

## IMPLEMENTATION OF DESIGN THINKING IN THE BRAND ACTIVATION PROCESS OF BAGUS KUMBAH MSME (SHOE CARE SERVICE BUSINESS)

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**Abstract:** Shoe fashion trends are increasingly influenced by various needs, such as functional, collection, or resale. This trend opens up business opportunities for shoe care services, as not all members of the general public can carry out appropriate shoe care, because it requires special knowledge and expertise. However, there are obstacles in introducing shoe care service brands to the public, as experienced by the Bagus Kumbah brand, one of the shoe washing service brands that is relatively new. In the initial stage, business improvement efforts were mapped on the business model canvas after identifying various problems, such as the need to increase public awareness of the brand. Efforts to reach and determine consumer targets to expand the scope of consumer targets and establish treatment processes for interaction with consumers directly and indirectly through social media to provide an impression of experience during the transaction process through various design solutions produced. The problem-solving process uses design thinking, which includes the process of data acquisition, data processing, generating various problem solutions, and implementing the initial solution. As a result, a series of brand activation processes has an impact on increasing the number of engagements on Bagus Kumbah's social media, increasing the number of new consumers, and further increasing the loyalty of existing consumers.

**Keywords:** brand activation, design thinking, MSMEs branding, promotion

**Abstrak:** Fenomena tren fashion sepatu semakin berkembang dipengaruhi oleh ragam aspek kebutuhan, seperti fungsional, koleksi, atau dijual kembali. Tren tersebut membuka peluang bisnis jasa perawatan sepatu yang tidak semua masyarakat umum dapat melakukan perawatan sepatu yang sesuai, karena diperlukan pengetahuan dan keahlian khusus. Namun terdapat kendala pada proses pengenalan brand jasa perawatan sepatu

*kepada masyarakat, hal tersebut dialami oleh brand Bagus Kumbah, salah satu brand jasa perawatan cuci sepatu yang cenderung baru terbentuk. Pada tahap awal dilakukan upaya business improvement yang dipetakan pada business model canvas, setelah mengetahui ragam permasalahan, seperti kebutuhan meningkatkan aspek kesadaran masyarakat terhadap brand, lalu upaya menjangkau, menentukan target konsumen hingga memperluas cakupan target konsumen, serta menjalin treatment proses interaksi dengan konsumen secara langsung dan secara tidak langsung melalui media sosial, hingga memberi kesan pengalaman selama proses transaksi, melalui ragam solusi desain yang dihasilkan. Proses penyelesaian permasalahan menggunakan design thinking yang memuat proses perolehan data, pengolahan data, menghasilkan ragam solusi permasalahan, sampai proses implementasi solusi tahap awal. Hasilnya, serangkaian proses brand activation berdampak pada peningkatan jumlah engagement pada media sosial Bagus Kumbah, mengalami peningkatan jumlah konsumen baru, dan semakin meningkatkan loyalitas konsumen lama.*

**Kata kunci:** *brand activation, branding UMKM, design thinking, promosi*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the shoe care industry are in demand by various segments of society (Yunianto, 2023). This growth began in late 2010 and continued to increase in early 2020, driven by a variety of influencing factors, including the tendency to adapt rapidly to fashion trends, the potential for business opportunities as a new service offering, not only targeting students, college students, and office workers, but also affordability in terms of capital, the availability of a variety of products to simplify the shoe care process, and the potential for exploration to adapt the brand image of shoe care services (Williams, 2023). Bagus Kumbah is a Bandung-based brand that has responded to this phenomenon. Bagus Yudo Prakoso initiated it after attending a shoe care workshop at Jakarta Sneakers Day 2019. He then sought further information and business partners, eventually establishing the Bagus Kumbah brand in May 2021. The initial step taken by Bagus Kumbah to find out its potential was through the results of a questionnaire distributed randomly through each colleague until the questionnaire distribution process continued, it was produced that the

tendency of shoe owners to have less free time for shoe care, and do not have a specific understanding of the shoe care process, related to the method, equipment, cleaners used, so they want quality care in a relatively short time. So the initial emphasis of the shoe care process by Bagus Kumbah was determined on each of these aspects.

After knowing the data on potential consumer needs through the initial questionnaire distribution, the next step is to adjust the business improvement process, which is an activity that provides added value to change input into sound output, in this case, in the form of services to customers by combining human resources, methods, and tools used. It is expected to minimise or even eliminate potential errors that will occur, increase competitive advantages, improve business processes, meet consumer needs, and achieve practical business goals (Pramudita & Safitri, 2019).

