



Communication Strategy in Building Corporate Image (a Case Study on PT KAI Divre IV Tanjungkarang)

Wardah Rusydah Ulfa*, Wawan Hernawan, M Denu Poyo

Universitas Bandar Lampung

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxx>

*Correspondence: Wardah Rusydah Ulfa

Email: wardahrusydahulfa03@gmail.com

Received: 26-05-2025

Accepted: 26-06-2025

Published: 26-07-2025



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the communication strategies implemented by PT KAI Divre IV Tanjungkarang in building a positive corporate image. The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The findings show that PT KAI employs external strategies via Instagram @siger.railway, mass media, and safety campaigns, while internal strategies include officer training and inter-departmental coordination. The research is analyzed using Weber's Social Action Theory and Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism, revealing that the company's communication acts are rational, symbolic, and consistent in building public trust.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Corporate Image, PT KAI, Social Media, Organizational Communication

Introduction

In the era of digital communication, organizations are required to adopt adaptive and integrated communication strategies to build a positive image in the eyes of the public. For public service institutions such as PT KAI Divre IV Tanjungkarang, communication plays a critical role in maintaining public trust, transparency, and engagement. Strategic communication enables organizations not only to disseminate information but also to construct long-term perception and reputation (Wibowo et al, 2021).

Social media has become one of the most dominant communication channels today. With the increasing penetration of the internet and social media in Indonesia, companies have a significant opportunity to engage directly and interactively with their audience. PT KAI Divre IV Tanjungkarang utilizes Instagram as a primary platform to deliver information, promote services, and conduct safety campaigns. This reflects a shift from one-way communication to a more dialogic and participatory approach (Claretta et al, 2022)

However, the success of digital communication must be supported by the quality of face-to-face communication in the field. Interactions between service officers and passengers directly reflect the company's values and play a major role in shaping public image. Therefore, a strong internal communication strategy is essential to align social media messages with frontline communication behavior (Wibowo et al, 2021).

This study aims to analyze the communication strategies of PT KAI Divre IV Tanjungkarang in building its corporate image, with a focus on the use of digital media and interpersonal communication in direct customer service. It is important to understand how organizational communication contributes to forming a coherent and strategic public image in the digital era.

Literature Review

1. Theory of Social Action

(Weber, 1978) theory emphasizes that individual actions have subjective meaning and are oriented toward others. In organizational communication, a company's strategy is viewed as social action designed to influence public perception. PT KAI Divre IV's communication—through social media and direct services—can be seen as rational social actions with strategic intent. Phenomenological Theory

2. Symbolic Interactionism

(Blumer, 1969) asserts that meaning is formed through interaction and symbols. In corporate communication, symbols like logos, brand colors, uniforms, and language style serve as tools to convey meaning. This theory helps explain how the public interprets symbolic messages from PT KAI in relation to its image.

3. The theory of group communication

focuses on how communication processes occur within groups, from small teams to larger organizations, and how group dynamics influence behavior, decision-making, and message effectiveness. (Maulana, R. A., & Saputra, 2019) define group communication as reciprocal interactions among members aiming to achieve shared goals. In PT KAI Divre IV's context, group communication takes place in internal meetings, interdepartmental coordination, and service team collaborations.

Effective group communication within the organization is essential to ensure consistent corporate messaging to the public. It also enhances the quality of external communication strategies. Furthermore, strong teamwork and shared values contribute to building a corporate image of responsiveness and unity.

4. Interpersonal Communication Theory

(DeVito, 2018) defines interpersonal communication as a direct, two-way message exchange. In public services, interactions between officers and customers significantly shape user experience and perception. This theory emphasizes how human connection and empathy affect public views of a company.

5. Mass Communication Theory

Mass communication theory explores how media shape public attention and opinion. The agenda-setting approach (McCombs & Shaw, 1993) posits that media influence what people think about, rather than what to think. PT KAI's use of Instagram @siger.railway illustrates how digital media are employed to build public focus and positive perception.

Methodology

1. Research Location and Time

The research was conducted at PT KAI Divre IV Tanjungkarang, particularly at Tanjungkarang Station and the official Instagram platform @siger.railway, between February and June 2025.

2. Data Collection Techniques

Three main techniques were used:

- a. Direct observation: focused on officer–customer interactions at the station and PT KAI's communication activities on social media.
- b. In-depth interviews: conducted with the Public Relations Manager, station service officers, and customers as supporting informants.
- c. Documentation: including Instagram content, safety campaign posters, and company reports.

3. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model (1994), which includes:

- a. Data reduction – selecting and filtering relevant data from interviews and observations,
- b. Data display – organizing information into thematic narratives,
- c. Conclusion drawing – interpreting findings through field data and theoretical frameworks.

4. Data Validity

Data validity was ensured through **source triangulation**, comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure accuracy and credibility.

Result and Discussion

1. Corporate Image of PT KAI Divre IV

Based on interviews with three customer informants, the majority perceive PT KAI Divre IV's image as positive. They note improvements in punctuality, cleanliness, and comfort. However, some criticisms persist, such as limited seating and lack of direct information on-site. As one informant, Siti (68), stated: *"It's better now, and the staff are polite. But sometimes we're confused about where to get schedule information."*

Social media content, especially on @siger.railway, presents a modern and informative image. Observation shows that posts include educational material, service promotions, and safety messages, portraying the company as responsive and digitally connected.

2. External Communication Strategies

PT KAI Divre IV's external communication strategy includes digital media, face-to-face service, and public safety campaigns. Instagram is used to reach younger audiences with visually appealing content that delivers information on schedules, services, and policies.

Face-to-face communication remains essential, with service officers acting as direct intermediaries. Observations show that officers actively assist passengers and respond to inquiries or complaints courteously. This is confirmed by the second key informant (station officer), who emphasized the importance of a human approach in communication.

Posters placed in the station deliver safety messages such as “no smoking” and “don’t sit on the carriage ends.” This integrated approach shows that both direct and digital strategies are employed.

3. Internal Communication Strategies

Internal communication is maintained through regular coordination, morning briefings, and internal messaging platforms like WhatsApp groups. These ensure all staff are updated on schedules, new regulations, or special instructions.

The PR Manager stated that internal understanding is essential to support external messaging. Therefore, regular service training is provided to maintain the quality of direct communication.

Observations reveal that staff receive updates through direct instructions and internal communication channels, ensuring consistency between internal and external messages.

4. Theoretical Interpretation

According to Weber’s theory of social action, PT KAI’s communication strategies are rational efforts to shape public behavior and perception. Safety campaigns on Instagram, for instance, are not merely informative but aim to guide passenger behavior in line with corporate goals.

Blumer’s symbolic interactionism is evident in how the public interprets communication symbols such as logos, captions, and staff responses, which collectively shape corporate image.

Devito’s interpersonal communication theory is reflected in the warm, respectful, and clear interactions between staff and customers—an essential factor in reinforcing a professional and positive public image.

Conclusion

The communication strategies adopted by PT KAI Divre IV Tanjungkarang illustrate the crucial role of communication in shaping the public image of a state-owned institution. Based on the findings, these strategies are not merely technical but also social and symbolic, as seen through the use of digital media, direct staff–customer interactions, and visual message delivery.

Externally, the company’s use of Instagram (@siger.railway) demonstrates its adaptation to the digital era. Social media is used not only for promotion but also to foster emotional connection with the audience. The shared content includes schedules, safety education, service promotion, and human stories. This aligns with modern communication practices that value transparency, engagement, and responsiveness.

This supports the agenda-setting theory by (McCombs & Shaw, 1993), which posits that media tells people not what to think, but what to think about. PT KAI’s Instagram posts highlight selected topics—such as safety and service quality—as public concerns, shaping perceptions indirectly through thematic emphasis.

In terms of interpersonal communication, the study found that customers greatly value courteous, informative, and quick responses from staff. These interactions significantly impact customer experience and public perception. This finding reflects

interpersonal communication theory (DeVito, 2018), which stresses the importance of empathy, message clarity, and immediate feedback in building meaningful communication.

Internally, strategies such as morning briefings, routine coordination, and messaging via internal groups serve to ensure that every staff member receives accurate and timely updates. This supports the idea that strong internal communication is the foundation for consistent and effective external communication, in line with strategic communication theory.

From the perspective of Max Weber's social action theory, PT KAI's strategies can be understood as rational actions aimed at influencing public behavior and attitudes. For instance, safety campaigns are not just announcements—they are deliberate acts to encourage safe passenger behavior.

Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism also applies. The public constructs meaning from company symbols—logos, captions, colors, and uniforms. When consistently applied and positively interpreted, these symbols enhance the company's image. Observations confirmed that such symbols are used consistently and received favorably by passengers.

