

## **Cyberbranding Interactivity of Using Professional Football Players in Asbhoel Distro**

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### **Abstrak**

*Ashboel Distro memasuki industri fashion dengan mengandalkan branding menggunakan pemain sepak bola profesional. Strategi branding ini sangat menarik dan cukup inovatif bagi perkembangan industri fashion di era digital. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis kemasan konten cyberbranding Distro Asbhoel dengan menggunakan pemain sepak bola profesional di Instagram. Metode: Kualitatif dengan pendekatan netnografi dan teknik analisis data induktif. Hasil dan kesimpulan: Asbhoel berhasil membangun cyberbranding yang kuat melalui kemasan konten interaktif, komunikasi dialogis, dan pengelolaan partisipasi audiens yang konsisten di Instagram. Strategi penggunaan pemain sepak bola profesional juga terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kesadaran merek dan membangun koneksi emosional dengan audiens. Implikasi: Memperkuat konsep cyberbranding dengan menunjukkan pentingnya keterlibatan emosional dan dialog dua arah dalam membentuk loyalitas merek. Memberikan panduan bagi bisnis untuk merancang konten, memilih influencer yang tepat, dan memanfaatkan umpan balik audiens untuk membangun branding yang kuat dan berkelanjutan.*

**Kata kunci:** *Asbhoel, Cyberbranding, Instagram, Konten, Pemain Sepak Bola*

### **Abstract**

Ashboel Distro entered the fashion industry by relying on branding using professional soccer players. This branding strategy is very interesting and quite innovative for the development of the fashion industry in the digital era. The purpose of this study is to analyze the cyberbranding content packaging of Distro Asbhoel using professional soccer players on Instagram. Method: Qualitative with a netnographic approach and inductive data analysis techniques. Results and conclusions: Asbhoel has successfully built a strong cyberbranding through interactive content packaging, dialogic communication, and consistent audience participation management on Instagram. The strategy of using professional football players has also proven effective in increasing brand awareness and building emotional connections with the audience. Implications: Strengthening the concept of cyberbranding by highlighting the importance of emotional engagement and two-way dialogue in fostering brand loyalty. Providing guidance for businesses to design content, select the right influencers, and leverage audience feedback to build a strong and sustainable brand.

**Keywords:** *Asbhoel, Cyberbranding; Instagram; Content, Soccer Player*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the trending and popular independent clothing stores (distros) among youth in Bandung is Distro Asbhoel. Asbhoel is a fashion distro located at Jalan Sultan Tirtayasa 41, Bandung. It sells a variety of clothing items such as sweaters, t-shirts, beanies, pants, caps, socks, and more, adopting a streetwear fashion concept. While most well-known fashion distros rely on endorsements from celebrities or popular social media influencers (Selebgrams), Asbhoel takes a different approach by focusing on football player endorsements instead. Leveraging endorsements from football players is a popular though less conventional strategy in the fashion world. A survey by Skala Survei Indonesia (SSI) in 2022 showed that 90.8% of Indonesians are aware of football, and 47.6% of them enjoy the sport. Beyond endorsements, Asbhoel also contributes significantly to Indonesian football. Notably, Asbhoel has expanded its influence into the fashion styles of top Indonesian football players.



**Figure 1. Post on Instagram @asbhoel with Persib players.**

According to Fardiah (2020), social media is designed to expand human social interaction by utilizing the internet and web technology. Based on a survey by We Are Social (2021), Instagram ranks as the sixth most-used social media platform globally and the fourth most-used in Indonesia, following YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook. Its growth has been significant, showing a 5% increase in one year, which equals around 3 million new users. Fashion brands leverage various digital platforms like Instagram to present visually appealing and relevant content, such as high-quality photos and videos. Direct interaction with consumers through comments, messages, and live features helps build closer relationships and

increase customer loyalty. Collaborations with influencers on social media enhance brand exposure and credibility, while integration with e-commerce platforms simplifies the shopping process and increases conversion rates. These strategies are employed by fashion brands to enhance their cyberbranding in the digital realm. Cyberbranding in fashion refers to strategies aimed at building and strengthening brand identity through online media. Fashion brands frequently utilize platforms like Instagram to raise brand awareness.

A journal titled "The Influence of Online Promotion and Selebgram Endorsement on Consumer Purchase Intention" concluded that business owners are encouraged to market their products through celebrity or selebgram endorsements, as both significantly affect consumer purchase intention, which ultimately boosts product sales (Purnama, 2020). This strategy benefits both the endorsers and the businesses. The interactivity of Asbhoel's sales on Instagram reflects a positive view of user engagement on the platform. By taking advantage of Instagram's visual appeal, Asbhoel can reach a broad audience through posts featuring product images, promotions, and attractive lifestyle content. Direct interaction through comments, direct messages, and other interactive features allows Asbhoel to communicate with potential customers, provide additional information, and respond to questions or feedback.

