

PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY IN BUILDING THE BRAND IMAGE OF BLOOMKA LOCAL SKINCARE

Olivia Iskandar¹, H. H. Daniel Tamburian^{2*}

¹Faculty of Communication Science, Tarumanagara University, Jakarta

²Faculty of Communication Science, Tarumanagara University, Jakarta
Email: daniel.t@fikom.untar.ac.id

*Corresponding author

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ABSTRACT

Bloomka is an online-based local skincare brand in Indonesia founded in May 2020 and was created to meet all the needs of young people at affordable prices and quality products. Currently, Bloomka has issued a variety of facial care products. The competition in the world of the skincare business, every company or brand is required to win the hearts of its consumers. The importance of the role and strategy of PR helps Bloomka carry out brand image-building activities in the community. The approach used in this research is descriptive qualitative and the type of case study. The research subject in this thesis is the Public Relations strategy used by Bloomka in building a local skincare brand image. Data were collected by conducting interviews, observation, documentation, and a literature study. Through four stages in carrying out PR activities according to Cutlip, et al, 1982, namely Fact Finding, Planning and Programming, Action & Communicating, and Evaluating. PR activities carried out by brands aim to foster a positive corporate image by understanding the target market and the company so that public relations strategies effectively build brand recognition and knowledge in the community. The conclusion of this research is that the #LetThemSee marketing campaign through social media in carrying out Bloomka's PR activities becomes part of the Public Relations strategy in building a Brand Image.

Keywords: Public relations, pr strategy, local skincare, communication, brand image

1. PREFACE

Humans are basically social creatures, that is, creatures who need other people to maintain their survival. Humans carry out communication activities to exchange information between one another. Communication is a fundamental human activity. Through communication, humans can interact with one another in their environment. There is no human being who is not involved in the communication process. By communicating effectively, the daily activities carried out by humans can work well.

The development of communication is increasingly advanced and runs rapidly, so that many fields of communication are emerging, one of which is known as Public Relations. Currently the role of Public Relations is needed in the business world. Public Relations is an institution or individual in charge of establishing and maintaining good relations between the internal, external public and company stakeholders. In broad outline, the task of Internal Public Relations is to conduct analysis and self-improvement, while externally providing statements to maintain the relationship and the company's good name. Public Relations functions to grow and develop good relations between institutions, organizations, or companies and their publics, both internally and externally.

The role of Public Relations in the business world is now increasingly needed as business developments in Indonesia go along. The amount of business competition demands entrepreneurs to think creatively and innovatively in marketing their products. For this reason, a company needs Public Relations or public relations in it to build a Brand Image as a

characteristic of the company so that consumers can trust and be interested in buying products from the company. According to Tamara, J., & Setyono, Y., a product can win market competition and produce sustainable profits with a good and strong brand image. Followed by resilience to crises, becoming an executive attraction, increasing the effectiveness of marketing strategies and saving operational costs [1].

Bloomka is an online-based local skincare brand in Indonesia, Bloomka was founded in May 2020 and was created to meet all the needs of young people (Gen Z and Zillennials) at very affordable prices and high product quality. Currently, Bloomka has issued a variety of facial products such as Face Toner, Serum, Moisturizer, Face Oil, Face Mask, and Multi-Function Balm

Recognizing the high competition in today's business world requires every company or brand to win the hearts of its consumers. The role of PR is needed to help build a brand image in Bloomka considering that there are more and more creative brands with various advantages. With the strategy owned by PR, the activities in building a brand image can be more easily carried out.

Based on the background of the problem, the researcher is interested in examining it in depth about the "PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY IN BUILDING THE BRAND IMAGE OF BLOOMKA LOCAL-BRAND SKINCARE"

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method by trying to understand and interpret the meaning of an event of human behavior. The object of this research is the Public Relations strategy in building a Brand Image, while the subject of this research is Bloomka as a local brand skincare. This research uses case study methods. Data collection using interviews, documentation, observations, and literature studies. Analysis of the data used is descriptive qualitative in data reduction, data display, and concluding. The data validity techniques used are source triangulation and technical triangulation.

This research conducts interviews with four informants, with the criteria as follows, work as Bloomka employee for six months or more; job desk related to decision making in public relations strategies; and users of Bloomka products for six months or more.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The growth of local-brand skincare in Indonesia

The advancement of the development of the local skin care industry in Indonesia during the pandemic gave rise to hope for entrepreneurs. The amount of time at home created a new trend, namely caring for skin health and beauty. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), in the first quarter of 2020, at least 5.59%, there was a growth in the chemical, pharmaceutical, and traditional medicine industries including cosmetics. The growth of the cosmetic market is estimated to grow by 7% in 2021 [2].

