

Public Communication Strategy At Kominfo Department In Improving The Image Of The Coal District Government

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research was to determine how the communication strategy implemented by Public Relations Diskominfo Batu Bara Regency helped to improve the image of the Batu Bara Regency government. This is an example of qualitative research. During the research, it was discovered that the Batu Bara Regency government's Public Relations strategy included collaborating with print and electronic media as media in reporting. If there is negative news about the Batu Bara Regency government, the steps to take are to clarify the negative information and increase the dissemination of positive information to the Batu Bara Regency government, utilizing information technology through official information channels in cyberspace for media dissemination of information by good framing and agenda setting in order to form a positive image of the Batu Bara district government so that it can be maintained in providing services.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana strategi komunikasi yang dilakukan Humas Diskominfo Kabupaten Batu Bara dalam meningkatkan citra pemerintah Kabupaten Batu Bara. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif. Dalam pelaksanaan penelitian diperoleh hasil bahwa Strategi yang dilakukan oleh Humas pemerintah Kabupaten Batu Bara diantaranya seperti melakukan kerjasama dengan media cetak dan media elektronik sebagai media dalam pemberitaan. Langkah yang dilakukan jika ada pemberitaan negatif mengenai pemerintahan Kabupaten Batu Bara adalah dengan mengklarifikasi informasi negatif tersebut dan meningkatkan lagi penyebaran informasi-informasi positif Pemerintah Kabupaten Batu Bara, memanfaatkan teknologi informasi melalui kanal informasi resmi yang ada didunia maya untuk media penyebaran informasi dengan framing dan agenda setting yang baik sehingga terbentuknya citra positif pemerintah kabupaten Batu Bara agar dapat terjaga dalam memberikan informasi kepada masyarakat berdasarkan fakta yang ada.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Public relations plays an important role for organizations, especially if the organization frequently interacts with the larger community in order to create, develop, and maintain mutual understanding between the organization and the community. The existence of Public Relations can serve as a bridge between the institution and the public, with Public Relations functions such as

disseminating information, creating, maintaining, and fostering good relationships in order to obtain a positive image from the public toward the organization.

Public relations is a method for institutions or businesses to establish a presence in the community. Public relations can shape public opinion, create a positive impression, and facilitate various community discussions. Public relations requires a strategy to carry out the function of public relations in order to manage the impression. The strategy must be as precise as possible, taking into account the company's or agency's ability from both internal and external factors. A good strategy is to fully exploit what is correct in order to achieve the best results. As a result, when developing a strategy, care must be taken. (Ridha, 2014)

Every organization or government agency, without a doubt, requires a good image in order to maintain and even improve the government's reputation. Based on the above description, the author decided to conduct a study titled "Communication Strategy for Public Relations of the Ministry of Communication and Informatics in Improving the Image of the Government of Batu Bara Regency."

Communication Strategy, Cangara in Bagus (2020) Communication strategy is planning and management to achieve a goal. Communication strategy is a concrete stage in a series of communication activities based on techniques to carry out communication goals. A plan that includes techniques, relationships and functional methods between the factors and elements of the communication process for operational activities so that goals and objectives are achieved. In principle, it is a management and planning to achieve goals. A communication planning expert Middleton provides a definition which states that communication strategy is the best combination of all communication elements, namely communicator, message, channel, receiver to the influence created so that communication goals are achieved optimally.

Public Relations, There are very short definitions such as PR is doing good and getting credit for it (public relations is an effort to do good things so that it gains trust) to the definition of public relations which consists of 100 words as stated in the Encyclopedia Britannica (Morrisan, 2014) As a process, public relations is the art of creating a better public understanding in order to deepen public trust in an individual or organization. According to IPRA (International Public Relations Association), public relations is an activity carried out in a planned and sustainable manner by an organization to gain understanding, sympathy, and support (Sutirman, 2020)

Image, Iwan Aprianto on Ruslan Rosady (2021) In general, an image is a collection of beliefs, ideas, and one's impression of a specific object. The image of an object that depicts the best conditions will determine a person's attitudes and actions toward that object. The primary goal is to establish a reputation and achieve success in the world of public relations (PR) or public relations. The image represents the trust values bestowed by these individuals or society.