Therefore, this study explores how Asbhoel engages in cyberbranding interactivity on Instagram and investigates how it effectively manages the information delivered in each content post. The study also examines the dialogic communication strategies implemented by Asbhoel to create optimal interactivity. Moreover, it explores why and how the use of professional football players serves as a unique differentiator in Asbhoel's cyberbranding activities on Instagram. Utilizing football players as influencers in fashion distro cyberbranding efforts in Indonesia offers distinct advantages, especially due to their unique appeal and influence among fans. At a time when selebgrams and celebrities are commonly used as influencers or brand ambassadors, this approach distinguishes Asbhoel's strategy. This uniqueness makes Asbhoel's cyberbranding approach particularly interesting for deeper exploration, focusing on message management, the forms of dialogic communication interactivity, and the distinctive characteristics that shape its Instagram-based cyberbranding.

## METHODS

A qualitative research method is used to gain in-depth insight and understanding of a phenomenon that is currently widely discussed by the public, in a detailed and clear manner. Keirl and Miller explain that qualitative research is a long-standing mm tradition in the field of science, fundamentally relying on human observation through direct interaction with individuals within the context of their language and terminology (Moleong, 2017). This study analyzes several issues related to the cyberbranding strategies implemented by Asbhoel. Several core research instruments are utilized, including the research method, data sources, and types of data. As a result, the findings obtained may be subjective, providing a broader understanding of Asbhoel's cyberbranding strategy. This analysis is grounded in theories selected by the researcher as a reference to draw conclusions.

The method used in this study is netnography, a form of digital ethnography developed by Robert Kozinets to study culture, interaction, and online communities. Netnography is a form of ethnography specifically designed to study cultures and communities that emerge through computer-mediated communication (Kozinets, 2002). Over time, netnography has become the primary method for studying interactions and meaning construction on social media (Kozinets, 2015). Netnography is highly relevant for studying communication phenomena on social media, as its primary focus is on exploring communication practices and meanings in digital spaces, such as Instagram. This method involves observing digital content, user behavior, and interactions within online communities without direct intervention. In line with the research objective, which is to analyze interactions on the Instagram account @asbhoel.

The paradigm used in this study is constructivism, as this paradigm explains that reality is formed based on an individual's perspective and how they view it, allowing freedom without fixed rules or principles governing a person's viewpoint by empirical data. This research is grounded in the constructivist paradigm, which views reality as a social construction shaped through interaction, experience, and interpretation by the subject. In this context, the cyberbranding of Distro Asbhoel is not understood merely as a technical process but as a social practice involving various actors with meanings formed subjectively. The researcher plays an active role in the process of data collection and interpretation, acknowledging their personal involvement as both the brand owner and an observer of the phenomenon.

The primary data sources used by the researcher include in-depth interviews with the General Manager of @asbhoel, Ricky Maulana Rendro; the Head of the Online Team at @asbhoel's Instagram, Rafshal Arasyi; Ghalih Harisma, the Head of Inventory at Distro Asbhoel; and professional football player Nadeo Harisma. To test the validity of the data through source triangulation, the researcher also conducted interviews with loyal Asbhoel customers, such as Hadi Rahmat Saputra, and an academic practitioner specializing in social media analysis, Tantri A. Hanjani. Observations were carried out on the @asbhoel Instagram account during content creation and product sales activities. Secondary data sources include documentation such as photos and several video clips showing @asbhoel's promotional and sales activities on Instagram.

The data collection methods used in this research are interviews, observations, and documentation. This study employs three stages of data analysis techniques: data collection, data reduction, and drawing conclusions. Source triangulation is applied to verify the information obtained over time and with various tools in qualitative research. This is done by comparing data from observations and interviews, contrasting statements from primary sources (business owners) with secondary sources (buyers/consumers), comparing statements from informants with the wider public, reviewing multiple perspectives, and finally, comparing interview results with related documents such as images, videos, audio recordings, and others (Moleong, 2017)

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Packaging of Interactive Message Content**

The purpose of Distro Asbhoel in using interactive message content is to actively engage with its audience by paying attention to various factors, such as ensuring that the content consistently aligns with Asbhoel's brand identity. This approach helps optimize Asbhoel's cyberbranding strategy through the Instagram social media platform. Innovative content is produced by Asbhoel to differentiate its brand from competitors while also considering the target audience. In addition to these factors, the interactive message content created by Distro Asbhoel specifically utilizes influencers as the face of the brand. The influencers chosen are professional football players, particularly those affiliated with Persib Bandung, Borneo FC, and the Indonesian national football team. The selection of these influencers aligns with

Asbhoel's branding goal to strengthen the brand's position within West Java as well as across Indonesia.

