

## **Digital Branding of Mafia Pentol Through Tiktok**

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**Abstract.** This research aims to explore Mafia Pentol's digital branding strategy comprehensively to increase brand awareness and brand loyalty. By using a qualitative research method that focuses on TikTok social media. The subjects in this study consisted of six people consisting of the owner, the marketing team, the creator team, and TikTok Mafia Pentol followers, while the object of this research is TikTok Mafia Pentol @teammafiapentol.sub. This research was analyzed using the concepts of digital branding and marketing communication. The results of this study state that Mafia Pentol has successfully built a strategy using the TikTok platform to increase brand awareness and brand loyalty. Mafia Pentol conducts market research to understand the competition and identify the right branding strategy. By analyzing the content and trends that are developing on TikTok, Mafia Pentol succeeds in creating content that is interesting and relevant to their audience. Through various digital branding strategies such as maximizing the use of social media, using quality marketing content, and inviting creators to collaborate, they have succeeded in increasing brand awareness of the Mafia Pentol brand. In addition, Mafia Pentol also maintains customer loyalty by actively interacting through social media or directly so that it creates an emotional bond, making this brand widely recommended by consumers to their closest people.

**Keywords:** Branding, Marketing Communication, TikTok

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mafia Pentol is one of the MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) brands and is a pioneer of lobster meatballs in Surabaya, this brand itself was founded in 2021 and now has more than 600 branches throughout Indonesia. From the researchers' observations, the name Mafia Pentol itself was taken from the owner's dark experience in the past when he was still a supporter of the famous soccer club, namely the Persebaya club. This brand was originally born in the Pandegiling area of Surabaya and then spread widely throughout Indonesia. Mafia Pentol is also one of Surabaya's best-selling MSME brands and has been able to accelerate so quickly in the past three years. Mafia Pentol also offers several partnership programs with prices ranging from 10-25 million rupiah. One of the characteristics or differentiation in this product is the lobster pentol which characterizes this product and becomes the brand identity of Mafia Pentol itself. Brand identity is very important because it builds awareness and recognition in society. A brand is usually facilitated by brand identity to be easily remembered and immediately recognized (Kurniawan & Fahriansyah, 2023). This is certainly one source of innovation and creativity in creating business opportunities for the people of Indonesia.

To become a successful brand, a digital branding strategy is needed to identify how to promote the product to the public. According to DeLane (2017) digital branding is the activity of building a brand and presence to consumers online, in this activity there is usually consistent content on several digital platforms and this branding helps build meaningful relationships with target audiences (Wardhana, 2024). The relationship refers to how to maintain and build brand awareness and brand loyalty of a brand. Researchers also emphasize that in the business world, of course, there will continue to be progress and changes in all aspects in it. Therefore, innovation is very much needed in the sustainability of a business, one way is in terms of branding or how to introduce goods by providing offers that can generate positive publicity.

Social Media Interaction is arguably one of the most important role holders in a business to be able to attract customer interest or desire to try a particular product. Therefore, involving brands in

an interactive with consumers can be used as a metric in terms of adding influence and relevance to the company in the digital world (Novita et al., 2022). In the end, it will certainly greatly affect good things in the growth of a business, one of which will increase the brand awareness of the products we offer to a wide audience and can maintain consistency in sales. This is what is used by Mafia Pentol to be able to gain fame in the wider community both Surabaya and even Indonesia.

According to Aditya in the book *Branding Strategies in the Digital Age* (2024: 147-148) explains that there are several elements in increasing product brand awareness including maximizing the use of social media, using quality marketing content, and inviting creators to collaborate (Wardhana, 2024). Activities related to digital branding that are being carried out by an individual certainly have a certain purpose and purpose in it, usually to build a brand requires knowledge of brand management. In brand management, there are several aspects in it such as brand awareness and brand loyalty.

In brand branding, both elements are important components that help a brand to achieve goals and maintain consumer presence, especially in terms of brand loyalty, which can be said to be a phenomenon in which customers or consumers are loyal to a brand and tend to choose that brand consistently compared to competing brands, even in situations where there are price or product variations. As is the case in the lobster pentol product offered by Mafia Pentol, in this case many consumers are interested and recommend the product, and are loyal to always taste Mafia Pentol's signature lobster pentol. Quoted from Firmansyah (2018) argues that there are three basic things related to brand loyalty or brand loyalty which are characterized by emotional involvement, recommending friends, and making repeat purchases or consumer consistency in choosing a brand (Firmansyah, 2018). Therefore, brand loyalty can also be interpreted as a consumer choice in choosing the desired brand in a particular product category (Pandiangan et al., 2021).

