



PT Garam (Persero) Business Strategy In Facing Global Challenges Of The Salt Industry In Indonesia

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Abstract

This short research examines PT Garam (Persero)'s strategy in facing the global challenges of the salt industry in Indonesia. The aim of this research is to find out how the business strategy implemented by the Board of Directors of PT Garam (Persero) is to face all the challenges of the salt industry in Indonesia which still relies on imported salt from abroad. The research method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative method, where the author examines the company strategy implemented in depth including the data presented. The results of this research show the fact that the strategy used by the Directors of PT Garam (Persero) in managing the company is slowly giving more positive results, where salt production, sales of processed salt and the company's financial condition are becoming more stable. Gradually PT Garam (Persero) was able to get out of the 'batman trap' of selling raw material salt to focus more on selling processed salt (packaged and sacked). Indeed, PT Garam (Persero)'s production has not been able to meet the need for salt in Indonesia, especially for industrial purposes, but the Company's business direction is heading towards sustainability as expected by Shareholders.

Keywords: strategy, salt business, PT Garam (Persero), salt production

INTRODUCTION

PT Garam (Persero) is the oldest state-owned company that produces and markets salt. Its existence as the only state-owned company operating in this industry allows it to monopolize salt production in Indonesia, even though many private business actors compete in it. The need for salt in Indonesia, especially to meet industrial demand, still relies on imported salt because national salt production is still very dependent on weather and natural conditions.

Salt is a strategic commodity because it is included in the nine basic needs of society. Salt is not only used for household consumption needs, but is also used for industrial needs (pharmaceuticals, mining, fertilizer and others). The need for salt in Indonesia tends to increase from year to year in line with the rate of population growth and industrial development, especially the pharmaceutical, food and beverage and mining industries in

Indonesia. Currently, consumption salt needs in Indonesia are still met by domestic production and imports, while industrial salt needs are still fully met by imported salt.

The national salt problem is caused by several main problems, namely production, infrastructure, institutional, marketing and supply demand aspects. Problems in the production aspect include the dependence of salt production on the climate, the majority of salt producers are salt farmers who are socially and economically weak, limited access to capital so they are trapped in the bonded bond system, the conversion of people's salt land because it is considered unprofitable and the method of making salt. different between PT. Salt with farmers, so the quality of the salt produced is different. The problems faced in the marketing sector are the price of salt which is still fluctuating even though there are regulations (SK), private traders tend to buy people's salt below the predetermined price, because there is no enforcement of sanctions, the quality of salt on the market varies greatly, government supervision of implementation National industrial standards do not work as they should, resulting in unhealthy price competition and the quality of domestically produced salt does not meet food industry standards. Supply demand problems include unstable stock availability, demand for salt tends to continue to increase, salt is a seasonal product, demand for salt is an inelastic demand, there is seepage of industrial salt originating from imported products into the consumer salt market, thus affecting the price and stock of national salt.¹

In recent years, PT Garam (Persero)'s business strategy has been trapped in conditions of market competition that are not very profitable. As a company that can carry out its business activities from upstream to downstream, due to the financial needs of PT Garam (Persero) it is forced to sell more of its production in the form of raw material salt, while the sales volume of processed salt is very small so that the brand name of PT Garam (Persero) is lacking. so well known to the public.

Changes to the Board of Directors in 2022 provide a new, fresher direction for PT Garam's business. The new Directors have learned a lot from the previous Directors' lack of success in producing salt and marketing it. An effort that is not easy, but to achieve a sustainable business for PT Garam in the future, the Board of Directors created a new business strategy that is very different from previous strategies. Slowly but surely the Company's financial condition is getting better and stronger and this strategy is producing quite encouraging results.

1 Yuliana Ulfidatul Hoiriyah (2019), Peningkatan *Kualitas Produksi Garam Menggunakan Teknologi Geomembran*, Jurnal Studi Manajemen dan Bisnis, Universitas Trunojo.

