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Utilization of Social Media as a Communication Tool in Introducing the Advantages of a Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The development of a private university is determined by the number of students studying at the university. The advantages of higher education need to be introduced and promoted to prospective students and the wider community, so that they are understood and become an attraction for prospective students. One way that is currently considered the most effective is the use of social media as a means of communication to introduce the advantages of higher education. Social media is one of the important references for higher education and for prospective students in sharing information about the various programs offered. The ability to use social media properly and appropriately can produce good business communication and can bring progress to universities to increase and maintain the number of students. This paper discusses the use of social media in introducing the advantages of higher education. The discussion is carried out with descriptive analysis and is accompanied by examples of applications for using social media. The results of the analysis show that the response to the content published through social media on the excellence of higher education has a positive impact on public understanding of the advantages of a promoted university.

Keywords: social media, university excellence, business communication

1. INTRODUCTION

Information about the advantages of a university and all the study programs in it needs to be continuously conveyed to prospective students and the wider community. One way that is usually done by universities is to make attractive advertisements that are delivered to the public. Advertisements can be made professionally and paid for or advertisements that are simply made and unpaid but attractive to prospective students. The ability to create good and interesting advertising content can produce good business communication and have a positive impact on the sustainability of a university. Of course, the advertisement must also be supported by good university performance, excellence built, reputation achieved and various other achievements which must also be prepared in parallel by universities [1].

One of the publications and communication media that is currently the choice of universities is to utilize various social media applications that are widely used by the public, especially prospective students. Social media has become a daily need for young people in building a lifestyle, communication media, entertainment media, media to express themselves and media to do business online. At the same time, universities can take advantage of various social

media applications to publicize the various advantages of higher education with content that attracts the attention of prospective students, which in turn is expected to attract them to become students at the college. This activity is certainly one of the important efforts of universities to continue to introduce products, advantages and various achievements produced by lecturers, students, and excellence development programs that are being and have been implemented by universities. Universities are increasingly able to get closer to prospective students who are the target of promotional activities according to the targeted market segment [2], [3].

This paper briefly discusses the use of social media as a means of informing the public about the advantages of higher education. The discussion is accompanied by several examples of activities that can support strengthening the excellence of universities and their study programs. The use of good and well-targeted social media can increase the promotion of higher education to people who need various information that will be used to decide the choice of higher education to continue their studies.

2. METHOD

The implementation of social media in various commercial activities to promote product excellence and sell products to consumers online has become a worldwide trend. The discussion in this paper includes focusing on introducing the advantages of a study program from a university to prospective students and the wider community. The steps for using social media are adjusted to the vision and mission of the study program, the objectives to be achieved, planning and implementation strategies, promotion, use of social media, evaluation and monitoring, feedback, and further development plans. The discussion is accompanied by examples of cases of using content on social media in introducing the advantages of study programs and the responses obtained from visitors to the content that is broadcast [4], [5].



Figure 1. Social media implementation framework

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Social Media

Social media is a combination of sociological science and internet-based information technology that changes the relationship from one to many become many to many. This condition causes the communication that is built to involve so many people at the same time. Social media has become a very important communication medium and is used by almost everyone, regardless of age. Social media can connect many people or institutions online in the form of personal relationships, politics, and economic activities [6], [7].

In the business world, social media has facilitated interactive communication between entrepreneurs, consumers, suppliers, distributors, overseas partners and various other interested parties, any time and wherever they are. Social media can remove the barrier of time and place, which overcomes the problems of conventional communication. Social media is very helpful to be a liaison of information and communication from producers to consumers wherever they are regardless of distance and time. Social media also has the potential to help find consumers, both existing consumers and other potential consumers, including in building the brand image of a product or service sold by producers [8], [9].

The function of social media is a medium designed to expand human social interaction by using the internet and web technology. Social media allows its users to create something new to meet the needs of friends to communicate. Social media provides an opportunity where a very close relationship with consumers can be created that can even be felt as a very close personal relationship. Currently, there has been a change from conventional media to social media to promote products and services. This is because social media is considered more effective in attracting consumers [10].

In an organization's relationship with its members as well as with other organizations, advertising campaigns on social media networks creates prerequisites for organizations to not only inform users more effectively, understand their changing information and knowledge needs, receive feedback, observe user interest and engagement in activities carried out by the organization and the products (services) it provides, but also generate certain challenges: how to evaluate the effectiveness of advertising campaigns on social media networks and how to improve these campaigns in an ever-dynamic environment [11].

Organizations can improve reputation by implementing the 7 P's to achieve success through social media. Social media marketing adopts the Seven Principals (7 P's): Perception, Predominance, Progression, Proof, Prevalence, Prominence, Power. According to Rani, 2013, the power of social media comes from the collective strength of all the P's in social media marketing, where all elements drive the success of your institution over time, and it is this type of momentum that drives sustainable results [12].

3.2. Publication of Higher Education Excellence

One of the reasons used by prospective students to choose a college is the advantages they have. Higher education excellence can be seen from various aspects, including aspects of human resources, learning resources, financial resources, accreditation, certification, internal quality assurance, research and publication performance, community service performance, and innovation performance, both produced by students and lecturers. The superiority of universities and study programs under their auspices is one of the achievements that cannot be separated from the contributions of lecturers, education staff and students. All academics must produce various works to build excellence and reputation together.