Mafia Pentol itself has several content creator teams that are very popular in these years. One of the social media used by the Mafia Pentol team is the TikTok application called @teammafiapentol.sub which already has 1.5 million followers. In addition, information and telecommunications technology makes it easier for anyone to access information on the internet, explore cyberspace, and interact through social media (Dharma et al., 2023). Currently TikTok can be said to be one of the social media or platforms that is now starting to be favored by young people to adults. Of course this is a form of opportunity for the Mafia Pentol brand because in terms of the targeted market, namely among children and adults. So that the Mafia Pentol marketer team uses TikTok as a branding medium for a product. If someone wants something, they will always surf and scroll on social media to find the desired product (Pamungkas, 2023).

TikTok itself was originally only an application for dancing, but now people can make TikTok as a business and create content of various types. This social media is moving much faster than other social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and others. Even some other social media almost all imitate the development of TikTok (Amartha & Anwar, 2023). Through this, TikTok is used as a business platform to be able to market a product directly to all consumers or what is commonly said as B2C (Business To Consumer).

Some related research conducted by previous researchers such as that conducted by Margarita Isoraite (2016) entitled "Increasing Brand Awareness Through Internet Marketing Tools" suggests that brand awareness is created through advertising, promotion, sales, and public relations via the internet. Internet marketing includes not only advertising on websites, but also email, and social

media (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) (Išoraitė, 2016). In addition, research conducted by Arina Muntazah (2020) entitled “Digital Marketing Communication Strategy to Increase Brand Loyalty in Travel Companies during the COVID Pandemic (Case Study on CV. Khairil Tour & Travel)” obtained the results obtained, in increasing brand loyalty, CV Khairil Tourn & Travel implements a digital marketing communication strategy through several social media, namely Instagram, Facebook, Whats up and Youtube with promotional content, namely with pictorial messages in the form of digital posters containing product photos (tourist attractions), travel time information, contact persons, and additional information about the Covid-19 prevention protocol that remains to be considered. (Muntazah et al., 2020).

In connection with the research that has been conducted by the researcher above, it is explained that there is a novelty of research that uses the concept of digital branding in communication studies to increase brand awereness and brand loyalty related to a product. From the observation of researchers, Mafia Pentol has previously made an observation about the digital branding strategy that must be carried out to generate a wider range of consumers. As an entrepreneur engaged in the MSME sector, of course, there are many competitors in the same field. Researchers also realize the importance of social media in a business can help people in terms of branding a product, therefore researchers have the aim of exploring Mafia Pentol's digital branding strategy comprehensively to increase brand awereness and brand loyalty and get new research on branding on TikTok so that it can help other developing MSMEs.

## **METHODS**

The researcher's method in this study uses a qualitative method that focuses on certain parts of various phenomena that exist in order to achieve suitability in the studies carried out in depth. According to Abdussamad (2021), in qualitative research, data collection is not guided by theory but guided by facts found during research in the field (Abdussamad, 2021). In this study, data collection was carried out using observation, interviews, and analyzing TikTok content. The object of this research focuses on the Mafia Pentol TikTok account @teammafiapentol.sub, while the subjects in this study contain six people who were selected using purposive, consisting of the owner of Mafia Pentol and the marketing team as creators in Mafia Pentol, loyal followers of TikTok Mafia Pentol who have followed for at least six months, and loyal customers of Mafia Pentol.

In research using an interactive analysis by conducting a process of data collection, data reduction, and testing in conclusion. Regarding this research, the researcher will also test the validity of the data obtained by the researcher using the triangulation method, namely by analyzing the answers of the research subjects through the empirical data that has been provided. Here the answers of the research subjects are cross-checked with the data obtained by the researcher. This research began on March 19, 2024 until its completion on April 01, 2024. The research location used by researchers is at Mafia Pentol Center Jl. Raya Ngagel No. 209 Surabaya.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Mafia Pentol's Digital Branding Strategy On TikTok**

Reality in communication to the order of marketing activities has changed the existing marketing paradigm. The main factor that must be seen or considered is the impact and influence on a significant

environment for a change. Mafia Pentol was founded during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. This is what encourages the owner of Mafia Pentol to look for innovations related to the marketing process of a product and how to make the awareness of the products sold known to a wide audience, because during the Covid-19 pandemic people were prohibited from doing activities outside the home at that time. Therefore, the challenge arose of how to get consumers to recognize the products of a brand without having to see them directly at the business location. In the end, Mafia Pentollah is one of the local MSMEs that has succeeded in finding new innovations in the field of digital branding using the TikTok social media platform to achieve success in its business.

