



## Marketing Communication Strategy Analysis of Imaginary Film Production House on Social Media (Case Study on the Film 'Agak Laen' 2024)

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### ABSTRACT

The film *Agak Laen* (2024) emerged as a phenomenon in the Indonesian film industry with its extraordinary commercial success, raising questions about the marketing communication strategy behind it. This study aims to (1) deeply analyze the integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy designed and executed by Imajinari Production House from the perspective of its key actors, and (2) identify the barriers and challenges faced in the process. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key strategists (producers and marketing agencies), which were then validated through source triangulation with academic and industry experts, and supported by secondary data from social media observation. The results indicate that the implemented strategy was a community-centric IMC orchestration. This strategy was built on three main pillars: (1) a Message focusing on story authenticity and a “grassroots” style of humor to build emotional connection; (2) a Channel strategy that integrated multiple digital platforms with offline activations and strategically leveraged contextual momentum; and (3) an Audience strategy that began not with acquisition, but by activating the social capital of a pre-existing podcast community. On the other hand, the main challenges faced included the uncertainty of digital conversion, the operational intensity of content production, and managing the high expectations of a highly engaged community.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Agak Laen (2024), produced by Imajinari Production House, emerged as an interesting phenomenon in the Indonesian film industry. This horror-comedy genre film managed to attract public attention and recorded the highest number of viewers in 2024. Based on data from Databoks, this film has been watched more than 9 million times in theaters, making it the second highest-grossing Indonesian film of all time after KKN in Desa Penari (Kusnandar, 2024). In addition to its success in theaters, the film Agak Laen also dominated the Netflix streaming platform, remaining in the top 10 for more than 100 days after its digital release (Prasastisiwi, 2024; Khairana et al., 2023).

The success of Agak Laen can also be seen in the high number of searches on Google Indonesia throughout 2024, which shows how effective the marketing communication strategy and utilization of social media are in creating offline and attracting the attention of the audience (Latifah, 2024). The film "Agak Laen" also achieved a proud achievement by winning the Antemas Cup at the 2024 Indonesian Film Festival (FFI) thanks to the achievement of 9.1 million viewers during 98 days of screening (Kumparan, 2024).

This film became the highest-grossing Indonesian film of 2024 and the second highest-grossing of all time, only below "KKN di Desa Penari" which recorded 10.06 million viewers. Imajinari Production House, founded by Ernest Prakasa and Dipa Andika in 2022, has positioned itself as one of the production houses that consistently presents quality films with innovative marketing communication strategies. Imajinari operates under the auspices of Hahaha Corp, a comedy talent management with a wide network in the Indonesian entertainment industry (Amalia et al., 2024; Dalimunthe & Saputra, 2021). Since the success of their debut film, Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap (2022), Imajinari has continued to strengthen its digital marketing communication strategy by utilizing social media, influencer marketing, and cross-platform collaboration that can increase engagement with the audience (Sabeq, 2023). With a more adaptive approach to technological developments and content consumption habits in the digital era, Imajinari has succeeded in creating a relevant marketing communication strategy that has a major impact on the success of its films (Rahmadani et al., 2022).

The use of social media has become a key element in modern film marketing, allowing production houses to communicate directly with their audiences through creative content, digital campaigns, and collaboration with influencers and online communities. In addition, data-driven strategies are also increasingly being used to target audiences more specifically and increase marketing effectiveness (Blakeman, 2018). Research shows that a combination of content marketing and influencer marketing can significantly increase brand awareness and influence purchasing decisions (Huang, 2024).

The film Agak Laen managed to reach more than 1 million viewers in just four days of showing in theaters, an extraordinary achievement that shows the effectiveness of the promotional campaign run by the production house. On the first day of showing, the film gathered 181,689 viewers, and the number continued to more than double on the second day (CNN Indonesia, 2024). This success also made Agak Laen one of the highest-grossing films, beating the

previous film produced by *Imajinari, Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, which took longer to reach 1 million viewers (CNN Indonesia, 2024).

