



# Perum Bulog (Logistics Affairs Agency) Medan Regional Office's Public Relations Strategy for Maintaining the Company's Image

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the public relations strategy of Perum Bulog in the Medan area office in maintaining the company's image. The main purpose of public relations is to make consumers aware of the company and to see the brand/product as trustworthy. Every organization exists in a social, legal, political environment where it has to interact with different institutions and individuals. Public Relations is the process of managing an organization's communications with stakeholders. It plays a company's reputation, compliance, marketing, risk and crisis management. Public relations can include activities built around a favorable corporate image through publicity and public activities (market operations by Bulog). This research is a descriptive qualitative research that aims to explain the public relations strategy of Bulog office in Medan in maintaining the image of the company that is the object of research. The results showed that the Public Relations of Bulog Medan was identified as a tool that really builds the company's image and sustains it because it helps shape the way the organization's public sees or views the organization. This public can be internal or external. The approach adopted by the organization and being proactive is also very important. A proactive approach is better than a reactive approach, because the company may need time to improve its image as a State-Owned Public Company.

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan strategi humas Perum Bulog Kantor Wilayah Medan dalam menjaga citra perusahaan. Tujuan utama dari humas adalah untuk membuat konsumen sadar akan perusahaan dan melihat merek/produk dapat dipercaya. Setiap organisasi ada dalam lingkungan sosial, hukum, politik di mana ia harus berinteraksi dengan lembaga dan individu yang berbeda. Humas adalah proses mengelola komunikasi organisasi dengan pemangku kepentingan. Ini memainkan reputasi perusahaan, kepatuhan, pemasaran, risiko dan manajemen krisis. Humas dapat mencakup kegiatan yang dibangun di sekitar citra perusahaan yang menguntungkan melalui publisitas dan kegiatan publik (operasi pasar oleh Bulog). Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif yang bertujuan untuk menjelaskan strategi humas Bulog di Kota Medan dalam mempertahankan citra perusahaan yang menjadi objek penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Humas Bulog Medan diidentifikasi sebagai alat yang benar-benar membangun citra perusahaan dan menopangnya karena membantu membentuk cara publik organisasi melihat atau memandang organisasi. Publik ini dapat bersifat internal atau eksternal. Pendekatan yang diadopsi oleh organisasi dan bersikap proaktif juga sangat penting. Pendekatan proaktif lebih baik daripada pendekatan reaktif, karena perusahaan mungkin memerlukan waktu untuk meningkatkan citranya sebagai Perusahaan Umum Milik Negara.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In every organization, maintaining the organization's image is vitally crucial. No organization can satisfy many of its publics if the public does not view it as trustworthy and dependable (Valencia & Sudibyo, 2021). The dependability of an organization is contingent on the level of public convenience it offers and its good intentions. It is generally acknowledged that the objective of every corporate organization is to attain expansion in terms of revenue, assets, and profits. All of this, however, rests on the goodwill of the organization's multiple publics. Goodwill is assured not only as a result of the organization's sheer existence, but also via constant strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation of the public's opinion of the organization.

According to Casado, Peláez, and Cardona (2014), an organization's reputation, profitability, and viability may be contingent on the degree to which its target public supports its objectives and policies. A PR professional serves as an advocate for clients that seek to create and maintain positive relationships with the general public. (Tümtürk & Deniz, 2021) Effective PR/Public Relations can aid in reputation management through communication and the development of positive connections with organizational stakeholders. PR is a field concerned with reputation. The result of your actions. Say and what others say about a topic. In this interdependent world, it is essential for nearly all types of organizations to develop long-term and trustworthy relationships with the community or the public in order to face impending problems and also to ensure their continued success. According to various researchers in the field of PR, public relations is a systematic effort to build the image and reputation of a business in a social context through the development, understanding, and maintenance of positive relationships with various publics, including government, media, employees, investors, suppliers, and customers.