Business process improvement can be done through five phases: 1. Organise for Improvement, 2. Understanding the Process, 3. Streamlining, 4. Measurement and Control, 5. Continuous Improvement (Adesola & Baines, 2005). The implementation of business process improvement is an effort to produce and increase company profits to be better, then improve service to consumers, the opportunity to reduce production costs in several business activities, then can reduce the time needed to produce a specific output, and finally to reduce the occurrence of errors and rework which ultimately slows down the production process time of a company (Harrington et al., 1997).

The Business Model Canvas is used to improve business processes. This strategy simplifies complex business concepts, presented on a single sheet of paper containing a business plan with nine well-integrated key elements. It encompasses the company's internal and external strategic analysis to more accurately visualise the current or future business landscape

(Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). Alternatively, it is a strategic tool to describe a business model and illustrate the rationale for how an organisation creates, delivers, and captures value (Warnaningtyas, 2020).

The Business Model Canvas contains nine variables for strategic and interconnected analysis: Customer Segment, Value Proposition, Channel, Customer Relationship, Revenue Stream, Key Resources, Key Activities, Key Partnerships, and Cost Structure (Hutamy et al., 2021). Therefore, using the Business Model Canvas strategy will be contextualised to improve the Bagus Kumbah brand business.

After understanding the needs of the Bagus Kumbah brand, namely to strengthen the brand and increase public awareness, and proposing business improvements using the Business Model Canvas strategy, brand activation will be conducted for the Bagus Kumbah brand. Brand activation is a brand promotion process that builds an interactive approach between the brand and consumers through various activities such as sports matches, entertainment, cultural events, social events, or other attention-grabbing activities (Yusuf, 2016). The construction of brand activation can be viewed from two perspectives: internal and external. Internally, the company can utilize key strategies and creativity (Wallace, 2012). Externally, communication with consumers utilizes various forms of construction (Sari & Tambunan, 2020), including the following: 1. Direct Marketing, 2. Social Media, 3. Promotions, 4. Event Marketing, 5. Sponsorship.

Several studies examining the impact of effectiveness and ease of use for MSMEs on their consumers in the brand activation process, such as research by (Thang & Iswanto, 2023), found that a series of brand activations and promotional media designed for Startr were reasonably practical and easily understood by the target audience. Research by (K. A. I. Sari, 2019) further stated that a successful brand activation process involves creating

brand awareness and building a relationship between the brand and consumers. Finally, research by (Choiriyah, 2022) found that one way to increase brand awareness is through an intensive promotional approach on social media.

Therefore, Bagus Kumbah will conduct brand activation to increase brand awareness through promotional channels, primarily social media, and supported by print media to foster a relationship between the brand and consumers.

## **METHODS**

The process of problem-solving using design thinking stages is a tool for transforming how organizations develop products, services, and strategies that align with technology and business or economics. It emphasizes collaborative, creative activities to solve human-centered problems in every process. It is often recommended to adopt a 'beginner's mind' to remain open to anything and to embrace ambiguity as an opportunity (Brown, 2008).

The design thinking process for problem-solving is based on the design thinking process, a tool for transforming how organizations develop products, services, and strategies, aligning with technology, business, or economics. It emphasizes collaborative, creative activities to solve human-centered problems at every stage. It is often recommended to adopt a "beginner's mind" to remain open to everything and to embrace ambiguity as an opportunity.

Referring to the Stanford Design School design thinking process model, there are generally five stages in the design thinking process: empathize, which involves understanding the problem at hand; define, which identifying and synthesizing the various problems to determine which ones

can and will be solved; ideate, which entails generating initial ideas to address various solution opportunities for the identified problem; prototype, which conducting various trials, evaluating, and gradually adjusting to ensure the identified idea is truly a solution; and test which refers to implementing the solution and monitoring to determine the implementation results as material for periodic evaluation.