This short research aims to examine the extent of the steps taken by the Board of Directors in implementing business strategies so that PT Garam (Persero) is able and continues to exist in the face of competition in the salt industry in the country.

THEORIES RELATED TO RESEARCH

Reporting from the Encyclopedia Britannica, salt is a compound produced by the neutralization reaction of acids and bases. Salt compounds are formed from elements which are ions. Positively charged ions (cations) combine with negatively charged ions (anions) in a neutralization reaction to form salt compounds. This means that salt compounds are not just table salt or sodium chloride (NaCl), but almost all ionic compounds that are formed from anions and cations.²

According to Sulistyaningsih (Wiwin Puspita Hadi et al, 2017). Salt is an ionic compound consisting of positive ions (cations) and negative ions (anions), thus forming a neutral compound (without charge). Salts are formed from the reaction of acids and bases. Anion and cation components can be organic compounds such as chloride (Cl^-), and also organic compounds such as acetate (CH_3COO^-), as well as monatomic ions such as fluoride (F^-), and polyatomic ions such as sulfate (SO_4^{2-}).³

In this research, the grand theory used is classical management from Henri Fayol. This theory aims to increase organizational efficiency and effectiveness through task organization, hierarchical structure, and the use of management principles that can be

applied universally. The theory of administration by Henri Fayol emphasizes five basic management functions, namely planning, organizing, directing, controlling and coordinating. Fayol also identified 14 principles of management which include authority and responsibility, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, fairness, stability of labor, initiative, esprit de corps, trust, centralization, hierarchy, communication, order, and justice.⁴

Middle theory uses strategic management (John A. Pearce II and Richard B. Robinson 2003). John A. Pearce II and Richard B. Robinson in their book *Strategic Management* (2003) state that strategic management is large-scale and long-term planning so that organizations can interact effectively in production and optimize the achievement of both strategic and operational goals.⁵

The applied theory used is marketing management (Kotler and Armstrong 2010). The definition of marketing management according to Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong is the analysis, planning, implementation and control of programs designed to create, build and maintain profitable exchanges with target buyers with the aim of achieving organizational goals.⁶

2 Silmi Nuril Utami (2022), *Senyawa Garam, Pengertian, Jenis dan Contohnya*, Artikel, Kompas, 2022.

3 Yuliana Ulfidatul Hoiriyah (2019), *Peningkatan Kualitas Produksi Garam Menggunakan Teknologi Geomembran*, Jurnal Studi Manajemen dan Bisnis, Universitas Trunojo.

4 Matt Par (2020), *Perbedaan Teori Manajemen Klasik dan Modern*, Artikel, Quora.

5 Silmi Nuril Utami dan Serafica Gischa (2022), *Manajemen Strategi: Definisi Para Ahli dan Tugasnya*, Artikel, Kompas.

6 Bella Manoban (2022), *Pengertian Manajemen menurut para Ahli*. Artikel. IDNTimes. Jakarta.

Marketing management is a process that aims to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing activities carried out by companies, organizations and individuals (Alma, 2016).⁷ Apart from that, Kotler & Keller (2016) describe marketing management as an art, a science of selecting target markets to obtain, retain, and grow customers by creating, delivering and communicating superior customer value.⁸

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative method. Qualitative research methods aim to explain a phenomenon in depth and are carried out by collecting data in as much depth as possible. Qualitative methods prioritize observing phenomena and researching more into the substance of the meaning of these phenomena. The analysis and sharpness of qualitative research is greatly influenced by the strength of the words and sentences used.

According to McCusker, K., & Gunaydin, S. (2015), qualitative methods are used to answer questions about "what", "how", or "why" of a phenomenon. Qualitative research methods put more effort into investigating problems. These existing problems will become the basis used by researchers in collecting data. Then the researcher determines the variables and measures them with numbers for analysis in accordance with applicable statistical procedures.⁹

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The national need for salt, both for households, cosmetics and industry, is still quite promising. In order to meet domestic needs, the Indonesian government must import large quantities of salt every year. Even though Indonesia is in a tropical region, not all areas are suitable for producing salt.

