

politics

SOCIAL
MEDIA
GUIDE
FOR 2010



How is Social Media Shaping Political Campaigning?

"..social media strategy is a cornerstone of any modern political campaign.."

Social Media is an evolutionary development that has transformed the way that individuals, organizations and political campaigns are able to communicate. The 2008 US elections were a defining moment for the use of social media in politics. As opposed to previous decades where the primary methods of human contact included in-person dialogue, phone calls, and (in recent years) email, individuals are now able to connect with one another in a viral way.

For example, The 08 Obama campaign generated a plethora of motivating, engaging

content that they distributed across email, social media platforms and their own websites. By synchronizing the messaging in traditional and social media they were able to achieve a seismic shift in the delivery of political messaging. Even more important was the way they encouraged and enabled citizens to share their voice from small personal meetings to online forums and mass rallies, they galvanized people to their cause.

The 08 elections heralded a turning point in how political candidates, and indeed governments themselves communicate with their citizens. Given this information, it is clear why deploying an effective social media strategy is a cornerstone of any politician's modern campaign, whether that be at the local, state or national level. As the medium

and technology continues to progress, more and more politicians will leverage the medium in new ways to give them the edge in connecting with their constituents.

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social media solutions
guide for politicians



2010

Today's web and the new media that underpin it are known for the ability to create instant sensations. From Digg's social news to CareerBuilder's Monk-e-Mail campaign, companies can advance from zero to 20 million viewers practically overnight. The viral nature of this highly social, user-driven environment enables complete strangers to connect over common beliefs, desires or interests and together create winners and losers. It empowers both the individual and collective voice. And isn't that what a political election is all about?



Most Commonly Used Types of Social Media in Politics

Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other popular sites for publishing online have become ubiquitous in the news media, if not in everyone's actual day to day lives. Recently, public officials have successfully made it onto the bandwagon by adopting these tools in promoting their campaigns, raising funds, recruiting volunteers, and, of course, garnering publicity.

Barack Obama certainly made hay online, with plaudits, publicity and private contributions rolling in over the course of the campaign thanks in part to a popular Twitter stream, Facebook profile, and a customized, public social network, MyBarackObama.com.

Local politicians who are "tweeting," or regularly posting messages to Twitter, include State Attorney General Jerry Brown, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera, State Senator Leland Yee, State Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, and San Francisco Board of Supervisors Clerk Angela Calvillo, on the Board's behalf. Befitting a brand new form of communication, they're all using it differently. The one common thread is that they would presumably all be relatively easy to reach, especially by a constituent and member of the press.



The most common types of social media used for politics includes:

- ★ Social Network Profiles on sites such as Facebook, Myspace, & Ning
- ★ Media Sharing sites such as YouTube, Flickr, and MetaCafe
- ★ Microblog Profiles on Twitter
- ★ Campaign Blogs & Wikis
- ★ Podcasts & Vlogs

Key Benefits of Social Media on Politics

As the industry continues to progress, more and more politicians have seen the impact it can have on their campaigns. The following is a list of possible benefits that can result by the use of an effective social media strategy:

- ★ Allows for politicians to connect with citizens on an intimate level
- ★ Provides a cost-effective alternative to raise public awareness
- ★ Offers a quick, yet effective way to communicate new information
- ★ Helps identify target audiences and track their opinions
- ★ Has a viral effect- strong supporters will spread the word through the use of their own social media accounts

Candidate checklist

Five things your social media team should be doing

1. **Develop a Facebook Profile**
Create a Facebook page- be sure to continuously add new content and respond to posts
2. **Join the Conversation on Twitter**
Actively Involve yourself in a Twitter account, & show participation by following others
3. **Communicate With Your Audience**
Create a blog where citizens can communicate their opinions on current issues
4. **Don't Forget MultiMedia**
Use sites such a Flickr and YouTube to promote your message, by uploading photos/videos for the public to access and link to their own accounts
5. **Remember it's a Conversation**
Talk to your readers like you would talk to real people in professional situations. Avoid overly pedantic or "composed" language, & don't be afraid to bring in your own personality and say what's on your mind. Post content that's open-ended and invites response. Encourage comments. Talk back.

