

From music industry to content industry: a story of Sun Eater Records

Idhar Resmadi

Announcement

In March 2020, several Indonesian citizens were glued to their TV sets, computers and mobile phone screens, waiting anxiously for President Jokowi to make the grand announcement on the policy regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim was to prevent its rapid spread in the country, which led to the implementation of large-scale social restriction policies such as school-and-work-from-home and prohibition of religious and other activities carried out in public places or facilities (Figure 1). The significant impact of these regulations hugely affected the entertainment business, both economically and culturally. All live music performances were prohibited in cafes or outdoor festivals during the pandemic.

The impact of large-scale social restriction policies frustrated musicians because most of the income is generated from live performances. Several music festivals and tours were canceled or postponed for the time being. Since the pandemic, this industry has faced an exorbitant retrogression. However, it was not only musicians who got frustrated; virtually all the stakeholders in this sector, from bands crew event organizers, to music companies, were confused about the entire situation.

The Indonesian arts advocacy group known as Koalisi Seni Indonesia, stated that a month after President Joko Widodo announced the large-scale social restriction policy in March 2020, approximately 40 concerts, tours and festivals were forced to be postponed (Figure 2). Every musician felt the impact of the pandemics which affected their income, technical support and made them lose several opportunities. Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy Sandiaga Uno on the G-CINC Expert Series webinar stated that this industry globally lost US\$30bn (Rp 434.6tn) because of the crisis (liputan6.com, 2021).

Kukuh Rizal Arfianto, director and co-founder of Jakarta music company Sun Eater Records, was negatively affected by the pandemic. Similar with others in the industry, this was a huge challenge. Kukuh had to cancel all scheduled tours and live music performances of Sun Eater Records bands. The annual festival *Here Comes the Sun* was also postponed indefinitely. The monthly revenue generated from tours and live music performances lost relatively 500m (rupiah currency) in a month (cnnindonesia.com, April 26, 2020). However, this is a typical example of how the large-scale social restriction policy had affected this sector. Another impact was the massive job loss across the supply chain.

It was inevitable for musicians to discover a new means of survival, as some of them actively jammed live on Instagram, made collaborations and held online shows to raise donations. The pandemic had a significant impact on all aspects of the music industry, including stakeholders. It led to loss of economic opportunities to the shifting of social culture and the psychological effect caused by the stress of "Zoom fatigue." Despite these challenges, Kukuh, a music entrepreneur, took the strides to soldier on. At the same time, he was

Idhar Resmadi is based at the Department of Visual Communication Design, Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia.

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HOME > NASIONAL >

Cegah Covid-19 Jokowi Terbitkan PP tentang PSBB, Simak Isinya

Reporter: [Friski Riana](#)
Editor: [Jobpie Sugiharto](#)
Selasa, 31 Maret 2020 16:51 WIB

0 KOMENTAR



Presiden Joko Widodo alias Jokowi mengikuti KTT Luar Biasa G20 secara virtual bersama Menteri Luar Negeri Retno Marsudi (kiri) dan Menteri Keuangan Sri Mulyani dari Istana Bogor, Kamis, 26 Maret 2020. Jokowi kembali bekerja setelah pemakaman Ibunda Sudjiatmi Notomihardjo. Foto: Biro Pers Sekretariat Presiden/Muchlis Jr

TEMPO.CO, Jakarta - Presiden **Jokowi** telah menandatangani Peraturan Pemerintah (PP) tentang Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar (PSBB) untuk mempercepat penanganan penyakit Covid-19.

"Baru saja saya tandatangani PP-nya dan keppresnya yang berkaitan dengan pembatasan sosial berskala besar," kata Jokowi hari ini, Selasa, 31 Maret 2020.

Berdasarkan salinan Rancangan PP tentang PSBB tersebut terdapat 7 pasal. Pada Pasal 2 disebutkan dengan persetujuan pemerintah pusat, pemerintah daerah dapat melakukan PSBB atau

Note: President Jokowi announced a large-scale social restriction policy to prevent Covid-19 spread rapidly in Indonesia
Source: Tempo (2020)

prepared to move forward by adopting the digital strategy before the pandemic storm hit massively.

Kukuh Rizal, the music entrepreneur

Kukuh Rizal Arfianto established Sun Eater Records in March 2019, and it is often addressed as a newcomer in the music industry. Before leaping into this sector, he had a career in other establishments. He had worked in a design studio in Bandung and the retail industry with Nike and Phillip Morris. However, despite working in various sectors, his deep passion for music led to the inspiration to set up Sun Eater Records.

Figure 2 Cancellations of music events during pandemic in Indonesia

KOALISI SENI		Beranda	Advokasi	Anggot
31	Musik	Anesthesia 2020		Surabaya
32	Musik	April Pop Concert (Kunto Aji & Maliq and the Essentials)		Jakarta
33	Musik	Authenticity Authentic Moment x Feast		Bandung
34	Musik	Authenticity Authentic Moment x Feast		Jambi
35	Musik	Authenticity Authentic Moment x Feast		Kendari
36	Musik	Authenticity Authentic Moment x Feast		Makassar
37	Musik	Authenticity Authentic Moment x Feast		Palu
38	Musik	Authenticity Authentic Moment x Kunto Aji		Mataram
39	Musik	Authenticity Authentic Moment x Kunto Aji		Sukabumi
KOALISI SENI		Beranda	Advokasi	Anggot
40	Musik	BASENSATION 2020		Semarang
41	Musik	CIMPHORIA #5		Yogyakarta
42	Musik	Coretan Putih Abu #4		Yogyakarta
43	Musik	DedicArt#9		Yogyakarta
44	Musik	E-project #3		Yogyakarta
45	Musik	Economy Fun Week 7.0		Bali
46	Musik	ENSYCLOMORDIA #6		Yogyakarta
47	Musik	Festival Hammersonic		Jakarta
48	Musik	Festival Heads in the Cloud		Jakarta
49	Musik	Festival We Are Connected		Bali

Notes: Koalisi seni indonesia (KSI) announced that several live music performances in bandung, jakarta, surabaya, yogyakarta, and Bali had to be canceled, and even international festivals such as the Hammersonic Festival were forced to be postponed indefinitely

Source: Koalisi seni indonesia (2020)

His interest in joining the music industry started after working in a Jakarta-based record company called Double Deer. He also met his colleague, Baskara Putra, a musician for rock band Hindia and .Feast, who also aided in establishing Sun Eater Records. During that time, there were plans to establish a company that focused on selling records and creating various derivative products through digitalization to attract clients, commercial brands or investors for partnership. Baskara took a creative A&R (artist and repertoire) role, and

Kukuh was responsible for adopting various strategies and business development in Sun Eater Records.

