


Public Relations Strategy of Perumda Tirta Pakuan in Utilizing Instagram to Improve the Company's Image

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ABSTRACT

Public relations play a strategic role in shaping a positive corporate image through transparent, responsive, and trust-based communication. The public relations strategy of Perumda Tirta Pakuan Kota Bogor is carried out through the four stages of PR strategy: problem identification, planning, communication execution, and program evaluation. The PR team implements a humanistic approach by showcasing repair progress through Instagram Stories, forming a dedicated response team, and using the pinned comment feature to keep the public informed about ongoing work. Challenges such as limited human resources and limited audience reach previously affected the company's professional image. However, these challenges were addressed through improved digital communication management and collaboration with 27 media outlets. Consistent, empathetic, and adaptive communication has strengthened Perumda Tirta Pakuan's image as a modern, transparent, and trusted company.

Keywords: *Corporate Image, Instagram, Perumda Tirta Pakuan, Public Relations Strategy, Reputation Management*

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INTRODUCTION

Public relations plays a central role in shaping and maintaining the company's image with the public. Their main task is not only to disseminate information but also to build trust and create a positive perception of the organization. According to (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) the Two-Way Communication theory holds that the relationship between the organization and the public is effective when communication flows in both directions openly and with mutual understanding. A positive image is formed when the public feels heard and valued and receives quick, empathetic responses from the institution.

Perumda Tirta Pakuan Kota Bogor, as a provider of clean water services, is committed to maintaining its image as a professional, responsive, and responsible public company. The company's success is not only measured by the technical quality of its services but also by how it fosters open communication and prioritizes customer satisfaction. Every message conveyed reflects the company's identity and values that care about public needs.

Digital transformation has made social media an increasingly strategic part of public relations, especially in building the company's image. Harahap & Ritonga, 2025 emphasize that public relations must now build interaction and public trust through online platforms. Saraswati, (2021) refers to Instagram as an effective way to visually showcase the company's identity. At the same time, Islami & Hadiyanto (2025) highlight its use by Perumda Tirta Pakuan's Public Relations to strengthen its reputation. A positive image is formed through consistent, empathetic two-way communication (Aziz et al., 2018), making Instagram an important medium for building public trust.

Public relations improve the company's image through structured Instagram content planning focused on transparency and public service. Instagram was chosen because it can build interaction and emotional closeness with the community. (Saraswati, 2021). Informative,

humanistic content showcasing field officers' activities strengthens the company's empathetic image and public trust, while consistent planning enhances engagement and the company's positive image.

The strategy for implementing the program refers to the four stages of the Public Relations Process (Cutlip et al., 2006): fact-finding, planning and programming, taking action, and communicating, as well as evaluating the program. This approach serves as the foundation for Public Relations in delivering targeted, adaptive, and empathetic communication to strengthen Perumda Tirta Pakuan's image as a modern, open, and trustworthy public service institution in the eyes of the community.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative research method. The study was conducted at Perumda Tirta Pakuan, located at Jl. Siliwangi No. 121, Sukasari, East Bogor, Bogor City, West Java. Data collection took place during the internship period, from 18th August to 20th December, 2025, following the company's operational schedule from Monday to Friday, 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM WIB. During this period, the author was directly involved in various Public Relations activities, allowing for intensive and continuous observation, documentation, and information gathering.

The data used in this study consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through the author's direct involvement in Public Relations activities, particularly during the planning, production, and publication of digital content on the company's official Instagram (@perumdatirtapakuan), as well as through interviews with related parties. Meanwhile, secondary data were collected from the company's internal archives and from various literature, including journals, articles, and other written sources relevant to public relations strategies and corporate image formation. The research instruments used include interview guidelines, a laptop, devices, and digital applications supporting the content creation process.

Data collection techniques included observation, active participation, interviews, and literature review. Observation was conducted directly within the Public Relations work process, especially in the creation and dissemination of creative content as the company's primary publication medium. Additionally, the author actively participated in the entire series of Public Relations activities to gain a deeper understanding of the company's digital communication practices. Interviews were conducted with the Assistant Public Relations Manager to gather more specific information on communication strategies and social media image management. As a complement, a literature review was used to examine relevant theories and research findings, ensuring that the analysis has a strong conceptual foundation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Public Relations Strategy of Perumda Tirta Pakuan in Utilizing Instagram to Improve the Company's Image

Public relations plays an important role in building two-way communication between the company and the community. According to Fio (2020), Public relations not only serve to disseminate information but also act as a communication bridge that builds public trust and maintains the organization's reputation. In the context of public services, this function becomes increasingly strategic because an organization's success is measured not only by technical aspects but also by the image it creates in the community's eyes. Grunig & Hunt (1984) explain that two-way communication allows organizations to tailor messages to the public's needs, thereby maintaining the institution's image sustainably. (Fitria & Wijaya, 2025), For example, it shows that the Public Relations of Perumda Tirta Pakuan, which implements a structured media relations strategy including Instagram use and collaborations with mass media, successfully increased public trust while also strengthening its image as a responsive and transparent clean water service provider.