In the last few years, many beauty products in the form of skincare have emerged and continue to grow. The development of local skincare products will continue to advance in 2021 due to the large number of enthusiasts, most of them also pay attention to the quality of their products,

namely by combining many popular active ingredients with natural ingredients and minimal side effects. Apart from being of good quality, local skincare prices with natural ingredients are more affordable [3].

The government recorded the development of the skincare industry as 797 large cosmetic industries and small and medium-sized industries (IKM) in Indonesia, this number increased from 760 companies in 2019. According to John Marco Rasid as CEO of PT Social Bella, the growth of the skincare industry is predicted to grow to the US. \$8.46 billion in 2022. In addition, John said at least three fundamental things will be the driving factor for the advancement of the skincare industry in Indonesia. First, Indonesia has a large young population. Second, Indonesia's good economic growth can support the industry. Third, the role of social media as a “market” is very significant [4].

Interestingly, local brands can now compete and outperform international brands. For example, based on statistical data, the local brand Compass, Scarlet, in early January 2021, was recorded to have a sales value of Rp. 85 million, surpassing Innisfree and Laneige, skincare products from Korea.

Figure 1

The Brand Leaders of Facial Cosmetic Brands in Early January 2021, Nova, 2021



Not only that, local skincare and cosmetic brands are also in the top 10 sales rankings, namely Dear Me Beauty, ERT0's, LT Pro, and Everwhite [5]. The rapid growth adds to the intense competition, so many local brands currently advertise on the Marketplace. About 50% of local brands are included in the Top Brand list and have product quality that is not less competitive with foreign brands [5]. Based on Rizki Ananda Musa's statement as the owner of Beauties Skincare, the number of requests for skincare products in Indonesia has increased, which is said to have reached 70%, making Indonesia one of the largest skincare markets in the world [6]. This can also be proven by an increase in the accumulated number of the cosmetics industry, which consists of 95% of Small and Medium Industries (IKM) and the growth of online-based cosmetic product sales (skincare) to 21% from the previous 17% followed by the growth of the cosmetics sector of 9.39 % and contributed 1.92% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) [7].

According to Kusuma Ida Anjani as the Daily Chair of the Indonesian Cosmetics Company and Association (PPAK), the current industry is adjusting in marketing by developing multifunctional and healthy innovative products [7]. According to data from Kompas.co.id, sales of local brand skincare reached IDR 91.22 billion with a total transaction of 1,285,529. The statistical data is based on transactions at E-Commerce Shopee and Tokopedia for the period 01 February 2021 – 18 February 2021.

There are 10 best-selling local skincare brands based on the recorded transactions, namely MS. Glow is in first place with total sales reaching Rp. 38.5 billion, followed by Scarlett Rp. 17.7 billion, Somethinc Rp. 8.1 billion, Avoskin Rp. 5.9 billion, Wardah Rp. 5.3 billion, Whitelab Rp. 3.1 billion, Bio Beauty Lab Rp 2.6 billion, Emina Rp 2.1 billion, Elshe Skin Rp 1.8 billion, and in the last position Everwhite Rp 1.05 billion [8].

The natural skincare trend in Indonesia

Along with the increasing number of market demand for local skincare products, it is seen that various local skincare products dominate the skincare industry in Indonesia. For example, facial care products such as facial serums, creams and facial cleansers are the most sought after products on e-commerce platforms in Indonesia. According to Ririe Prameswari, the must-have facial care products are cleansing balm, facial serum, and sunscreen. In addition, skincare products made from natural ingredients to treat acne, moisturize the skin and various anti-aging products are the most popular products this year [9].

Talking about the trend of skincare products, of course there are various natural ingredients that are in demand by many skincare users. The content of skincare ingredients that are widely used today will certainly affect skincare trends with other natural ingredients in the year to come. According to a statement from the esthetician Dr. Komang Suli Natalia, a popular skincare ingredient, one of which is Centella Asiatica as a type of wild plant that has many benefits [10].

As a wild plant, the main ingredient of Centella Asiatica is easy to obtain. One of the benefits of Centella Asiatica is to disguise wounds [10]. In addition, there is also grape extract which contains many vitamins and is rich in antioxidants and proteins which are very helpful for nourishing the skin [10]. Aloe Vera (Aloe Vera) also functions to hydrate the skin, moisturize the skin, and is anti-inflammatory because it contains Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and Vitamin E [10].

