

Communication Intervention: From Civil Society Diplomacy to Sustainable Business Growth

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Abstract

This paper explores various forms of communication intervention employed by corporations and government institutions to address strategic issues and foster constructive relationships with the public and key stakeholders. The interventions include civil society diplomacy, which highlights the active role of digital communities in influencing public discourse and institutional reputation; event-based approaches aimed at education and engagement; normative approaches rooted in institutional governance and formal procedures; and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies as structured expressions of social commitment. This study employs a qualitative research methodology utilising a case study technique to examine the activities of organisations like BCA, PT Pupuk Indonesia, PT Samudera Indonesia, Telkomsel, Djarum Foundation, and Kitabisa. The results of these interventions (societal impact, investment flows, and sustainable business growth) are analysed to comprehend how communication methods enhance organisational performance. The results show that strategic communication is not only a way to deal with crises, but also an important way to promote long-term social and economic sustainability.

Keywords: case study, civil society diplomacy, communication intervention, organizational legitimacy, sustainable business growth

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Introduction

In the modern business landscape, the legitimacy and survival of an organization are no longer determined solely by financial performance. Sustainable growth requires a delicate balance between economic profit and social, environmental, and ethical responsibilities. To achieve this, organizations must move beyond traditional public relations strategies toward proactive communication intervention. This study defines communication intervention not only as a crisis response strategy but also as a mode of business diplomacy that involves civil society to obtain operational authorisation. Corporate diplomacy has been a significant subject in public relations research because to its tight association with relationship-building (Ingenhoff & Marschlich, 2019; Mogensen, 2017; White & Alkandari, 2019).

The necessity of moving from reactive measures to diplomatic engagement is evident in the Indonesian context, where corporations face significant challenges in trust, regulation, and global instability. PT Bank Central Asia Tbk (BCA) PT Pupuk Indonesia (Persero), Telkomsel, Djarum Foundation, PT Samudera Indonesia, and Kitabisa.com have demonstrated how strategic communication underpins reputation.

The first challenge lies in security and consumer protection in the financial sector. Cybercrime, such as skimming and social engineering fraud, is a constant threat to PT Bank Central Asia Tbk (BCA). This puts its mandate under Law No.24 of 2004 at risk. To counter this, BCA implements preventive communication interventions. The second challenge is sustainable growth requires solving structural inefficiencies through empowerment. PT Pupuk Indonesia (Persero) addresses the issue of subsidized fertilizer inefficiency by shifting from a distribution focus to a solution-based approach. Similarly, Telkomsel as Indonesian telecommunication company, addresses the dual challenge of digital inequality and climate change. The “Telkomsel Jaga Bumi” program and the rollout of 5G show that communication may lead to both technological progress and environmental protection. The company is working to meet Indonesia's net-zero emissions goals while also growing its business.

The next challenge involves navigating regulatory and ethical friction with public interest groups. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) accused the Djarum Foundation, a long-standing charitable organization, of using children in their badminton auditions to promote tobacco brands, citing Government Regulations (PP) No. 109 of 2012. The conflict threatened to dismantle a decades-old sports development program. Here, the communication intervention took the form of high-level negotiation and adaptation.

Furthermore, communication interventions also focus on maintaining trust within the digital civil society. As the digital economy grows, so does the fragility of public trust. Kitabisa.com, Indonesia's largest crowdfunding platform, faced a critical “trust deficit” when fraudulent campaigns, such as the case of a user named Singgih Sahara engaging in alleged donation fraud, exposed vulnerabilities in the system. The problem was existential: if civil society loses faith in the platform's integrity, the business collapses. Finally, organizations must manage global macro-environmental volatility. PT Samudera Indonesia faced a 73% surge in shipping rates and severe logistical disruption in 2024 due to geopolitical tensions in the Red Sea.

This diverse phenomenon is observed across corporations through targeted communication activities. This paper argues that the journey to sustainable business growth is paved with communication interventions. This study illustrates the transformation of potential conflicts into enduring organisational values through the examination of the shift from civil society

engagement (Kitabisa.com, Djarum Foundation) to systemic resilience (BCA, PT Pupuk Indonesia, Telkomsel) and global adaptation (PT Samudera Indonesia).