**Table 1. Parties Involved In Packaging Asbhoel Distro Message Content.**

No	Division	Job Description
1	<i>Creative Director</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop creative concepts and ideas for interactive content</li> <li>2. Design engaging visual elements, videos, audio, and storylines</li> <li>3. Strategically integrate the presence of football players into the content</li> </ol>
2	<i>Content Creator</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Design visual content to be posted, such as photos and videos</li> <li>2. Manage content production</li> <li>3. Edit and refine media materials before publishing</li> </ol>
3	<i>Owner</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Schedule and coordinate with football players for content creation.</li> <li>2. Communicate with the team to ensure the players' involvement aligns with the brand and the message conveyed.</li> <li>3. Maintain the image and reputation of the players in the content produced.</li> </ol>
4	Brand Marketing Team	Responsible for designing, managing, and evaluating the success of campaigns.
5	Social Media Team	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage digital marketing strategies and promote content</li> <li>2. Handle content distribution across various platforms</li> <li>3. Analyze content performance data after publication</li> <li>4. Monitor audience interactions and feedback</li> </ol>
6	Professional Football Player (Influencer)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The main figure in interactive content</li> <li>2. Acts as a public figure who becomes the face of the campaign and delivers the message to the audience</li> </ol>

The packaging of content at Distro Asbhoel begins with the determination of specific message objectives to be conveyed to the audience. Setting clear goals in message packaging on social media is essential to ensure that the message is targeted accurately, relevant, and aligned with audience expectations. This is also necessary to align the content message goals with the company's overall brand strategy. Distro Asbhoel sets its content objectives by ensuring that the produced content remains consistent with the company's values, mission, and vision. The main goal of Distro Asbhoel's campaign is to increase brand awareness among its followers as the audience, by engaging them to drive product sales through content



presented on Instagram. Distro Asbhoel consistently strives to build relationships with its followers through every piece of content shared on its Instagram social media by employing effective and interactive communication. Consistent communication supported by visual and audiovisual elements has been carried out to establish a strong brand impression. Distro Asbhoel maintains an aesthetic that fits the lifestyle of its customers, which facilitates the development of a strong brand identity on Instagram. The brand also differentiates its products by creating unique and relevant content on its social media accounts to avoid similarity with competitors. The promotional objects chosen by Distro Asbhoel involve professional football players in Indonesia as product influencers.

Distro Asbhoel implements market segmentation by grouping customers into clusters with similar characteristics based on demographics, interests, and audience behavior. This segmentation is crucial for business activities as it helps the company understand the needs, preferences, and behaviors of consumers and potential customers. By identifying the target market, the Distro Asbhoel brand can design more precise and cost-effective campaigns. It also allows the brand to target consumers according to their needs and preferences, thereby helping build stronger relationships between the brand and its customers. Market segmentation provides insights that can be used to create products tailored to the unique needs of each desired segment.

In conducting interactive communication on Instagram, Distro Asbhoel produces various types of message content aimed at its followers. The content presented contains promotional messages specifically involving influencers as the key attraction. Additionally, audience interaction is encouraged by optimizing various types of engaging content that invites active participation in certain posts. Once content objectives are set, the next step is to develop themes and concepts aligned with these objectives, while also considering the brand image of Distro Asbhoel. Since influencers are involved, it is important to determine the type of content that aligns the Asbhoel brand with the influencer's personality. Since 2016-2017, Distro Asbhoel has collaborated with influencers. Intensive use of professional football players as influencers on various product releases has been ongoing for the past three years, from 2021 until now. This selection is based on the compatibility of the Asbhoel brand and its products with the professional football players chosen as influencers. Furthermore, the appropriate interactive communication format is selected to optimize message delivery to the

audience, also considering the influencer's involvement in the chosen content type. The messages conveyed by the Asbhoel brand to its followers via Instagram emphasize clear and concise packaging to ensure the target audience can enjoy and actively engage with Asbhoel's Instagram content.

**Table 2: Types of Message Content of Distro Asbhoel**

No	Content Type	Message Content Description
1	Interactive Stories on Instagram: Polling and Voting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Display interactive story content that allows followers to participate in voting or selecting desired features.</li> <li>2 Conduct polls related to clothing or specific products to be promoted.</li> </ol>
2	Question & Answer (Q&A): Instagram Story & Live Streaming	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Hold Q&amp;A sessions on Instagram Story where followers can ask professional football players about their experiences, opinions on matches, or personal topics related to branding.</li> <li>2 Football players can host live sessions on Instagram, directly engaging with followers and answering questions about promoted products.</li> </ol>
3	Challenge-Based Content and Quizzes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Football players challenge their followers to participate in challenges or competitions, such as showcasing skills on the field or fashion styles inspired by the players.</li> <li>2 Create quizzes or challenges with attractive prizes to boost user interaction.</li> </ol>
4	<i>Behind The Scenes</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Show snippets of the football players' personal lives or training activities that interest followers.</li> <li>2 Stories or narratives about the Asbhoel brand.</li> </ol>

Table 2 shows the types of content and message details delivered by Distro Asbhoel through Instagram social media. Several types of message content are created by Asbhoel to build interactive communication with their followers, including interactive Instagram Story content through polling and voting, providing a Q&A (Question and Answer) feature, creating quizzes (challenges), and displaying behind-the-scenes activities of influencers. The selection of these types of message content is intended so that followers can feel involved with the



Asbhoel brand. The messages delivered by the influencers are part of the brand, so followers are expected to feel a connection with the influencers. The content presented by Distro Asbhoel also shows the human side of the influencers, who are professional football players, and gives their followers the opportunity to interact directly with them, strengthening the bond between them. This is a personal and exclusive experience that followers can enjoy.