This extraordinary achievement is not only limited to Indonesia. *Agak Laen* has begun to penetrate the international market, with screenings in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and even the United States. According to reports, the film received a positive response from overseas audiences, and the film's main actors also promoted screenings in these countries through their social media (Tedy, 2024). This success further solidifies *Agak Laen*'s status as an Indonesian film with global appeal.

This success indicates that digital marketing through social media, collaboration with influencers, and public interaction-based campaigns have an important role in today's film marketing communication strategy. With this significant achievement, it is important to further explore how elements in a digital marketing campaign such as creative content, choice of social media platforms, and interaction with the audience can influence the decision to watch a film.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

In every marketing activity, a very important element to consider is communication. With communication, marketing activities will take place in such a way, and can achieve everything that is desired, one of which is the purchasing process. At a basic level, communication can inform and make potential consumers aware of the existence of the product being offered (Kurniawati, 2023). Communication has a broad impact and can influence social dynamics in a group or society (Humaizi & Zulkarnain, 2024). According to Oktaviani (2023), marketing communication is a series of activities carried out by companies to convey relevant messages and influence consumer decisions in purchasing products or services. According to Oktaviani (2023), marketing communication is a series of activities carried out by companies to convey relevant messages and influence consumer decisions in purchasing products or services. In the modern era, sustainability has become an important aspect of

marketing communication strategy. Braga et al. (2024) found that sustainability communication helps companies build a positive image while encouraging environmentally friendly consumer behavior. Sustainable marketing communication includes delivering messages that emphasize corporate social responsibility, such as reducing carbon footprints and using environmentally friendly raw materials. This strategy not only increases consumer trust but also strengthens their loyalty to the brand.

Technological transformation has brought a revolution in marketing communications, especially through digital media. Susilo noted that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and message personalization are major trends in digital marketing. This technology allows companies to deliver relevant and targeted messages, which ultimately increases consumer engagement levels. Digital media also allows companies to reach a wider audience at a more efficient cost than traditional media (Susilo, 2023).

Sathish (2015) found that social media plays an important role in supporting the sales and purchasing process in the B2B market. Social media allows companies to communicate directly with business partners, share information in real time, and build stronger relationships.

Porcu et al. (2017) developed an IMC measurement tool designed to evaluate the extent to which marketing communications integration is carried out across the organization. This tool includes dimensions such as message consistency, coordination between functions, and efficiency of resource use. The results of this evaluation help companies understand the extent to which their communication strategies are integrated and provide direction for future improvements.

Danaher and Rossiter (2011) compared the effectiveness of old and new media in building consumer trust. They found that new media, such as social media, have the advantage of creating a more interactive and engaging experience for consumers. However, old media such as television remain effective in reaching a wider audience (Sani et al., 2022).

Marketing communication challenges are increasingly complex with changes in the media landscape and consumer behavior. Batra and Keller (2016) stated that companies need to develop more flexible strategies to face these challenges. They also emphasize the importance of understanding the consumer journey in the decision-making process to create more relevant and effective communication strategies.

Rekettye (2017) identified several global trends that will impact marketing communications in the future, including climate change, economic recession, and technological developments. These trends require companies to adopt a more adaptive and responsive approach to changes in the business environment.

Marketing communications is a dynamic and ever-evolving field. By adopting an integrative, data-driven approach that is responsive to technological change, companies can create more effective communication strategies to face future challenges.

IMC aims to deliver a clear, consistent, and compelling message to the audience, as well as strengthen the brand and increase the effectiveness of the

marketing campaign through good coordination between the various communication elements used (Andrews & Shimp, 2018).

