

RNC STATE PARTY STRATEGIES

DIGITAL GUIDE FOR COUNTY PARTIES

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Summary



DEFINITION OF TERMS

Acquisition Campaigns - acquisition campaigns drive a user to complete an online action (i.e. liking your page on Facebook or submitting their email address).

Ad Copy - refers to the text used to convey our message in an advertising campaign.

Ad Creative - referring to the visual elements used in an advertising campaign, such as a graphic or a video.

Bounce Rate - the percentage of visitors to a particular website who navigate away from the site after viewing only one page.

Click-Through-Rate - the percentage of online users who click on a piece of content (e.g. email, ad, text) after viewing it.

CompletionRate - the percentage of times a viewer watches a video in full, to the end.

Cord Cutter - a person who cancels or forgoes a cable television subscription in favor of alternative Internet-based services such as Hulu, HBO, Peacock, etc.

Cost-Per-Acquisition (CPA) - the average cost to acquire a new donor, volunteer, etc. through an advertising campaign.

Cost-Per-Click (CPC) - the average cost required to get a user to click on an advertisement (i.e. Total Cost divided by Total Clicks).

Cost-Per-Like / Follow - the average cost required to get a social media user to like or follow a page.

Cost-Per-View - the average cost to get a person to watch a video through an advertising campaign.

Direct Match - a method used to target social media users based on existing lists of a tightly targeted audience. For example, using a campaign donor list to achieve a Direct Match on YouTube to show them a candidate's new advertisement.

Display Ads - graphic advertising on Internet websites, apps or social media through banners or other advertising formats made of text and images. The main purpose of display advertising is to deliver general advertisements and brand messages to site visitors.

Email Service Provider (ESP) - the software used for managing email marketing campaigns.



Frequency - the number of times (on average) an individual user views an ad creative online. Frequency is determined by total impressions (ads) served divided by the total users reached.

Impressions - the number of times an ad creative is served online.

Interest Targeting - a method by which companies target audiences based on their behavior and interests - for example, women who attend college and listen to Kenny Rogers.

Internet Service Provider (ISP) - such as Comcast.

Landing Pages - a web page designed to achieve a specific goal, typically only accessible through an advertisement, email message, text message, etc. These pages are more narrow in scope and help clearly define the action we want a user to take. For example, a petition page asking users to stand with President Trump, linked from a text message with similar copy.

Lapsed Donors - previous donors who have not given recently (e.g. within the last 12 months).

List Rental - a partnership with a campaign, firm, or other organization that allows the use of their email lists. The rental agreements vary in price and how the lists can be used.

Lifetime Value (LTV) - the monetary value of an individual donor during the lifetime of the relationship between your organization and the donor.

Microsites - a separate website with a unique URL. Typically used for specific campaigns or ads. For example, a candidate could use their main website to discuss their position on the economy and a microsite with a different URL to highlight how Biden is failing the economy.

Offline Conversion - a measurement used to track the effectiveness of an advertisement when the action we are asking the user to take occurs offline. For example, measuring the number of votes cast in an election after running an online Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign.

Persuasion Campaigns - online campaigns designed to convince voters to support/oppose a particular candidate or issue.

Reach - the total number of different people exposed, at least once, to a digital campaign or piece of digital content during a given period.

Sessions/Page Views - a session measures any time a user visits a website - a page view measures how many pages that user has visited. For example, if John Smith visits a website and views the homepage, the about page, and the donation page, that is one session consisting of three page views.



Opt-In - when a user makes the choice to subscribe to your email or texting communications. Many email service providers require users to be opted-in in order for you to send emails to them.

SSL Certificate - SSL Certificates are small data files that digitally bind a cryptographic key to your website. A website that has an SSL certificate will display a padlock to the left of the URL in the URL bar of the web browser. These certificates are required and are used to secure general data like form submissions, credit card transactions, logins and more.

UTM Tagging - a snippet of code attached to the end of a URL that measures where specific traffic originated in your website. This is helpful to track performance and determine the effectiveness of any campaign. For example, using a UTM tag on multiple text messages sent to donors to measure which one was more successful.

Views - the number of times a video ad has been viewed.

Viewability - a measurement used in advertising campaigns to determine if an ad appeared on the user's screen, unobstructed, for at least two seconds.

WinRed Slate - a new way for county parties to share donations between federal and statewide candidates. A statewide candidate can create a page that also shares with a federal page, but not the reverse. This allows the statewide candidate to then take advantage of those willing to also give to the federal official.



WHAT IS DIGITAL?



Digital Advertising



Texting



Websites



Social Media



Email

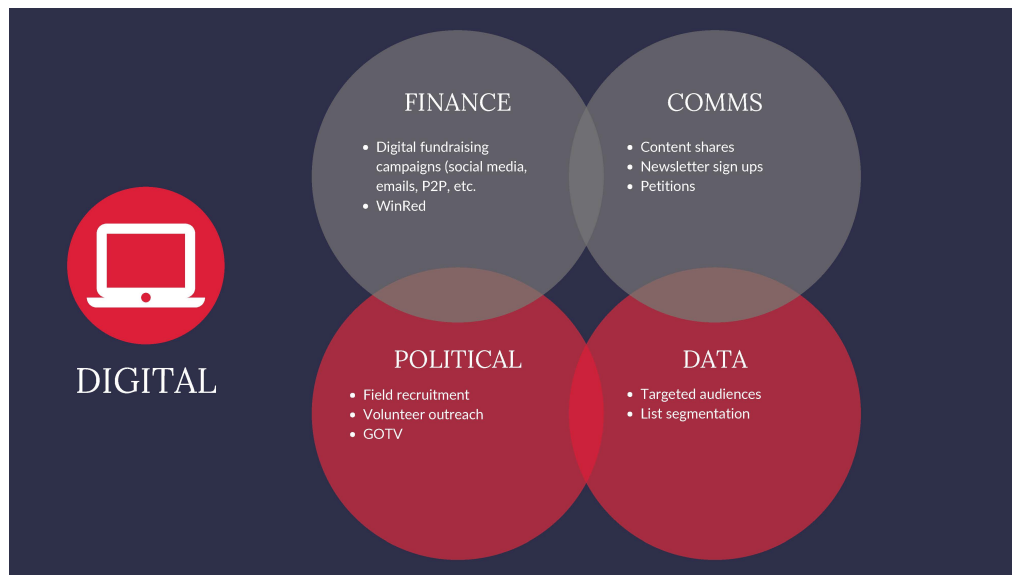
Digital utilizes online-based technologies and platforms to promote specific messaging. It encompasses digital advertising, texting, websites, social media, emails and more. County parties and campaigns can utilize digital to amplify their messaging, solicit donations, encourage people to vote through GOTV campaigns, grow their grassroots network and directly engage with individual supporters.

Roles of Digital

Ideally, county parties should have a dedicated digital firm, and potentially even a digital staffer responsible for managing all of the aforementioned online tools. However, in areas where resources aren't as readily available, individuals from other disciplines, specifically finance and communications, typically assist – as fundraisers are already familiar with soliciting donations from supporters and your communications staff is already leading your messaging strategy.