Asbhoel involves influencers from professional football players to promote their products through various interactive content on the Instagram social media platform. The goal is to reach a wider audience, both existing customers and potential customers. Professional football players are chosen as influencers because they have a particular appeal to the targeted market segment. This appeal includes the influencer's credibility or trustworthiness. Influencers who communicate transparently and honestly will build trust among their audience, including when they use products from the brand, which is an effective form of promotion. However, this also needs to be supported by influencer behavior that avoids scandals or negative issues that could damage the company's brand image.

After setting goals, segmenting the target audience, determining the types and models of message content, the content creation process for posting on the Instagram platform is arranged. The technical aspects of content creation include making storyboards and scripts for the influencers, who are professional football players. Many factors are considered during the making of storyboards and scripts, including using formats that invite audience participation and maintaining consistency in building the Asbhoel brand identity. Both the storyboards and scripts made by the Asbhoel team aim to help create strong and structured content so that the messages are easy to understand by the audience. Using engaging storytelling and well-designed visuals increases the chances of getting more likes, comments, and shares.

In the final stage, evaluation is conducted by measuring the promotional results on Instagram and the use of professional football players as influencers. This measurement considers various factors, especially related to the engagement rate from Instagram posts. Feedback from these posts is also monitored, coming from follower responses based on the number of likes, comments, shares, and reposts of posts created by the Asbhoel marketing team. The packaging of Instagram content carried out by Asbhoel, from the process of designing, arranging, and presenting content on the Instagram platform, is consistently done to deliver the message's purpose to the audience. This packaging involves various visual, text,

and strategy elements to ensure the content attracts audience attention and produces the desired results. Overall, the entire process of packaging interactive message content to build the Asbhoel brand can be illustrated by the following model in Figure 2.

