

# ANALYSIS OF BRANDING STRATEGY THROUGH INSTAGRAM WITH STORYTELLING IN CREATING BRAND IMAGE ON PROUD PROJECT

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## ABSTRACT

*The objectives of the article were to study the branding strategy of a new age media company through social media with storytelling, how it could be utilized in the building of brand image, and what were the special characteristics of storytelling in social media environment, especially Instagram. The study provided an overview of factors in the online content update from social media to elevate interaction and to maintain the relationship between the company and its audience. Also specifying the points on how the information looked desirable to the customer. The qualitative descriptive content analysis was conducted to investigate how a new age media company with Instagram as the platform, which products were intangible and used storytelling in the delivery utilizes and mixes both components. Data were obtained by conducting the in-depth interview with company's representative, public relations practitioner, and a follower of the company's Instagram account, which then analyzed through data reduction. The research suggests that storytelling combined with social media features potentially strengthens all dimensions of brand equity with the brand image as the focus, primarily due to its engaging content, its ability to enhance the formation of an emotional connection, and its capabilities in improving recall and recognition. Branding activities conducted by Proud through Instagram can be said to be effective, taking into account the six main factors in providing updates, namely vividness, interactivity, informational content, entertaining content, position and valence of comments. Storytelling plays a role in communicating the company's brand and value. In addition, storytelling is also a branding tool that becomes an element that uniquely unveils a company with a competitor.*

**Keywords:** branding strategy, social media, storytelling, Instagram, brand image

## INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology increasingly influences and triggers the changes in consumer culture in utilizing information that is obtained from the internet. In this modern era, social media is an important part of communicating both interpersonally and publicly. It is also supported by the ease of internet access with a relatively affordable price. Of the many accesses that are made by internet users, 86% of users access social media. And according to a survey that is conducted by Nielsen, the first rank to do is send a message, next is followed by updating the status, and the last one is reading the profile of people. Of the three things, all are accommodated by the social networking system that is used such as Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, and Instagram. Each social media has its own characteristics according to the needs of its users.

Not only personal, but social media is also used by the companies to be part of their effective and efficient promotion strategy because it can be accessed by anyone without having to spend more expenses, so their network promotion can be more extensive. Social media becomes an indispensable part of marketing for many companies, and it is one of the latest techniques in a company's marketing

strategy. Kerpen (2011) has said that social media along with a global recession has led companies, organizations, and governments to figure out how to accomplish more with less money. They want people can get their messages out there and talk without spending much money on media that in declining like television, radio, and print. Based on that quote, social media goes hand in hand with a global recession that directs companies, organizations, and governments to achieve more outcomes by spending less money and being able to convey the message easier without spending as much money if it is using television, radio, or print media.

Different social media applications are perceived differently, and this perception is influenced by the social media users' patterns, gender, and age (Chan-Olmsted, Cho, Lee, 2013). One of the social media that is often used in business activities, especially in pioneering and building a brand, is Instagram. This application allows users to capture photos and videos, applies digital filters, and shares them to various social networks including Instagram itself. Instagram is officially launched in October 2010 and reaches up 1 million users within the first month. And by April 2015, this application has reached 300 million monthly active users (Costill, 2014). As a social media that features the presentation of visual content along with caption features in the presentation of content, Instagram allows companies to reach consumers and strengthen brands in new ways.

The role of social media is increasingly recognized in boosting business performance. This has brought benefits, as well as challenges for companies to bring interaction activities between companies and their publics to a new and very different level of communication. The effectiveness of utilization depends on how the brand owner uses it for its marketable product. Therefore, it is very important for the company to understand how to be part of this digital era effectively. Someone who specifically wants to enhance the number of comments should post a highly interactive brand post characteristic, such as a question (de Vries, Gensler, and Leeftang, 2013).

The brand is a promise of the organization to the customer to deliver what is already the principle of the brand itself, not only in emotional, self-expression and social benefits. In the minds of consumers, they will find it hard to turn to other brands and are likely to make transactions repeatedly, not even a few of them, market the brand without being asked. Therefore, companies must build a more prominent image by making consumers loyal in the use of products or services on a regular basis to outperform the competitors. And also the companies must maintain the market share and build a positive image for consumers. The brand image is a set of tangible and intangible traits, such as ideas, beliefs, values, interests, and features that make it unique. Within this brand, there is a promise of the company to consumers to provide certain benefits, privileges, and services. The brand is valuable because it is able to influence consumer preferences. A good brand can signal the customer's superiority that leads them to a favorable consumer attitude and brings better sales and financial performance to the company.

