

The Implementation of Persuasive Communication by Account Executives in the Pitching Process at PT Karya Digital Madani

Khansa Naurah Khalilah¹, Vivien Febri Astuti²

^{1,2}IPB University, West Java, Indonesia

Correspondence: khansanaurah@apps.ipb.ac.id¹

Abstract

The creative industry continues to grow, increasing the importance of Account Executives as the link between clients and agencies. This study analyzes how persuasive communication is implemented by the Account Executive during the pitching process at PT Karya Digital Madani. A qualitative method was used through active participation, observation, and a literature review. The findings indicate that persuasive communication is effective when Account Executives apply the elements of attention, comprehension, learning, acceptance, and message retention based on Hovland's model. This study adds a distinctive contribution by examining persuasive communication specifically within the pitching stage, an area rarely detailed in previous studies that mainly focus on general Account Executive roles. The findings show that strong client relationships, communication skills, and real needs for social media management support the pitching process, while differing expectations, limited client knowledge, and incomplete information become obstacles. The study concludes that effective and adaptive persuasive communication is essential for successful pitching and agreement building.

KEYWORDS

persuasive communication; account executive; pitching; creative agency.

Introduction

The sectors of design, music, film, and digital technology play a significant role in driving economic growth (Rahmawati et al., 2025). The development of creative industries in Indonesia is also supported by the rapid growth of digital agencies that require effective coordination between clients and internal creative teams (Anggraeni & Saragih, 2024). As competition among digital and social media agencies intensifies, the role of the Account Executive (AE) becomes increasingly essential in ensuring that agency services align with client needs (Aliefiya & Susyanti, 2023; Woods et al., 2021). Calista & Hasfi (2025) add that AEs are responsible for managing client relationships, identifying opportunities, and coordinating the communication flow between clients and internal teams (Kaur & Fanani, 2024; Robbins & Lloyd, 2016). Their responsibilities include conducting market research, analyzing audience behavior, and developing creative concepts that reflect client values (Azka, 2024). By facilitating collaboration across departments, AEs help ensure that strategic and creative outputs meet client expectations effectively (Dwityas et al., 2021). Given these extensive responsibilities, AEs are expected not only to manage relationships but also to communicate ideas persuasively in high-stake situations such as pitching. This makes pitching an essential moment where the AE's communication skills directly influence whether a project can be secured.

Promotional pitching aims to support business objectives through effective messaging, language, and visuals that influence target audiences (Hamid, 2020; Zhao, 2025). Pitching in creative agencies is essentially a strategic communication process that requires clarity, relevance, and message framing tailored to the client's current business challenges (Hasibuan, 2025; Husni, 2025; Oetomo & Priatna, 2025; Wijaya, 2024). Kurniawati et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of intensive communication

to understand client expectations and execute creative ideas effectively. Pamungkas (2024) further highlights that an effective pitch is supported by thorough preparation and a structured idea-development process, ensuring that the proposed concepts are relevant and aligned with client needs. Effective persuasive communication is needed because clients often rely on the Account Executive's ability to interpret data, frame solutions persuasively, and reduce uncertainty during decision-making (Lolita & Oktavianti, 2023; Rachman, 2021; Zahra & Ulfa, 2025). However, persuasive communication during pitching has unique dynamics compared to routine client interaction, as AEs must articulate value convincingly within limited time and under competitive pressure. These dynamics underline the importance of studying how AEs construct persuasive messages in real pitching contexts.

This study focuses specifically on the persuasive communication strategies used by AEs during the pitching process, from the initial engagement to the completion of the contract. Pitching is described as the art of selling ideas persuasively through relevant narratives and solutions (Siraj, 2025). Suhodo (2016) notes that creative agencies need a supportive creative climate and effective communication to meet client expectations. For this reason, Account Executives must understand client needs clearly and communicate them accurately to the agency team (Tampubolon & Agustiningsih, 2019). Delivering pitches with clear messages and accurate data strengthens trust and increases the likelihood of securing new clients (Van Werven et al., 2019). Therefore, this research aims to explain how persuasive communication is implemented by AEs at PT Karya Digital Madani during the pitching process and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence its effectiveness.

Persuasive communication plays a crucial role in sustaining strong client relationships within creative agencies. This responsibility is primarily carried out by the Account Executive, who represents the company in presenting ideas, strategies, and solutions tailored to client needs (Aliefiya & Susyanti, 2023; Asrie & Priatna, 2025). Beyond acting as a representative, the Account Executive serves as a communication bridge between clients and internal teams, such as creative and production units. This position enables more effective fulfillment of client needs because persuasive communication helps align different interests and facilitates smoother collaboration.