Achievements of excellence and reputation of study programs need to be socialized and conveyed to the public as a form of accountability to the public continuously through various media. This information is very important because it can produce a brand image for all stakeholders, both internal and external. Reputation and excellence are needed by prospective students to be interested in registering and continuing their studies at the campus. This is indeed not easy to implement in a sustainable manner. However, all constructive efforts must be made to maintain the study program or college so that it remains superior according to the requirements that have been made.

Some of the impressions published through social media related to the introduction of the advantages of higher education through various forms of design models are as follows:



Figure 2. Flyers on social media to inform important activities (Source: IG untarjakarta)

Based on Figure 2, we can see 2 examples of flyers with short, concise information, attractive designs and easy to understand content. Flyers that are distributed through social media with attractive designs and information that are dense but still meaningful, become a concern for the intended target. In business communication, information that is dense and contains an attractive appearance is needed. This is because recipients of messages with social media need only the necessary information, easy to open and save, easy to download and easy to find more detailed information if needed.

In general, there are several things that need to be considered in creating and publishing content on social media that need attention, including the following (Figure 3) [10],[13]:

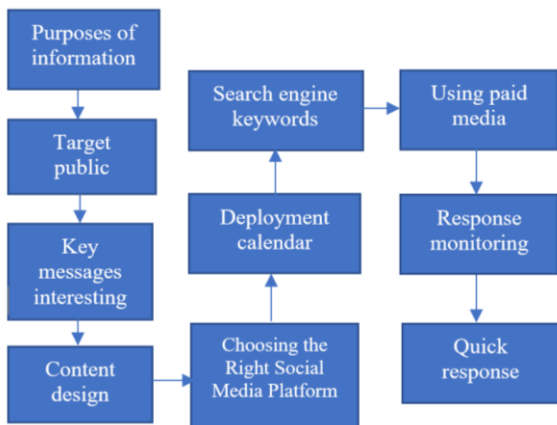


Figure 3. Flowchart of social media utilization

Based on the description above and referring to Figure 2, it can be said that the information conveyed through the 2 examples of content mentioned above is easy to understand, with an attractive appearance and easy-to-remember content. Such content design can be a model for sharing information with all stakeholders according to the purpose of the information being distributed. If we look at the contents written in the flyer, we can see the advantages that

content creators want to convey to the public in social media. The word vaccination socialization implies that the university can administer vaccinations, has experts related to vaccination, has the necessary cooperation to carry out vaccinations, and has the facilities and infrastructure used to support the vaccination process. In the next picture, it is written 'Festival of Humanities', containing a broad understanding, among others, that universities want to show excellence related to the humanity qualities learning process, the works that will be exhibited at the festival, and various programs related to the humanities that can be enjoyed and followed by the public. By using short, dense, and contained language, it can lead to public desire to participate in activities that have been informed through social media. This is very important in business communication.

The next example is content about achievements that want to be informed to the public related to the achievement of a certain achievement. Information is packaged in such a way as to become a unified whole with display design, communication language, and evidence of achievement as support. All information is packaged briefly, concisely, and attractively (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Use of flyers on social media to inform various achievements (source: IG untarjakarta)

Based on the two examples of flyers such as Figure 3, higher education institutions want to inform excellence related to the achievement of study program accreditation and student achievement in a competition. The information conveyed through social media using the flyer has described the achievements to be shared with the public. A simple but attractive design makes the information can be easily conveyed [5], [6], [10], [12].

Good and interesting business communication will make the public understand the advantages of higher education well and it is hoped that the public will provide positive feedback on the university. Some important things that can be obtained by universities from the publication process using social media are good and appropriate, including the following:

- a. Obtain an increase in brand image and brand awareness in accordance with the objectives of the social media content created.
- b. Increase public satisfaction with the performance of universities and open opportunities to partner or become students at these universities.

- c. Increase consumer loyalty of prospective students who can continue to be inspired by the excellence and achievements of the university
- d. Improve the reputation of the college and the ease of accessing it online.
- e. Capture prospective students with a wider reach because social media can be accessed easily.

Some of the reasons why the introduction of the advantages of using social media is important to be implemented in universities, namely: information media to convey internal achievements, getting prospective students with affordable promotional costs, information can be accessed at any time, obtaining information about other universities, building the loyalty of prospective students from alumni family, provide the best service to all stakeholders, improve the overall performance of the college, build intense communication with all partners, increase awareness of the college's brand image, promote college products and services effectively and efficiently [8], [10], [12].

Social media is a powerful and profitable platform. It is necessary to develop a continuous strategy in providing various content needed by the public, so that communication is not interrupted. The use of social media must be carried out in a sustainable manner, so that good relations are established with all stakeholders. Thus, the advantages possessed by universities can continue to be conveyed to the public as interesting information and become a binder for all customers to continue to be loyal customers [7], [12].

4. CONCLUSION

Social media has become a trend and has been used by people in various countries to communicate, including in the social, political, educational, religious, and business fields. Social media allows a person or organization to communicate with each other, the community, customers, and potential customers easily. In the business world, social media gives identity to the brand being marketed and helps to spread messages, information and services related to product excellence.

Social media makes it easy for social media users to promote their products in a relaxed and communicative way. Currently, social media is one of the most effective media to increase customer engagement with products or services offered by a company. This can also be felt by universities in introducing higher education products and services, including the advantages of higher education. Universities can continuously create various content to convey excellence to all stakeholders including prospective new students.

Ease of access to communicate and socialize with prospective students has a positive impact on the recognition of a study program by prospective students. By creating interesting content along with improving the internal quality of the university, prospective students can choose the university as a place to continue their studies.

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