Social media has become a core element in the integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy in the film industry. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok play a key role in reaching audiences directly, building awareness, and driving engagement. According to Smith and Taylor (2022), Instagram is widely used to share engaging visual content such as posters, behind-the-scenes photos, and short clips, all of which are designed to pique the curiosity of the audience ((Rehman, Gulzar, & Aslam, 2022).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. To answer the research questions, data collection is focused on primary data sources supported by secondary data sources. In-depth interviews are the main technique for obtaining primary data. This technique is then strengthened by non-participant observation on social media which functions as a secondary data source for triangulation and context enrichment. Primary data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews. The selection of informants used the snowball sampling technique, where the process starts from the first key informant who then recommends the next relevant informant. The researcher began by interviewing Dipa Andika (Co-founder & Producer of Imajinari), who then directed the researcher to other strategic informants, namely Olivia Azora Monenda (Imajinari Project Officer) and Agung Putro Setio (Lead Digital & Offline Activation-Rhaya Flicks). This interview aims to explore a comprehensive internal perspective on the background of strategy formulation, decision-making process, message and channel selection, how to engage the audience, and the challenges faced. To complement the primary data from the interview, the researcher used non-participant observation techniques as a secondary data source. This observation process includes observing and collecting digital artifacts from marketing communication activities on official social media accounts such as Instagram (@pilem.agak.laen), TikTok (@pilem.agak.laen), and YouTube (Imajinari & Agak Laen Official). The artifacts collected include poster uploads, behind-the-scenes videos, teasers, and relevant audience interactions. It is important to emphasize that this secondary data is not analyzed separately, but rather serves to: (1) provide visual context to the narrative conveyed by the informant; (2) verify claims or explanations from the interview results; and (3) become concrete examples presented in Chapters IV and V to enrich the analysis.

## **RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Message Foundation on Narrative Authenticity and Communication Style***

The most fundamental finding of this study is that the Agak Laen message strategy is deeply rooted in a concept of authenticity, both in terms of the substance of the story and its delivery style. This is not just a creative choice, but a strategic decision that is the foundation for all communication activities. The research findings reveal that strategists, from the leadership level to field executors, consistently emphasize the importance of story originality. Belief in the quality of the original script is the main message and foundation before the

promotion is designed. When analyzed using the marketing communication theory framework, this approach is in line with the concept of source credibility.

According to Belch & Belch (2021), messages will be more effective if delivered by sources that are considered credible. By prioritizing story quality, *Imajinari* implicitly builds an image as a credible source, which is reinforced by the finding that the focus on 'original stories' is consciously built as *Imajinari*'s brand identity. This authenticity of substance is then conveyed through an authentic communication style. The "organic, trivial, silly, and stupid" communication style is an implementation of what is referred to in theory as humor-based emotional appeal. However, if interpreted more deeply, this is a strategy to form a specific Brand Personality, namely as a "funny hangout buddy", not as a "corporation that sells films". This style has proven to be very effective because of the precision in matching the message encoding process with the "field of experience" of the core audience of "Pasukan Bermarga". When compared to previous research, this approach shows differences.

In contrast to the KKN strategy in Desa Penari (Bramantyo, 2023) whose message is built on mystery, *Agak Laen* proves that messages of authenticity and humor that are close to the audience's daily lives have the same viral power. The research findings show that the authentic message is not delivered randomly, but through a very planned content orchestration. The series of content releases such as teasers, daily BTS videos, official trailers, to posters of viewership achievement can be analyzed sharply using the AIDA Effect Hierarchy Model to dissect how the audience is psychologically led from the introduction stage to action. The Attention stage is massively captured through the "serialization" strategy of the production process. The BTS video released every day since the beginning of filming serves as an effective "noise breaker" to grab the audience's attention. The message conveyed is "there is something we are working on, and we invite you to peek", a very powerful tactic to attract initial attention and create a habit in the audience to look forward to the content every day.

After attention is gained, the Interest stage is intensively cultivated through the launch of an official trailer that reveals more of the plot, as well as interviews with the cast in various media managed by a publicist. Furthermore, the Desire stage is massively raised through social validation messages (social proof). The tactic of releasing milestone posters of the number of viewers periodically is the most effective way to send the message: "millions of people have proven that this film is good, you will lose out if you don't watch it." This message directly triggers FOMO, a psychological mechanism that is relevant in the context of today's digital audience.

