Proactive Marketing Development and Public Relations of Community Enterprises to Strengthen the Income of Ranong Province

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were (1) to study the general condition of income; Marketing and Public Relations of Community Enterprises of Ranong Province (2) to propose proactive marketing and public relations models of community enterprises to enhance the income generation of Ranong Province and (3) to propose guidelines for proactive marketing and public relations management of community enterprises to enhance Ranong's income generation. In-depth interviews with sixteen key informants, who are representatives from the public sector, private sector, local government organizations, community enterprise entrepreneurs, academics, and other stakeholders. The study found that there was little investment in marketing, promotion, and public relations. Advertising, pamphlets, and community radio were employed to promote community products but lacked the development and modernization of customer incentives. In terms

of proactive marketing and public relations of community enterprises to enhance Ranong's income generation, it was found that three marketing models are used: offline, online, and marketing activities, to expand the online market to various channels, which are of interest to consumers through social media. Additionally, new forms of public relations to reach customers more easily were employed. Guidelines for proactive marketing and public relations management of community enterprises to enhance Ranong's income generation included having a modern and streamlined database so that community enterprises can retrieve news from the same source. This results in precision and speed. Data can be used to monitor and evaluate, such as the volume of sales of community enterprises through various marketing channels that have been made.

Keywords: Development, Proactive Marketing, Public Relations, Community Enterprise

Introduction

According to the policy statement of General Prayuth Chan-o-cha, the Prime Minister, who made a statement to the National Legislative Assembly on Friday, September 12, 2014, the cabinet accepted the policy in Article 6.12 on increasing the country's economic potential by strengthening the capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises to be able to compete effectively. These include increasing knowledge in terms of improving the efficiency of production processes in product development and management development within the organization, restructuring the mechanism to support and drive small and medium-sized enterprises to be a clear system and unity both in terms of access and financial and investment services for small and medium-sized enterprises. Development of marketing products and services, marketing opportunities, and opportunities for foreign investment are also required (Cabinet Secretariat, 2019). Hence, small and medium-sized enterprises are therefore considered the cornerstone of the country's economy. According to the National Statistical Office (2022), there are approximately 21 million households nationwide, with an average household income of 27,352 baht per month. More than half of households have debts (51.5%) and average household debts of 205,679 baht per household. Of these, 15.8 percent of the debt is from agriculture. Economic inequality leads to various problems and intertwines in chains, whether it is political, economic, social, environmental, quality of life, or education, especially for citizens in rural areas, which are the majority of the country. Agricultural occupation is considered the foundation of Thailand. Driving the micro-economy is one of the key policies under the National Strategy (2018-2037). The foundation economy must have the most comprehensive approach to development and management by local

communities. Strong capital and fund building, production, privatization, services, marketing, food production, basic livelihood necessities, the unique culture of the area, and its development along with new techniques, innovations, and technologies are required. These are to develop a self-sufficient market or economic society.

Ranong is a province in southern Thailand, located on the west side of the Andaman Sea. It has an eastern contact area with Chumphon province. To the south, it borders Surat Thani and Phang Nga provinces. To the west, it borders Burma and the Andaman Sea. Ranong province is therefore an area that is continuously driven and expanded economically through the development of local community enterprises. It is rich in natural resources, and unique aspects of local culture such as batik, economic crops, as well as local consumer products (Sukmaitree, Bhaksuwan, Jakkapattarawong, & Siriwatn, 2022). Therefore, we are interested in studying the general condition of income, marketing, and public relations of community enterprises of Ranong Province, and to propose models and guidelines for proactive market management and public relations of community enterprises to enhance Ranong's income generation. These will help promote and develop strong community enterprises, increase the capacity to reduce poverty and inequality and create opportunities and social equality under the National Strategic Plan to ensure sustainable and stable economic growth.

