The Role of Public Relations In Restoring The Reputation of PT Jasa Medivest

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ABSTRACT PT Jasa Medivest is a subsidiary company of BUMD PT Jasa Sarana that focus on B3-Medical waste management business sectors in Indonesia. On August, 2017, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia (KLHK) had given the company an Administrative Sanction because the Environmental Supervisor found approximately 1,000 tons of medical and infectious waste were placed in open areas and only covered with tarpaulins. Because of the sanction, the company experienced decline income and decrease of trust in customers. This study investigated the role of Public Relations in restoring the company's reputation after the sanction was revoked with qualitative method and case study strategy. After collect primary and secondary data, the data were analyzed by using the Interactive Model which had been proposed by Miles & Huberman. The role of Public Relations is very necessary in restoring the reputation. After some processes for one year, on September 2018 the Minister of Environment and Forestry revoked the sanction and on October2018, PT Jasa Medivest's Plant was able to operate again. In 2021 PT Jasa Medivest managed to had good income with a value of IDR 45.93 billion and by 2022, around 50-60% of their previous customers have partnered again with PT Jasa Medivest. Based on this research it can be concluded that the role of Public Relations of PT Jasa Medivest is as follows: (1) Problem Solving Process Facilitator (2) Communication Facilitator and (3) Communications technician.

Keyword-- public relations role, public relations strategy, reputation damage, restore the reputation

1. INTRODUCTION

PT Jasa Medivest is a subsidiary company of the West Java Regional-owned Enterprise (BUMD) PT Jasa Sarana. The company focus on B3-Medical waste management business sectors in Indonesia. The company was founded in 2006 and began operating in 2009. From 2011 to 2015, the company has successively got a Proper Biru from Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia.

On August 14, 2017, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia (KLHK) had given PT Jasa Medivest an Administrative Sanction trough Decree No. 4240/ Menlhk -PHLHK/PPSA/GKM.0/08/2017. The company had violated Law No. 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management and PP No. 101 of 2014 concerning B3 Waste Management. This happened because the Environmental Supervisor found that approximately 1,000 tons of medical and infectious waste were placed in open places and only covered with tarpaulins. In addition, in the warehouse, 475 tons of clinical waste were found wrapped in yellow clinical plastic packaging, 100 tons of expired drugs and other medical waste that had been stored since 2016. The sanction stated that PT Jasa Medivest was not allowed to accept waste and was required to treat existing waste. Furthermore, the company is obliged to restore the waste landfill site and last, the B3 waste producer could not send their waste until PT Jasa Medivest makes improvements according to a sanction order. https://tirto.id/company-pemilik-1500-ton-limbah-b3-medis-di Tutup-klhk-cuSG (accessed March 15, 2023)

This sanction has impacted the reputation of PT Jasa Medivest, termination on operational activity make customers engaged with competitors, and this make PT. Jasa Medivest experienced decline income business as written in Annual Report 2017 PT Jasa Sarana. *"Revenue from the medical waste management sector by PT Jasa Medivest in 2017 reached IDR 29.87 billion, a decrease of 40.81% compared to 2016"*

On November 8 2018, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) officially revoked the sanction after PT Jasa Medivest was proven not to have polluted the environment. https://pojokbandung.com/read/2018/11/09/sanksi-dicabut-pt-jasa-madvest-prepare-program-baru/ (accessed March 15, 2023)

Two years since PT. Jasa Medivest are back, company managed to achieve the Proper Biru again from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia. This was stated in the Decree of the Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia Number SK.1307/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/12 /2021 concerning the results of the company's performance rating assessment in environmental management for 2020-2021. This research related to the role of Public Relations in PT Jasa Medivest to restore company's reputation after get sanctioned by the Ministry of Environment and

Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia (KLHK).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Communication

According to Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steineer in (Rustan & Hakki, 2017:29), Communication: the transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills, etc. by using symbols, words, pictures, images, graphics, and so on. There are three absolute elements that must be fulfilled in the communication process; (a) Communicator; humans who transfer messages to communicants either it's individual or groups; (b) Communicator; humans who receive messages from communicators; and (c) Channels/Media; used for information transfer from the communicator to the communicant. Each of these elements has an interrelated relationship that can determine the success of a communication.