Your digital strategy should also be working hand-in-hand with your data department to ensure you are reaching the right audience, supporting your volunteer outreach efforts, and achieving your fundraising goals.

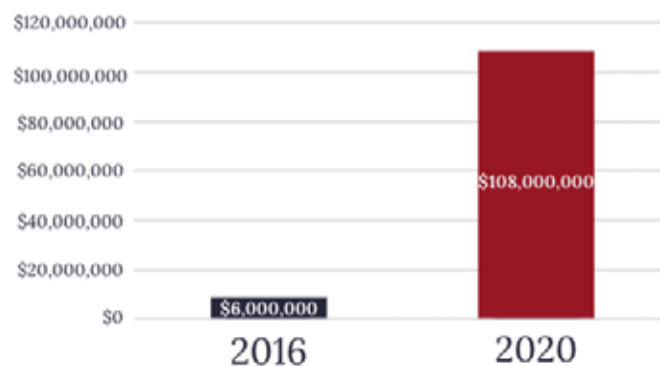




Effective uses of digital:

- **Fundraising:** Through list building, text and email campaigns, and digital advertising, Republicans have raised over \$2 billion online. Digital is essential to gaining small-dollar donors and growing your fundraising base.

RNC DIGITAL FUNDRAISING



- **Field Recruitment:** Using targeted email and texting campaigns, digital is able to efficiently recruit volunteers and build your field team's database of engaged supporters.
- **GOTV:** Using Vote.GOP, digital channels can drive voters to take direct action by registering to vote, finding their polling place, or requesting an absentee ballot.



RNC DIGITAL GOTV



+1.5 Million

Volunteers recruited online in 2020



+3 Million

Voters used Vote.GOP to learn how to vote

- **Messaging Amplification:** Digital advertising allows campaigns to effectively communicate their most important messaging to broad or tightly targeted audiences using platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Hulu, Google Search and more.



DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Basics of Digital Advertising

Digital advertising publishes your promotional material across multiple online mediums and ensures more people are seeing the important information we need them to. It helps your county party build email and text lists, raise money, amplify important messages and more.

Below are some examples showcasing Youtube ads, search ads, Facebook ads and display ads.



Donald J. Trump

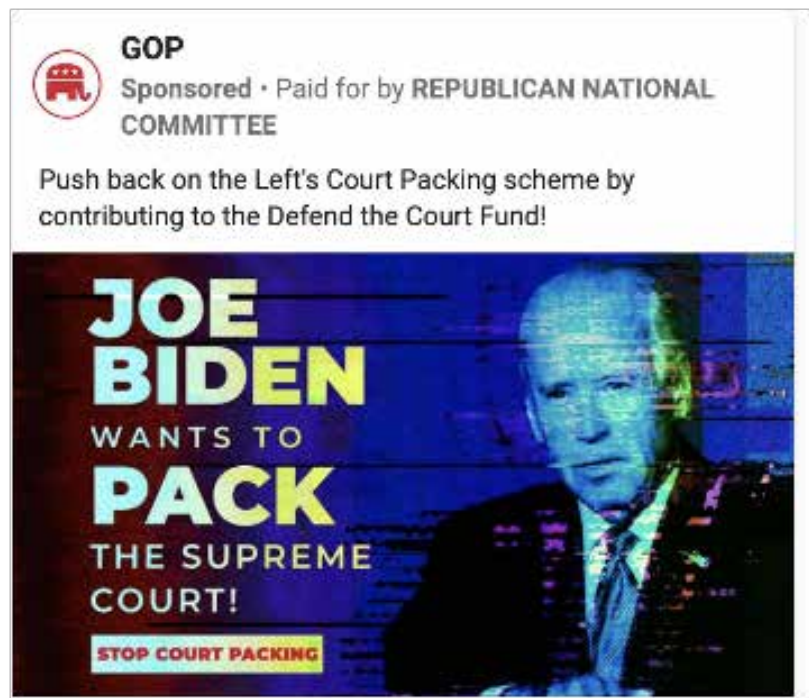
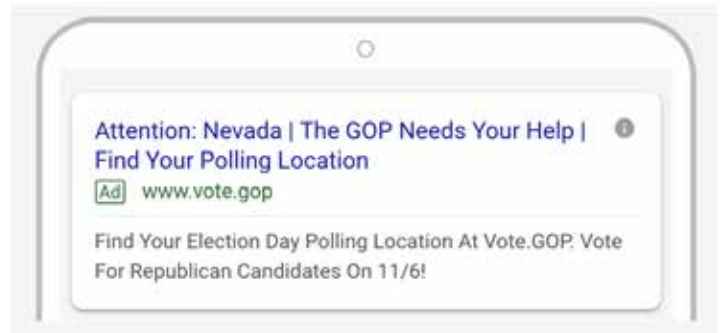
Sponsored • Paid for by DONALD J. TRUMP FOR PRESIDENT, INC.

Election outcomes are controlled by people who show up.

Your country needs you to show up.

President Trump needs you to show up.

Vote now.



Basics of Digital Advertizing

Always start planning your digital advertising campaign by establishing goals and a budget. The two main types of advertising campaign goals are acquisition and persuasion.

Acquisition Campaigns are designed to acquire new prospects for donations, volunteers or event attendees for your county party.

- Some of the main goals of acquisition campaigns include:
 - Acquire donors
 - Acquire volunteers
 - Grow social media following
 - Obtain petition signers
 - Solicit event attendees
- These goals can be achieved by using digital ads to drive:
 - Email sign-ups
 - New likes or followers on social media
 - Higher website clicks and traffic
 - RSVPs to county party events

Persuasion Campaigns are designed to convince your audience of a certain belief so that they take a certain action in the future.

- Some of the main goals of persuasion campaigns include:
 - Persuade swing voters to vote for Republicans
 - Get out the Vote
 - Amplify press coverage of an issue or event
- These goals can be achieved by using digital ads to drive:
 - Video views for your digital ads
 - Impressions to your digital ads
 - Engagements with social media posts
 - Higher website clicks or traffic
 - Impressions to your digital ads
 - Engagements with social media posts
 - Higher website clicks or traffic

Best Practices for Digital Advertising

- Think about digital in the scripting process , how will this translate from the TV screen to social media? Digital-first creative isn't just about the length .
- Film direct-to-camera videos, they perform well on digital platforms because they are personable.
- Use attention-grabbing visuals to encourage people to stop scrolling and read your content.
- Pay attention to aspect ratio (horizontal, square, vertical) – the creative should match the use case. Horizontal or square for Facebook, square for Instagram feed, vertical for Instagram stories, etc.
- Utilize heavy text overlay because many digital ads are viewed with the sound off. For example, 85% of Facebook videos are viewed with the sound off.



Best Practices for Digital Advertising

There is no silver bullet when it comes to choosing which ad platforms to use. Each ad platform has strengths and weaknesses when it comes to reaching voters and achieving goals due to differences in the creative types the platforms support and differences in targeting capabilities. For example, Facebook is well-suited for acquisition campaigns due to its adept targeting capabilities but poorly suited to persuasion due to its poor viewability on video advertising.

