

WIPO IPMC Case Study

Mie Aceh Seulawah: Crafting a Legacy of Flavour and Innovation

The Founders' Journey – From Need to Opportunity

The story of Mie Aceh Seulawah began in 1996, when civil servants Ratna Dwikora and her husband Heru embarked on an entrepreneurial journey, motivated by their need to provide quality education for their four daughters. With a bank loan of IDR 6 million, they opened a small food stall in the canteen of the Department of Religious Affairs office in Warung Buncit, South Jakarta, offering authentic Acehnese cuisine.



Image Source: <https://rmacehseulawah.blogspot.com/2018/01/founder-mie-aceh-seulawah-jadi-bintang.html>

The restaurant name, “Seulawah,” carries cultural significance. It references both Mount Seulawah Agam in Aceh Besar Regency and RI-001 Seulawah, Indonesia’s first national aircraft, symbolizing pride, resilience, and national identity.

Ratna, assisted by her mother Fatimah, a skilled Acehnese cook, managed the restaurant hands-on. Their authentic flavours quickly attracted loyal customers, though the business faced downturns and near bankruptcy amid the 1998 financial crisis. Perseverance defined their journey, and as opportunities arose, the couple reopened in the Karet Tengsin area before establishing a permanent outlet in Bendungan Hilir, the brand’s flagship restaurant today.



Image Source: Facebook @ MIE ACEH Seulawah Benhil

24 Spices, 3 Styles, One Signature

Mie Aceh is a distinctive Indonesian noodle dish originating from Aceh province, reflecting the region's rich cultural tapestry shaped by centuries of trade and cultural exchange. The dish combines influences from Indian and Chinese cuisines, evident in its curry-like broth and noodle texture. Traditionally, it features thick yellow noodles served with beef, goat, or seafood, infused with spices such as cardamom, cumin, and star anise. The preference for mutton, goat, and beef aligns with Islamic dietary laws, while seafood reflects Aceh's coastal geography and trading heritage.

The hallmark of Mie Aceh Seulawah lies in its authentic spice blend, comprising 24 traditional Acehnese spices, including star anise, cardamom, nutmeg, cinnamon, cumin, candlenut, and chili, all sourced directly from Aceh. These ingredients are meticulously combined to produce their signature noodles in three styles: fried (goreng), stir-fried (tumis), and boiled (kuah).

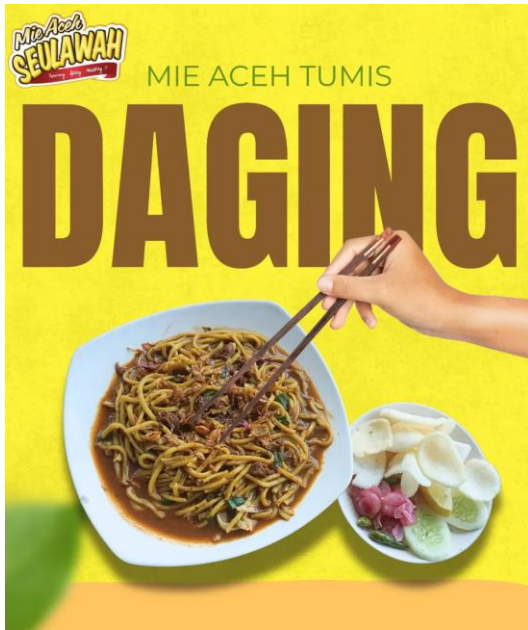


Image Source: Instagram @ mieacehseulawah

Beyond noodles, the menu features Acehnese martabak, roti cane, ayam tangkap, and beverages such as Acehnese coffee, cucumber ice, and teh tarik with milk and cinnamon, reflecting the founders' commitment to preserving Acehnese culinary heritage through authenticity and quality.

Clicking with Customers through Digital Reach

Recognizing shifts in consumer behaviour, Mie Aceh Seulawah embraced digital transformation early. Heru learned search engine optimization (SEO) and built the restaurant's website to increase visibility. Today, the brand partners with major food delivery platforms, connecting with a younger, tech-savvy audience seeking comfort food that feels both authentic and modern.



Image Source: Facebook @ MIE ACEH Seulawah Benhil

This digital engagement strengthened the brand's market presence, contributing to a monthly turnover of approximately IDR 300 million. By 2005, the business expanded with new outlets across Jakarta, Depok, and Bogor, cementing Mie Aceh Seulawah as a household name across the Greater Jakarta metropolitan area.

Securing and Protecting What Makes Seulawah Unique

In 2008, the business was officially rebranded from "Rumah Makan Aceh Seulawah" back to "Mie Aceh Seulawah" and registered the latter as a trademark with Indonesia's Directorate General of Intellectual Property (DGIP), safeguarding the brand's name and distinctive identity as it expanded.



Today, with a loyal following for its signature spice blends and condiments, the company is exploring further IP filings to protect its proprietary sauces and spice recipes. These measures ensure that its brand assets, from logo and name to flavour identity, remain legally protected against unauthorized replication, supporting long-term brand equity and market trust.

Developing IP Strategy for Sustainable Expansion

Participation in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) IP Management Clinic (IPMC) Program, conducted in partnership with DGIP Indonesia, IP Australia, and WIPO Singapore, has empowered Mie Aceh Seulawah to align intellectual property (IP) strategy with business growth. The company recognizes that protecting IP is essential for sustainable expansion, ensuring that every innovation, from recipes to packaging, remains an enduring asset.

By integrating tradition, innovation, and IP protection, Mie Aceh Seulawah continues to craft not just food, but a culinary legacy, one that celebrates the spirit of Aceh while resonating with future generations of Indonesian diners.

Growing with Confidence through Franchising and Product Diversification

Looking ahead, Mie Aceh Seulawah is preparing for its next phase of growth, with a focus on enhanced marketing through content creation, influencer partnerships, and loyalty programs. These efforts aim to strengthen the brand's connection with customers and increase visibility in an increasingly competitive market.



Image Source: https://www.liputan6.com/lifestyle/read/3921096/perjuangan-di-balik-kelezatan-mie-aceh-seulawah-yang-diracik-dari-24-rempah?page=2#google_vignette

At the same time, the company is developing product line extensions, including bottled sauces, spice blends, and ready-to-eat noodle kits. These offerings allow the brand to bring its signature flavours to a wider audience while maintaining the quality and authenticity that define Seulawah.

Franchise development continues to be a key growth strategy, enabling the brand to expand to new locations across Indonesia. Each step of this expansion is carefully aligned with IP protection, ensuring that recipes, packaging design, and other brand elements are legally secured.

With these initiatives, Mie Aceh Seulawah is poised to grow sustainably while preserving the authenticity and distinctiveness that have made it a beloved culinary brand.

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This is part of a series of 4 case studies showcasing real-world outcomes from the IP Management Clinics (IPMC) held in Jakarta. These stories originated from WIPO's IPMC program co-organised by IP for Business Division (IPBD) and the WIPO Singapore Office (WSO). The initiative was made possible through the generous support of Funds-in-Trust (FIT) Australia and delivered in close collaboration with the Directorate General of Intellectual Property (DGIP) of Indonesia.