

## Brand Identity Development Strategy for RM. Laksana

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### Abstract

This research examines the development of brand identity strategies for RM. Laksana, a traditional Sundanese restaurant in Kuningan, West Java, that has been operating for more than 50 years. In the context of the food and beverage (F&B) industry that continues to grow in Indonesia, especially in West Java with a growth of 15.53% (y-o-y) in the third quarter of 2025, RM. Laksana faces challenges in building a strong brand identity in the midst of increasingly fierce competition. This research uses a qualitative approach with in-depth interview methods with restaurant owners and managers, direct observation, and document analysis. The findings of the study show that RM. Laksana has strategic assets in the form of a 50-year heritage of hereditary recipes, a commitment to quality raw materials (live fish and homemade spices), and strong family values. However, the restaurant faces the problem of using generic names that causes consumer confusion. The recommended strategy includes developing an authentic brand identity by positioning RM. Laksana as the "Guardian of Heritage", the implementation of a new visual identity that still respects historical heritage, and consistent communication about the restaurant's values and excellence. This research makes a practical contribution to culinary MSMEs in developing a strong and sustainable brand identity.

**Keywords:** brand identity; branding; traditional restaurants; MSMEs; Sundanese cuisine; Marketing Strategy

### INTRODUCTION

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the food and beverage (F&B) industry has shown remarkable resilience as a key pillar of the national economy (Beducci et al., 2024; Estelita Putri G & Aprianingsih, 2025; Mee et al., 2014; Strauss et al., 2025). This is evidenced by a growth of 5.82% in the third quarter of 2024. This increase exceeded the national gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 4.95%. Furthermore, the F&B industry has a significant impact on the GDP of the non-oil and gas processing industry, increasing by 40.17% in the same period (Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024).

Meanwhile, in the regional context, West Java province in particular showed solid economic performance, as evidenced by growth of 5.20% (y-o-y) in the third quarter of 2025. The F&B sector showed an impressive growth surge of 15.53% (y-o-y). This growth makes the F&B industry one of the second highest growth business fields after Corporate Services. Furthermore, the F&B sector has reached Rp24.16 trillion in market realization (GDP on the basis of Prevailing Prices) in just one quarter. This indicates that the F&B industry in West Java is currently in an expansion phase, where there is an aggressive movement as depicted in the data (BPS West Java Province, 2025).

In the context of consumer behavior, a survey conducted by GoodStats Indonesia (2023) aims to determine the culinary preferences of young Indonesians. The survey involved 440 respondents, 60% of whom were aged 18-24. Forty-five percent of respondents chose traditional/regional specialties as their favorite. This is followed by fast food (28.18%), snacks (18.64%), and instant food (8.18%). This indicates that traditional/regional specialties are the main preference of the Indonesian people when choosing food and drinks.

Previous research has extensively explored the critical role of brand identity in business competitiveness. Aaker (1996) and Kapferer (2012) establish brand identity as a multifaceted

construct essential for differentiation and consumer connection. In the culinary sector specifically, studies highlight the power of heritage and authenticity. Urde et al. (2007) demonstrate how corporate brands with a heritage can build significant equity and loyalty. Similarly, Beverland and Farrelly (2010), along with Napoli et al. (2014), emphasize that perceived authenticity—often rooted in tradition, quality commitment, and genuine storytelling—is a key driver of consumer preference and willingness to pay a premium, particularly in the food industry.

The high interest in traditional/regional cuisines in Indonesia has naturally given birth to market leaders who dominate the competitive landscape. The following table illustrates the market leaders in the Indonesian Restaurant category based on the Frontier Top Brand Award (2024).

**Table 1. Market Leader in the Indonesian Restaurant Category**

| <b>Brands</b>         | <b>Top Brand Index 2024</b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Grilled Chicken Solo  | 21,3%                       |
| Suharti Fried Chicken | 14,9%                       |
| Simple                | 7,6%                        |
| Emperor               | 7,1%                        |
| Village Spices        | 5,8%                        |
| Cianjur Grilled Fish  | 5,5%                        |
| Senayan Typical Satay | 4,9%                        |

Source: Frontier Top Brand Award, 2024

The table above shows that two Sundanese restaurant brands are market leaders. The two brands are Ampera (7.1%) and Bumbu Desa (5.8%). This is a positive sign that Sundanese restaurants can compete with other Indonesian restaurants in terms of top-of-mind status among Indonesians, making them just as famous as other well-known national restaurant chains.