Public relations (PR) is an integral component of every business's integrated marketing strategy (Al-Hakim, 2021). A good public relations department cultivates and maintains a company's public image, which is crucial in a competitive market. For continuous business growth success, organizations must employ public relations to establish confidence and reliability with consumers. The primary objective of public relations is to increase brand awareness and credibility among consumers. People will be more likely to purchase a product or service if the public has a favorable opinion of the company. The PR team is responsible for monitoring and managing the company's public image through a variety of communication techniques. This technique builds ties between prospects and consumers and the organization or brand (Ferbita, Setianti, & Dida, 2020). The PR department mostly collaborates with the marketing department to optimize communication efforts. The marketing department provides the public relations team with relevant content, such as case studies, white papers, blog posts, articles, and videos, that may be promoted to the target audience.

The marketing team's advertising efforts are explicit, whereas the public relations team's marketing strategies are more subtle. They collaborate with the media, organize public events, and devise strategies to place businesses in the public eye. Utilizing social media networks is another method of content promotion. With tweets, Facebook posts, and Pinterest images, a company's content attracts and retains consumers' interest. Using press releases to promote content and/or make announcements is also an useful method for obtaining media and industry attention.

Additionally, social networking offers an added benefit. The platform enables prospects and consumers to provide comments and thoughts about the organization. These comments, tweets, and reviews tell the PR staff about the public's perception of the organization. This leads to another essential part of public relations work: managing one's reputation. The public relations team should monitor these internet comments, reply to them, and handle any problems publicly. This transparency also enhances the company's reputation.

The public relations team assists businesses in maintaining a positive public image in the eyes of consumers (Perdana, 2020). Maintaining long-term relationships with clients is the only way to generate repeat sales. Through different channels of communication with the target market, such as blogs, website text, news, and videos, the company maintains a prominent presence in the minds of consumers. However, the corporation also wants to be remembered in a positive light, which is why keeping a great public image is so crucial in business.

The importance of a company's reputation cannot be overstated. Every business has numerous ties, all of which must be beneficial to the business's interests. Therefore, it is essential to safeguard this reputation by presenting the public with accurate information. Public relations encompass a variety of operations conducted by businesses to promote and protect their image, products, and policies with key constituencies (Alvin, 2020). Customers, suppliers, shareholders, and staff are examples of stakeholders with an interest in a business. PR advises management to adopt regulations that enhance the firm's public image, and to focus on getting people to think positively about the company and what it has to offer in order to achieve the company's goals.

There is a big portion of society that is not a client of the firm, but they are potential customers, and this needs creating a respectable corporate image and highlighting corporate social responsibility over the long term. Respect for the rights of diverse parties, the elimination of monopolies, and informing the public about the company's contribution to the growth of industry and the economy of the country, such as the promotion of self-sufficiency, exports, and import substitution, are therefore present. It also informs the public that the corporation provides its personnel with compensation, bonuses, prizes, luxuries, etc. Lastly, he implemented charity initiatives in the community after establishing a more harmonious relationship amongst them.

The client-company relationship influences the company's actions, consumer attitudes, and image (Ltifi & Hichri, 2022). Public relations understands how customers think in order to influence them through snooping and information gathering; this enables businesses to adjust their products to meet client expectations. Customers should be informed about product availability and quality in order to allay their concerns that the company may provide substandard goods, especially during times of supply scarcity. Additionally, they should be informed about the introduction of new items, the modification of existing products, and the differentiation of their products from those of competitors.

One of the objectives of public relations is to strengthen the brand, stimulate demand, offer information, generate interest, and increase product awareness (Sibbel, 2009). Public relations continues to create and strengthen relationships with stakeholders such as consumers, employees, the community, and others interested in corporate finance in order to reach this objective (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011). He communicates with them and offers essential information at times of distress. Public Relations makes advice on company policies and decisions to manage them, particularly those pertaining to communication, relationship development, and enhancing the organization's image among key stakeholders.