Don't Forget...

Using these tools incorrectly can do more damage to a candidates reputation than botching an interview or debate, and the damage is much harder to un-do. As political candidates reach into the social media tool bag, they must be aware of the impact of their actions, and understand exactly how these tools work.



Politicians Using Social Media

The presence of politicians in the social media realm is becoming increasingly high at local, state, and national levels of government. In fact, many individuals believe that social media is must for politicians to engage in. According to political consultant Jim Ross, "It's [social media] a very effective organizing tool and it's a way to mobilize the campaign and the candidate... Using social media as a politician is no longer optional."

On the local level, Coronado Mayor Casey Tanaka uses social media tools to address community concerns and gather feedback from his constituents, while Councilman member Kevin Faulconer personally logs into his Facebook account multiple times per day to actively reach out to his district, and keep them involved in his agendas.

On the State level, we are seeing an increasing number of politicians using social media to announce & promote their candidacy for Governor. Illinois comptroller Dan Hynes utilizes Facebook and Twitter as a means to promote his campaign for the 2010 Governor of Illinois, and San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom used his Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages to announce the news that he will be running for the 2010 Governor of California. Both candidates use social media to post news and information about their campaign to (1) encourage public support & (2) involve voters in their campaign.

Nationally, the most famous social media case involves our current President Barak Obama, who is the first president to correctly employ the use of a social media strategy, which strongly contributed to his win of the election. (For additional information on Obama's social media success, please see the case study below.)

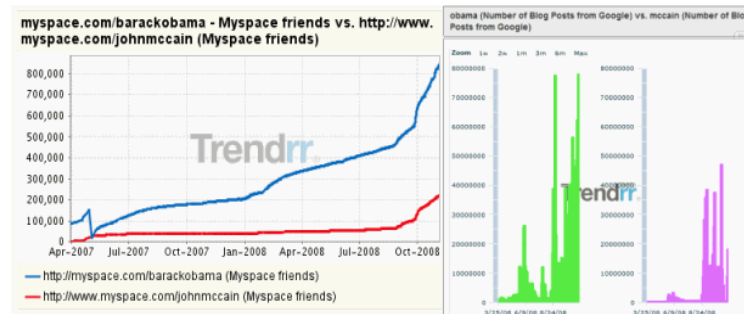
By evaluating both past and current politicians' participation in social media, we can clearly establish a positive relationship between level of involvement and political success. Listed below are a few examples of government officials who have effectively implemented the use of social media strategies to improve their current positions in the eyes of the community.

Case Study: Barak Obama, 2008 Presidential Election

Social media changed the future of political campaigns and engaged a new audience when Obama announced his vice presidential nomination with a vast text message at 3 a.m. Instead of thinking about

the right newspapers or journalists to reach out to, the Obama campaign began to think in terms of how they can engage today's youth. The result was record-breaking - Obama used social networking to raise over \$1.5 million in this month of September alone, and continued to increase funding throughout his campaign by utilizing these tools to connect with his

With podcasts, viral videos, twitter streams and Flickr groups there seemed to be no corner of the Internet where Obama wasn't being talked about. The result is all the social networking that Obama started has nurtured and developed throughout this campaign in the primaries and general



Comparison of Obama/McCain Myspace friends and blog posts

election. Below are some key statistics detailing just how successful Obama's social media campaign was.

Obama Currently has a presence in over 16 social media websites

At the time of the 2008 election, Obama had 350 million more blog mentions, 625,523 more friends on MySpace, and 113,165 more followers on Twitter than John McCain did during election period. (Visual representations of these successes can be seen in the charts below.)