2.2 The Role of Public Relations

Frank Jefkins dalam (Irene, 2020:27) states that PR consists of all forms of planned communication, outwards or inwards, between an organization and its publics for the purposes of attaining specific objectives concerning mutual understanding. On its function, Dozier & Broom Broom (Fikri & Yuli, 2021: 19) conceptualizes four basic PR roles that may be performed by PR practitioners namely:

1. Expert Preciber

The expert prescriber is a specialist on a specific industry, problem, or form of public relations and is handed the main responsibility to carry out this function as a consultant or with minimal input or participation by other senior management.

2. Communication Facilitator

The communication facilitator is a boundary spanner listening to and brokering information between the organization and its significant publics. The goal of this role is to offer both management and publics the information required to making decisions of mutual interest.

3. Problem Solving Process Facilitator

The problem-solving facilitator cooperates with other managers to define and solve problems. This role demands that the professional is a part of the dominant coalition of the organization and in addition has access to other senior managers. The practitioner performing this role problem helps other managers think through organizational problems using a public relations viewpoint.

4. Technician Communication

The communication technician's role commands implementing strategies with the communication tactics of news releases, employee newsletters, position papers, media placements, Web site content, speeches, blogs, and social media messaging. In this role, practitioners are usually not participating in defining problems and creating solutions, but focus their tactics on the technical skill of writing.

2.3 Crisis

In his book Crisis–A Leadership Opportunity (2005), Robert P. Powell states that, "A crisis is an unexpected, dramatic, sometimes unprecedented event that pushes an organization into chaos, and can destroy the organization without any real action". In general, the crisis develops through three stages. These stages are: (1) Pre crisis; (2) crisis; (3) post crisis

2.4 Company Reputation

Doney and Cannon (Prakkasi: 2021:267) claimed that a company's reputation is linked to the company's history, which is connected to stakeholders. One of the methods to assessing the reputation of an organization is using Reputation Quotient (RQ) method formulated by Fombrun et al (2013): Emotional Appeal; Products and Services; Vision and Leadership; Workplace Environment; Financial Performance; Social Responsibility.

2.5 Restoring Reputation

William Benoit (Kriyantono, 2017:229) introduced Image Restoration Theory (also known as image repair theory) outlines strategies that can be used to restore one's image in an event where reputation has been damaged. Benoit breaks his image restoration strategies into five broad categories: denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and feature sub-strategies as well.

3. METHOD

This is a qualitative study with case study method. A case study analyses persons, groups, events, decisions, periods, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods (Gerring, 2006). The case just focuses on time and activities, and the researcher collects the information completely by using some collecting data procedure based on the time which had been given. A case study applies when a "how" and "why" question is posed to a set of present events that is impossible or at least difficult for the researcher to control. In this study the researcher investigated about PR roles in restoring a reputation after crisis that happened at PT. Jasa Medivest. The data obtained through several processes, namely interviews,

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observation, online data and studies library. The subject of this study are Public Relations & Corporate Secretary of PT Jasa Medivest, Al-Ihsan Hospital, Ciamis Hospital and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK). After the data gathering process had been completed, the data were analyzed by using the Interactive Model which had been proposed by Miles & Huberman (1986). Interactive Model Analysis refers to the data analysis technique that describes the interactive traits of the data collection. Last but not the least, in ensuring the data validity, the Data Validity Inspection Technique (Validation and Accuracy) that had been implemented was the triangulation. Within the implementation of the triangulation, the direct observation and the interview session with the information were compared.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 PT Jasa Medivest's Reputation Before Get Sanction.

The company founded with a purpose to organize medical B3 waste management business sector (Storage, collection, transport and handling disposal B3 waste). In 2012, West Java Government issue West Java Regional Regulation Number 23 of 2012 concerning management waste, incl waste medicine in West Java Area which in the end increase the value of PT Jasa Medivest. The presence of PT Jasa Medivest as waste management company is very well received by producer of medical B3 waste like hospitals (government / private) and health centers/clinics. On it's journey company get Proper Blue Award since 2011 – 2015 from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Republic of Indonesia because the company is considered as a company that complies with environmental management regulations and has environmental excellence.



Figure 1 Proper Biru Award 2011 - 2015 Source: PT Jasa Medivest

After do interview with Key Informant, Mohan Felani as Public Relations & Corporate Secretary of PT Jasa Medivest, before the crisis happened there was no PR division at company, the public relations activities carried out by the Holding Company (PT. Jasa Sarana), at that time Mohan Felani worked in *Corporate Communication* division.

