



TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR POLITICAL PARTIES ON THE USAGE OF THE VIRTUAL PUBLIC SPACE FOR THE 2020 ELECTIONS

Date: 27th August, 2020

Venue: IDEG Auditorium & Zoom



This training was funded by kind courtesy of the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS USING ONLINE TOOLS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Kwami Ahiabenu, II

Tech Innovations Consultant @kwamigh

August 2020

Outline



- Understanding political campaigns
- Political Campaign Strategy
- Online Political Campaign Strategy
- Social Media Campaign Strategy
- Conclusion



- Social media(SM) now established as a key communication channel for candidates and political parties during election campaigns – Facebook, twitter, Instagram , etc linking candidates to voters, testing the pulse of voters, polling, raise funds, mobilise supports, influence public discourse and setting agenda
- Political communication – radical and fundamental change - candidates and political parties with unprecedented range of strategic options



- *Social media can offer a powerful tool to mobilise your base, recruit new members and connect with ongoing conversation on key issues*
- *It offers a cost effective mechanism to understand sentiments and issues dear to the heart of voters*
- Twitter and Facebook and messaging platform WhatsApp are now important channels for getting your messages out and connecting with your audiences
- It can serve as listening tool since it performs an important logical conversation function.
- Social Media live – presents an opportunity for candidates to interact with audiences – one-on-one basis
- Serves as a Rapid Response tool especially in crisis situation

STATE OF PLAY

- Previous - Order and bigger role of journalists and media houses
- Current state – disorder, intermediary role of journalists is diminishing
- Anyone can publish
- Given the widespread of social media tools, it is possible for anyone to communicate directly with the public

QUESTION

- What is a political campaign strategy ?

Strategy formation

- It is not recommended to have a traditional campaign strategy then try to adapt it for online
- It is important to note that both worlds co-exist and increasingly lines are blurred
- Recommendation is to fully intergrate an offline and online into one coherent campaign strategy

Understanding political Campaign Strategy

- What problem are we trying to solve
- Central message
- Target groups
- Tools in order to solve these tools
- Key factors : SWOT, Central Message, Means, Target Audience, Mobilisation, Campaign Organization, Managing Team & Volunteers, Recruitment and Fund-raising.

SWOT

- What are your political parties - strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and threats facing the party with offline and especially online?

Target Audience Analysis

- Who are they: that is target group in the voter population ?
- Where are they?
- How can we reach them?
- What are the key issues?
- What type of content do they respond to?
- Which other political parties are working on these issues and/or how are they reaching these audiences ?

Central
message

- What is your key message ?

Content

- Creative and consistent content is key.
- Be personal but not too private
- Pictures, videos and fun situations can attract audiences to your message
- **KISS** – Keep it short and simple.

Platforms

- No. 1 – facebook
- No. 2 - Twitter
- Others – Instagram, Snapchat etc
- Online platform
- Emails
- No. 1 messaging platform is WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal

Means

- Physical office - internet access plus back up, computers, standby generator equipment, etc
- Facilities to work 24 hours
- Funds for salaries or stipends
- What means do you have to implement this strategy?
- Do you have resources to pay for social media/online ads?
- Do you have social media budget?

Mobilisation

- How do you plan to galvanise your base into action ?
- Social media- has transformed traditional mobilization structures, recruitment of members, communication and interaction at increased speed.
- Virtual protest is now the norm – influencing policies creating symbolic change, highlighting political and economic issues, identifying targets of blame, and ensuring issues are kept current in the news and in the broader political conversation.
- Social media - tactical tool (a means to disseminate information, coordinate action, and publicize the cause) as well as an emotional conduit (a place to develop identity, share emotions, and symbolically construct a sense of togetherness among activists)
- (McKeon & Gitomer 2019) (Social Media, Political Mobilization, and High-Stakes Testing

Question

- Who is an online politician?

Online Campaign organisation

- Do you have a qualified well resource team, volunteers in place equipped with funds, equipment and resources?
- Do you have a functional organisation structure in place with leaderships and roles assigned ?

Managing Team & Volunteers,

- Do you have full time key team members in place across functional areas such as project management, content, creatives, graphics design, videography, photography, multimedia, etc etc

Recruitment

- How do you recruit new members?
- How can online tools help with recruiting new members?
- How can we make use of online tools to manage members database and engage with them?

Fundraising.

- How can we use social media/online tools to raise funds?
- For example, Facebook can enable your interested audience make donations using “donate button and Page Fundraisers”
- See https://web.facebook.com/fundraisers/?_rdc=1&_rdr
- SMS – short code
- Mobile Money

Exercise

- Assessing political parties and candidates social media pages/groups

SOCIAL LISTENING

The process of monitoring, listening and tracking conversations that relates to your political campaigns, e.g. track conversations or hashtags relevant to your party like #PNC, #PPP, #APC, #NPP, #NDC, #CPP, etc

Without the analysis and actionable responses, your brand cannot sufficiently meet the needs of it's audience. Social listening finds root causes behind social conversations and implements long-term strategy changes.



Why is social Listening important

It is important because with social listening:

- The audience like it when their opinions are heard/when their issues are addressed by their representatives directly.
- Keep track of your campaign growth online.
- Identify/discover new opportunities to capitalize on.
- Increase your campaign reach.