His interest in becoming a music entrepreneur was triggered when he read an article in *The Guardian* about Radiohead's business model titled "Radiohead's Corporate Empire: Inside the Band's Dollar and Cents," published on April 29, 2016. Afterward, he was able to discern that the British rock band was legendary, and this blew his mind. This business empire was innovatively built with relatively 20 subsidiary companies, which were united by Kukuh to re-orientate and build an innovative music business model. The conventional industry usually relies on record sales of CDs, cassettes, vinyl, streaming services, tours, live performances and merchandise. Besides Radiohead's companies, Kukuh was inspired by 88 Rising (Music Records Company) and Disney (Entertainment Industry) business models focused on developing content. Presently, these two companies massively create content for their audiences. All that inspiration caused him to adopt an innovative strategy in the music business (Figure 3).

Business model strategy

Eliminate

Kukuh tried to eliminate the conventional business model strategy by not depending on the selling of physical records. The use of mass media or billboards for promotion and marketing was also limited. The conventional music business model is inseparable from producing, distributing, promoting and selling records, tours or live music performances. At the beginning of Sun Eater Records, he reportedly adopted a different business strategy to create intellectual property (IP) assets and digital content rather than selling records. This was similar to that adopted by the Blue Ocean to severe competition by

Figure 3 Sun Eater Records as the emergent music-entrepreneur in Jakarta, Indonesia



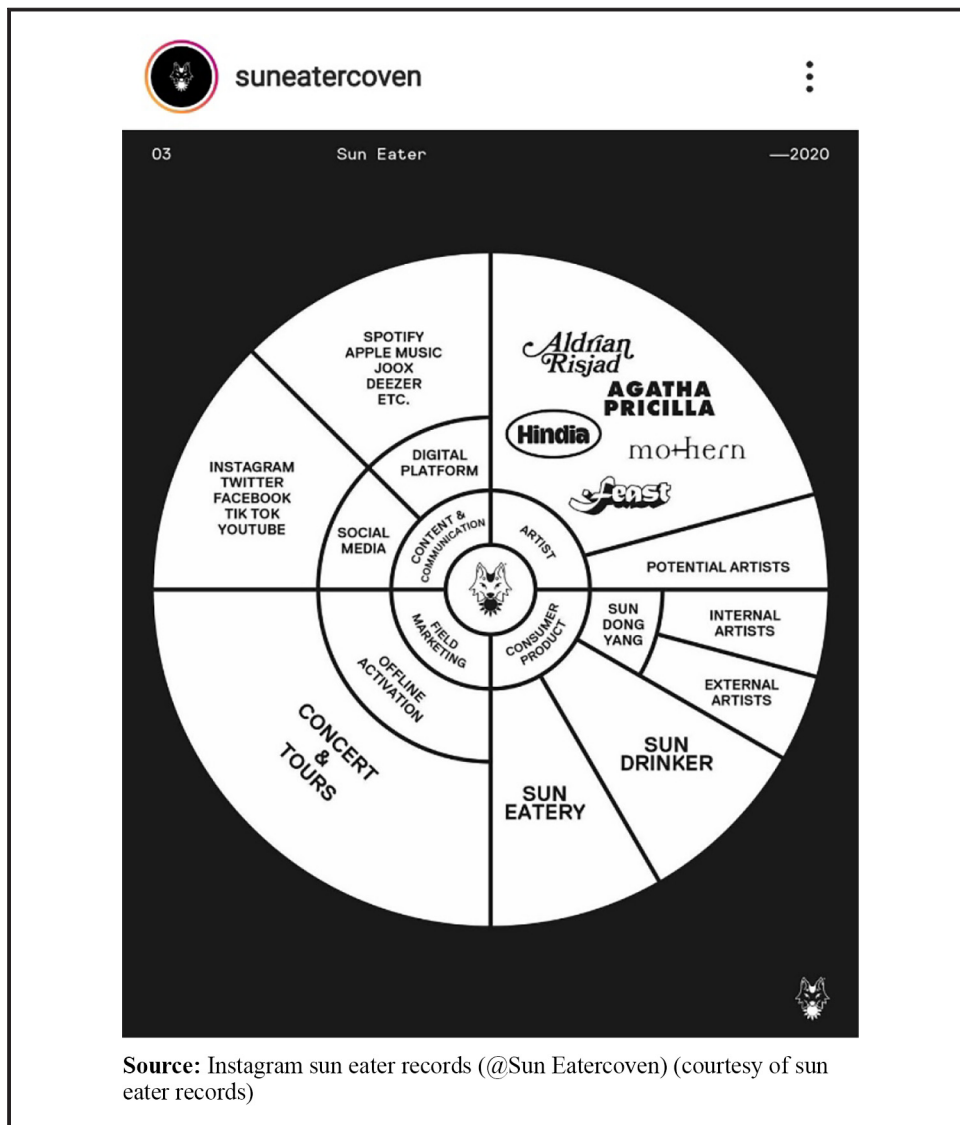
Note: Sun eater logo

Source: Private data (courtesy of sun eater records)

creating an uncontested market space and a new niche within the industry by altering existing competitive rules (Kim, Yang, & Kim, 2008). He was able to discern the potentials that several other stakeholders failed to see, including the opportunity to create digital content.

Initially, selling records and live music performances were the main sources of revenue in this business. However, the evolution of the pandemic led to the use of digital media, an ideal strategy that aided in building a strong branding position, such as gaining partnerships with commercial brands or investors. He decided to establish a music company that combined artist management, event organizer, merchandising and content and communication (Figure 4). He was concerned about developing a sub-division in digital content creation called “content and communication.” Under these four business models, Sun Eater Records offered a wide range of artist management, music events, digital content, social media activation, band merchandise and book publishing.

Figure 4 Sun Eater Records' business model



Reduce

Kukuh's main product was digital content rather than selling records or live music performances. To prove this, he deliberately limited musical performances in certain cities to prevent the artists from over-demanding and to sustain their audience. Furthermore, other conventional promotion and marketing strategies, such as selling records, spreading billboards and posters or activating the mainstream mass media, were also reduced. Rather than focusing on these, he tried to push the digital activations. He stated that content and storytelling were the main weapons used to boost Sun Eater Records. It simply means that these were usually the first to be delivered to their audience:

What makes (us) different from other record companies? They tend to perform on stage occasionally, while our foundation is built on content rather than music, besides our activities are quite distinct, and the videos are made first, said Kukuh, in Karena Podcast Episode 8, September 17, 2020.

From the interview excerpt, it is obvious that initially, he tried to re-orientate the adopted strategy with respect to the digital content. For example, when musicians release their singles, the next step is to make a video to promote their song. Conversely, he stated that all the contents, from the teaser to the campaign, and musical videos, were created first before the musicians released their single and tried to narrate the stories to their music.

