

Digital Content Strategy as a Marketing Tool in Creative Business Development: Case Study of the Merona Space Workshop Brand

Marsya Putri¹, Putut Raka Santoso²

¹² International Women's University

Corresponding Author e-mail: pmarsya562@gmail.com, pututrakas@iwu.ac.id

Article History:

Received : 26-07-2026

Revised : 16-09-2026

Accepted : 17-09-2026

Keywords: Content Marketing, Creative Industry, Digital Marketing, Instagram, Workshop

Abstract: This study aims to analyze Merona Space's digital content strategy, identify factors influencing participants' decisions to attend workshops, and examine its role in creative business development. The study used a qualitative approach with a case study method involving 12 workshop participants and 1–2 representatives from previously collaborated venues, selected purposively based on data saturation. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, supported by source triangulation, technical triangulation, and expert validation. The results show that Merona Space's digital content strategy involved planning, implementation, and evaluation, with Instagram as the main platform supported by TikTok, Threads, and Instagram Ads. Participants' decisions were influenced by friend recommendations, digital content, workshop benefits, price, personal motivation, and participation experience. Digital content supported participants' interest and confidence and contributed to collaborations and community strengthening in creative business development.

How to Cite: Marsya Putri, Putut Raka Santoso.(2026).Digital Content Strategy as a Marketing Tool in Creative Business Development Case Study of the Merona Space Workshop Brand.4(2). pp.888-894. <https://doi.org/10.61536/escalate.v4i02.597>



<https://doi.org/10.61536/escalate.v4i02.597>

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) License.

Introduction

Technological advancements have made social media a crucial marketing tool for creative businesses. According to We Are Social (2024), Indonesia has over 167 million active social media users, with Instagram being the most widely used platform by consumers, accounting for 92% of users (Databoks, 2025). This demonstrates Instagram's strategic potential as a marketing medium due to its ability to engage and influence consumer decisions through visual content (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022).

The growth of the creative workshop industry post-pandemic has been supported by government policies and increasing public interest in skills development. In this context, Merona Space in Bandung City utilizes Instagram as its primary marketing medium and has hosted approximately 14 workshops with over 250 participants since its inception in April 2025.

Despite attracting over 250 workshop participants, the performance of the @merona_space Instagram account remains relatively low compared to similar creative spaces, both in terms of follower



count and average engagement. This indicates a gap between digital content performance and success in attracting workshop participants.

Pre-survey results showed that most participants learned about the workshop through recommendations from friends, while Instagram served more as a supporting medium, reinforcing interest through information, workshop benefits, and venue visuals. These findings indicate that the decision to attend the workshop was influenced by digital content, along with other factors such as word of mouth, activity benefits, and venue appeal.

This study aims to analyze Merona Space's digital content strategy, identify factors influencing participants' decisions to attend workshops, and analyze the role of digital content in creative business development. The urgency of this research lies in the limited digital marketing studies on workshop-based creative businesses, while its novelty lies in analyzing the position of Instagram content compared to other factors such as friend recommendations, workshop benefits, and venue appearance in supporting Merona Space's creative business development.

Research methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of Merona Space's digital content strategy as a marketing tool for workshops and creative business development. Qualitative research was chosen because it is based on natural conditions, with the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Sugiyono, 2022). The case study was used because the research focuses on one specific case, the Merona Space brand, to comprehensively understand the phenomenon of digital content utilization in workshop-based creative businesses in a real-life context (Yin, 2018). The research approach is inductive, so the analysis is conducted based on field findings which are then interpreted using relevant theories.

The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling based on the consideration that informants have direct experience and involvement with the phenomenon under study (Sugiyono, 2022). The number of informants was determined based on the principle of data saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The informants consisted of 12 Merona Space workshop participants representing the Makeup Class, Baking Class, and Creative Class, as well as one to two venues that had collaborated with Merona Space. The research object was the digital content strategy of the Instagram account @merona_space as a marketing medium for the workshop and supporting the development of creative businesses.