These large companies are doing well, but it also illustrates how difficult it is for smaller, more traditional companies to compete. Ampera and other large companies have a lot of brand value and many locations, but traditional restaurants like MSMEs may struggle to differentiate themselves in an increasingly saturated market. In this competitive industry, having a true taste is no longer enough. To be successful in the long run, a strong brand identity is required.

In this case, having a distinctive appearance is not enough to be a brand, but also to give it a strategic advantage. While many restaurants offer similar menus, services, and atmospheres, only businesses that create strong, true, and consistent brands can stay in consumers' memories for a long period of time. Unfortunately, many small and medium-sized food businesses in Indonesia, especially in West Java, have not started implementing this strategic branding strategy. This problem is even worse because so many consumers use generic names. This is a big problem for RM. Laksana at the moment because it makes brands less unique and confusing for buyers.

Brand identity doesn't just involve visual aspects, such as logos, colors, or typography. Brand identity also includes stories, values, and perceptions that are formed through various brand touchpoints. In addition, brand identity also encourages recognition, strengthens differentiation, and makes big ideas and meanings more accessible (Wheeler and Meyerson, 2024).

Many micro, small, and medium enterprises in Indonesia working in the food industry still do not have a good branding strategy, especially when compared to large companies that have been around for a long time. These businesses do not create their own identities, instead, they generally use conventional names that do not differentiate them from their competition. Since there is no difference, consumers become confused about brands and have difficulty distinguishing one business from another. Because of this, it is very difficult for new companies to generate client loyalty and compete well in a market that is already full of them.

RM. Laksana is one of the famous restaurants in Kuningan, West Java, and has been in operation for more than 20 years, offering an authentic Sundanese dining experience, with a concentration on freshwater fish and traditional dishes. Located in a strategic area that is easily accessible to local customers and visitors from outside the city, this restaurant is famous for its signature dishes such as grilled fish, fried fish, and various other processed fish served with traditional Sundanese spices.

The restaurant has become an integral part of the local community, known for its authentic flavors and friendly service. RM. Laksana is managed by a family that has inherited traditional recipes from generation to generation, ensuring that each dish served maintains the quality and authenticity of the flavor that has characterized them over the years.

Even though it has been operating for quite a long time and has a loyal customer base, RM. Laksana faces challenges in terms of branding and brand identity. The use of the relatively common name "Laksana" has caused several problems, including potential confusion for consumers with other businesses that use similar names. This is one of the main focuses in the development of a brand identity strategy to ensure that RM. Laksana can effectively differentiate itself in an increasingly competitive market.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by developing a contextually grounded brand identity strategy for RM. Laksana. It moves beyond general theory to provide a practical framework that leverages the restaurant's unique heritage and operational ethos. By integrating established brand identity models with an in-depth case analysis, this research aims to demonstrate how traditional culinary MSMEs can systematically build a strong, authentic, and sustainable brand to secure their competitive position in the modern marketplace.

Based on the background described, this study stems from several key issues faced by RM. Laksana in developing its brand identity. These issues include: understanding the current state of RM. Laksana's brand identity within the context of the Sundanese culinary industry in West Java; identifying the challenges and opportunities in building a strong and sustainable brand identity; and determining the appropriate brand identity development strategy to strengthen its competitive position in the market. To address these problems, this research aims: (1) to analyze the current condition of RM. Laksana's brand identity and identify its strategic assets; (2) to identify the challenges and opportunities in developing RM. Laksana's brand identity within the competitive culinary industry; (3) to formulate a comprehensive and applicable brand identity development strategy, encompassing brand positioning, visual identity, and brand communication; and (4) to provide implementation recommendations for the brand identity strategy that can be applied by RM. Laksana and similar culinary MSMEs. The benefit of this research is to provide a strategic and practical framework that can be directly implemented by RM. Laksana to differentiate itself in the market, enhance brand equity, and build long-term customer loyalty, while also serving as a reference for other traditional culinary

MSMEs facing similar challenges in building a brand identity amidst increasingly intense competition.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore in depth the development of RM brand identity. Laksana. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the branding phenomenon from the perspective of business people and the socio-cultural context in which the business operates.

### **Data Collection Methods**

The research data was collected through three main methods:

First, an in-depth interview was conducted with the owner and manager of RM. Laksana. The interview is conducted in a semi-structured manner with pre-prepared question guides, but still provides flexibility for the exploration of themes that arise during the interview. Interview topics include the restaurant's history, core business values, perception of the competition, branding challenges faced, and long-term vision and mission.