Literature Review

Proactive Marketing

Proactive marketing refers to a strategy where businesses actively anticipate changes in the business environment, identify opportunities, and develop and implement action plans. This strategy typically involves continuous monitoring of the market, anticipating changes or potential issues, and taking action before they occur. Proactive marketers also anticipate customer needs and design their products or services to meet those future needs (Kumar, Jones, Venkatesan, & Leone, 2011). According to Kumar et al., several proactive marketing strategies can be employed by businesses to stay ahead of the curve and gain a competitive advantage.

1. Market research: Businesses can conduct detailed market research to understand current trends, consumer behavior, and the competitive landscape. This research can be used to forecast future trends and design products or services that meet the predicted needs.

2. Customer relationship management (CRM): Proactive marketers use CRM tools to understand customer behavior and anticipate their future needs. This allows them to personalize their marketing strategies, improve customer service, and enhance customer loyalty.

3. Innovation: Being proactive often involves investing in innovation. This might be in the form of new products, services, or marketing strategies that anticipate future market trends and customer needs.

4. Social media monitoring: Proactive marketers use social media not just to promote their products but also to monitor customer opinions and anticipate potential issues. This can help them react quickly to changes in the market and avoid potential crises.

5. Competitor analysis: By constantly keeping an eye on competitors, proactive marketers can anticipate potential competitive threats and take action before their competitors do. This could involve introducing new features, improving customer service, or adjusting pricing strategies.

In all these strategies, the common theme is anticipation. Proactive marketers anticipate changes and act before they occur, which can give them a significant advantage over businesses that react to changes after they happen.

Proactive Marketing and Community Enterprises

Proactive marketing for community enterprises involves the use of both traditional and digital marketing methods, all of which aim at creating awareness about a company, its products, or services before the customer needs them (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Some strategies include community events, sponsorship, participation in local initiatives, and targeted advertising on social media (Valos, Habibi, Casidy, Driesener, & Maplestone, 2016). These strategies not only promote the community enterprise's visibility but also help to build relationships within the community, fostering a sense of belonging and increasing customer loyalty (Baker & Baker, 2019). The rise of digital marketing has presented community enterprises with numerous opportunities to engage with their customers more proactively. Tools like email marketing, social media advertising, and content marketing allow these businesses to reach out to potential customers directly and foster strong relationships with them before a purchasing decision is made (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Moreover, community enterprises could also adopt customer relationship management (CRM) software to better understand and predict the needs of their customers (Peppard, 2014). By doing so, they can proactively offer solutions that satisfy these needs, thus building trust and loyalty. Finally, it is worth noting that for these proactive marketing efforts to be successful, community enterprises need to ensure that they are customer centric. This means that they should not only aim to sell their products or services but also aim to provide value and a positive experience for their customers (Morgan, 2017).

Public Relations and Community Enterprises

Public relations (PR) play a critical role in the growth and development of community enterprises. As a strategic communication process, PR builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their public, and this holds true for community enterprises as well (Grunig, 2013). Community enterprises can leverage public relations to promote their business goals, values, and initiatives to various stakeholders including customers, suppliers, local communities, and even investors (Smith, 2017). For instance, PR initiatives such as issuing press releases, holding public forums, participating in community events, and engaging with local media can create a positive image and reputation for the enterprise, thus increasing its credibility and standing within the community (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000). PR can also help community enterprises manage their reputation, especially during crises. Effective crisis communication can mitigate the potential negative impact on the organization's image, and even transform a crisis into an opportunity for showcasing the organization's values and commitment to its stakeholders (Coombs, 2014). In addition, PR plays an important role in the marketing mix of community enterprises. By using PR alongside other marketing techniques such as advertising, direct marketing, and digital marketing, community enterprises can reach a wider audience, build brand awareness, and drive customer engagement (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015). Lastly, PR can also help community enterprises influence public policy and legislation in ways that favor their mission and goals. By advocating for their causes, these organizations can affect change at the community, regional, or even national level (Molleda & Moreno, 2008).