Data was obtained through observation at Bagus Kumbah brand locations, interviews with Bagus Kumbah and several consumers, and more widely distributed questionnaires to consumers and potential consumers. The data collected was then processed through the Empathize stage. The Define stage curated the data to determine which problems could be solved with a design approach. The Ideate stage generated various alternative solutions to determine the most effective solutions in addressing Bagus Kumbah's brand activation challenges. The Prototype stage generated design solutions in the form of design artifacts supported by promotional strategies through print and digital media. Finally, the design solutions were implemented with periodic evaluations (Soewardikoen, 2019). Each piece of data was contextualized using a Business Model Canvas, a comparison matrix, and problem brainstorming to identify appropriate strategies and solutions for Bagus Kumbah's brand activation process.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Empathize**

The data acquisition process was carried out through offline observation, resulting in the finding that the Bagus Kumbah business process was carried out with a pinpoint concept, namely a profit-sharing collaboration with partner coffee shops as a place to place customer shoes that will be

picked up by Bagus Kumbah (K Kopi and BC Kopi Seduh), through this process it was also discovered that there was no identity and brand information for Bagus Kumbah at each pinpoint coffee shop (Figure 1). Hence, it wasn't easy to know that the coffee shop had a shoe care service.



Figure 1. Bagus Kumbah's pinpoint and instagram content  
Source: Results of Personal Documentation Observation Data Acquisition (2023)

Data acquisition through interviews was also carried out on several Bagus Kumbah parties and customers, resulting in data that the tendency of customers only included partners of Bagus Kumbah and the coffee shop; there were very few new customers. Random sampling interviews were conducted in the community around the coffee shop, pinpointing that many tended not to know about Bagus Kumbah's existence at the coffee shop; this was supported by online observations on Bagus Kumbah's Instagram, it was found that the intensity of the content was not consistent in terms of format and period for uploading content. The acquisition of interaction with followers was minimal, measured by the number of likes and comments. On average, there was no significant increase in content.

## 2. Define

After identifying the initial data, the next step is to carry out a canvas business model mapping process to identify the processes and needs of Bagus Kumbah's business so that Bagus Kumbah's position can be determined against various other competitors (Table 1). In this case, it is known that Bagus Kumbah is in a similar segmentation to Ikigai and Cucipatu Bandung in the regular shoe-washing category at affordable costs.

Table 1 Bagus Kumbah's business model canvas

<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Key Resources</b>
Coffee Shops	Restock stock of materials	Quality shoe care materials and tools
Supplier of shoe care materials and tools	Customer shoe care and pick-up service Marketing through various social media	Service coverage in Bandung city
<b>Value Propositions</b>	<b>Customer Relationships</b>	<b>Channels</b>
Shoe care rates can compete with competitors	There are various discounts available for certain events	Social media Insgatram @baguskumbah
Various shoe care available	There are various discounts available in the form of bundled transactions	contact directly via WhatsApp
Customer shoe pick-up and delivery service available	Shoe care educational content on the Instagram platform	Pin point coffee shops
There are various shoe care durations available according to customer needs.	Free shoe care pick-up and delivery service within a 3 KM radius of pin point coffee shops  Shoe care consultation services are available to customers	
<b>Customer Segments</b>	<b>Cost Structure</b>	<b>Revenue Streams</b>
School and university students aged 20-35 years	Restocking costs for raw materials and shoe care equipment	Initial independent business capital
Coffee shops pin point customers	Transportation costs for shoe care pick-up and drop-off services	Payment for shoe care services
Bandung city residents	Shoe care equipment maintenance costs	

Source: Results of Observation and Interview Data Processing (2023)

The perceptual map of Bagus Kumbah (Figure 2) shows how different brands are positioned based on price (from murah to mahal) and market level (from regular to premium).