With these changes, the branding strategy must be more flexible, and have high visibility in every branding strategy carried out by considering every condition that occurs (Tulasi, 2012). Digital branding is one aspect that exists in marketing, where a brand is indeed important in business to be able to build a good image in creating relationships with consumers. A digital branding strategy is a way or effort by business people to make it easier for consumers to recognize their products by utilizing social media, even understanding the products and logo design of a brand that they see at that time and cause an interest. When an entrepreneur succeeds in creating a good branding strategy, it will add a positive image and value to the brand. (Novita et al., 2022). In this case, researchers found the stages carried out by Mafia Pentol in building brand awareness and brand loyalty or customer loyalty through TikTok, namely:

**a. Increase Brand Awareness**

In research to increase brand awareness is very important for Mafia Pentol products. Hendra as the owner of Mafia Pentol seeks to introduce a product from Mafia Pentol, brand, usefulness and determine market segmentation. Using a name character that is relatively rarely used, will help consumers recognize and remember the brand. The name Mafia Pentol is a name that is arguably unique among the public, the name was obtained based on the hunter's experience of the owner of Mafia Pentol in his past. At this arguably interesting stage, the brand of a product is usually recognized by the public. At this stage, it will also change the message or visual, emotional character of a very strong message, the message will also become very specific, which only emphasizes its advantages and solutions to consumer problems (Hariyanto, 2023).

Technological developments affect many aspects of life, one of which is trade. Since the rapid development of technology, it has led to the widespread impact of free trade. And it seems that trade is not limited by time and space. This is what causes the higher level of competition that must be faced by business actors. (Rizky & Setiawati, 2020). Mafia Pentol is one of the MSMEs that focuses on digital marketing to achieve success in its business.

Before producing a content in increasing brand awareness, it is necessary to know the competitors in the same business field. So it is mandatory for business owners to have a good digital branding strategy, by implementing a good branding process for the community or consumers. Of course, this will make it easier for consumers to be able to remember a product that has been offered by the MSME business actor (Fawahan & Marianingsih, 2022).

The owner of Mafia Pentol was an active user of TikTok social media at the time. This began when the owner of Mafia Pentol saw that there were MSMEs that chose the TikTok platform as a way to introduce or promote the products they produced to consumers who used the TikTok platform

by displaying videos that were packaged as attractively as possible to attract public attention. Therefore, Mafia Pentol determined TikTok as one of the digital branding tools they chose. This is in line with Hendra's statement as the owner of Mafia Pentol in the following interview excerpt :



Image 1. The TikTok account of the pentol mafia that FYPs and uses hastags in its videos  
Source : (@teammafiapentol.sub, 2024)

“I chose TikTok because in this application there is also a feature called FYP (For Your Page) and in the FYP feature you can provide video feed to users who are curated from creators who may not be followed. And also by using the # (hashtag) tool in writing video captions it will help users to get FYP, and also determining the upload time also affects the video that can FYP mas,” (*Hasil Wawancara Owner Terkait Strategi Digital Branding Mafia Pentol*, 2024).

By recognizing the marketing process through existing segments and pointing to the market to be able to maximize, so that customers want to buy the products they want and that will certainly foster awareness of the brand (Tulasi, 2012). Activities at the beginning of brand activities publicized by the company always have the aim of raising consumer awareness of the brand.

In this study Mafia Pentol uses several strategies to increase brand awareness by using TikTok social media, three strategies include maximizing the use of social media, using quality marketing content, and inviting creators to collaborate. With that the researcher has summarized with easy-to-understand language as follows:

### 1) Maximizing the Use of Social Media

Technological developments affect many aspects of life, one of which is trade. Since the rapid development of technology, it has led to the widespread impact of free trade. And it seems that trade is not limited by time and space. This is what causes the higher level of competition that must be faced by business actors (Rizky & Setiawati, 2020). Mafia Pentol is one of the MSMEs that focuses on digital marketing to achieve success in its business.