Client satisfaction is a key factor in the success of a creative agency. Clients not only seek technical solutions, such as design or content, but also emotional reassurance that fosters trust in the agency. This trust can develop into strong loyalty and support long-term partnerships.

Previous studies, such as Aliefiya & Susyanti (2023), primarily examined the general roles and competencies of AEs in managing client relationships and highlighted the importance of communication skills and the 7M competencies. In contrast, this study narrows the focus to the use of persuasive communication specifically during the pitching stage, an aspect that has received limited attention in prior research. This perspective provides a clearer understanding of how persuasion influences client decision-making and long-term collaboration.

This research differs by specifically examining the use of persuasive communication by Account Executives during the pitching process, from the initial engagement through the completion of the contract. The study explores how persuasive communication serves as a key factor in maintaining positive client relationships and ensuring satisfaction throughout all stages of collaboration (Lestari, 2025). It demonstrates that persuasive communication is instrumental not only in securing initial agreements but also in sustaining long-term partnerships after a project concludes.

This approach underscores the Account Executive's role in effectively conveying value and solutions to support successful and sustainable cooperation.

The purpose of this study is to describe how persuasive communication is implemented by the Account Executive during the pitching process at PT Karya Digital Madani and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence this implementation. The study aims to provide deeper insights into effective persuasive communication strategies that help maintain strong client relationships and satisfaction until the end of the collaboration (Siagian et al., 2024). It is also expected to offer practical contributions to improving the communication skills of Account Executives and enhancing the effectiveness of agency to client cooperation.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive case study approach to obtain a deep and contextual understanding of how persuasive communication is implemented by the Account Executive during the pitching process. Data were collected at PT Karya Digital Madani, located at Jl Panjang No. 29, Kedoya Selatan, Kebon Jeruk, West Jakarta, where the internship and field activities took place from 18 August 2025 to 29 December 2025 (Afriзал, 2019).

The primary data were gathered from the Account Executive, with supporting information obtained from the Business Development supervisor. Data were collected through active participation in the Business Department, allowing the researcher to observe pitching activities, communication practices, and client interactions directly. Additional insights were obtained through non-participant observation and a literature review of journals, articles, and relevant online sources. Secondary data from company archives were also used to enrich the analysis.

Field notes and observation records served as the main instruments for organizing and documenting the data. Hovland's communication model, which consists of the elements of attention, comprehension, learning, acceptance, and message retention, was used as the analytical framework to interpret the communication patterns observed during the pitching activities. This model helps explain how messages are received, processed, and ultimately influence client decisions, making it highly relevant to understanding the persuasive strategies used within the pitching activities at PT Karya Digital Madani.

Result and Discussion

Implementation of Persuasive Communication by the Account Executive in The Pitching Process at PT Karya Digital Madani

The implementation of persuasive communication at PT Karya Digital Madani follows Carl Hovland's (Tan, 1981) communication model, which emphasizes the stages of attention, comprehension, learning, acceptance, and message retention. During the internship period, several pitching cases involving both new and returning prospective clients were observed, allowing the communication patterns to be identified across different contexts.

1. In the attention stage, the Account Executive (AE) identifies the client's core problem. In this case, a prospective client struggling to manage their Instagram account due to limited creativity and internal manpower. In some sessions, the AE initiated the discussion by pointing out current digital challenges faced by the client's industry, which helped capture their interest and focus their attention on the proposed solution. This issue becomes an entry point for

the AE to offer relevant solutions and highlight the urgency of collaboration.

