

## Conference Paper

# Information Technology as Tools of Public Relations Inform in Health Services

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## Abstract

Internet usage in Indonesia has jumped from just 2 million in 2000 to 45 million in 2011. The use of communication technology has impacted on all aspects of life in Indonesia, including the marketing of medical services by public and private hospitals. This paper reports on a survey of three private hospitals in Surakarta, Indonesia, that have used five types of marketing communications including: advertising, personal selling, sales promotions, public relations and direct marketing. One of direct marketing methods used is internet marketing with the development of hospital website. This paper describes ICT used by RSU PKU Muhammadiyah Delanggu in informing the public of its health services.

**Keywords:** Hospital, Information Technology, Public Relations

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## 1. Background

Public relations can use information technology to disseminate information about the organization. The core of the PR functions is best summarized as compiling information by researching all stakeholders through: 1) information received from them, 2) offering advice to management regarding stakeholder attitude and response, 3) setting up policies and programs which provide sufficient attention to them and 4) rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of all PR programs. The aim is to create and maintain a positive image as well as to build a strong and stable relationship with the stakeholders. These PR strategies apply to the communication of medical services by a hospital to its stakeholders. If the strategy is determined incorrectly, the intended communication goals will not be achieved, as presented by ([4]: 180)/ Organizations can fail in reaching their objectives because they miss the mark when the messages should be communicated to members, potential donors or other important constituencies such as leaders and government officials.

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## 1.1. Tools of Public Relations

Managing relationship in Public Relations has forever been altered by new media communication. In RSU PKU Muhammadiyah Delanggu, one of the hospitals in Klaten Central of Java, website and social media are the important tools to inform the public of its health services. Social media tools include the following: blog, forum or message boards, micro blogging sites, photo sharing sites, podcasts, and so on. Facilities provided are among others: 1) Browsing/surfing the activity data or information on the Internet, 2) E-mail is letters exchanged electronically, 3) Mailing list, is one of the facilities to discuss through email and can exchange letters or message, 4) Chatting: activities to communicate with others on the internet, 5) Downloading files from other computers via the internet to one's personal computer, 6) Upload: the process of putting the files from one's personal computer to another computer over the internet.

However, these PR tools are not necessarily applicable RSU PKU Muhammadiyah Delanggu. The results are expected to be utilized in the implementation of hospital policy. As stated by ([6]: 68), communicative process is involved in the implementation of strategic organizational initiatives.

## 1.2. Information Technology and Public Relations

Public relations professionals in the past had relied almost exclusively on the mass media to distribute the organization's messages to the public. The internet has opened up new opportunities for direct two-way communication between organizations and public. The field of online public relations involves the application of internet technologies by organizations to communicate and build relationship with key publics, customers and consumers, employees, investors and donors, community members, government and the news media ([8]: 403).

Internet has led the PR practitioners to utilize this medium. Moreover, if the existence of a company has been exposed through an online site, PR should use internet services in each activity. Each side can know public companies easily. Audiences will be able to understand the company profile and its product and services.

In its activities on the internet, PR use some existing infrastructure such as email, mailing lists, Yahoo messenger, web sites, news groups and social networking. Even social networking becomes popular means and effectiveness taken into account currently. Facebook users in Indonesia reached the point that quite a lot of users, when compared with the other countries in Southeast Asia.

Internet-based PR activities will support the offline PR activity to produce the "3R": Relations, Reputation and Relevance. These three things are intimately associated with PR. Marketing strategies of online PR become very important to know. PR activities

can be more flexible than those in the real world. When conventional PR program is expensive, using the internet will be cheaper.

In the journal, *Public Relations in Health Services*, ([12]: 98) introduced three models: The first model is called "Identification of Strategic Communication Elements". The second model is called: "The Business Communication Model". The third model is called "Communications Management Process".

These models, PR should be able to determine the most appropriate model to be applied in the institution, so that objectives can be achieved. To select the appropriate information technology, the environmental PR capabilities should also be taken into account. Thus, the right model will be applied.

## 2. Method, Findings and Discussion

A case study of how RSU PKU Muhammadiyah Delanggu, Klaten has used the internet as a PR tool found that ICT was used as a direct marketing tool. The main tools used are limited to an official website, Facebook and email. According to the directors, the use of the website for the hospital had many benefits, such informing the public of existing health services in the hospital. Information on the type of specialist services, patient room types, superior service and the hospital, BPJS services, hours of specialist physician practices, health articles and others. The website presented company profile. In addition, employee activities can also be uploaded via the website, making it known to the public and to improve the image and reputation of the hospital. The use of the website to facilitate the public hospital service users to get the information needed. People who want to obtain information do not need to come to the hospital, but stay open a website it will get the full information.

The PR department at RSU PKU Muhammadiyah Delanggu uses Facebook to upload new developments to be conveyed to the public. Facebook is more personal, because it can interact directly with the public via comments or chats. At this time, the comment section at the hospital still needs to be screened in order to provide correct information about the hospital.

Email is also used in RSU PKU Muhammadiyah Delanggu. According to the directors, the Muhammadiyah hospital network is interconnected throughout Indonesia. Besides public and private hospitals outside Muhammadiyah network in this country also have a good relationship with PKU. The hospital also cooperates with hospital-related institutions including BPJS Company involving employees in health insurance, pharmaceutical companies, banks, government and etc.

Information by mail will normally be sent by email. If there is a letter of cooperation that should be sent, it can be done via email. Training materials in the form of soft file is also sent by email.

Internet as the most advanced technology in today's era has several problems, including not being able to reach all people. The use of the Internet is generally confined to intellectuals and those who are able to use the technology. It is also still considered by RSU PKU Muhammadiyah Delanggu not to use all the existing ICT services. Until now, hospitals have utilized the three services mentioned above in terms of ICT. So, the conventional fixed service is used to complement the new technology services.

### 3. Conclusion

The conclusion of the research conducted in RSU PKU Muhammadiyah Delanggu concerning the use of PR and ICT are as follows:

1. Marketing communication strategies used by hospitals include advertising, personal selling, sales promotions, publicity and direct marketing.
2. Direct marketing used by hospitals related to ICT includes website, Facebook and email.
3. Website is used by the hospital to inform hospital services completely, company profile and actual activity of employees.
4. Facebook is used to communicate personally to the public. Actual information is uploaded via Facebook, chat to community and comment via Facebook.
5. Email is used to establish relationships. The important things, such as a letter of cooperation and other matters that should be implemented immediately, can be sent via email.

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