In addition to the various natural ingredients mentioned above, in 2021 the trend of natural skincare ingredients is also developing, according to a Female Daily quote, several natural ingredients are increasingly being used by several local skincare brands in Indonesia, including [11]:

(a) Mugwort. Like Centella Asiatica in 2020, Mugwort is now getting more and more talked about for its ability to soothe the skin, relieve irritation and inflammation, kill bacteria naturally, and reduce acne. Mugwort is even claimed to be able to help relieve various skin conditions such as eczema, because the content of vitamin E in Mugwort can also soothe the skin. Not only that, Mugwort content can also be used for mature skin because it is rich in antioxidants to protect the skin and prevent fine lines;

(b) Bakuchiol. The well-known function of Bakuchiol as an alternative to retinol active ingredients can stimulate collagen production, minimize wrinkles, reduce acne, tighten skin, and reduce black spots. In addition, Bakuchiol with a myriad of benefits is also claimed to be safe for sensitive skin, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers;

(c) PHA. The content of AHA & BHA can remove dead skin cells so that the skin looks brighter, but not a few people experience irritation because they use skincare made from AHA and BHA. The presence of PHA (Polyhydroxy Acid) can be a solution for exfoliating without causing inflammation in the skin. Examples of PHAs are Lactobionic Acid and Gluconolactone. With a

function similar to AHA, the PHA molecule is larger so it doesn't absorb too much into the skin but only on the outer layer;

(d) Probiotics and Prebiotics. Probiotics are a type of good bacteria for the skin (and also for the body) that must be maintained, while prebiotics are food to nourish probiotics. The content of probiotics and prebiotics is claimed to make the pH of the skin more balanced, as well as delay aging which minimizes skin problems such as redness, irritation and dry skin.

In addition to the four skincare ingredients mentioned above, according to the data listed on the Cosmo link, there are several skincare ingredients that are no less popular, such as Glycolic Acid, Hyaluronic Acid, Niacinamide, and Collagen [12]. According to dr. Meva, the use of Glycolic Acid (glycolic acid) is one of the AHA group derived from sugarcane. Glycolic Acid has very small particles that can very easily penetrate into the skin layers, with the main function of exfoliating the skin and removing dead skin cells [13].

Dr. Meva explained, Glycolic Acid can function to treat acne, disguise acne scars, brighten skin color, fight signs and premature aging [13]. Furthermore, the active ingredient that is becoming a trend is Hyaluronic Acid. dr. Meva mentions various functions including: nourishing the skin, moisturizing the skin, reducing the appearance of wrinkles, accelerating the wound healing process, and helping skin regeneration [13].

The content of Hyaluronic Acid is considered important because as we age, some cells in our body also experience a decrease in production, including natural collagen and Hyaluronic Acid. So it is necessary to use facial care products that support according to the conditions that occur [14]. Another active ingredient that is becoming a trend is Niacinamide, as a form of Vitamin B3 which has the function of moisturizing the skin, overcoming acne, disguising black spots, and even claimed to be able to prevent diseases such as skin cancer type melanoma. This is because the content of Niacinamide is proven to accelerate the repair of skin DNA damaged by sun exposure [15].

Natural local skincare company profile: Bloomka

Bloomka as a local skincare brand in Indonesia has the motto “a local skincare brand where natural skin solutions are made, and everyone is accepted” which means “a local skincare brand where natural skin solutions are made and everyone is welcome”

Bloomka was first formed in May 2020, with the aim of fulfilling the skincare needs of young generation, especially for Generation Z and Zillennials. The skincare products offered by Bloomka are skincare products with high quality ingredients at affordable prices.

According to Bloomka's Brand Manager, Shekkinah Magda, Bloomka's marketing target, which is aimed at young generation Z and Zillennials, makes Bloomka a skincare brand that has a fun and not rigid impression from product packaging to delivering information about its products. For now, the products that Bloomka's products are Facial Serum, Facial Oil, Acne Spot Treatment, Facial Toner, Face Mask, Face Cleanser and Multi-Purpose Balm.

Bloomka's PR strategy as online-based store

Based on Shekinnah Magda or Minka Magda as Bloomka's Brand Manager, Bloomka's PR strategy does not have a fixed basic step in its implementation. Regarding the target market from Bloomka to Generation Z and Zillennials, Bloomka's PR strategy in building its brand image is as

a skincare brand that accepts young people and sees Bloomka as its own friend. Continuing with Magda's answer as Brand Manager, Mila, better known as Minka Mila, said that the content approach created by Bloomka on her various social media is a personal approach.