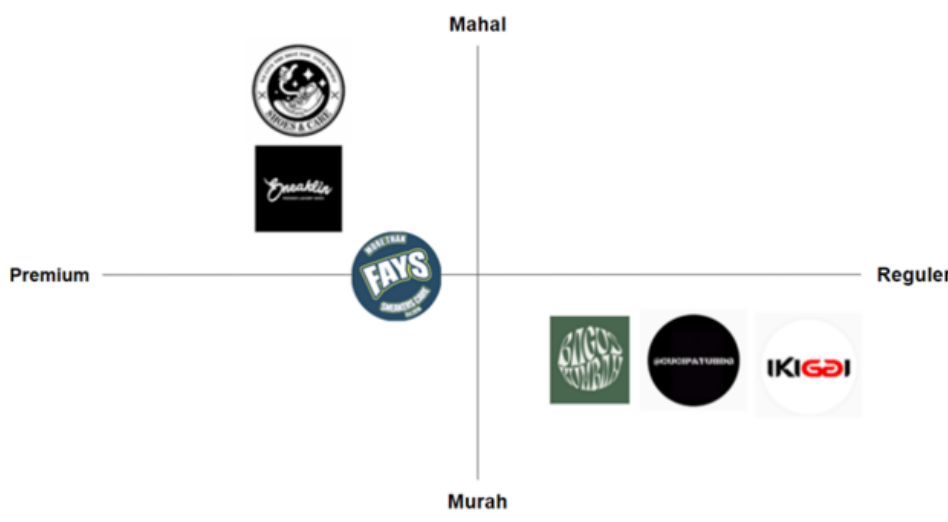


Figure 2. Bagus Kumbah’s perceptual mapping  
 Source: Results of Observation and Interview Data Processing (2023)

The canvas business model data with Bagus Kumbah perceptual mapping is mapped as problem brainstorming (Figure 3).

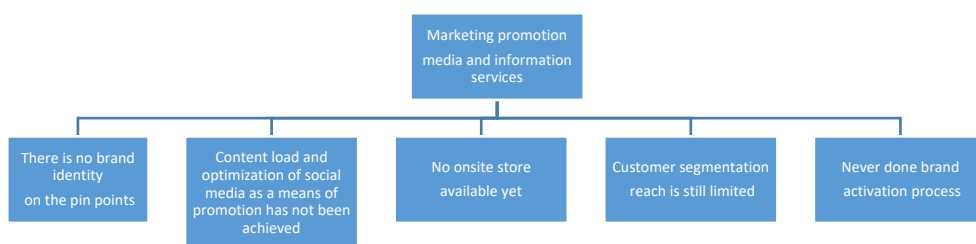


Figure 3. Bagus Kumbah’s problem brainstorming mapping  
 Source: Personal Documentation (2023)

It can be concluded that Bagus Kumbah experienced several problems. The initial trigger was that the brand was relatively new, resulting in minimal awareness among the Bandung community. Although collaborating with

coffee shop partners as pinpoints and promoting on social media had been implemented, these efforts had not significantly increased public awareness of the Bagus Kumbah brand.

Therefore, it was proposed that in the initial stage, public awareness of the brand, particularly among school students, university students, and office workers, be raised by providing information about the Bagus Kumbah brand to coffee shop partners at pinpoints and optimizing content on Bagus Kumbah's social media platforms.

A brand activation scheme is planned that begins with efforts to increase public awareness to get to know the Bagus Kumbah brand in the form of physical information boards in the form of banners and flyers attached to each coffee shop pin point, followed by efforts to involve interaction and direct transaction experiences for consumers, in the form of tiered transaction cards to get exclusive merchandise at certain transaction stages, and at the same time increase engagement on Bagus Kumbah's social media accounts with interesting and varied content, as well as special Bagus Kumbah instagram filters for use by consumers, so that it is hoped that the brand activation process can be carried out, then have an impact on increasing brand recognition, expanding consumer reach, and increasing transaction processes.

### 3. Ideate

A process of determining several alternative solutions to the various problems experienced by the Bagus Kumbah brand was carried out. In this case, the focus was on promotional variables from the brand activation process, not only because they tend to be the most effective, as proven by established competitors. Furthermore, the evaluation of Bagus Kumbah's business strategy, as a relatively new brand compared to competitors in its

class, has not been practical. Consequently, the implementation of promotional strategies has not significantly improved. Therefore, the adoption of brand activation promotional variables was adjusted to optimize the potential of coffee shop pinpoints as a distinctive feature of Bagus Kumbah.

A solution to the tendency of Bagus Kumbah's still low brand awareness among the public was offered by providing information about the Bagus Kumbah brand at each coffee shop pinpointed in the form of banners and flyers, as an initial introduction to potential Bagus Kumbah customers. At the same time, Bagus Kumbah offered a menu package bundle with the coffee shop, including shoe cleaning service packages for specific menus. In the next stage, consumers are expected to make regular transactions using a special transaction card with exclusive merchandise offers upon regular transactions. At the same time, the use of Bagus Kumbah Instagram filters is offered to consumers. The use of Bagus Kumbah Instagram filters by Bagus Kumbah consumers, in addition to being an indirect promotional approach through consumer social media, also involves direct interaction between consumers and Bagus Kumbah and provides a specific experience using the Super Kumbah card and Bagus Kumbah Instagram filters.