In today's business world, the perception of public relations is the degree to which a company retains and expands its client base (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2019). Learn how to develop a trustworthy reputation that rivals that of competitors as a company adjusts to a competitive economy. Communication with clients is the cornerstone of any successful company partnership. Creating a strong public relations image is a solid option for firms seeking to increase contact with their customers, foster goodwill, and bolster trust.

As a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, the global PR market is expanding. Public relations refers to an organization's strategic communication with the public to maintain its brand image or to respond to any public topic (Lischka, 2019). This essay will serve as a guide for any firm seeking to

establish a trustworthy public relations image, whether it is a startup or a company dealing with a traumatic incident.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative descriptive study aims to describe the public relations approach of the Bulog office in Medan in sustaining the image of the subject of the study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), descriptive research aims to provide systematic and reliable descriptions of facts or events concerning the features of a specific population or location. This research is a case study that tries to explore in depth the public relations technique utilized by the Medan office of Bulog to maintain the company's image. This study employed both primary and secondary data collection methodologies. For primary data, structured observation was used, with the researcher aware of the features of the actions he witnessed that were pertinent to the problem and purpose. Systematic disclosure is conducted to characterize the PR technique utilized by the Medan office of Bulog to maintain the company's image. The second key data source is interviews, and semi-structured interviews are used in this study's photographs. In-depth interviews were performed to determine the public relations strategy of the Medan office of Bulog for maintaining the company's image. During interviews, informants also shared their thoughts and opinions regarding the subject of the study. This research gets secondary data from company papers and literature reviews. The information was gathered from reference sources such as books, journals, and online media (Fikri & Hasudungan, 2022). Data analysis is the methodical process of searching and compiling data gathered from interviews, field notes, and other sources in order to make them easily understandable and communicate the findings to others. Coding data analysis techniques were utilized in the data analysis method. According to A. Strauss and J. Corbin (1998), qualitative coding involves the dissection, conceptualization, and recombination of data. Source-obtained data is collected and evaluated through the steps of open coding, social coding, and selective coding in data coding analysis. This study employs source triangulation for data validity methodologies. Source triangulation is used to assess the reliability of data by comparing data from multiple sources. The data from multiple sources are characterized and classified based on their opinions, whether they are identical or not, and which sources are specific.

## III. RESULTS OF THE DISCUSSION

### 1. Relations with the Public (Public Relation)

Public Relations is the art and science of fostering and sustaining mutual understanding and acceptance among individuals, groups, organizations, businesses, etc. Public relations is not merely words or conversation without deeds, but rather deeds supported by well-packaged and timed words communicated to the appropriate audience (Igben & Ilaya, 2021). Before initiating an action, Public Relations/PR requires research, careful preparation, and a comprehensive evaluation or measurement of results (Santoso & Riskiyanti, 2014). Public relations is only a tool for effective communication techniques in promoting marketing, developing partnerships, and bridging the gap between diverse businesses and their respective publics.

Public Relations is one of the numerous communication-related disciplines currently undergoing rapid upheaval (Hakim & Sugiyanto, 2018). PR is a function of senior management that aids in achieving organizational objectives, defines organizational ideology, and enables organizational change. Public Relations is integrated in a continuous mass marketing communications program

and policy that contains reasonable, public-directed statements from an organization with the primary objective of balancing an abundance of evidence dynamics with enduring relationships and community spirit. PR practice entails forecasting, assessing, and interpreting public opinion, attitudes, future trends, and concerns that may be pertinent to any aspect of an organization's operations. Public Relations is a strategic communication strategy that creates relationships between an organization and its publics that are mutually beneficial (Sumarto, 2016).

Public relations is the activity of managing communication between an organization and its publics (Wulur, 2016). PR (Humas) refers to the many efforts conducted by the firm to promote and safeguard the public's perception of the company, its products, and its policies. Public Relations is a deliberate method to building goodwill and brand image via the cultivation of positive relationships between a company and its target audience (Ramesh, Saha, Goswami, Sekar, & Dahiya, 2019). Every organization lives in a social, legal, and political environment in which it must interact with other institutions and people. PR is the management of an organization's stakeholder communications. It plays a role in the management of a company's reputation, compliance, marketing, risk, and crises. Public relations might involve efforts that promote a positive business image via publicity and public events.