Methods

This research is qualitative. In-depth interviews with sixteen key informants were conducted. The key informants included representatives from local administrative organizations, representatives of community enterprise entrepreneurs, local stakeholders, and academics. Approaching key informants effectively involves respectful and clear communication, as well as an understanding of their position and expertise (Marshall, 1996). The initial contact with a key informant was made in person. The researchers clearly informed them of the purpose of the research, and why they believe the key informants would be a valuable contributor. The researchers ensured that the key informants understand what participating in the research will involve, any potential risks, and their rights as a participant. When conducting the actual discussion or interview, the researchers used open-ended questions to facilitate conversation and allow the key informants to share their knowledge. (Patton, 2015). Finally, conduct qualitative data analysis using document analysis, content analysis, and organizing data for interpretation, explain and draw conclusions in an inductive way.

Results

General Condition of Community Enterprises' Income, Marketing, and Public Relations

Community enterprises in Ranong province are mainly related to agriculture and handicrafts, which can be divided into 3 main categories as follows:

1. Food products

2. Jewelry products

3. Household products

From observation, it was found that community enterprises in Ranong province still have little investment in marketing promotion and public relations. Some products that want to generate sales are advertised using pamphlets and rely on community radio. Some community enterprises have some publicity using the website, but the media lacks development and modernization and does not motivate customers as it should. As a result of this problem, products from many community enterprises Can't make as good an income as they should.

The results of the research showed the current condition of income, marketing, and public relations of community enterprises in Ranong Province are as follows:

1. Advertising: Advertising leaflets of some products using plain paper have been placed at the counter, which has not yet attracted customers, some advertising on community radio or social media, but lack of continuity and an inability to reach customers, possibly due to high costs and lack of cooperation networks among community enterprises to create marketing activities together.

2. Public relations: Current community enterprises in Ranong province lack publicity due to a lack of budget.

3. Promotion: Many community enterprises in Ranong province lack promotion, which is the motivation for selling goods; Some offer price reductions, noting that sellers will reduce prices as they see fit, but there is no firm system.

4. Personal sales: Sales staff are not sent directly to sell products to consumers, but they do accept orders online or by phone and send them by mail. Some community enterprises have personnel sales who are knowledgeable about certain types of products and can explain them to customers reasonably.

5. The problem of marketing and public relations of community enterprises: Most of them do not have sufficient budgets and lack technological knowledge. It is not possible to advertise and promote much online. This makes advertising and public relations narrow.

Using SWOT analysis, the research team was able to summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and obstacles of marketing management of community enterprises in Ranong province as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 SWOT analysis results

Strengths	Weaknesses
Marketing promotion by word of mouth works well because the quality of the product is reliable.	1. Lack of budget, resulting in low and intermittent marketing promotion. 2. Lack of technological knowledge so they cannot advertise via social media. 3. Lack of integration in organizing joint activities of community enterprises in the province. 4. Promotion of reduction, exchange, and giveaway have no fixed system 5. Members participate in the operation and marketing promotion to a lesser extent.
Opportunities	Threats
1. Products are diverse and can respond to customer needs. 2. The government emphasizes community enterprises and organic agriculture.	1. The long-term COVID-19 pandemic causes the market to stagnate. 2. Economic downturn impacts sales.

Proactive Marketing and Public Relations Model of Community Enterprises

Proactive marketing and public relations (PR) can significantly benefit community enterprises by fostering visibility, building relationships, and driving community engagement. Here's a model integrating both concepts:

1. Marketing Promotion: Community enterprises should improve marketing promotion by making interesting advertising media, such as creating pamphlets that are beautiful, and interesting and can attract customers to read and decide to buy a product, or to put up advertising banners in the area. Promotions such as the sale of products at festivals, and purchases can be made in installments, improve public relations, word-of-mouth promotions marketing to reach customers and product reviews through various online media, other products and

giveaways, prizes, or sweepstakes. There should be continuous communication with target customers, both offline and online. The community enterprise should create awareness through advertising through social media sharing, Facebook, and others, and bring popular products and known brands to attract customers' attention.