Regarding the reputation before crisis, the researcher also does interviews with 2 (two) PT Jasa Medivest customers, they are from Al-Ihsan Hospital and Ciamis Hospital. Al-Ihsan Hospital is west java regional public hospital in Baleendah, Bandung (class B). The hospital produced medical B3 waste approximately reach 18 tons/month or 600 kg per day. Based on the interview with Darso Susanto, Head Al-Ihsan Hospital Environmental Health Installation:

"The first time we collaborated (with PT Jasa Medivest) was precisely in 2009, at that time Jasa Medivest had not yet do transportation, they cooperated with another company (as transporters), so we initially working with the company that do the transportation, did not directly engage with PT Jasa Medivest". The reason why Al-Ihsan Hospital chose PT Jasa Medivest as a vendor was because according to him, PT Jasa Medivest was the best medical B3 waste management company in West Java in terms of facilities and infrastructure. Experience working with PT. Medivest services were also very satisfying and never disappoint at that time. "Our level of satisfaction at that time was 9. Very good, from the schedule, transportation, the plant, and vehicle, they were good, that's what we looking for"

Apart from Al-Ihsan Hospital, the researchers also interviewed Ciamis Hospital. Ciamis Hospital is also west java regional public hospital in Ciamis regency (class B). The hospital produced medical B3 waste approximately reach 4 tons/month. The first time Ciamis Hospital in engage with PT Jasa Medivest was in 2013 through auction held by the Regency. Based on the interview with Eep Saepul Milah as Head of the Emergency Room at Ciamis Hospital:

"The first time we working with Jasa Medivest, their work was very good and professional, there is no problem. They do what stated in the contract, they provide maintenance like checking our tools, checking goods in our cold storage every month. But I think they only do it in the first years, in 2-3 years later they are rare provide maintenance in our hospital"

One of the methods to assessing the reputation of an organization is using Reputation Quotient (RQ) method formulated by Fombrun et al (2013). Based on the interviews with Ciamis Hospital. The reputation that PT Jasa Medivest had is based on aspect:

- Vision and Leadership, assume that company walk under reliable leadership because of the status of PT. Medivest Services as West Java Regional-owned Enterprise (BUMD)
- **Emotional Appeal,** the management from Ciamis Hospital feel respect towards PT. Jasa Medivest because PT Jasa Medivest was recommended by the government.
- **Product and Service**, the first time engage with PT Jasa Medivest in 2013, Ciamis Hospital feel satisfied with the performance of PT Jasa Medivest, like on time to pick up the medical B3 waste and the company provide maintenance in the cold storage of RSUD Ciamis.

Other than that, based the interview with Al-Ihsan Hospital. The reputation that PT Jasa Medivest had is based on aspect:

- **Emotional Appeal**, the management of Al-Ihsan hospital sees that PT Jasa Medivest has superior facilities and infrastructure compared to other waste management companies.
- **Product and Service**, assumes that the service is in accordance with company's core business. Since the first time engage in 2009, Al-Ihsan Hospital feel very satisfied with PT Jasa Medivest's performance.
- Workplace Environment, seen as a company that has professional employees. The management of Al-Ihsan hospital feel that the communication between the Al-Ihsan Hospital team with PT Jasa Medivest team was very good. When Al-Ihsan Hospital needs something, they can contact the PIC/Marketing to get quick solutions/assistance.
- Social Responsibility, management of Al-Ihsan Hospital visited the Dawuan Plant in Cikampek. They assessed that the location of the waste incineration was far from human settlements so that there would be no environmental impact or health risks.

4.2 Sanction from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK)

The crisis began due to delays in pick up the waste by PT. Jasa Medivest at Ciamis Hospital. Medical waste such as syringes, plastic infusions and others scattered and were visible to the public because the location of the cold storage is right in front of the emergency room. Because of the overload waste, Ciamis Hospital was summoned by the prosecutor's office to conduct a case hearing. Ciamis hospital was suspected of committing corruption and not being credible in granting authority to a medical B3 waste management company. After do some process, the Prosecutor's Office suspected that PT Jasa Medivest had a problem and then the Prosecutor's Office forwarded the case to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry for further investigation.

