

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AT THE COMMERCIAL TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY OF THE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PRODUCTION

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### ABSTRACT

*One of the endeavors to introduce, make them interesting and transferable to the industry; is by attractively promoting inventions produced by the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development continuously. Promotion is a means of invention information dissemination of the Indonesia's Agency for Agricultural Research and Development that is protected by the Intellectual Property Rights towards the potential target by expanding the network, favoring the inventions, and building a technological image to the end users. The formula to the problematic research with regards to communication process in the inventions' transfer of technology promotion produced by the agricultural research and development and their success level is to perform commercial collaboration of agricultural research and development results. The objective of this research is to analyze the process and the success of communication in promoting the transfer of technology of agricultural research and development results performed. The research was conducted at the Indonesian Institute for Agricultural Technology Transfer, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia. In-depth surveys and interviewing methods were applied to 42 respondents consisting of researchers, licensees, and technology transfer operational staffs. The results of the research showed that, there were some difficulty levels in marketing the technology and non-product made the activities still need a lot of improvements. Therefore, effective and sustainable promotion efforts are still needed to increase the number of commercially technology transferred invention.*

**Keywords:** *promotion, invention, commercialization, technology transfer*

### 1. PREFACE

The challenges of agricultural development nowadays have become increasingly difficult and diverse. This is not only because nature experiences changes rapidly, but the demand of human needs in this speedy, precise and accurate era right now has made technology a necessity. These are the challenges of the Indonesia's Agency for Agricultural Research and Development (IAARD) that exists as an institute and is mostly expected to be the forefront pioneer and agent of agricultural reform.

IAARD, as the main source of agricultural technology innovation, should produce planned and focused researches with clear objectives applicable

to the industry to solve actual community problems by taking advantage of science and technology. In anticipation to such situation, two measures have been applied to speed up the dissemination of agricultural research technology and development to the end users.

Firstly, by applying a dissemination program for farmers taking to the Pioneering Program and Accelerated Socialization of Agricultural Technology Innovation, which then became a national model in order to expedite the socialization of innovation. Secondly, by collaborating the technology transfer commercially with the industrial/ licensees in order to transfer the technology of research results/inventions that have been protected by the Intellectual Property Rights,

and executed by the technical operation unit of the Indonesian Institute for Agricultural Technology Transfer (IIATT) under the IAARD.

In its implementation, the transfer of technology that has been done commercially for the utilization of the results of agricultural research to this date has not fully materialized properly. The challenges that are still encountered, among others are the communication process that are not entirely running smoothly among the related parties, such as the promotional activities to introduce and market the technology/inventions by the inventors of the IAARD. To overcome such challenges, a fundamental action that can be taken is to apply a focused, efficient, and effective promotional strategy in a maximum manner during the promotional activities.

Promotion means communicating information between the seller and potential buyer or other people to affect attitude and behaviour (Cannon, Perreault, & McCarthy, 2008). Another definition of promotion is a company communication to its consumers regarding the products or services produced in its effort to develop a profitable relationship (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). Also according to Kotler & Keller (2009), promotion is a means in which the company endeavours to inform, persuade, and directly or indirectly remind the consumers about its products and their selling brand. Widiastuti (2012) stated that promotion means communicating advantages and persuade the target mass to utilize the offered message. An attractive message is insufficient, it needs to be followed by a continuous and directed communication, using a proper communication channel and appropriate for the targeted mass segment.

According to Kotler (2009) there are eight steps in an effective communication program and total promotion, wherein the marketing communicator must: (1) identify his audience; (2) determine his communication purpose; (3) draft his message; (4) select his communication channel; (5) determine his promotion budget; (6) make decisions on his marketing mix; (7) measure the results of his promotions, and (8) manage and coordinate an integrated marketing communication process. Based on those steps, the final response of his audience would be purchases, high satisfaction and good word by mouth.

Thus, the problem of this research lies on how the communication process in the promotional activity of commercial technology transfer takes place for the results of agricultural research and development. Moreover, the objective of this research is to analyze how far the communication process in the promotional activities of commercial technology transfer of the results of agricultural research and development has succeeded.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

### 2.1 Method

The research was conducted at the Indonesian Institute for Agricultural Technology Transfer (IIATT), which is located in Bogor (West Java, Indonesia). Data gathering was performed between June, 2014 and December, 2014 by limiting the promotional activities which were executed by the IIATT in 2011 – 2014.