The peak of this desire building is the fulfillment of the promise or "nazar" to become a silver human, an action that turns the celebration of the number of viewers into a cultural event that strengthens the audience's desire to be part of the phenomenon. When connected with the research of Thahirah, et al. (2024) who found that viral marketing and E-WOM had a significant influence on the decision to watch *Agak Laen*, this analysis shows how these effects were created. These tactical contents are the fuel for the viral marketing and E-WOM triggers they measured.

One of the most sophisticated findings of the message strategy is its ability to adapt and even take advantage of the external context. The finding regarding the choice of release time two weeks before the 2024 Election is not just a logistical decision, but a very strong implicit message. In the Marketing Communication Process Model, there is an element of Noise, which is all external factors that can interfere with the reception of the message. A noisy political campaign is a form of very large noise. Instead of trying to "shout" louder than the noise, Imajinari's strategy is to offer a message that is the antithesis of the noise itself.

When the media landscape is filled with serious and divisive political messages, Agak Laen comes with a message of "escapism", entertainment, and laughter that unites. This message becomes very valuable and relevant precisely because of the context of the political noise, a strategic move that is even recognized and taken into account by other industry players as revealed in the triangulation analysis. This adaptive ability shows a level of strategic maturity that is not found in many other film marketing case studies, which tend to focus only on internal campaign factors.

Key findings show that marketing teams are not only using social media, but designing a digital ecosystem where each platform has a specific function. TikTok is positioned as a "viral engine", Instagram as a "community hub and brand identity", YouTube as a "deep narrative channel", and even Telegram as an "exclusive channel for super-fans". If analyzed theoretically, this is a manifestation of the synergy principle in IMC. According to Belch & Belch (2021), synergy occurs when all communication channels are optimized to work together and create a greater effect than if each channel worked alone. This strategy effectively carries out what was validated by industry practitioner Daniel Irawan, who mapped the ideal function of each platform: TikTok for word-of-mouth, Instagram for brand exhibition, and YouTube for longer content.

This multi-platform, layered approach is clearly different from previous studies such as Aulia's (2023) work which only focused on one platform (TikTok) or Abellia & Amalia (2025) which focused on Instagram. While these studies analyzed the effectiveness of one channel, the findings in the Agak Laen case indicate a deliberate orchestration. The use of "proops" accounts or fan accounts that are casually managed by the agency team can also be analyzed as a tactic to blur the boundaries between personal and non-personal communication channels. Messages from these "proops" accounts are received by the audience as organic E-WOM, which according to theory has higher credibility, a very sophisticated tactic to amplify messages.

The Agak Laen channel strategy does not stop at the digital world. Findings regarding offline activations such as cinema visits, roadshows, and the "silver man" gimmick indicate a conscious effort to bridge the virtual and real worlds. Within the framework of IMC theory, this is an application of experiential marketing that aims to create direct interaction and emotional memories for the audience. The "silver man" activation is the ultimate example. This is not just an ordinary promotional event; it is a show designed to become viral content. These offline events become the "fuel" for online conversations, creating a continuous online-offline-online cycle: promises in the virtual world

trigger events in the real world, which then generate endless content in the virtual world, which ultimately drives more people back to the real world (cinema).

The discussion on channels becomes richer when we analyze the use of networks outside of owned media. Findings about strategic partnerships with big brands such as Alfamart and BCA show the marketing team's ability to "borrow" distribution and communication channels owned by other parties to reach audiences at the grassroots level. This is the application of IMC that goes beyond the promotional mix, entering the realm of strategic marketing partnerships. This channel allows the film's message to be present at unexpected points but very close to the target audience's daily lives, such as at minimarket cashiers or ATM screens. The most unique and sophisticated finding is the use of "time" itself as a strategic channel. The decision to release the film during the pre-election momentum is a masterstroke in contextual marketing. When analyzed from the theory of communication channels, the marketing team intelligently identified a "channel gap" in the national information landscape. At a time when all other media channels were "clogged" by political noise, they opened a new, clean channel with entertainment content. This was validated by Daniel Irawan who admitted that other industry players had to "take into account the release date" Somewhat Different. This is the strongest evidence that timing as a channel is very effective, not only to attract attention, but also to influence the dynamics of industry competition as a whole.

