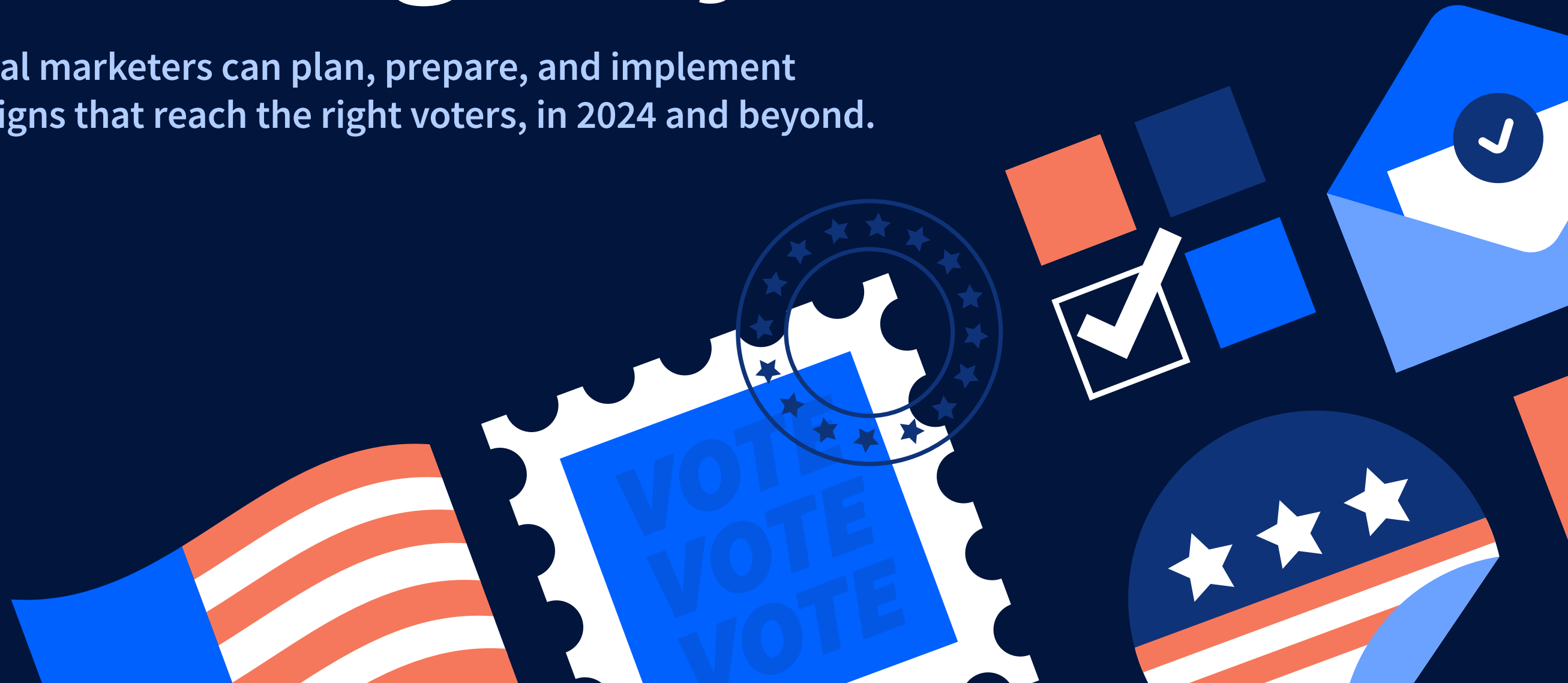


The 2024 Political Advertising Playbook

Learn how digital marketers can plan, prepare, and implement political campaigns that reach the right voters, in 2024 and beyond.



With the next US presidential election coming soon and digital advertising spend increasing across all industries, it's expected that 2024 will see notable growth in political ad spend.

This political advertising playbook explores how digital marketers can plan, prepare, and implement programmatic campaigns that reach the right voters, in 2024 and beyond.