Three Best Practices for Building An Ad Campaign

Cross-Platform Approach

Using multiple ad platforms strengthens an ad campaign and expands potential reach. It's important to remember the following:

- There is NO one-size fits all solution.
- There is NO one-platform fits all solution .
- Google Search (Adwords is key for reaching high-intent voters, donors, volunteers) .
- YouTube is good for persuasion because it supports high-quality video ads.
- Hulu is also good for persuasion because it supports high-quality video ads.
- Facebook has strong targeting capabilities so it is good for acquisition. You should focus on display and cater to mobile devices. Using Facebook is also a good time to get creative with your ad tactics.

Cross-Device Approach

At least 67% of website traffic is mobile, so ads must be mobile and tablet friendly.

Cross-Channel Approach

Digital should work hand-in-hand with TV (and radio, mail, etc.) to reinforce your messages and goals.

Digital Advertising Creative

Below are some tips that will help you use the most effective creative, maximizing the ROI on your digital ad campaigns.

- Tailor your creative to the platform AND device (e.g. an ad ran on Facebook and viewed on an iPhone).
- Think about length when using video (:06, :15, :30, or 60 seconds) . You want your videos to be visually engaging in the first few seconds to capture your audience's attention.



- Think about digital in the scripting process , how will this translate from the TV screen to social media? Digital-first creative isn't just about the length .
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Advanced Pro-Tip! Creative vs Targeting

Creative and targeting are equally important to an effective digital advertising strategy. Targeting will ensure you are speaking to the right individuals, while your creative will make sure you are sharing engaging content.

There are several different options for targeting through digital advertising. One option is direct match, which utilizes your list to target specific individuals. Another option is using behavioral targeting that utilizes the advertising platform's data (search history, website visits, likes, etc.) to reach individuals. To ensure you are reaching all the targeted individuals, you should use a cross-platform with your digital advertising.

- 5-35% of ROI is from targeting
- 50-80% of ROI is from creative

Major Terms to Know:

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are the important metrics you should track for your digital advertising campaigns to ensure your ads are achieving your goals and staying within budget. Consistently tracking KPIs gives you the information you need to optimize ad campaigns so that they are as successful as possible.

Some relevant KPIs for **acquisition campaigns** include:

- **Cost-per-acquisition (CPA)** Or cost-per-conversion
- **Click-through-rate**
- **Cost-per-like/follow**

Some relevant KPIs for **persuasion campaigns** include:

- **Impressions** - the number of times an ad creative is served online.
- **Reach** - the total number of different people exposed, at least once, to a digital campaign or piece of digital content during a given period.
- **Frequency** - the number of times (on average) an individual user views an ad creative online. Frequency is determined by total impressions (ads) served divided by the total users reached.
- **Views** - the number of times a video ad has been viewed. Different ad platforms define this differently. For example Facebook defines a view as when a video plays for at least three seconds.
- **Cost-per-view** - your average cost to get a person to watch a video through an advertising campaign.
- **Completion rate** - the percentage of times a viewer watches a video in full, to the end. Average view time - the average amount of time your video is viewed by a user. This is total view time divided by the number of views.
- **Cost-per-viewed-second** - the average cost of each individual second that any user spent watching an ad.



- **Cost-per-viewable-second** - the average cost of each individual second that any user spent watching an ad, removing any watch time that was completed on poor quality ad placements (e.g. when an ad is served to a user but the ad is not fully on screen).
- **Time on site** - the duration of time a user spends on your website.
- **Page Views** - a page view measures how many pages a user has visited on your website. For example if one user visits your home page and your about us page, that counts as two views.
- **Users** - the number of visitors who have started a session on your website.
- **Sessions** - measures any time a user visits a website (regardless of how many different pages within the website a user visits).
- **Average Pages per Session** - the average number of pages within your website a user views when they visit your website.
- **Bounce Rate** - the percentage of visitors to a particular website who navigate away from the site after viewing only one page.
- **Average Time on Page** - the average amount of time all users spend on a particular page of your website.





Advanced Pro-Tip! Digital Ad Authorizations

Before you can run any Facebook ads you must become authorized to run ads related to social issues or politics. Make sure to check Facebook's political ad requirements and the status of your disclaimer at least two weeks before you plan to start running ads.

How to become authorized to run ads on Facebook:

In order to submit authorization, you will need to be the administrator of the Facebook account, have two-factor authentication enabled, and submit a photo of your ID.

1. Confirm your identity at facebook.com/id.
2. Click on Start Identity Confirmation, regarding Social Issues, Elections, or Politics, and then select the United States.
3. Submit credentials to login with Two-Factor Authentication.
4. Enter your Mailing Address. A letter with a code will be sent within 3-7 days for confirmation of address.
5. Upload an image copy of each side of your ID.
6. Enter the code from the physical letter within 21 days of your initial submission.

Things to watch out for:

- The email/phone that you use for the disclaimer will be public in the ad library for 7 years. If you don't want your phone number to be public, you can create a Google voice number to use.
- Make sure that the disclaimer for your page is up to date. You will need your FEC ID number to complete this. It can take up to 48 hours for the Facebook ads team to approve your disclaimer so keep this in mind before running an ad.
 - To check the status of your disclaimer, go to your Facebook page from your administrator view. On the left-hand toolbar scroll down to Settings.
 - Then click on Issue, Electoral, or Political Ads.
 - Once there, you can scroll down to Manage Your Disclaimers to see if the disclaimer for the page is approved.
 - Note: when the administrator changes for your page this could trigger your disclaimer to become unauthorized.
- When using your FEC ID number to become authorized, if any information is missing or not updated on the FEC site Facebook may make the process more difficult. If you are on a tight timeline, you can use the "Other Organization" disclaimer option. It typically gets approved much quicker, requires less info, and you can go back and make another later so you can have the "confirmed organization" icon for future campaigns.
- Double check that the organization that manages your page is the county party.
 - Go to the administrator view for your page > Settings > Page Transparency > at the top you can see which organization is the owner of the page.



How to become authorized to run ads on Google:

You also must get authorized to run Google ads before you can run any ads related to social issues or politics, so make sure to check their political ad requirements and the status of your disclaimer at least two weeks before you plan to start running ads.

There is a two-step verification process through Google, and each step can take up to 5 business days to receive approval back from Google.

Step 1: Get Started

1. To get set up to run ads on Google you must be an authorized representative for your organization - this means a full-time employee or an authorized digital vendor.
2. Sign in to your Google Ads account.
If you do not have an existing Google Ads account go to ads.google.com and sign up for one using your organization's information.

Step 2: Get Verified

1. Login to your Google Ads account to find your Google Ads Customer ID. Click on the “?” tag at the top right of the main page and find the ID at the bottom of the pop-up menu.
2. Go to support.google.com.
3. Search “get verified to run ads”.
4. Click “Election advertising verification”.
5. Scroll to the bottom and select the United States as the region in which you want to run ads.
6. Once you are through the prompts, enter your Google Ads Customer ID, Email Address, and phone number.
7. Select Organization and enter in the authorized representative name, the organization name, address, and then check the boxes and submit.
8. After Google reviews the form, you will receive an email with final steps on Identity Verification.