Moreover, this strategy can be analyzed using Social Identity Theory. This campaign was successful because watching the film *Agak Laen* was no longer just an entertainment consumption activity, but rather an act of affirming one's identity as part of the "Surname Troops". This is a validation of membership in a social group that shares the same sense of humor and values. The drive born from this group identity has proven to be much stronger than mere curiosity about a new film. This is very different from the case of *Mencuri Raden Saleh* (Diputra & Widagdhaprasana, 2023) which had to build an audience from scratch for an entirely new IP, or *NKCTHI*, whose IP source was a book, where the reader community tends to be more individual and passive compared to the interactive podcast listener community.

The essence of *Agak Laen*'s audience strategy is not just getting people to watch, but turning them into part of the campaign. This was achieved through a variety of deep engagement tactics, which are the implementation of modern IMC that focuses on dialogue. The para-social communication style implemented by social media managers, where interactions feel personal and two-way, successfully built strong relationships. The creation of exclusive channels such as Telegram groups is also an advanced segmentation strategy that provides preferential treatment to the most loyal audiences, who then voluntarily become the most vocal brand advocates. The peak of this engagement strategy is offline activations such as cinema visits and "silver human" actions. These activities not only function as promotional channels, but as community "rituals" that strengthen emotional bonds. By fulfilling "vows" to the audience, the talents and production team show that they value the audience's contribution. This

emotional experience then becomes content that is shared massively by the audience (user-generated content), creating organic promotion that is much more credible than any paid advertising. If analyzed, the marketing team managed to "delegate" some of the promotional tasks to their own audience. They did not just sell tickets, but managed to build an authentic social-entertainment movement.

### ***Obstacles and Challenges in the Marketing Communication Process of Imajinari Production House in the Film Agak Laen (2024) on Social Media***

The strategic level challenges are the highest-stakes bets because they involve fundamental decisions that determine the direction and potential success of the entire campaign. The two main strategic challenges revealed by the research findings are the uncertainty in converting digital attention into real action, and the need to adapt to the highly dynamic national socio-political context.

The most fundamental challenge felt by strategists is the uncertainty in the conversion process. Interview findings indicate a consistent "strategic anxiety", both at the producer and agency levels, about whether social media buzz and engagement can be directly proportional to ticket sales in theaters. This is the essence of the bet in modern digital marketing. When analyzed using a marketing framework, this is a classic problem in the conversion funnel.

Digital metrics such as likes, shares, and views are excellent indicators of success at the top of the funnel, namely at the Attention and Interest stages. However, there is a large gap of uncertainty between digital interest and real action at the bottom of the funnel, namely ticket purchases. The strategic anxiety of these informants was empirically validated by the findings of Thahirah et al.'s (2024) quantitative research. Their study found that the FOMO phenomenon, which is a proxy for viral buzz, partially had no significant effect on the decision to watch the film *Agak Laen* in Pekanbaru. This shows that, even though a campaign successfully creates a "fear of missing out" sensation, it does not automatically and linearly encourage every individual to buy tickets. This confirms that the biggest challenge for strategists is designing an effective bridge to cross the gap between attention and action. The second strategic challenge is the ability to adapt to the national political situation.

The finding that the film was released just before the quiet period of the 2024 election, when discussed from a challenge perspective, indicates a very high risk calculation. In the Communication Process Model, a noisy political environment can be considered a very large "noise" that has the potential to drown out any marketing message. The strategic challenge for Imajinari at that time was: should they postpone the release to avoid the "noise", or face it? The decision to move forward can be interpreted as a sophisticated adaptive strategy. Rather than seeing the political situation as a threat, they see it as a context that can be exploited. This is very different from the challenges faced by the film *KKN di Desa Penari* (Bramantyo, 2023), which faced an unexpected crisis (pandemic) and was forced to adopt a reactive strategy to survive. In contrast, *Agak Laen*'s challenge was to manage a predictable event (election) with a proactive strategy.