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Indonesia's salt imports will be 2.76 million tons with a value of US\$124.42 million in 2022. Looking at the volume, Indonesia's salt imports will fall 2.63% compared to the previous year which was 2.83 million tons. Nevertheless, the value of Indonesian salt imports increased by 15.70% compared to the previous year. In 2021, the value of Indonesian salt imports was recorded at US\$107.53 million.¹⁰

The high import of salt is due to, among other things:

- People's salt production cannot yet meet the specifications for industrial salt needs.

- The land area for salt production is still limited because not all areas of Indonesia are suitable for salt production.
- Even though it is located on the equator, several parts of Indonesia are often colored by clouds.

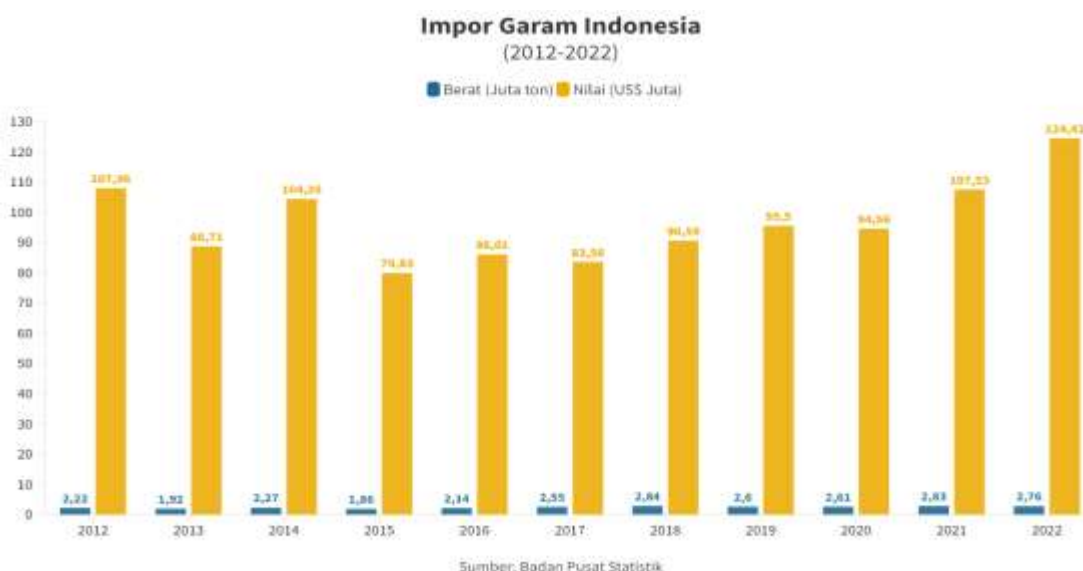
7 Alma, Buchari (2014). *Manajemen Pemasaran dan Pemasaran Jasa*. Bandung, Alfabeta