On August 15, 2017, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) sanctioned PT Jasa Medivest through Decree of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number 4240/Menlhk-PHLHK/PPSA/GKM.0/08/2017. This is in accordance with what was stated by Robert P. Powell in his book Crisis–A Leadership Opportunity (2005): ""A crisis is an unexpected, dramatic, sometimes unprecedented event that pushes an organization into chaos, and can destroy the organization without any real action". The sanction stated that PT Jasa Medivest was not allowed to accept waste and was required to treat existing waste. Furthermore, the company is obliged to restore the waste landfill site and last, the B3 waste producer could not send their waste until PT Jasa Medivest makes improvements according to an sanction order.



Figure 2 Signpost Sanctions from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Source: Sinfonews.com

According to Mohan Felani, Public Relations of PT Jasa Medivest, the overload waste happened due to a mismatch in the timeline for the construction of the 2nd incinerator. Permits should have been issued before there was an overload waste and incinerators could be used, but in fact the incinerator licensing process was very complex. Also, at that time the company did not cooperate with other waste management companies, so the moment waste was overload PT Jasa Medivest leaves the waste temporarily in the warehouse. The impacts from this sanction, the company experienced decline income. This decline occurred because the customer stopped cooperate and choose other competitors.

The communication strategy chosen by the company PT Jasa Medivest was to not said any statements that would make case worse. What Mohan Felani could do at that time was try to coordinate with the media crew by explaining that PT Jasa Medivest respected the existing process. The communication with the media crew was good because Mohan Felani already has good relationship with the media crew. Since he worked at 2013, he often spends time build interpersonal relationship with media crews outside office hours. Because PT Jasa Medivest did not has a public relations division, communication activities carried out by marketing department, company said sorry to the customers because of the impact of this sanction and confirmed that PT Jasa Medivest will still pick up the waste, however the waste will carry out by others companies.

In the process of settling sanctions to the ministry of environment and forestry, PT Jasa Medivest was trying to fulfill the requested requirements such as laboratory evidence stating that the medical waste does not contaminate the soil and so on. The communication occurred through formal and official. The researcher has confirmed this when visited the office of the ministry of environment and forestry (PPSA LHK) and met with "DD". It's said that the ministry invited PT Jasa Medivest representatives to come to the PPSA LHK office on the 10th floor of the Manggala Wanabakti building. The contents of the Ministerial Decree (SK) are closed and cannot be known by the public in general.

After some processes for one year, on 25 September 2018 the Minister of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) revoked the

sanction and on 1 October2018, PT Jasa Medivest' s Dawuan Plant was able to operate again.

4.3 Restoring The Reputation

After PT Jasa Medivest was allowed to operate again on October 1 2018, the company immediately prepared several strategic steps; settle arrears in employee salary payments; Minor repair to incinerator-1 and repair to incinerator-2. Besides, PT Jasa Medivest also established a subsidiary company, PT Jabar Laju Transindo (PT JLT), to carry out the waste transportation business. Based on Image Restoration Theory (TIR) there are five communication strategies to restore reputation however PT Jasa Medivest carries out 2 strategies as follows:

- 1. **Mortification**, by apologizing for the case that happened.
- 2. **Evasion of Responsibility**, by giving good faith to improve. This is in accordance with Manti Afandi's statement as Corporate Secretary at PT Jasa Medivest, that the company has fulfilled all the requirements requested by the Ministry of Environment

Management is aware that this sanctions will result in reduced trust in customers, so it was decided by management to add a new Public Relations & IT division under the Corporate Secretary in 2019 and appointed Mohan Felani to work in PR division. The first thing the PR division did at that time was to try to increase public engagement, by creating social media such as Instagram and YouTube in early 2020. As PR, Mohan Felani uses the good relationship with media crew to raise news about the revoked sanction on online media news portals such as; Jabar.tribunnews.com; bandung.business.com; suaramerdeka.com; and others. The journey to restore relations with old customers was not easy, the obstacles faced were the decrease in trust which caused customers to hesitate to partner again and the emergence new competitors because the company was on hiatus for 1 year.