Literature Review

Communication Intervention

Intervention communication, as indicated in the sources, delineates strategic messaging and professional involvement aimed at altering stakeholder perceptions, behaviours, and outcomes in several contexts, including public health, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and crisis management. These kinds of interventions work by changing information to fit certain socio-ecological or cultural codes, which makes the environment more responsive to participation (Illia et al., 2025). In crisis communication, intervention tactics are fluid, necessitating that professionals proactively anticipate and adjust to changing dynamics as new information alters views of crisis blame and causation (Jong, 2025). Interventions that seek to enhance organisational legitimacy typically employ a blend of communication strategies, including information visibility, organisational listening, and cross-sector partnerships. Effective listening and collaboration with government entities are essential for attaining elevated pragmatic legitimacy (Fu & Wang, 2024). These several instances illustrate that communication intervention primarily involves strategically constructing meaning, influencing behaviour, and modifying organisational outputs to attain specific engagement objectives.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method with a case study approach. By utilizing open-ended questions and the flexibility to probe for further details, the in-depth interview method allows for comprehensive understanding Communication Intervention as part of Corporate Diplomacy. The research subjects include public relations experts (the Chairman of PAFI) and PR Managers of heads of communication departments from companies recognized in the 2023 The Iconomics Corporate Reputation Awards. This award evaluates corporate reputation based on three paramaters: business & commercial reputation; people & leadership reputation; and social & citizen reputation. The complete list of selected companies is presented in Table 1:

Table 1

List of Research Subjects

No	Company	Category
1	PT Bank Central Asia	Bank
2	PT Pupuk Indonesia (Persero)	Petrochemical – Fertilizer
3	Djarum Bakti Olahraga	Philanthropy Foundation
4	Telkomsel Indonesia	Telecommunication
5	PT Samudera Indonesia	Shipping, Port and Logistics
6	Kitabisa.com	Startup Galang Dana dan Donasi

Interviews were conducted using an interview guide consisting six sections: (1) informant profile; (2) target stakeholders in communication activities, including issues, motivations, and implementation strategies for building positive relationships; (3) planning and execution of communication program; (4) spesific diplomatic or communication tactics; (5) challenges encountered in communication interventions.

Data analysis was performed using the dominant analysis techniques proposed by (Yin, 2014). The analysis involved: (1) pattern matching, which includes nonequivalent dependent variables as pattern, rival explanations as a pattern, and simpler patterns; (2) explanation building; (3) time-series analysis. In practice, the process began by establishing main categories of communication intervention based deductively on the research questions and the interview guide. Atlas.ti was utilized as the qualitative data analysis tool.

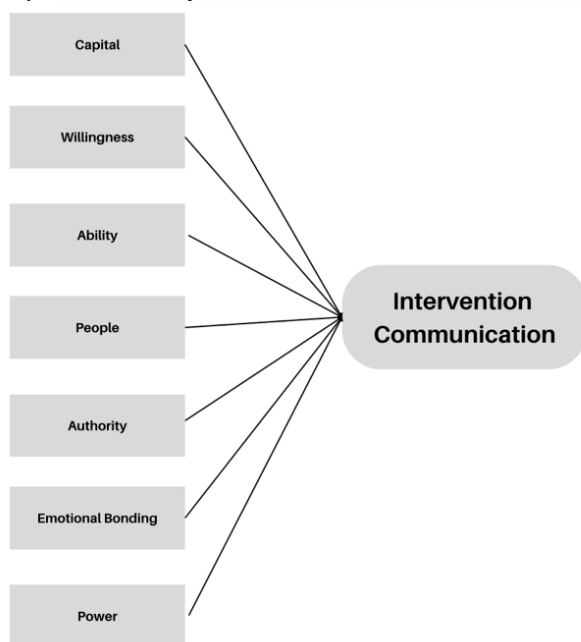
Results and Discussion

Communication Intervention Techniques

The effectiveness of communication intervention within corporate diplomacy relies on the strategic mobilization of distinct organizational resources and behavioral attributes (Marschlich, 2022). This study identifies seven critical factors: Capital, Willingness, Ability, People, Authority, Emotional Bonding, and Power. These key elements as dynamic intervention techniques to navigate complex stakeholder landscapes. These factors allow organizations to not only manage reputation but also to influence decisions and foster deep-seated engagement. The following analysis details how each factor is operationally defined and applied by the observed entities to secure organizational legitimacy and drive sustainable growth.