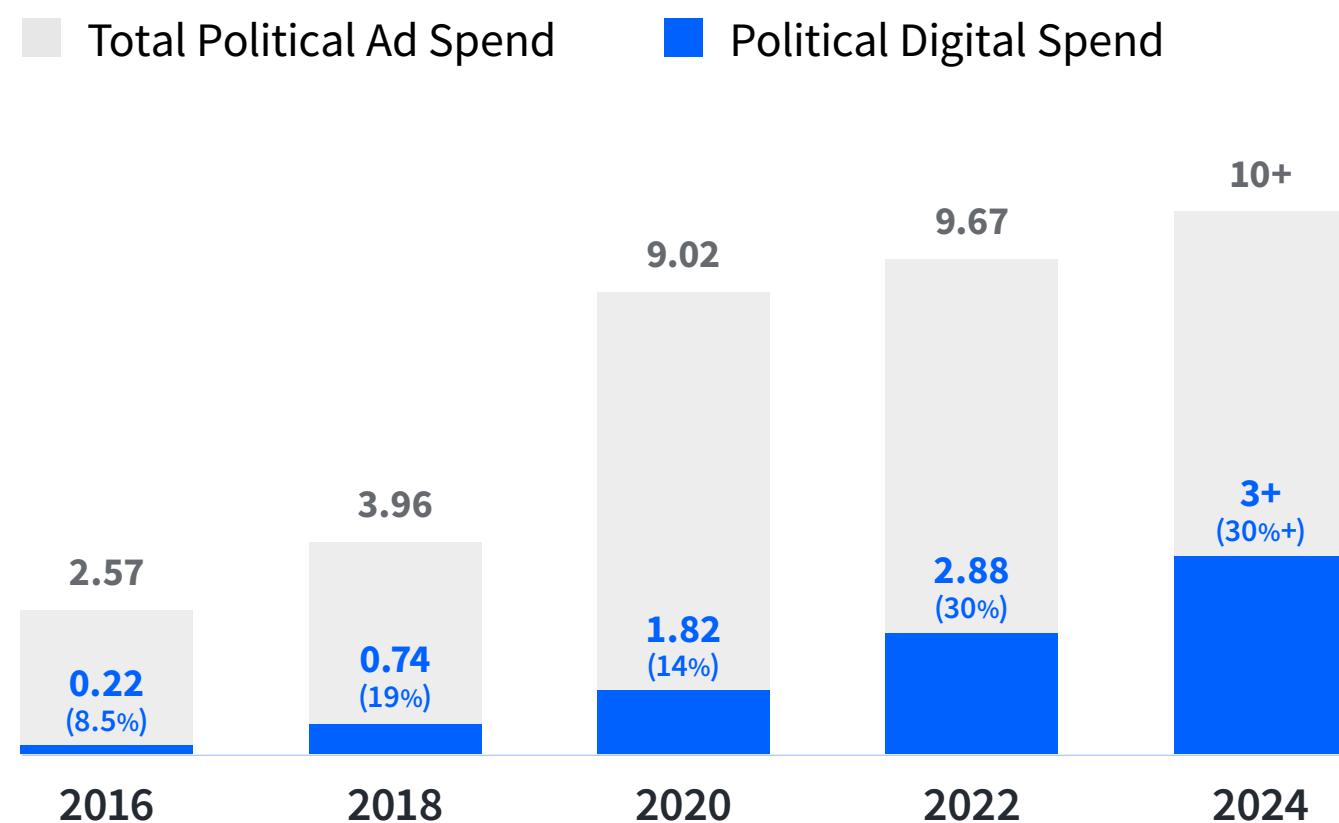
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US Presidential Election 2024 Forecast

US Advertising Spend and Digital Spend

In Billion USD, 2020–2024



i Source: [AdImpact](#), Aug 2022.



\$10 Billion+

Despite midterms having traditionally lower voter turnout, advertisers hit record high spends per vote in 2022. It's forecasted that this trend will continue into 2024 with political advertising spend easily surpassing \$10 billion USD.

Politics and the Programmatic Landscape

Since 2008, digital political spend has been consistently growing. Candidates can reach voters in ways that weren't possible in past election cycles with the scale and speed that only programmatic allows.

Digital advertising provides ample opportunity to influence voters by offering a method for reaching them where they are—which is increasingly online.

Why is speed so important for political advertising?

Speed of campaign planning and execution can make the difference in allowing political campaigners to take initiative during the defining moments of the campaign life cycle.



Quick turnaround for campaigns.

The nature of political fundraising cycles results in budget injections to spend within a short period of time.



Time sensitive campaign goals.

