



MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS CRISIS FACING DIGITAL DISRUPTION

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INTRODUCTION

Whenever a disruptive force enters an existing marketplace, chaos and demonstration are sure to be present. That certainly seems to be the case of Blue Bird taxi that has been hit hard by the new competitors like Uber, Grab and Go-Car.

On March 22, 2016, chaos broke out on the already-crowded main streets of Jakarta when Blue Bird taxi drivers protested. “Stop illegal taxis,” protesters yelled. “No more apps”. **Violence** breaks out in Jakarta as taxi drivers protest against Uber, Grab and Go-Car.

Taxi drivers under the Blue Bird Group has emerged as the worst instigators of violence in the protest, with most of the photos and videos of the ruckus being shared across social media depicting drivers wearing the Blue Bird uniform.



(Source : Dian Ardiahanni/Kompas.com)



This incident became **crisis of public relations** and was obviously more or less definite impact on the reputation of Blue Bird taxi as the foremost and most reliable transportation provider in Indonesia.

Blue Bird taxi must manage crisis of public relations by recovering their good reputation. Especially in disruption era, when news goes viral almost instantly, company need to be ready to respond public relations crisis quickly and efficiently, using all available media of communications.

Research Objectives

Based on explanation above, this research seeks to :

1. Create time line of the Blue Bird Group's respond strategies for surviving from crisis public relations facing digital disruption.
2. Construct the role of public relations management in handling reputation repair.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Management of Public Relations

Generally speaking, based on George R. Terry's view and Haig's view, ***Management of Public Relations*** in digital era is a distinct process consisting of planning, organizing, activating, controlling and evaluating the efforts for building relations through interacting with online media to your different audiences and managing your online reputation for long-term success.

For the explanation of crisis response strategies, Coombs defined ten strategies that company may use for surviving from crisis public relations, such as :

“ (1). Attacking the Accuser. (2). Denial. (3). Scapegoating. (4). Excusing. (5). Justification. (6). Compensation. (7). Apology. (8). Reminding. (9). Ingratiation. (10).Victimage.”
(Coombs, 2007, p.140).

Reputation repair and maintain a good image of the company is a long-term process. According to Dennis L.Wilcox and Glen T. Cameron about Image Restoration,

“ Professor William Benoit University of Missouri offers five general strategies for image restoration that can be used when the worst of a crisis has passed : (1). Denial. (2). Evade responsibility. (3). Reduce offensiveness. (4). Corrective action. (5). Mortification.” (Wilcox, 2006, p.266)

FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

For many residents of Jakarta and many other big cities in Indonesia, Blue Bird taxi is known as the part of Blue Bird Group and already as the listed taxi company in Indonesia. When company faced crisis in disruptive era, Blue Bird's crisis response strategy can be explained and divided into five points, such as :



Figure 1. Time Line illustrating How Blue Bird Taxi Responded to A Crisis



(Source : Bayu Nurpatria, <https://dapurpacu.com>)

(1). *Blue Bird Vice President for Business Development, Noni Purnomo* gave explanation during press conference on March 22, 2016

On the next day, Blue Bird made *compensation* action to its customers by giving free taxi rides to customers in Jakarta, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi in attempting to restore its image following violent protests involving some of its drivers yesterday. However, some people decided to shun Blue Bird taxi regular and said that Blue Bird had lost its status as a respected taxi company.

(2). On May, 2016, Blue Bird made *corrective action* by making innovation with upgrading their business model to adapt to the change into the new edition of ***My Blue Bird Application*** that can reserve a taxi from smartphone with multi platform and for cashless system of payment.

NOW EVERYTHING IS EASIER WITH

My BLUE BIRD

My Blue Bird App is now released! Try The New My Blue Bird with friendly and latest features to make your trip enjoyable.



Advance & Multiple booking

Manage your own pick-up time and set for more than one booking



Share My Journey

It's now safer by sharing your location



Rating System

Rate each journey to help us improve our service



Multiple Payment

More convenient ways to pay



Easy Ride

Get the taxi directly and you can pay through the app



Promo

Many promos to make your every journey interesting

Available at Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya, Bali and Medan



Blue Bird Group



Bluebirdgroup



Bluebirdgroup



#NEWMYBLUEBIRD

Pandji Pragiwaksono

Stand Up Comedian, Actor, Rapper, Writer



BLUE BIRD

My Blue Bird Application On Your Hand
(Source : Delila D./ www.infobdg.com)

- (3). On September 25, 2016, Blue Bird launched sympathetic advertising to explain conditions and situations they faced in era of disruptive. This advertising broadcasted in social media You Tube with the theme of “Renovated for Change” which contains the meaning that Blue Bird is still the big player who owns the market share.
- (4). On October 2016, Blue Bird participated as official transportation partner on the sport-event “ Mandiri Jakarta Marathon 2016 “. There were many services of Blue Bird, such as ; Big Bird Bus, Rental Car & Limousine Golden Bird and Blue Bird Lifecare Taxi.
- (5). On February 1, 2017, Blue Bird and GoJek (Go-Car) joined forces. Now, by ordering from My Blue Bird application, everybody will get the nearest Blue Bird or a Go-Car, both with same fixed price and Go-Pay discount. The collaboration means that Indonesia’s two largest taxi operators are now partnered with online ride-hailing platforms.

Finally, after handling crisis seriously and correctly for repairing Blue Bird reputation, on May 24, 2017, Blue Bird taxi got award again as seen on photo below, namely ***Top 100 Most Valuable Brands of Indonesian Awards 2017*** is organized by Brand Finance, a brand consultant of international institutions working with SWA magazine.



(Source :www.bluebirdgroup.com)

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation that has been mentioned, it can be concluded as follows :

1. From time line of Blue Bird Group's respond strategies, the company already gave the soon respond quickly on the first day when crisis happened. Since March 22, 2016 until February 1, 2017, company made some actions of denial, evade responsibility, reduce offensiveness, reminding, compensation and corrective action.
2. The role of public relations management in handling reputation repair by building relations with competitor (Go-Car) and interacting with *My Blue Bird application* as online media for managing online reputation for long-term success.

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for
Your Attention**