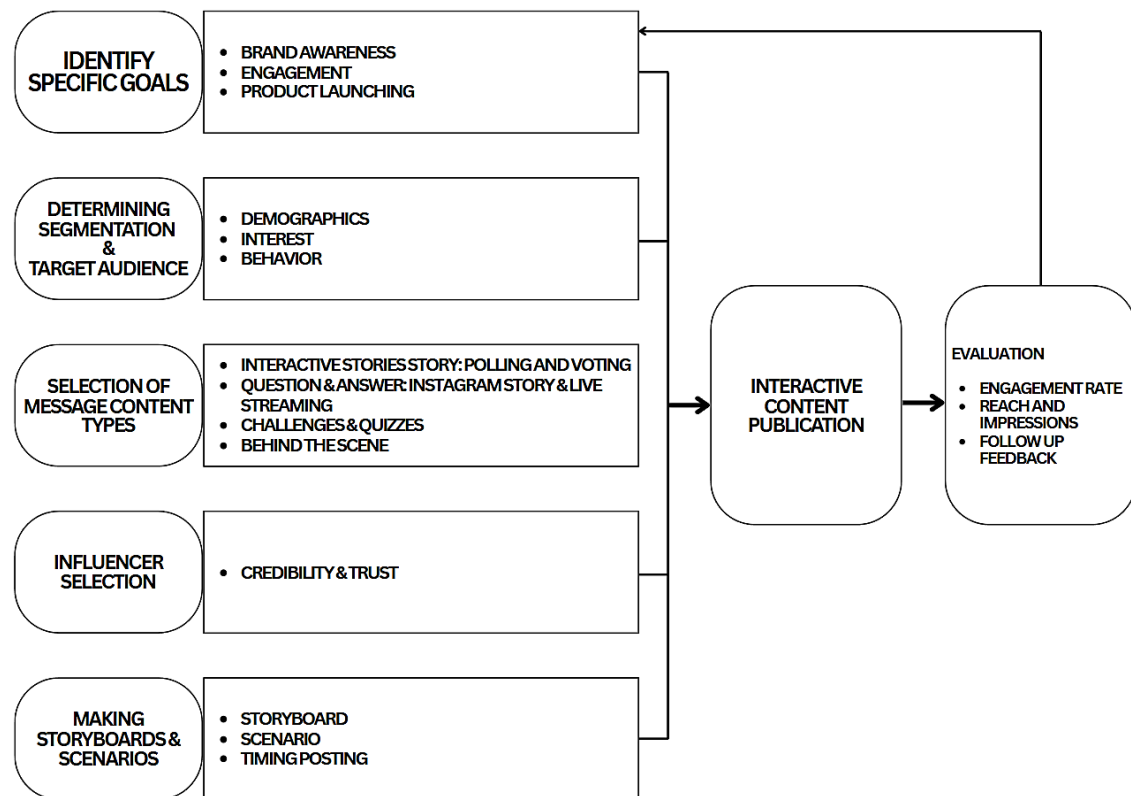


Figure 2. Model of Interactive Message Content Packaging by Distro Asbhoel

## 2. Management of Dialogic Communication

Asbhoel manages dialogic communication with its audience to build the company's branding. This is a two-way communication strategy carried out by the company to establish and strengthen the brand's image and reputation. The types of message content created by Asbhoel include interactive stories on Instagram Story using polls and voting, Q&A sessions via Instagram Story and Live Streaming, challenge-based and quiz-based content, and Behind the Scenes content. These four types of content are used in accordance with the specific objectives set by the Asbhoel team and are scheduled for release at predetermined times. In addition, various comments and incoming messages via Direct Message (DM) are responded to by the Instagram admin according to customer needs. This is Asbhoel's effort to maintain a

communicative bond between the company and its followers. This two-way dialogue builds strong connectivity between both parties.

Asbhoel presents various types of content that allow audiences to engage in communication whether directly with the company, discussions with fellow followers, or interactions with influencers. This is particularly evident through Q&A content using Instagram Story features. Polling content in Instagram Story also attracts the audience to participate by sharing their opinions on products or brand-related decisions, such as preferred product designs. Asbhoel often invites followers to comment on posts and replies with personalized messages. This is a form of personalized interaction, where Asbhoel responds to the audience personally (e.g., by using their names) to create a closer relationship. Another form of interactive content offered by Asbhoel is live interaction, where professional football players who act as influencers host live sessions on Instagram. This allows them to interact directly with followers, answer questions, and talk about the products. Asbhoel specifically creates content that sparks discussion, such as questions, polls, or relevant topics for the audience. This encourages audiences to share stories or experiences related to the brand. The language style used is generally casual, friendly, entertaining, and often humorous helping the audience feel comfortable and connected with the Asbhoel brand itself. Good management of dialogic communication not only builds a strong brand but also creates long-term relationships with its audience. Overall, the dialogic communication management conducted by the Asbhoel brand is illustrated in Figure 3.

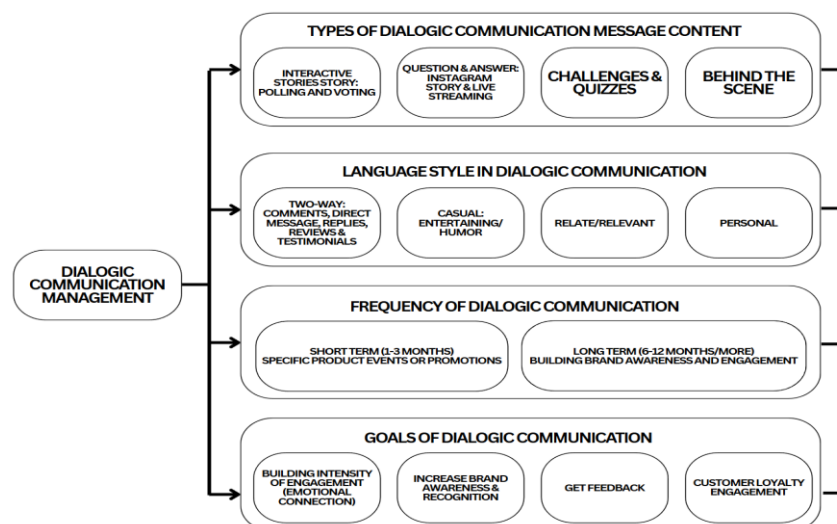


Figure 3. Model of Dialogic Communication Management by Distro Asbhoel

### 3. User Feedback Management

Distro Asbhoel receives customer feedback on Instagram through various types of content and available features. The feedback collected from interactive content includes Call to Action (CTA) content and live sessions with football players. Challenges or quizzes are examples of CTA content where followers can give feedback through photos or videos. In addition, Asbhoel collects feedback via comments on posts, especially those involving football players. Asbhoel also uses Direct Messages (DMs) to invite followers to send private feedback. This provides followers with the opportunity to give more detailed suggestions or complaints. User feedback management is a strategic process aimed at building company branding by collecting, analyzing, and responding to input from users (including criticism, suggestions, and praise) to strengthen brand image, enhance reputation, and foster stronger relationships with customers. Once feedback data is collected, Asbhoel conducts an analysis of the results. Sentiments; both positive and negative; are used as metrics for shaping future dialogic and interactive communication strategies. The feedback received is categorized based on themes or topics, such as product quality, customer service, football player interactions, and others. Data analysis is conducted to identify recurring patterns or issues, whether in content that receives positive or negative responses. Metrics or indicators are also used to measure how frequently specific types of feedback occur, which helps prioritize which issues need improvement.

