

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY OF EAST JAVA PROVINCE IN MANAGING INSTAGRAM SOCIAL MEDIA @HUMASPROVJATIM**

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### *Abstract*

The purpose of this research is to understand the public relations strategy of East Java Province in managing the Instagram social media account @Humasprovjatim and the community's response to its activities. The method used in this study employs a qualitative approach through interviews with targeted informants. The focus of this research is on the public relations of East Java Province. The results show that the implementation of the public relations strategy in East Java Province is quite good, with effective planning during brainstorming sessions. However, there is no specific time or schedule for posting content. Nevertheless, the quality and packaging of the content are varied and engaging, which encourages the community to seek information through Instagram @humasprovjatim. The conclusion of the research indicates that the role of public relations in East Java Province in managing social media content on Instagram is satisfactory. To be even more efficient, actions that can be taken include establishing target audiences, creating a timetable for content creation and posting, and distributing it on Instagram.

*Keywords: Social Media, East Java, Public Relations Strategy, Instagram*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As a medium of communication and information, social media has a crucial role as a tool, message, communicator/distributor, and recipient of messages (Haryadi & Ulumuddin, 2018). With its development, social media provides convenience for users to access information efficiently. Social media is a tangible manifestation of technological advancements based on the internet that allows users to interact directly in various forms (Mahmudah & Rahayu, 2020). The role of public relations (PR) in a company or organization is considered very important, as PR professionals require effective communication skills to engage honestly with all aspects, both internal and external publics, to strengthen beneficial relationships that have been built from the start (Rahma & Novita, 2023).

In this advanced technological era, social media is vital for disseminating information, such as through Instagram. In this context, the Leadership Administration Bureau of the East Java Provincial Secretariat plays a significant role and has a primary task in public relations to create and disseminate information related to the duties of the governor, vice governor,

and regional secretary to the people of East Java. In its implementation, the Instagram social media used by the East Java PR is both general and specific. General information includes updates on tourism potential, support for local MSMEs in East Java, as well as commemorations of significant days, and technology-related information. Meanwhile, specific information pertains to the activities, policies, and events of the governor.

The Leadership Administration Bureau, previously known as the PR and Protocol Bureau, is a government agency headed by a bureau chief responsible to the Assistant for General Administration, who is in turn accountable to the Regional Secretary. The Leadership Administration Bureau itself has three sections: the Protocol Section, the Leadership Communication Material Section, and the Planning and Personnel Section, each with subsections led by heads who report to the bureau chief.

PR plays a crucial role in helping to inform both internal and external publics by providing accurate information in an easily understandable format for all citizens. Therefore, PR itself has strategies to become highly effective (Syahputra, D. I., Hendra, Y., & Hidayat, T. W. (2018)). Within the PR profession, there is a key role in clearly explaining a situation so that opposing public sentiments can understand and accept the viewpoints and input provided by PR professionals.

The role of PR in the government sector is very important in building a positive image, especially in a governmental environment facing various fundamental societal issues. The enhancement of social media to disseminate information to the public, particularly in East Java, places local government PR in a very important and strategic position (Sauki, M. (2022)).

PR also represents a continuation of the government policy-making process, providing information services to the public, thus gaining the trust of its broader audience. Therefore, a good attitude and service are essential for creating a positive image. One of the objectives of the Leadership Administration Bureau at the East Java Governor's Office is to communicate information that meets the needs of the community.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

As a government agency, PR practitioners need to optimize their performance and functions for an institution. This can be aided by adapting to the use of digital media or new

media, which can also be utilized as public relations media, referred to as digital public relations (Nugraha, A. R., Sjoraida, D. F., & Novianti, E. (2022)). The removal of spatial and temporal boundaries requires PR practitioners to play a significant role in providing current and factual information.

The Instagram account @humasprovjatim features ideas in each post designed to provide information that is engaging and easy for the general public to understand. The themes included in the @humasprovjatim Instagram account are as follows:

1. The governor's or local leader's duties in attending events.
2. Community outreach activities for socialization, infrastructure development, and natural disasters.
3. Informative themes containing content about East Java, including its uniqueness, characteristics, and history.
4. Engaging themes featuring quizzes or entertaining content.