Starbucks, Dell, Levi's and Apple are the series of successful global brands that are driven by the enormity of social media. Especially Apple, the company founded by Steve Jobs. This company can be said to be born and grown in social media by utilizing storytelling techniques in various messages that are used to communicate these from company products and brands, such as advertisements or slogans. On various occasions, Steve Jobs always communicates the value that he applies and trusts in the Apple brand with anecdotes using storytelling (Zax, 2011). This technique has often been used by Steve Jobs in many percentages he does, including when he introduces the products from Apple. His expertise in storytelling has given a variety of impacts, such as the increasing sales of Apple products even after the departure of the deceased.

Storytelling is the act of telling a story by a storyteller to the listener. Basically, stories are the fundamental activities of every human being. Even when they are talking to themselves means that they are in the process of telling a story. Storytelling can be regarded as the oldest and most recent branch of the literary sciences. Although the goals and requirements of storytelling change each

century, from culture to culture, it is sustainable to meet the same basic of social and individual needs. Storytelling aims to provide the information for the listeners so that it can be used to recognize their emotions and able to do problem-solving. Storytelling is delivered without the use of props, but it is relying on vocal quality, facial expression, hand, and body movements.

In marketing, storytelling is a form of narrative where changes connect their identity and philosophy in making activities and products (Jonsson, Strannegard, and Pallas, 2014). A story can form a strategic position in the company by defining and aligning the brand and ensuring that communication can strengthen the story and build the brand (Baker and Boyle, 2009). As a tool for branding, storytelling ties brands with the value and emotion, adds authenticity, gives a sense of quality to the product, and explains how the products are different from competitors (Kristensen, Gabrielsen, and Zaichkowsky, 2012).

Proud Project is one of the many startup companies that are aware of the social media phenomenon that occurs in the midst of society and uses it as a corporate branding strategy. It is undeniable that social media, especially Instagram, has contributed a lot in building the effectiveness and efficiency of a company or business entity as a means of communication and publication. Through the Instagram account of @proud.project, it provides content in the form of stories and inspirational experiences that is quoted from interviews with figures from various relevant fields in Indonesia, ranging from art, entertainment, to the government. The content of the story is then packed with photos and text in the form of storytelling that is included as a caption to its followers. Because moving in the field of social media, then indirectly Proud Project is dependent on the internet network in its daily activities, especially in the business of building a company brand. By utilizing the various features owned by Instagram and its owned content, @proud.project now has a follower of 9.807 and continues to grow every day. Then the dissemination of information provided by @proud.project can be said to spread quite widely.

Based on the background of study, it is found some research questions as follows (1) Is the use of social media Instagram effective in building the brand image of Proud Project? (2) How to use storytelling technique as branding strategy through social media Instagram that can support the process of creating the brand image of Proud Project? (3) What are the obstacles that Proud Project encounters in establishing brand image?

In accordance with the problems formulation, the research objectives are (1) To know the effectiveness of social media, especially Instagram than other social media in terms of forming the brand image. (2) To know the use of storytelling techniques in encouraging the process of brand image formation on social media Instagram of Proud Project. The results of this study are expected to be useful for (1) Academic to enrich Public Relation and Branding courses, especially in using storytelling concepts. (2) Practical benefits as an evaluation and consideration material for designing a more innovative branding strategy for Proud Project. (3) Benefits to the general public as a source of information and references on storytelling especially in new media in the future.

## METHODS

The approach used in this research is the qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is an approach based on the postpositive philosophy that is used to encounter natural objects (as opposed to experiments) in which researchers are the key instruments, source, and purposive sampling, and data are conducted purposively and snowball. Data is done with triangulation (composite) of more qualitative data. Based on the definition put forward, it can be concluded that the qualitative approach is a type of approach that focuses on the of social phenomena conducted through an explanation of

attitudes, perceptions, motivations, and behavior thoroughly researched and presented through words in a special context.

Qualitative research has some very prominent characteristics, namely (1) the research was conducted holistically and thoroughly, (2) research is subjective, (3) performed by communication and observation, (4) the basic elements of the research are analysis and words, (5) focus on process rather than result, (6) pay attention to uniqueness. The qualitative approach believes that truth is a dynamic and knowable thing through the understanding of the interactions of the people involved. It can be concluded that in explaining the branding strategy of Proud Project that is using Instagram, it focuses on how to interact conducted by Proud Project to the public at large. The aim of this is increasing brand awareness of the company.