The analysis results are then used by Asbhoel as a foundation for developing new products or features that the audience desires. Regular evaluation meetings with the marketing team, product development, and customer service are held to review the feedback received and decide on responsive actions. Responses may include publishing positive reviews or testimonials (via reposts), as well as responding to queries using the Q&A feature on Instagram Story; one of the active approaches used by Asbhoel. Periodic reviews of the feedback continue to ensure that the actions taken are appropriate and remain relevant.

Ultimately, user feedback management at Distro Asbhoel aims to improve the quality of products, services, and customer experience while strengthening the relationship between the company and its audience. An overview of this feedback management process is illustrated in Figure 4.

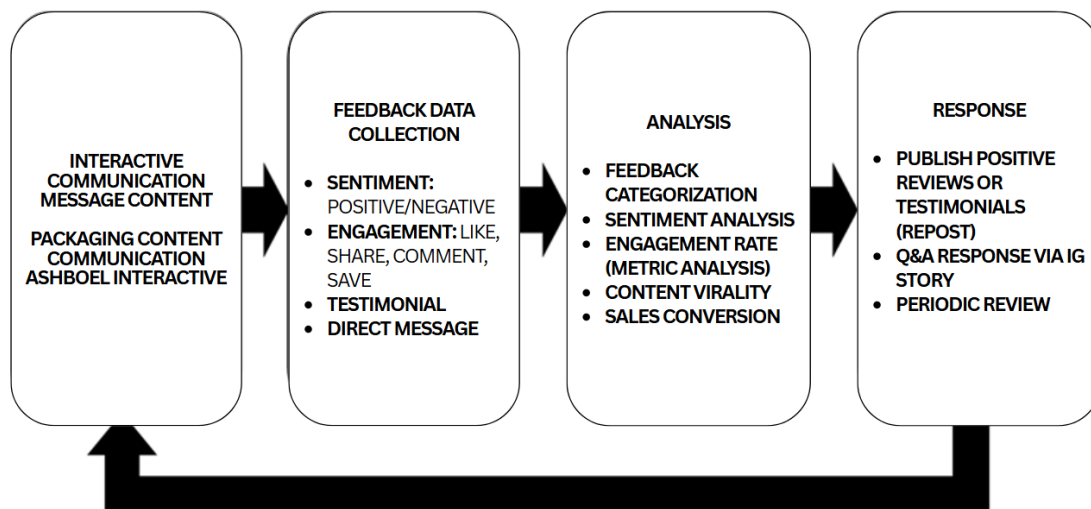


Figure 4. Model of Customer Feedback Management at Distro Asbhoel

#### 4. Active User Participation in Building Corporate Branding

Active user participation at Distro Asbhoel provides a focused framework on the role of users (followers) as empowered communication agents. This serves as an important foundation in understanding how Asbhoel's Instagram account actively contributes to brand building. In today's digital era, social media users have broad access to various platforms and the freedom to choose what aligns with their needs and preferences. Table 3 outlines the types of interactive content commonly used by Distro Asbhoel to elicit active user participation, including interactive Instagram Stories through polling and voting, Question & Answer (Q&A) sessions via Instagram Stories and Live Streaming, challenge-based content and quizzes, as well as Behind The Scenes content.

Table 3. Forms of Audience Participation in Asbhoel Distro's Interactive Content

No	Content Type	Forms of Audience Participation
1	Interactive Story on Instagram Story: Polling and Voting	3 Followers participate in voting or selecting desired features. 4 Followers take part in polls related to clothing or specific product choices.
2	Q&A (Question & Answer): Instagram Story & Live Streaming	Followers engage in discussions by asking questions through Instagram Story (e.g., asking professional football players about their experiences, opinions on matches, or even personal topics related to branding).

- |   |                                  |   |  |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--|
| 3 | Challenge-Based and Quiz Content | 3 | Followers participate in challenges or competitions provided   |
| 4 | <i>Behind The Scenes</i>         | 4 | Followers answer the quizzes given   |
|   |                                  |   | <i>Followers can give likes or comments on behind-the-scenes clips featuring the personal lives or training activities of football players, which are interesting to followers, or storytelling content about the Asbhoel brand.</i> |
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The interactive content regularly conducted by Asbhoel on Instagram plays a crucial role in deeply engaging users and building more personal relationships. Through features such as Q&A sessions, live streaming, polls and voting, as well as quizzes and challenges, Asbhoel not only delivers messages but also invites users to become part of the content experience. These activities transform users from passive viewers into active participants who share opinions, vote, and express their creativity. This active participation helps Asbhoel better understand user preferences directly while also fostering a loyal community that feels valued by being included in fun and lifestyle-relevant activities. A prominent form of active user participation includes product reviews of Asbhoel items worn or promoted by professional football players on Instagram. These reviews often appear in the comment sections, where users share their experiences related to product quality or design, creating active discussions with other followers. Users also frequently post personal content, photos or videos featuring Asbhoel products in their daily lives; tagging both the official @asbhoel account and the football influencers. This activity organically expands Asbhoel's brand reach through interaction and tagging while also boosting credibility and consumer trust. It provides valuable feedback for improving Asbhoel's product quality and marketing strategies. Active participation in live Q&A sessions with professional football players on Asbhoel's Instagram offers users a highly interactive and personal experience. Before the sessions, users submit questions via the Questions feature, ranging from football-related topics and players' personal experiences to their opinions on Asbhoel products. When selected, users feel acknowledged and more connected to both Asbhoel and the football players. Another active engagement form includes quizzes and challenge-based giveaways that prompt users to upload photos of themselves wearing Asbhoel products endorsed by the players. These entries not only encourage product purchase and use but also showcase how users creatively integrate Asbhoel into their daily lifestyles. Participation in polls and voting on Instagram Stories is also



