

## **Path of Promotion and Socialization of Universitas Terbuka**

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*Universitas Terbuka (UT) provides a higher education in Indonesia for about 29 years. It has more than a million of alumna. Unfortunately, some Indonesian did not know about UT based on the survey we already done. The survey showed that the fresh graduate from High School do not know about UT. Most people who know UT are the people who already work. To make people of Indonesia know more about UT then UT has done any efforts to promote itself. This paper will discuss deeply about paths that UT has done in promoting and socializing itself. The methods and techniques of the process in socializing will also describe in details.*

*Keywords: promotion and socialization*

UT applied open and distance learning (ODL) system since 1984. Thus, UT has already existed in about 29 years to serve the people in Indonesia for attending higher education. As stated on the abstract above even UT has about a million of alumna but there are some people do not know about UT. Most of them are the fresh students who just graduated from the high schools. UT has done some efforts to promote since 2009.

UTs students are dominated by primary teachers who have to increase their qualification based on the government policies that primary teachers should have graduated certificate from the undergraduate level (Sarjana- S1) background as stated on the Law of Teachers and Lecturer Number 14, 2005. Since 2007, UT has already made a prediction of these students that they will graduate on the 2009 at most. It means that UTs students will decrease on 2010 and so forth.

To solve the decreasing prediction of students in 2010 then UT started to rebrand its branding and focused the recruitment of students on the fresh students who just graduated from high schools. The demanding of recruiting students who are youths and do not know about UTs system is a big effort to attract them to participate in UT.

The advantages of learning through ODL which is UT conducted are: First, there is no boundary about age, location, time, and not disturbing people who has to do their job while studying in UT. Second, it is easy to access since the learning resources are modules which students can bring everywhere and learn it every time they want to study. They also can access the learning process through face to face or online tutorial and also desk or online examination. Thus, UT is applied a flexible of time and system of learning. Third, UT is affordable since the students do not need to pay the application form. They just download it from UTs website and it is free. The tuition fee is also very affordable.

Since 2009, UT has rebranded itself. The purpose of rebranding is to create the consumers mind about UT. It also prefers to establish itself with a different presence to the consumers. UT wants to have loyal consumers and they get prospects to be loyal consumers of UT. The following discussion of this paper is about the paths of promotion and socialization that UT already done.

### **Branding in UT**

UT has rebranded its branding. The purpose of rebranding is to create a unique image of UT to the consumer mind. A process of creating a unique image for a product has already done by UT. UTs branding is used with a consistent for campaign. Establishing UTs branding is also the aim of UT to rebrand itself. It has a dream to be a significant different presence to the consumers. It did efforts to attract and retain loyal consumers. Thus, branding in UT is tried to get prospects to see UT as the only one that provides a solution to the consumer problem of looking higher education.

“The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines: “a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers. Therefore it makes sense to understand that branding is not about getting your target market to choose you over the competition, but it is about getting your prospects to see you as the only one that provides a solution to their problem” (Laura Lake, 2012)

Through its new branding UT prefers to deliver message clearly to its consumers. UT also provides about its credibility and connects its target prospects through its branding. UT prefers to motivate its consumers to be a concrete user loyalty. UT understands that its branding is already accommodated the needs and wants of its customers and prospects. Moreover, UTs branding is the resources of promising its consumers and as the foundation of UTs marketing.

Shifted to attract the fresh graduated, UT has to do some efforts not only rebranding but also increasing the process of socialization and promotion through using the media. Many kinds of media UT has to use for attracting the youths to be participate in UT. Youths are not preferred to attend ODL system since they prefer face to face. The result for promotion for three years seems better since the students of UT who are 19 – 24 years are increased participating in UT.

**Table1. Number of UT students in age 19-24 years**

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>2010.1</b>	<b>2010.2</b>	<b>2011.1</b>	<b>2011.2</b>	<b>2012.1</b>	<b>2012.2</b>
Non Education	27.315	34.374	35.392	41.851	39.956	46.600
Education	87.915	96.853	77.738	88.835	74.196	80.734
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115.266</b>	<b>131.227</b>	<b>113.130</b>	<b>130.686</b>	<b>114.152</b>	<b>127.334</b>

### **Promotion and socialization through Printed Media**

UT used printed media for promoting itself. The printed media is poster, leaflet, brochure, books, and flyers. All of this media are used by head office to promote and socialize UT. These media are also used by the Regional Offices (ROs) which are spread out the country. All units and

offices in UT have to use same posters, leaflets and flyers when they want to promote UT to its customers.