This type of descriptive research is a type of research in which every information, data, discovery obtained during the research process will then be analyzed and presented in the form of words arranged systematically and sequentially. This type of descriptive research does not attempt to find causal relationships between one variable with another but rather aims to describe and explain a phenomenon as the phenomenon is.

The descriptive-qualitative research method is a type of research that emphasizes the research process to the observation and natural atmosphere (natural setting). As it has been said before, this type of research does not consider human interaction as a variable, but rather as an act aims at understanding the social phenomenon. It does not attempt to prove the theory, so the research process has no restrictions that curb the discussion. Descriptive research has a prominent characteristic of explaining phenomena through words based on information found during the research process. The analysis is a process whereby each data and information obtained from interviews and observations that are arranged so that later can be interpreted. Data is organized into patterns, themes, and categories. Interpreting here means giving meaning, explaining each pattern, and finding relationships between the various interactions that occur during the data collection process.

The process of analysis using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (1994) model analysis done in 3 (three) stages, namely data reduction, data display (data presentation), and conclusion drawing/verification. For data reduction, during the collection process, the amount of data obtained from the field is considerable, so it should be noted in detail. Reducing data means embracing and selecting data that focuses on the things that are important to give a clearer picture and make it easier in collecting further data. Data display (data presentation) can be done by writing a short description or in other forms, such as chart or category. Display data aims for data that has been reduced previously can be easily understood by way of grouping the data into different categories or groups. And for the conclusion drawing or verification is done through the categories of data that have been made. It will be drawn a conclusion that is made based on analysis of the data and supported by valid and consistent evidence during the process of data collection. The conclusion can be in the form of description, causality, interactive or theory. Based on interviews conducted with three informants who have been mentioned and participant observation is approximately five months.

Triangulation is done to check the use of data collection methods, whether the information obtained by the method of interviews, with observation methods, or whether the observations are in accordance with the information given when in-interview. Similarly, techniques perform to test the source data, whether the data source when in-interview and observation will provide the same or different information. The aim is to find the similarity of data with different methods. The process of the validity of data using source triangulation, namely testing the credibility by checking data obtained from several different sources. The technique of source triangulation is done by checking the degree of confidence of an information obtained through different times and tools through the following stages (1) comparison of observation data with interview results, (2) comparison what someone says in public with what is spoken in private, (3) comparison what is said with the research situation with

what is said all the time, (4) comparison of circumstances with a person's perspective argues as the ordinary people, the educated, and the government officials (Moleong, 2010).

The source used in this research is divided into three parts, namely internal source (Co-Founder & Social Director of Proud Project), external source (customer), and practitioner (Public Relation practitioner). From three different types of sources, it will be checked whether all three data obtained will produce the same conclusions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Proud is a non-profit company that distributes products in the form of content packed with stories that have value and uniqueness of its own. The goal is to inspire people to think differently and more advanced. Moving proud online utilizes the use of the internet by using social media Instagram as the main container running the company. In addition, the internet is also used as a media company in carrying out daily activities because of the increasing trend of internet usage in the community. Access to information at this time is very much different from access to information a few years ago. From the answers given by the three informants about the importance of internet use in everyday life, it can be concluded that the internet has become an important part of human activities and the most widely used today to seek information.

In this digital age, people who use the internet in their daily activities have full control over the information they access. In contrast to a few years ago when traditional media such as newspapers are providing much information in one issue. With the internet, people can choose what information or news they want to read without having to look at other information that is considered unimportant or not meeting their needs as readers. Therefore, it is very important for Proud to think of branding image strategy, so the Instagram account that used as the main container of company product become more presentable and attractive so that people become interested in accessing information about Proud and products offered in their Instagram. Instagram is also used by Proud as an interactive tool for followers to ask and discuss various things that are cognitive, such as the problems that exist in life. It also provides advice on every action to be taken by followers. In addition, once a week internal weekly meeting holds to evaluate activities that have lasted for one week to improve the quality of service to customers.

