

CRISIS COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS OF PT KERETA API INDONESIA IN HANDLING PUBLIC COMPLAINTS IN MAINTAINING THE REPUTATION

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ABSTRACT

A crisis is an unexpected situation that can endanger the stability, reputation and image of an organization. This can disrupt the sustainability of a company or organization, because it has a negative impact, especially if it is not handled properly. In facing a crisis, a company can communicate with its consumers through press releases on its website or social media. This crisis communication effort is to help consumers while protecting potential victims from danger and it is hoped that this communication effort will be able to protect the company's reputation from the damage that accompanies the crisis. The research technique used in this scientific writing is documentary study, namely by researching and understanding relevant books, documents or other written sources and cases related to crisis communication. The results of this study show that with responsive action from PT KAI, the community feels cared for and gets fairly fair treatment. In this way, the existing crisis can be resolved well through appropriate communication strategies.

Keywords: Crisis Communication, handling complaints, reputation

INTRODUCTION

A crisis is a problem or challenge that every company or agency has experienced. No company escapes the crisis, the only difference is how big the crisis is experienced and the company's success in getting through the crisis. Managing a crisis is the most important factor that determines the formation of public opinion regarding a company's image. The crisis creates a company in a position to become the public's attention, thereby questioning the management of the company's crisis management.

One of companies that often experiences crisis communication is PT Kereta Api Indonesia (formerly known as PT Kereta Commuter Indonesia/PT KCI). Throughout 2021, KAI Commuter recorded that it had served 123,125,911 Jabodetabek KRL users with an average of 337,331 users per day. This number is down 19.6% compared to the number of

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Jabodetabek KRL users throughout 2020, namely 153,154,151 users, with an average daily user of 419,600 users (PT KAI Website, 2021).

Although currently PT KAI has carried out a company transformation to improve the quality and service to users of train transportation services, including modernizing the ticketing system, the KAI Access application, rejuvenating facilities, improving infrastructure and service facilities at all stations, establishing a Contact Center 121 service, and etc., however, there are still quite a lot of complaints from the public, including many reductions in train schedules during the pandemic, while people have already made ticket reservations, resulting in automatic ticket cancellations, changes to the E-Ticketing system which causes disruption to tap-in entry routes and tap out at all stations on the five main routes, namely Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi, to PT KAI staff who are considered by the public to be not providing good service. Therefore, this research is aimed at finding out how PT KAI overcomes the crisis communication it is experiencing so that the company's reputation can continue to be maintained.

METHOD

The research technique used in this scientific writing is documentary study, namely by researching and understanding relevant books, documents or other written sources and cases related to crisis communication. Guba and Lincoln (in Alwasilah, 2009 p. 155) differentiate between documents and records as follows : records are all written notes that have been prepared by a person or institution to prove an event or present calculations, while documents are written or filmed items other than records that has been specially prepared at the request of the researcher. Arikunto (2010, p. 201) explains that documentation comes from the word document, which means written items. Then Sukardi (2004, p. 34) explains various types of documents or literature sources, including journals, research reports, scientific magazines, newspapers, relevant books, seminar results, unpublished scientific articles, resource persons. The documentary study carried out by the author is related to the crisis communication case experienced by PT Kereta Api Indonesia (KAI), a study taken from previous research related to the crisis communication case at PT KAI, and a literature study from books about communication. crisis written by communication science experts.

DISCUSSION

In this research, the authors took 3 examples of crisis communication cases experienced by PT Kereta Api Indonesia based on documentary studies:

PT Kereta Commuter Indonesia (PT KCI) Crisis Communication Case 1

The case related to Crisis Communication that occurred at PT KCI was written by

Ferlita Lourensia and Yugih Setyanto in the journal *Prologia* (2018) related to the Role of Public Relations in Restoring the Reputation of PT Kereta Commuter Indonesia After Changes to the E-Ticketing System. In his article, it is explained that PT Kereta Commuter Indonesia (PT KCI) experienced a communication crisis caused by changes to the E-Ticketing system which caused disruption to the tap in and tap out routes at all stations on the five main routes, namely Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. This of course causes the quality of service in the eyes of the public, especially commuter service users, to decline, and of course the reputation of the PT KCI company also declines.

However, PT KCI responded responsively to this, by apologizing to PT KCI, represented by VP CorCom, Eva Chairunisa, regarding the renewal and maintenance of the system which caused long queues at the entrance and exit counters and electronic gates. Apart from the apology from the VP of CorCom, an explanation was also conveyed from the destination station officer, namely that there had been a change in the system by deactivating the KMT card serial 1001 because the new card would use a better quality chip.

