRATEGIES FOR CREATING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF BAN PRADU AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE, NAN PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate the current state of the problem and develop digital marketing promotion strategies for the Ban Pradu Agricultural Community Enterprise located in Nan Province. A sample of 40 members from the enterprise group in Thung Chang Subdistrict, Thung Chang District, Nan Province, participated in the study. The research utilized several methods, including a structured questionnaire and focus group interviews, to collect data. Content analysis was employed to analyze the gathered data.

The findings indicated that 1) the development of digital marketing promotion strategies in community enterprises was at a low-level regarding advertising, public relations, promotion, personal selling, and direct marketing promotion. Furthermore, the study identified members' lack of marketing knowledge, inadequate funding, and limited knowledge of digital communication technology as contributing factors to the low level of digital marketing promotion strategies; and 2) to address these issues, guidelines were proposed for the development of digital marketing promotion strategies in community enterprises. These guidelines included creating a product page via Facebook, employing product photography and content writing techniques, using product page advertising techniques, and increasing government public relations. Additionally, the study recommended that community enterprises focus on marketing rather than production, by enhancing members' marketing knowledge to improve efficiency and effectiveness in responding to consumers' needs in the digital age, and generating income for long-term self-reliance.

Keywords: Digital marketing promotion/ Marketing strategy/ Community enterprise

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the internet has become an integral part of people's daily lives, and the number of individuals using online services has significantly increased. This development has proved beneficial to service providers, who can now manage and reduce costs more efficiently. Furthermore, service providers can store information online and use it to enhance and develop services that meet the diverse

needs of users [1]. The rise of digital business entrepreneurship among the new generation and the general public is noteworthy. This trend has led to a better understanding of digital entrepreneurship, which is crucial in supporting personnel to enter the industry and following the government's policy to improve the country's economy. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of new entrepreneurs in the digital field (Digital Startup) [2]. Digital marketing has made it possible for consumers to access information through multiple channels within a short time. As a result, entrepreneurs must adapt to stay competitive and develop products and services that meet the needs of the target audience. Therefore, digital marketing is crucial for business entrepreneurs to prepare for the development of diverse strategies that can sustain their businesses in the long term. This is in line with the national strategy of developing the national economy through "Value-Based Economy" or "an economy driven by innovation and creativity." The marketing era is evolving, and consumers play a vital role in the changing marketing processes. This development comprises three essential aspects: 1) New technology consumer aspect, such as smartphones and social networks; 2) Technology and information, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), where every device in daily life is connected by the internet network; and 3) Technology communication, which plays a significant role in transforming communication patterns between brands and consumers. The significance of digital marketing as a channel for expanding sales territories of borderless businesses cannot be overlooked. Businesses that develop a digital marketing strategy that responds to the behavior of a vast number of consumers are likely to experience success [3]. According to a study of key variables related to innovation and digital marketing that affect small and medium business operations, it was found that digital marketing affects small and medium business operations (a Rittiya Moonsri, 2019). A study of Digital Marketing Development Guidelines for Khlong Yong-Larn Tak Fah Community Enterprise Group in Nakhon Pathom Province found that the use of digital marketing media is beneficial to community enterprises. This development is more effective with up-to-date, suitable images and content that meet customer satisfaction and create interest in consumers. In line with the industrial and service sectors in Thailand, it is essential to change communication technology to reach target groups in line with changing consumer behavior. Community enterprises, in particular, must seriously adapt to increase income, raise the level of living, and ensure long-term business viability in the region.

Nan Province is characterized by a low cost of living for its population. Despite some community enterprise groups having a strong foothold in product development and garnering regional and national recognition, such as Ban Pradu Agricultural Community Enterprise Group in Thung Chang District, Nan Province, they still face the challenge of lacking expertise in marketing management to distribute their products and increase income for group members. This aligns with the findings from a study on community enterprise problems in The Marketign Promotion by Partcipation of Pickled Fish Occupation Group at Phrommat Sub-district, Muang District, Lopburi Province, which indicated a moderate problem with marketing promotion. The study suggested developing the group's marketing promotion by adding advertising media, such as outdoor billboards, and expanding to provincial markets to increase sales promotion [4]. Furthermore, a study on the development of a causal relationship model of support factors in the organization affecting the acceptance of digital marketing of community enterprises in Bangkok demonstrated that the causal relationship model shows the influence of support from community enterprises in Bangkok towards the acceptance of digital marketing use through the variables of technology competence, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease in harmony with empirical data [5]. Additionally, promoting the development of knowledge for community enterprise groups with increased

digital marketing proficiency can facilitate the development of digital marketing promotion strategies to create competitive advantages and foster long-term sustainability [6].