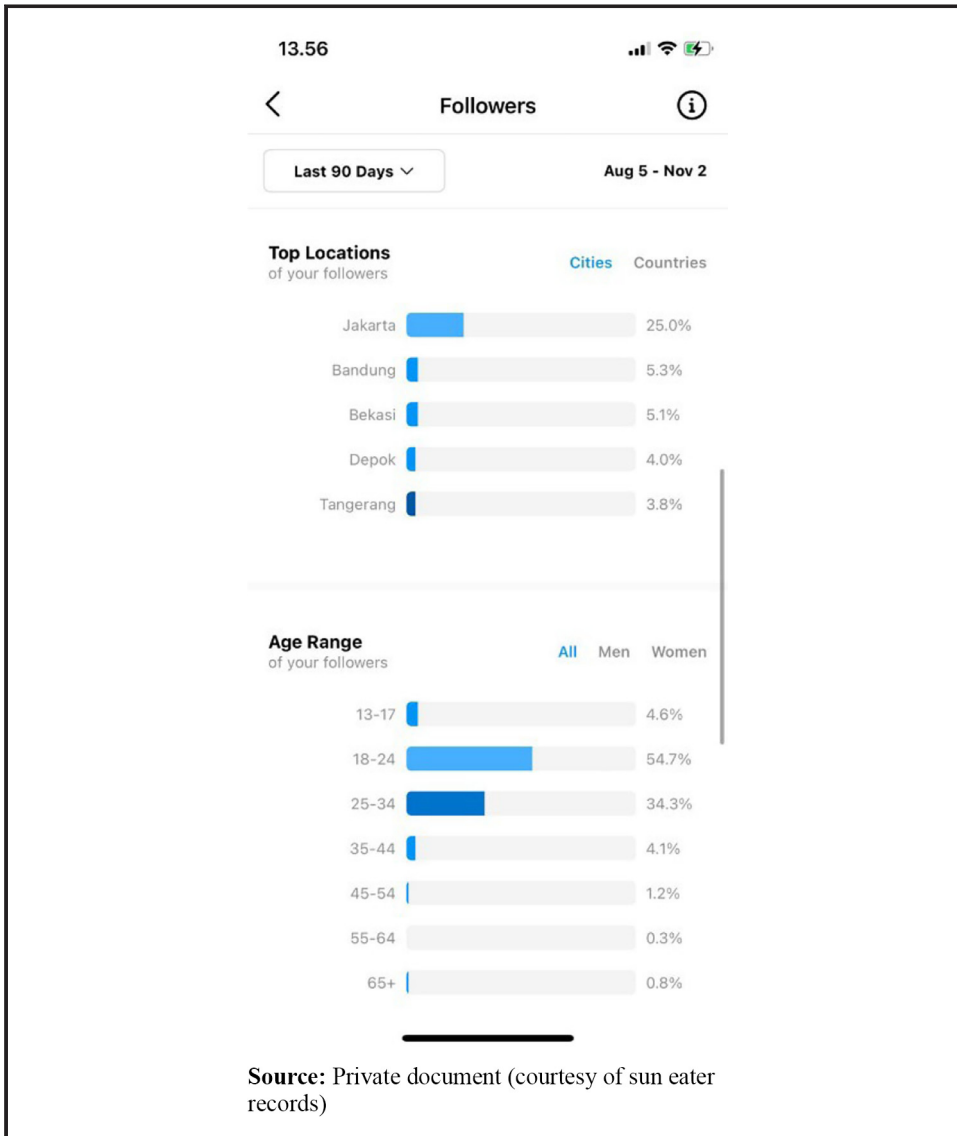
Raise

There are several driving forces behind a rising imperative to create blue oceans. Accelerated technological advances have substantially improved industrial productivity and allowed suppliers to produce an unprecedented array of products and services (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). At Sun Eater Records, Kukuh focused on developing Intellectual Properties Rights and business model franchises by adopting the digital content strategy. These are the main assets that need to be protected in this present era. In an interview with Kulturekstensif, Kukuh stated the need to focus on IP development rather than the usual music business model (*medium.com/kultur-ekstensif, December 29, 2021*). He ensured that every musician registered under Sun Eater Records has the right to IP assets to collaborate or partner with clients or commercial brands in the future.

Sun Eater Records' business model is closely related to several digital activations. This strategy distinguished it from other conventional music companies in Indonesia. It implemented approaches that apply to many forms of digital content, ranging from the online streaming platform (Spotify, Joox, Youtube Music, Apple Music, Etc.) to social media activation (Instagram, Youtube, Tiktok, Facebook, Discord, etc.) (Figure 4). Sun Eater Records used all these, including the available data, to create content and make certain decisions. They were always active on social media and promptly adaptable to technological changes. This led to the establishment of an independent music company and agile and flexible innovations, including various opportunities that other industry actors have not experienced.

The strategy to raise digital activation is undeniably based on their social media segmentation and positioning massively influenced by teenage internet users. Based on the acquired data, it is obvious that Sun Eater Records music fans were dominated by 54.7% of generation Z (gen-Z; aged 18–24 years), followed by 34.3% of millennials (aged 25–34 years) (Figure 5). Geographically, they were dominated by audiences from big cities, namely, Jakarta (25%), Bandung (5.3%), Bekasi (5.1%), Depok (4%) and Tangerang (3.8%) (Figure 5). The adopted content strategy was closely related to their segmentation and brand positioning in social media. Sun Eater Records music fans were dominated by 74.5% male and 25.5% female. Figure 6 shows the activities usually carried out during prime time, i.e. from 12 p.m. to 9 p.m. Therefore, based on the acquired data, it was concluded that

Figure 5 Instagram followers of Sun Eater Records dominated by generation Z and millennials teenagers