Image is an abstract concept that cannot be measured mathematically, but it can be felt through the results of positive and negative assessments from the target audience (public) and the larger community. Community evaluation can refer to respect, a positive and favorable impression of an institution or a product of its goods and services as represented by public relations. (2021, Iwan Aprianto)

Public relations in government should also include public relations in institutions or organizations that work to improve the public's perception of them (Khusnul Khotimah, 2021). Given the importance of public relations in maintaining and developing positive relationships with the public, public relations is required in every organization (Juhji, 2020)

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This is an example of qualitative research. Through in-depth data collection, qualitative research seeks to explain the phenomenon as thoroughly as possible. This study does not prioritize population size or sampling, despite the fact that sampling is extremely limited. There is no need to look for additional sampling if the data collected is deep and can explain the phenomenon under

study. Qualitative research focuses on the problem of data depth (quality) rather than data quantity (quantity). 2009 (Kriyantono)

Primary data collection techniques are data obtained or collected directly in the field by the researcher or the person who requires it. Primary data can be obtained from informant sources, such as individuals or the results of interviews and field observations conducted by researchers (Hasan, 2002). Secondary data is information obtained or gathered from existing sources by researchers. This data is used to supplement the primary information obtained. Secondary data for this study were obtained from previous research journals, theses, books, and articles relevant to the variables to be studied. (Hasan, 2002).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Batu Bara Public Relations Duties and Functions

The Batu Bara Regency Regional Secretariat is organized into several sections, each with their own set of duties and functions. The Public Relations section is one of them. In addition, the Public Relations section is responsible for facilitating policy formulation, program coordination, and public relations affairs services such as media relations development, documentation, publishing, data, and information. Based on Batu Bara Regent's Regulation Number 21 of 2022 concerning the Batu Bara Regency regional apparatus's position, organizational structure, and work procedures. The Public Relations Sub-Coordinator is responsible for assisting the head of the information and public communication sector in preparing materials for policy formulation and implementation, drafting norms, standards, producers, criteria, and providing technical guidance and supervision, as well as monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on Public Relations, providing cross-sectoral content, and managing public communication media in the regions.

Based on the findings of the above interviews, it is possible to conclude that in order to foster a harmonious relationship with the community, Public Relations must provide correct information about government activities and correct any incorrect information that is circulating in the community.

2. Improving the Image of the Batu Bara Regency Government Through Public Relations and Communication

In order to instill trust in the community and improve the image of the Batu Bara Regency government, Public Relations requires a communication strategy when conveying information about the Batu Bara Regency government's activities. Public Relations' communication strategy is not limited to communicating directly with the community. However, the role of the media is also required to facilitate smooth communication between the government and the community. So that, in the end, Public Relations will improve the image of the Batu Bara Regency Government in the eyes of the community. Where Zulkarnain, SE, M.Si, as the Secretary of the Batu Bara Regency Information and Communications Office, revealed the PR communication strategy to improve the image of the Batu Bara Regency Government, namely:

"In the field of communication, particularly in matters of public information, the Department of Communication and Information, as the information kitchen of the Batu Bara Regency Government, implements a strategy, one of which is collaborating with print and electronic media as media in conveying news; in the field, we conduct Framing and Agenda Setting for each issue that will be raised, so that the positive image of the Batu Bara Regency Government can be maintained and enhanced; and Zulfan Suri, ST, the Batu Bara Regency Communication and Information Office's Head of Encryption and Statistics, also commented on the PR communication strategy, namely:

"Aside from what has been described previously, we continue to make various innovations by utilizing Information Technology through official information channels in cyberspace such as websites, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube in order to increase the positive image of the

Batu Bara Regency government. Using these social media channels, information is disseminated in a positive light so that it reaches the public quickly and the news is always up to date. We do this to meet the public's information needs while also adhering to the community's culture of the last decade, in which people prefer to get information in the palm of their hands more easily via the internet."

The researcher also inquired as to what steps Public Relations had taken to restore the image of the Batu Bara Regency Government, to which Aliandi Samosir, Sub-Coordinator of Public Relations, responded:

"The steps we have taken are to clarify the negative information and increase the dissemination of positive information from the Batu Bara Regency Government, which can be taken to temporarily resolve the existing problem." As a result, public relations always cooperates with the media, which are partners in the field of Information and Public Communication in reporting a positive image free of hoaxes ".

