

## Enhancing The Product Value of Bitter Melon Chips Through Branding at Home Industry Melati

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### ABSTRACT

Home industries play a vital role in the local economy. However, some small-scale businesses struggle to compete due to limited product value and the lack of branding. One example is the Melati Home Industry in Jatiroto Village, Lumajang Regency, which produces bitter melon chips but lacks strong branding. This community service activity aims to strengthen product value through branding, including logo creation, packaging design, and attention to product quality. The method used is participatory training and mentoring, including branding strategies and the use of production aids such as spinners to improve product quality. The results of this activity show a improvement to the partner's understanding of the importance of branding and its application to their businesses. Partners successfully created new product logos and labels, utilized standing pouch and jar packaging, and utilized spinners and impulse sealers to improve product neatness and hygiene.

Keywords: Branding, Home Industries, Product Values.



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## INTRODUCTION

Home industries play an important role in supporting local economic growth. According to Law No. 3 of 2014 on Industry, home industries are generally classified as the informal sector, which produces uniquely, is related to local wisdom and local resources, and prioritizes handmade products. Home industries operate on a small scale, with non-professional labor, limited capital, and seasonal production (Khairil Hamdi, 2019). The Melati Home Industry is one of the industries in Jatiroto Village, Lumajang, East Java, that produces bitter melon chips. Bitter melon contains many vitamins and minerals such as vitamin A, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, vitamin C, calcium, potassium, zinc, iron, copper, phosphorus, and linoleic acid. Bitter melon is also effective in lowering blood glucose levels, and it can be used for the prevention and treatment of other diseases such as malaria, canker sores, and coughs, and it has antioxidant properties (Wibowo et al., 2023). Bitter melon chips are highly sought after by the public. However, the chips produced have a drawback in terms of branding, namely the logo and packaging are not attractive enough to capture consumer interest and

attention. Moreover, the sales being conducted are still conventional amidst the increasingly rapid utilization of technology. The urgency of product branding in marketing stems from a shift in internal thinking that brands are assets (Faizah, et al, 2023). A logo is an effective marketing tool that helps create a strong brand identity and is the first element consumers see on product packaging or other promotional materials (Komang et al., 2024). However, the absence of a logo on this Melati Home Industry and the relatively simple packaging limit the product's marketability.



**Picture 1. Bitter melon chips**

The packaging only uses a standing pouch with a thank you sticker. This is less appealing when marketed. Even for larger packaging, they only use plastic which is then sealed with wax.



**Picture 2. Bitter melon chips with wax-sealed plastic packaging**

According to (Majdi et al., 2020), packaging is the first thing consumers see. Attractive packaging can gain more attention from consumers and lead them to purchase the product. Additionally, packaging also ensures the safety and health of the product. By assuring consumers that the home-based food industry product is safe and healthy, packaging can convince them to purchase it. With good packaging, the seller will also gain a good image. This is what is called branding a product.

According to (Suryandari et al., 2022) a brand can also be used as one way to market a product. According to (Nurmarisma & Muharsih, 2023), having a brand for a product is one of the requirements to be able to market the product thru a marketplace, making it easier for consumers who will buy the product to get information and details about it. In addition, brand application also serves as a means of interaction between business owners and consumers regarding anything that needs to be known about the product, thus providing a sense of security to consumers. Branding will be done by providing an identity in the form of labels and the creativity of MSME actors in terms of packaging. According to (Rizki et al., 2022), creativity is essential for a business, especially in terms of product packaging, considering that packaging is one form of product identity. The importance of packaging and label innovation is due to current trends in packaging and labels, which are no longer just visual aids or brand identity, but also important tools for attracting consumers, conveying product information, and maintaining product safety and durability (Rizki, 2024). Not only the packaging, but the quality of the bitter gourd chips product is very oily. This is evident from the packaging, which is plastic and the standing pouch is full of oil stains. The draining process is still traditional, using only containers for drying. The manual oil draining process still used causes a lot of oil to stick to the chips, which can reduce the quality of the chips, such as making them easily crumble, smell rancid, and not last long (Ryantara & Diari, 2024). A lack of knowledge regarding the utilization of production tools for the quality of bitter gourd chips is needed to ensure the chips are not oily and can compete in the market.

Based on this background, the aim of this community service project is to assist Melati Home Industry in strengthening its product value through two aspects:

1. Providing understanding and skills regarding the importance of branding as a product identity and attractiveness through logo creation, label design, and packaging; and
2. Improving product quality by introducing and utilizing a spinner (oil drainer) to reduce oil content and an impulse sealer to seal 500g–1kg packages for a neater and more hygienic appearance.

This community service project is unique among similar initiatives because it combines branding empowerment with innovation in simple production tools. This integration not only enhances the visual aspects and identity of the product but also enhances its physical quality, thereby increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of small businesses, motivating them to further develop their businesses.