Media managers or public relations (PR) professionals play a role in providing information or content that is not monotonous. Therefore, the creation and presentation of information are crafted in such a way as to remain engaging. In addition to well-organized and visually appealing posts with clear segmentation and targets, the management of the Instagram account @humasprovjatim also involves media managers who respond to comments and direct messages, which is part of social media management.

Indicates that the Instagram account @humasprovjatim has its own social media managers. The segmentation of content on this account makes the Instagram feed attractive and relevant to the target audience, both the people of East Java and those seeking information about the region, to disseminate both general and specific information. In spreading or creating information, PR practitioners play a crucial role in ensuring that the information reaches the public in a relevant manner. It is important that the audience can understand the information presented and respond, allowing PR to answer any questions, as their role as public servants is deeply involved in the social media management process, particularly on Instagram.

The choice of the Leadership Administration Bureau of the East Java Provincial Secretariat as the subject of this research is based on direct observations in the field. The

management of the Instagram account @humasprovjatim is conducted in such a way that it presents an attractive display and posts; however, it has not yet succeeded in creating strong interactions with the audience. The selection of Instagram as the object of this research is due to the content uploaded on the @humasprovjatim account serving as a medium for information dissemination, which is then mirrored to other social media owned by the Leadership Administration Bureau of the East Java Provincial Secretariat, such as its official website.

The use of the Instagram account @humasprovjatim is directly managed by the Social Media Team under the Leadership Communication Material (MKP) section. As a form of digital media, it has a significant following, particularly among Millennials and Gen Z, who seek and disseminate information. Social media is defined as technology-based platforms that provide opportunities for the creation and distribution of information, ideas, and various forms of expression through virtual network communication.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a constructivist paradigm, which views reality as shaped by the researcher's assumptions that observing the uniqueness of public relations strategies in managing the Instagram account @humasprovjatim, as well as the community's responses to the PR activities on that account, will yield comprehensive research findings. The constructivist paradigm assumes that reality is multi-dimensional, interactive, and is a social exchange interpreted by individuals, allowing for different perspectives. A qualitative approach is chosen by the researcher as a means to address issues, as field findings cannot be achieved through statistical procedures.

In this study, the use of three techniques involves observing the Instagram account @humasprovjatim, conducting in-depth interviews with informants who possess knowledge, experience, and competence in the relevant fields to gather appropriate data, and analyzing other supporting documents that are expected to assist the researcher in further analyzing the PR strategies employed in managing the Instagram account @humasprovjatim and the community's responses to the PR activities to achieve more accurate research results. The subjects of this research are the Leadership Communication Material field, acting as PR for the Leadership Administration Bureau of the East Java Provincial Secretariat. This bureau

assists the governor, vice governor, and regional secretary in governmental affairs related to protocol and social media management. Meanwhile, the specific object of this research is the role of PR in managing the Instagram account @humasprovjatim and the community's responses to its PR activities.

The content segmentation in the Instagram account @humasprovjatim can also be seen as a form of PR strategy in its management. The researcher employs the Public Relations Strategy Theory according to Cutlip & Allen H. Center (1982), which outlines four stages in the implementation of public relations work programs. Additionally, to provide a more detailed reference, the researcher also integrates the concept of social media management strategies for government PR published by the Directorate General of Information and Communications as a benchmark for the accuracy of the theory and its practice.

Both concepts are chosen by the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of how the management of Instagram @humasprovjatim operates by examining its PR strategies, particularly within the government PR field of MKP, when communicating as a form of managing the Instagram account @humasprovjatim. This allows the researcher to obtain accurate results that align with the findings in the field.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

#### **Public Relations Strategy of East Java Province in Managing Instagram Social Media @Humasprovjatim**

In the development of information and communication technology, the use of social media has become a crucial skill to master for effective utilization, especially for corporations and government agencies. Particularly during the pandemic, with rapid regulatory changes, government institutions need to provide information that is current and factual. Therefore, the role of social media in assisting government institutions to fulfill their public relations duties can be effectively applied in the use of social media itself. The research findings refer to the PR Strategy theory proposed by Cutlip & Allen H. Center (1982), which includes Research-Listening, Planning-Decision, Communication-Action, and Evaluation, as well as the Social Media Management Guidelines for Government Agencies published by the Directorate General of Information and Communications.