Thus, based on the aforementioned problems, the researcher recognizes the need to investigate the development of digital marketing promotion strategies that can create a competitive advantage for the community enterprise group in Ban Pradu agriculture, Thung Chang sub-district, and Thung Chang district in Nan Province. The objective of the study is to jointly develop marketing promotion strategies that meet the needs of the target groups under their own context, to create competitive advantages, and to operate the group's enterprises sustainably on a long-term basis through self-reliance.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

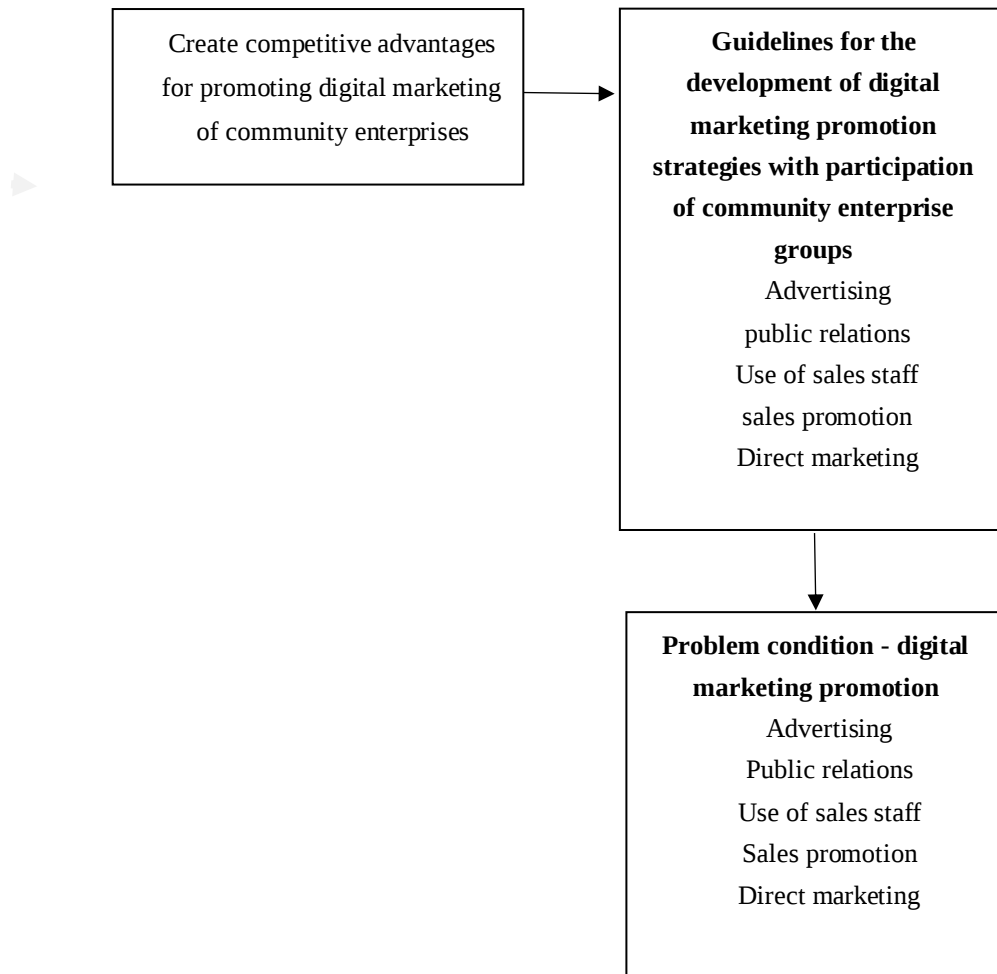
1. To examine the guidelines for the development of digital marketing strategies for the Ban Pradu Agricultural Community Enterprise Group in Nan Province.
2. To identify the challenges and issues associated with the development of digital marketing promotion strategies for the Ban Pradu Community Enterprise Group in Nan Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review examines theoretical concepts and related research on digital marketing promotion strategies, competitive advantage creation, and the marketing promotion mix theory [7]. The marketing promotion mix theory comprises five aspects: advertising, public relations, sale promotion, personal selling, and direct selling. The literature underscores the importance of differentiation, which involves offering something of unique value that better meets the needs of the target audience at a lower cost and cannot be easily imitated. Differentiation is critical to creating a sustainable competitive advantage over competitors [8]. Resource-based theory posits that focusing on the performance of resources in a constructive and concrete way maximizes the benefits of increasing the focus of an organization's marketing and operational planning, leading to the creation of a competitive advantage.