Active in creating content on Social media to increase brand awareness in encouraging consumers so that brands get the desired results in the digital branding process. Related to providing an encouragement is part of the efforts used by business people to be able to provide stimulation (encourage) consumers and also to be able to provide added value or satisfaction for consumers who have purchased products from the brand itself. In this study, the creator team and marketing team also have the same strategy and goals, namely through TikTok to always actively create content that aims

to provide encouragement to the audience to be more confident in choosing the brand offered and conceptualized with an interesting and not boring concept. This is in line with what Hendra, owner of Mafia Pentol, explained in an interview about how to encourage audiences on social media, here is his explanation :

“For now, TikTok is the fastest social media and also has relatively high users in Indonesia itself. This is what makes a determinant for my brand, Mafia Pentol, to create interesting content every day and will be uploaded to TikTok social media,” (*Hasil Wawancara Owner Terkait Strategi Digital Branding Mafia Pentol, 2024*).

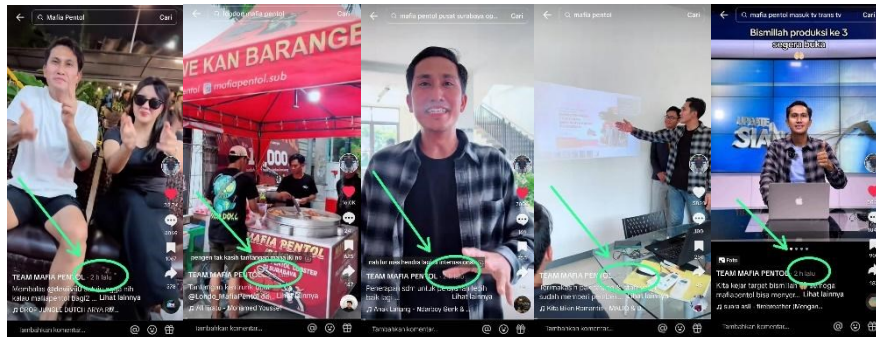


Image 2. Pentol Mafia content that keeps updating its activities  
Source : (@teammafiapentol.sub, 2024)

The Mafia Pentol marketing team seems to apply more strategies in each content creation in order to maximize consumer response through the process of publicizing the Mafia Pentol brand through TikTok than other social media. This is in line with Bimbim's statement in the following interview excerpt :

“Mafia Pentol here only focuses on one TikTok social media, but also Mafia Pentol also has other social media such as Instagram and Facebook. But the social media is not as extensive as TikTok. Especially in terms of viewing. On Instagram we have to move to the search page first if we want to see content that is trending on the application. Likewise, on Facebook, the information obtained cannot be universal. In Facebook, we only see content that we follow from friends or Facebook groups that we follow. This is certainly very different from TikTok, in TikTok we only need to open it and scroll through the videos we can get viral content without having to move to other features,” (*Hasil Wawancara Tim Creator dan Marketing Terkait Strategi Digital Branding Mafia Pentol, 2024*).

Creators must also be able to create content that interests the audience. Content creators must think about how the videos produced can be enjoyed and not boring (Dewi, 2023). Related to this research, one of the ways Mafia Pentol maximizes social media content that will be uploaded in the TikTok @teammafiapentol.sub account by looking at content from other MSME business actors or what trends are currently busy on the TikTok platform to make it more optimal. Researchers found that the content of TikTok @teammafiapentol.sub always raises a theme that tells or introduces what the contents of the Mafia Pentol team activities are. In addition, Mafia Pentol also introduces what menu variants are in Mafia Pentol and all the activities of the Mafia Pentol team starting from the partner opening event to the family gathering activities of the Mafia Pentol team. By involving online

brand presence through TikTok, the Mafia Pentol Brand has maximized the message that will be conveyed to the audience well. From this content, it can also illustrate that the branding target of @teammafiapentol.sub is all Indonesian people without requiring social status. This is in line with Bimbim's statement in the following interview excerpt :

“ From this activity video, we can arouse public curiosity about what we are selling, and on average the content gets quite a lot of viewers, almost on average with hundreds of thousands of viewers in one video. In addition, we also include elements of comedy and add trendy music to entertain the Indonesian people,” (*Hasil Wawancara Tim Creator dan Marketing Terkait Strategi Digital Branding Mafia Pentol*, 2024).

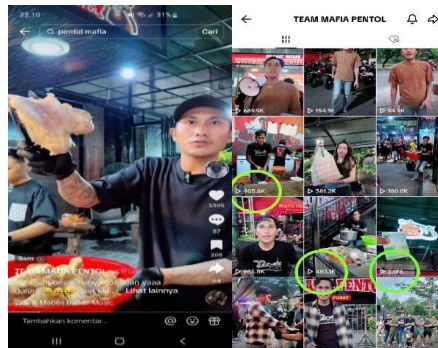


Image 3. Mafia Pentol menu introduction  
Source : (@teammafiapentol.sub, 2024)

Of course, here the researcher assumes that in terms of maximizing the most important content, it is about how business people try to determine the direction of the content that will be produced later. By using one of the FYP features on TikTok, this is what helps Mafia Pentol to find content relationships that will be chosen by the creator later.