Second, direct observation is carried out at the restaurant location to understand the customer experience, brand touchpoints interaction, and current brand identity implementation. Observations include the physical aspects of the restaurant (signage, interior, menu), the interaction of staff with customers, and the overall atmosphere and ambience.

Third, document analysis was carried out on various relevant materials including menus, promotional materials, visual documentation, and secondary data related to the F&B industry in West Java. The analysis also includes a literature review of the theory and practice of brand identity development from academic and practical sources.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The analysis process begins with the transcription of the interview, followed by coding to identify the main themes that emerge. These themes are then organized and interpreted within the framework of brand identity theory to produce coherent and meaningful findings.

The analytical framework refers to the Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer, 2012) which includes six dimensions: physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image. In addition, the analysis also uses the concept of brand positioning to identify RM's unique selling proposition (USP) and competitive advantage. Laksana.

### **Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, data triangulation was used through the use of multiple data sources (interviews, observations, and documents). Member checking is carried out by confirming findings to informants to ensure the accuracy of interpretation. In addition, the study also uses thick descriptions in the reporting of results to enable the transferability of findings to similar contexts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Analysis of the Condition of RM's Brand Identity. Current Practice**

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the brand identity of RM. Current Laksana can be analyzed through several dimensions. In terms of physique, the restaurant has a new logo that is modern but has not been fully implemented consistently across all

touchpoints. Signage and branding materials still use simple, old-fashioned designs, creating visual inconsistencies that can confuse customers.

From the dimension of personality and culture, RM. Laksana has very strong assets. This restaurant has been in operation for more than 50 years with recipes that have been preserved for generations. Interviews with the owners reveal a strong commitment to the quality of the raw materials, where the restaurant uses only live fish kept in special ponds and hand-made homemade condiments. Family values, honesty in the kitchen, and respect for Sundanese culinary heritage are the core values that distinguish RM. Like competitors.

However, from the dimension of reflection and relationship, there is a significant gap. Restaurants have not effectively communicated their values and excellence to the target market. Many new customers are unaware of the restaurant's 50-year history or strict raw material selection process. This leads to a misperception about restaurant positioning, where some consumers think the price is too expensive without understanding the value proposition offered.

### **Challenges and Opportunities in Brand Identity Development**

The analysis identified some of the key challenges facing RM. Laksana. First, the problem of using the generic name "Laksana" which is also used by other businesses, creates brand confusion among consumers. Second, the increasingly fierce competition from other Sundanese restaurants, both those that are large chain restaurants (such as Ampera and Bumbu Desa) and local competitors who offer similar products. Third, limited resources for the implementation of a comprehensive branding strategy, including marketing budgets and human resources dedicated to brand management.

On the other hand, there are several significant opportunities that can be taken advantage of. First, the growing demand for authentic traditional cuisine, as shown by survey data that places traditional food as the main preference (45%) of young Indonesian consumers. Second, the unique heritage and story owned by RM. Laksana (50 years of operation with hereditary recipes) can be a powerful differentiator in an era where consumers increasingly value authenticity and heritage brands. Third, the commitment to quality ingredients (live fish, self-concocted spices) provides a tangible competitive advantage that is difficult for competitors to imitate.

### **Aset Strategis RM. Laksana**

The research identified three key strategic assets that are the foundation of brand identity development:

First, Heritage Brand Story: 50 years of operation with hereditary recipes that are preserved as authentic is an invaluable asset. In the context of modern marketing, brand heritage has been shown to have a positive effect on brand equity and customer loyalty (Balmer, 2023; Rindell & Santos, 2021; Sammour et al., 2020; Urde et al., 2007). The story of how recipes are passed down from generation to generation and how restaurants survive through different eras creates an emotional connection with consumers.

Second, Quality Commitment: Commitment to the quality of raw materials manifested in the use of live fish (with a strict selection system for unhealthy fish) and manually concocted seasonings (without instant seasoning) provides concrete product differentiation. This is in line with the concept of authentic branding where authenticity is delivered through consistency between brand promise and actual product/service quality (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010).

Third, Family Values: Family values that are the core values of restaurants create a distinctive organizational culture. Interviews reveal that decision-making in business always involves family discussions and considering the long-term impact on the family legacy, not just short-term profits. This creates a sustainable business mindset that is increasingly valued by conscious consumers.