Therefore, community enterprise groups must develop outstanding digital marketing strategies that offer unique values that are superior to their competitors. Additionally, these groups must possess the knowledge necessary to develop themselves and their members to further their creativity, which will enable them to create a competitive advantage and reach the needs of target consumers deeply within the context of the community. Ultimately, these efforts will enable community enterprise groups to achieve long-term survival and self-reliance.

Figure 1
Research Conceptual Framework



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and sample:

The researcher employed purposive sampling technique to identify the population and sample for the study. The study focused on 40 community leaders, chairpersons, committee members, representatives of community enterprise members, Ban Pradu farmers, Thung Chang sub-district, Thung Chang district, Nan province. The sample comprised of groups that produce rosemary refined oil products, bitter gourd product group, cold-pressed tamarind product group, and organic agricultural products.

Research tools:

A structured questionnaire, consisting of 10 open-ended questions, was utilized as the data collection tool for the study. Prior to the actual data collection process, the data collection tools were thoroughly examined by experts to ensure their reliability and validity.

Data collection:

The structured interview was employed as the data collection tool for the study. Focus group discussions were also conducted, and content analysis was carried out by grouping, collating, sorting, and analyzing data through synthesis based on the study's specific research questions. The key points were summarized to provide guidelines for the digital marketing promotion strategies and the implementation of the triangular accuracy summary from synchronized sources. The data collection period spanned from October 2022 to February 2023.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The research results can be classified by purpose as follows:

1. According to the research study on the development of digital marketing promotion strategies of Ban Pradu Agricultural Community Enterprise Group, located in Thung Chang Subdistrict, Thung Chang District, Nan Province, the research results indicate that the enterprise group has developed marketing promotion strategies consisting of five aspects: advertising, public relations, using sales staff, sales promotion, and direct marketing.

1.1 Advertising

It was found that Ban Pradu Agricultural Community Enterprise Group had limited advertising promotion due to insufficient budgetary support. The advertising media used is only in the form of vinyl billboards, which merely provide an overview of the province's activities without explicitly advertising the group's enterprises. The advertising strategy for community enterprises can be categorized into two methods: 1) Government support from relevant agencies that assists in communicating advertisements through radio advertisements, leaflets, and billboards at key points of various activity areas through budgets at the provincial level and the budget of local organizations in case of organizing activities for groups of enterprises to participate in exhibitions and training activities at the provincial level to help build a network of community enterprises to jointly develop products in the long term. 2) Advertising by the community enterprise's own budget, which has not yet been initiated as the profits are shared among members for personal use. Therefore, the group members expressed the need for self-reliance in the long-term survival by increasing their knowledge in developing marketing promotion strategies to attract more target groups.

1.2 Public Relations

It was found that Ban Pradu Agricultural Community Enterprise Group has a low level of marketing promotion and public relations. The media employed for public relations are vinyl banners, brochures, and personal online media such as Facebook, Line, etc. The nature of public relations consists of two methods: 1) Government support from Nan Province that helps in communicating advertisements and public relations through radio advertisements, leaflets, and billboards in exhibitions at the district and participating in training activities at the provincial level, and 2) Word-of-mouth publicity by old customers introducing new customers, which helps the group's products gain more attention.

1.3 Use of Sales Staff

It was found that every member of the community enterprise group acts as a salesperson, and there is no hiring of sales personnel for the enterprise group. The returns from sales are brought to the group as central income with profit dividends every year. Guidelines for developing marketing promotion strategies using sales staff are unnecessary, and the group has never consulted on hiring sales staff since

all members share sales, which saves more costs. However, if the product becomes known, and sales increase, the group may discuss hiring sales staff in the future.