2. The comprehension stage involves explaining the company's social media retainer services, including content production for feeds and reels, as well as the provision of skilled specialists to manage daily uploads. During several pitching cases, the AE broke down the workflow of social media management such as content planning, production, and scheduling, which helped clients understand the direction and potential impact of the proposed strategy. This makes it easier for the client to follow the logic of the proposal and see how the solution aligns with their goals.
3. During the learning stage, the AE strengthens the message by including supporting data, such as audience insights, digital behavior patterns, and performance results from previous campaigns. For example, the AE often presented market trends or comparisons with similar client cases to demonstrate that the proposed strategy was based on measurable evidence. This data-driven approach provides rational grounding for the solution and enhances message credibility.
4. The acceptance stage occurs when the client begins to show trust in the proposed solution, supported by the AE's emphasis on added value, such as content alignment with the client's brand identity and consistent posting supported by a monthly Editorial Plan. In some observed pitching situations, clients asked follow-up questions or requested clarification about the content approach, indicating that they were beginning to accept the proposed solution. Conversely, when differences in expectations emerged, such as mismatched content preferences, the AE adjusted the explanation to bridge the gap and maintain the client's interest.
5. In the message retention stage, the AE reinforces key points through follow-up communication such as meeting summaries, proposal documents, and formal offers sent via email or messaging platforms. Across different pitching cases, consistent follow-ups helped clients remember the proposed solutions and stay engaged throughout the decision-making process, even when negotiations extended over multiple discussions. This final stage ensures that the core message is stored and recalled by the client, increasing the likelihood of closing the deal.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Persuasive Communication during The Pitching Process

Several supporting factors strengthen the persuasive communication process at PT Karya Digital Madani. First, the company maintains strong collaborative relationships with clients, supported by affiliations with multiple businesses. Second, the Account Executive demonstrates effective communication and negotiation skills, allowing them to explain solutions clearly, build trust, and adapt service offerings to client needs. Third, clients often face real challenges in social media management, such as lack of manpower and creativity, making them more receptive to professional assistance from the agency.

However, several inhibiting factors also influence the pitching process. Differences in expectations regarding content output often prolong negotiations and require repeated adjustments to proposals. Additionally, some clients have limited understanding of digital media services, leading to extra time needed to explain terminology, workflows, and long-term benefits of retainer-based services. Lastly, incomplete information regarding client needs can result in less specific pitching materials, which may hinder the

effectiveness of the presentation and slow down the overall pitching process.

The findings of this study highlight several practical strategies that can strengthen the implementation of persuasive communication within the pitching process at PT Karya Digital Madani, and these insights align with existing research on effective client-agency collaboration. One of the key recommendations is the need for a structured pre-briefing session before the pitching stage. This initial discussion would enable the agency to gather more detailed information about the client's needs, business objectives, brand vision, and expectations. By obtaining this clarity early, the agency can develop a proposal that is more personalized and aligned with the client's perspective, reducing the likelihood of rejection or repeated negotiations. This approach reinforces previous studies emphasizing the importance of mutual understanding and clear communication in establishing persuasive and client-oriented strategies. The use of modular and flexible proposals also supports better alignment between the agency and the client, as it allows content to be adjusted without compromising the overall structure or message.

Another key implication relates to the challenge of limited pitching time, a constraint commonly noted in both industry practice and academic literature. To address this issue, PT Karya Digital Madani can adopt a concise presentation format that focuses on core problems, proposed solutions, and the value offered to the client, supported by clear and informative visuals. Developing a well-structured pitch deck template, consisting of problem identification, key insights, strategy, timeline, and success indicators, would streamline the preparation process while maintaining the quality and persuasiveness of the content. This aligns with research highlighting that clarity, structure, and relevance are essential components of persuasive business communication (Ahmad Noval et al., 2026).

Previous research by Aliefiya & Susyanti (2023) focused on the roles and qualifications of Account Executives in managing client relationships within creative agencies. Their study highlighted that Account Executives must possess strong communication skills, broad knowledge, and the 7M abilities, Knowing, Discovering, Accepting, Analyzing, Processing, Packaging, and Executing to represent the company effectively. This emphasizes the importance of the Account Executive as a key connector between clients and the agency.

In contrast, the present study examines a different perspective by emphasizing persuasive communication during the pitching process, from the initial proposal to the completion of the contract. This research highlights how persuasive communication helps maintain strong client relationships and ensures client satisfaction throughout every stage of collaboration. Unlike previous studies that focused on general roles and competencies, this study underlines how the Account Executive uses persuasive communication to deliver value, provide solutions, and support long-term, sustainable partnerships.

While these recommendations offer practical benefits, the study acknowledges limitations such as the specificity of the research context and the reliance on qualitative data, which may not capture the full complexity of pitching across different industries. Future research could expand on these findings by comparing pitching practices across multiple agencies, incorporating client perspectives, or examining how digital tools and analytics can support more data-driven persuasive communication.

