

THE POWER OF PRINT

Election Advertising: Print Moves and Motivates Voters

Political advertising and voters' reactions to it are excellent indicators of the relative effectiveness of different media. In one of American history's most consequential elections, the latest data indicate that mail-delivered print is the most trusted, effective medium for reaching and motivating voters.

\$15.8B

Total projected political ad spend in the US, 2024¹

+4.9%

Projected political ad spend growth YoY (all media) in the US, 2024¹

In 2024, political media spend has been big and growing, adding to the bombardment of communications people already receive every day. How to break through? No medium matches print.²

71%

of voters check their mailboxes at least 4 times per week²

62%

of voters believe direct mail includes more facts²

Like every election cycle, the 2024 political season is all about reaching and motivating potential voters. Accomplishing this has never been more challenging, with an increasingly divided and skeptical American electorate already overwhelmed with ads and messaging across every electronic channel, every minute of every day.

BOMBARDMENT

Global ad spend is expected to exceed \$1 trillion in 2024, a 10% increase year over year (YoY), led by retail media, the

fastest growing online channel with 21% growth in 2024.¹ Pure-play internet, defined as online ad spend other than online components of publishing, radio and TV, is expected to rise by a significant 25% in 2024.¹

Total U.S. political ad spend is projected to reach \$15 billion this year, \$3.6 billion of which is expected to be allocated to social media platforms.¹ Ad spend has accelerated rapidly since Biden stepped down, with political spending in social media tracking 27% higher in Q3 2024 than in Q2.¹

Political consultants are well aware of the challenge. In a 2024 study sponsored jointly by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and the American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC), 90% of consultants surveyed said they were extremely concerned about standing out and maintaining relevance.² 59% of them were extremely concerned about integrating political messaging across channels during the election cycle.²

Conclusion? Candidates are putting a full-court press on voters already overwhelmed with ads and messaging across every medium, and political consultants are considering direct mail to get their messages across and stand out from the crowd.²

DIRECT MAIL SENDS A MESSAGE

The USPS/AAPC survey found that 68% of voters feel less overwhelmed by direct mail than by other political advertising channels such as broadcast television, social media, website ads and others.²

71% of voters said they check their mail at least four times per week,² and the majority (57%) in the survey also agreed that direct mail is harder to ignore than online or TV ads.² Perhaps surprisingly to some, the percentage with that view of direct mail is even higher (60%) among Gen Z voters than in older demographics.²

Facts like these are why consultants and voters like direct mail. Political consultants surveyed see direct mail as one of the best media for reaching the right target demographics.²

TRUST IN PRINT

The USPS/AAPC survey generated some convincing data indicating that mail-delivered print is a highly trusted communication channel for among voters. 62% of voters surveyed said they believe direct mail includes more facts than what they see in other channels.² 56% said they trust direct mail more than other media.²

Consultant views aligned with these insights. The survey found that 54% believe that direct mail is the most credible political advertising channel.²

The USPS/AAPC study found that direct mail is the most effective and trusted channel to reach, engage and motivate voters.

POLITICAL MAIL DRIVES ACTION

Every voter has a mailing address. Print technology makes it easy to customize messaging to them. And direct mail campaigns are a very effective, trusted way to reach them.

The USPS/AAPC survey uncovered data indicating that direct mail inspires action that's beneficial to political campaigns. For instance, 71% of voter respondents read political direct mail when they receive it.² After receiving a direct mail piece, 65% said they follow the political race more closely.² And 62% fact-check the information in the direct mail piece on the internet, among other activities.²

These are big—and maybe the most significant—numbers that support the use of mail-delivered print in political campaigns.



TIMING MATTERS

When it comes to reaching and motivating voters, frequency and timing matters.

In the survey, 42% of political consultants said they believe direct mail should be sent twice a week to be most effective.² And they said that the timing of advertising can make or break a political campaign—a strong majority (72%) indicated that they believe direct mail is most impactful when received during the last month before election day.² Many (59%) also said they believe the last week before election day is an important time for direct mailers.²

Voter responses to the survey supported consultants' beliefs. Of 42% recalling having received mailers daily or weekly during the 2023 political campaign, 56% said the frequency was "just right."²

POLITICAL MAIL GETS THE MESSAGE OUT

The conclusion of the USPS/AAPC study is quite clear: Direct mail is the most effective and trusted channel for political advertising to reach, engage and motivate voters. It leave no doubt that print should have a prominent place in the media mix!

— Source 1: "Global Ad Spend Outlook 2024/25: A Decade of Consolidation," WARC, August 2024

— Source 2: "How to Tackle Campaign Challenges with Direct Mail," USPS and AAPC, 2024



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