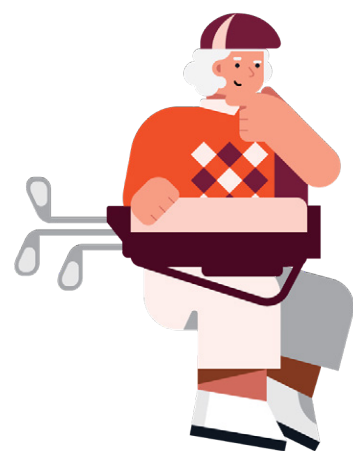
Approximately 75% of spend happens in the 10 weeks leading up to election day, requiring quick pivots between campaign strategies.



Reactive to race events.

Past elections show that spend spikes occur around key election events, such as candidates entering or withdrawing from the election race.

Which Generations Are Voting



Baby Boomers

remain the generation with the largest share of the voting-eligible population. Older generations have historically been more likely to turn out and vote. The baby boomer voting-eligible population peaked in size at 73 million in 2004, which signals their slow decline in voting power.



Gen X and Millennials

are approaching the baby boomers in their share of the American electorate. Since entering the electorate in large numbers in the 2004 election, millennial voter turnout has been increasing. They turned out in force in the 2020 election, and we can expect this trend to continue in the 2024 presidential election.



Gen Z

are a voting generation, similar to millennials. They are known for being socially conscious as well as practical, and these traits drive their voting patterns. Gen Z is also the most diverse generation in the history of the US and this informs their voter preferences.

Benefits of Programmatic for Political Campaigns

Programmatic allows you to connect with voters across all of their devices, capturing when and where they're paying attention.



Speed

Programmatic advertising leverages machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) together. This streamlines advertising efforts by making decisions at scale and rapidly responding to pivots in how people consume information.



Greater Reach

Programmatic offers huge potential audience reach, as well as incremental reach, because most users are online. In the US, there are 312 million active internet users, and most of these users are all voters that you can target.



Granular Targeting

Speak directly to your ideal voters for any given goal by narrowing down the pool that you target. You can target by geolocation, by IP address, or even by context, to ensure you reach voters who are receptive to your messaging.



Effective Reporting

With programmatic, you can see real-time reporting and data. This way, you can measure exactly how creatives, campaigns, or overall targeting performs shortly after your political campaign is launched, and then adjust accordingly for the best results.

Formats and Channels for Political Ads

You can reach US voters wherever they're engaged with a digital environment, which is across a wide variety of formats and channels.

The first step to getting a political campaign up and running is to partner with a demand-side platform (DSP). The right DSP will have features and support that will help you go from the campaign planning stage to launch, and allow for smooth and quick optimization.