Respondents were divided into three categories, namely 1) licensees; 2) researchers/inventors; and 3) technology transfer operational staffs. The licensees were purposely determined by using *purposive sampling* technique i.e. 18 licensees were chosen because of their generated royalties during their collaboration with the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development and are located in Bogor, Jakarta, Malang, and Surabaya. While the other two respondent categories were chosen based on the census where all the population members were made samples. They consist of nine researchers/inventors within the scope of the IAARD producers of invention protected by the Intellectual Property Rights and have generated royalties and the technology transfer operational staffs at the IIATT comprising 15 personnel.

Data gathering were done using survey method with questionnaire. To complement the research data, in-depth interviews were also conducted with the entire inventors and some licensees (9 of them). Secondary data were also produced which were obtained from various promotional activities conducted by the Indonesian Institute for Agricultural Technology Transfer.

### 2.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis were completed descriptively utilizing percentage calculations, whereas qualitative data were analyzed using a systematic data search and

compilation process obtained from the interview results, field notes and other sources.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Promoting Commercial Teknology Transfer

The initial stage required in order that inventions produced by the IAARD would be known, favored and transferred to the industry, is to endeavor attractive and continuous promotional efforts. Promotion is a means to disseminate information of IAARD inventions protected by the Intellectual Property Rights to the potential targets, expand the invention users network, favor the own inventions against those of the competitors, and build a technology image to end users. Promoting technological inventions is far more difficult than promoting a product, because the targets are business practitioners who will develop or mass produce technology. The industry that is interested in them should be geared towards an agreement, pre license agreement, or license agreement. This promotion was conducted based on the consideration that from 539 inventions protected by the Intellectual Property Rights, only 108 inventions (roughly 20%) were commercially licensed to the business world comprising of several companies

and local governments. Thus, effective and continuous promotional endeavors are still needed to commercially increase the number of technology transfer inventions.

#### 3.2 Audience Identification

This activity clearly identifies the mass target that comes from potential buyers, companies, end consumers, decision makers, or even influential people. In this case, the audience identification activity was performed based on the decision made by the immediate supervisor of the technology transfer operational staffs at the IIATT. The identified audiences were *stakeholders* from licensees and local governments that were involved with the promoted invention.

The identification performed by the immediate supervisor of the was based on the recommendation of the head of the IAARD as stated by 33.3% of the respondents. 13.3% of the respondents stated that it was based on the recommendation of the agencies related to the inventions that would be promoted; while 13.3% of the respondents stated that it was based on the recommendation of the investors, and 40% of the respondents stated that it was a joint decision among the supervisor, inventor, and the related agency (Table 1).

Table 1: Total and percentage of respondents as the basis audience identification

Audience Identification Basis	Total Respondents	Percentage (%)
Superiors's recommendation	5	33.4
Related agencies' recommendation	2	13.3
Inventor's recommendation	2	13.3
Superior, inventor and related agency joint decision	6	40
Total	15	100

The audience identification was performed based on input from the inventors happened because of their involvement or close relation during the research. When the private party has engaged in a research collaboration with the inventor from the beginning, it can be ascertained that the said private party would be identified as an audience of the commercial technology transfer promotion activity. Based on the data gathered 66.7% of the inventors stated that they know the private party prior to the commercial technology transfer collaboration, and only 33.3% of the inventors admitted that they have not known the private party yet prior to the said collaboration.

Actually, the audience identification performed by the IIATT is an effort to synergize the industrial world relation with the hope of knowing the needs

of the business partner in the said commercial technology transfer, achieved through a continuous communication using several strategies. This perception is in line with theory that states the first strategic step in communications is *Scan or Identity and segment target groups with audits the existing perception of key public member* (Belasen, 2008). However, in reality audience selection decisions are mostly made by subjective superior or because they are input from inventors because of facts and not based on surveys conducted to determine market needs and who the audiences are. It is important to note that in order for the marketer determine the target audience accurately, it is necessary to pre-identify opportunities in the market, unfulfilled needs, and unanswered market expectations. With the presence of the said information, the marketer,

or the IIATT in this activity, can satisfy the existing opportunity and accommodate it to the public.

