

## Promotion Development Through Social Media for OTOP Branding: A Community-Based Approach

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### ABSTRACT

The international community service program entitled Promotion Development Through Social Media for OTOP Branding: A Community-Based Approach was conducted on August 26, 2025, at the Bang Prong Subdistrict Administrative Organization Office, Samut Prakan, Thailand. The main objective of this initiative was to enhance the capacity of OTOP entrepreneurs in understanding branding concepts and utilizing social media as a promotional tool. The methods included a product exhibition, production process demonstrations, and interactive workshops that emphasized content creation, hashtag strategies, and business account management. The results revealed significant improvements in participants' comprehension of branding, their skills in generating promotional content, and their confidence in conducting online promotion. Furthermore, the program demonstrated that community-based approaches foster participatory learning and effective peer-to-peer exchange. The cross-border collaboration between Universitas Komputer Indonesia and Thai Global Business Administration Technological College also enriched the program by ensuring international knowledge transfer adapted to local contexts. In conclusion, the initiative highlights the importance of integrating modern branding practices with local wisdom to strengthen OTOP competitiveness in the digital era and to support sustainable community-based entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** OTOP, Branding, Social Media, Digital Promotion, Community Service.

Received:  
01.09.2025

Revised:  
10.09.2025

Accepted:  
15.09.2025

Available online:  
30.09.2025

### Suggested citations:

Narimawati, U., Rahayu, S. K., Ratchakulwongwarit, W., Aromdee, W., Hidayat, S., Aein, M. A., & Saputra, R. (2025). Promotion Development Through Social Media for OTOP Branding: A Community-Based Approach. *International Journal of Community Service*, 4 (2), 446-453, DOI : 10.55299/ijcs.v4i2.1565

### INTRODUCTION

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) remain a cornerstone of economic growth across ASEAN, with Thailand's One Tambon One Product (OTOP) program serving as a flagship model for community-based entrepreneurship. OTOP enterprises not only preserve cultural heritage but also provide opportunities for local economic empowerment, particularly by enabling rural communities to transform local resources into value-added products (ASEAN et al., 2024). Despite this potential, many OTOP businesses face ongoing challenges in scaling their reach and communicating their value to broader markets. Product quality and uniqueness are often well

established however, branding and promotion strategies especially in the digital sphere remain underdeveloped for many entrepreneurs (Kiatsangsilp & Pankham, 2025)

In the last five years, the rapid expansion of internet usage and mobile connectivity in Thailand has transformed social media into a dominant marketplace. According to DataReportal (2025), Thailand records one of the highest social media usage rates in Southeast Asia, with platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and LINE not only functioning as communication tools but also shaping consumer purchase decisions (Setini et al., 2025). For OTOP entrepreneurs, this digital landscape represents both a challenge and an opportunity: those who can effectively build brand identity online are more likely to expand beyond local markets, while those who fail to adapt to risk are left behind (Sechele et al., 2024; Ueasangkomsate, 2025).

The relevance of branding through social media lies in its dual function: it allows entrepreneurs to position their products with distinct value propositions and simultaneously interact directly with consumers. Recent studies indicate that digital branding can enhance trust, customer loyalty, and long-term competitiveness in MSMEs (Sharabati et al., 2024). Moreover, Wongpun et al. (2024) highlight that training programs designed for Thai entrepreneurs must integrate practical demonstrations with hands-on use of social media platforms, as this contextualized approach ensures that entrepreneurs can immediately apply what they learn (Jaiborisudhi & Kitipadung, 2023; Wongpun et al., 2024).

Universities and academic institutions have increasingly participated in facilitating this process by engaging in community service programs that connect research, practice, and social empowerment. Umiyati et al. (2025) demonstrated that international community service initiatives combining digital marketing and financial training significantly improved MSMEs readiness to compete in digital markets. Likewise, Sandira et al. (2025) argue that marketing management in the current era is inseparable from digital innovation and branding strategies, as these have become the main drivers of visibility and differentiation in highly competitive environments.