Defining PR problems

First stage in compiling Bloomka's social media content according to Magda is to research the trends in social media content that is popular on social media, this process is in the form of basic research on what is happening on social media and trends that are often used by Content Creators and attract a large number of audiences.

According to Cutlip and Center in the book *The Effective Public Relations* (2013) [17], the process of Defining PR Problems is carried out to find actual facts on the ground and serve as the basis for further decisions. The process of Defining PR Problems carried out by Mila and Magda as the initial stage of developing Bloomka's PR strategy filters information related to various product content on social media, then it will be reprocessed according to ongoing trends on social media and content theme trends favored by Bloomers (nickname for users of Bloomka products) especially on the Instagram media platform. As an initial research process, Magda stated that the process of Defining PR Problems was carried out by a Social Media Specialist, namely Mila, which could be in the form of analyzing the social media content of competitors' brands. The process of Defining PR Problems carried out by the Bloomka social media team is focused on social media content for similar skincare brands and other product social media content that can increase engagement on social media.

Planning and programming

The next stage after conducting field research is to proceed to the Planning and Programming process. The Bloomka social media team, led by Mila, will plan to prepare social media content that will be created based on various facts found and collected through the process of Defining PR Problems. In the Planning stage, Magda added that the Social Media Specialist will discuss with the Brand Manager regarding information, content ideas, etc. before being handed over to the designer. After going through the Planning and Programming process and then Approval, there will be a discussion regarding the priority of the content to be uploaded depending on the needs and ongoing events. However, according to Anne Gregory, 2010 the planning process can also determine the contribution that each person can make, which can then be used as evaluation material [16].

Action and communicating

After Defining PR Problems and Planning and Programming, the next stage is Action and Communicating. According to Cutlip and Center in the book *The Effective Public Relations* (2013) [17], at this stage, the PR Person must act according to the plan so that it effectively conveys information to the audience.

Based on Magda as Brand Manager, Mila as Social Media Specialist will upload the content that has been approved through the Approval process which Magda will give. The delivery of content messages that have been compiled according to Magda is not just information on social media, starting from the design and the language used in conveying the information in question also has a crucial role.

According to Cutlip, planning the implementation of such content is an Action Strategy which is the main driving force of a program. Communication as a clearly seen component has a function

as an interpreter and supporter of Action Strategy. Through media content, the audience can see how information can be developed, created, and expressed [17].

Evaluating the program

After implementing the content planning, Mila as a Social Media Specialist will conduct an evaluation. This stage aims to redevelop content ideas in the future, related to this evaluation, it is not only observing content and engagement rates, according to Magda, input from Bloomers on a product campaign and content is also accommodated to be taken into consideration in Planning and Programming at a later stage.

According to the opinion of one user of Bloomka's products, the content uploaded by Bloomka is always interesting and contains product knowledge. Not only explaining the benefits of the advertised product, but also how to use it and the potential results that will be obtained from using the product.

In the evaluation stage, there was also a discussion on how the Bloomka team faced obstacles when there were problems related to the implementation of the campaign/program. According to Magda as Bloomka's Brand Manager, one of the obstacles is when there is negative feedback from customers. The existence of differences in perception between Bloomka and customers is an obstacle when Bloomka creates content, and the Bloomka PR Team will conduct education to straighten the information received and receive input from customers for the next social media campaign/content.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research results, according to Cutlip and Center's PR strategy in the book *The Effective Public Relations* (2013) [17], there are four stages of implementation, namely Defining PR Problems, Planning and Programming, Action and Communicating, and Evaluating the Program. Bloomka as a local skincare brand in Indonesia, applies the four steps in implementing the PR strategy through Instagram, Twitter, and Tiktok. According to Magda, through the implementation of the four stages of the PR strategy, Bloomka experienced an increase in engagement on social media by around 30% and got a revenue increase of 20-30%. Looking at the results obtained by Bloomka in implementing this strategy, it can be concluded that the preparation and preparation of a PR strategy will be effective by preparing carefully starting from research on trends in social media, careful planning, implementation and delivery of the right message, and making the evaluation of each program a reference. in formulating Public Relations strategy.

Author also gives recommendations for future research to be more engaging in how a brand decides their key opinion leader to develop brand image using public relation strategies as a core point. Author also gives practical recommendations that can be used by a brand or company, which doing public relations strategies to build brand image, all the strategies must be issued from planning, implementation and then monitoring evaluation.

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