Connected TV

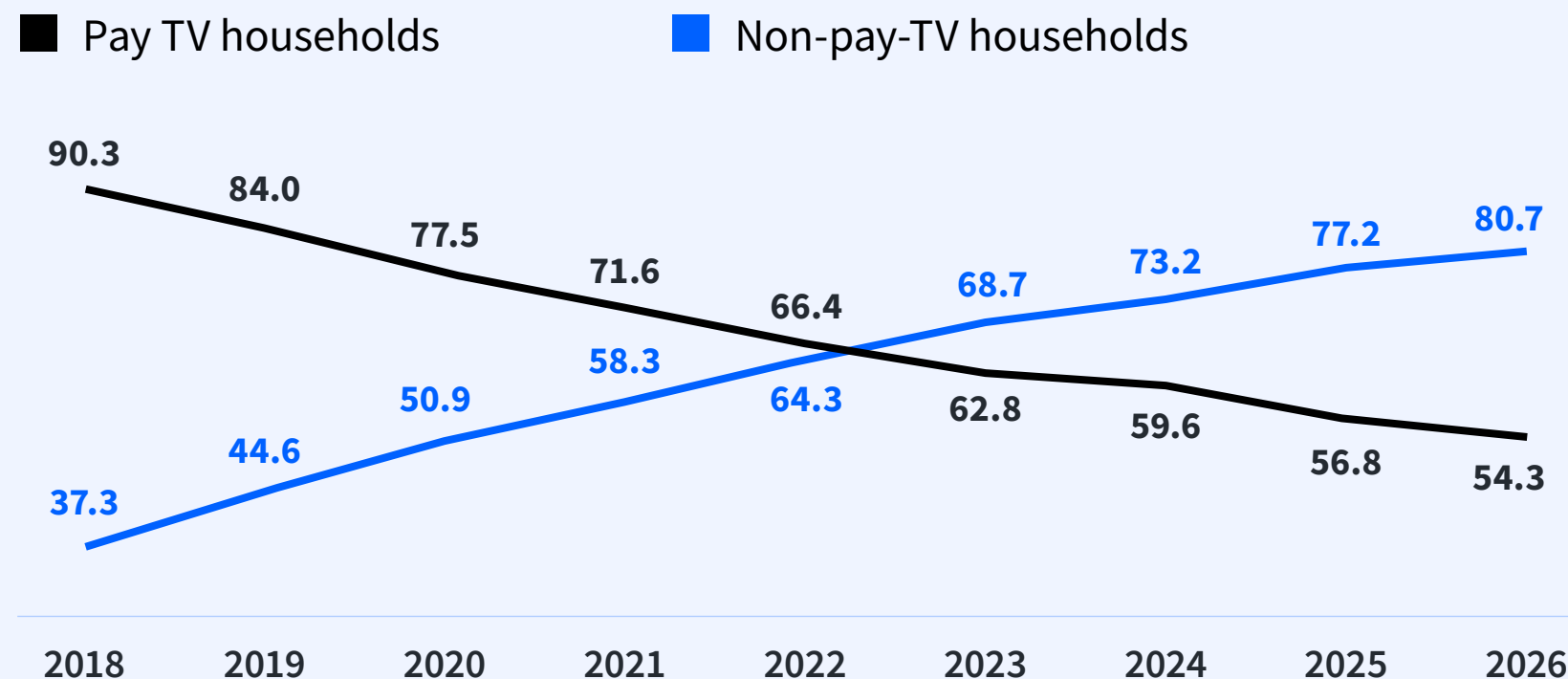
Unlike traditional TV ads, connected TV (CTV) ads are highly targeted, enabling advertisers to speak to specific households, with more options to target voters based on their interests, rather than just age and gender demographics.

Viewers watching CTV have made the active choice to watch the programming, and don't have the option to fast forward or skip ads. This creates an undistracted environment for getting your political messaging across to voters.

CTV spend increased by 1,500% in the 2022 election, amounting to a total of \$1.5 billion (half of the total digital ad spend). According to eMarketer, 69% of the US population will use a CTV device in 2024.

CTV Households Will Surpass Traditional TV in 2023

US Traditional Pay TV vs. Non-Traditional TV Households, 2018–2026



Source: eMarketer, Nov 2022.



Campaign Tip

Leverage CTV to grow your audience and collect a retargeting pool based on video completions. You can also build a retargeting list based on video starts, which is ideal for outstream, in-stream, and pre-roll for digital video. Consider leveraging CTV for incremental reach, to reach users who aren't engaging with linear TV content.



Video

Programmatic video advertising is the perfect channel for creating an emotional connection between your campaign and your ideal voters. This medium will capture the undivided attention of voters, provide an opportunity to educate them, build brand awareness, and develop trust.

With video advertising, you can reach potential voters wherever they may be watching video content online. Audiences may see a video ad ahead of streaming a TV series, or while scrolling through a blog.



Campaign Tip

The first few seconds of a video ad should hook your audience. The initial frames of an ad should be engaging to capture their attention and still have an impact if closed or skipped. You'll want to keep the video's messaging concise and to the point. It's recommended that video ads can still convey a message even if shortened to 10–20 seconds.



Programmatic Audio

In recent years, there's been rapid growth in audio content that's available for streaming. With the growing adoption of audio content, we've seen growth in digital audio advertising spend, too.