The Obama team utilized sites such as YouTube to promote his "Message of Hope" campaign and encourage viewers to do the same

Lastly, Obama created a website (Change.gov) with the sole purpose being to prompt supporters to blog about their opinions on the election and spread the word to other individuals

Case Study: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

The star of The Terminator movies hasn't just made a half hearted attempt but is fully committed to using tools such as video, Twitter, Twitpic, blogging and podcasts to help get his message directly to the people who matter. Schwarzenegger currently uses his Twitter account to collect information on

public opinion regarding state budget proposals. Arnold also his Facebook account to post videos and create discussion boards to encourage community feedback.

Now, trying times call for creativity and breaking away from the norm. Facing a massive budget crisis and difficult economic times; the state of California is reaching out to citizens via Twitter. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger launched the Twitter forum MyIdea4CA. Twitter users can tweet their opinions, leave comments and provide feedback on different ways to fix the State Budget using the hashtag #myidea4CA.

Schwarzenegger is asking for Californians opinions, suggestions and ideas

"no matter how radical" they may be. It is a very progressive and forward thinking approach by the governor, calling upon the people directly affected by the problem to help fix the problem, with social media as the medium of communication.

Case Study: Adriel Hamton for Congressman

Adriel Hampton works as an investigator for the San Francisco City Attorney's office and has kicked off a congressional campaign for California's tenth district. An avid user of Twitter personally, he maintains a profile on Facebook, and is an active participant in a social network called GovLoop, where public employees are exploring ways to better connect public service with private taxpayers. It was at his urging that the City Attorney's office created an account on Twitter.

"We're trying to be transparent and apolitical in a way that advances the public interest, the public's right to know and builds public trust in the office," Hampton said of the tone and impetus of discussion on the site. Transparency and authenticity seem to be two benefits most often cited by proponents using these new communications tools in government.



Case Study: Texas Governor Rick Perry

Gov. Rick Perry has employed new tactics, such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs, to attract young supporters for his gubernatorial campaign. Currently, Perry's Web Site has about 1,300 new visitors every day and his Twitter site has over 10,600 followers and grows by a hundred each day. Perry Personally "tweets" using his BlackBerry rather than delegating it to his representative, and pushes out content that involves both personal as well as political marks to allow for a more intimate connection with his supporters. On Facebook, Perry is connected to roughly 7,500 people. The campaign also has a text message platform in which 12,000 people have opted to join. Perry's campaign advisors have said that Perry has already made significant political decisions based off of constituent feedback & comments on his social media sites.

Mistakes Politicians Are Making with Social Media

Given the viral nature of social media, it is inevitable that some individuals or entities may find that the incorrect use of it has actually damaged their reputations. Two of the most widely known examples of this occurrence are with Republican Attorney General Mark Shurtleff, and Michigan Representative Pete Hoekstra.

Republican Attorney General Mark Shurtleff announced he will be challenging Sen. Bob Bennett (R-Utah) in a Republican primary - by accident. He posted a series of messages announcing his campaign on Twitter while on a trade mission to Israel, but he didn't realize that his feed was available for the public to see. He quickly tried to delete his posts, but the damage was done.

Representative Pete Hoekstra landed in hot water this week after using his Twitter page to update the public on his precise whereabouts while traveling through Iraq and Afghanistan. The revelation prompted the Pentagon to review its policy, which regards such information as sensitive, and lit up the liberal blogosphere with accusations of hypocrisy.

"Just landed in Baghdad," the congressman declared on Feb. 5 at 9:41 p.m. By 11:56 p.m., the public was given this more precise update: "Moved into green zone by helicopter, Iraqi flag now over palace. Headed to new U.S. embassy. Appears calmer, less chaotic than previous here." Hoekstra later told reporters that his posts might not have been accurate. When asked if they were, he said he didn't remember.