Image 4. Mafia Pentol TikTok Account  
Source : (@teammafiapentol.sub, 2024)

From the interesting content, TikTok @teammafiapentol.sub managed to reach more than 1.5 million followers and 57.1 million likes until the time of this research, this was obtained due to a success in maintaining the consistency of content selection techniques from the beginning to the present. Of course, with such a large following at this time, it will make an opportunity for Mafia

Pentol to generate considerable publicity. Realistically @teammafiapentol does sell food products but the marketing that they offer to the audience on TikTok is content based on their daily activities so that followers are interested in seeing the content.

By often being active in terms of social media on the TikTok platform significantly makes audiences who often see Mafia Pentol content in the FYP feature in TikTok certainly cause extraordinary curiosity. This is also in line with the opinion of Farah as a follower of Mafia Pentol in the following interview excerpt :

“I've known about this Pentol Mafia for a long time, more or less since 2022. But at that time I was just curious and finally followed TikTok at that time. It's been a long time until now, it was just conveyed to try the taste of the Mafia Pentol product. Maybe I also want to meet the Mafia Pentol creator team too. Because it appears too often on FYP, which makes me even more curious to try the taste of Mafia Pentol products,” (*Hasil Wawancara Followers Terkait Digital Branding Mafia Pentol, 2024*).

Based on these interviews, it can be concluded that TikTok is one of the platforms with the most users today. With us often and actively adding videos to TikTok with interesting content, it will increase the possibility that the video will continue to be frequently FYP on the TikTok feature and increase the increase in brand awareness of Mafia Pentol, and possibly the curiosity of the audience to come to purchase products from the brand.

## **2) Using Quality Marketing Content**

Good content is not only about how to make people see, but also how brands can tell stories that are interesting to the audience do not. In creating a content, don't just focus on sales, but also be emotionally close to the audience. In this study, researchers found content where the Mafia Pentol brand carried out social activities such as community activities and social concerns related to improving the image of the brand, and as a result it will generate positive public opinion and by conducting social programs or activities, of course, it will also increase consumer trust regarding the Mafia Pentol brand. In terms of strategies used to influence consumers to build positive opinions regarding the Mafia Pentol brand, namely by providing social assistance to victims of natural disasters, as was the case during the flood disaster in the city of Demak in 2024. Mafia Pentol went directly to help the community by carrying out social activities at that time. In this case Hendra as the owner of Mafia Pentol explained during the interview as follows :

“In terms of social activities, God willing, we always participate. As was the case in the flood disaster in the Demak area, the Pentol Mafia team helped by providing food assistance and holding a lobster cooking event which aimed to be distributed to victims affected by flooding in Demak City at that time,” (*Hasil Wawancara Owner Terkait Strategi Digital Branding Mafia Pentol, 2024*).



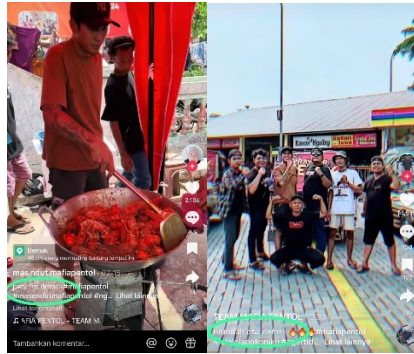


Image 5. Pentol Mafia content during flood relief in Demak  
Source : (@mas.ndut.mafiapentol, 2024)

From this content, it managed to get good publicity and also managed to increase positive public opinion on the Mafia Pentol brand. As said by the TikTok account @RizalHaw in his post explaining his gratitude for the assistance provided by Mafia Pentol to Demak residents during the flood disaster.