Figure 1

Key Elements of Communication Intervention



Capital serves as the fundamental foundation supporting various communication strategies, ranging from formal collaborations to informal relationship building. For instance, Kitabisa utilizes capital to foster media relations and professional networks through flexible budget allocations for informal hospitality, such as dining with stakeholders to ensure positive information dissemination. Similarly, PT Pupuk Indonesia leverages financial resources for “premium networking” and strategic lobbying. Their capital is directed toward exclusive activities (such as golf, travel, and entertainment) to cultivate close ties with key partners and

support their needs. Both cases demonstrate how financial resources are instrumental in facilitating both flexible and exclusive relationship-building efforts. In contrast, Djarum Foundation Bakti Olahraga directs its capital toward sponsorship investments and cross-group collaborations involving entities like Blibli, BCA, and Polytron. Rather than serving as mere business expenditures, these sponsorships act as strategic tools to cultivate a positive corporate image through high-impact activities. Although the foundation operates on a non-profit basis, the deployment of capital for social initiatives effectively reinforces the wider group's reputation. Thus, for Djarum, capital functions as a mechanism for strengthening organizational legitimacy (Troy et al., 2025) through social contribution (Johnston & Lane, 2018).

Willingness is manifested through the readiness, commitment, and proactive attitude of organizations to fulfill the specific needs and interests of their stakeholders. In the corporate and digital sectors, this is evident where communication intervention techniques leverage transparency and user-centric innovation to foster trust. PT Bank Central Asia (BCA) demonstrates this through a strategy of Information Provision and Transparency, ensuring open access to performance data via digital platforms and public reports to enhance credibility with investors and customers. Similarly, Kitabisa shows its willingness through Innovation to Enhance Donor Convenience, utilizing features like automatic donations and a user-friendly interface. By proactively adapting to user needs without compromising comfort, Kitabisa lowers barriers to participation, thereby increasing donor engagement and ensuring the sustainability of their social impact. In the philanthropic and governmental spheres, willingness takes the form of resilience, integrity, and structured collaboration. The Djarum Foundation exhibits Transparency and Courage in facing public challenges, such as the dispute with KPAI; by maintaining open dialogue while adhering to its core vision, it demonstrates a commitment to principle that allows its sports development programs to survive regulatory friction.

Ability functions as a strategic intervention technique that reflects an organization's capacity to identify, implement, and evaluate effective measures to achieve its objectives. This capability is exemplified by BCA, which fosters stakeholder trust through rigorous transparency, utilizing quarterly performance reports to counter potential skepticism with verifiable data. Similarly, the Djarum Foundation leverages its operational ability to mitigate negative industry perceptions by diversifying into non-tobacco sectors and investing in athlete development, effectively shifting the narrative toward national achievement. Furthermore, Telkomsel demonstrates this competence through a research-driven communication strategy, using empirical data to tailor its diplomacy and prevent miscommunication. Collectively, these approaches illustrate how distinct organizational abilities are successfully deployed to manage stakeholder perceptions and ensure organizational effectiveness.

People functions as a strategic intervention technique that leverages human capital to achieve organizational objectives. This approach is exemplified by BCA, which mobilizes a broad network of individuals, including anti-hoax communities, IT experts, and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), to collaboratively educate customers and mitigate cybersecurity risks. Conversely, Samudera Indonesia focuses on internal dynamics by recruiting high-energy individuals capable of thriving under pressure to navigate complex operational challenges. Together, these cases illustrate that effective “People” intervention relies on optimizing the specific roles of individuals to either foster public vigilance or ensure operational agility.

Authority serves as a strategic intervention technique that utilizes leadership dynamics, regulatory adherence, and hierarchical division to achieve organizational objectives. This is demonstrated by Samudera Indonesia, which applies “flexible leadership,” where a fluid, approachable CEO fosters a collaborative environment that balances direct instruction with employee input to enhance efficiency. In contrast, Kitabisa frames authority through strict regulatory compliance, using legal adherence to maintain the legitimacy of its nonprofit operations while ensuring user-centric transparency. Meanwhile, PT Pupuk Indonesia utilizes authority through rigid hierarchical segmentation, assigning specialized roles (such as Corporate Secretary and Public Advocacy) to manage distinct stakeholder groups precisely. Collectively, these cases illustrate that authority is not merely about command but about structuring power, whether through fluid collaboration, legal discipline, or functional specialization, to ensure operational clarity and effectiveness.

Emotional Bonding functions as a strategic intervention technique designed to forge deep psychological connections between an organization and its audiences by aligning corporate actions with human values and needs. This approach is illustrated by Kitabisa, which respects the spiritual privacy of its donors by avoiding ostentatious features like “annual recaps,” thereby prioritizing user comfort over gamification. Similarly, the Djarum Foundation cultivates emotional investment through the inculcation of ethical values, teaching athletes respect and “togetherness” to foster a lifelong sense of belonging and pride within their ecosystem. Meanwhile, Pupuk Indonesia builds bonding through consistency, maintaining routine, non-transactional interactions to ensure relationships are perceived as genuine rather than opportunistic. Collectively, these examples demonstrate that effective emotional bonding (whether through respecting donor humility, instilling shared values, or ensuring consistent engagement) is essential for securing long-term trust and loyalty.