Public Relations of PT Kereta Commuter Indonesia has performed its role well in restoring its reputation due to the crisis caused by changes to the E-Ticketing system, even though the crisis faced has caused panic and conflict in the form of new issues within the company, PR of PT Kereta Commuter Indonesia must respond quickly in provide accurate confirmation to the media, and in making decisions, PR must work quickly in overcoming the crisis (Anom & Handayani, 2010).

PT KAI Public Relations acts as an advisor to company leaders, in the form of input or considerations in making decisions such as giving advice so that no information is covered up, the company must not give false statements or in other words must provide honest information because the public has the right to know the actual facts (Carlina & Paramita, 2017) and provide input for issuing paper tickets and holding press conferences. In accordance with the theory above, the role of PR in PT Kereta Commuter Indonesia is as an advisor to the management leadership to provide information according to the situation, and provide input in the form of considerations in selling paper tickets.

PT KAI Crisis Communication Case 2

The case experienced by PT KAI written by Meri Safarwati Putri in *The Source Journal of Communication Sciences*, Vol 3, No 1 (2021). people have already ordered tickets, so tickets are automatically canceled. Apart from that, there were also customer complaints due to travel disruptions, both due to flooding and signals being struck by lightning.

In this situation, PT KAI tries to be responsive to public complaints. The efforts made are: (a) For customers who are directly affected, an SMS will be sent by Customer Service

who handles customer complaints in the field or Customer Service will communicate directly with these customers. Meanwhile, customers who were not directly affected were informed via broadcast release and customers who were at the station were informed using media announcements from the announcer, while for customers outside the station (wider community) Public Relations of PT. KAI held virtual press conferences, distributed releases and created advertorials. This completion stage has been mutually agreed upon by senior managers and involves all divisions.

PT KAI Crisis Communication Case 3

The second case related to Crisis Communication was written by the Al Azhar Indonesia Student Corps on the Comic website. In June 2021, social media was abuzz with the Public Relations case that handled KAI Commuter Line's Twitter responding to reports of sexual harassment from its audience unethically. His response was seen as not paying attention to the rights of other parties and not respecting other people's opinions and dignity. It even appears to not pay attention to one's self-esteem and the public interest. His actions did not show a sense of responsibility for the safety and comfort of his audience and therefore violated the Public Relations code of ethics.

"By the way, this happened to a friend of yours, right? Isn't it the same sis?? Why don't you just report it to the police, sis? "And if you report to the police, the lady must have proof," wrote the account @CommuterLine. (Source: Twitter @CommuterLine, 2021)

Public Relations should act through mature, rational, objective consideration, full of integrity and high responsibility. If not, the consequence is that it can create uncontrolled and sensational news that will have a detrimental impact on the company's good image. When service processes are unreasonable, or when employees are rude, the customer's self-esteem or sense of fairness can be negatively affected. As a consequence they may become angry and emotional (Lovelock & Wirtz (2011).

However, PT KAI responsively immediately made further efforts regarding this case, namely by uploading a tweet in the form of a photo on the Twitter account @CommuterLine that it had met and directly apologized to users who experienced sexual harassment on KA 1452 on June 4 2021. Not only that , KAI Commuter Line held a follow-up meeting with the victim which took place at Jatinegara Station on June 5 2021. KAI Commuter Line has provided a number of supporting data that the victim needs to forward a report to the police. And promised to always accompany the process of reporting to the police and always maintain contact with the victim.

The serious efforts that have been continuously done by PT KAI in handling Crisis Communication, PT KAI received a Diamond award in the Best Crisis Management category at the 3rd ASEAN PR Excellence Awards 2021. KAI received this Diamond predicate thanks to the implementation of the 'Public Relations' program of KAI, Information Oxygen in the Midst of COVID-19 Pandemic," as reported in the article entitled "KAI's Communication Strategy During the Pandemic Wins Award from ASEAN PR" (detiknews.com, 2021). From the discussion above, it can be seen that customer complaints cannot be ignored, because this will make customers feel unappreciated and not cared for at all (Rusadi, 2004).

CONCLUSION

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that PT KAI has experienced a crisis communication that cannot be said to be small. Public complaints were responded to quickly and involved all leaders and divisions in PT KAI management. With responsive actions from PT KAI, the community feels cared for and gets fairly fair treatment. In this way, the existing crisis can be resolved well through appropriate communication strategies. This is proven by the success of PT KAI in obtaining the Diamond award in 2021 at the 3rd ASEAN PR Excellence Awards.

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