The primary research instrument was the researcher (human instrument) supported by semi-structured interview guidelines, observation sheets, a recording device, a camera, field notes, and research documentation (Sugiyono, 2022; Moleong, 2021). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation (Moleong, 2021; Yin, 2018). Interviews were conducted with workshop participants and venue staff to explore perceptions regarding digital content strategies and factors influencing the decision to attend the workshop. Observations were made of the workshop implementation and the Instagram content of @merona_space, while documentation included Instagram posts, promotional materials, activity photos, and other supporting documents.

Data analysis used Miles et al.'s (2020) interactive analysis model, which includes four stages: data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. Analysis was conducted continuously throughout the research process by grouping data based on the research focus, namely digital content strategy, factors influencing participants' decisions to attend workshops, and the role of digital content in creative business development. Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation, technical triangulation, and expert validation to ensure the credibility of the research results (Sugiyono, 2022; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research procedure began with determining the research focus and selecting informants, followed by data collection through interviews, observation, and documentation. The collected data were then analyzed in stages using the Miles et al. (2020) model. Verification was then conducted through triangulation and expert validation before drawing conclusions that answered the research objectives regarding digital content strategy, participants' decision-making factors for attending the workshop, and the role of digital content in the development of Merona Space's creative business.

Results and Discussion

Merona Space's Digital Content Strategy for Workshop Marketing

1. Digital Content Strategy Planning

Planning is the initial step Merona Space undertakes before developing and publishing digital content. Based on interviews with key informants, the content strategy planning process isn't a spontaneous process, but rather begins with defining the workshop concept. Determining the workshop theme serves as the basis for developing content, identifying target participants, selecting promotional media, and crafting the message to be conveyed to potential participants.

Based on interviews with Key Informants (IK), the workshop planning process was carried out jointly by the two founders, Sofina Fahlan and Ahya. Although Merona Space does not yet have a complex organizational structure, tasks are divided according to each party's responsibilities. Sofina focuses on managing participants, collaborating with partners, and administering the event, while Ahya handles digital content development, promotion, and social media marketing.

"So, there are only two of us on this team. Ahya and Sofina handle all aspects of the role and organization, from planning, implementation, to evaluation, all together. But, we usually like to divide up the tasks. First, for example, we make the planning together. For example, I'm the one who looks for brand partners, Ahya is the one who looks for venues. So, later on, we'll work together through social media. Once we connect with marketing friends or friends from the venue, from the brand, we contact them. Then, we collaborate, determine the place and date. Then, after that, Ahya usually creates the content itself on social media. And, Ahya also does the marketing. So, ads. We use ads to promote our event. Later, I'll manage the participants during registration. So, I'll handle the registration, payment, and registration process myself. Later, during the implementation, we'll both carry out the implementation. And, during the evaluation, we'll both be evaluators." (IK Sofina)

Based on this statement, it can be seen that the digital content strategy planning process is an integral part of the overall workshop planning. Despite limited human resources, a clear division of tasks ensures that each promotional phase runs smoothly. This demonstrates that the digital content strategy is not only prepared for publication needs but also tailored to the workshop's specific requirements.

In addition to assigning tasks, the informant also explained that the biggest challenge in the planning stage wasn't content creation, but rather finding the right participants for the workshop's target audience. Therefore, each piece of content created was always tailored to the theme of the event.

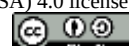
"Then the most complicated thing, in my opinion, is finding people who want to join, because that's why we're like, yeah, of course, every time there's an event, we think about, how are we going to get participants, get people who want to join, who are interested in us, like what kind of content to create, that too, that's based on who we are, what our theme is like." (IK Ahya)

This statement demonstrates that digital content development at Merona Space begins with understanding the characteristics of the workshop being marketed. The workshop theme serves as the basis for determining the content format, promotional message, and communication approach used with potential participants. Therefore, the content planning process is not random but tailored to the objectives of the event being promoted.