Power serves as a critical communication intervention technique defined by an organization’s capacity to influence, direct, or control stakeholder decisions. This is exemplified by the Djarum Foundation, which asserts power through autonomy and internal capability, maintaining its dominance in the badminton sector independent of government support and resisting external pressure (such as regulatory interference) to preserve its strategic self-determination. In contrast, Pupuk Indonesia exercises power through strategic alliances with state authority, leveraging relationships with high-ranking security officials (police and military) to secure operations and enforce stability in subsidized fertilizer distribution. Together, these cases illustrate that power can be wielded either through self-sufficient dominance or through the strategic mobilization of external enforcement networks to ensure organizational stability.

Types of Communication Intervention

Effective communication intervention is not a monolithic practice but rather a multidimensional strategy comprising four distinct yet interconnected approaches. There are four types: (1). Civil Society Diplomacy; (2). Normative Government Approach; (3) Event-based Engagement; (4) CSR Strategies.

First, the emergence of Civil Society Diplomacy highlights a power shift where authority is no longer vertical but distributed across digital networks. For example, by reinforcing a “customer-focus” mindset and launching massive educational campaign like “Awat Modus” and “#TolakDenganAnggun” BCA engages stakeholders not just as consumers, but as partners in security. This aligns with their sustainability mission, proving that effective

intervention protects both the customer's funds and the bank's long-term viability. This form of intervention underscores the active role of digital communities in shaping public discourse and determining institutional reputation. Unlike traditional diplomacy, which operates between formal entities, this approach relies on the dynamism of digital activism (Adria, 2020), online communities, and crowdfunding networks. Here, the organization does not merely broadcast messages but engages in a negotiated dialogue with a digitally empowered public, where legitimacy is granted or withdrawn based on real-time responsiveness and community alignment (Sung et al., 2025).

In contrast to the fluidity of civil society engagement, Normative Government Approaches provide the structural backbone of communication intervention. This approach embeds communication within rigid institutional procedures and ethical standards. Particularly for government bodies and regulated industries, communication is less about persuasion and more about demonstrating adherence to transparency, accountability, and regulation. By anchoring communication in normative frameworks, institutions aim to build trust through consistency and procedural integrity, ensuring that their license to operate is legally and ethically secured. For example, through mediation with multiple ministries (Kemenko PMK, Kemenkes, Kemenpora) and dialogue with the public, Djarum Foundation pivoted its strategy, altering the audition format to ensure compliance while sustaining its commitment to athlete development. Furthermore, PT Samudera Indonesia collaborated with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), port authorities, and global partners; the company optimized logistics and ensured compliance with safety standards. This engagement minimized supply chain disruptions, securing the company's competitiveness amidst global inflation risks. Moreover, the solution employed was a transparent communication intervention. Kitabisa.com engaged in diplomatic restoration by closing the accused account, issuing public clarification via PR management, and collaborating with regulators like the Financial Services Authority (OJK) and the Ministry of Social Affairs. This shift from defensive silence to active collaboration illustrates the role of diplomacy in restoring the digital ecosystem. This case exemplifies how corporate diplomacy resolves conflicts between corporate branding (Rees, 2020) and social regulation (Mulej et al., 2021).

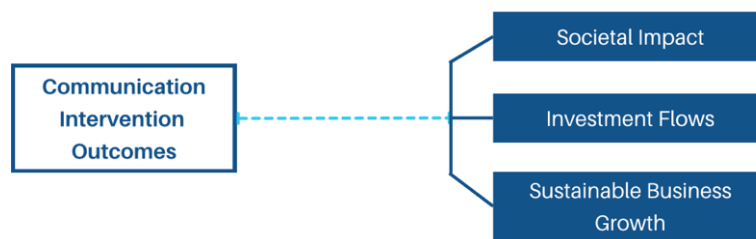
Bridging the gap between digital fluidity and formal structure is Event-Based Engagement. This approach humanizes the organization through direct, experiential interaction. By utilizing seminars, workshops, public talks, and cultural events, organizations move beyond abstract messaging to foster tangible connections. This form of intervention serves a dual purpose: it acts as a platform for education – transferring knowledge and values – and as a mechanism for relationship building, allowing stakeholders to experience the organization's culture firsthand.