PT Jasa Medivest tried to restore the partnership with Al-Ihsan Hospital. Marketing PT Jasa Medivest came back to Al-Ihsan Hospital to offer company's services but in 2018, the Al-Ihsan Hospital was already engaged with another medical waste management company, but in 2019, PT Jasa Medivest come again to participate in internal auction at Al-Ihsan Hospital and won the tender for the 2019 period. selected as a processing and transporting vendor waste for 2019 period. Reason why Al-Ihsan Hospital is back partner with PT Jasa Medivest in 2019, disclosed in interview:

"We've visited their Plant in Cikampek. In terms of permits, they are complete and their facilities look good compared to other waste management companies. The most important thing for us is a complete licensing document. Any company- if the permits are complete then we will believe it. In the past, we feel satisfied with the performance of PT Jasa Medivest, so we did not hesitate to partner again"



Figure 3. Transportation Process Waste in Al-Ihsan Hospital Source: Al-Ihsan Hospital

Apart from that there were several requests from Al-Ihsan Hospital such as (1) asking for a lower price, (2) asking PT Jasa Medivest to provide training about waste management for internal team of Al-Ihsan hospital (3) PT Jasa Medivest must take quick responsibility to divert the overload waste to other companies if something in 2017 happens again. All of these requests were approved by PT Jasa Medivest.

With Ciamis Hospital, the management of Ciamis Hospital is still disappointed with what happened in 2017. PT Trisna Aufa Buana won the tender for transporting and processing medical B3 waste for the 2018-2019 period. However, in 2020, PT Jasa Medivest won an auction only for the transportation at the Ciamis Hospital. Medical b3 waste processing is carried out by another company.

To be able to compete with competitors, Public Relations create programs that become differentiators with competitors who can add a value to PT Jasa Medivest services such as:

- Create a socialization program how to Electronic Manifest (Manifest) to clinics (puskesmas).
- Create a program training and consulting about B3 waste management to environmental health technician in a hospital.
- Collaborate with Jabar Quick Respond to give protective equipment assistance (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Provide Educational Funding for the Annida Rosada Children's Orphanage
- Make a customer gathering event in 2022 for strengthening cooperation with stakeholders

Based on the results of the primary and secondary research, it can be concluded that the role of Public Relations PT Jasa Medivest is as follows:

1. Problem Solving Process Facilitator

> Together with the corporate secretary and holding management to establish the Public Relations division at PT Jasa

Medivest

- Due to the emerging new competitors, customers ask PT Jasa Medivest to also reduce prices to balance it with other competitors, this request was accepted and discussed together with all management leaders.
- > During the Covid-19 pandemic, PT Jasa Medivest decided to collaborate with Jabar Quick Respond to provide PPE.

2. Communication Facilitator

- > Create socialization program how to use Electronic Manifest (Manifest) to clinics (puskesmas).
- Create a program training and consulting about B3 waste management to environmental health technician in a hospital.
- > Make a customer gathering event in 2022 for strengthening cooperation with stakeholders
- > Become a bridge between media crew meetings with company directors 3-4 times/ year
- Schedule customer visits to the Dawuan Plant, Cikampek.

3. Communications technician

- > Create Instagram & YouTube social media accounts for increase brand awareness and public engagement.
- ➢ Maintain good connection with the media crew
- > Communicate with the media crew to raise news about PT Jasa Medivest that already comeback.
- Manage company website
- Routine makes press release
- Engaged in making annual report.

From all the information above, it can be concluded that the public relations of PT Jasa Medivest performed its role to restore the reputation of PT Jasa Medivest after being sanctioned by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and this is in accordance with Communication Theory by Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steineer: "Communication is the transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills, etc. by using symbols, words, pictures, images, graphics, and so on" Manti Afandi, Corporate Secretary of PT Jasa Medivest stated that in 2022, around 50-60% of their pervious customers have return partnered again with PT Jasa Medivest.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The crisis experienced by PT Jasa Medivest has greatly impacted the company's reputation, a reputation that had been well maintained so far, making all stakeholders put their trust and expectation in PT Jasa Medivest as medical B3 waste management company in West Java. The impact of the sanctions in 2017, company experienced decline income and decrease of trust from the customers who chose to engage with other waste management companies. The process of restoring reputation is not easy and until now PT Jasa Medivest is still trying to restore its good name. The role of Public Relations is very necessary in restoring the reputation. Based on discussion above it can be concluded that the role of Public Relations of PT Jasa Medivest is as follows:

- 1. Problem Solving Process Facilitator
- 2. Communication Facilitator
- 3. Communications technician

Because the hard work of all employees, in 2021 PT Jasa Medivest managed to had good income with a value of IDR 45.93 billion and by 2022, around 50-60% of their previous customers have partnered again with PT Jasa Medivest.

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