The Public Relations of Perumda Tirta Pakuan manages the company's internal and external communications, including delivering information on clean water services, handling public complaints, and maintaining the company's reputation with the public. The role of Public Relations becomes especially crucial during service disruptions such as pipe leaks or uneven water distribution. These conditions can lead to customer dissatisfaction and, in turn, impact the company's image. Therefore, a communication strategy that is quick, transparent, and empathetic is necessary to maintain public trust.

According to Cutlip et al. (2006), the Public Relations strategy is carried out through four stages: fact-finding, planning and programming, taking action and communicating, and evaluating the program. These stages are used by Perumda Tirta Pakuan's Public Relations to manage digital communication during service crises, ensuring the company's image remains positive in the public's eyes.

Fact Finding (Defining the Problem)

The initial stage of the Public Relations strategy involved identifying issues through social media monitoring, analyzing customer complaint reports, and conducting direct field observations. From these monitoring results, it was found that delays in communicating information about water distribution disruptions and repair processes triggered an increase in public complaints on social media. This condition indicates that the company's crisis is not only technical but also affects public trust. Setiawan & Sartika (2025) emphasize that the effectiveness of public communication is highly influenced by the speed, accuracy, and empathy with which situations are responded to. Therefore, Public Relations needs to map issues and formulate crisis communication strategies that can maintain the public's positive perception of the company's performance. Local studies support the importance of the fact-finding stage. (Utami Dewi et al., 2024) found that the success of the Public Relations of Garut Police Resort in utilizing Instagram to improve the institution's image was initiated by mapping public issues and complaints, so the messages crafted truly addressed the community's concerns. Likewise (Ruchiat Nugraha et al., 2020) it shows that the public relations of district/city governments in West Java use Instagram as the primary channel for communicating service information, after first mapping issues through public interaction analysis.

Planning and Programming

The planning stage is carried out systematically by preparing a monthly content agenda, dividing team roles, and determining key messages focused on transparency of information and public service. The communication strategy is centered on three main types of messages: informative, educational, and humanistic. Informative content explains the causes of disruptions and the steps taken to address them; educational content raises awareness of the wise use of water; and humanistic content showcases field workers repairing water networks under challenging conditions. The selection of human interest content, such as documentation of field workers, reinforces the company's image as empathetic and oriented toward public service, in line with the concept of corporate image reinforcement. Similar findings are reported in research on Dompot Dhuafa's Instagram account, which found that visual narratives about social activities and community empowerment are key to strengthening the organization's image (Tajudin & Gunawan, 2023). Through this content, the public sees that the company takes social responsibility seriously and is committed to being a part of the community. This strategy also reflects the Agenda Setting theory. (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), because consistent management of messages and visuals can direct public attention to the company's positive aspects rather than its technical issues. In the government sector, (Ainussyifa et al., 2022) found that the Ministry of Social Affairs of Indonesia uses Instagram to highlight transparency of programs and budget progress as a strategy to restore its image after social assistance cases.

Taking Action and Communicating

The implementation stage is carried out through quick two-way communication on Instagram. Before publication, the Public Relations team prepares a content creation plan through planning meetings to determine the theme, main message, and delivery flow, making it easy for the public to understand. After the concept is agreed upon, the team creates a script and simple visualizations in accordance with the character of the content to be uploaded. The Public Relations team displays real-time progress on improvements through story and feed features to demonstrate the officers' responsiveness. Authentic visual content enhances emotional closeness and public trust (Aji et al., 2022). Public Relations also formed a special team to respond to comments and messages quickly and used the comment pin feature to make information easily accessible. This strategy strengthens the company's image as an institution that is responsive, transparent, and cares about the community.



Figure 1. Examples of Instagram content posted by Perumda Tirta Pakuan: (a) humanistic content showing field officers working in the field; (b) informative content related to water service updates.

Evaluating the Program

Monthly evaluations assess the effectiveness of publications by analyzing Instagram interactions and public responses. Humanitarian-themed content, such as social activities and field officer work, received the highest response rates, indicating the strategy's success in building an empathetic image. Collaboration with local media increased the credibility of the information. The main challenge was limited human resources, which occasionally caused publication delays, but this was addressed by forming a dedicated team and implementing a monthly content schedule. This step successfully strengthened the company's image as a modern, responsive organization that meets community needs.

Public Relations Challenges of Perumda Tirta Pakuan in Utilizing Instagram to Improve Company Image

Although the Public Relations of Perumda Tirta Pakuan has optimized digital communication through Instagram, challenges persist in maintaining the company's image in the public's eyes. PR must adjust its communication strategies to ensure the public's perception remains positive and that the company appears adaptable and empathetic.