**Table 2. Summary of RM's Strategic Assets. Laksana**

| <b>Strategic Assets</b> | <b>Description</b>                            | <b>Potential Brand Value</b>                |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Heritage Brand Story    | 50 years of operation with hereditary recipes | Emotional connection, authenticity, trust   |
| Quality Commitment      | Live fish, hand-made seasoning                | Product differentiation, quality perception |
| Family Values           | Family values, long-term sustainability       | Sustainability mindset, ethical business    |

Source: Author's analysis based on interview and observation data, 2025

### **Brand Positioning Strategy: Guardian of Heritage**

Based on the analysis of strategic assets and competitive landscape, this study recommends the brand positioning of "Guardian of Heritage" for RM. Laksana. This positioning is built on three main pillars:

First, Authenticity: RM. Laksana positions itself as the guardian of authentic Sundanese culinary recipes and traditions. This is communicated through stories about how recipes are passed down from generation to generation, how quality standards are maintained without compromise, and how restaurants remain true to traditional roots despite changing trends.

Second, Quality Excellence: This positioning emphasizes superior quality resulting from commitment to the best ingredients and traditional cooking methods. The use of live fish and manual concoctions is not just an operational practice, but a manifestation of the philosophy that authentic Sundanese cuisine must be made in a proper way and proper ingredients.

Third, Emotional Connection: As the Guardian of Heritage, RM. Laksana not only sells food but also experience and memory. Restaurants are a place where customers can reconnect with authentic Sundanese flavors, where they can experience the "real taste" as they or their parents used to taste.

The target market for this positioning is middle-to-upper income consumers who value quality over price, appreciate authenticity and heritage, and are willing to pay a premium for a superior dining experience. The demographic profile includes families, professionals, and tourists who are looking for authentic local cuisine. Psychographic profiles include individuals who are conscious about food quality, appreciate cultural heritage, and seek meaningful dining experiences.

### **Visual Identity Development**

The results of the interviews show that the owner has developed a new, modern logo. This study recommends the use of the new logo with several enhancements to ensure that the logo can effectively communicate the brand positioning of the "Guardian of Heritage". The logo must incorporate elements that represent both tradition (through design motifs or color palettes inspired by Sundanese culture) and modernity (through clean execution and contemporary typography).

To address concerns that too modern logos can eliminate the sense of heritage, this study recommends a dual communication strategy: modern logos are used as primary visual identifiers, while heritage stories and values are communicated through supporting brand elements such as tagline, menu design, and in-store storytelling. For example, a menu book might have an opening page that contains a brief history of the restaurant's 50-year journey, along with a photo of the founder and a narrative about the philosophy behind each signature dish.

Consistency of visual identity must be maintained across all brand touchpoints: exterior signage, interior design, menu design, staff uniforms, packaging (for takeaway), and digital presence (website and social media). The color palette should be carefully selected to evoke feelings that align with brand positioning - for example, earth tones to represent authenticity and connection with nature, combined with accent colors that give a sense of sophistication.

**Brand Communication Strategy**

Brand communication must be designed to effectively convey brand positioning and values to the target audience. The research identified several key messages that should be communicated:

Title: "Preserving the Culinary Heritage of Sundanese for 50 Years." This message must be prominently featured at various touchpoints to build awareness of the restaurant's historical significance. Supporting messages can include a timeline of key milestones, testimonials from long-time customers, or behind-the-scenes content on how recipes are kept authentic.

Quality Message: "Only Live Fish, Only Homemade Spices." Based on the feedback from the interview, the owner agreed to communicate these kitchen secrets to customers, noting that the wording should be refined to sound more elegant. Research recommends sophisticated framing such as "Our Commitment to Excellence: We serve only the freshest catch from our live fish ponds, seasoned with our family's time-honored spice blends, prepared fresh daily."

Experience Message: "Taste the True Sundanese Taste." This message invites customers to experience authentic Sundanese cuisine, positioning RM. Laksana as a destination for those seeking genuine culinary experience, not just an ordinary place to eat.

For implementation, the study recommends an integrated communication approach that combines traditional and modern channels. Traditional channels include in-store communications (wall displays, menu storytelling, table tents), word-of-mouth marketing (customer satisfaction leading to recommendations), and local media coverage. Modern channels include social media content marketing (sharing heritage stories, behind-the-scenes kitchen content, customer testimonials), Google My Business optimization, and influencer collaborations with food bloggers who appreciate authentic traditional cuisine.

