

COLUMNS

Mobile technology and the 2016 US presidential election

June 9, 2016



Naveen Tewari is founder/CEO of InMobi

By **Naveen Tewari**

From forbidden campaigns during the very first presidential election to billboards, leaflets, door-to-door canvassing and television ads, the world of political marketing campaigns has undergone significant changes in recent years.

Now we can see that these political marketing and advertising campaigns are beginning to explore more modern mediums such as social media and mobile.

Ringin endorsement

With the 2016 United States presidential election campaign in full swing, the United States is expected to experience an election dominated by more mobile devices than in previous history.

Smartphones have become a popular platform of choice since then-Senator Barack Obama's campaign in 2008 when mobile was first used on a larger scale to announce the selection of Senate colleague Joe Biden for his vice presidential running mate.

This year, political ad spending is projected to reach a record high of \$11.4 billion, 20 percent more than was spent in 2012, according to research firm Borrell Associates.

What is more notable is how that money will be spent.

About \$1 billion will be allocated to digital media, a nearly 5,000 percent increase from the measly \$22.25 million spent on digital ads in 2008.

According to Borrell, spending on digital media will explode to nearly \$3.3 billion by the next presidential election in 2020.

The effect of mobile devices on the pending election is already being felt. The ability to reach key voter groups on smartphones also will be key to driving digital and mobile spend in 2016.

Smartphone usage was at 42 percent during the presidential election in 2012 and is projected to grow to 70 percent this year.

With this in mind, smartphones will be the go-to platform of choice among politicians and voters as a way for everyone to become more engaged, and to track and analyze public opinions.

Winning ticket to Oval Office

There are a number of opportunities for politicians to harness a slew of mobile technologies in this election year to help engage and reach voters effectively, specifically:

1. Mobile location gets better

Location-based political campaigns that focus on specific geographical areas and tailor creative messages to each voter are important.

The mobile ecosystem has matured dramatically in recent years.

Mobile has improved the precision and relevance of smartphones, combined with location-targeting tools, to grant political marketers with countless opportunities to reach the right voters, at the right moment, throughout their decision-making journey.

Implementing a targeted radius around key areas allows political marketers and advertisers to target prospective voters based on their mobile location, which can help fuel high-performing campaigns across devices.

2. Programmatic spending

Programmatic technology has evolved and gained more acceptance by proving it is an effective digital marketing tool.

It is now more important than ever for political advertisers to choose the right technology and to serve the right ad, to the right audience, at the right time.

Advertisers are learning from other company successes and failures, and are taking note of the best tools to target voters most efficiently, at scale, and to find the best way to gain useful political insights.

Political advertisers are able to reach specific audiences based on demographic, interests, and to choose precise locations for targeting.

Political marketers are able to serve unique and creative messaging on the issues voters care most about, rather than focusing on generic media outlets or publications.

Programmatic will enhance political marketing strategies by engaging with voters based on their lifestyle and reaching them in real time.

3. Big Data + mobile = Next U.S. president

Data has always been crucial to understanding political outcomes.

In the past, political marketers had begun to understand the power of data to share and predict election outcomes.

In the coming election, Big Data analytics will be one of the most powerful forces in the presidential race.

The search for voters, focused campaigns, regional demographic stats, personal voting history, historic trends and future predictions can come to fruition because of Big Data analytics.

Similar to how advertising and marketing agencies analyze data to find and persuade a market, political campaigns use big data to craft advertising messages, enlist influencers and canvassers, and target messages.

4. Mobile video consumption surges

One in 10 mobile users watch videos on their device every day. This number is expected to increase each year.

With mobile surpassing desktop as the primary screen for many people, mobile video marketing will make the 2016 election year the first of its kind when it comes to mobile involvement.

Studies have shown that users enjoy watching shorter versions of videos on their mobile device, and platforms such as Snapchat and Vine have made this possible.

It will be interesting to see how the political campaigners, candidates and voters will adapt to these videos to showcase daily campaign life, capture critical messages, generate donations and secure votes.

AUTHOR MARK TWAIN famously said, "The secret of getting ahead is getting started." This advice applies to all marketers today.

Mobile technology, as a tool for advertising and engaging voters, is expected to reach new heights as each party attempts to accurately target their voter base.

The campaigners, advertisers and candidates need to perfect their digital and mobile strategies to effectively reach voters.

The countdown has begun for political campaigners to build a successful and winning campaign for the 2016

...presidential elections.

With mobile becoming the device of choice for all age groups, 2016 promises to be the year of the "mobile election."

*Naveen Tewari is founder/CEO of **InMobi**, San Francisco. Reach him at naveen.tewari@inmobi.com.*

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

American Marketer is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.