It is worth noting that the entire marketing communication program will succeed if it is supported by the marketer's skill in exploiting the opportunity, the ability to provide solutions to problems or answers towards the market needs. Hopefully, the target audience would respond well to such market communication program.

### 3.3 Determining The Communication Objectives

If the mass target is already known, then the marketing communicator should determine what sorts of responses are desired from the said mass target. The format should be clarified through a hierarchical response model wherein this research will be analyzed through an AIDA model consisting of four sales process stages, namely *Attention*,

*Interest*, *Desire*, *Action* which is a simple model that could be utilized as a guidance in formulating the desired objectives of a marketing communication process that will be executed (Kotler, 2005).

The promotion activities in the form of business gathering, mix and match that the IIATT has been conducting in the framework of commercial technology transfer has sufficiently gained attention from licensees. These are shown by the responses of the invited licensees to such activities (Table 2). When invited, the licensees show their attention by trying to attend the promotion activities conducted by the IIATT, in such a way that most attending invitees matches the total invitation given out. Note that five licensees who never received the invitation, but have collaborated in the commercial technology transfer with the IAARD, and two licensees who never received the invitation nevertheless tried to attend the said activities.

Table 2: Total and percentage of respondents based on received invitations and their attendance

Total Invitation	Total Attendance (%)			
	0	1-2 time(s)	3-4 times	>5 times
0	16.7	11.1		
1-2 time(s)		44.4		
3-4 times			16.7	
5 times				11.1
	16.7	55.5	16.7	11.1
Total				100

Most of the motivations of the attending licensees were because they had an interest in the said promotion activities. This is shown by the number of the licensees' opinion stating that they were interested in the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development's inventions and would like to know how the technology was implemented. There

were also licensees who made the event an opportunity to expand their network effort by meeting other fellow licensees (Table 3). Hence, one can conclude that around 67% of the licensees were interested in the inventions of the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development.

Table 3: Total and percentage of respondents based on interest

Motivation of attendance	Total respondents	Percentage (%)
Interested in the invention	8	44.5
Meet other licensees	4	22.2
Curious	4	22.2
No reason	2	11.1
Total	18	100

After attending several promotion activities, it is clear how far licensees are trying to obtain further information regarding inventions they are interested in from the inventors. This is shown in the desire of 67% of the licensees who were eager in obtaining the latest in-depth information. Moreover, after participating in the promotion activity some licensees wanted to seek solutions to their problems.

Nevertheless, to a few licensees there were no further interests because they do not deem the promoted inventions to be relevant or in line with existing potential market (Table 4).

A successful example of a promotion activity based on a research conducted by Rosyad (2011) in the daily Kompas, wherein promotional advertisement, sales and public relation met the determined target.

It was based on an accurately drafted message because it was informative, persuasive, reminding, based on a clear and good repetitive evaluation program.

Table 4: Total and percentage of respondents based on the desire to obtain other information

Desire	Total respondent	Percentage (%)
Latest in-depth information	11	61.1
Seek solutions to the problem	3	16.6
None	4	22.3
Total	18	100

The final objectives of this promotion is to take action in the form of commercial technology transfer between the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development and the licensees; however, only 27.8% of the licensees were interested in continuing to this stage. This was done in several ways such as requesting additional percentage for the related licensees with the inventions they were interested in or proposing a collaboration request letter. A total of 72.2% of the licensees stated that the commercial technology transfer collaboration with the IAARD were accomplished not because of the performed

promotions, but because of the licensees' technology and market needs. They also collaborated on the commercial technology transfer because they already have prior research collaborations with the inventors/related research institute (Table 5). Thus, one can say that the performed promotion activities have not fully succeeded in their final executions i.e. license renewal collaboration. This happened because some of the licensees have conducted licensure collaboration in relation to their prior research collaboration.