Besides, UT also used newspaper, and magazine to promote and socialize. Newspaper is used for socializing to all people all over the country. UT promotes not only used the national newspapers but also focused on the local newspapers. Purpose of using local newspaper is demanding for people who are readers of local newspapers. This kind of newspaper is popular in local since the information is focused on the local evident and events. UT used special magazines such as the local government magazines are appropriate to place UTs information as an advertorial, advertisement, and sharing information about UT.

### **Promotion and socialization through Broadcasting**

Target of Radio listeners is great on demographics. Radio broadcasting is the best and quickest for UT to promote since it gains national recognition. Through talk in radio UT can promote its product to the target listeners all over the country since the coverage of radio is huge and broad. Besides, Radio is capable to reach many people while maintaining a strong impact. Dissemination education message is particularly advantages through radio. Radio can serve as a forum to elicit its listener reactions or comments.

Radio broadcasting is one path of promoting UT. Other strategies of promoting UT in Radio are Advertorial and talk show. UT used national and local Radio. Since both of them have different audiences. Besides, each radio has its characteristics and coverage. National radio broadcasting has its own audience which is not appropriate to the need of UTs consumers. Local radio broadcasting is also has its audiences which are appropriate to UTs need. Radio broadcasting is very useful for UT especially to inform to them who are in the remote area and Radio is the only one tool to communicate. Besides, it coverage is broad and many people still listen to it.

Television (TV) broadcasting is also used by UT to promote. Unfortunately, this kind of broadcasting is difficult to watch by all people in this country since the coverage and programs are not appropriate to all audiences. Each TV has its own loyal audience because of their programs. Moreover, it is very expensive to place advertorial, talk show, advertisement and other kind of promotion through TV.

### **Promotion and socialization through Face-to-face Media**

UT has done some gathering, discussion, and forum to talk about distance learning system. These activities are conducting for giving the audience direct information about UT and they tour the head offices. The purpose of having these activities is to give the consumers the product knowledge and views about UT. Besides, they got a coaching clinic to use the UTs products through website such as; how to download the application form from the website, how to attend the tutorial online and also online examination, how to access the supplement materials such as, streaming, dry lab, digital library and others portal in UTs website.

Most of the consumers who attend the gathering, discussion and forum are communities such as; bloggers, students from high schools, gardeners, farmers, workers, labors and their family, and

other people. Discussion is focused on their need and interest. UTs inform about UT through visiting the units such as; the library, multi media center, distribution center, and examination center especially digital printing area.

Furthermore, face to face media is an activity to meet UTs costumers or new costumers. They are ready to encounter messages and action to do business. UT can influence them to purchase UTs product by hearing, sights, touch, smell and taste. Interaction is very important in using this media and encouraging consumers to be participate in UT. UT has to make them leave UT with unforgettable memories and experiences.

### **Promotion and socialization through Outdoors Media**

Outdoors media is the lowest cost to promoting UT. Outdoor advertising is able to supply some impressions, reaching and frequently, coverage ideas to inform to consumers about UTs products. It provides broad coverage and visible media to expose to everyone who goes outside and passes to office, home, shopping, and going around. UT is consistent used this outdoor media such as billboards and directions from some places to the head office of UT.

UT chooses this outdoors media since it believed that most people or human being spend their time outdoors. Continuing presence outdoor can produce frequently exposure since billboard will be there for 24 hours in seven days a week. Even this kind of media is the old fashion but it still used for advertised any kind of products of UT. UT also thought that using outdoors media means wide target potential communities, ages, genre, groups will get the information from this media. This media is proper to exposure UT and put this in the pinpoint to reach the market area. Outdoors media could not compete to the other media since outdoor media cannot be missed or diluted.

### **Promotion and socialization through Media Online**

Website, Facebook, Twitter are the media online communication. UT also used this media for promoting. According to some experts on common sense media (2013) that teens prefer face to face communication. UT has targeted to increase its students who are 18 above. It means that media online is not appropriate to use most.

UT used this media for promotion and socialization since it is needed to provide knowledge about the flexibility learning by using internet. Thus, UT still used this media for specific consumers who are used social media as their tool for communication.

### **REFERENCE**

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