2. Distribution: Community enterprises should improve online distribution by emphasizing sales through mobile applications. The ordering process should be easy to understand and convenient through online media, such as Facebook, Lazada, Instagram, Line, Website, or YouTube. The products should be presented in categories that are easy to search for. The enterprises should create a sense of comfort to satisfy customers which is suitable for the lifestyle of each target group. They should consider choosing online media to match their target customers, including Facebook Page, Facebook Application, Twitter, Viral Videos, Mobile Applications, Location Base Service, and QR Codes, as online consumer behavior is evolving and adapting.

3. Logistics: Community enterprises should improve logistics by developing rapid delivery of goods to customers, establishing a delivery progress tracking information system, and adding a network that can be delivered across the country allowing delivery to customers anywhere, and there is no shipping charge for placing orders. They should continuously reduce costs to create competitiveness and increase communication speed before, during, and after shipment. Open delivery channels for customers to choose from express delivery, express delivery, normal delivery according to customer needs, and increase service efficiency.

4. Pricing: Community enterprises should improve pricing by setting psychological prices ending in 9 (e.g., 9, 99, or 999 baht) to give buyers a sense that they are affordable. The enterprises should determine the price that is cheaper than selling in the store, the price is suitable for the quality, the price that consumers can buy, and the price is cheaper than competitors. In addition, they should set attractive prices such as easy-to-calculate prices, the price with a smaller number of syllables, separate shipping costs from primary prices, offer recurring payments, show product prices in the lower-left corner of the price tag, psychologically incorporate small letters and price them reasonably.

5. Products: Community enterprises should consider improving the selection of products for sale through online media by selecting good quality products for sale. Warranty and return are available for customers. The enterprises should distribute state-of-the-art products, and the product should be certified by government agencies. Products must have a design that looks beautiful and eye-catching. There are pictures of the product including videos that explain the

properties of the product in detail, and product reviews by well-known people on the internet.

6. Services: Community enterprises should consider improving their services by taking service recipients before anything else, answering a question, solving problems, educating customers with a tone that makes customers feel comfortable, fast, and willing, and allowing customers to order and pay with a credit card. Debit Card, ATM. There should be returns or exchanges that can be paid at convenience stores or checkouts. There is a place where customers can go to see the real thing, cancel the purchase, and collect cash on delivery.

7. Service Process: Community enterprises should consider improving the process of building customer relationships. A cancellation process, easy-to-understand & convenient ordering process, fast ordering process, and correction process should be set up in place. When problems arise, enterprises' staff can be contacted quickly. The purchase process must be simplified. Sending information to potential customers, tailoring it to each target customer group, saving time, and reducing costs for each activity should be considered.

In addition, marketing patterns found in the post-COVID-19 show that traditional marketing styles and strategies may not work well for today's consumers, whose behaviors have changed dramatically. Overall, you can see that there are three marketing styles: offline, online, and events. Here, we can see the relationship of all three marketing forms through current communication channels, which expand online marketing to various channels that are of interest to consumers. This includes organizing public relations activities to create interest for consumers and another part of organizing public relations activities to promote sponsors who are advertising buyers. In addition, marketing tools have been developed that are currently being used to match the technologies and information that appear in society. Influencers are used in promotions as well as new forms of public relations that have emerged with an emphasis on expanding customer groups by focusing on online marketing channels to reach customers more easily.

Guidelines for Managing Proactive Marketing and Public Relations of Community Enterprises

Guidelines for managing proactive marketing and public relations of community enterprises to enhance Ranong's income generation can be summarized as follows.