Table 5: Total and percentage of respondents based on post promotion actions

	Total respondent	Percentage (%)
Established collaboration after participating in promotions	5	27.8
No new collaborations	13	72.2
Total	18	100

### 3.4 Drafting Messages

After determining the mass response, the communicator should proceed to draft effective messages. The messages ideas should capture attention, be attractive, arise desire, and produce results. According to Kotler (2009) there are 4 points that need attention in drafting messages namely what should be conveyed (the contents of the messages), how to logically convey them (the structure of the messages), how to convey them in symbols (the format of the messages), and who will convey them (the source of the messages).

Based on the opinion of 86.7% of the commercial technology transfer operational staffs, there is a promotion strategy designed to introduce an Agency for Agricultural Research and Development

invention to the licensees in the form of business meetings such as *Agro Innovation Round Table*, mix and match activities, and conduct technological presentations at several related licensees. While 13.3% of the technology transfer operational staffs believe that there is no strategy used to introduce inventions to the licensees, promotion activities are only routine activities that should be conducted by the IAARD (Table 6).

While the inventors (66.7%) also believe there is a strategy/activity that is co-designed by the IIATT. This strategy introduces technological inventions of the IAARD to the licensees, but according to 33.3% of the inventors, that strategy does not exist because they were never invited to carry such promotion with their inventions.

Table 6: Total and percentage of respondents based on promotion strategy design perception

	Inventor (%)	Operational Staff (%)
With promotion strategy design	66.7	86.7
Without promotion strategy design	33.3	13.3
Total respondents	100	100



Business meetings as a form of promotion strategy requires a strong message design especially if it is associated with the subject being presented. Widyastuti (2012) stated that a message is connected to its completeness, arguments used, reward within the message, message of one or two parties, sequence conveyed, and repetition and conveying style. Based on the interview conducted, according to 33.3% of the licensees, the presented subject was interesting and beneficial because it met their needs; however, 44.4% of the other licensees

stated that the presented subject was beneficial but not interesting. This is evident by the displays, which were merely tables and graphics that looked like scientific presentations, or by the incompleteness of the subject of the business information presented. There were also 22.2 % of the licensees that assumed the presentation was not attractive nor beneficial, because the offered invention did not meet their needs or their expectation.

Table 7: Total and percentage of respondents based on promotion materials perception

Materials presented	Total respondents	Percentage (%)
Attractive and beneficial materials	6	33.3
Not attractive but beneficial materials	8	44.4
Not attractive and not beneficial materials	4	22.2
Total	18	100

The above mentioned information is also in line with Schramm's (1955) opinion that states some prerequisites to the success of a message are: 1) the message should be planned to the extent that it is capable of attracting the attention of the intended target; 2) utilize a variety of signs based on similar experiences that creates a mutual understanding; 3) should arise the needs of the target; and 4) should suggest an appropriate way wherein an awareness is created when executed to provide required answers. Thus, if one analyzes based on Schramm's opinion, the message design of the commercial technology transfer promotion conducted was less successful in its execution, because only 33.3% of the licensees assumed the promoted materials attractive and beneficial.

Moreover, it is necessary to determine the source messenger that could be an individual and institute, or an organization. In order for the message to be truly accepted by the target audience, the source messenger should be credible with the following two criteria, namely: firstly, having the expertise. This means the source messenger should have the expertise or skill that is publicly acknowledged. The second criterion is *trustworthiness* i.e. conforms to the ethics related to building trust that prevails in society. Hence, the source messenger should be able to establish trust in the minds of the target audience.

The two above-mentioned criteria also determine the success of a marketing communication program. The message coming from a source having the said two criteria will have the chance of influencing the trust, opinion, attitude and behavior of the message

receiver to the extent that the latter who integrates his opinion or attitude is in line with the message conveyed and will remember it.

Based on the interview with the commercial technology transfer operational staffs. One of the problems with the promotion activities conducted by the IAARD is the scarcity of source messenger that possesses the above-mentioned two credibility criteria. Thus, this has become one of the challenges for the conveyed message to be attractive, beneficial, and acceptable by the audience.