Against this background, the current program was initiated as an international collaboration between the Doctoral Study Program in Management Science, Universitas Komputer Indonesia, and Thai Global Business Administration Technological College. Implemented on 26 August 2025 at the Bang Prong Subdistrict Administrative Organization Office, Samut Prakan, Thailand, the activity combined product exhibitions, demonstrations of production processes, and intensive workshops on social media promotion and branding. By embedding branding knowledge into a community-based approach, this initiative sought to empower OTOP entrepreneurs with conceptual insights and tangible skills to build stronger brand presence in the digital economy.

## METHOD

The program was carried out on Tuesday, August 26 2025, hosted at the Bang Prong Subdistrict Administrative Organization Office (Address: 444 หมู่ 1, Bang Prong, Mueang Samut Prakan District, Samut Prakan 10270, Thailand). The site was selected because of its function as a local administrative hub and accessibility to community members and entrepreneurs. Its strategic location within Samut Prakan also made it ideal for attractin OTOP participants from different product clusters. A schematic map of the location was prepared to document the geographical context and provide a visual reference for where the activity took place.

The direct beneficiaries of this program were OTOP entrepreneurs, representing diverse categories such as food products, handicrafts, herbal goods, and textiles. Selection was coordinated with the local administrative office, ensuring the inclusion of entrepreneurs who were active in the OTOP programme and expressed readiness to explore branding innovations.

This initiative was jointly facilitated by the

1. The Doctoral Study Program in Management Science, Universitas Komputer Indonesia (UNIKOM), Indonesia, contributes to academic expertise in marketing, branding, and social media promotion.
2. The Thai Global Business Administration Technological College, Samut Prakan, Thailand, is responsible for local coordination, contextual adaptation, and cultural integration of training materials.

This collaboration ensured that the program not only delivered technical knowledge but also respected local business practices and cultural values.

The community service adopted a participatory and practice-oriented approach, consisting of several interconnected activities

1. Exhibition of Products - Entrepreneurs showcase their goods, allowing facilitators and peers to observe the diversity of OTOP products and identify branding opportunities.
2. Production Demonstrations Selected participants shared how the products were made. These demonstrations became the foundation for creating authentic content such as storytelling posts and branding visuals.
3. Branding and social media workshops Interactive sessions were organized where participants learned how to design brand identity, create engaging social media posts, use hashtags, and establish a consistent online presence.
4. Mentoring and Direct Assistance - Trainers provided individualized guidance to entrepreneurs during the workshops, enabling them to experiment with their own devices and accounts.

By blending exhibitions, demonstrations, and training, the service method allowed participants to connect branding theory with their daily business practices.

Program success was assessed using both tangible and intangible indicators as follows:

1. Number of participants able to create branded social media content during the workshop.
2. Increased understanding of branding concepts as reflected in post-activity feedback.
3. Participant enthusiasm and active involvement in discussions, mentoring, and practice sessions.
4. Visible improvement in the quality of promotional content created by participants compared to initial attempts.

The evaluation was conducted using a combination of

1. Pre- and Post-Activity Surveys Measuring Shifts in Knowledge, Confidence, and Attitudes toward Social Media Branding.
2. Observation Trainers observed the levels of engagement, interaction, and the participants' ability to apply techniques during the workshop.
3. Assessment of Outputs - Each participant was required to produce at least one promotional post or branding draft that was reviewed using a simple rubric to assess creativity, relevance, and clarity.

4. Feedback Dialogue An open session at the end of the programme allowed participants to reflect on the benefits and challenges of applying branding through social media.

This evaluation design provides a holistic view of the program's impact, capturing both measurable and experiential learning outcomes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Research Results section contains research findings obtained from the research data and relates to the hypotheses.

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The community service program was successfully held on August 26 2025 in Bang Prong, Samut Prakan, with strong participation from local OTOP entrepreneurs. The activity combines three main components: (1) product exhibition, (2) demonstrations of production processes, and (3) branding workshops focused on social media promotion. This holistic format enabled participants to connect traditional practices with modern branding approaches. The event fostered an interactive atmosphere in which entrepreneurs not only displayed their products but also experimented with creating digital promotional content in real time.



Figure 1. Exhibition of Products

One of the most notable outcomes was the increase in participants' understanding of branding more than packaging or logos. Through facilitated discussions, entrepreneurs recognized branding as a strategic process for creating a story, identity, and emotional connection with customers. Many participants began to link their product uniqueness such as cultural heritage or natural ingredients to storytelling elements that could strengthen their brands. This shift in mindset is critical, as it positions branding not as an additional cost but as an investment in long-term market presence.