1. Community enterprises in Ranong Province should select the outstanding products of enterprises and develop such products to meet quality standards. This should be done in each product group, such as food, jewelry, or household products, including the design and development of packaging, logos, and products of the group to be beautiful, stand out, and be easily recognizable. In addition, quality

standards should be maintained. Raw materials for use in the production of products should be unique, i.e., the use of raw materials in the area.

2. Planning for budget allocation by conducting marketing promotion by creating interesting advertising media, such as creating beautiful pamphlets that are interesting and can attract customers to read and decide to buy products or placing billboards in the area inviting people to visit the area of community enterprises.

3. Establishing clear marketing promotion guidelines. The budget should be allocated for proactive marketing promotion and public relations through advertising. The enterprises should set up a promotional system with discounts or giveaways and create word-of-mouth promotional guidelines to reach as many target customers as possible. They should focus on developing advertising and public relations through online media. This is to create familiarity with customers to know more about the products of the group. Members of the group should be educated on online publicity such as Facebook, IG, Shopee, or Lazada, including the use of technology in public relations or even taking photos for online media. This designation must be based on the participation of members and applied to the same standard of customers to stimulate and generate sales as well as may lead to building customer confidence.

4. Data collection and evaluation of proactive marketing management and public relations of community enterprises should be administered. The database is modern and streamlined to run so that community enterprises can retrieve news from the same source. This will result in precision and speed. Additionally, the data can be reviewed and evaluated. For example, the volume of sales of community enterprises through various marketing channels has been made, and analyzing problems and improving the development of proactive marketing and public relations are more effective.

Discussion

The results showed that community enterprises in Ranong province still have little investment in marketing promotion and public relations. Some products that want to generate sales are advertised using pamphlets and rely on community radio. Some community enterprises have some publicity using the website, but the media lacks development and modernization and does not attract customers as much as it should. As a result of this problem, products from many community enterprises are unable to generate as good income as they should. This is in line with the findings of Viriyavittaya (2016), who found that the use of packaging and labels that do not have a strong point cannot attract consumers. In the field of public relations media, no press releases, product catalogs, and no

video materials to introduce the company and its products are also crucial problems for local enterprises.

The findings indicated that the community enterprises in Ranong use proactive marketing and public relations strategies to gain market share and customer segments. This will increase the income of community enterprise members in Ranong province. Proactive marketing and public relations models of community enterprises, marketing, and traditional strategies may not work for today's consumer groups that have changed dramatically. Overall, there are 3 marketing styles including offline, online, and events. Hence, we can see the relationship between all 3 forms of marketing through current communication channels that are marketed both to the product. The expansion of online marketing into various channels that are of interest to consumers through social media has a direct impact on consumers' daily lives. Public relations activities are organized to create interest for consumers. The other part is to promote sponsors who are advertising buyers. In addition, marketing tools have been developed that are currently being used to match the technologies and information that appear in society. Influencers are used in promotions as well as new forms of public relations that have emerged with an emphasis on expanding customer groups by focusing on online marketing channels to reach customers more easily. This finding is consistent with the study by Mungkornsila and Sunthornsamai (2022) who found that social commerce could support community enterprises to provide consumer behavior education. The use of information, information, and knowledge from the e-commerce system could enhance effective relationship management with buyers who are customers of community enterprises.

Finally, the findings also revealed having a modern and streamlined database to run so that community enterprises can retrieve news from the same source. This results in precision and speed and the data can be reviewed and evaluated. For example, the volume of sales of goods of community enterprises through various marketing channels that have been made. These will improve and develop proactive marketing and public relations to be more effective. According to Silberschatz, Korth & Sudarshan (2020), modern databases have revolutionized the way community enterprises manage their information and conduct their operations. They offer features like scalability, security, flexibility, and the ability to handle large amounts of data, all of which can help community enterprises streamline their processes and improve decision-making. Here are a few ways in which modern databases can benefit community enterprises: Customer Relationship Management (CRM): Databases are at the heart of modern CRM systems, which help enterprises manage customer data, track interactions, and analyze customer behavior. This information can be used to enhance customer service, predict customer needs, and improve marketing efforts (Peppard, 2014). Inventory and Supply Chain Management: Databases help enterprises track inventory,