So what does this all mean? While it is clear that political campaigns are constantly looking for new technologies to reach voters and appear tech-savvy, there are pitfalls that candidates and representatives need to be aware of. Using these tools incorrectly can do more damage to a candidate's reputation than botching an interview or debate, and the damage is much harder to undo. As political candidates reach into the social media tool bag, they must be aware of the impact of their actions, and understand exactly how these tools work.

To help politicians understand the potential pitfalls of social media, we have identified common mistakes that politicians have made which have had a negative impact on the way they are viewed by the community:

- ★ Not interacting enough with supporters
- ★ Waiting too long to engage in social media during election periods
- ★ Being inconsistent or unreliable with posting new content
- ★ Making negative references about other candidates or parties
- ★ Unintentionally releasing confidential information
- ★ Having someone other than the politician posting and responding

How Should YOU Use Social Media?

Social Media is an excellent tool to positively promote your campaign to the citizens of your community, by allowing them to become actively involved. We have created a list of tools that we recommend you engage in, which will better shape your political standing and increase your popularity:

- ★ Create a Facebook page- be sure to continuously add new content and respond to posts
- ★ Actively Involve yourself in a Twitter account, & show participation by following others
- ★ Create a blog where citizens can communicate their opinions on current issues
- ★ Use sites such as Flickr and YouTube to promote your message, by uploading photos/videos for the public to access and link to their own accounts



Politicians Using Social Media



Barak Obama, President of the United States

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of California

Rick Perry, Governor of Texas

Adriel Hampton, Congressional Candidate

Paul Sanford, State Senator

John Kasich, Ohio Congressman

John McCain, 2008 Presidential Candidate

Sarah Palin, former Alaska Governor

John Edwards, 2008 Presidential Candidate

Charlie Crist, Governor of Florida

Bill McCollum, 2010 Candidate for Florida Governor

Alex Sink, 2010 Candidate for Florida Governor

Mark Shurleff, Attorney General (R)

Pete Hokestra, Representative

Case Studies and Real World Examples

YouTube Goes to Russia

Barack Obama has it, Nicolas Sarkozy has it, Pope Benedict XVI has it, and now Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has one: his very own YouTube channel.

Medvedev is using social media in one of the best ways possible; reaching out to today's youth to educate & involve them in their country's politics. The channel is located over at www.youtube.com/kremlin, and its main purpose is to reach out to Russian youth. Medvedev covers a wide array of topics on this page: the first video on the site addresses schoolchildren and talks about good neighborly ties, while in the latest Medvedev talks about the Second World War and its outcome.



Conclusions

Recently, a local government employee in California declared his run for the U.S. House of Representatives – on Twitter. In full-blown 'Government 2.0' style, he appears to be communicating his message in a very personal manner, largely through new media technologies. Will that be enough to carry him to Congress? Only time will tell.

The world has seen a U.S. President underdog nominee overtake the competition and ultimately win the Presidency by utilizing these new media channels, and now everybody wants to learn how to use social media to boost the success of their campaign. What must be remembered, however, is that candidates need platforms, personalities, financing, timing, and hard work to pull off a successful run, and in the end, a campaign is a campaign, and new media tools are just that – tools. Tools that if used properly, can provide a candidate with a formidable secret weapon in their arsenal, but if used incorrectly, they can shut out a candidate's chance of success within minutes of posting.

Fail or succeed, the choice belongs to the campaign teams who are devising their candidate's strategy. With proper planning & education, social media can be one of the most powerful campaign tools a candidate has. What will your choice be?

About Us

Many social media campaigns transcend across channels such as marketing, public relations and sometimes even customer service depending on the goals of the campaign. To effectively manage these needs, a social media agency must essentially be an extension of the client, involved with various communication channels within the client's organization in order to communicate the right content at the right time.



Social Media Solutions prides itself on becoming an extension of your business. Not only will we work your account as if we were promoting our own business, but we will also continue to brainstorm and develop new online marketing and social media strategies to optimize your business.



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