8 Bela Manoban, *ibid*.

9 Muhammad Syafii (2022). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara.

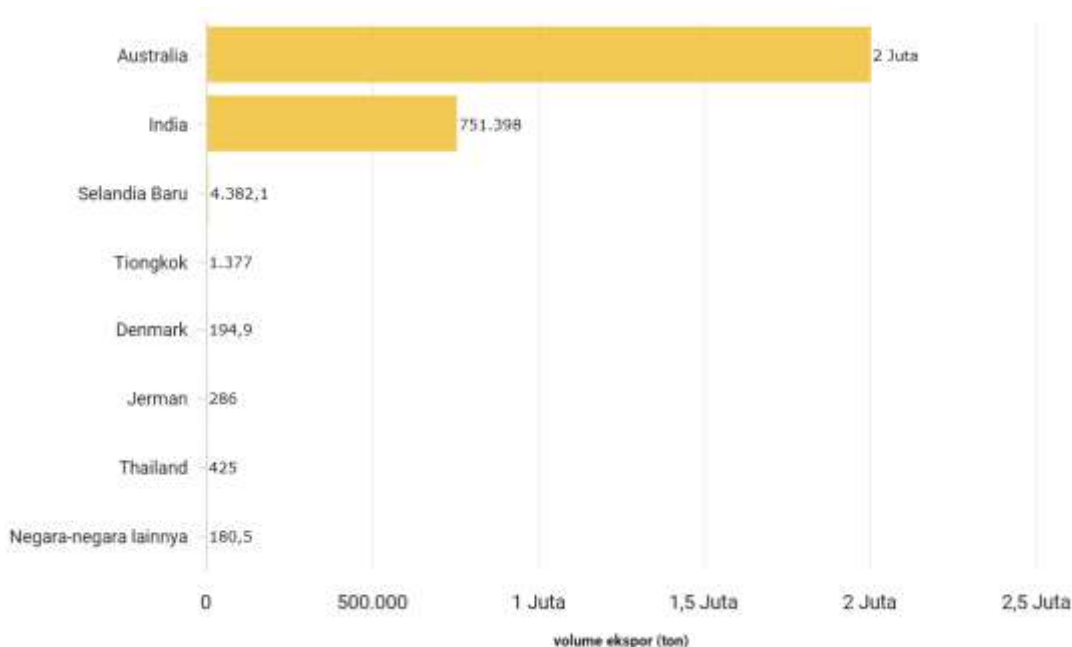
10 Nabilah Muhammad (2023). *Daftar Negara Pemasok Garam Impor untuk Indonesia*. Artikel, Databoks, Jakarta

Meanwhile, based on research results from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), national salt production was 1.09 million tons last year. The projected salt production this year reaches 859 thousand tons (prediction as of July 2022). The projected low domestic salt production is caused by natural factors (weather) due to the occurrence of moderate La Nina and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) which remains in a negative phase at the start of this dry season..¹¹



Sumber: Badan Pusat Statistik

Based on BPS data, the country that supplies most of Indonesia's imported salt is Australia, followed by India, as shown in the following data.



11 Nabilah Muhammad, *op.cit.*

Following up on high salt imports into Indonesia, the Government plans to increase domestic salt production. This is stated in Presidential Regulation (Perpres) No 126/022 concerning the Acceleration of National Salt Development, which was stipulated on 27 October 2022. The Presidential Decree states that national salt needs must be met from domestically produced salt by salt farmers and business materials no later than 2024. Imports are only permitted to meet the need for chemical industrial salt or chlor alkali.¹²

Responding to the conditions of the global salt market in Indonesia, PT Garam (Persero) as the only State-Owned Enterprise engaged in the production and marketing of salt in the country is quite challenged by this. Based on performance data up to Quarter III 2023, the following performance review report was obtained:¹³

a. Production (tons)

Nb	Description	2023		2022	Percentage (%)	
		Real until September	RKAP until September	Real until September	(2:3)	(2:4)
	1	2	3	4	(2:3)	(2:4)
1	Raw Material Salt	156.493	121.901	42.417	128,38	368,94
2	Packaged Coarse Salt	8.501	4.291	3.931	198,11	216,26
3	Sacked Fine Salt	20.312	20.569	18.859	98,75	107,70
4	Sacked Refined Salt	11.390	5.544	4.137	205,44	275,32
5	Lososa	20	28	2	71,43	1.000
6	Lifestyle Salt	0	0	0	-	-

b. Sales Volume Penjualan (tons)

Nb	Description	2023		2022	Percentage (%)	
		Real until September	RKAP until September	Real until September	(2:3)	(2:4)
	1	2	3	4	(2:3)	(2:4)
1	Raw Material Salt	30.508	191.771	260.236	15,91	11,72
2	Packaged Coarse Salt	7.261	4.434	4.000	163,76	181,53
3	Sacked Fine Salt	9.005	15.551	11.492	57,91	78,36
4	Sacked Refined Salt	9.572	5.762	4.087	166,12	234,21
5	Lososa	25	57	31	43,86	80,65
6	Top Grade Salt	65	264	196	24,62	33,16
7	Lifestyle Salt	-	7	-	0,00	0,00