### 3.5 Determining Communication Channels

The marketing communicator should determine the efficient communication channel to convey the message. Basically, there are two types, personal channel, and non-personal channel. Kotler & Keller (2009) stated that private communications affects two situations, namely: during a price increase, it would provide an unfavorable effect because it risks the consumers from buying, or in a reverse situation. Most importantly, through the personal communication channel, a person would request for a product recommendation. Non-personal communication channel is that which is meant to the masses such as the media, sales promotion, special events, and public relation.

In conducting a commercial technology transfer promotion, the IAARD does such activity through two communication channels. Firstly, by using a non-personal communication channel through business meetings inviting several related

*stakeholders*. And then according the commercial technology transfer operational staffs, after introducing the invention to licensees via the non-personal communication channels a follow-up in the form of personal communication channel takes place such as a mediated collaboration if a licensee is interested, *roadshow* to various licensees to conduct specific presentations and contact prospective licensor(s) further interestedness.

According to the licensees, those two methods are proven to be quite effective if *roadshows* are conducted to carry specific presentations because the established communication would be more effective and focused, and the presented materials would be more comprehensive.

Moreover, the IAARD should select among the various marketing communication media to be adopted and is assumed to represent the formulated message. In selecting a media, one should carefully consider the image that could be created through the usage of the intended marketing communication. If the IAARD decides to use more than one type of communication media, then it has to ensure that the entire media being utilized should simultaneously voice the same message (*single voice*). With a *single voice*, the targeted audience exposed to the message through a series of different media could still perceive the message meaning coherently.

### 3.6 Determining The Total Promotion Budget

The most difficult problem is to measure how much is the promotion cost it requires several posts within the budget cost. In determining the budget cost, one should also calculate the cost of goods production / technology plus promotion cost. The element of production cost alone depends on several promotions to be carried on. IAARD should be able to calculate the costs of several promotion activities to be spent. Each promotion activity needs promotion cost that is quite expensive which means the ideal percentage level of promotion cost should be self-determined because it is directly related with the *feedback* that will be obtained from the licensees.

There are four methods that can be adopted by an institution in determining the promotion budget, one of which is the arbitrary method i.e. based on the institution's affordability to provide the funds. This method ignores the role of promotion as an investment that has an increase in sales volume effect in the short future.

Based on the interview with the commercial technology transfer operational staffs, it turned out that the IIATT is a work unit owned by the government under the IAARD of the Ministry of Agriculture that is not allowed to create a promotion budget as practiced by the industrial world. The proposed promotion budget is does not pass through a market survey, but is determined by the funds estimate that will be approved by the Ministry of Finance; nevertheless, the proposed funds would not necessarily be fully materialized. It could be less or greater based on the needs of the existing activity priority. In other words, one can say that the total existing promotion budget is through an *arbitrary method* with a risk that this method ignores the role of promotion as a form of investment and directly affects the sales promotion.

### 3.7 Selecting A Promotional Mix

Kotler (2005) stated that the elements of a promotional mix consist of four main tools, namely: 1) advertisement; 2) sales promotion; 3) public relation and publicity; and 4) face-to-face sales. In relation to determining the total promotion budget based on the *arbitrary* method, then the design of technology promotion resulting from the IAARD is greatly determined by the technology transfer operational staffs with the final decision by the superior. Thus, the promotion means frequently used by the IAARD is a sales promotion, with public relation and publicity, with the assumption that this is very appropriate for the situation if the market perception deviates from the marketer's expectation. Moreover, the sales promotion can proceed to establish preference, belief, and further actions from the public as end consumers.

The selection of promotion form is based on the opinion of 67.7% of the inventors and 83.3% of the licensees that state that business meetings, mix and match, *roadshows*, and sales promotions via *website* is very important to execute as a means of introducing and marketing inventions of the IAARD. Furthermore, according to 55.5% of the licensees, aside from having an accurate promotion target, a clear business plan of each promoted invention is needed so that they know the prospect of that business in the future.

If you associate the opinion of Kotler (2005) regarding the said promotional mix, the IAARD has just partially applied the main tools, i.e. sales promotion and public relation. That approach has

not fully achieved its target if this is regarded from the promotion result that is not yet in line with the expectation

### 3.8 Measuring Promotional Results

After executing the promotion plan, the communication should be able to measure the effects on the targeted mass. This should be based with asking what the content of the conveyed message is by the communicator, covering questions addressed to the targeted audience whether they recognize or remember the conveyed messages, and how they feel about the messages, and their prior attitude, and now about the product and institution related to the said product.

