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PergiKuliner's Event Marketing Role in Building Customer Relationships

(Case Study of PT. Online Media Guna)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the event marketing strategy implemented by GoingKuliner to build relationships with external audiences, including customers, business partners, the media, and the community. PT Online Media Guna, the company that manages GoingKuliner, uses event marketing as a means to strengthen public engagement with its platform and build its brand image in the culinary industry. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study method, involving data collection through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation of GoingKuliner's events, both online and offline. The results indicate that PartaiKuliner's event marketing strategy aims to create brand awareness, expand its network with business partners, and build customer loyalty. GoKuliner employs a symmetrical two-way communication model, where feedback from external audiences during events serves as the basis for service improvements and innovation. Interactive events that actively engage audiences strengthen long-term relationships with external audiences, foster trust, and create positive experiences for event attendees. This research also provides theoretical contributions in the field of event marketing and public relations, as well as practical benefits for digital companies in managing communications and marketing strategies to achieve understanding and harmonious relationships with external publics.

Keywords: *Event Marketing Strategy, External Public, GoKuliner, Public Relations, Symmetrical Two-Way Communication*

1. INTRODUCTION

PergiKuliner is a dining app and directory site, as well as a comprehensive *review platform* for restaurants across Greater Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya. The site makes it easy for users to find information about restaurants, from street food stalls to five-star establishments. The information provided is highly detailed, including the name of the establishment, phone number, address, menu, food photos, restaurant ambiance, the restaurant's location automatically linked to a map (Google Maps), and *reviews* from previous visitors.

According to Similar Web, PergiKuliner is the number one restaurant search app and website in Indonesia. Founded in 2015, PergiKuliner boasts millions of monthly active users. It provides information on dining options, from street stalls to five-star restaurants, and has over 100,000 registered restaurants in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi, Bandung, and Surabaya.

PergiKuliner's presence as a leading review app in Indonesia has undoubtedly had a significant impact on public perception of the country's culinary diversity. PergiKuliner's presence in the online media industry, particularly in the review app category, has sparked fierce competition among industry players. Many companies and other review websites are striving to maintain or even achieve their top position as the most widely used platform by consumers.

PergiKuliner faces challenges not only with competitors, but also with evolving consumer trends and

social media dynamics. This raises the crucial question of what kind of *event marketing strategy* PergiKuliner employs to improve *its customer relations* Every activity undertaken is inseparable from PergiKuliner's *Public Relations role* .

In today's digital age, a company's image is shaped not only by its products or services, but also by online interactions, user reviews, and responses to various situations. Therefore, a PR strategy is key to maintaining and improving a company's image.

PergiKuliner strives to foster and build positive relationships with *stakeholders* (external parties), such as potential *users, new users,* active users, and restaurants that collaborate with PergiKuliner. PR is a crucial pillar in PergiKuliner's efforts to maintain its position at the top of the culinary review app industry in Indonesia.

This research has significant relevance to the field of *Public Relations* in facing the challenges of today's digital era. This research will provide an in-depth understanding of the PR strategies implemented by PR PergiKuliner in maintaining its position as the number one *review app* in Indonesia. By analyzing the steps taken by PR PergiKuliner, it is hoped that we can identify the key factors for PergiKuliner's success in maintaining its position as the number one *review app* in Indonesia amidst increasingly fierce competition in the online media industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 Public Relations

According to Frank Jefkins, *Public Relations* is all forms of planned communication, both internally and externally, between an organization and all its audiences in order to achieve specific goals based on mutual understanding [10]. According to the Institute of Public Relations (IPR), *public relations* is all efforts made in a planned and continuous manner in order to create and maintain goodwill *and* mutual understanding between an organization and all its audiences [11].

2.3 Strategy

According to Sandra Oliver in her book entitled "Public Relations Strategy" as quoted by Wahyu, strategy is defined as a method for achieving a final result concerning the goals and final results for the organization. There are broad strategies for the entire organization and competitive strategies for each activity carried out. Functional strategies directly support competitive strategies [14].

2.4 PergiKuliner

PT. Online Media Guna (PergiKuliner) is an application and website-based internet company engaged in food-related media, which was founded on January 7, 2015. PergiKuliner has become the number 1 most comprehensive restaurant directory and review site in Indonesia since 2021, featuring delicious restaurants in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi, Bandung, & Surabaya, from street stalls to five-star hotel restaurants. PergiKuliner's vision is to create and enrich the lives of Indonesians through the internet.

2.5 Applications

An application is software that refers to programs and other tools that increase the computer's capabilities as a tool for carrying out certain tasks or operations. According to Dhanta, quoted by Azhar, an application is software created by a computer company to carry out certain tasks [2].

3. METHOD

The research, conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach, will explore in depth the *public relations strategy* implemented by PT Online Media Guna to maintain PergiKuliner's image as the number one *review application* in Indonesia. According to Sugiyono, descriptive research is research that aims to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate description or measurement of the research object [24].