Image 6. Positive response to social assistance from Mafia Pentol in the Demak flood disaster  
Source : (@Rizahaw, 2024)

In addition to creating content about social activities to attract positive responses from audiences or followers, the marketing team as the content creator of Mafia Pentol also suggests content activities to publish content sharing lobster pentol at each grand opening of a new branch. This can certainly influence people's perceptions to try to come at the opening of a new Mafia Pentol branch wherever it is. This activity certainly requires very careful conceptualization so that even though the brand shares products for free or free, the brand will still make a profit and not lose money. This was mentioned by Galih as the marketing team and creator in the interview excerpt regarding the content of sharing lobster pentol for free at the opening as follows :

“In managing this, of course we previously needed to think about the concept very carefully, calculate in great detail so that this event does not make our partners lose money. At that time I proposed to mas Hendra for this lobster pentol sharing event to include the basic costs in the partner program offer. I thought for sure this program would be successful because our people are known to like free things. Of course, by sharing food, especially the lobster that we give, of course the community will try to attend to get it. We do this content at every partner opening in all branches and we will publish

it first in other TikTok content by including it in the description column. This content contains sharing 100 lobster pentol for 100 main customers who are present and without any minimum purchase, I propose this so that we can later attract consumer interest and also in the form of influencing public opinion that Mafia Pentol is a brand that is loyal to its customers. And also we often create content themed jokes (jokes) about the mafia pentol menu package which is expensive by conceptualizing it as entertainment content. The impact is that people are even more curious about whether the price is really expensive or not, and makes people come directly to confirm the truth of the viral content. This may be due to our brand image that has been positively embedded in the community so they do not believe and want to prove it directly,” (*Hasil Wawancara Tim Creator dan Marketing Terkait Strategi Digital Branding Mafia Pentol*, 2024).

We need to know the truth by looking for sources of information to validate and prove in real terms that the results of the interview have an impact in terms of influencing and building public opinion. Researchers also tried to confirm this and get data results from an interview from a consumer and also as a TikTok follower @teammafiapentol.sub, Zidan explained :

“I initially tried to come during the opening of a branch in Sidoarjo at that time and happened to have seen before regarding the information on the TikTok account post regarding the grand opening of a new branch that would distribute free lobster pentol. At first I thought Mafia Pentol was an expensive product because every content always shows a 15 thousand package that gets only a little, but because of my great curiosity I tried to buy it directly at that time. What makes me interested in Mafia Pentol again is because I often see content sharing lobster pentol for free. I thought if it was expensive, the important thing was that I got free lobster pentol deh,” (*Hasil Wawancara Followers Terkait Digital Branding Mafia Pentol*, 2024).

Based on the results of this research, it can be seen that in increasing brand awareness, a brand certainly requires community involvement in every aspect, not only in terms of sales, business, and promotion. But it must also be able to have a positive social impact or influence on society. Sharing a product voluntarily according to Kotler & Keller is a form of sales promotion that can motivate customers to continue to buy certain products/services (Dwiyani & Sulistiadi, 2022). This is in line with the data obtained in the interview above, where Mafia Pentol carried out social activities for the community during the flood natural disaster in Demak city. Not only that, Mafia Pentol also did and contended related to the event of sharing 100 lobster pentol which was carried out at the grand opening of the new Mafia Pentol branch to attract positive opinions in the community towards the Mafia Pentol brand. Of course this will attract consumers to be interested in coming, basically this lobster pentol is the icon of the Mafia Pentol brand. Of course this will build the Mafia Pentol brand story so that it can be recognized by the audience.

### **3) Inviting Creators To Work Together**

The service used to strengthen the reach of the next brand is by inviting content creators to join the Mafia Pentol team with the aim of introducing products from the Mafia Pentol brand to the public. The Mafia Pentol creator team consists of 8 people who have backgrounds as successful content creators in creating interesting content on their personal TikTok.



Image 7. Owner and marketing team as content creators of Mafia Pentol  
Source : (@teammafiapentol.sub, 2024)

The content creators are required to always participate in the video making process in order to increase brand reach and increase people's awareness of the Mafia Pentol brand. In this case, creators are required to use their personal TikTok account to create interesting content every day on their personal TikTok account, as well as to introduce to the public what Mafia Pentol is in terms of brands and products.



Image 8. Owner and creator team of Mafia Pentol in TikTok video @teammafiapentol.sub  
Source : (@teammafiapentol.sub, 2024)

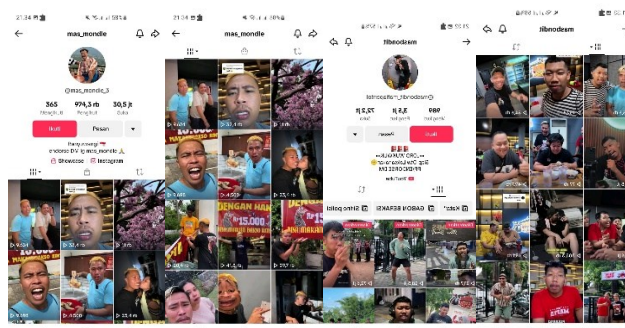


Image 9. TikTok account team Mafia Pentol  
Source : (TikTokTimMafiaPentol, 2024)

This study shows Mafia Pentol's efforts to attract customers by inviting the creator team to expand the reach of the brand through the TikTok application by utilizing the fame of the creator team so as to create content that can always be viral or trending and increase consumer curiosity.