In sum, PT KAI Divre IV demonstrates that communication is not just an information channel, but a tool for image management and relationship building. Strategic, responsive, and human-centered communication has helped establish PT KAI as a modern, informative, and approachable public service provide

References

- Alakkas, A.A. (2022). Corporate Social Responsibility and Firm-Based Brand Equity: The Moderating Effect of Marketing Communication and Brand Identity. *Sustainability Switzerland*, 14(10), ISSN 2071-1050, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14106033>
- Blume r, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. University of California Press.
- Claretta, D., Putri, E. P., Yuniati, L., & Rahmawati, I. (2022). Strategi Public Relations Teh Villa Dalam Meningkatkan Citra Perusahaan. *JKOMDIS : Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Media Sosial*, 2(1), 172–179. <https://doi.org/10.47233/jkomdis.v2i1.280>
- Deigh, L. (2020). Building Legitimacy for CSR in Banking through Marketing Communications: Enlightenment from Sub-Saharan Africa: An Abstract. *Developments in Marketing Science Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 209-210, ISSN 2363-6165, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-42545-6_59
- DeVito, J. A. (2018). *The Interpersonal Communication Book* (14th. ed).
- Gómez-Rico, M. (2023). The role of novel instruments of brand communication and brand image in building consumers' brand preference and intention to visit wineries. *Current Psychology*, 42(15), 12711-12727, ISSN 1046-1310, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02656-w>
- Hlefana, M. (2020). Precursors and outcome of satisfaction in business-to-business relationship building: An information communication technology industry perspective in South Africa. *Acta Commercii*, 20(1), ISSN 2413-1903, <https://doi.org/10.4102/ac.v20i1.777>

- Kronenberg, J. (2022). Animal and plant images in corporate marketing communications are ecosystem services that should be paid for. *Ecosystem Services*, 56, ISSN 2212-0416, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2022.101464>
- Lee, C. (2021). Professional team sports organizations' corporate social responsibility activities: Corporate image and chosen communication outlets' influence on consumers' reactions. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 14(2), 280-297, ISSN 1936-3915, <https://doi.org/10.1123/IJSC.2020-0298>
- Li, Y. (2022). Advantages of Marketing Communication in the Development of a Tourism Brand. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 12(6), 273-281, ISSN 2239-978X, <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2022-0162>
- Maulana, R. A., & Saputra, R. (2019). Efektivitas Komunikasi Kelompok dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Tim Kerja. *Jurnal Komunikasi Profesional*, 3(1), 1–12.
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1993). The evolution of agenda-setting research: Twenty-five years in the marketplace of ideas. *Journal of Communication*, 43(2), 58–67.]
- Ravazzani, S. (2024). Multimodal Sensemaking and Sensegiving Processes of Discursive Threat Appraisal in Environmental Crisis Communication. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 32(4), ISSN 0966-0879, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.70005>
- Ravina-Ripoll, R. (2023). Mapping intrapreneurship through the dimensions of happiness at work and internal communication. *Corporate Communications*, 28(2), 230-248, ISSN 1356-3289, <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-03-2022-0037>
- Sagapova, N. (2022). Marketing Communication and Reputation Building of Leading European Oil and Gas Companies on Instagram. *Energies*, 15(22), ISSN 1996-1073, <https://doi.org/10.3390/en15228683>
- Selvalakshmi, V. (2023). Sustainable Strategy: Analyzing The Role Of Csr Communication Of Select Companies To The Stakeholders. *International Journal of Professional Business Review*, 8(4), ISSN 2525-3654, <https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i4.1600>
- Tsybalenko, Y. (2020). The role of company's top officials in corporate communications. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 18(3), 255-267, ISSN 1727-7051, [https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.18\(3\).2020.22](https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.18(3).2020.22)
- Vyas, D.P. (2022). Gender Representation in ESG Communication of Indian Companies: Observations and Insights. *Infrastructure Development Theory Practice and Policy Sustainability and Resilience 2021 Conference Compendium*, 16-21, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003311157-4>
- Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*.
- Wibowo, A., Syahputra, S., & Susanto, R. D. (2021). Strategi Komunikasi Korporat Dalam Upaya Peningkatan Komunikasi Internal Dan Citra Perusahaan. *LUGAS Jurnal Komunikasi*, 5(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.31334/lugas.v5i2.1871>