The qualitative approach in this research will provide a detailed description of the strategies used, including practical steps, communication tools applied, and their impact on public perception.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the context of PergiKuliner's PR strategy, it can be seen that this theory is very relevant. For example, regarding the analysis of feedback obtained, we see that PergiKuliner actively collects feedback from various channels, such as social media, app stores, user surveys, and reviewer communities. This is in accordance with the "media" element in Lasswell's model, where PergiKuliner uses various channels to receive feedback from communicants (users) [7].

Furthermore, the role of public relations in growing brand awareness and building consumer trust is also very prominent in PergiKuliner's strategy. In accordance with Kotler's theory (1993), PergiKuliner's PR focuses on growing consumer awareness, building trust in the company's image, and encouraging enthusiasm through various events and campaigns [3]. This is clearly seen in sub-sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.10, which discuss the various strategies and programs implemented by PergiKuliner.

As a platform focused on culinary experiences, PergiKuliner has utilized various communication and public relations theories that provide a strong foundation for their strategy. One of the main theories they apply is Harold D. Lasswell's communication model, which identifies five key elements in the communication process: who (communicator), says what (message), through what channel (media), to whom (communicatee), and with what effect (influence) [5]. By using this model, PergiKuliner can design targeted PR messages and understand how their messages are received by the audience.

PergiKuliner conducted an in-depth analysis of their target audience, in accordance with Kotler's market segmentation principles. They understood that to deliver

an effective message, understanding their audience's demographic characteristics and preferences was crucial. This allowed them to tailor their communication strategy and messaging to be more relevant and appealing to their target market.

Collecting user feedback is also a key focus for PergiKuliner, demonstrating the application of communication theory, which emphasizes the importance of effective communication channels. By monitoring social media, app store reviews, and conducting user surveys, they can gather valuable data to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their service. This allows PergiKuliner to make necessary adjustments to improve their overall user experience.

Program evaluation was the next step taken by PergiKuliner, reflecting a systematic and ongoing approach to measuring the impact of their PR messages and activities. By measuring various indicators such as visitor numbers, transactions, and satisfaction levels, they were able to assess the success of their strategy and make necessary improvements.

Event marketing is also a key pillar of PergiKuliner's strategy, demonstrating a deep understanding of the importance of direct interaction in building relationships with users. Through events such as culinary festivals and foodie meetups, they not only increase brand exposure but also create positive experiences that can boost consumer loyalty. The use of social and digital media is another crucial component of PergiKuliner's communication strategy. By leveraging platforms like Instagram and TikTok and collaborating with influencers, they can reach a broader and more diverse audience, enhancing the credibility of their message.

PT Online Media Guna implemented various communication strategies to increase consumer awareness of the PergiKuliner brand. They focused their efforts on building trust through active interaction with users and driving enthusiasm in ways that align with current practices in *Public Relations* . The PR program designed by PT Online Media Guna followed the planning and evaluation principles recommended by Harris. They organized various activities such as event marketing and collaboration with influencers to achieve their PR goals, in line with regular evaluations to ensure the program's success. Referring to Grunig's theory, PergiKuliner actively utilized social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. They not only used social media to send messages, but also to interact directly with users, listen to feedback, and build an actively engaged community.

PergiKuliner demonstrates a strong commitment to social responsibility and sustainability. Their approach to building long-term relationships with various stakeholders, including business partners, the government, and the wider community, reflects their social responsibility. By building and maintaining strong relationships with these stakeholders, PergiKuliner not only secures their long-term support but also strengthens their position as a leader in the industry.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that PergiKuliner's event marketing strategy plays a crucial role in strengthening relationships with external audiences, including customers, business partners, the media, and the culinary community. PT Online Media Guna, through its PergiKuliner platform, utilizes event marketing as a key tool to increase public engagement and interaction with its brand. Events, both online and offline, are an effective way to build brand awareness, strengthen the company's image, and expand its network with stakeholders.

This strategy achieved its goals because PergiKuliner employed a symmetrical two-way communication model that emphasized open interaction and dialogue between the company and its external audience. This two-way communication enabled direct feedback from event attendees, which was then used to improve services and adjust future marketing strategies. Through this approach, PergiKuliner was able to better respond to customer needs and preferences, thereby enhancing the overall user experience.

From a customer perspective, event marketing has been proven to increase loyalty and trust in the PergiKuliner platform. Customers feel valued by being able to participate in events, provide feedback, and see improvements made by the company based on their input. This directly contributes to increased customer loyalty, as they not only use the platform more consistently but also recommend PergiKuliner to others.

On the other hand, business partners and the culinary community also benefit from participating in PergiKuliner's events. Event marketing helps expand partnerships with various parties, introduce new restaurants and dining establishments, and provide broader visibility for PergiKuliner partners.

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