They managed to turn "disruption" into "opportunity" by positioning their film as an "antithesis" or "escape" from political noise, a strategic maneuver that

shows a high level of maturity and market sensitivity. One of the main operational obstacles was the very heavy content production load. The strategy of "serializing" the production process by releasing behind-the-scenes (BTS) videos every day during the shooting period, although very effective in building engagement, created very high pressure for the content team. This can be analyzed as a challenge to maintain production speed (content velocity).

Every day, the team has to go through a fast cycle: shooting in the evening, editing the next morning, and publishing in the afternoon. This relentless rhythm brings with it the difficulty of maintaining originality and freshness of ideas continuously. The risk of this working style is the occurrence of creative burnout and a decrease in the quality of content. The solution revealed by the findings is to adopt a more "raw" and spontaneous content style. This style, in addition to being effective in building authenticity, is also more operationally efficient because it does not require a long and layered production process, allowing the team to maintain a fast daily rhythm.

Another operational obstacle that is no less complex is coordination with many external parties. The findings show that the campaign ecosystem not only involves Imajinari's internal team, but also a digital marketing agency (Rhaya Flicks) and a professional publicist (Poplicist). Within the IMC theoretical framework, the biggest challenge in implementing an integrated strategy is ensuring that all these different parties move in the same rhythm and deliver a consistent message. This is a complex stakeholder management challenge. A very clear communication flow, strict division of tasks, and a fast approval process are needed so that the campaign can run dynamically and responsively to trends. The findings regarding the role of the Project Officer as a liaison between the internal team and external vendors indicate an awareness of the importance of a centralized coordination function to overcome this obstacle. The success of this campaign indicates that behind the scenes, there is a project management process and inter-agency communication that, although challenging, is running very effectively.

Finally, there are challenges in managing communities on private media. The use of exclusive channels such as Telegram, while very effective in cultivating super-fans, also brings its own challenges. Unlike public social media, private spaces like this require more intensive management to keep discussions positive, relevant, and not backfiring on the brand. Challenges include preventing the spread of misinformation, handling internal conflicts between members, and most importantly, ensuring that "exclusivity" does not turn into "alienation" that makes members feel superior and negative towards audiences outside the group. This is a community governance challenge that shows that in the modern marketing era, the marketing team's job does not stop after the campaign is over, but continues in maintaining and fostering long-term relationships with the audience they have built.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The marketing communication strategy implemented by Imajinari Production House for the film *Agak Laen* is an integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy that is holistic, adaptive, and community-centered. This strategy is built on three main pillars: (a) Message Pillar that focuses on the authenticity of the story and the humorous communication style that is popular; (b) Channel Pillar that orchestrates various digital platforms (multi-platform) synergistically with offline activation; and (c) Audience Pillar that begins with the activation of a loyal core community (podcast), then expands concentrically to reach the mass market. The obstacles and challenges faced by Imajinari Production House in the marketing communication process are multi-dimensional and can be categorized into three main areas: (a) strategic challenges, namely the fundamental uncertainty in converting digital engagement into real ticket sales; (b) operational obstacles, which include the workload of high-paced content production and the complexity of coordinating various external parties; and (c) audience dynamics challenges, namely the need to manage very high expectations and face the risk of backlash from a very active and vocal fan community.

## ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future research is encouraged to examine how integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies in the film industry can be optimized through real-time audience analytics and adaptive content loops. While this study reveals a robust community-driven IMC model, future investigations could explore the scalability of such strategies across different genres, audience demographics, and international markets. Moreover, there is room to assess the long-term brand equity impact of emotionally immersive campaigns like those in *Agak Laen*, especially in sustaining post-release engagement and merchandise monetization. A promising research direction involves evaluating the effectiveness of time-contextual messaging such as releasing content during politically noisy periods as a deliberate positioning tool within broader media ecologies. Incorporating cross-cultural comparative studies on the success of humor-based versus fear-based promotional appeals may also enrich the strategic blueprint for regional filmmakers in global digital ecosystems.

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