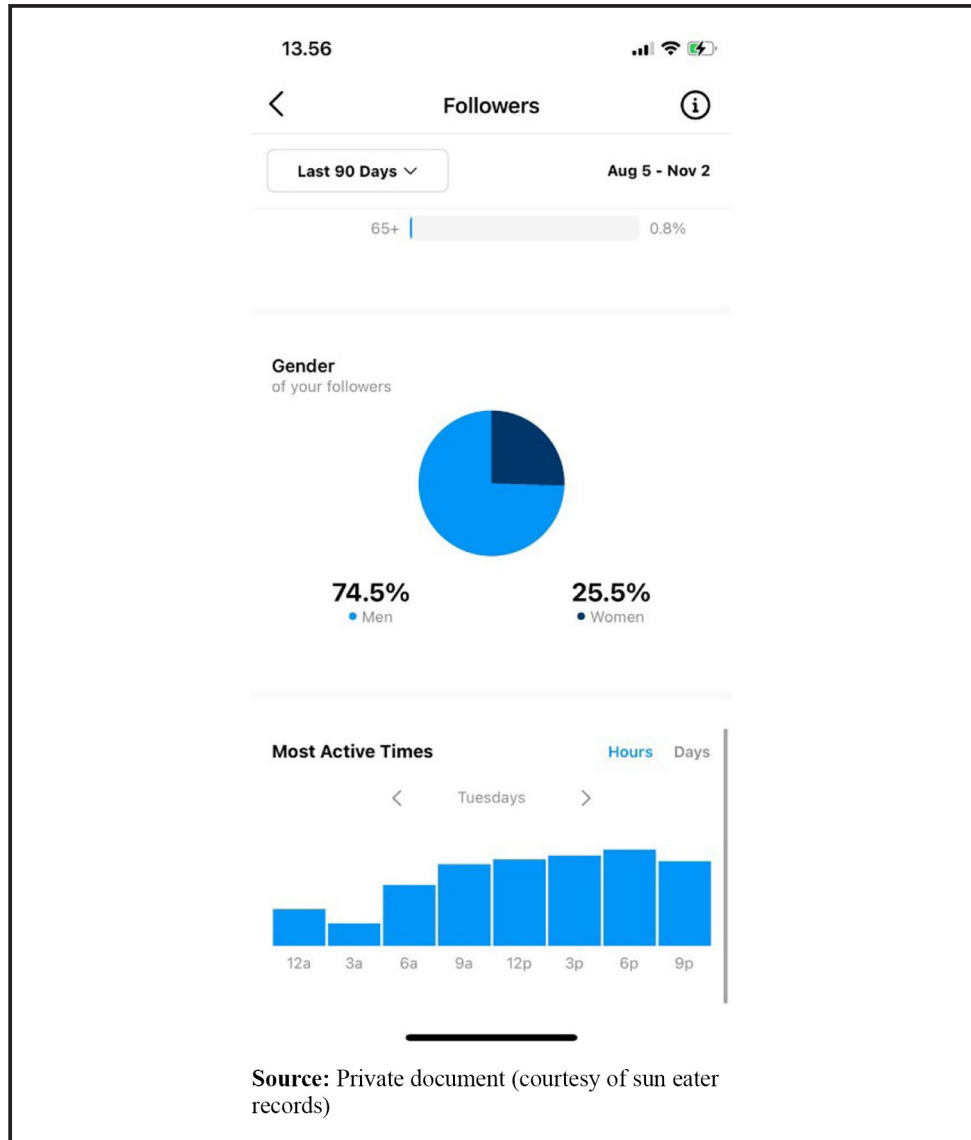


teenagers dominated the fans because most of the content was music-related. Kukuh stated that digital data drove the adopted business strategy and technology. In addition, these are important in decision-making to effectively attract specific audiences and subscribers (Lazauskas & Snow, 2018).

Create

Sun Eater Records developed a potential business model involving designing digital content. They created a sub-division, namely, "Content and Communication," to boost their various activities, starting with the activation of social media and digital platforms (Figure 4). This made Sun Eater Records different from other companies limited to selling recorded albums or engaged in live performances. The business model involves designing various contents, such as digital streaming revenue, to gaining clients or partnerships from commercial brands. These

Figure 6 Instagram followers of Sun Eater Records based on gender- and time-based consumption



designs consist of many Instagram content, YouTube videos, Tiktok videos and Discord, including comics. According to Kuku, all activations carried out by this company need to be integrated with digital content during promotion, campaign and marketing. A typical example is the use of the digital comic "Earth-6" to promote band .Feast or campaigns relating to mental health issues were designed to promote the musical video of band Hindia. One of the endeavors adopted by Sun Eater Records was to multiply the digital products besides from selling records. Fortunately, their loyal audience and appealing content gave them an edge in bargaining power compared to other commercial brands (Table 1).

Shift and adapt from music to content industry

My friends and I at Sun Eater believe in telling stories that matter, and every adopted step is based on these narratives that are considered important to be shared with others (Kuku Rizal @kukuhing; <https://greatmind.id/article/bercerita-dengan-karya>).

Table 1 Sun Eater Records' business model strategy

<i>Eliminate</i>	<i>Selling physical records Conventional distribution and promotion</i>
Reduce	Musical performances in a certain city Conventional distribution and promotion
Raise	The potential digital user on social media Intellectual Properties Rights development Big data activation
Create	Digital content Content creation partnership Content strategy

Source: Analyzed by author

The Indonesian digital content was remarkable, specifically during the pandemic when live music was prohibited. However, in early 2021, internet users reached 202.6 million. This number escalated by 15.5% or 27 million compared to the previous year. Presently, internet users in Indonesia are relatively 73.7% of the total population (274.9 million). They are usually within the age range of 16–64 years, while mobile phone owners were relatively 98.3%; besides, this favorite device is used to access various contents. It is recorded that 96.4% or 195.3 million Indonesians access the internet through mobile phones, while active social media users are approximately 170 million. Online activities involving watching videos (whether it is streaming or broadcast), reading stories from media companies (online or printed) and listening to music in streaming services usually last for 2 h 50 min, 1 h 38 min and 1 h 30 min, respectively (*Kompas.com, February 23, 2021*):

They agreed that they were living in the music and content industry. It only occurs that their main product is music, however, it was learnt from Disney tagline that “sparking the imagination”, inspires people, not by covering something or riding the wave. We create our own story rather than the same old content, such as YouTube that is limited to live sessions, gear reviews, or IG, which only shows a release’s countdown. Besides, we only do what we love and are comfortable with, even the senior musicians, is a little hesitant with what they do, specifically during a crisis such this, where everyone becomes a content creator, as stated by Kuku in Karena Podcast Episode 8, September 17, 2020.

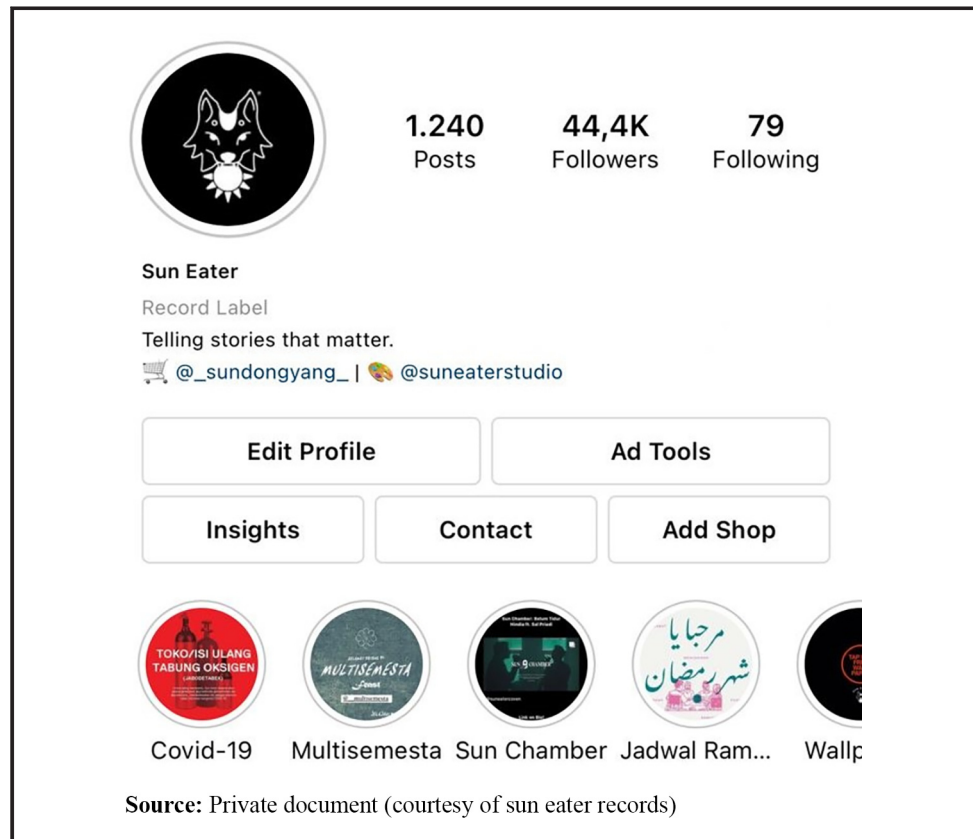
The Covid-19 pandemic led to an increase in the production and consumption of digital content, as well as new opportunities. Interestingly, Kuku was quick to realize this phenomenon.