Figure 2. Production demonstration

The workshops provided direct experience in designing posts, writing captions, and creating hashtags tailored to each participant's product. Entrepreneurs worked on their own mobile phones, took photos during the exhibition and production demonstrations, and then turned these visuals into promotional content. For example, one group of participants producing crafted posts highlighting natural freshness and health benefits, while another group promoting textiles emphasized cultural motifs and craftsmanship.



Figure 3. Branding and Social Media Workshops

This practical approach ensured that participants not only learned the theory of branding but also immediately applied it by producing visible outputs. The content created during the workshop demonstrated improvements in image quality, message clarity, and audience engagement strategies. The participants reported that this was their first time producing structured promotional material, and many expressed confidence in continuing such practices after the program.

The pre- and post-activity surveys revealed a significant increase in confidence among the participants regarding their ability to use social media for branding. Before the training, many entrepreneurs had personal accounts but rarely used them for business purposes. After the activity, most participants successfully set up or optimized their business pages, posted their first branded content, and planned to maintain a regular posting schedule. This transition reflects the key success of the program transforming passive social media users into proactive brand managers. The impact of the program is clearly shown in Figure 4, which compares participants' branding skills before and after training.

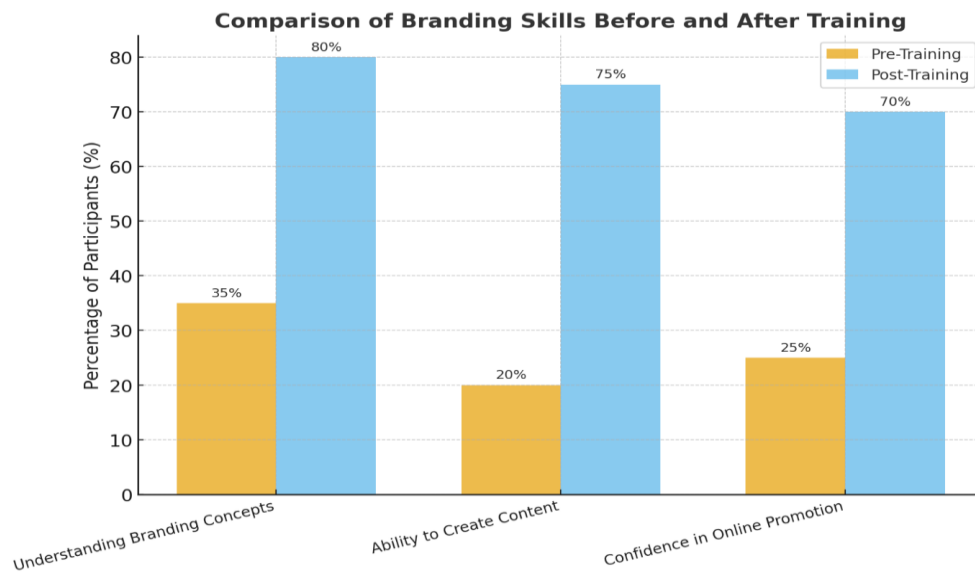


Figure 4. Comparison of branding skills before and after training

1. Understanding branding concepts rose from 35% to 80%, demonstrating that participants shifted their view of branding from a limited focus on packaging to a broader understanding of storytelling, identity, and differentiation.
2. The ability to Create Content improved from 20% to 75%, reflecting the effectiveness of hands-on exercises in teaching entrepreneurs how to design engaging posts and promotional material.
3. Confidence in online promotion increased from 25% to 70%, showing that the workshop successfully reduced hesitation in using social media for business purposes.

These findings highlight the strengths of the participatory and practice-based approaches. Entrepreneurs were not only provided with theoretical inputs but also guided step by step in producing their own branding content. This immediate application bridged the gap between knowledge and practice, ensuring that the participants left the program with both conceptual clarity and practical outputs.