In its management, the Instagram account @humasprovjatim has one admin responsible for posting content, responding to audience comments and direct messages, and there is a team assigned to analyze the posted content as well as the account @humasprovjatim itself. Additionally, there is a team that participates in brainstorming sessions to create a timetable. The structured management of Instagram social media ensures that each team has designated tasks, leading to effective content management.

"When it comes to effectiveness, it's very effective because social media is vast. So, basically, within the structure of social media, there is the social aspect and an admin responsible for posting content and responding to comments or direct messages from the audience. The second aspect is social media strategy, where strategies and plans are created. There is also analysis involved; for example, identifying current trends to inform the strategy. Additionally, there are different teams responsible for creating various types of content. Overall, everything is being managed well because each team is fulfilling its specific tasks." (Interview with the Social Media Manager on June 27, 2024).

Another finding by the researcher is that the admin of the Instagram account @humasprovjatim does not have a template for responding to messages or comments. This was also mentioned by the publication analysis team of Humas Prov Jatim: 'There isn't one, because the content on the Humas Instagram is mostly informative and generates many questions, so it can't be answered with a template like the posts about Saimbara Design for the Logo Creation of the East Java Province Anniversary' (Interview on August 19, 2024).

In addition, a Social Media Admin must have a broad understanding and be familiar with the content being posted on Instagram, so they can appropriately respond to questions from the public in the comments. 'Being an admin is not as easy as it seems because you have to respond quickly and accurately so that the public feels acknowledged and can receive information promptly' (Interview on August 19, 2024).

Another finding from the researcher during the interview with the Instagram creative team regarding post creation was, 'To create a piece of content or a post, we don't rely solely on the design and documentation section. In our department, there are three sub-sections, and each sub-section contributes to the content creation process, with some responsible for generating ideas, planning, and designing.'

From the findings, it can be concluded that the use of Instagram by the Public Relations of East Java Province as an effort to disseminate information is effective and efficient. Each team has its own responsibilities and does not rely on a single person. Additionally, the posts in the comments do not have template responses because the uploaded content cannot depend on templates, and many questions from the public are answered manually, requiring an understanding to ensure effectiveness and accuracy in the information provided. In content creation, each sub-section usually participates in contributing creative ideas.

In packaging content, the Public Relations of East Java Province often uses storytelling, which is considered quite efficient and more persuasive. This approach aims to enhance engagement on both the posts and the Public Relations account itself. 'Our current content is created through storytelling, so people will follow along from start to finish, and in the last sentence, we make it persuasive, prompting people to respond and discuss. Because the public needs general information or just wants to be informed, like '#wargajatim should be smart and wise consumers of information, and should not easily believe in government-related information that lacks official sources and accountability.'

Using storytelling to package content is certainly one way to align with current trends; however, it's not that simple. It must also be tailored to the target audience, as not everyone prefers content presented in a storytelling format—some also appreciate more straightforward content. Therefore, the Public Relations of East Java Province conducted evaluations of the content distributed on its Instagram over the past month. This evaluation is part of the brainstorming process, where it also serves as a basis for creating a timetable for content posting, allowing for the utilization of Instagram's insight features with different content.