**Table 3. RM Brand Communication Strategy. Laksana**

| Key Message      | Contents                           | Channel                          | Objective                                   |
|------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Heritage Message | 50-year legacy, hereditary recipes | Menu, wall display, social media | Build awareness, authenticity perception    |
| Quality Message  | Live fish, hand-made seasoning     | Menu, behind-the-scenes content  | Justify premium pricing, quality perception |

| Key Message        | Contents                    | Channel                    | Objective                  |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Experience Message | Authentic Sundanese flavors | Advertising, word-of-mouth | Drive trial, word-of-mouth |

Source: Author's analysis and strategic recommendations, 2025

### Implementation Roadmap

The implementation of a brand identity strategy needs to be carried out in a gradual and structured manner. The research recommends a three-phase implementation roadmap:

**Phase 1 - Foundation Building (Months 1-3):** Focus on establishing core brand elements. Activities include finalizing the logo and visual identity guidelines, development of brand messaging framework, training for staff on brand values and customer service excellence, and initial implementation at critical touchpoints (exterior signage, menus, staff uniforms). This phase also includes the development of brand story content that will be used across various channels.

**Phase 2 - Expansion and Communication (Months 4-6):** Focus on rolling out brand identity to all touchpoints and launching communication campaigns. Activities include a complete rollout of visual identity at all physical touchpoints, the launch of social media presence with a curated content strategy, the implementation of in-store storytelling (wall displays, menu narrative), and the initiation of PR activities to generate media coverage. This phase also includes customer feedback collection to assess the initial response to the rebranding.

**Phase 3 - Optimization and Sustainability (Months 7-12):** Focus on optimizing based on feedback and ensuring long-term sustainability. Activities include refinement of communication messages based on customer response, expansion of digital presence, development of loyalty programs that align with brand values, and documentation of brand guidelines to ensure consistency in future implementations. This phase also includes planning for next-level brand development initiatives.

### Success Metrics

To measure the effectiveness of the implementation of a brand identity strategy, several metrics need to be monitored:

**Brand Awareness Metrics:** Tracking of top-of-mind awareness and brand recall among target market, measuring through periodic surveys. Baseline measurement is carried out before implementation, with follow-up measurements at certain intervals to assess improvement.

**Brand Perception Metrics:** Assessment of how customers perceive brand attributes such as authenticity, quality, heritage. It is carried out through customer surveys and social media sentiment analysis. The target is to increase positive associations with the desired brand attributes.

**Business Performance Metrics:** Monitoring of revenue growth, average transaction value, and customer retention rate. While these metrics are influenced by multiple factors, positive trends should correlate with successful brand identity implementation. Customer acquisition cost and customer lifetime value also need to be monitored.

**Digital Engagement Metrics:** For social media presence, tracking of follower growth, engagement rate, and reach. Content performance analysis to understand which messages resonate most with the audience. Google reviews and ratings as indicators of customer satisfaction and brand reputation.



## CONCLUSION

This research resulted in a comprehensive brand identity development strategy for RM. Laksana, a traditional Sundanese restaurant that has been operating for more than 50 years in Kuningan, West Java. The in-depth analysis identified three key strategic assets that are the foundation of the brand identity: a heritage brand story with 50 years of recipe heritage from generation to generation, a quality commitment manifested in the use of live fish and hand-made seasonings, and family values that create a sustainable business mindset. Based on these assets, the research recommends a "Guardian of Heritage" brand positioning that emphasizes authenticity, quality excellence, and emotional connection. The visual identity strategy developed integrates modern logos with heritage storytelling through various brand touchpoints, while the communication strategy is designed to effectively convey heritage, quality, and experience messages to the target audience. The implementation of the strategy is recommended through a three-phase roadmap which includes foundation building, expansion and communication, and optimization and sustainability, with monitoring through brand awareness, perception, business performance, and digital engagement metrics. This research makes a practical contribution to culinary MSMEs in developing a strong and sustainable brand identity in an increasingly competitive industry. Suggestions for future research include longitudinal studies to measure the long-term impact of strategy implementation, comparative studies with similar culinary MSMEs that are successful in branding, and exploration of the role of digital marketing in building brand equity for traditional restaurants. The limitation of this study is that it focuses on a single case study, so generalization of findings to other contexts needs to be done carefully. However, the framework and approach developed can be adapted for other culinary MSMEs that face similar challenges in developing brand identity.

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