In the ongoing stage, it is recommended to be consistently active on Instagram by regularly uploading promotional content at certain times, educational content about shoe care, and a variety of content that indirectly interacts with Bagus Kumbah consumers through Instagram. Through intense brand activation, Bagus Kumbah's brand awareness can increase, and periodic adjustments are evaluated (Table 2).

Table 2 Comparison of brand activation process with competitors

Brand	Direct Marketing	Social Media	Promotions	Event Marketing	Sponsorship
<b>Bagus Kumbah</b>	X	✓	✓	X	X
Number of likes	X	51	23	X	X
<b>Faya Shoes Care</b>	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of likes	X	12.651	13.806	5.571	170
<b>Sneaklin</b>	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Number of likes	X	561	85	249	X
<b>Shoes and Care</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of likes	331	1.510	1.883	1.929	69
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>14.773</b>	<b>15.797</b>	<b>7.746</b>	<b>239</b>

Source: Results of Observation and Interview Data Processing (2023)

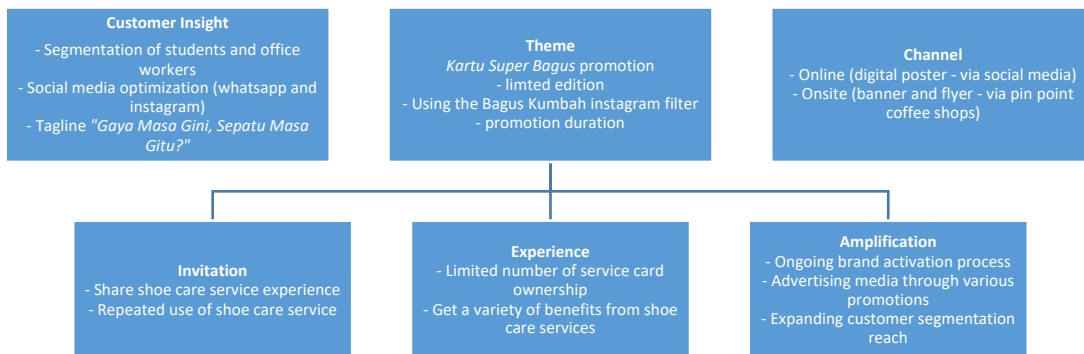


Figure 4. Bagus Kumbah’s brand activation scheme and determination  
Source: Results of Observation and Interview Data Processing (2023)

#### 4. Prototype

As shown in Figure 4, After determining the problem, initiating the solution idea and conducting regular discussions with Bagus Kumbah regarding the development and realisation of the solution, four prototype forms of brand activation development were produced, including the Super

Bagus Card as a means of providing a transaction experience for the shoe care process with various benefits including an exclusive Bagus Kumbah shoe box, then digital and physical posters as a sign of Bagus Kumbah information offline at pinpoint and as a poster for information and shoe care promos boldly, and Bagus Kumbah's Instagram filter as an expressive effort from the interaction between Bagus Kumbah and consumers as well as an indirect promotion process by consumers digitally through Instagram social media. The results of Bagus Kumbah's prototype brand activation are shown in Figure 5.





Figure 5. Bagus Kumbah's brand activation prototypes  
Source: Results of Ideate Data Processing (2023)

## 5. Test

In June 2023, the offline and online brand activation process was implemented initially by implementing information banners and identities at each Bagus Kumbah pinpoint supported by printed flyers, then distributing digital posters promoting the brand activation process on Bagus Kumbah's Instagram (Figure 6). Periodically, there was an increase in the engagement rate on Bagus Kumbah's Instagram by 74.4%, which could reach other than Bagus Kumbah followers (242 non-follower accounts and an increase of 994 impressions). Furthermore, it continuously impacted increasing shoe care transactions at each Bagus Kumbah pinpointed by new consumers; the Super Bagus Card was periodically applied to them.