Based on research conducted by researchers, the average Mafia Pentol creator team does have more than tens of thousands of followers in their TikTok account, of course this greatly supports the process of delivering information to the public. However, this strategy requires a fairly large expenditure of funds to get results in terms of expanding the market for a brand. Researchers tried to ask about how much budget was spent to pay the Mafia Pentol creator team. Hendra as the owner of Mafia Pentol explained in the interview as follows:

“The expenses for our creator team itself are quite large now, especially since Mafia Pentol has eight creator members with an average salary of five million rupiah per month not including bonuses. We have previously calculated the cost of this process itself. And as a result, we actually get a very good impact from the strategy we use. This is arguably more effective and cheaper than the cost of promotion using advertising,” (*Hasil Wawancara Owner Terkait Strategi Digital Branding Mafia Pentol*, 2024).

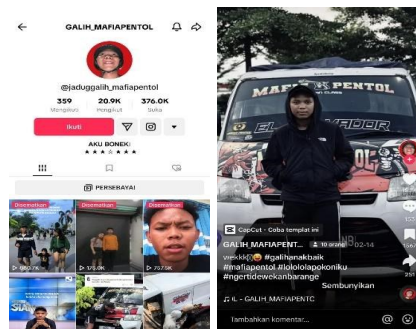


Image 9. The marketing team as the creator of Mafia Pentol in promoting the brand on social media  
Source : (@jaduggalih\_mafiapentol, 2024)

In increasing brand awareness it is very important to have the power to attract audience curiosity. This is in line with Hendra's statement as the owner of Mafia Pentol in the following interview excerpt :

“Before I emphasize that what Mafia Pentol sells is a food product, yes mas. automatically before we go further regarding how to expand the market, we must create a quality product in terms of taste first. If that has been fulfilled, then we think about how we expand our market reach. Mafia Pentol itself in terms of expanding its market reach, the steps we take by using the strategy of inviting content creators to join us. One of the reasons is to speed up the process of spreading the information that we provide through the TikTok platform. So, we will invite content creators to make videos to promote our products and also ask them to participate in introducing our products on their social media,” (*Hasil Wawancara Owner Terkait Strategi Digital Branding Mafia Pentol*, 2024).

Based on the results of interviews with the owner of Mafia Pentol, we get a result that in an effort to increase audience curiosity by inviting well-known content creators to participate and participate in the marketing video process related to a Mafia Pentol brand to be uploaded on TikTok @teammafiapentol.sub and also the creators are told to create and introduce Mafia Pentol through personal TikTok social media to speed up the process of conveying brand information and achieving the targets set by the business actor. It does seem that this strategy requires a very large cost, but

compared to using promotional advertising, this strategy is indeed a very appropriate choice because it will get quite a lot of benefits for the Mafia Pentol brand.

**b. Increase Brand Loyalty**

According to researchers in maintaining brand loyalty or customer loyalty, it can be interpreted as a tool to measure loyalty owned by customers regarding a brand or product from a particular brand. In measuring the level of brand loyalty, it can usually be seen by how choices consumers make to buy or get certain brands compared to other brands in one product category or can be defined as an attitude of liking a brand which is manifested in continuous or consistent purchases of that brand over time (Pandiangan et al., 2021). Therefore, Mafia Pentol applies related strategies in building brand loyalty by involving emotional consumers to always be loyal to their brand.

In this study, Mafia Pentol uses Tiktok as a medium to increase brand loyalty of its products. By providing high service to consumers and also providing product quality that will not be found in other brands, customer loyalty will definitely be maintained. (Išoraitė, 2016). Of course, using this digital branding strategy will have a considerable impact in increasing brand loyalty. This is in line with Hendra's statement as the owner of Mafia Pentol in the following interview excerpt :

“Through social media, we can directly communicate with customers. And this active interaction allows us to provide quick responses to customers, provide support, and strengthen closer relationships. Sometimes, we also invite our customers to participate in the making of our videos. With such continuous interaction, customers will feel heard, valued and connected to our brand, which in turn will increase their willingness to contribute to increased customer loyalty,” (*Hasil Wawancara Owner Terkait Strategi Digital Branding Mafia Pentol, 2024*).