## **Discussion**

In managing Instagram's social media as a communication medium between the public and government institutions, Instagram plays a significant role in fulfilling the functions of public relations, making its management an essential part of PR strategy. In its utilization, Instagram serves an important role, not only in fostering communication with the public but also as a medium for distributing information. The advantage of using social media for government institutions is that the data or information provided can be considered more valid,

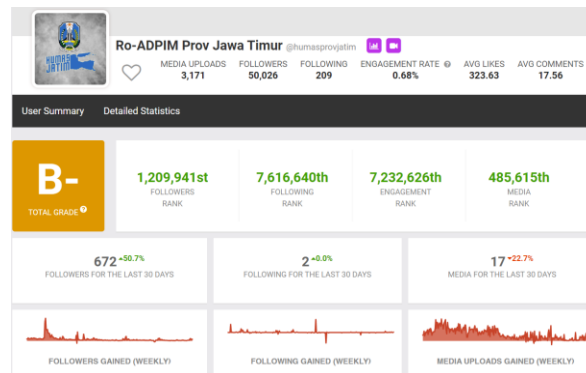
given the rigorous process of information handling within government agencies, which minimizes the likelihood of misinformation.

According to Dozier & Broom in Ruslan (2020), one of the roles of public relations in an organization is that of a communication technician, which positions PR practitioners as resident journalists who provide technical communication services, including conveying information from internal to external parties. This approach is also employed by the East Java Provincial Public Relations in managing its Instagram account, @humasprovjatim, which strives to provide up-to-date and factual information to its audience. This is important because the target audience on this social media platform is very specific—namely, the public who need information about the East Java Provincial Public Relations itself, as well as the large number of younger Instagram users, which contributes to the optimization of the social media account.

The efforts made by the East Java Provincial Public Relations in managing their Instagram social media as effectively as possible involve creating a content timetable through a brainstorming process with the social media management team. This content timetable serves as a reference for gathering baseline data, which is then packaged in such a way that it can ultimately be distributed to the audience. Of course, there are limitations on content creation, which must align with the guidelines for social media management issued by the Director General of the Ministry of Communication and Information, as well as applicable regulations according to the law.

As a regional government organization (OPD), the East Java Provincial Public Relations indirectly serves as the public relations office for the province. According to Millet (in Ruslan, 2020:341), some primary tasks of government public relations include understanding the desires and aspirations of the public, providing advice or recommendations on the steps that the OPD should take by public expectations, ensuring that the relationship between the public and government officials is satisfactory, and providing information about the efforts made by East Java province and related matters. Some of the actions taken by the East Java Provincial Public Relations to fulfill its main duties include providing information officially.





**Gambar 1.** Sosial blade

Based on the researcher's observations, the process of viewing responses from the public, or social listening, falls within the evaluation process, or Evaluating. However, the findings indicate that the followers of the Instagram account @humasprovjatim are passive. This is evidenced by data from Social Blade, which shows that the engagement rate for the @humasprovjatim Instagram account is only 0.68%, while the account has approximately 50,026 followers. On the other hand, data collected by the researcher indicates that the public liked the posts 323.63 thousand times and commented on the posts 17.56 thousand times. This suggests that the content shared by the social media management team at @humasprovjatim is more likely to receive likes than comments. This situation may arise due to the appropriate packaging of the content; however, the responses from the targeted audience remain limited.

Given that the monitoring conducted by the social media management team for Instagram @humasprovjatim tends to rely solely on posts featuring the governor's activities, it can be said that the management of the Instagram account has not effectively implemented social listening. This effort has primarily involved trial and error with various types of content to gauge audience preferences. The lack of interaction between the management team and their audience does not necessarily indicate a failure in information dissemination or transparency. However, it makes it challenging to accurately gauge public sentiment, which diminishes the likelihood of achieving two-way communication and mutual understanding between the government agency and its audience. In reality, there are more posts about the governor's activities than content related to information about East Java.

## CONCLUSION

The Public Relations Office of East Java Province manages its Instagram account @humasprovjatim as a means of information and communication with the public. The strategy employed in managing the Instagram account focuses on optimizing social media. The implementation of this strategy has been effective in packaging posts that are not monotonous. However, there are still shortcomings, such as inadequate planning during brainstorming sessions, specifically the lack of a set schedule for posting content. Despite these shortcomings, the Public Relations Office of East Java Province has successfully disseminated information to the public in a general manner.

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