manage supply chains, and forecast demand, ensuring that products or services can be delivered in a timely and efficient manner (Chopra & Meindl, 2016). Financial Management: Enterprises can use databases to manage financial data, track transactions, and generate financial reports, aiding in budget planning, financial analysis, and compliance with financial regulations (Marshall, McManus, & Viele, 2014). Data Analytics and Decision Making: Modern databases can handle large amounts of data and integrate with analytical tools, allowing enterprises to gain insights, identify trends, and make informed decisions (Provost & Fawcett, 2013).

Security and Privacy: Databases offer features like encryption and access control, helping enterprises protect sensitive data and comply with privacy regulations (Kaufman, Halper, & Miller, 2016).

Future Research Directions

Impact of Increased Marketing Investment: Future research could investigate the impact of increased investment in marketing and public relations on the income and sustainability of community enterprises. This research could involve conducting longitudinal studies to track the financial performance of community enterprises before and after implementing enhanced marketing strategies.

1. Evaluation of Modern Marketing Techniques: Researchers can explore the effectiveness and impact of modern marketing techniques, such as digital marketing and social media, in the context of community enterprises. This could involve conducting surveys or interviews with community enterprise members and customers to assess the outcomes and benefits of adopting these strategies.

2. Customer Behavior and Incentives: Future research could delve deeper into understanding customer behavior and preferences within the context of community enterprises. It could examine the effectiveness of different customer incentives and rewards programs and analyze their impact on customer loyalty, satisfaction, and purchasing behavior.

3. Comparative Analysis: Researchers could conduct comparative studies to compare the marketing and public relations practices of community enterprises in different regions or industries. This would enable the identification of best practices, success factors, and challenges that may vary across contexts.

4. Role of Technology: Investigate the role of technology in enhancing marketing and public relations efforts of community enterprises. This could involve exploring the adoption and impact of emerging technologies such as mobile applications, online marketplaces, or customer relationship management (CRM) systems on income generation and customer engagement.

5. Policy and Support Mechanisms: Future research can explore the role of government policies, support mechanisms, and financial incentives in promoting marketing development and public relations for community enterprises. It could analyze the effectiveness of existing policies and identify areas for improvement to facilitate the growth and sustainability of community-based businesses.

By addressing these recommendations and exploring the suggested future research directions, community enterprises can enhance their marketing and public relations practices, strengthen their income generation potential, and contribute to the overall development of the community enterprise sector.

Conclusion

The study found that there was little investment in marketing, promotion, and public relations. Advertising, pamphlets, and community radio were employed to promote community products but lacked the development and modernization of customer incentives. Hence, Community enterprises should prioritize allocating resources for marketing, promotion, and public relations activities. This may involve developing a dedicated budget for marketing efforts, hiring skilled professionals, or seeking partnerships with marketing agencies or consultants who specialize in community-based enterprises. Community enterprises should explore modern marketing strategies and techniques to enhance their outreach and engagement. This could include leveraging digital marketing platforms, social media, and online advertising to reach a wider audience and attract customers. Investing in professional branding, website development, and e-commerce capabilities can also modernize the customer experience and enhance customer incentives. They should focus on developing and implementing customer incentives and rewards programs to encourage repeat purchases and foster loyalty. These can include offering discounts, loyalty points, exclusive promotions, or personalized customer experiences. Conducting market research to better understand customer preferences and designing tailored incentives accordingly can be beneficial. Capacity building and training are also crucial. Community enterprises should invest in capacity building and training programs for their members to develop marketing and public relations skills. Workshops, seminars, or mentorship programs can provide valuable knowledge and expertise, empowering community members to effectively promote their products and engage with customers.

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