Based on the figures above, something quite striking can be seen between the 2023 RKAP and the previous year's RKAP, where production of raw material salt and processed salt (packaged and sacked) is relatively greater in 2023 but sales of raw material salt are relatively small compared to production. The management of PT Garam (Persero) has learned from the experience of previous Directors, this is indeed the strategy of the Directors of PT Garam (Persero) so that the business managed by PT Garam (Persero) continues to exist and is able to compete amidst the flood of imported salt in Indonesia.

12 Viva Budi Kusnandar (2022). *Alasan Indonesia Masih Impor Garam dalam Jumlah Besar Setiap Tahun*. Artikel. Databoks. Jakarta

13 *Performance Review* PT Garam (Persero) Triwulan III tahun 2023.

PT Garam (Persero)'s strategy to face global competition and challenges in the salt industry in Indonesia is carried out with the following steps:

1. Change the salt sales strategy, from previous years selling raw material salt in very large volumes to a strategy of selling processed salt in both packages and sacks (both fine and coarse salt) with consideration of:
 - a. To strengthen the Company's business lines so that it is able to manage the salt business from upstream to downstream.
 - b. Strengthen PT Garam (Persero)'s bargaining position in the market so that it also determines the price of salt on the market.
 - c. Salt production is greatly influenced by natural factors (weather and seasons) so management is thinking about how PT Garam (Persero) can continue to operate throughout the year by providing large stocks of raw material salt in factory warehouses.
 - d. If the company continues to rely solely on sales of raw materials, large stocks of salt will only be owned by certain private parties and they can control prices.
 - e. By producing processed salt, people's salt absorption will be greater and maximum because throughout the year the factory can accommodate the incoming raw material salt.
 - f. PT Garam (Persero) no longer wants to be trapped in the risk of the raw material sales scheme in the past where private parties who purchased raw material salt in very large quantities did not immediately take the salt that had been purchased so that the risk of shrinkage and burdens for warehouse use remained PT Garam's obligation. (Persero), for example, the private sector Global has not taken the salt it bought for 5 years.
 - g. Selling raw material salt in large quantities has the potential to give rise to business fraud and indicative price deviations.
 - h. Buyers of raw material salt in large quantities who do not immediately take the salt they have purchased apparently have other intentions for their business interests. For example, the contract to purchase raw material salt with PT Garam (Persero) was used as a reason to propose imports because the private sector argued that they had absorbed the maximum amount of people's salt through PT Garam, so indirectly PT Garam's strategy actually protected salt farmers.

2. Strengthen the Company's risk mitigation so that it always runs in the corridors that have been determined and is able to anticipate all risks that occur. An overview of the company's risk map in 2023 is that there are 10 Main Risks (Top Ten Risks) of PT Garam, as is the final position of residual risk in September 2023, namely:
 - a. Cost of Goods Production (COGM) was not achieved according to target.
 - b. La Nina phenomenon.
 - c. Decreasing Warehouse Function Value.
 - d. The capacity of the fine bag washing factory is not yet optimal.
 - e. The product packaging process (fine and rough packaging) is not optimal.
 - f. Decrease in Market Demand.
 - g. Limited availability of raw salt stock.
 - h. Decrease in Sales Revenue.
 - i. Infeasibility of Strategic partner cooperation.
 - j. Unavailability of local salt.