The findings of this study align with the Plan stage in the RACE Planning Framework theory proposed by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022). At this stage, the organization first establishes communication objectives, identifies the target audience, and designs a digital marketing strategy before publishing content. Although Merona Space does not yet have a content calendar or formal planning, the research results indicate that the planning process still involves internal discussions, task allocation, participant targeting, and content adjustments based on the workshop theme being promoted.

2. Digital Content Strategy Implementation

Digital content strategy implementation is the implementation phase of the previously developed plan. At this stage, Merona Space began communicating information about the workshop to potential participants through various social media platforms. Based on interviews with key informants, the social media platforms used for promotion were Instagram and TikTok.



Furthermore, Merona Space utilized Instagram Ads to reach a wider audience, particularly during the brand's early stages.

Key informants explained that Instagram was the primary medium for promoting the workshop because most of the target participants actively use the platform. Meanwhile, TikTok was used to expand the reach of content through short videos that more easily reach new users.

A key informant explained that Merona Space utilizes several social media platforms to promote its workshops, including Instagram, TikTok, and Threads. In addition to organic social media, Merona Space has also used Instagram Ads to expand its promotional reach. According to the informant, the use of these various platforms is still a trial and error process because Merona Space does not yet have a dedicated digital marketing team.

"We also use trial and error, using ads and promotions. We now have multiple channels, including Instagram, TikTok, and Threads. We're also actively promoting those, as we don't have a marketing team dedicated to social media marketing," (IK Ahya)

The research findings indicate that Merona Space's digital content strategy implementation does not rely solely on a single social media platform, but utilizes multiple digital platforms simultaneously to reach potential workshop participants. The use of Instagram as the primary platform is supported by TikTok and Threads as supporting platforms to expand promotional reach. Furthermore, the use of Instagram Ads demonstrates Merona Space's efforts to increase content visibility despite not yet having a dedicated digital marketing team. These findings also indicate that the strategy implemented remains adaptive through trial and error, reflecting the experience gained throughout the business.

In addition to selecting promotional media, Merona Space also employs a copywriting strategy to ensure the published content captures the audience's attention. Interviewees explained that each piece of content begins with a hook, or opening sentence, that piques the curiosity of potential participants. The content then continues by explaining the various benefits participants will receive from attending the workshop.

"Usually we give out hooks that are indeed like, are you free on the 30th? Something like that, well, those are usually the busy ones or I say like guys, makeup class already got a goodie bag, and getting this much food is worth it or not?"

The interviews revealed that Merona Space's digital content development focuses not only on delivering information about the workshop schedule but also on how the message is delivered to the audience. The use of a hook aims to capture the attention of social media users from the first moment they see the content, while conveying the benefits of the workshop is intended to increase potential participants' interest in the activities offered.

In addition to focusing on the information presented, Merona Space also emphasizes visual aspects in every published piece of content. Based on interviews with key informants, promotional content not only showcases the workshop location but also focuses on the event atmosphere, participant activities, and the experiences gained during the workshop.

"Actually, the aesthetics of the venue are the first priority, of course. It's definitely there. But we're more focused on the atmosphere of the event, the activities. So, we want viewers of our videos to see what we're doing there." (Key Informant – Ahya)

Information obtained from informants indicates that it is understandable that the visual strategy implemented by Merona Space does not only emphasize the aesthetics of the workshop venue, but rather prioritizes conveying the experiences felt by participants during the event. Through documentation of participant activities, the workshop process, and interactions that occur during the event, prospective participants can get a more realistic picture of the activities offered. This strategy shows that digital content is used as a medium to build perceptions and interest of prospective participants through the experiences presented, not only through the visual appearance of the venue.

This finding aligns with Pulizzi's (2014) theory of content marketing, which explains that effective content not only serves to convey information but also provides value and experience to the audience. In this study, Merona Space utilized digital content to showcase the workshop experience so that potential participants could visualize the activities they would undertake if they participated.

3. Digital Content Strategy Evaluation

Evaluation of Merona Space's digital content strategy cannot be done solely from the perspective of the management. Source triangulation in this study revealed a gap between what the owner believed and what workshop participants actually experienced, particularly regarding how potential participants first learned about Merona Space.