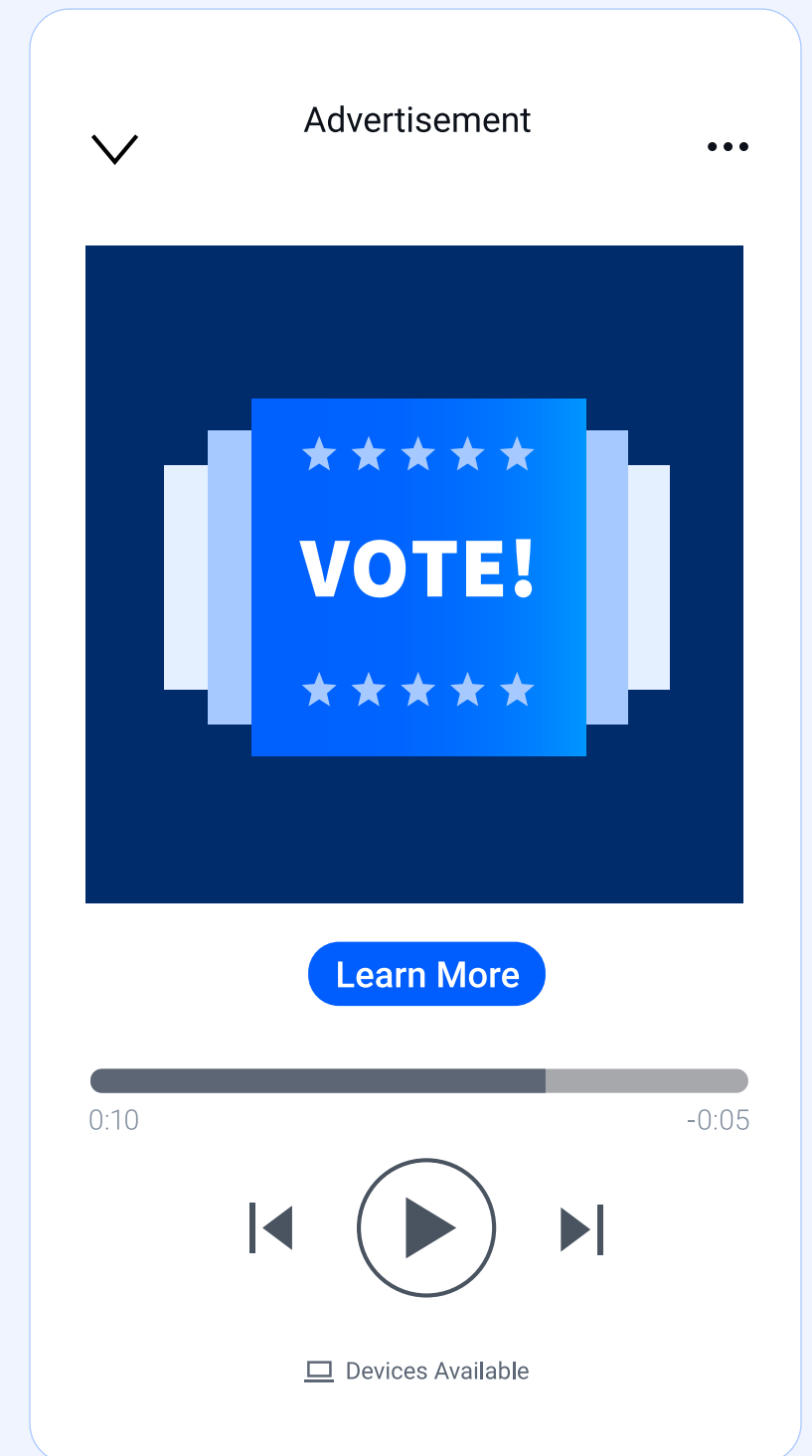
Audio is highly engaging. It reaches listeners right in their ears, capturing voters' attention, so you can be sure your messaging is really *heard*.

With programmatic audio, you can strategically target premium digital audiences against traditional broadcast metrics, such as geography, daypart or format. You can use the same audience targeting parameters from video, mobile, and cross-device campaigns, or you can leverage data from partners to target specific demographics or interests.



Campaign Tip

Audio content is highly popular with millennials. If millennials are part of your target voter demographic, you can leverage programmatic audio to capture their attention, and their vote. Include companion banners alongside your audio to help reinforce the impact of your message and drive more engagement.





Display

Display is an essential component in any political campaign because it drives performance. Display ads enable you to learn about your voters and collect information that helps you communicate to them most effectively.