Content pattern: create, connect and optimize

Sun Eater Records wrote “telling stories that matter” as their tagline (see [Figure 7](#)). According to Kuku, the creation of digital content always required storytelling. This involves adopting a common strategy in digital and content marketing ([Pulizzi, 2012](#)). The content storytelling approach used by Sun Eater Records is inseparable from the media and message strategies. These focused on using visual-based digital media that were more entertaining ([Resmadi, Bastar, & Prahara, 2020](#)).

Sun Eater Records’ contents are inseparable from their promotion and marketing strategies on Instagram, YouTube, Discord and Tiktok. Digital storytelling involves the use of multimedia such as a combination of videos, photographs and sounds to stimulate reflection ([Sandars, Murray, & Pellow, 2008](#)). Sun Eater Records does not only spread musically related information, rather they also narrate fun and interesting contents related to daily activities, astrology, social and teenager issues, etc. Moreover, through this, they try to develop relationships with their fans or audiences by appealing to their emotions to stay

Figure 7 Instagram page of Sun Eater Records (@Sun Eatercover) titled “Telling Stories That Matter”



relevant and establish a positive brand. In accordance with various literatures, conveying storytelling messages was more effective because it emphasizes emotional and relatability aspects that engage the audiences dominated by millennials and gen-Z.

The company designs digital contents by creating, connecting and optimizing (C–C–O) patterns. The first step is the creation of timely, seasonal and evergreen-based contents. At the connection phase, it builds engagement with the audiences based on the business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-consumer (B2C) goals. Finally, at the optimization step, it designs content by optimizing resources, such as the data and metrics used (Lazauskas & Snow, 2018).

Create

The company’s creative process of designing digital content is relevant and related to segmentation, demographic and visitors’ data, as well as social media followers. Based on data, the visitors and social media followers were dominated by millennial and gen-Z between the ages of 25–34 (34.3%) and 18–24 (54.7%), as shown in Figure 5. Therefore, their content strategy to gain attention from visitors and followers is targeted toward a specific demography and active user in social media, as illustrated in Figure 6.

The idea is to divide the stories into three more categories, including timely stories that are pertinent on news or currents events, seasonal stories that are relevant to the time of the year and evergreen stories valuable to the audience (Lazauskas & Snow, 2018). Sun Eater Records’ contents are mostly based on timely and seasonal stories. In timely stories, Sun

Eater Records made digital content from various musicians' stories and social problems to present a story. Meanwhile, for seasonal stories, a more productive digital content was produced from mini-documentary, album compilation comics, social media content and campaign, to virtual concerts during the pandemic.

The process starts with deciding the topic, which is usually related to the main issues delivered by the musicians or bands. All those registered under the company always have a particular theme associated with their songs or music. The creative process of the designed digital content starts with the main theme intended to be conveyed with the idea relevant to the musicians and audience. For example, when the Sun Eater Records released Aldrian Risjad's single called "Help You Out," which talks about Risjad's relationship with their father, a campaign was initially set to boost the emotional storytelling, and this was intended to build a relationship with the audience. In this stage, it is important to consider how the story relates to Sun Eater Records musicians' personal branding. Moreover, their social media uploads contain information concerning entertainment content related to personal branding. It was concluded that the strategy adopted by Sun Eater Records was initially used to analyze the themes that relate to the bands or musicians and the audience. These were also processed into storytelling that stimulates attention and emotions.

Connect

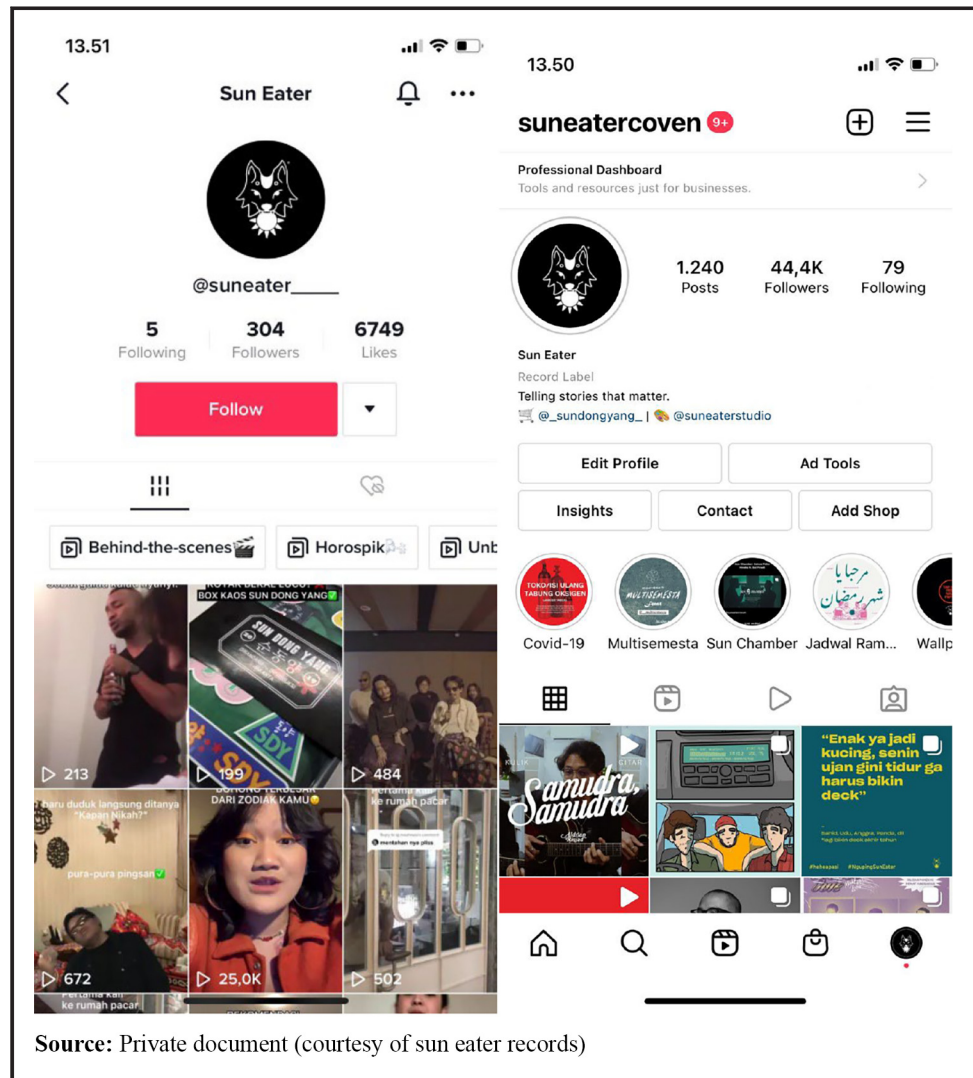
The two factors related to the business model in content marketing are audiences and goals based on B2B and B2C. Some of these factors were created independently, while others were designed to gain partnerships with clients or commercial brands (B2B). Kukuh stated that the company's business model patterns were based on the aspect of building attention rather than sales conversion. Furthermore, its business pattern, such as targeting brands, product endorsement and paid posts on social media, varies from other Indonesian content creators. Kukuh preferred the creation of content to gain attention and attract consumers, through the conversion of data needs to economic value thereby leading to product campaign. Content design is always based on the aspect of how to build awareness from the audience compared to selling products.