Step 3: Create your Ad

1. Sign in to your Google Ads account
2. You will begin the process by writing the copy on how you would like your ad to appear or the graphic for your completed ad when Google pulls up search results.
3. Google is then going to ask for your organization's website, from there you will be able to create ads on the Google Ads landing page.



TEXT MESSAGING

Basics of Text Messaging:

Relatively new to the digital marketing mix is text messaging. Text messaging is an extremely effective method of engagement. If you have the budget and list available to run a text messaging campaign, it can add value to your existing efforts.

- 90% of texts are read in the first 5 minutes
- 5x the click through rate of email
- 12x the conversion rate of email

How You Can Use Text Messaging

Building your Housefile SMS List:

- Start Early - it takes time to acquire phone numbers of users who have opted-in to receive texts from your organization. Incorporate your short code into all digital media platforms such as your website, social media bios, and email to encourage opt-ins (example: include “Text FREEDOM to 80810” on your home page).
- Make sure to consult with your legal team to ensure you are following all legal guidelines on opt-in language as you begin building your housefile SMS list, opt-out language (such as include Stop2end at the end of a text) and your links include proper disclaimer language
- Keep your audience engaged - make sure to send to your audience consistently without overwhelming them. As you send, try new and engaging content to add variety and to keep everyone engaged.
- Track your conversions and costs using UTM tagging on all of your links. Create opt-in keywords for specific goals and occasions (ex. Text VOTE to 80810, Text ACTION to 80810, Text WIN to 80810). This will help you track the success of each campaign.

Prospect, Fundraise, or Get Out The Vote through Peer-to-Peer (P2P):

Peer-to-Peer (P2P):

P2P text messaging is for reaching users who have not opted-in to receive your messages. This requires messages to be manually sent by volunteers to comply with all FCC and TCPA guidelines. The vendor prices often fall in the range of 4-12 cents for this service. P2P texting is generally more expensive, but does not require users to have previously opted-in to receive texts.



Since these users are new to your audience, it can sometimes help to send more visually engaging MMS messages – allowing you to send videos, pictures, audio clips, or GIFs and can include more characters than a standard SMS message. Some vendors also have options for individuals to reply to the message with a keyword to donate.

Best Practices for Texting

- Make it personal, include a merge tag that will fill in their name. Have a conversation – don't always send copy that sounds like you're talking at the recipient. Experiment with informal copy and make it seem more personable and conversational.
- Don't overdo it. While text lists can be sent too often, it's important to gauge the health of your list and not send too frequently.
- Follow-up (again) – sending follow up messages is an effective way to re-engage with people who may not have read or even opened your previous message. If you see it's working well with other people in your audience, try resending with slightly updated copy to non-responders.
- Test your message. Sending messages costs money, and we understand resources are limited. Send test messages to a smaller sub-section of your audience to see what performs best. Once you have a winner, send it to the rest of your list.
- Plan ahead – knowing important dates in advance can help you plan your sends. Put together a calendar and schedule your messages no more than a couple days in advance.
- Give a clear call-to-action, this helps your audience know exactly what you expect from them and increases the likelihood of them following through.
- Be concise.
- Text-to-donate. Some vendors support creating profiles where your users can reply with a donation amount and it is automatically deducted from their payment method on file. It's important to remove as many barriers as possible to make it easier for your supporters to give.

Peer-to-Peer (P2P):

P2P text messaging is for reaching users who have not opted-in to receive your messages. This requires messages to be manually sent by volunteers to comply with all FCC and TCPA guidelines. The vendor prices often fall in the range of 4-12 cents for this service. P2P texting is generally more expensive, but does not require users to have previously opted-in to receive texts.



SMS Copy Rules for Fundraising or Get Out The Vote (GOTV) Texts

- Make sure you use the correct character count. SMS supports a maximum of 160 characters, including the link and opt-out language (Stop2End). Without the link and opt-out language, you have approximately 133 characters for your copy.



Pro Tip: Watch out for emojis and check with the SMS platform you are using – they can sometimes count as more than one character.

Use urgency in the copy (specific times usually work best). Using deadlines for fundraising works well, but be careful using deadlines for GOTV texts unless they match up with your state's legal deadlines.

- Examples:
 - 1 HOUR
 - MIDNIGHT
 - EXPIRES AT 11:59 PM
 - ONLY FOR THE NEXT X HOURS or X MINUTES
 - Support NOW
 - Early Voting Ends TOMORROW
- Don't waste characters. Every letter you save gives room to strengthen copy elsewhere. Examples:
 - President > Pres
 - And > &
 - You have > You've
 - They are > They're
- Only use one call-to-action and make it clear where the user needs to click. Examples:
 - Donate NOW: [link]
 - Donate HERE: [link]
 - Contribute NOW: [link]
 - Find Your Polling Place HERE: [link]
 - Register to Vote NOW: [link]
 - RSVP TODAY: [link]



➤ Use Attention-Grabbers. Examples:

- Get on the list
- You've been selected
- Membership
- Breaking record
- Short of goal

➤ Create custom, shortened links for tracking purposes. This allows you to determine which copy is performing best and track the returns for each campaign.

➤ Fundraising Examples:

- [COUNTY] GOP ALERT: Your membership EXPIRED, {FIRST_NAME}. We need you to renew NOW so we can STAND UP to the Left. 1 HOUR LEFT >>
- It's Ryan from [COUNTY] GOP. Spots for the America First 1000 Club are filling up FAST, {first_name}. Don't miss out! Act NOW:
- Is Joe Biden a failure? 1 HR to grade his job performance. We can't trust the media for the truth, so we're counting on YOU. Act:

➤ GOTV Examples:

- NJ VOTER ALERT: It's Election Day and polls are officially open! Do your civic duty & GO VOTE! Find your Polling Place HERE:
- TEXAS: with your vote on May 1st you'll send a STRONG REPUBLICAN to Washington. Are you ready to vote? Register to vote NOW:
- TOMORROW is the FINAL day of Early Voting in New Mexico. Find your Polling Place NOW and go secure your vote TODAY



WEBSITES

Basics of Websites

Your website should act as the central hub for your county party with a clearly defined donation button and an easily accessible form on the homepage to collect sign-ups from visitors who come to your site with the intention of getting involved.

Aside from a donate button, and an email capture form featured prominently on the homepage, there is no right way to structure a county party website. There are several types of pages that a county party may or may not want, depending on your specific resources and priorities. These include:

- Homepage (Required)
- About Page
- Volunteer/Get Involved Page
- Issues Page
- News Page
- Events Page or Calendar
- Donation Page (Link to WinRed)
- Contact Page
- Elected Officials Page
- Privacy Policy (Required)
- Terms and Conditions (Required for Blast Texting)
- Landing Page Template (to create landing pages for fundraising or other efforts)

When choosing which pages your county party needs, the most important thing to prioritize is flexibility, ensuring your entire website is easily edited by county party staff without requiring a website developer's time.