Image 10. Customer response to Mafia Pentol  
Source : (@teammafiapentol.sub, 2024)

In this context, it will have a psychological effect on customers who feel valued and cared for when they engage in loyalty programs. This will create an emotional bond with the brand and attempt to increase the perception of value from the customer's perspective. This will make customers feel emotionally attached to the brand and more likely to maintain their loyalty.

Activities in terms of creating customer loyalty supported by developments in the field of digital technology can also increase customer loyalty and confidence in brands that make consumers always trust the brand. One way is to respond or respond to various negative comments that aim to blaspheme

or bring down the brand to increase a high sense of trust in consumers and produce a positive image for the Mafia Pentol brand. This is in line with Anok's statement as the marketing team and also the creator in the following interview excerpt :

“With the response to the videos that we publish to Mafia Pentol's social media, it has actually become an opportunity for us to maintain customer loyalty. Especially with the negative comments on the video, we are never late to respond. However, in the video we respond with a video that does not contain elements of emotion, but by proving the truth of these comments with relevant evidence to maintain customer confidence, of course,” (*Hasil Wawancara Tim Creator dan Marketing Terkait Strategi Digital Branding Mafia Pentol, 2024*)



Image 11. TikTok account @teammafiapentol.sub's response to negative comments  
Source : (@teammafiapentol.sub, 2024)

In this research on maintaining brand loyalty, it can be said that using TikTok can allow a brand to create a personal experience with consumers, strengthen customer engagement, and establish long-term customer loyalty. Indeed, social media can also be a forum for public aspirations to provide criticism and suggestions for a brand to maintain two-way communication (Annisssa & Wardani, 2024).

By involving consumers emotionally by inviting and responding to consumers, consumers want to also share this experience with people they know through acts of recommendation either by WOM (word of mouth) or EWOM (electronic word of mouth). In recommendations made in EWOM, it can be done by conducting a review of the published brand by including a positive description as done by the owner of the TikTok account @anisfit\_\_ who said that the pentol in the Mafia Pentol brand is very delicious.

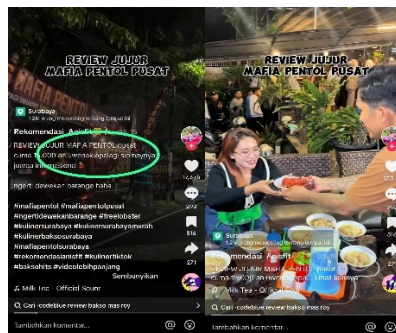


Image 12. Mafia Pentol EWOM recommendation  
Source : (@anisfit\_\_, 2024)

Overall, active interactions carried out in person and through TikTok social media @teammafiapentol.sub support consumers to get the opportunity to participate in making videos on TikTok Mafia Pentol, get a fast response by the Mafia Pentol team, and enjoy personalization of the events they feel. Therefore, this strategy will certainly make interrelationships with each other and become stronger, increase emotional relationships, and will also generate consumer loyalty to Mafia Pentol. By understanding consumer preferences and needs, Mafia Pentol can provide customized messages and present relevant products or services through TikTok @teammafiapentol.sub. This can increase customer satisfaction and strengthen their loyalty. (Sudirjo et al., 2023).

## CONCLUSIONS

From the research that has been done, it can be concluded that the Mafia Pentol brand utilizes the TikTok platform to build a brand and generate a large enough consumer presence. Mafia Pentol conducts market research to understand the competition and identify the right digital branding strategy to use. By analyzing the content and trends that are developing on TikTok, they manage to create content that is interesting and relevant to their audience. Through digital branding strategies in building brand awareness such as maximizing the use of social media, using quality marketing content, and inviting creators to work together, Mafia Pentol has succeeded in increasing brand awareness of the Mafia Pentol brand. In addition, Mafia Pentol also maintains customer loyalty by actively interacting through social media or directly so that it creates an emotional bond, making this brand widely recommended by consumers to their closest people.

Overall, Mafia Pentol has succeeded in building strategies in increasing brand awareness and brand loyalty through TikTok by using creative and interactive digital branding strategies, this is certainly very useful in the future for MSME business actors to implement these strategies. Thus, Mafia Pentol can increase customer understanding of the Mafia Pentol brand, increase and maintain Mafia Pentol loyalty, and create a competitive advantage in the market.

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