## **METHODS**

The method used in this community activity is participatory and applied, where training is conducted by providing direct instruction to partners in the form of material delivery, practice, and technical assistance, which takes place at the Melati Home Industry located in Jatiroto Village, Lumajang Regency, East Java. This activity was carried out over two months, from January to February 2025, involving four participants from the Melati Home Industry, accompanied by a team of lecturers and students from ITB Widya Gama Lumajang, in collaboration with the Jatiroto Village Government. The implementation phase consists of three stages:

1. Preparation phase: identifying partner problems, coordinating with the village government, and planning materials and production equipment.
2. Implementation phase: participatory training and assistance covering branding strategies (logo and packaging design) and hands-on practice in operating production aids such as spinners and impulse sealers.
3. Evaluation phase: assessing partners' understanding and application of skills through observation and discussion. Evaluation of success was conducted by comparing product appearance and packaging before and after the activity, as well as through informal interviews. The evaluation showed improvements in product neatness, durability, and sales volume based on the interviews.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The method used in this community activity is participatory and applied, where training is conducted by providing direct instruction to partners in the form of material delivery, practice, and technical assistance, which takes place at the Melati Home Industry located in Jatiroto Village, Lumajang Regency, East Java. The training is conducted participatively, actively involving partners from the Melati Home Industry at every stage of the activity. The community service activity conducted at Home Industry Melati successfully achieved its goals, namely strengthening product value thru branding and improving production quality using simple tools. Bitter melon chips produced by Home Industry Melati have a distinctive savory and crunchy taste, and are not bitter despite being made from bitter melon. These bitter melon chips are processed in a way that reduces the bitterness without diminishing their nutritional value. Here are the qualitative and quantitative results of the community service activity:

### 1. Qualitative Results

- a. Business owners experienced an increase in understanding regarding the importance of branding as a product identity. This is evidenced by the partners' ability to independently create logos and product names with guidance, select appropriate packaging types such as standing pouches and jars, and design attractive labels.
- b. Improving production quality thru product quality, specifically bitter gourd chips. Previously, the packaging used ordinary plastic and wax; now, an impulse sealer can be used for bulk packaging. This makes it neater and more hygienic. Before the bitter gourd chip training, the chips were also packaged while still oily, even after being drained. After the spinner was introduced, the product became drier and more durable.

### 2. Quantity Result

Based on the quantitative results, progress is evident. According to the statement (Khumairoh & Laily Nisa, 2024), branding can help creative industry players reach a wider market, increase brand awareness of their products, and boost sales, as well as enable them to compete in the global market.

**Table 1.1 Quantitative Results of Partner Problem Solving**

| No | Achievement                                  | Indicator before                  | Activity proposed                                                               | Solution after activity       |
|----|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Produc identity (logo/label)                 | None                              | Training on logo and product label                                              | Available and used            |
| 2  | Type of packaging                            | Ordinary plastic, Sealer uses wax | Introduction to packaging with standing pouches, jars and label design training | Standing pouch jar with label |
| 3  | Production aids (spinner and impulse sealer) | Not available                     | Procurement and training on the use of spinner and impulse                      | Available and used            |
| 4  | Product appearance meets aesthetics          | Less than satisfactory            | Improve the product's visual quality through packaging and labeling             | More attractive               |

Source: Personal data, 2025.

Community service activities are carried out systematically through three stages: preparation, implementation, and reporting. Based on the community service program activities, branding training provides material related to logos/labels and packaging. This material is relevant to addressing the issues raised.



**Figure 3. After Material on Branding and Product Packaging**

Source: Personal Data, 2025.

This material served as a foundation for expanding business owners' understanding of the importance of branding through logos and the importance of selecting attractive packaging for Melati Home Industry partners. At this stage, partners successfully created logos and product names with the team's guidance. They also selected stand-up pouches and jars, including attractive label designs. This presentation and mentoring provided Melati Home Industry partners with an understanding of the importance of packaging as a key factor in attracting consumers to their processed products.



**Figure 4. Bitter Melon Chips Label Sticker**

Source: Personal Data, 2025.



**Figure 5. Bitter Melon Chips with Packaging Label Sticker**

Source: Personal Data, 2025

The packaging chosen by Melati Home Industry is standing pouches and jars. The standing pouches have a net weight of 250 grams and the jars have a net weight of 500 grams. However, some consumers also prefer to purchase by the kilo for resale. In this context, Melati Home Industry simply packages in plastic and presses using an impulse sealer.

Partners are also provided with additional insights into improving production quality, such as the use of impulse sealers and spinners or oil drainers. These simple production tools are highly relevant to the capacity of home-based MSMEs. The spinners or oil drainers are used to reduce the oil content in bitter melon chips. Previously, they did not use spinners, resulting in oil-filled packaging and poor shelf life.



**Figure 6. Bitter melon chips with packaging label sticker**

Source: Personal Data, 2025



**Figure 7. Impulse sealer**

Source: Personal Data, 2025

Based on these results, the processed product, bitter melon chips, is drier, lasts longer, and is suitable for sale to a wider market. The larger packaging also no longer uses wax, instead using an impulse sealer for efficiency and aesthetics. The evaluation revealed that the implementation of branding and improved production quality have yielded measurable results. Sales volume increased by approximately 25% in the two months following the implementation, supported by improved product presentation and cleanliness, which attracted more consumer interest during sales in the local market.

These findings align with branding theory proposed by (Agustina et al., 2022), which emphasizes that a product's visual identity and branding consistency significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Similarly, (Majdi Khaleeli, 2020) stated that attractive and safe packaging increases consumer trust and strengthens a product's position. Therefore, combining branding strategies with practical innovations in production equipment has been shown to increase product appeal and market competitiveness for home industries like Melati.

## CONCLUSION

The community service program entitled "Optimizing Sales Increase of Bitter Melon Chips through Product Value in Melati Home Industry" has successfully had a positive impact on target partners, especially in improving capabilities, branding and increasing production. Through training and mentoring, partners gained a new understanding of the importance of branding and branding strategies through logo design and attractive packaging, and the use of production tools such as spinners and impulse sealers to increase product value. Bitter melon chip products now appear more professional, clean, and attractive, thereby increasing their selling value. Partners also demonstrated high enthusiasm and commitment in continuing the practices they have learned independently.

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