Remember that the more pages that are added to a website, the more your county party's audience will be divided among those pages, driving less eyeballs to the most important content.

It's also important to be mindful that each page can be a liability if not properly maintained and updated. Events and News pages should not be empty or outdated – each requires substantial staff time to maintain.

Website Best Practices

Tracking & Security:

- Setup Google Analytics, Google Tag Manager and tracking pixels from major advertising platforms to help monitor website traffic for data analysis and reporting. This helps determine who is visiting your website and which content best resonates with your visitors.



- Make sure links to your website include a description and an image when shared on social media using a tool like Yoast. You can use Facebook's Debugger tool and Twitter's Card Validator to check this. (See pages 37-39 for more information on using these tools).
- Confirm your SSL certificate is functioning correctly (a lock icon should appear next to the URL).
- Include a favicon, which is the small image located on the tab when your website is open usually a condensed version of your logo.

Content:

- The front page of your website should be visually appealing with a pronounced donation button and a form for visitors to input their information into. Include high-quality photos and/or videos.
- Include a latest news section, blog section or social media feed where visitors can see the latest updates and events from the organization.
- Include links to your social media accounts on your website.

Forms:

- There should be several locations throughout your website where people can enter their information to receive emails from your county party. These forms should include first name, last name, email, zip code and phone number.
- All forms, when entered, should redirect to a thank you/donation page. Set up auto-responder emails so that when a visitor fills out a form on your website they automatically receive an email welcoming them.
- Ensure all data that is collected through the forms on your website are being added to your ESP and that UTM tracking is working on your forms so you can track exactly where sign-ups are coming from.
- Include form validation. Forms should include certain requirements to keep bots and other bad actors from crashing your website. Best practices include character limits for boxes, requiring an @ in email addresses, a specific number of digits for phone numbers and zip codes and requiring at least 2 characters in the first and last name.

Legal:

- Include a privacy policy and terms of conditions at the bottom of the page.
- Include mobile terms and conditions if you have an SMS program.



Advanced Pro-Tip: Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization is the process of increasing traffic to your website by improving your ranking in search engine results, such as Google. Web pages with higher rankings will appear more frequently in search results, leading to increased traffic.

Best practices:

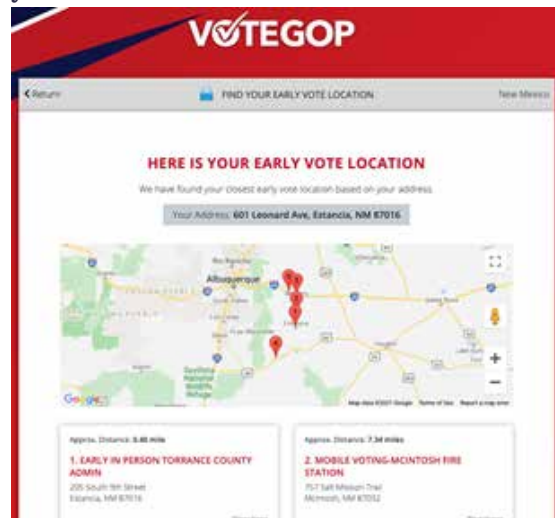
- Create a search-engine-friendly title. For example, the home page should be optimized to either the name of the county party or a candidate.
- Make sure the name of the page appears in the URL (not applicable on the home page), the header of the page, in the SEO description, and several times in the body copy.
- Enter the keywords into the Yoast section of the website. If the plug-in is installed, this should be near the bottom of the page when you are editing it.
- Make sure your pages follow a proper structure. For example, if your About page includes interior pages on each issue, those page URLs should look like this:
site.com/about/second-amendment.
- Post press releases or other updates to the News section of your website on topics you want people to know about, like important issues. Then ensure you define keywords and fill out the proper fields and define the correct structure as outlined above. This allows interested voters to more easily find you and shows search engines your website is not dormant and is actively being updated.
- Write with authority and at a reading level most people can understand. Google and other search engines can recognize when you are writing empty content and trying to use the keyword as much as possible. Your content is unique to your organization or campaign, write in a way that establishes this authority and ranks you as a top source for this specific information.
- One way of establishing relevance and authority is to cross-link to other content across your website and offsite, such as news articles or the GOP.com website when applicable.



Advanced Pro-Tip: Use Vote.GOP to Get Out The Vote

How Can Vote.GOP Help Your Campaign?

- Connect your voters with up-to-date election information.
 - Get Out The Vote by connecting your supporters to information specific to them and their locality – including election deadlines, voter forms, and polling locations.
 - Vote.GOP is always on, live, and consistently updated based on county-specific election deadlines and policies.
 - Supporters can register to vote, request a ballot, look up their registration, or find their polling location after they enter their information on Vote.GOP.



- Track the success of your Get Out The Vote Campaign:
 - Each campaign has an individual tracking link for Vote.GOP that will record all information input by voters who use your custom link.
 - Your campaign will have a custom dashboard that is updated every half hour, allowing you to generate a report of actions taken using your personalized link.
- Vote.GOP is available to all Republican campaigns. Set up is simple – just reach out to RNC Digital and we'll get your campaign up and running.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media Basics

Using social media is a great way to help expand your fundraising efforts and amplify your message. Posting to platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can help your supporters feel connected to you and your cause, creating a grassroots network of people ready to join in the fight.

Each platform has its own unique use cases, and focus. Keys to maximizing success begin with:

- Knowing your platform.
- Tailoring your content to the platform.
- Posting frequently to keep your audiences engaged.



RNC Pro-Tip: Graphics

The RNC has a creative team which works within the digital department that can help with graphics requests. Reach out to your Regional Digital Director to submit a request. The typical turnaround time is 48 hours, depending on the specific request and total volume.



Facebook

Facebook is a grassroots heavy platform that has several features to help you get the message out, including live video streaming capabilities, groups for your most engaged supporters, dedicated pages for your events, and more. Follow some of these platform specific tips below to increase engagement:

- Engage with voters and volunteers by responding to their positive comments or “reacting” to them.
- Go into your page’s settings and ensure you’re sorting comments by “most relevant.” This will push that positive content to the top if you consistently engage.
- While you’re on the settings page, change the profanity filter to strong and upload a custom list of banned words to help you moderate any comments from trolls.
- Create a Private, Invite-Only group for your most dedicated supporters (usually volunteers and staffers you trust). Give them access to information early (when it isn’t mission critical) and ask them to help engage with positive content and share posts.
- Grow your list by posting petitions encouraging people to sign them. Post video and high quality photos/graphics, visuals typically get more engagement than just text alone.

X (The Platform Formerly Known as Twitter)

X is focused primarily on news and commentary. It is a platform that consists mostly of reporters, politicians and “influencers” – not voters. You should Post often, but tailor your content to the audience.

- X is fast paced and real time – it’s fine to plan and schedule content, but be ready to have a different conversation every day and follow the trends.
- Everything on the platform is a discussion, use an authentic voice. post often. It’s not uncommon for accounts to post several times per day.
- Use a mix of plain text and visuals.
- Remember, X is very public. Stay on message, make sure you’re logged into the correct account, and absolutely do not engage in any fights, especially with trolls.