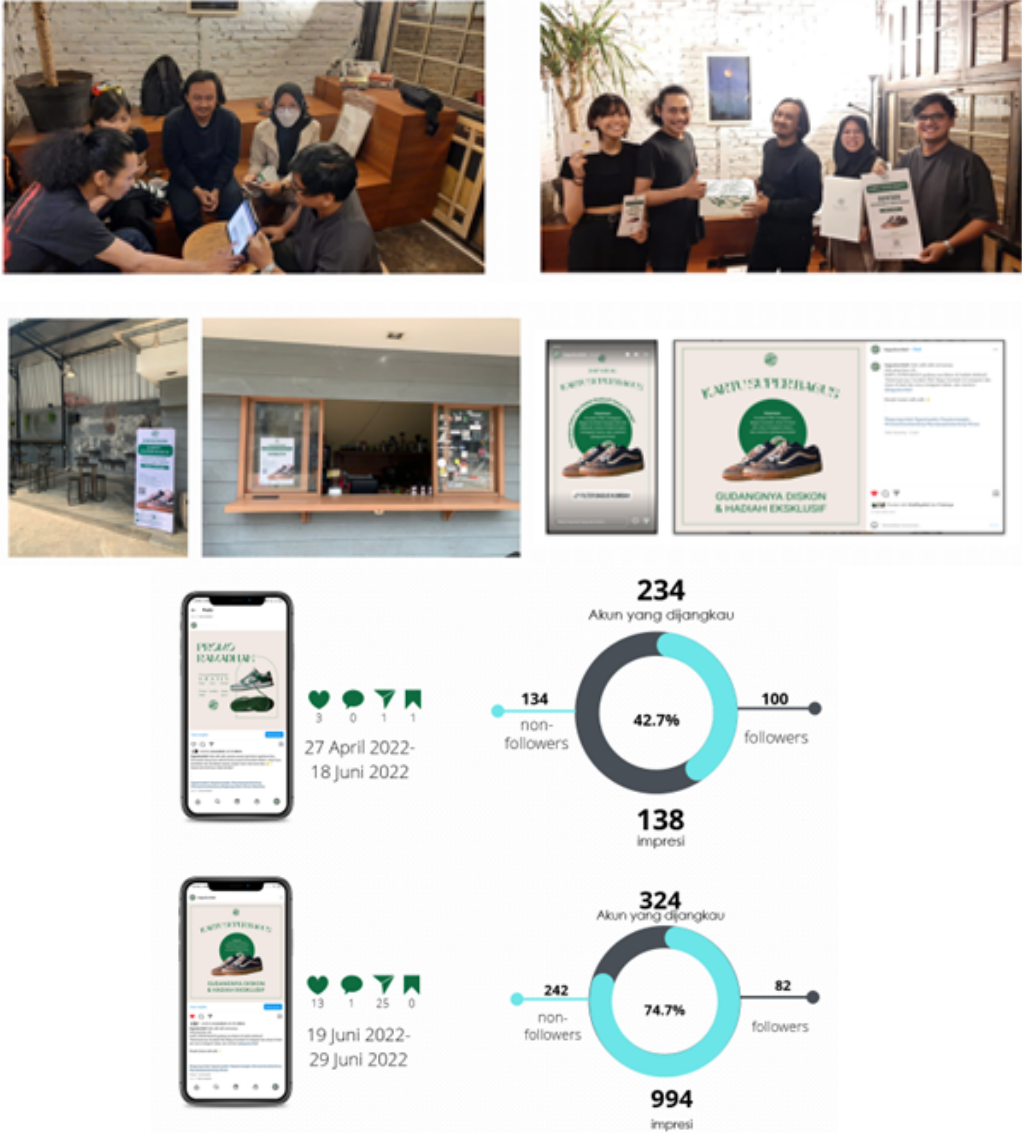


Figure 6. Bagus Kumbah's brand activation implementation  
 Source: The Process of Handing Over and Implementing the Bagus Kumbah Brand Activation Process (2023)

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of the data acquisition and analysis process through the business model canvas show that the brand focuses on shoe care services with affordable prices, regular service quality, and limited operational costs, initiated with the pinpoint concept at partner coffee shops.

The urgency of the problems obtained is the suboptimality of the brand identity so that it is not yet known, conventional packaging design, and social media content that does not yet have a distinctive character. So that the solution to the problem through brand activation is produced, including in the form of online promotion through transaction activation using the Super Bagus Card using the Bagus Kumbah Instagram filter and shared on each customer's social media, then physical and digital posters to support offline promotions, and exclusive shoe boxes as merchandise for periodic impulsive customer transaction efforts. After the periodic implementation process, the brand activation increased offline and online promotions by acquiring many new customers and strengthening the loyalty of old customers.

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