Specific roles of PR/Public Relations are grouped according to the public with which they are associated and to whom appeals are made to comprehend and/or accept a certain policy, process, individual, cause, product, or service. Practitioners who conduct specific activities can serve as managers, communications technicians, or in numerous capacities. The primary function of Public Relations is to establish and maintain positive relationships with the organization's internal and external audiences (Soyusiawaty, 2017). These publics are the organization's stakeholders and can include private individuals and companies, governments, and society in general. PR can have a significant impact on public awareness for a fraction of the price of advertising. The purpose of the public relations function is to increase the organization's trustworthiness and credibility with key stakeholder groups. They help create awareness of the group and allow it to define, control, and deliver its message to individuals inside and outside the organization. An efficient PR function can also promote an organization, facilitate communication during a crisis, and defend its reputation against media attacks.

Nevertheless, according to (Yates & Paquette, 2011), the functions of PR are as follows: 1) Crisis management addresses crises that affect an organization. They assist in establishing emergency response procedures, such as who can speak with the media and how management communicates with staff. 2) Relationship management establishes strategies for building and maintaining relationships with important public segments, such as customers and reporters; 3) Image management professionals work to present the company as socially responsible, compassionate, and involved in society; 4) Resource management examines the budget and resources for the organization's PR and seeks to maximize them.

Typically, an organization need its PR team to fulfill multiple roles. Managing relationships and building an organization's image can produce a significant amount of goodwill. When a crisis or negative news event occurs, the duty of public relations is to minimize the resulting damage or reaction. In other words, the head of the PR team should be responsible for damage management.

## 2. Company Image

Image is the reputation or perception of a person, group, or legal entity held by others, frequently as a result of their actions. According to Chabibi, Hasiholan, and Harini (2018), an organization's, person's, or group's image is the sum total of their impressions. Audiences' instant mental picture of an organization is its corporate image. A well-structured communication program helps expedite the formation of a business's image. Image, according to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (2021), is the public perception of a person, organization, or thing. Image is of utmost importance to

organizational management since the public's perception of an organization influences their attitudes toward the company, its activities, and its products. Therefore, Labrecque, Markos, and Milne (2011) define image as a representation, reflection, or appearance of a person or thing, as well as the impressions, thoughts, sentiments, or ideas formed in the minds of individuals.

The following key criteria outlined by Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) must be adhered to in order for a company to build a positive reputation and image: 1) Company Profile must have a good company profile and positioning to project the corporation; 2) Company Policy, should be well defined to enable knowing where to start on key issues and actions; 3) Opening the gates, allowing the political world to see what is happening, explaining problems, prospects, and challenges; 4) Communication: The company's reputation demands good communication and the use of appropriate communication tools.

A company's corporate image is how it is regarded. This is the commonly held conception of the company's mission. Typically, a company's image is crafted to appeal to the public in order to increase consumer interest, mind share, brand equity, and ultimately enable product sales. Corporate image is not established simply by the organization. A company's image may also be affected by the news media, journals, trade unions, environmental organizations, and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Companies are not the only type of organization that contributes to this perception. Governments, charity organizations, criminal groups, religious organizations, political organizations, and educational organizations all tend to have a distinct image that is in part purposeful and in part unintended, self-created and external. Considered crucial for attracting, cultivating, and retaining an employer's talent pool is the creation and management of a company's image. Public impressions of a given firm have been linked to individual career involvement decisions (e.g., seeking alternative work, pursuing promotion possibilities). In the eyes of a diversified audience, company image is best understood as a reflection of a dynamic and evolving employer.