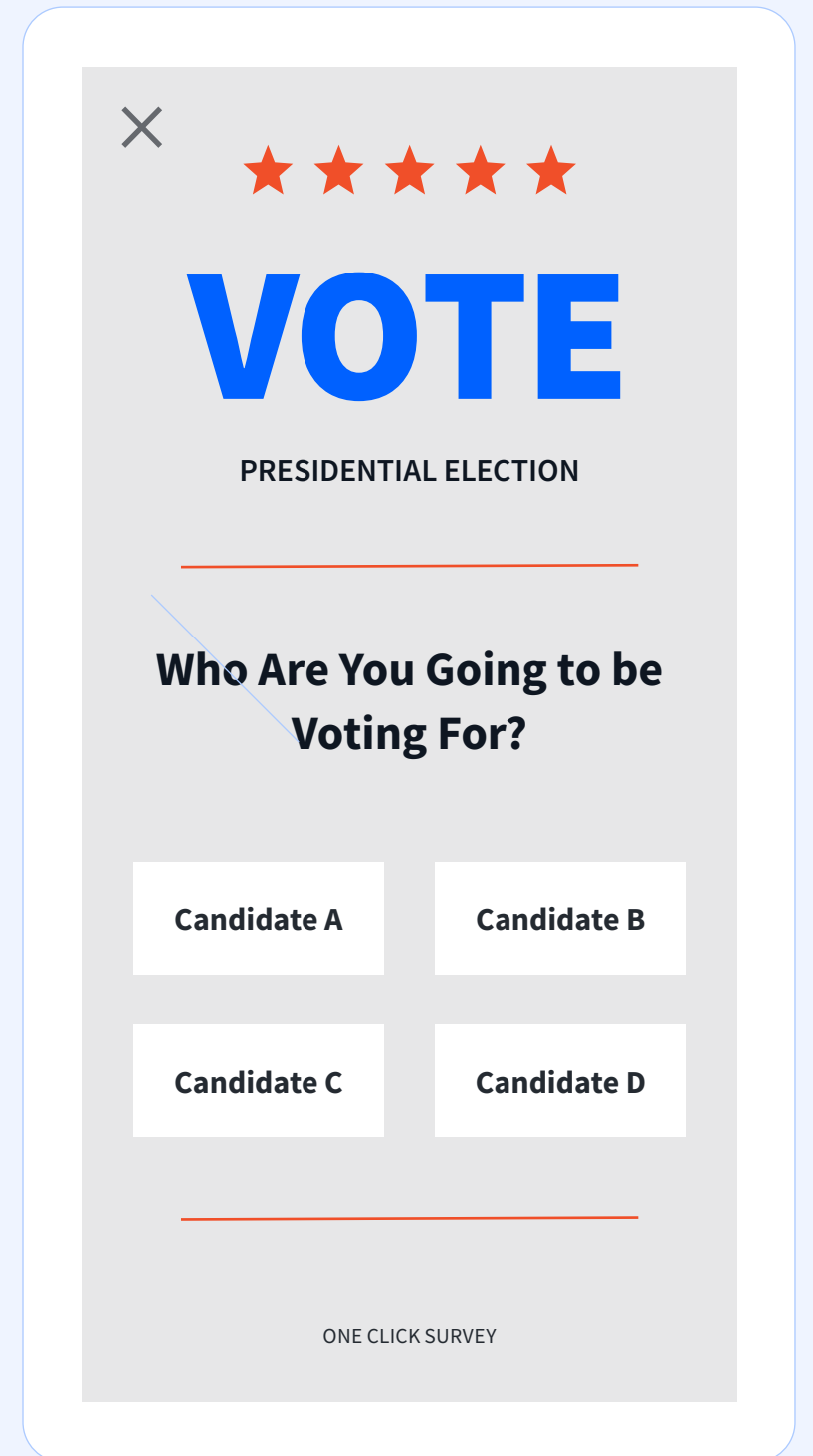
Political advertisers may need to display legal information alongside their core message. Display units like disclaimer/ISI rich media ads allow for a discreet disclaimer on hover, or an auto-scrolling ISI ensuring legal compliance without taking away from the creative's aesthetic appeal. The disclaimer can be viewable upon load or hidden within a hover interaction. Plus, you can use motion to bring your display ads to life.



Campaign Tip

Leverage dynamic retargeting to generate highly-customized display (and native) ads. This enables you to serve ads based on a viewer's prior website engagement and activity, to deliver ads that have the greatest likelihood of creating conversions, web traffic, and impact.

The StackAdapt Creative Studio team can support ad creation, including in-banner video, social display, and countdown units. Contact us to learn more.