Conclusion

This study investigated the implementation of persuasive communication by Account Executives during the pitching

process and aimed to understand how these strategies influence client decision-making and collaboration at PT Karya Digital Madani. The findings demonstrated that persuasive communication is most effective when the elements of attention, comprehension, learning, acceptance, and message retention are applied consistently, reflecting Hovland's communication model. These results highlight that both supporting and inhibiting factors shape the success of the pitching process, offering unique insights into the practical challenges faced by Account Executives in a digital agency setting. Notably, the study shows that adaptive and well-structured communication strategies play an essential role in guiding clients toward agreement and long-term cooperation.

While this study provides valuable insights into persuasive communication in agency-client interactions, certain limitations should be noted, such as the focus on a single company and the use of qualitative data, which may limit broader generalization. Future research should explore similar communication practices across different agencies or industries and include perspectives from clients to gain a more comprehensive understanding. Such studies can enhance our knowledge of persuasive communication in professional settings and support the development of more effective communication frameworks for agency practice.

Author contributions

The first author was responsible for conducting the research, collecting primary data through direct observation

and active participation during the internship, analyzing the findings, and drafting the manuscript. The first author also organized the literature review, structured the research framework, and developed the overall narrative of the paper.

The second author provided academic supervision throughout the research process, offering guidance on the analytical perspective and ensuring that the manuscript aligned with academic standards. The second author contributed to refining the arguments, improving the clarity of the writing, and revising the manuscript to enhance its overall quality

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the academic supervisor, who also serves as the second author of this study for providing continuous guidance, constructive feedback, and invaluable support throughout the research and writing process. Deep appreciation is also extended to PT Karya Digital Madani for granting permission to conduct the internship and for providing a conducive environment for learning and data collection. The author especially thanks the Business Development team of PT Karya Digital Madani for allowing active participation in their activities and offering meaningful insights during the observational data-gathering process. Finally, the author extends heartfelt appreciation to all team members within the company whose assistance, cooperation, and encouragement contributed significantly to the completion of this study

