

## **Digital Marketing The Obama Way**

### **Understanding the Power of Digital for More Targeted Marketing Communications**

As is often the case, we benefit from what comes 'tried and tested' across the Atlantic to these shores. Online engagement and using digital marketing for more targeted marketing communications is no exception. The web campaign run by Barack Obama's team in the US presidential elections gives us a great insight into how powerful digital marketing can be.

Building interest in politics, engaging the masses and tackling voter apathy are always going to be some of the biggest challenges in the lead up to an Election. Many of these challenges for political parties are no different to the challenges faced by many businesses and brand marketing professionals looking to acquire and engage customers with their particular business' offerings. We can learn a lot about how digital marketing works for any campaign when we look at Barack Obama's successful Presidential campaign. The Obama story is of course an exceptional one – to get such a groundswell of support and interest with little cynicism for a brand, for example, would be a difficult task. Yet what is interesting about the story of his digital campaign is the way in which digital was integrated fully into the Obama campaign, rather than been seen as an additional extra. What was revealed is that if technology is used correctly to harness interest, it is clear that the results can be huge.

The brilliance of Obama's digital campaign was not its size, but what he did with it. From the very beginning, across every touch point, it was about lead generation. He slowly and consistently built up his database over time. He then cut and sliced it, analysed it, and targeted the relevant segments. For instance, Obama's volunteers captured the email addresses of various event and rally attendees. And as he amassed the names, so he put them to work. The phrase "one click canvassing" was coined as Obama facilitated the viral impact through digital channels like no one else – even creating an iPhone application that automatically trawled contacts for those in swing states, to help supporters communicate quickly, and showing a perfect understanding of the immediacy of mobile. And as the database grew exponentially, so did the donations.

In a similar way to Barack Obama, the Liberal Democrat's Nick Clegg's lack of baggage and freshness to the campaign trail gave that particular digital campaign a very credible foundation. Added to this, there was a robust and well designed site around user experience which recognised different voting journeys of any visitor to the site, from the uninformed, to the engaged, to the supporter, to the volunteer, to member and donor, and ultimately, to the activist. This is the basis of mass customisation - where many differently minded visitors find an easy path to satisfy their individual online needs, and sign up for further personalised engagement: by email, by event invitation, or by joining 'ACT'; the Libdems online community network of discussion groups. Clear 'Call To Actions' on homepage and key landing pages are used to target the key audiences.

And thought is given to what the experience will be when they get there, and any e-CRM dialogue that would ensue. Social media integration also plays a significant role in allowing community groups to build a voice and engage digitally. YouTube, Facebook and a Ning based community site are integrated, building on the power and advocacy of social networks.

In summary, the results of using digital marketing for more targeted marketing communications have been tried, tested and proven, including in recent topical campaigns such as those for Barack Obama and Nick Clegg. For more detailed results on the effectiveness of these campaigns see

: [http://www.bluestatedigital.com/casestudies/client/obama\\_for\\_america\\_2008/](http://www.bluestatedigital.com/casestudies/client/obama_for_america_2008/)  
and <http://www.beingonline.co.uk/casestudy-libdems.aspx>