Native

Native ads are simple and effective creatives that match the look, form, and feel of the media format that they appear in. They seamlessly blend into the content that a user is viewing on their mobile device or desktop, which makes them a perfect format for informing your target audience.

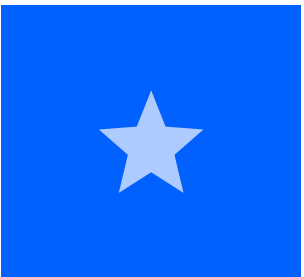
Native ads can be leveraged in political campaigns to educate voters about a candidate and their platform. This ad format can be a great tool for developing the trust of your ideal voter. Native ads should be approached as a form of high-quality content marketing that offers relevant information to interested voters, in a relevant context.

Campaign Tip

Earn the votes of multiple audiences with earned media. Run an interactive display campaign to provide context into the top-performing domains per audience. Then, use earned media through native ads to drive users to articles on the websites that you know the audience trusts and visits frequently.



Candidate A



Message 1



Candidate A



Message 2



Political Audience Targeting

Audience targeting enables advertisers to separate their ideal audience into segments based on interests or demographic data.

Political advertisers should use audience targeting to formulate campaigns that will align directly with their voters.

Here are 6 audience targeting tactics that you can leverage in your political campaign strategy.



Custom Audience Segments

Create custom audience segments based on content consumption. This can be leveraged to find a hyper-relevant audience for your party or candidate.



Political Influencer Audience Targeting

Work with political influencers and decision makers. Choosing the right partner can improve candidate recognition and persuade them to donate, move public opinion, and change policy.



1st-Party Targeting

Onboard 1st-party data collected at rallies, from petitions, or registered voters in your district through CRM direct upload.



3rd-Party Targeting

Use segments from 3rd-party data providers. For example, StackAdapt partners include L2, Data Trust, Aristotle, and Target Smart.



Congressional or Legislative District Targeting

Overlay your micro-targeting segments with congressional district targeting to reach your voters where it matters most.



Lookalike Targeting

Leverage a pixel on your site to build a list of users who exhibit the same behaviour as site visitors who have been tagged.

Programmatic Features for a Successful Political Campaign Strategy

With the rise in early voter numbers, the time to plan your 2024 campaign is fast approaching. It's important to consider all the features you'll need to run your campaign, and ensure that your programmatic platform offers them.



Multi-Channel Targeting



Retargeting



Geographic Targeting



Forecasting



Contextual Targeting



CRM Direct Upload



Persuasion and Candidate Lift



Compliance and Brand Safety



Lookalike Audiences



Voter Data Attribution



Programmatic Guaranteed



Multi-Channel Targeting

In our current digital media landscape, voters are actively using a mixture of channels. With a multi-channel strategy, you can reach them throughout the entire funnel, creating a cohesive message across channels like native, display, CTV, audio, and DOOH.

You may run a campaign across two channels, or across a larger mix. Leveraging a mix of complementary channels increases the percentage of the total target audience that you can reach.



Retargeting

Along with a multi-channel strategy, you can use cross-channel retargeting to increase the likelihood that your political messaging reaches your audience. Retargeting enables you to deliver ads to a user based on their previous intent-based actions on the web. It's an important tactic for re-engaging a voter who has shown interest in your political platform.

Introducing retargeting into your political advertising plan will help to drive engagement and conversions. With a strong retargeting strategy, you can ensure your campaign performs by communicating a strong call to action to your potential voters. With high reach and frequency across your target universe, cross-channel retargeting ensures your messaging will reach the voters who matter most to your campaign.





Geographic Targeting

Geotargeting delivers content to an audience using the geographic location information of the recipient. You can target by country, state, US county, city, zip code, or US congressional and legislative district.

Within the US, you can upload a list of zip codes to reach users. Or, you can target specific districts or zip codes with geo radius targeting. Customize your radius down to the mile or kilometre to target users across all device types. Both of these targeting methods enable you to reach your audience with precision.

Geotargeting is a key feature in political campaigns because it enables you to focus your efforts on specific regions. By focusing on specific locations or US congressional and legislative districts, you can avoid wasting time and ad dollars on people outside of your target voting district.