1.4 Sales Promotion (with discounts, exchanges, giveaways)

It was found that most of the community enterprises provide a slight discount on cash trade as the price plus profit is not high. The discount is given in the case of customers ordering in large quantities at wholesale prices. The group management has a central label for both retail and wholesale prices, which facilitates the same communication of group members to sell together.

1.5 Direct Marketing

It was found that most products are sold by members for their own family use. The leftovers are distributed to nearby communities from exhibitions outside the area according to activities provided by government agencies. Only some products are seasonally ordered.

2. In the study of the development of digital marketing promotion strategies, it was discovered that there exists a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding digital marketing promotion. As a result, group members expressed their desire to improve their knowledge in this area so that their children can assist with sales support through online media, thereby increasing distribution channels. It was also revealed that community enterprise groups are seeking to jointly develop guidelines for the development of marketing promotion strategies with the participation of members in all five areas, namely advertising, public relations, using sales personnel, sales promotion, and direct marketing. Furthermore, the study identified that the guidelines for developing digital marketing promotion strategies that community enterprise groups want to focus on the most include: product page creation, product photography techniques, content writing techniques, product page advertising techniques, and public relations of government agencies. This is due to their convenience and cost-saving benefits.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the research conducted on the Ban Pradu Agricultural Community Enterprise Group in Nan Province, regarding the development of digital marketing promotion strategies to gain a competitive advantage, several discussions can be made.

1. Upon studying the challenges faced by the Ban Pradu Agricultural Community Enterprise Group in Nan Province with regards to developing digital marketing promotion strategies that create competitive advantages, several issues were identified. Specifically, it was found that the group has limited advertising, lacks effective public relations, does not utilize promotions, relies solely on the use of salespeople and engages in only basic direct marketing. This can be attributed to a lack of budgetary support and a dearth of knowledge and understanding in marketing management. These findings align with previous research on The Marketign Promotion by Partcipation of Pickled Fish Occupation Group at Phrommat Sub-district, Muang District, Lopburi Province, which also reported insufficient budget and marketing knowledge amongst members, as well as inadequate utilization of technology [9]. To address these issues, it is recommended that knowledge on digital marketing promotion strategies be promoted among members to equip them with the necessary skills and up-to-date knowledge to keep up with the constantly evolving consumer behavior. This is in line with the research conducted on the marketing promotion by community's participation of Rai San Fan Community Enterprise, Nikhom Sang Ton-eng Sub-district, Mueang District, Lop Buri Province, which highlights the importance of social media for public relations in the development of marketing promotions [4]. It is therefore crucial for the Ban Pradu

Agricultural Community Enterprise Group to prioritize the development of digital marketing strategies that leverage on social media and other digital tools to improve their marketing promotion efforts.

2. The study on the development of digital marketing promotion strategies to create competitive advantages of Ban Pradu Community Enterprise Group in Nan Province yielded results that indicate the need for guidelines on digital marketing promotion strategies. Specifically, the community enterprise group requires guidance on product page creation (Facebook Fanpage), product photography techniques, content writing techniques, advertising techniques through product pages, and increased government public relations. These findings are consistent with research on sustainable competitive advantage, which suggests that market focus and continual performance can contribute to an organization's sustainable competitive advantage [10]. Moreover, a study on differentiation strategies for competitive advantage of OTOP ceramic products in the lower northern region of Thailand found that competitive advantage is influenced by differences in personality, image, and distribution channels, but not by product differences [11]. Thus, community enterprises can develop competitive advantages by promoting product differentiation and exploring different distribution channels, which can enhance their attractiveness to the target consumer group.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The findings of this study on the factors affecting the competitive advantage of community enterprises in the agricultural product group should be utilized to formulate effective business policies.
2. The study highlights the significance of human resources and skill development as a crucial factor affecting the competitive advantage of community enterprises. Future research should focus on personal development and image enhancement.
3. Other community enterprises' successful marketing promotion strategies for specific products can be used as a guideline for professional development, and further research is recommended for interested parties.

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