The findings of this community service program underscore the transformative role of social media in strengthening OTOP branding. The activity succeeded in shifting entrepreneurs' perception of branding from a limited understanding focused mainly on packaging and labeling towards a holistic approach that includes storytelling, identity building, and emotional engagement with consumers. This is consistent with research by Sharabati et al. (2024), who emphasized that branding through digital platforms enhances customer loyalty and long-term competitiveness for SMEs. The direct application of this insight was evident during the program as participants began linking their product uniqueness such as cultural roots or natural materials to brand narratives suitable for social media campaigns.

Furthermore, the introduction of hands-on social media content creation has allowed entrepreneurs to practice branding strategies in a supportive environment. The transition from being passive users of social media to active managers of business accounts reflects the findings of Wongpun et al. (2024), who showed that structured and participatory training leads to higher adoption rates of digital marketing tools among Thai SMEs. In this program, participants learned about branding strategies and produced tangible promotional posts during the workshop. This finding confirms that immediate practice during training is an effective way to reinforce conceptual understanding.

The cross-cultural aspect of this programme also adds value to the discussion. Collaboration between Indonesian and Thai academic institutions created an environment in which global insights into branding were adapted to the local context. This approach resonates with Umiyati et al. (2025), who documented that international community services combining financial management and digital marketing increased MSME resilience by bridging global knowledge with local practices. In this case, Thai entrepreneurs benefited from a blend of international expertise and culturally relevant applications, ensuring that branding practices remained authentic while being modernized for online platforms.

Additionally, the integration of product exhibitions and demonstrations provided raw materials for social media content creation. Participants took photos and videos of these demonstrations and later transformed them into promotional posts. This strategy echoes Sandira et al. (2025) argument that innovation in marketing requires

integrating local identity into digital narratives to create sustainable competitiveness. In other words, the authenticity of OTOP products rooted in community heritage becomes an asset in social media branding when entrepreneurs are trained to highlight these elements in their posts.

Overall, the discussion highlights three main contributions of this study. First, it confirmed the effectiveness of community-based and participatory approaches in branding education. Second, it validates previous research showing that hands-on social media training significantly boosts SMEs' branding capacities. Third, it demonstrates that international academic-community collaboration can accelerate digital transformation for local entrepreneurs by contextualizing global branding strategies in local realities.

## CONCLUSION

The community service program on Promotion Development Through Social Media for OTOP Branding demonstrated the effectiveness of a participatory and practice-oriented approach in strengthening the branding capacity of local entrepreneurs. Conducted on August 26 2025 at the Bang Prong Subdistrict Administrative Organization Office in Samut Prakan, Thailand, the activity combined exhibitions, production demonstrations, and social media workshops into an integrated learning process that provided both theoretical insight and practical application. The results clearly showed improvements in the participants' awareness of branding concepts, their ability to create engaging promotional content, and their confidence in using social media platforms to promote their products. These outcomes confirm that branding is not merely about visual identity but also about storytelling, positioning, and emotional connection with consumers, all of which can be effectively conveyed through digital platforms. In addition to these technical results, the program highlighted the importance of cross-border collaboration between academic institutions in Indonesia and Thailand, showing how international knowledge transfer can be localized to suit community needs.

Several recommendations have been proposed for the sustainability and long-term impact of this initiative. First, entrepreneurs require ongoing mentorship beyond initial training, as continuous guidance helps refine strategies and ensure consistency in online promotion. Second, future programs should offer customized modules tailored to specific product categories, such as food, handicrafts, or textiles, so that branding strategies align closely with market demand and consumer expectations. Third, stronger institutional collaboration with OTOP offices and local governments is needed to embed branding and social media promotion into official development agendas, ensuring broader reach and sustainability. Fourth, access to affordable technology, user-friendly applications, and reliable Internet connectivity must be prioritized, as infrastructure support is a prerequisite for successful digital branding. Fifth, international academic partnerships should be expanded beyond Indonesia and Thailand to other ASEAN countries, enabling wider knowledge exchange and promoting regional competitiveness of community-based products. Finally, long-term monitoring and impact studies should be conducted to evaluate the influence of social media branding on business growth, market expansion, and community empowerment, thereby providing evidence-based recommendations for future community service initiatives. Through these combined efforts, OTOP entrepreneurs



will be better equipped to thrive in the digital economy while preserving their cultural identity and contributing to sustainable community development.

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