Forecasting

Campaign forecasting can be leveraged to better understand how your campaign is going to scale and perform before you spend at all. This way, you can plan your political campaign strategy quickly and effectively. Forecasting will give you the ability to identify the highest-value opportunities and reach potential voters across an optimal media mix.

Forecasting will provide you the insights you need to plan your campaign quickly. By predicting how your campaign will scale ahead of time, you can make sure you're including the parameters that will help you reach the right audience, and maximize the impact of your ad dollars. In turn, you're able to shift media budgets around during an unpredictable political cycle.



Contextual Targeting

Rather than targeting ads based on user behaviour, contextual advertising targets ads based on the environment in which the ad appears. This targeting strategy helps you reach users while they are in a particular frame of mind, which is indicated by the content they are consuming.

With contextual ads, you can target niche phrases that are related to a campaign's platform, or to the political concerns of your target audience. In the upcoming election, leverage contextual ads to reach politically engaged voters who are receptive to political messaging. This way, your advertising efforts reach the right audiences, at the right time.



CRM Direct Upload

CRM direct upload enables you to easily upload CRM data, such as address, email, or phone number directly into your DSP. Once the data is uploaded, it is hashed to ensure all personal information is removed prior to generating the audience in the platform. From there, you're able to retarget users who have shown interest in ways that aren't captured by pixel tracking—voter file lists, for example.

Given the increased demand for 1st-party data and the need to onboard voter files digitally, this solution is crucial when it comes to shortening the time required to get your political campaigns to market. With the right DSP, you'll also have the ability to build a lookalike audience around your CRM list to increase reach, or suppress a list, if needed.



Persuasion and Candidate Lift

Persuasion lift measures candidate popularity and voter persuasion based on ads that have been served. Run a campaign that interactively polls users' perceptions of your client and the other candidates.

You can then sort your audiences more accurately, and continue the conversation by delivering different messages depending on the response. Post-campaign reporting will include data that covers survey results, geo breakdown, audience breakdown, creative breakdown, creative impact, and more.



Compliance and Brand Safety

It's important to consider DAA and DAAC compliance for your political ads. This doesn't have to stifle your campaign creativity.

Leverage a programmatic platform, like StackAdapt, that offers the ability to both embed or display your disclosure when hovering over the ad. Your programmatic platform may also provide a team that ensures all ads that contain messaging or imagery are compliant.



Lookalike Audiences

Tapping into lookalike audiences enables you to reach potential voters who are likely to share similar interests and behaviours with your existing supporters. Using a pixel on your political party's site, you can tag site visitors, and target those who exhibit the same behaviour as the tagged audience.

Using lookalike audiences is a great way to drive incremental reach, build awareness around your political campaign, and engage with new prospects who have the potential to identify with your messaging.



Voter Data Attribution

With voter data attribution you can measure the percentage of your target audience that registered to vote in the upcoming election. You can also run this study after the election to get the percentage of the audience who voted after running a targeted campaign.



Programmatic Guaranteed

With increased political spending comes greater competition and higher CPMs, especially as we inch closer to the peak election months. This is why planning ahead is so important, particularly for political campaigns. Programmatic guaranteed (PG) is a feature offered by DSPs that facilitates one-to-one deals between the publishers and advertisers.

The advertiser pays a flat, negotiated CPM for the inventory that they are purchasing. In return for purchasing all of the impressions fulfilling the criteria set, the publisher sets aside inventory for the advertiser.

Programmatic guaranteed helps lock in rates against an audience that is hard to find, or it can help ensure delivery on campaigns—especially during periods of high competition, such as election time. For example, you can use programmatic guaranteed to reserve specific CTV placements on key dates.





Get Started With Political Advertising

Digital ad spend on political campaigns has been steadily growing, and the 2024 presidential election is projected to continue the growth trend.

Political advertisers can take advantage of this increasingly digital landscape by leveraging programmatic advertising. In 2024, plan, prepare, and implement digital political campaigns that reach the right voters.

Reach out to the StackAdapt team to learn more.



StackAdapt is a self-serve programmatic advertising platform used by the most exceptional digital marketers. This state-of-the-art platform is where some of the most progressive work in machine learning meets cutting-edge user experience. Ad buyers plan, execute, and manage data-driven digital advertising campaigns across all devices, inventory, and publisher partners.

For more information, visit stackadapt.com.