Sun Easter Records' business strategy is inseparable from the selection of media channels used to determine how the content is delivered to the audience. The media selection process is inseparable from the relationship between the music fans and the internet. This simply implies a range of multimedia always fits into the medium in which the music fans become popular with most of the work centered on music. However, instead of marketing it as a recording product, the company considers it a visual media content for audience consumption on various social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and Tiktok. Kukuh strategy does not only involve the usual display of information on social media, but more visually attractive characters while creating digital content. Kukuh tried to convey an appealing and visualized message provided by the bands through various digital content forms consisting of visual-based media such as Instagram, YouTube and Tiktok (Figure 8). The visuals combine catchy photographic and comic illustrations with colorful images to make issues more interesting in accordance with the fact that the millennials and gen-Z prefer visualized information. In addition, the technological capability on Instagram, YouTube and Tiktok was used to promote these visuals. The strategy adopted by this company was based on a combination of social media data, content storytelling and multimedia to create visual content aimed at gaining the attention and interest of their target audience and followers.

Optimize

Several types of engagement metrics, such as shares, average attention and finish time, social lift, average stories per person, press score, email conversion rate, lead form

Figure 8 Instagram and Tiktok page of Sun Eater Records (@Sun Eatercover) displayed various video contents



Source: Private document (courtesy of sun eater records)

conversion rate, lead score and opportunities are used to attract digital content readers (Lazauskas & Snow, 2018). Sun Eater Records often use data from social media to optimize their content using metrics and indicators. The metrics approach was not aimed at sales conversion, but to build audience attention, create engagement and positive branding. Kukuh stated that all decisions at Sun Eater Records were always based on their digital data, such as the number of subscribers, consumers, user behavior and market segmentation on social media. These data were developed by a variety of activations.

Kukuh stated that digital content on social media is the “main weapon” used by the company besides music. It can be seen through various co-creation and collaboration with artists, designers and other musicians. The company’s creative process of designing digital content is relevant and related to segmentation, demographic and visitors’ data, as well as social media followers. Based on data, the visitors and social media followers were dominated by millennials and gen-Z between the ages of 25–34 (34.3%) and 18–24 (54.7%), as shown in Figure 5. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents came from big

cities, such as Jakarta, Bandung, Depok, Bekasi and Tangerang, as indicated in Figure 6. Sun Eater Records used social media metrics to create reader engagement, which was an added value to build a positive branding presence. Kukuh always invited consumers from various works of life to talk about the music business innovation through webinars and discussions. The company is well known for delivering unique products to its audiences through creative storytelling and digital technology.

Content creation during the Covid-19 pandemic

During the pandemic, Sun Eater Records then made digital content from various issues ranging from musicians' stories to social problems to present a story. A typical example was when many music companies were still confused about facing the Covid-19 pandemic, Sun Eater Records was even more productive producing various digital contents from mini-documentary, the compilation of albums, comics, social media content and campaign, to virtual concerts. It proves that the crisis does not have an impact on creative process on digital content.

1. Here Comes the Sun documentary series

The company created a mini-documentary about their annual festival, "Here Comes the Sun 2020," which tells about the entire process and behind-the-scenes activities (Figure 9). They narrate the reason to held virtually, and their encounter during the Covid-19 pandemic, including how it frustrated and confused them in terms of engaging in other tasks. Irrespective of the condition, the show had to go on, and therefore, it was shifted virtually. Although this is incomparable to the experience of watching a live-music festival, they tried to maximize it by adding certain features such as interactive chat. This was showcased, and a mini-documentary that tells the story about the musicians' conditions during the pandemic and the process of holding the Here Comes the Sun festival from the meeting process, rehearsal and behind-the-scenes story were created. To build this digital content, they co-partnered with Goplay (one of the features from Gojek), which focused on digital content and the entertainment industry. The audience who wanted to watch this mini-documentary was able to access the content on Goplay.

Figure 9 Mini-documentary Here Comes the Sun promotion in Goplay



Source: Instagram page of sun eater records (@suneatercover) (courtesy of sun eater records)

2. Sounds Cute, Might Delete Later Compilation

The pandemic left all Sun Eater Records musicians confused about releasing their music because of the ineffective promotion. The social restriction policy later became the main obstacle for the promotion, which left them perplexed. Subsequently, many musicians postponed the release of their work till the pandemic subsided. Sun Eater Records musicians subsequently created a compilation series called “Sounds Cute, Might Delete Later” with the subtitle “Rilisan Pandemi Hemat Anggaran” (Budget-saving Pandemic Release) (Figure 10). This compiled album contains B-sides, unused songs or bootleg materials. Both roster musicians and outsiders were also involved. During the pandemic, they tried to release the compilation every month. Presently, they had released *Sounds Cute, Might Delete Later Vol. 1*, *Sounds Cute, Might Delete Later* (September edition) and *Sounds Cute, Might Delete Later* (October edition).

3. Earth-6 Digital Comics

Sun Eater also released a comic series on Instagram called “Earth-6” (Figure 11), a multiverse of the band .Feast. Its members were concerned as the main characters, and it was uploaded monthly on Sun Eater Records Instagram page. This comic is an endeavor to introduce the members to the public and to build their brand. Meanwhile, the Earth-6 became a promotional media of band .Feast. Its creation involved the collaboration with artist or illustrator @thepincster and @reinmaychaelson. The last edition was uploaded on Sun Eater Records Instagram page on November 10, 2021. This comic was also the outcome of the collaboration with the sportswear brand Puma.