The importance of public relations in any organization cannot be overstated. This is largely dependent on the fact that a company's public relations department is a crucial role in deciding its success through cultivating its corporate image. Whether a corporation is the "hunter" or the "prey," a strong corporate image can have a significant effect on both short-term financial outcomes and its long-term corporate image. The Public Relations Department is responsible for fostering mutual understanding between management, staff, and the general public. It is also a strategic communication technique that fosters mutually beneficial partnerships between an organization and its target audiences. Corporate image refers to an organization's entire reputation, which is formed by the many pictures, impressions, knowledge, information, and perceptions held by the public. Relations with the media are the most evident aspect of public relations, therefore they constitute a strategic approach to influencing the ideas and behaviors of others and developing new sales channels and opportunities. However, during public relations, businesses should cultivate ties with journalists whose work intersects with that of their clients. Sustenance relates to the maintenance of an organization's image for continued existence (Blustein, Kenny, Di Fabio, & Guichard, 2019).

Corporate image contributes to effective marketing communications and increased public safety (Yunus & Riatno, 2019). These outcomes can inspire more patronage. High productivity results, increased sales of products (and services), resistance to competitive challenges, encouragement of employee relations, improvement of financial relationships with customers and financial institutions, management of relationships and minimization of organizational crises, and an increase in public trust, all of which can encourage the recruitment of high-quality personnel. In Benteng Field, Medan City, for instance, the General Logistics Affairs Agency (Perum Bulog) of North Sumatra hosted a low-cost market. In 2022, the inexpensive market will collaborate with the TNI to commemorate the TNI's anniversary.

Arif Mandu, the head of the North Sumatra Bulog Logistics Agency, stated that the purpose of the inexpensive market was to help the inhabitants of Medan City obtain affordable, high-quality food.



Figure 1. Cheap Market by Bulog in Medan on October 19, 2022

The purpose of Bulog's Cheap Market is to maintain the company's image. Public Relations (Humas) or Public Relations (PR), sometimes known as Public Relations (Humas), is crucial to maintaining the organization-client relationship. The relevance of Public Relations lies in the following areas: 1) Increase Awareness: Companies and public relations departments concentrate primarily on increasing awareness by educating consumers about product specs and brand values. 2) Creating Brand Image and Reputation: Through PR strategies, businesses have the chance to enhance their public image and grow their reputation. Customers build loyalty factors for brands as a result of aggressive PR activities. They tend to purchase from companies repeatedly; 4) Promoting Goodwill: Over time, PR activities set the stage for the establishment of large goodwill for businesses. 5) Build Trust and Credibility: Repeated brand promotion, conducted through matching the company's goals with the community and target audience, builds public trust and credibility. Public Relations is supposed to meet the aforementioned objectives in order to create and preserve the organization's reputation.

The Function of BULOG Public Relations in Establishing Firm Image There are a variety of tools available for use in constructing a company's image. However, we shall discuss a few essential ones; 1) Press Releases: Part of a company's public relations strategy is to spin the news in a positive light. A narrative created by a company to promote a product, service, or individual. Consider how much better a story or product suggestion is likely to feel when recipients think the content to have originated from an objective third party as opposed to the firm itself. 2) Press Conferences The Public Relations Officer (PRO) of an organization can hold press conferences and speak with media representatives regarding the organization they represent. Both press conferences and press releases can be either proactive or reactive. By being proactive, PRO does not wait for difficulties to impact an organization's image before communicating with the media. By being reactive, PRO addresses the media or takes action when an organization's image is damaged. 3) Sponsorship: An organization might sponsor a significant television or non-broadcast program or event to promote their brand. There may be annual festivals, sports competitions, educational competitions, etc.; 4) House Organ is now referred to as the internal journal. In the form of a magazine containing just information about an organization and its activities, possibly for the year or from a historical or mixed perspective (both old and new); 5) Annual General Meeting (AGMS): Occurring year. The organization may assemble the GMS at any time of the year. It could be the

beginning, middle, or end of the year, or any other time of the year. Typically meant to examine the organization's prospects and difficulties, strengths and weaknesses, risks and opportunities; 6) Customer/Client Relations: An organization occasionally presents clients and customers with gifts. Typically, this is done at the beginning or close of the fiscal year, or on any significant transaction. This may consist of a calendar, journal, pen, etc. This activity leaves a highly long-lasting impression of the company in the customer's or client's mind.