common; for example, choosing favorite styles or answering football-related trivia. Users actively select their preferred options, such as favorite clothing styles from an Asbhoel collection. These poll results provide immediate user feedback, helping shape future product designs or marketing campaigns. They also give users a sense of involvement in decision-making, fostering a feeling of ownership over the brand. Meanwhile, voting is typically conducted to select the newest T-shirt design, favorite color combinations, or the best campaign involving football players; allowing users to directly influence key brand elements.

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted, the most common form of active participation on Instagram @asbhoel is liking posts that feature professional football players. Instagram posts by Asbhoel that involve football players as influencers often receive high active participation from users because these players are seen as inspirational figures who have achieved success through hard work and dedication. Asbhoel frequently offers direct incentives to users for active participation, hoping to reward them with exclusive prizes, which further strengthens audience engagement. The emotional connection between Distro Asbhoel and its users in cyberbranding develops through several stages, starting from emotional awareness, engagement, personal connection, to self-identification and loyalty.

Asbhoel records active user participation by using Instagram's analytics tools (Instagram Insights), monitoring hashtags, surveying and gathering user feedback via direct messages, as well as tracking the results of polls and voting. The method of recording active user participation through hashtag monitoring involves watching the use of special hashtags created for content campaigns. These hashtags act as unique tags that make it easier for Asbhoel to track posts, comments, and user interactions involved in the campaign. To record active user participation using surveys and feedback, Asbhoel utilizes interactive features available on the platform, such as polls, quizzes, or question boxes in Instagram Stories. Asbhoel creates simple surveys to understand user preferences, their level of engagement in content campaigns, or their opinions about Asbhoel products. Recording active user participation by monitoring polls and voting involves using interactive features in Asbhoel's Instagram Stories to ask questions to the audience. Asbhoel creates simple polls or voting by asking users to choose between two designs, colors, product styles, and to share their opinions about elements of the ongoing content campaign.

By analyzing interaction data such as likes, comments, and shares, the brand can understand which types of content are most engaging for users, allowing marketing strategies to be more effective and relevant. This data also helps the brand identify potential market segments and measure customer loyalty levels. Additionally, active user participation reflects their emotional engagement with the brand, which can be leveraged to strengthen relationships through personalized content or rewards for their contributions. With proper follow-up, this data becomes a strategic tool to build an authentic digital image, increase trust, and expand the brand's reach and influence in the online world.

**Table 4. Follow-up Actions on Active User Participation at Distro Ashboel.**

No	Follow-up Action	Description
1	Displaying User Content	Display content created by users on the brand's feed or story. Create Instagram highlights showcasing the best user content, with the intention of providing additional recognition and motivating other users to participate in the future.
2	Giving Rewards	Offer giveaways or prizes such as free products or opportunities to meet Ashboel players. Create user groups or community hashtags so followers can continue to share content and interact.
3	Building Community	Ashboel creates groups or community hashtags where followers can continuously share content and interact. In addition, they also show appreciation to users who have actively participated by expressing thanks through comments, DMs, or by reposting their content. This shows that the brand values their contributions.
4	Improving Customer Experience	Use feedback from active participants to improve products or services, as well as to create more relevant campaigns in the future.
5	Sharing Positive Feedback	Share the results of active participation that have been received, for example, by displaying quotes or testimonials from users who participated in the campaign.

The follow-up actions based on the analysis of active user participation on Instagram (as presented in Table 4) involve several strategic steps that go beyond the Instagram platform and contribute to building a stronger brand identity. First, participation evaluation is conducted by analyzing the data to understand engagement patterns; such as identifying the types of activities that are most appealing to Ashboel's users. This data is then used for user

segmentation, which involves categorizing audiences based on their level of engagement with Asbhoel (e.g., active, passive, or potential users), in order to develop more effective communication strategies. Next, Asbhoel strengthens its relationships with audiences through regular interactions, loyalty programs, and rewards for engagement. Additionally, the data serves as the basis for optimizing future campaigns by creating content that is more relevant and attractive to the target audience. Finally, Asbhoel enhances interaction with users through innovative new content tailored to audience preferences. These steps are essential in ensuring that Asbhoel's branding remains strong, with a consistent and relevant digital presence.