Political party in-house news/information services

- *An opportunity to insert yourself into ongoing conversations focusing on current, relevant and important issues*
- Need to undertake media and social media monitoring in order to add value to on going discussions
- Enable two-way (interactive) personal communication with audience in a deeper personal manner
- Need to put in place technical and editorial capacity in order to effectively implement this strategy

Tone of voice (TOV)

- **Tone of voice (TOV)** character of your political parties is communicate through words, both written and spoken. It's not about what you say, but rather the way you say it, and the impression it makes on everyone in your audience who reads or hears you.
- 4 primary tone-of-voice dimensions :
 - Funny vs. serious
 - Formal vs. casual
 - Respectful vs. irreverent
 - Enthusiastic vs. matter-of-fact

Exercise

- Write a short message reflecting TOV of your political party

Community Management

- Focuses on what happens after you have created and posted content on social media concentrating on clients service, social listening and actively engaged in discussion and interacting with your social media community

What is the role of Social media community Management

- Content curation, sourcing and scheduling
- Listening and engaging with your political party
Strategy and analytics
- Finding new users and interacting with them
- Engaging current community members and providing them with feedback
- Strategy for energising and developing the community

Social Media Ownership



- Ultimately social media companies are the owner of the content
- Do back up content you consider important, do not have all your political parties videos on Youtube without a back up for example
- Read terms and condidtions of the platform
- Internally, you should designate an owner of the platforms
- Develop a policy to guide set up of party related social media accounts

PREPARE

Develop a dynamic social media strategy and plan aligned to your campaign strategy

Develop a vibrant social and online team

Research and understand your target audience including segmentation

Don't invest in only one social media channel.

Clarity of communication- timely, relevant and valuable

Verify your political party and candidate social media accounts

Develop and maintain an interactive website & build up active user base

LAUNCH

Tailor your content to reach your target audience.

Videos (short videos and low on bandwidth)

Social media calendar, engagement goals, potential partners and influencers.

Attention-grabbing images are important

Not every content will go viral and it is normal

Differentiate content for each social media channel

Plan for any paid social media efforts (online, search and social ads)

GROWN

Remember to make use of social media content curation tools

Promote your social media handles on all info and comms materials as well as at events

Use word of mouth to grow your followers as well as contests

Separate your political party social media account from your personal one

Develop a strategy for Crisis Communication and PR blunders

Ask your followers for feedback and be responsive to their queries

Set up social media tracking and monitoring tools

Challenges



- The promise of positive and normative usage of social media is not always the case
- Increasingly presence of negative, offensive, or abusive behaviours both as comments and posts
- Manifestation: acts of trolling, flaming, harassment, threats trolling, sybil attack (having multiple accounts), shared accounts, advertising, plagiarism, profanity, or express negative and offensive sentiments.
- Growth of online-driven radicalization.
- Real life experiences – death, injury etc

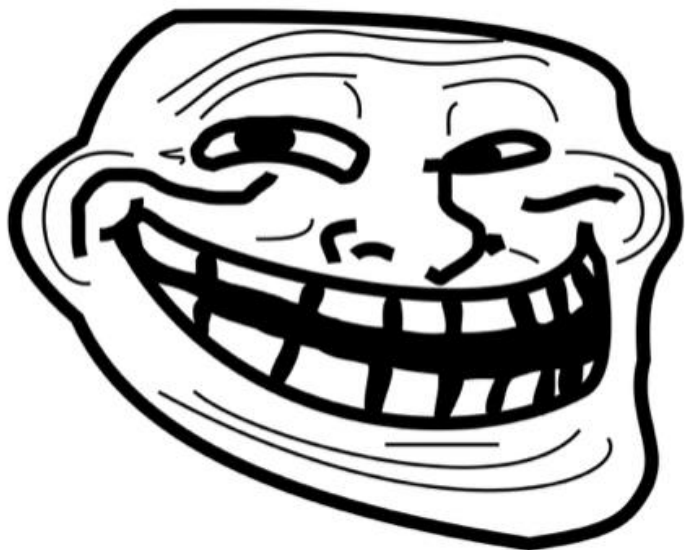
■ <https://www.advancedsciencenews.com/behavioral-analysis-social-networks/>

Challenges



- Security – social media accounts: multiple attacks
- People losing their social media accounts due to hacking
- Inappropriate content can be posted to your political party account if you do not protect it
- Two factor authentication
- Change your password frequently
- Make the password difficult
- Social media companies – Terms and Conditions – they can ban or remove or tag content which is considered to be against their T&C

Challenges



- However, positive and normative usage of these platforms is contrasted and polluted by the presence of negative, offensive, or abusive behaviours, frequently in the form of posts and comments. Depending on the environment, polluting or abusive users may perform acts of trolling, flaming, harassment, threats trolling, sybil attack (having multiple accounts), shared accounts, advertising, plagiarism, profanity, or express negative and offensive sentiments.

CONCLUSION

- Social media posts are the oxygen of any winnable political parties strategy and plan
- You can not win an elections in Ghana today without relying on social media and online tools
- As a political party you need to invest serious time, energy and effort into it in order to achieve your electoral goals

EXERCISES

1. Create a social media strategy for your political party or candidate
2. Describe how your political party social/online/digital campaign strategy is organised?
3. Draw up a list of 5 top social media accounts relevant to your political party
4. Select a recent theme from your political party and look for entry level to contribute value to an ongoing conversations.
5. Write a blog post about why a voter should vote for your political party
6. Create a Facebook page and/or Twitter page
7. Go to any political party twitter account – look for 3 good and 3 bad tweets – discuss and vote
8. Create a hashtag for your party 2020 elections slogan
9. Identify an organization with an excellent social media setup
10. Draw up a list of relevant social media influencers for your political party
11. What are the key challenges of using social media for campaigning?
12. List ways your supporters can help you win elections using social media/online tools?