Instagram

Even though it's owned by Facebook, Instagram caters to a much younger audience and is focused on high quality content

- Unlike the other platforms, it is much easier to over post on Instagram. Timing is key, it's okay to go a couple days without posting, especially to your feed.
- Since you don't have to post as frequently, prioritize high-quality content. Professional photos, on-trend stories that share an "on the ground" look into your daily operations, etc.
- Share your feed posts to your story for more engagement
- You can't add a link in posts directly, update the link in your bio and reference "Link in bio" in your posts to drive users to take action.
- Instagram stories are the best tool for broadcasting to followers.



Social Media Best Practices

Following these steps will ensure that you are getting the most out of your social media campaigns.

- **Keep Your Feed Updated and Interesting**
 - Make sure to post at least a few times or more per week.
 - Use a healthy mix of news content and more organic “on the ground” posts (events, pictures of volunteers, personal candidate photos, etc.).
 - Create a content calendar so you never miss important dates.
 - Photos and videos work best. Always use high quality photos and graphics, but videos can be shot on a phone and perform best when they are direct to camera or highlighting supporters.
- **Be Interactive**
 - Quote tweet to jump on board a popular tweet and add your own commentary.
 - Keep an eye out for good op-eds and when posting, make sure to tag the author in order to increase engagement .
 - Take advantage of mentions and hashtags.
- **Know what works and what doesn't**
 - Use metrics to easily measure what is working.
 - Review your feed at least once a week to see what is doing well.
- **Timing Matters**
 - Set up Google alerts and alerts for all of your social media accounts.
 - Live tweet big events.
- **Nuts and Bolts**
 - Make sure your website link is visible in the “about” section.
 - Write a page bio that is consistent with other materials and across social channels.
 - Cover photos (the picture at the top of your Facebook and Twitter bios) crop differently on desktop and mobile, make sure they don't cut off any people or important information.
 - Set up a legal approved disclaimer on the back end of your Facebook page and website.

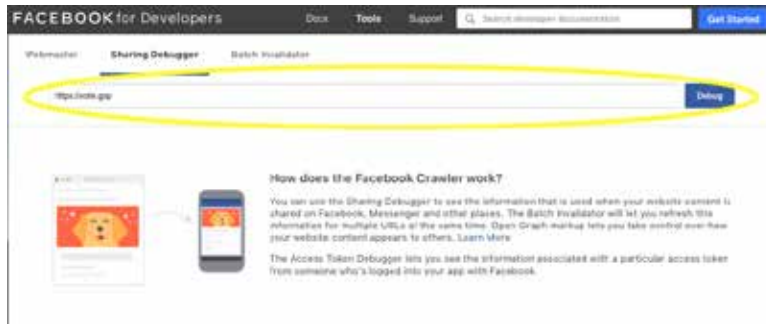


Advanced Pro-Tip: Facebook Debugger and X Card Validator

Use Facebook Debugger and X Card Validator to make sure that the links in your social media posts will look clean and polished. These tools help you control what other people see when pages from your website are shared on social media.

▶ How to use Facebook Debugger:

Step 1: Go to developers.facebook.com/tools/debug/ and enter your link into the box at the top (highlighted in the image below).



Step 2: Once you enter your link into Facebook's debugger tool, you can see what will display when you share your link on Facebook. Check to make sure your image and preview text looks correct. Dimensions for images should be 1200 x 628.




Step 3: If anything doesn't look correct on Facebook's preview, you can scroll down to view all the information that is being used to generate the preview. You can use this information to make any changes you need to the webpage you are sharing.



➤ How to use X Card Validator:

Step 1: Go to cards-dev.twitter.com/validator and enter your link into the box. Make sure you include “https://” at the beginning of your link when you input it into X Card Validator.

 Developer

Card validator

Card URL

Preview card

Step 2: Next, check to make sure your preview image and text looks correct in the preview. Preview Images should be a 16:9 ratio (1200 x 675).

Card preview



Step 3: If there are any issues with your preview, you can look at the log below to troubleshoot the problem before you update your web page.



Log

```
INFO: Page fetched successfully
INFO: 34 metatags were found
INFO: twitter:card = summary_large_image tag found
INFO: Card loaded successfully
WARN: this card is redirected to
https://secure.winred.com/rnc/contribute
```

- Once there you can copy and paste the link of what you plan on sharing in a Facebook post to see what image auto populates for that link.
 - Preview Images are 1200 x 675.
- These tools generate a report that will tell you exactly why Facebook or X pulled that particular image for the link.
- Once you add a link to your post on Facebook, a preview image will populate. You can then delete the text URL and the preview image linked to your website will still stay on your post.
 - Deleting the text URL allows you to use UTM tagging on your link without having to leave the long tracking link visible in the text of your post.



EMAIL MARKETING

Email Marketing Basics

Email marketing is a cornerstone of digital. Investment in acquisition efforts and list hygiene are critical to building and maintaining this investment.

Email marketing is still a powerhouse for digital. By building up your housefile of engaged supporters, you will be able to continually engage with them, solicit volunteers and raise money. Investing in the growth and maintenance of your housefile is crucial to your digital operation.

How to Grow Your Housefile Email List

Consistently growing your housefile is critical to building a strong digital fundraising and voter outreach program. Prospecting and list-building can be done through paid digital advertising, peer-to-peer texting, list-rentals, and organically through your website or social media.

Paid Digital Ads

Digital ads are often the largest source of new emails for a campaign or county party because it is the most scalable. Facebook and Google Search are the best digital ad platforms for prospecting initially. Generally, paid ads don't have positive returns immediately, but see high returns over time. This allows you to invest earlier and continue re-investing to grow your list and, in turn, fundraising operation.

Peer-to-Peer Texting (P2P)

Peer-to-Peer texts are messages that are sent one at a time so that you can reach people who have not previously opted-in to receive texts from your organization. Through P2P texting, you can directly contact individuals with a link that directs to a petition form or a fundraising page to have them sign up and opt-in to your housefile email or SMS list.

Email List Rentals

Email list rentals allow you to send your content and fundraising link to a different organization's housefile email list. In an email list rental, your organization will pay a fee, percentage of profit, or fee per sign-up to the vendor/organization that you're sending your email content to. Email rentals allow you to make a profit on the front-end of prospecting while also growing your housefile email list. Emails gained through list rentals are often the most valuable emails you can prospect.

Organic List-Building

While the majority of your list-building will come through paid channels such as ads, P2P, or list rentals, you can also use your website and current following on social media to begin bringing in new emails.



To collect new emails on your website, your organization should have a clear form on the homepage and throughout your website where visitors can input their first name, last name, email, zip code, and phone number. You can also use social media to post petitions, surveys, or requests to donate to encourage your current following on social media to sign up and join your housefile email list.