The mitigation for each risk is as follows:

Key Risks	Mitigation
Cost of Goods Production (COGM) was not achieved according to target	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify costs that do not add value 2. Identify costs that can speed up recovery from production season disruptions

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Determine the use of priority scale costs and efficiency 4. Carry out maintenance of all production activities according to the time and costs that have been determined
La Nina Phenomenon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring and analysis of meteorological bulletin references and Kalianget meteorological stations 2. Elevation of nearby shipyards 3. Geomembrane repair, pump repair 4. Saving the salt harvest in the salt fields
Decreasing Warehouse Function Value	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Calculations and planning by the Engineering and planning division 2. The process of making RAB and budget approval 3. Tender process for renovation of PMN and SN warehouses 4. Dismantling and cleaning the area 5. Process of renovating the PMN & SN Warehouse 6. Letter to the Engineering and Planning Division regarding repairs and provision (rental/repair) of heavy equipment 7. Acceleration of expenditure to sales and factories 8. Moving salt to Veem for shipping activities 9. Letter to the Engineering and Planning Division for maintenance of the existing open storage/Olo warehouse due to the condition of the Olo warehouse which makes it impossible to occupy it without carrying out maintenance first 10. The use of open storage/Olo warehouses is prioritized at Veem Camplong due to the better condition of the base 11. Use of open storage/Olo warehouses in the salting area as an anticipation if the warehouse in Veem is full
The capacity of the fine bag washing factory is not yet optimal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of the revitalization of the Segoromadu Factory 2. Optimizing the Camplong Factory 3. Pressing time to repair (MTTR) by carrying out repairs/providing spare parts
The product packaging process (fine and rough packaging) is not optimal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuously evaluate & synchronize between forecast and sales with the sales division 2. Coordination with the Sales Division to accelerate expenditure 3. Increase buffer stock specifically for fast moving SKUs 4. Addition of palette to increase storage capacity 5. Utilize the empty raw material warehouse at the Segoromadu factory as a processed salt warehouse
Decrease in Market Demand	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer, appointment, implementation of marketing communications 2. Offers, appointments, implementation of consumer promotions 3. Procurement of point of sales materials (POSM) 4. Market price survey, improvement of salt price structure 5. Planning trade marketing according to the targeted cost to revenue ratio, trade marketing action 6. Carry out intensive promotions in existing areas and new market areas

Limited availability of raw salt stock	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct technical meetings with the Production Division 2. Adjustment of production projections with sales plans 3. Coordinating with procurement for salt price survey activities with PT ITS Partnership and absorbing people's salt at prices according to company needs 4. Provide promotional prices with set price limits 5. Planning trade marketing according to the targeted cost to revenue ratio, trade marketing actions 6. Carry out intensive promotions in existing and new areas
Decrease in Sales Revenue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning trade marketing according to the targeted cost to revenue ratio, trade marketing action 2. Research planning and survey timeline, analysis of market results 3. Product offers, negotiations and dealing and maintenance 4. Carry out bill recapitulation and early warning
Infeasibility of Strategic partner cooperation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procurement of business assistance consultants, legal consultants and appraisal service consultants 2. Assistance from the Prosecutor's Office and BPKP 3. Management of rights (HP and HPL)
Unavailability of local salt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate regularly with related divisions regarding the availability of salt stock storage and market demand 2. Conduct a salt price survey with ITS 3. Absorb people's salt from 3,500 farmers with their own funds amounting to IDR 10,351 billion

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the research results, the following can be concluded:

1. The Directors of PT Garam (Persero) have started a salt business management strategy with a more concrete vision to support the Company's sustainability.
2. The business strategy implemented by the Directors of PT Garam (Persero) is not solely to achieve instant profits but is more concerned with the Company's position to be able to take further part in the national salt industry.
3. Production management strategies, marketing management, financial management and human resource management as well as strong risk mitigation so that the Company is able to face all challenges in the salt business in Indonesia.

Based on the research results, the author provides the following suggestions:

1. To maintain the company's sustainability, PT Garam (Persero) management must continue to manage the salt business from upstream to downstream while still paying attention to the principles of good corporate governance (GCG).
2. Salt production is very dependent on nature and weather. PT Garam (Persero) must prepare raw materials optimally so that the company's operations can continue to run well.
3. Risk mitigation for PT Garam (Persero) must be carried out consistently and with high commitment so that the strategy that has been implemented can be well monitored throughout the year.

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