Based on the interview explanation, it is possible to conclude that the public relations communication strategy used to improve the image of the Batu Bara Regency Government is quite effective. Because improving the image requires significant sacrifice and cooperation from both the government and the PR industry. Based on the information submitted to the public or the public, the researcher became curious and asked Mr. Zulkarnain, SE, M.Si, Secretary of the Communication and Information Office of Batu Bara Regency, about the extent of transparency carried out by the Communication and Information Office of Batu Bara Regency, and what effect information transparency has. the public's perception of the Batu Bara Regency Government Because, of course, when an agency provides information openly, there must be some impact on the agency itself. The Secretary of the Coal Regency Communication and Information Office responded:

"In disseminating information, we always prioritize transparency by packaging information that will be published in such a way that the originality of the news is not compromised, in accordance with the Law on Public Information Disclosure Number 14 of 2018, as well as the code of ethics." The Ministry of Communication and Informatics' disclosure of information may also have an impact on the image of the Batu Bara Regency government. As a result, it is possible to conclude that the communication strategy used by the Public Relations of the Batu Bara Regency Communication and Information Office in improving the image of the Batu Bara Regency Government has been successful and has been operating in accordance with its duties and functions as a bridge between the Government and the community.

3. The media used by the Batu Bara Regency Communication and Information Office to improve the image of the Batu Bara Regency Government.

The Batu Bara Regency Government's Public Relations Department's communication strategy cannot be separated from the means and media of communication, which include print, electronic, and online media.

"Aside from traditional print media, we also create media channels in the internet domain, such as the website diskominfo.batubarakab.go.id, Facebook Kominfo Batubara, Instagram @kominfobatubara, Twitter @KominfoBatubara, Youtube Department of Communications and Informatics Coal, and we also use radio in disseminating information, namely Radio Odan 89.3 FM," Zulfan Sufi said. As a result, it is possible to conclude that Public Relations has collaborated and established good communication throughout the mass media, so that the media can support Public Relations' work in conveying information to the public with the goal of improving the image of the Batu Bara Regency government.

4. The Role and Barriers of Public Relations in Implementing the Communication Strategy of the Batu Bara Regency Government

An institution/organization, particularly the Batu Bara Regency Government's Public Relations, will almost certainly experience fluency and success in implementing its communication strategy when carrying out activities related to improving the government's image in the eyes of the public. According to Mr. Zulkarnain, SE, M.Si, the Secretary of the Batu Bara Regency Government's Communication and Information Office, "the Department of Communication and Information Technology plays a very big and strategic role in maintaining a positive image of the Batu Bara Regency government, this is because we as information managers can provide information according to what is needed." Keep your eyes open. Information and communication are essential for shaping public opinion. Now it's just a matter of how we manage and lead the information so that it always creates positive framing".

Not all public relations activities are successful. Because everything that is done must encounter difficulties. Whereas Aliandi Samosir explains the obstacles faced by the Batu Bara Regency Government's Public Relations, "there are several obstacles that we are currently facing in carrying out our duties, such as the lack of facilities or infrastructure and also Human Resources (HR) in the Office of Communication and Informatics of Batu Bara Regency, so it made us a little overwhelmed to cover the shortfall."

So it can be concluded that the PR communication strategy in improving the image has been going well, as evidenced by several explanations from interviewees who have carried out their duties as Public Relations based on existing regulations, resulting in an increase in public trust in the Batu Bara Regency Government by always prioritizing and improving what the community needs in terms of services and information. The researcher then argues that the problem of obstacles may lie in internal and external technical errors such as the speed with which Public Relations receives and disseminates correct information about activities and Public Relations with the media.

IV. CONCLUSION

Researchers can draw conclusions based on the findings of their research on the Communication Strategy of the Department of Communication and Informatics in improving the image of the Batu Bara Regency Government, namely: Public Relations strategies implemented by the Batu Bara Regency government include collaboration with print and electronic media as media in reporting. If there is negative news about the Batu Bara Regency government, the steps to take are to clarify the negative information and increase the dissemination of positive information to the Batu Bara Regency government, utilizing information technology through official information channels in cyberspace for media dissemination of information by good framing and agenda setting in order to form a positive image of the Batu Bara district government so that it can be maintained in providing services. In carrying out its duties, the Office of Communication and Information Technology always prioritizes information transparency, which builds public trust and helps to create a positive image of the Batu Bara Regency Government. By improving the service system and maintaining good communication and cooperation with the community, the Batu Bara Regency Government can improve its positive image.

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