Finally, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategies represent the most structured expression of communication intervention regarding long-term impact. Rather than sporadic gestures, these are organized programs that operationalize social and environmental commitments. For example, through the “Agro Solution” program and partnerships with universities, PT Pupuk Indonesia engages farmers actively, providing technology and education. Through CSR, communication ceases to be just words and becomes action, directly supporting community welfare and long-term sustainability (Mulej et al., 2021). This strategy validates the organization's purpose, proving that its economic goals are aligned with the broader well-being of the ecosystem in which it operates.

Communication Intervention Outcomes

Figure 2

Communication Intervention Outcomes



Societal impact represents the tangible contribution of communication interventions toward community empowerment, ecosystem development, and sustainable development. This outcome is evident in BCA's #BuktiBaktiBCA campaign, which fosters a sustainable cycle of positive influence by encouraging active community participation in social preservation. Similarly, Kitabisa leverages transparency to build public trust, creating a "snowball effect" that amplifies social awareness and contribution. In the realm of human capital, the Djarum Foundation strengthens social solidarity and individual potential through a sustainable sports ecosystem that supports athletes beyond their active careers. Meanwhile, Telkomsel drives societal impact through digital transformation, ensuring equitable access to education and environmental awareness through its CSR initiatives (Rasche et al., 2017). Collectively, these interventions demonstrate how strategic communication extends beyond corporate reputation to foster long-term social resilience (Aksak et al., 2016).

Investment flow serves as a strategic outcome where effective communication intervention validates an organization's economic significance to the state and society (Kaplan et al., 2022). As illustrated by the perspective on several corporations, this outcome is achieved by clearly articulating corporate contributions to national development, such as GDP growth, tax revenue, and job creation. Consequently, transparent communication regarding these shared economic benefits secures the sociopolitical legitimacy required to facilitate smoother capital inflows and foster an environment conducive to future business expansion.

Sustainable Business growth serves as a tangible outcome of communication intervention, manifested through strategic market expansion (Rexhepi et al., 2013), product diversification, and technological innovation. This is evident in Samudera Indonesia's bold entry into the cruise segment and Kitabisa's evolution into a multi-service holding group with international reach in South Asia. Similarly, Pupuk Indonesia utilizes diplomatic communication to forge partnerships in green technology, while the Djarum Foundation leverages extensive sports sponsorship to broaden its brand influence and market presence. Complementing these expansionist strategies, Telkomsel ensures that its communication initiatives are directly aligned with long-term sales performance, collectively demonstrating that effective intervention acts as a critical engine for scaling operational scope and driving commercial revenue.

Recommendations

Organizations should strengthen civil society diplomacy through continuous, two-way engagement and institutionalize transparent, research-based communication practices that

support regulatory compliance and public trust. Event-based programs should be designed as platforms for education and relationship-building, while CSR initiatives must be aligned with long-term ecosystem development rather than treated as peripheral activities. To enhance effectiveness, companies should operationalize the seven key intervention elements across departments, invest in internal communication capacity, prepare integrated crisis-response protocols, and foster cross-sector collaboration to ensure organizational resilience and sustainable growth.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that communication intervention is a strategic pillar of corporate diplomacy that enables organizations to secure legitimacy, strengthen stakeholder relationships, and achieve sustainable business growth. Across the cases of BCA, Telkomsel, Djarum Foundation, Kitabisa, Pupuk Indonesia, and Samudera Indonesia, four forms of intervention: civil society diplomacy, normative government approaches, event-based engagement, and CSR strategies, serve as complementary mechanisms that allow corporations to navigate complex social, regulatory, and digital environments. The findings reveal that effective communication intervention is built upon seven key elements: capital, willingness, ability, people, authority, emotional bonding, and power. When mobilized strategically, these elements enable organizations to influence public meaning-making processes, negotiate institutional expectations, and transform potential conflicts into long-term value creation. The outcomes observed: societal impact, strengthened public trust, increased investment flow, and sustainable business expansion, show that communication is not merely a reputational tool but an engine of organizational resilience. In an era marked by digital activism, regulatory scrutiny, and global volatility, communication intervention becomes essential for maintaining legitimacy, supporting ecosystem development, and ensuring that business growth aligns with broader social and environmental responsibility. Ultimately, the study affirms that organizations that communicate transparently, participate collaboratively, and act consistently are better positioned to thrive sustainably in a rapidly changing landscape.

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The author declares that Grammarly, an AI-assisted writing software, was used in proofreading and refining the language used in the manuscript. The usage was limited to correcting grammatical and spelling errors and rephrasing statements for accuracy and clarity. The author further declares that, apart from Grammarly, no other AI or AI-assisted technologies have been used to generate content in writing the manuscript. The ideas, design, procedures, findings, analyses, and discussion are originally written and derived from careful and systematic conduct of the research.

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