Judging by the number of followers on Instagram that are fairly large, the branding strategy is done by Proud so far in the stage of brand image building is how they can form and maintain a strong image to form a solid and relevant association. Based on the observations that have been run for three months as admin of Proud's Instagram, there are six factors that are considered in providing updates, where the six factors serve as a branding strategy through Instagram. The use of these six factors is also supported through the interview with informant 1, which says that the update should be updated with value and has to be unique. So that it will create more interaction or engagement in @proud.project Instagram. The considered factors in providing updates are vividness, interactivity, informational content, entertaining content, position, and valance of comment.

The first of considered factors in providing updates is vividness. One way to improve the feedback provided by the followers on updates given by companies is to install live-looking updates, or in other words, things that can stimulate consumer senses so then they would find out more. An update that seems to be more alive will further enhance the consumer's positive attitude towards the update that will culminate in providing feedback from followers as the consumers. The vividness of this factor can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Update with Vividness

Interactivity is defined as the measure by which two or more people can communicate with each other through the communication channel provided by a particular message. Interactivity is shown by two-way communication that occurs between the company and its customers, and often between consumers and consumers. Even more, it can stimulate the occurrence of many-to-many communication. It can be seen in Figure 2.

ikarinetti Follow ini deh @frida\_ay  
@rennadewi @dumorasihite @annisa.aar22  
@tanobi27\_shop kalo senggang dibaca2  
sampe kebawah, bagus 😊😊

rennadewi Aaahh melupakan kesalahan  
orang lain dengan cara merusak dirinya  
@ikarinetti @dumorasihite @frida\_ay

ikarinetti Bukan bukan yg ini, liat kebawah2  
... Banyak hal ka @rennadewi

frida\_ay Yang mane @ikarinetti  
@rennadewi ??

debbypasuria I have read all of this words  
over here , wish someday i could be send  
my story :) thankyou

dessiameliap Kamu ga sendirian Petra saya  
pun mengalaminya

destachristined Ni juga mbaa @eldaprap

Figure 2 Update with Interactivity

Informational content is one of the strong reasons why people use social networking sites to find information that enables them to participate in virtual communities. Furthermore, the same thing also causes people to search for updates related to the brand that they consume. Therefore, the desire of consumers to participate or just find out is said to be fulfilled when a given update contains the information brand or product itself. Products offered by Proud is information that has no form or is intangible. The information contained in the story uploaded with the expected output is value, entertainment, and stories through the story of the icon being uploaded. In addition to that, aside from getting information from what the company offers, Proud utilizes Instagram to inform and promote updates of Proud content which are produced on YouTube platform. It can be seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3 Update with Informational Content

The entertaining content of social media is also a factor that is no less important to use. Because people have full control over access to information they have, they tend to look for information they like or want to see. An entertaining update tends to build a positive attitude towards the brand and can meet the needs of consumers in using social media, one of which is to seek entertainment. Entertaining does not always have to contain the element of humor, but can also be words that inspire or encourage. The example of entertaining content can be seen in Figure 4.

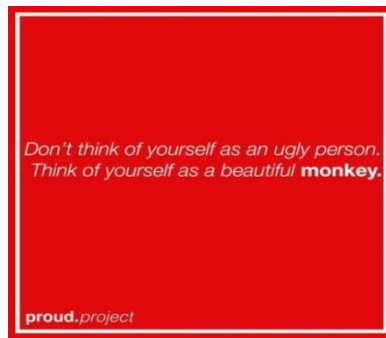


Figure 4 Update with Entertaining Content

Another factor is the position. Positioning ads or banners on social media profile pages can also determine brand popularity, especially in using Instagram. There are certain times where consumers tend to access Instagram more. Therefore, at certain times, updates should be ensured to get a large amount of feedback from consumers who see updates. The example of this factor can be seen in Figure 5.



Figure 5 Update with Position

The last factor in providing updates is valence of comment. Talking about the consumer's tendency in giving feedback to the company whether the feedback is negative or positive. This feedback is often also called or as a testimonial. The more positive feedback given, the popularity of the brand will increase. In Proud's Instagram so far, there has been more positive feedback than negative feedback. This, of course, benefits the company, especially if the audiences who provide the positive feedback are Instagram users who have considerable influence and are being followed by many other users. Thus, others who cannot be reached directly by Proud would know the existence of Proud through the people they follow. Feedback is quite often provided by followers in the form of photo content that has been updated in the past day, impression, or their opinion about the @proud.project account. It can be seen in Figure 6.