Email Marketing Best Practices

Copy Best Practices:

- Utilize surrogates as email senders.
- Perform different tests to see what is working.
- Be creative with your senders.
 - Ex.) “Maddie from MO GOP,” “Texas Voter Alert” or “Official Notice from FL GOP”
- Utilize Subject lines AND preview text.
 - Ex.) Subject Line: Your Sustaining Membership; Preview Text: Is about to expire.
 - Ex.) Subject Line: It’s official; Preview Text: Voter Registration is now live in Montana!
- Stress URGENCY.
 - Ex.) “If you don’t renew before the deadline, your status will be permanently marked as LAPSED.”
 - Ex.) “There’s no time left to waste. Make your Election Day Plan to VOTE right now and ensure you’re ready to Vote Red TOMORROW!”
- Clear and Early Call to Action.
 - Ex.) [PLEASE SIGN NOW >>] or [CONTRIBUTE NOW >>]
- Link often and use UTM tagging on your links.



Email Sending and Deliverability Best Practices

A key element of your email program is monitoring your deliverability and list health. It is critical that you monitor your list health to avoid hurting your email sending reputation. Below are best practices for sending emails so that your deliverability and reputation are not harmed.

Selecting an Email Service Provider (ESP):

- An Email Service Provider is a tool that allows you to send emails from your domain out to a large list of emails. Some ESPs you may already be familiar with include MailChimp, Constant Contact, and Campaign Monitor, but there are many other options to fit your specific needs.
- When choosing an ESP it's important to consider how prices might change as your email list grows, reporting options, and customer service. RNC Digital is happy to help answer any questions about different ESP options.

Email Sending Techniques and Practices:

- Warming up an Email IP Address: When sending out your first email in a while or using a new ESP, it is critical that you gradually warm up your email list to avoid any deliverability issues.
 - Don't: Send to your full list en masse. Sending to your full list on a new or unengaged IP can severely harm your sender reputation. Email providers will view this as suspicious and send emails from your domain straight to spam folders.
 - Do: Segment your list down to a few hundred people to gradually build a reputation. Then you can begin to roughly double the volume every day.
 - Do: Segment your list into those who are most engaged (such as users who have opened your emails in the last 30 days). Then you can begin to send to this segment more often.

Email Deliverability: The ultimate goal once you begin sending is making sure your emails hit potential voters or donor's primary inbox rather than their spam folder. There are several factors that play into this but follow these steps to maximize deliverability:

- Consistency: Whether it be once a week or twice a week, being consistent in emails will go a long way in keeping people engaged.
- Segmentation: Your most engaged email addresses (those who open, click links frequently or who have donated) should be receiving more emails than unengaged users.
- Content: Emails that contain excessive capitalization, spam trigger words (such as "act now" "click here" "instant" "limited time"), and special characters will have an increased chance of being marked as spam.

List Health: The more users that open your emails, the greater your sender reputation will be. Organic sign-ups will always be the strongest, most engaged audience in comparison to a purchased list.

- RNC Digital is happy to take a look at your overall list health and help pinpoint improvements that could be made and next steps for growing your list.



The background is a solid red color. It features a pattern of white stars of varying sizes, some of which are slightly tilted. On the left side, there are several horizontal rows of white chevrons pointing to the right. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

DIGITAL IN ACTION: FUNDRAISING RUNDOWN

DIGITAL FUNDRAISING STAGES

Stages

Stage 1: Building

Stage 2: Growth

Stage 3: Expansion

Above is a breakdown of the digital fundraising life cycle. There are three stages, but this process is continuous. Once you've reached Stage 3, you should simultaneously start over from Stage 1 to help constantly improve your fundraising operation.

Stage 1 - Building

Once you've completed the initial steps of selecting an ESP, setting up your email lists and creating an account on a donation platform like WinRed, Stage 1 begins.

The primary focus in Stage 1 is list building and audience acquisition. Building your list initially is critical in the beginning, but as you grow your fundraising operation and need to increase your reach, revisiting Stage 1 in the future will allow you to continually expand to new audiences.

In the beginning, it's critical to establish performance metrics (opens, clicks, etc.) and set attainable goals (emails acquired, dollars raised, etc.).

Initial Steps

- Setup your donation platform:
 - Create an account on WinRed. Make sure you have everything set up and ready before you start a digital fundraising campaign. This requires FEC and other legal information as well as creative assets (photos, logo, copy, etc).
- Research and select an ESP:
 - Start researching and select an ESP that meets your current and future needs. Your ESP will help to provide insights on how to reach your goals as you begin email marketing campaigns. A good ESP should provide you with analytics on deliverability, open rate, and click-through rate. You can utilize these metrics to refine your program in later stages.
 - When you set up your ESP, ensure any form sign-ups you receive, whether through social media posts, your website, or other mediums, seamlessly enter into your housefile email list in your ESP. This ensures you don't miss any potential opportunity to raise money from the new emails you have acquired.



➤ Start your email list:

- Begin with an initial assessment of any email lists already in your possession. Organically build your list by utilizing your full network. Start with people you know and ask them to forward your message to others.

Goals

- Establish initial goals and key performance metrics you want to hit.
 - Begin UTM tagging all emails, social media content and other links you send out so that you can track which platforms and content are performing best.
- Establish a regular email schedule.
 - Create a content calendar to help you set a monthly email schedule that allows for copywriting approval and set up. Make sure this calendar includes important holidays and dates you can fundraise off of. Missing important dates could result in a potential loss of money.
- Warm-up your IP address and new email addresses acquired:
 - When you first start sending to your email list again, make sure to warm-up your IP address and email list so that you avoid any deliverability issues.
 - Don't blast your full email list all at once. You should segment your list into smaller audiences and send to a list of people who are most engaged (such as users who have opened your emails in the last 30 days) a few times a week.
 - Sending to your most engaged emails more frequently, will help strengthen your email reputation.
 - As you acquire new emails, you should try to get them to engage with your emails before you add them to your full housefile list. One great way to increase engagement and warm-up new emails is to create a welcome series.
 - A welcome series is a series of automated emails that includes soft-asks, such as petitions or surveys, to try to get new emails to engage with you before you move them into your full housefile list and ask them for donations.
- Create an acquisition plan.
 - Every day you are not collecting emails is a missed opportunity for future revenue. Paid efforts are preferable, we will discuss this in Stage 2, but during this stage, you should start with organic.
 - Organic efforts for acquisition
 - Create surveys to post them on your website and social accounts to gain new email sign-ups
 - When hosting events, use online forms to collect all RSVP info, allowing you to add their email and other information to your housefile. This not only grows your list, but also creates a segment of users who are likely to attend future events or volunteer.



Best Practices

- Enable 2-factor authentication (2FA) on your ESP to ensure the safety of your email program.
- Enroll in WinRed as your donation platform. WinRed has several features that allow you to create forms that convert and raise more money.
- Keep your audience engaged by emailing them regularly.
- Use creativity with your email asks and keep up with the news cycle.
- Make your content personal and have a conversation with your email list - just don't overdo it, especially at the beginning.
- Ensure all links in your emails are UTM tagged to keep track of where money is coming from, where people are clicking, and what campaigns are successful.

Stage 2 - Growth

The next stage of digital fundraising is focusing on continuing to grow your housefile email list and identifying areas for improvement in your digital fundraising program. By this stage, you should have developed more clear performance metrics that you are consistently using to monitor success, selected an email service provider, and established a process through which you continually clean your housefile list.