Based on several conducted promotion activities, according to 50% of the licensees, presenters and experts are assumed to master the material, communicative and interesting in presenting the

materials. By 33.3% of the licensees, they are assumed to master the materials, but are not communicative and interesting. However, 16.7% of the licensees do not master the material, their presentations are not communicative nor their presentation interesting (Table 8). Consequently, even though most of the licensees assume that the presenters and experts succeeded in presenting the material, but the appearance of the experts were considered needing corrective evaluation. The main problem lies in the fact that not all inventors are capable of conducting promotional presentations. There are many inventors who conduct presentations in a scientific presentation manner. As stated by Cornelissen (2014), sometimes the elements of a communicator have a stronger influence than the conveyed message. Hence, a capable communicator would create effectivity and should be capable of meeting prerequisites, mainly *credibility* or *can think and act strategically*.

Table 8: Total and percentage of respondents based on the capability of the experts

Expert capability	Total respondents	Percentage (%)
Experts master material, attractive and communicative	9	50
Experts master material, not attractive and not communicative	6	33.3
Experts do not master material, not attractive and not communicative	3	16.7
Total	18	100

As many as 60% of the licensees think that the various information on promoted invention and then distributed is assumed to be meagerly adequate, but 40% of the licensees assume that the provided information is still insufficient and not thorough, especially if there is an invention that needs bureaucratic rules that are slightly sophisticated. In the execution of the *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD) that are always conducted at the end of business meetings, the expert or inventor is assumed to be communicative and provides sufficient information by 83% of the licensees, but is still assumed to be by 17% of the rest of the licensees. That happened when the FGD was running. Like licensees that are interested in the same invention are not mutually open towards the needed information, thus the provided information by the experts is still assumed to be insufficient and thorough.

### 3.9 Managing and Coordinating The Overall Marketing Communication Process

The tools and communication message should be coordinated because of their great coverage availability. Marketing communication is a

communication activity that is performed between the seller and buyer that influences the marketing decision making of a company. There are many companies that heavily rely on one or two communication tools to achieve their communication goals. Based on the above statement, thus the communication that should be performed or improved by the IIATT in establishing relation with the licenses is by creating a communication forum with various social media facilities between inventor, licensees, and transfer technology service staffs, to create online media that is always updated to disburse invention promotion of the IAARD and increase other forms of promotion such as advertisement or through various articles on on print media or online.

The IAARD should also coordinate the entire marketing promotion at the Indonesian Institute for Agricultural Technology Transfer so that the invention of the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development promotion could be more centralized, planned and in line with the target.



#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

##### 4.1 Conclusion

Based on the research done, one can conclude that in conducting a promotion activity, with the audience selection largely remains the decision of the superior that is subjective in nature and not based on conducted survey to know the market needs and who should be the audience. That makes the communication target a handful of licensees who are interested in continuing up to an action level, i.e. a further stage after promotions. The message draft has not fully succeeded in conveying to the licensees. Only a few licensees and inventors are assumed to have succeeded in conveying the message because the presented materials made them interested to find out further. Thus, the IAARD should be able to coordinate the entire market promotion activities in order that the invention of the IAARD could be done in a more centralized manner, planned, and in line with the objectives.

##### 4.2 Suggestions

The Agency for Agricultural Research and Development through the Indonesian Institute for Agricultural Technology Transfer is expected to pay more attention to planning and focused in conducting promotion that is in line with the market needs of the licensees. Mainly because it is more difficult to promote a technology/invention compared to promoting an ordinary product. The business meetings activities is suggested to be more frequently conducted, like selecting more appropriate audiences, create draft messages that could attract the interest, and chose reliable communicators that could convey the messages in line with the objectives. Aside from business meetings, other forms of promotions such as *roadshows* to various prospective licensees, update

various latest information on inventions done, offer collaborative researches by conducting joint promotions through performing demonstration plots in various locations in Indonesia.

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