Ahya, as a key informant, is quite certain that Instagram and TikTok are the main sources.

"Mostly from TikTok and Instagram." (IK Ahya)

Interviews with ten participants revealed a different story. The majority (six people) admitted they first learned about the Merona Space workshop from an invitation or a friend's story, not from scrolling through Instagram. The owner never directly inquired about this during the registration process, so it's understandable that the role of word of mouth hasn't been identified by the management.

Interestingly, the six participants who learned about it from friends still opened the @merona_space account before finally deciding to join. So, Instagram content isn't the first entry point, but rather a confirmation or strengthening of intention. Mapped to the AIDA model, the Attention stage is more often triggered by social media, while Instagram plays a strong role in the Interest and Desire stages through researching information about the Merona Space Instagram account before signing up.

Another gap emerged in content performance. Ahya herself acknowledged that some content generated significant comment traffic, but the number of applicants was actually low.

"We're really busy with that content, there are even people who comment 'want it, want it,' and we DM-in each person who comments 'want it,' but there are very few people who register, and there are also things like that." (IK Ahya)

When viewed through the RACE framework, this means the Act stage doesn't automatically lead to the Convert stage. Comments aren't the same as actual signups, and Merona Space doesn't yet have a systematic way to follow up with people who initially expressed interest but didn't register.

These two findings share a common thread: a gap between management perceptions and the reality on the ground. Merona Space is quite good at planning and executing content, but lacks a measurement tool that truly captures the role of WOM or converts curiosity into actual registrations.

Based on the evaluation results, it can be concluded that Merona Space has been able to build engagement through digital content. However, the evaluation process still needs to be developed to identify participants' primary sources of information and optimize the conversion of digital interactions into workshop registrations. These findings further inform the discussion of factors influencing participants' decisions to attend the workshop.

Factors Influencing Participants' Decisions in Attending the Merona Space Workshop

1. Information Sources and Attention Stages

Participants' initial information sources were divided into two categories: friend recommendations and direct digital content. Of the ten participants, six learned about the program through friends' recommendations, and the remaining four learned about it through Instagram or TikTok.

This friend referral pathway is inextricably linked to the Merona Growth Pulse community, an informal community formed by the owner that involves people outside the core team to assist with each workshop. Members of this community indirectly help disseminate information to their respective networks.

There's also the price factor. Merona Space has several times offered two-person packages, encouraging participants to bring friends.

"We have several workshops that we've created, like a program that says it's cheaper for two people, for example, one person costs 110 thousand, but for two people it's 200 thousand, meaning it's only 100 thousand per person." (IK Ahya)

So, WOM at Merona Space isn't purely coincidental. Price incentives and community involvement drive it, even though it hasn't been formally designed as a referral program. The

Attention stage here stems more from social media and pricing, while Instagram serves to reinforce trust before people actually sign up.

2. Interest, Desire, and Action Factors

Nine out of ten participants said they were attracted by the content, which showcased the workshop itself, not just the venue. This aligns with previous findings that Merona Space deliberately emphasizes the atmosphere of the event, not just the aesthetics of the venue.

Tangible benefits were also a consideration. Five out of ten participants cited things like free PCAs, certificates, product offerings, or food as reasons for attending.

"At Merona, you usually get a free meal or something like that, and the goodie bags are definitely cute, which we really didn't expect. Oh, it's worth it." (IU)

Additionally, there were personal motivations, such as wanting to fill spare time and improve skills (mentioned by five out of ten participants), and affordability (mentioned by four out of ten). Price wasn't the dominant factor, but it was still an additional consideration. All of this suggests that the decision to participate in the Merona Space workshop wasn't the result of a single factor, but rather a combination of content, benefits, and personal needs, which aligns with Pulizzi's idea of the importance of tangible value in content.