High Complaints and Public Service Crisis

Disruptions in water distribution, pipeline leaks, and service delays directly impact the company's image. Customer complaints on Instagram demand quick, attentive responses. The public needs not only technical information but also empathy for the inconveniences they are experiencing. The public relations team adjusts communication by updating repair

information in real time on Instagram and delivering humane messages, ensuring the company's image remains responsive, transparent, and caring toward customers.

Limitations of Internal Support in Communication Management

The main challenges faced are limited human resources and the reach of the digital audience. The limited personnel result in less optimal content management and customer responses, while not all customers follow the company's Instagram account. To maintain a positive image, the Public Relations team ensures information is consistently disseminated across various channels, keeping the company responsive and trustworthy.

Discussion

The research results show that the Public Relations strategy of Perumda Tirta Pakuan in utilizing Instagram has been carried out in accordance with the stages of the Public Relations Process as proposed by (Cutlip et al., 2006), namely fact-finding, planning and programming, taking action, and communicating, as well as evaluating the program. These findings align with Maulvi et al. (2023) who explain that social media enables government public relations to carry out their strategic functions systematically, including building image, listening to public opinion, and strengthening public trust through digital communication. The implementation of these stages shows that public relations activities are not conducted spontaneously but follow a structured process as recommended in modern public relations literature.

In the fact-finding stage, monitoring customer complaints on social media serves as the primary basis for developing communication strategies. The dominance of complaints about water distribution disruptions indicates that technical issues directly affect public perception. This condition confirms that in public service organizations, technical issues and communication issues cannot be separated. These findings are consistent with research (Supriyanto & Noegroho, 2024) which indicates that the effectiveness of public services increases when social media is used for real-time, transparent complaint monitoring, enabling organizations to respond to community needs more accurately. When information is not conveyed quickly and clearly, public dissatisfaction increases even though improvement processes are underway.

The planning and programming stage shows that dividing content into informative, educational, and humanistic categories is a relevant communication strategy aligned with the characteristics of social media audiences. This strategy aligns with Agenda Setting theory and is supported by research from the Cianjur Communications and Information Office (2025), which found that content planning and selecting the appropriate message format are key factors in the success of government digital communication. Informative content conveys technical data, educational content builds public literacy about water use, and humanistic content fosters emotional closeness. This approach has proven effective in shaping public opinion toward the company's tangible efforts to address service disruptions.

In the taking action and communicating stage, the use of Instagram as a two-way communication platform shows that Perumda Tirta Pakuan not only serves as an information provider but also listens to the community's aspirations. A quick response to comments reflects the implementation of the Two-Way Symmetrical Communication concept. Grunig & Hunt (1984). This finding is supported by Rahmanto's (2022) research, which shows that two-way communication through social media enhances public perceptions of government transparency and accountability. This dialogic communication pattern plays an important role in building public trust, as the community feels that their voices are truly heard.

The evaluation stage of the program shows that audience-interaction-based evaluation is the leading indicator of communication strategy success. The high level of engagement with humanistic content indicates that the community responds positively to messages emphasizing empathy and social closeness. These results are in line with the findings. Rosilawati (2024) emphasizes that the success of social media-based public services is highly influenced by public relations' ability to understand audience preferences and periodically adjust content. Regular evaluations enable public relations to adapt its strategies to the community's dynamic information needs.

The main challenge faced by Public Relations, namely the high volume of customer complaints and limited human resources, is a common issue in public service organizations. However, adaptive measures such as forming a digital team and media collaboration demonstrate strategic efforts to maintain communication effectiveness. This finding aligns with (Rosilawati, 2024), who emphasizes the importance of enhancing digital human resource capacity to optimize public service functions through social media. In the context of water services, slow communication can erode public trust, while fast, transparent, and empathetic communication can help maintain the company's reputation even during a crisis.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that the effectiveness of Instagram as a public relations communication medium is not determined solely by publication frequency but also by the quality of message management strategies, response speed, and an emotional approach to the public. This aligns with previous research indicating that social media has become a strategic tool for building image, increasing public participation, and strengthening public trust (Maulvi et al., 2023; Rahmanto, 2022; Supriyanto & Noegroho, 2024). By integrating a structured public relations strategy and adaptive digital media management, Perumda Tirta Pakuan maintains the company's image amid various service challenges.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that Perumda Tirta Pakuan's Public Relations strategy for building the company's image is carried out through four stages of the Public Relations Process, which emphasize two-way communication as the primary foundation. The use of Instagram as a digital platform has proven effective in delivering real-time information, presenting humanized content, and educating the public through informative, transparent, and empathetic messages. Instagram's interactive features enable the Public Relations team to build closer ties with the community, especially during service disruptions that require quick responses. By forming a digital team, collaborating with local media, and conducting regular evaluations, the company can overcome challenges such as limited human resources and audience reach. These efforts strengthen Perumda Tirta Pakuan's image as a modern, adaptive, open institution increasingly trusted by the community.

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