Figure 6 Update with Positive Feedback

Based on the results of interviews and observations, there are some advantages of Instagram compares with other social media. One of the reasons why Proud uses Instagram as a tool to form a brand image is because it provides a platform where users and companies can communicate publicly and directly. This makes Instagram an ideal platform for companies or brands to connect with consumers and target consumers.

The using Instagram by Proud increases the exposure of it which is now at the stage of forming their brand image to the public, especially in the younger age group or Millennials as its target market. Instagram also strongly supports the activity of branding of Proud, especially in content updates with the six factors that have been discussed. By doing that, Proud can represent a better, personal, and original picture of their brand and value.

Storytelling has been known in the art since ancient times. There is such a phenomenon due to the closeness of the relationship between storytelling marketing with word-of-mouth, social sharing, and social media in general. Storytelling in the realm of marketing and business communications is not just about telling a story, but it is also a technique and strategy that aimed at making a difference marketing variety in a new and unique way. Storytelling is a journey and is also part of a marketing science (storytelling as a part of marketing). Now every business needs to invite their customers on a



journey of their products or services (Aaker, 2014). In other words, it involves consumers in the course of their products. A study says that the stories others say about us affect how they see us. It is same with consumers who talk about the products.

Stories are tools for communicating the ideas. In addition, a story is able to represent the image and purpose of the Proud. Through the story, it also explains how a thing is running, why it is like that, the role and purpose of that thing. Thus, it can also connect us with humanity as well as past, present, and future by teaching us to anticipate the possible consequences of the actions. Based on the answer from informant 1, storytelling is a very vital element in Proud, because it starts from a story, tells a story, and it will bring change through story. So far, Trivet as a company co-founder feels that over time and throughout the development, Proud begins to realize its vision on the ground. The amount of feedback proves many impressions that Proud's Instagram account is a different from other social medias; it has value, unique, and brings change. It can be seen from how the audience expresses their gratitude to Proud through their personal account. The positive feedbacks from Proud's Instagram followers can be seen in Figure 7.

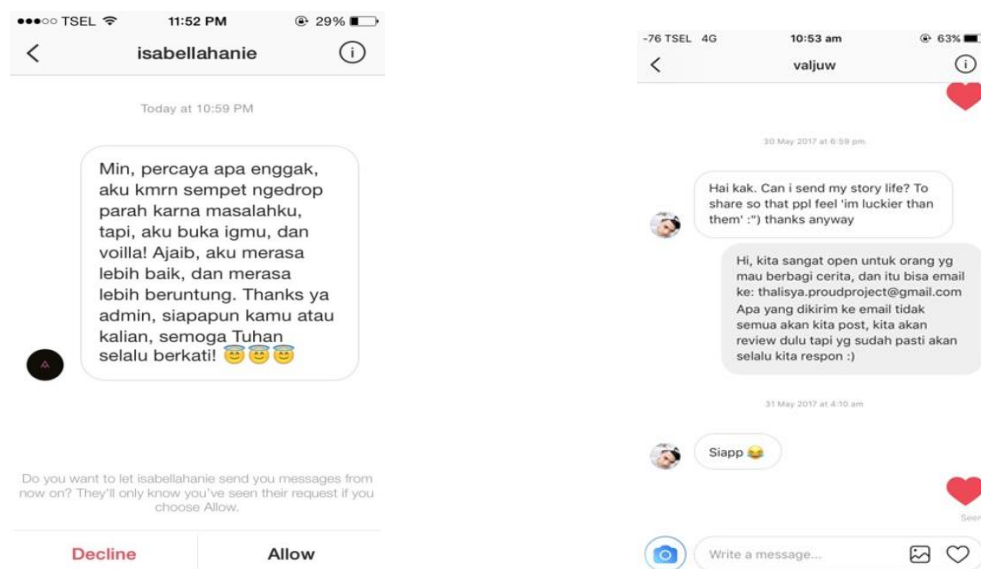


Figure 7 Positive Feedbacks

## CONCLUSIONS

Branding activities that are conducted by Proud through Instagram can be said to be effective by applying the six main factors in providing updates, namely vividness, interactivity, informational content, entertaining content, position, and valence of comments. The factor is also noticed by the Proud in maximizing the features available in Instagram and its use in building and maintaining relationships with followers of @proud.project account as a company audience.

Storytelling is a very important element in the company. Storytelling plays a role in communicating the company's brand and value. Storytelling within the company provides a unique and emotional product experience. In addition, storytelling is also a branding tool that becomes an element that uniquely unveils a company with a competitor.

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