

COLUMNS

How mobile can swing the vote in the primaries and on Election Day

April 21, 2016



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Through the years, we have seen political battles traditionally waged on the campaign trail shift due to new technologies that allowed candidates to better connect with voters.

Calvin Coolidge was the first to use radio. John F. Kennedy was the first to fully grasp live television, using the medium to shine in a debate against Richard Nixon, and later hosting the first live TV press conferences.

Barack Obama became the first digital candidate, using the Internet and mobile in 2008 and social media in 2012 to connect with key voter demographics and propel himself to victory.

As we approach the party conventions at the end of July and the 2016 presidential race soon after, a similar question arises: Which technology can candidates use to try and push themselves over the finish line to victory?

The answer is mobile.

If you think about the way mobile is currently used in retail, you can see how much it makes sense for political advertising.

Retailers use mobile to advertise to key audience segments that consume mostly through their personal devices, tapping strategies such as location and retargeting to put their message in front of potential buyers. Political campaigns can benefit from this methodology as well.

Reaching key voter demographics

Every election has key audience segments that can help push one candidate over the top.

In 2016, these key voter groups are millennials and minorities, and to no one's surprise, these individuals consume a lot of information digitally on mobile devices.

A recent study by the Interactive Advertising Bureau states that those who consume their political information on mobile/digital devices are younger and more likely to vote ages 18-34 and 90 percent reporting that they would be voting in the primaries.

Millennial voters are also extremely likely to find out about candidates online (86 percent) and to take an action after seeing a digital ad for a candidate (71 percent).

Hispanic voters are also mobile heavy, with 67 percent visiting political sites from their personal devices, and 87 percent taking action after viewing a political ad.

So why does this matter?

Consider the Democratic race where Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders continues to struggle to reach minority voters, an area where former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has succeeded.

This election is poised to be the most diverse in United States history, according to Pew Research, with 27.4 million eligible African American voters and 27.3 million eligible Hispanic voters. These voters consume media via mobile. It is time that candidates recognize this and shift their ad spend accordingly.

Location-based campaigning

With so many individual caucuses, candidates are tasked with finding ways to get their message out to the masses, but also to specified geographic areas.

Through hyperlocal targeting, candidates can reach GOP and Democrat households in key voter segments or turfs.

Imagine if you could reach every citizen without having to go door to door, knocking for hours hoping to get your message in front of a few key voters.

Hyperlocal targeting can ensure a candidate can engage potential voters in defined areas whenever they open an application or browse on the mobile Web.

Mobile location geo-targeting layered with first- and third-party data enables candidates to create demographic profiles of individual voters, including gender, age, race, places that they have visited (a rally or a store) and their interests.

Using this data, Ms. Clinton could target known Sanders supporters, and vice versa.

Mobile retargeting

In retail, if someone comes into your store, you want to be able to engage with her after she has left.

Similar to retail, there are certain locations that infer party allegiances, such as a political rally, that candidates can use to target potential voters.

Mobile enables candidates to retarget these voters with relevant messaging to influence and drive them to the polls to cast a ballot in their favor.

Through mobile attribution it is possible to see when a voter was served an ad and then walked into an actual polling station.

This is a terrific way to track Election Day get-out-and-vote campaigns in neighborhoods with lower voter turnout rates and provide attribution metrics for a candidate's campaign.

THE CAUCUSES AND PRIMARIES are heating up, and the remaining candidates are fighting for every vote they can get.

As in years past, best use of technology could be what swings the race and, in 2016, the candidate who best uses mobile could end up in the White House.

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