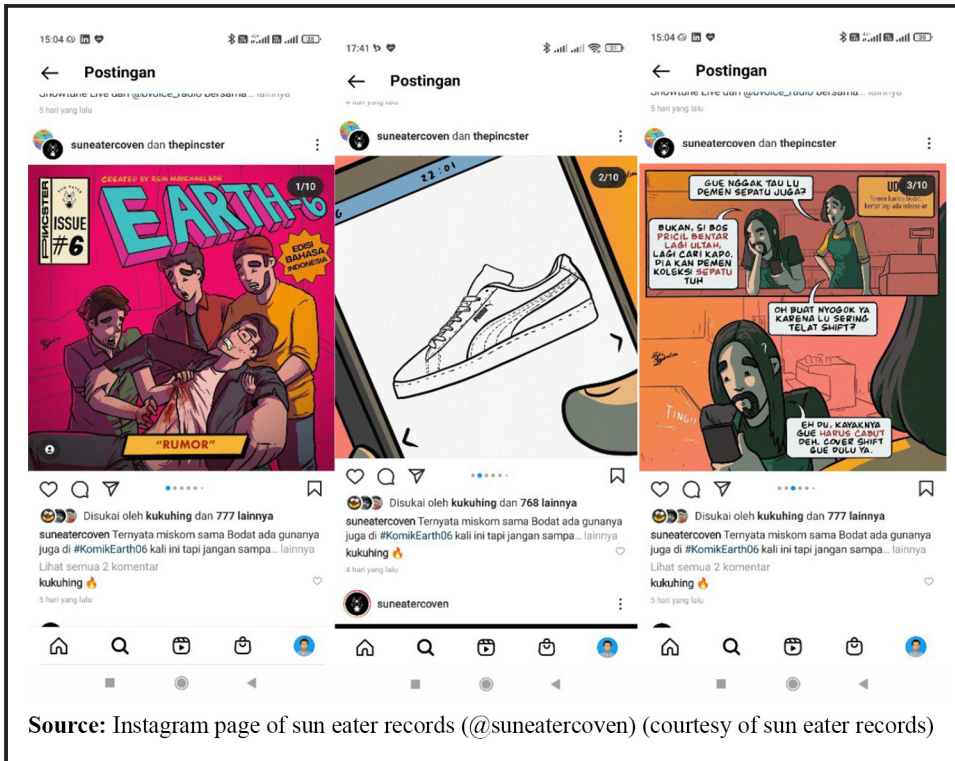
4. SUPER Remix Prontaxan Collaboration

During the pandemic, musicians collaborated with their colleagues who had similar genres and not those registered under Sun Eater Records. They compiled a series of songs that

Figure 10 Album cover of Sounds Cute, Might Delete Later Vol. 1 featuring Aldrian Risjad, Hindia and Rayhan Noor



Figure 11 Digital comic content of Earth-6 in Instagram



Source: Instagram page of sun eater records (@suneatercover) (courtesy of sun eater records)

Figure 12 Album cover of SUPER



Source: Instagram page of sun eater records (@suneatercover) (courtesy of sun eater records)

contain the remix by *dangdut koplo* bands called Prontaxan (Figure 12). There are four of them, namely, “Berita Kehilangan” by .Feast, “Membasuh” by Hindia, “Lampu” by Rayhan Noor and “Evaluasi” by Hindia. The compiled album is titled *SUPER (Sun Eater Prontaxan Energy)*. It is similar to the “Sounds Cute, Might Delete Later” compilation. This *collaboration album* is an alternative content produced during the pandemic.

5. Saferoom Virtual Concert

On July 31, 2021, Sun Eater Records, collaborating with Tap projects and Wonderland Records, initiated a virtual music concert to raise funds and donations to provide health facilities and support health-care workers during the pandemic (Figure 13). The audience contributed by donating QR codes displayed on the screen during the concert, which was aired live on *the KitaBisaIndonesia* youtube channel, and relatively Rp. 208,994,217 was realized.

6. #UntungGuediJakarta Campaign

Sun Eater Records was also involved in a social campaign supporting artists who needed a medium to express themselves during the pandemic (Figure 14). They collaborated to

Figure 13 Promotion poster of Safe Room Concert

SAFEROOM CONCERT

SAT 31/07 19:00 WIB

.FEAST ADHITIA SOFYAN ADIKARA FARDY AFGAN AGATHA PRICILLA ALDRIAN
RISJAD ARASH BUANA A. NAYAKA ARMAND MAULANA BILAL INDRAJAYA
BISMA KARISMA COLDIAC DERE DVY EFEK RUMAH KACA ENDAH N RHESA
GAMALIÉL GANGGA HINDIA IGA MASSARDI ISYANA SARASVATI JUANG MANYALA
JUICY LUICY KEVIN HUGO KUNTO AJI LOMBA SIHIR MANTRA VUTURA FT.
NATASHA UDU MIKHA ANGELO MOCCA MORAD NADIN AMIZAH PETRA SIHOMBING
PUTRA TIMUR FT. SKY SUCAHYO RAYHAN NOOR RAYI PUTRA FT. LAZE RENDY
PANDUGO SADE SUSANTO SIVIA TEDDY ADHITYA VIRA TALISA

HOSTED BY **RAPOT**

LIVESTREAM AT
 YOUTUBE.COM/KITABISAINDONESIA

DONATE TO
 KITABISA.COM/SAFEROOMCONCERT

100% DANA YANG TERKUMPUL AKAN DIPERUNTUKAN BAGI PENGADAAN FASILITAS KESEHATAN, DAN DUKUNGAN BAGI TENAGA KESEHATAN SERTA WARGA TERDAMPAK PANDEMIK COVID-19

Source: Instagram page of sun eater records (@suneatercover) (courtesy of sun eater records)

Figure 14 Social campaign #UntungGuediJakarta



produce their works in Jakarta public space, such as on MRT pillars located in Jalan Fatmawati. Sun Eater Records made video testimonials on their Instagram page on the experiences of those living in Jakarta.