## **5. Reasons for Using Professional Football Players**

The advantages of professional football players lie in their high achievements, strong credibility and trust from fans, wide audience reach, and powerful emotional appeal. For these reasons, Distro Asbhoel strategically chose to use professional football players to strengthen its brand identity and reach a broader audience. This approach also aims to create a stronger emotional connection with Asbhoel's loyal customers. In Indonesia, the popularity and reach of football players are not limited to sports fans alone but extend to the general public, thanks to their frequent exposure in mass media and on social media. With fan bases spread across different regions of Indonesia, professional football players can help bring the Asbhoel brand to a global market. Professional football players are also highly relevant to Asbhoel's streetwear market segment. Footballers play a significant role in modern popular culture and lifestyle. Moreover, their popularity on social media makes them effective marketing tools for Asbhoel, which often utilizes them to expand audience reach.

Asbhoel's decision to appoint a professional football player as a brand ambassador is intended to strengthen brand image, broaden the audience base, and boost sales. The visual appeal and personal branding of Indonesian footballers make them highly suitable ambassadors for Asbhoel's fashion brand. These athletes have unique styles and personalities that represent a fusion of local and international culture. Asbhoel sees professional footballers as emotionally powerful figures in branding, especially for a streetwear-themed fashion brand. Their involvement helps build a strong emotional link between the brand's products and its customers. These footballers appear in campaigns that tie Asbhoel products to emotional moments such as victories, struggles, or friendship; thereby enhancing the emotional value of

the products. This makes Asbhoel items more than just fashion products; they become part of meaningful stories that evoke positive emotions.

Using football players as influencers has proven to be an effective marketing strategy for enhancing branding and reaching a wide and diverse audience. Asbhoel does not rely on just one player. Instead, it collaborates with multiple professional football players. This diversification prevents the brand's image and public interest from declining if one player's performance or reputation drops. By involving several players, Asbhoel ensures that public enthusiasm remains high. To avoid excessive dependence on a single football player's image, the brand also regularly monitors campaign performance to ensure that collaborations remain effective and relevant. Another strategic move is leveraging short-term trends and maximizing the players' roles when they are at the peak of popularity.

The use of professional football players by Distro Asbhoel has proven to be an effective marketing strategy for increasing brand presence, raising brand awareness, and building emotional connections with the Instagram audience. The global popularity of professional footballers in Indonesia, along with their personal appeal on social media, provides broad reach and high engagement in developing Asbhoel's brand within society. However, the success of this strategy is supported by careful planning, including selecting footballers with values and lifestyles aligned with the brand, collaborating with multiple influencers, and drafting contracts that include risk management in case of controversies or declining performance. With this well-thought-out approach, potential drawbacks associated with using football players can be minimized, ensuring that collaborations stay on track and enhance Asbhoel's brand reputation in the public eye.

Interactivity in Asbhoel's cyberbranding is built through the use of professional football players as visual magnets. Content featuring these public figures captures the audience's attention, encourages positive comments, prompts product-related questions, and even leads to content being reshared to their personal accounts. This interaction reflects emotional and social engagement between the audience and the brand, strengthening Asbhoel's image as a brand that aligns with sporty and trendy lifestyles.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, Asbhoel has successfully built a strong cyberbranding presence through consistently and structurally packaged interactive message content on the Instagram platform. This strategy involves visual elements, text, and effective two-way communication to convey the brand's values and messages. The dialogic communication applied plays a significant role in strengthening relationships with the audience, creating a sense of engagement and ownership, and positioning Asbhoel as a fashion brand that is not only visually recognized but also emotionally close to its customers.

In addition, the dominance of emotional feedback from the audience and the management of user participation show that Asbhoel's communication strategy is audience-centered and oriented toward long-term relationships. Through feedback analysis and the adaptation of relevant content, Asbhoel has been able to maintain audience engagement and remain competitive in the digital space. The use of professional football players as influencers has proven to be an effective strategy in expanding reach, increasing brand awareness, and building emotional connections. This approach has been carefully planned, including the selection of appropriate figures and risk management, thereby strengthening Asbhoel's reputation and brand sustainability.

This study contributes to the development of communication science, particularly in the field of cyberbranding, by emphasizing the importance of utilizing digital platforms to build an authentic, relevant, and sustainable brand image while creating emotional closeness with the audience. In the future, it is expected that Asbhoel will optimize the empowerment of online communities as part of its marketing strategy and brand awareness efforts through loyalty programs, user-generated content, and collaborative campaigns. Active community engagement can be enhanced through discussions, online events, and recognition of active members, thereby deepening emotional bonds while organically expanding brand reach.

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