3. Participant Loyalty and Engagement

One thing that was most consistent among the ten participants was their loyalty. All of them, without exception, expressed their desire to attend the next Merona Space workshop. This demonstrates that the workshop experience, from the concept of healing with productivity to the personal interactions with the organizers, successfully retained participants, regardless of the route they initially learned about Merona Space. Linked to the Engage stage of RACE, this suggests that hands-on experience plays a greater role in retaining participants than digital content alone.

4. The Role of Digital Content in the Development of Merona Space's Creative Business

Merona Space's digital content not only plays a role in driving registrations but also expanding its network of collaborations with partner venues and brands. One venue that has collaborated with the company stated that the relationship is mutually beneficial in terms of exposure.

"We benefit each other, people know Merona Space from those who know Hotel Santika, and vice versa, people know Hotel Santika from that, Merona Space booms." (Venue)

Collaborating with venues isn't just about the space; it's also about expanding each other's visibility through tagged and shared content. Both venues interviewed reported smooth and timely communication and implementation of the collaboration with Merona Space, which is crucial for building trust for future collaborations.

The Merona Growth Pulse community also plays a dual role here. Besides acting as a WOM channel, as discussed previously, this community also acts as a flexible workforce, assisting with workshop operations, from documentation and venue setup to acting as liaison officers. This model is what keeps Merona Space running and growing, even though its core team consists of just two founders.

From a female entrepreneurial perspective, Merona Space's approach to growth through collaboration and community is quite distinctive: gradual growth, relying on networks and trust, rather than aggressive expansion. This pattern aligns with what Cardella et al. have proposed regarding the characteristics of female entrepreneurship. Therefore, digital content plays a dual role here: expanding exposure through business collaborations while simultaneously strengthening the identity of the young women's community that is Merona Space's hallmark.

Conclusion

This study shows that Merona Space's digital content strategy has been implemented through planning, implementation, and evaluation stages oriented towards promoting experience-based workshops. Content planning was carried out by adjusting the workshop theme, target participants, and division of tasks among the founders. The strategy implementation utilized Instagram as the main media supported by TikTok, Threads, and Instagram Ads, with an emphasis on presenting the workshop experience through compelling visuals and copywriting. The results also show that participants'

decisions to attend the workshop were influenced not only by digital content, but also by friend recommendations, workshop benefits, price, personal motivation, and the attractiveness of the venue. Digital content acted as a medium that strengthened the interest and confidence of potential participants before registering, while also supporting the development of creative businesses by increasing brand visibility, expanding collaborations with venues and partners, and strengthening the Merona Space community.

This study has limitations because it only focuses on one research object, namely Merona Space in Bandung City, with a limited number of informants, so the results cannot be generalized to all workshop-based creative businesses. Furthermore, the study only focuses on Instagram as the main marketing medium and therefore does not discuss in depth the contribution of other digital platforms. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve more creative spaces, compare various social media platforms, and examine the influence of other factors such as electronic word of mouth, community, or participant loyalty on the success of digital marketing. Practically, the results of this study can provide input for Merona Space and creative MSMEs to develop more planned content strategies, optimize the evaluation of content effectiveness, strengthen the integration between digital content and customer recommendations, and increase the conversion of social media interactions into actual participation in workshop activities.

Bibliography

- Cardella, G.M., Hernández-Sánchez, B.R., & Sánchez-García, J.C. (2020). Women entrepreneurship: A systematic review to outline the boundaries of scientific literature. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, Article 1557. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01557>
- Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2022). *Digital marketing: Strategy, implementation and practice* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Databoks. (2025). The most widely used social media platforms in Indonesia in 2025. <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/>
- Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Moleong, LJ (2021). *Qualitative research methodology* (Revised edition). PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Pulizzi, J. (2023). *Epic content marketing: Break through the clutter with a different story, engage and convert more customers, and inspire your audience to action* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Sugiyono. (2022). *Quantitative, qualitative, and R&D research methods* (2nd ed.). Alfabeta.
- We Are Social. (2024). *Digital 2024: Indonesia*. DataReportal. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-indonesia>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