References

- Afrizal. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Rajawali Press.
- Ahmad Noval, Istiaty, D., Kusumadiningrat, S. R. H., & Patrianti, T. (2026). Business Communication Strategies in Building Brand Awareness on the Instagram Account of UMJ Press Academic Publisher. *Communica : Journal of Communication*, 4(1), 60–76. <https://doi.org/10.61978/COMMUNICA.V4I1.1320>
- Aliefiya, P., & Susyanti, D. W. (2023). Peran account executive dalam mengelola hubungan dengan klien di PT Duabelas Multikreasi Indonesia. *Jurnal Bisnis Event*, 4(16), 150–155. <https://doi.org/10.32722/bev.v4i16.6263>
- Anggraeni, F., & Saragih, N. (2024). Pola Komunikasi dan Manajemen Creative Agency dalam Penanganan Proyek Branding pada periode Work From Home. *Jurnal Mahardika Adiwidia*, 4(1), 39–47.
- Asrie, R. A. M., & Priatna, W. B. (2025). Digital Communication Strategies of Homeless Accounts In Building Engagement on Tiktok Platform. *Communica : Journal of Communication*, 4(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.61978/COMMUNICA.V4I1.1179>
- Azka, G. (2024). *Strategi Kreatif Pembuatan Konten Instagram Creative Agency Gagah Studio dalam Menumbuhkan Minat Klien Pemasang Iklan*.
- Calista, N. D., & Hasfi, N. (2025). Social Media Content Activation Dan Event Management The Beautologist "Feel Beauty, Spend Wisely" Sebagai Account Executive, Public Relation, And Content Planner. *Interaksi Online*, 13(3).
- Dwityas, N. A., Fadli, K., Aprilia, F., & Briandana, R. (2021). Peran dan aktivitas komunikasi divisi account executive pada digital agency. *Commed: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Media*, 5(2), 188–202. <https://doi.org/10.33884/commed.v5i2.2668>
- Hamid, D. M. (2020). *Komunikasi Bisnis (Teori dan Konsep)*. CV. Media Sains Indonesia.
- Hasibuan, D. (2025). Spinoza's Critique of Descartes' Dualism and The Relevance of Both In The Digital Age. *Communica : Journal of Communication*, 3(1), 50–68. <https://doi.org/10.61978/COMMUNICA.V3I1.629>
- Husni, M. (2025). Framing the Floods: Temporal Shifts and Ecological Silences in Indonesian Media. *Communica : Journal of Communication*, 3(3), 487–500. <https://doi.org/10.61978/COMMUNICA.V3I3.782>
- Kaur, P., & Fanani, A. (2024). Barriers and Opportunities in Fostering Pragmatic Competence in the Digital Age. *Lingua : Journal of Linguistics and Language*, 2(4), 206–217. <https://doi.org/10.61978/LINGUA.V2I4.1044>
- Kurniawati, L., Sugandi, M. M., & Huda, A. N. (2022). Mengembangkan proses kreatif, originalitas, dan komunikasi dalam periklanan. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Fakultas Hukum (JIM FH)*, 5(2), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.29103/jimfh.v5i2.10513>
- Lestari, P. A. (2025). Communication Satisfaction and Citizenship Behavior: A Mediated Model for Public Sector Transformation. *Communica : Journal of Communication*, 3(3), 476–486. <https://doi.org/10.61978/COMMUNICA.V3I3.797>
- Lolita, D., & Oktavianti, R. (2023). Persuasive Communication Messages on Beverage Products Through Uploading Educational Content On Instagram. *International Journal of Application on Social Science and Humanities*, 1(1), 880–888. <https://doi.org/10.24912/ijassh.11.880-888>
- Oetomo, A. L., & Priatna, W. B. (2025). Communication Strategy Based on Interactive Games in Climate Change Education by Predikt Tangguh Indonesia. *Communica : Journal of Communication*, 4(1), 12–21. <https://doi.org/10.61978/COMMUNICA.V4I1.1186>
- Pamungkas, S. R. (2024). Strategi Memenangkan Pitching Pada Social Media Marketing. *TUTURAN: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, Sosial Dan Humaniora*.
- Rachman, F. (2021). Persuasive Communication and Local Wisdom: The Role of Culture in Attitude Change. *Journal of Islamic Communication and Society*, 2(1), 1–15.
- Rahmawati, A., Masyithah, M., Auralia, L., & Sarma, Y. H. (2025). Dari seni ke bisnis: "Bagaimana industri kreatif mengubah wajah ekonomi global." *Seminar Nasional Pariwisata Dan Kewirausahaan (SNPK)*, 4, 383–389.
- Robbins, B., & Lloyd, C. (2016). Account management and the changing advertising landscape. *Journal of Advertising Education*, 20(1–2), 144–151. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10980482160201-217>
- Siagian, E. I., Nurkarim, M. C., & Maharani, N. (2024). Persuasive Communication in Business Negotiations: Strategies and Techniques. *Ilomata International Journal of Social Science*, 5(2), 428–443.
- Siraj, N. A. (2025). Implementasi Teknik Pitching Divisi Investor Relation pada Calon Investor (Studi pada PT. Bento Group Indonesia).
- Suhodo, D. S. (2016). Think out of the box: Proses kreasi-kreativitas industri periklanan. *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Pembangunan*, 24(2), 71–82. <https://doi.org/10.14203/JEP.24.2.2016.71-83>
- Tampubolon, A., & Agustini, G. (2019). Peran Account Executive di Era Digital dalam Proses Perencanaan Iklan. *Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Bisnis*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.46806/jkb.v7i2.631>
- Tan, A. (1981). *Mass communication theories and research*. Grid Publishing Inc.
- Van Werven, R., Bouwmeester, O., & Cornelissen, J. P. (2019). Pitching a business idea to investors: How new venture founders use micro-level rhetoric to achieve narrative plausibility and resonance. *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242618818249>
- Wijaya, A. L. I. (2024). Persuasive Communication Strategy in Creative Work Digital Marketing Agency: Descriptive Study of Creative Works Digital Marketing Agency. *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Sains*, 5(5), 1128–1139. <https://doi.org/10.59141/jiss.v5i05.1112>
- Woods, L., McNamara, L., & Townend, J. (2021). Executive Accountability and National Security. *Modern Law Review*, 84(3), 553–580. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2230.12624>

- Zahra, S. A., & Ulfa, N. S. (2025). The Role of Account Executive in a Marketing Communication Campaign to Increase Awareness and Sales of Sobat Sambat Pro. *Interaksi Online*, 13(3), 43–58.
- Zhao, Y. (2025). Language Strategies and Language Preferences in the Russian

Tertiary Sector, the International Trade and the Impact of the One Belt One Road Initiative. *Lingua : Journal of Linguistics and Language*, 3(4), 208–230. <https://doi.org/10.61978/LINGUA.V3I4.841>