In this stage, you can begin to focus on list segmentation and other creative ways to see better engagement from your housefile email list. You will also continue focusing on prospecting efforts to grow your housefile email list.

Prospecting through digital advertising, such as Facebook ads or Google Search ads, will likely be the highest source of new emails because these platforms offer the most scalability. Another avenue for prospecting is through list rentals through a vendor or a list exchange with another county party or aligned advocacy group.

While pursuing paid prospecting efforts you should remember to use organic methods as well. You can use your current social media following to grow your email list by posting a link to a petition form. You should also ensure your website has clear forms on the homepage and throughout to collect emails.



You should always be looking for ways to improve your current email deliverability and regularly monitoring your list health for things such as bounce and unsubscribe rates.

It's also important to identify existing recurring donors to ensure they keep giving and actively find ways to turn your most engaged supporters into recurring donors.

Initial Steps

- Track key performance metrics:
 - Fundraising metrics include: Cost Per Action (CPA), Average Donation, Lifetime Value, Return on Investment (ROI).
 - Email metrics include: Bounce Rate, Unsubscribe Rate, Delivery Rate, Unique Open Rate, Unique Click Rate.
- Continue acquisition efforts:
 - There is no stage of your digital fundraising program where you should stop prospecting. You should maintain a budget dedicated to paid efforts for prospecting new emails for your housefile list.
- Evaluate your email list health:
 - Identify and address any deliverability issues, monitor unsubscribe and bounce rates, and clean your email list regularly.
Watch out for low delivery rates. This could signal bad list health and require a list cleaning. If a low delivery rate continues, it can hurt your email reputation and make it more difficult to get into the inboxes of your supporters.

Goals

- Create segments within your email list:
 - To increase the engagement with your emails and draw in new donors, you should segment your list into active donors, lapsed donors, and prospects.
- Diversify your online fundraising programs:
 - Create different plans with content geared to specific groups in order to keep active donors engaged, re-engage lapsed donors, and convert prospects into active donors.
 - Plans can include membership programs for active donors or programs geared specifically to recurring donors.
 - Plan to reach out to key surrogates to use as senders for your emails.
 - Create different landing pages that match with the content of the different campaigns you are running.



- Explore list share agreements:
 - Use list exchanges or list rentals to continue prospecting and expand your efforts done through digital advertising and organic methods.
- Fully integrate acquisition to donor conversion funnel:
 - Minimize friction in the process of taking a new prospect gained through acquisition efforts and engaging with them through your housefile email program so that they become a recurring donor to your program.
- Identify and use CRM tools that will make this process as efficient as possible.

Best Practices

- Continue to update your content calendar for email and social media.
- Implement Google Analytics on your website to track what content is generating the most engagement.
- Use email list rentals to grow your housefile email list. Emails gained through list rentals are some of the most valuable emails you can acquire.
- Run ongoing Google Search advertising on key search terms.

Stage 3 - Expansion

During this phase, you should be focusing on identifying and engaging your recurring donors. Look for creative ways to enhance the donor experience and incentivize individuals to give more and more frequently.

This is also a good time to re-evaluate your ESP and ensure they are still meeting your needs. Are their tools still helping you keep track of important analytics? Is there any friction that makes it harder to continue growing your list? If not, great. If so, find a new ESP and keep sending.

You should also be continuing your prospecting programs and monitoring them to ensure you have a positive ROI.

Initial Steps

- Continue all the online fundraising campaigns established in the first two stages:
 - You now can focus on establishing creative programs that will ensure fundraising success.
- Continue utilizing list rentals and shares to grow your email list.
- Identify larger fundraising partners for revenue-sharing fundraising efforts:
 - Now that you have your list built up, you can identify larger fundraising partners that you can do a revenue share with. Reach out to congressional, Senate, and other campaigns to create new fundraising opportunities together. This is a great time to look into digital fundraising programs like contests with some of the most popular politicians in your county.
 - Take advantage of donation features such as slates and upsells involving multiple candidates/committees.



Goals

- Grow your recurring donor base:
 - Ask your active donors to make a recurring donation, not just a one time donation.
- Find creative ways to improve the recurring donor experience:
 - Come up with new fundraising content ideas.
 - Example: A sweepstakes where supporters donate to be entered to win two free VIP tickets at an event or a conference call with surrogates that supporters have to donate \$5 to join.

Best Practices

- Try A/B testing fundraising copy to see what works best for your donors. Get creative and see what your audience responds best to.
- Keep up your UTM tagging on all digital channels for performance tracking and analysis. These analytics will help make crucial decisions about which programs are and are not working. You should be learning more and more about your lists every day to ensure the future success of your fundraising operation.



Anecdotes

Here are some examples of how county parties have employed some of these strategies in their digital program, specifically in growing their lists, and fundraising.

Illinois GOP

- Ran list exchanges with “Vote No to the Progressive Income Tax” and netted IL GOP over 20,000 emails.
- Employed organic efforts engaging those opposed to defunding the police. This gained nearly 4,000 emails via petitions.

Growing the Digital Program in Nevada

- Spent at least \$1,000 a month on social media ads.
- Used petitions and surveys to gain emails.
- Sent out 1-2 emails per day, using a targeted list.
- Started an SMS opt-in program.
- Utilized list exchanges to acquire additional new emails.

Washington State GOP

- Fundraising through digital efforts:
 - 2018 - 1,410 donations = \$83,285
 - 2019 - 1,747 donations = \$75,795
 - 2020 - 9,743 donations = \$409,720
- Membership - March
 - 933 donations = \$30,518
 - 1,002 donations = \$37,625
- Jay Inslee - Window Clinger
 - 327 Donations = \$10,000



Use Data to Enhance Your Digital Efforts

County parties can utilize data in a variety of ways to improve or supplement digital efforts. First, utilizing targeted audiences to ensure the intended group is reached. You can use data to create audiences based on location, behavioral information/interest targeting, issue-based modeling, vote history, vote method, vote frequency, and several other combinations.

Second, utilizing AB/EV (absentee ballot/early voting) data to guide digital GOTV audiences and lists is a great way to save money on active ad campaigns by scrubbing those who have already returned a ballot, or to serve tailored chase creative to those who have requested an absentee ballot. You can also use this data to remove individuals who have voted early from your active GOTV ad campaigns, as you no longer need to be talking to those individuals.

Data can also be utilized to inform key target areas. For instance, on Google, you can no longer utilize first party data (a list that your county party would provide and upload to Google); however, you can utilize your own zip code list to identify which areas are best to serve your ad. This will help you identify zip codes that lean GOP or swing voters and exclude heavy Dem areas.

The aforementioned examples are a high-level overview of how data can inform digital strategy. Ensuring your digital and data operations work together is critical and can help in ways beyond what is included in this document.



SUMMARY

Utilizing these tips and best practices will help your team run an effective digital program. One of the biggest advantages of digital is measurability. Tracking key metrics closely throughout campaigns will provide clear indications of what is working well, and which areas need to be reassessed or retooled.