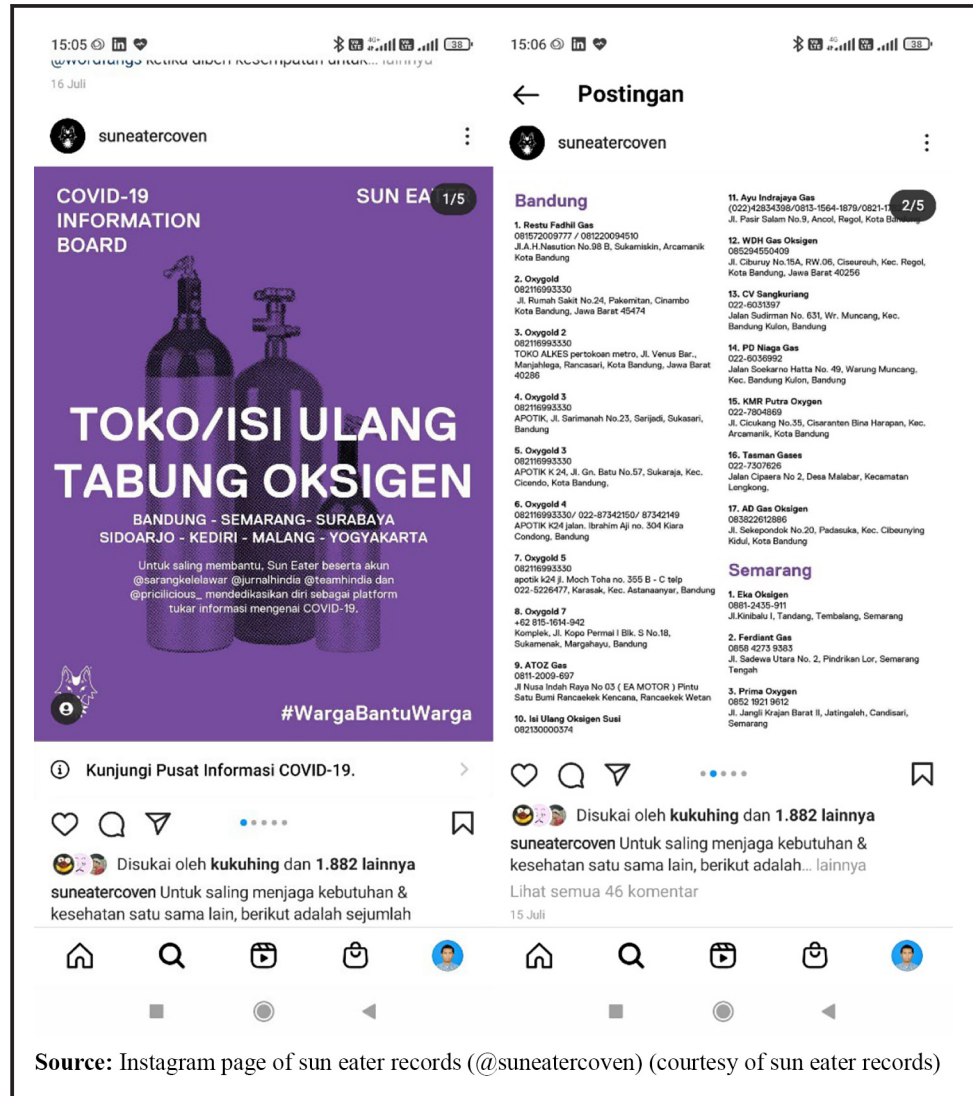
7. Covid-19 Information Board

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Sun Eater Records rapidly created content about social distancing rules to vaccination (Figure 15). Instead of providing many information about the band's activities such as other record companies' social media accounts, Sun Eater Records actively created various content related to the pandemic.

The dilemma: the long and winding road?

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the digital content strategy became fruition. Even though music performances and tour schedules were limited, partnerships with brands or clients

Figure 15 Covid-19 information on Sun Eater Records Instagram

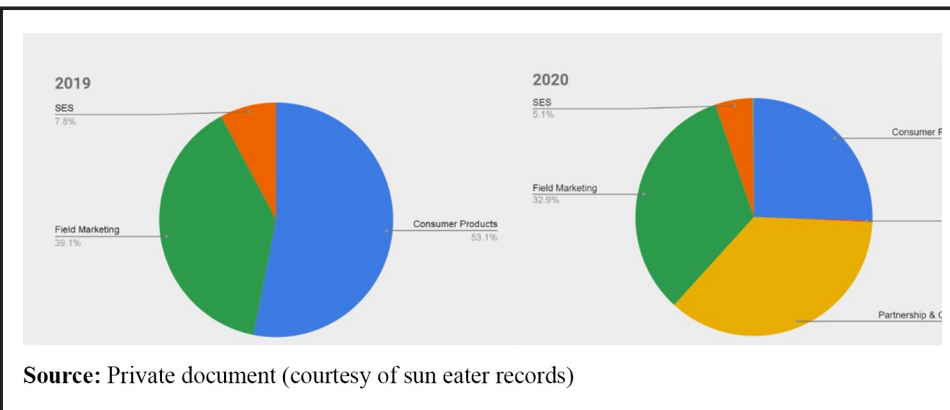


Source: Instagram page of sun eater records (@suneatercoven) (courtesy of sun eater records)

were established through various activation, including virtual shows. In 2020, the digital content contribution of Sun Eater Records was tremendous and boosted the business growth by approximately 36.1%. The existence of digital content overthrew artists' management (A&R), field marketing and consumer products (merchandise) (Figure 16). The shift from selling records to producing digital content made them survive the pandemic and exposed bigger opportunities in the future.

In recent years, Kuku had always been invited to speak about certain business ideas in Sun Eater Records as a panelist in various forums related to music webinars, workshops and conferences. Last year, Kuku shared some views during the largest innovation conference in Indonesia, called the "Idea Fest 2020." He was happy to be invited because in many forums, he shared his vision that he has a dream to share his knowledge. These views were candidly shared while answering the audience. During interviews, people had always wanted to know some of the challenges encountered in developing business transformation in Sun Eater Records.

Figure 16 Sun Eater Records' business model comparison during the pandemic from 2019 to 2020



The author: Mr. Kukuh, what was the biggest challenge encountered in terms of transforming the music business to be more focused on digital content?

Mr Kukuh: I think several issues were encountered when transitioning from the music to the content industry. These problems pertain to both technical and non-technical terms. The main issue that often emerges is the judgment and pessimism from other music industry players, specifically those who reported that Sun Eater Records' business model does not make sense. Whenever the digital contents were merely social media gimmicks, there were many criticisms that failed to portray music as an art expression. Although people tend to make right or wrong decisions, the "A/B Testing" principle, which is all about "doable or undoable" strategies, is needed for proper validation. Interestingly, assuming those strategies are verified as "doable," it is planned and executed, and supposing otherwise, an alternative to making them 'doable' is created. However, other serious issues frequently encountered are related to sociocultural problems, such as many 'free products' including concerts, bootlegs, and unappreciated premium content by local creators, which is presumed the biggest challenge in Indonesia.

The pandemic offered Kukuh the momentum to create awareness and focus on digital content before all music stakeholders did the same. Furthermore, the shift in business model toward the activation of digital content does require the emergence of continuous creativity given the limited public attention. In addition, Sun Eater Records needs to be actively aware of any particular issues in creating any content. They need to have many creative ideas, preventing the public from getting bored with their content.

The use of digital content negatively affected the public perception as trivial and banal entertainment rather than producing educative values. Therefore, encouraging digital activation through the design of various contents leaves a complicated dilemma. Music is a noble artistic product, but also a trivial and banal entertainment product. Sometimes the mindset and cultural context were the main issues in creating digital content and social media technology. Was the content design by Sun Eater Records a successful strategy in the music industry? Was the decision to focus on creating content effective during the Covid-19 pandemic? How to solve the social conflict while considering the trivial and banal musical content as a taboo by the music community?

The shift from the music to the content industry created more opportunities, but the process was not easy. This is in line with the Beatles' song, titled "the long and winding road" . . .

Keywords:
Business process
improvement,
Strategy,
Innovation

Primary source

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Interview Kukuh Rizal Arfianto through Zoom Meeting, 4 November 2021.

Secondary source

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Corresponding author

Idhar Resmadi can be contacted at: idharresmadi@telkomuniversity.ac.id