Table 1.1 Total Population  
Perum BULOG Medan Branch Office

No	Section	Number of employees
1	Administration and Finance Section	2
2	Business Development Section	1
3	Commercial Section	4
4	Accounting Section	2
5	Operational Section	2
6	Procurement Section	2
7	Internal Control Unit	1
8	Auditor Assistant	1
9	Warehouse	21
Totals		36

Source: Perum BULOG Medan Branch Office

Employee-related PR actions reveal the method employed by Bulog Medan's Public Relations department to mitigate existing internal issues. The employee-related public relations initiatives of Bulog Medan include coordination meetings. During meeting activities, Public Relations is held to discuss arising issues and efforts to resolve them. This meeting is held with the company's internal parties in the form of a management meeting, and every month Bulog Medan conducts routine "coffee morning" activities. The purpose of this activity is to strengthen the relationship between superiors and employees, and communication can flow in both directions so that employees are aware of developments at Bulog's headquarters. The gathering is also anticipated to be beneficial for discussing future strategies and evaluating employee performance.

Bulog's efforts to maintain or repair the company's positive image have not been flawless because employees and employers should work together to enhance performance. This can be accomplished by continuous and seamless coordination between all staff and Bulog leaders in every practice activity. A positive reputation has a significant impact on the future state of Bulog Medan, particularly in terms of community service. The steps taken or taken by Bulog Medan's Public Relations to improve the company's image are as follows: a) Convincing the RTSPM (Target Beneficiary Households) that Bulog Medan's performance has improved; b) Introducing the Raskin work program in accordance with general guidelines, so that the community can control the components in rice or unhulled rice; c) There is good coordination between Bulog Medan, the Provincial Government (Pemprov) of North Sumatra and Medan City, and related agencies as competent parties within North Sumatra; d) There

Due to a number of challenges, Public Relations of Bulog Medan believed that the realization or reality that had occurred was not entirely in accordance with what had been anticipated. Public Relations of Bulog Medan encounter a challenge if there are parties from the community that complain or complain to parties who do not comprehend the concerns or complaints filed and are submitted directly to the media without first confirming with Bulog Medan. Multiple efforts are made by the Public Relations of Bulog Medan to ensure that there are no misunderstandings between the affected community and Bulog Medan, which in this case is the Public Relations of Bulog Medan. This can be accomplished by communicating and coordinating either directly through field visits or by clearing misleading information to the media.



#### IV. CONCLUSION

Public relations (PR) is a deliberate method to creating goodwill and brand image by fostering positive relationships between an organization and its target audience. Image is the reputation or perception of a person, group, or legal entity held by others, typically as a result of their actions. This research seeks to determine two primary factors: To assess if the Public Relations of Perum Bulog Medan play a role in developing the organization's image and if PR plays a role in maintaining the organization's image. Public Relations Bulog Medan was identified as a technique that establishes and supports the company's image since it influences how the public perceives or views the organization. This audience may be either internal or external. Internal references, such as to staff, and exterior references, such as to clients and the general public. For the Public Relations Officer to establish or maintain the corporate image of a company, numerous significant tools may be identified, such as press/news release, press/press conference, sponsorship, house organ, Annual General Meeting, etc. The primary objective of Public Relations at Perum Bulog is to establish and maintain positive relationships with the organization's internal and external publics. There are seven PR types. The importance of Bulog's public relations cannot be overstated if the organization-client relationship is to be preserved. Public Relations is intended to meet the aforementioned objectives in order to help create and maintain Bulog's reputation. There are quite a few instruments that can be utilized when constructing the image of Bulog. The public relations activities of Bulog assist in constructing, preserving, and enhancing the company's reputation. Otherwise, the organization will give it little thought. The organization's strategy and proactivity are also extremely significant. The corporation may require time to improve its image as a State-Owned Public Company, therefore a proactive strategy is preferable to a reactive one.

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