

Obama marketing campaign assignment

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Just how did Barack Obama? a relatively inexperienced African American senator pull off the historic feat of winning the US Presidential elections? While the pundits may say the political tide was on Obama's side, we cannot overlook one very critical factor that played a substantial role in getting Barack Obama into the White house? the skillful creation and management of Brand Barack! Just how did Barack Obama? a relatively inexperienced African American senator pull off the historic feat of winning the US Presidential elections?

While the pundits may say the political tide was on Obama's side, we cannot overlook one very critical factor that played a substantial role in getting Barack Obama into the White house? the skillful creation and management of Brand Barack! Top industry publications including Advertising Age have taken note of the marketing lessons to be learnt from Obama's campaign. In fact Barack Obama has been named Advertising Age's Marketer of the Year for 2008! He received the honour above big names like Apple and Nike!

There is no doubt that Obama had three of the world's best political consultants directing his campaign, so let's take a look at the PR and Marketing strategies that these geniuses? Campaign Manager David Plouffe, Chief Strategist David Axelrod and Communications Director Robert Gibbs used to create history on November 4. 1. Strategic Networking- Put yourself in a position to meet the right people. When Barack Obama, the young Illinois Senator took up playing golf and participating in poker nights with some of Chicago's most influential people, it wasn't because he wanted to get away from wife Michelle and his two girls.

He did it because this was his way of meeting and learning from the movers and shakers who could help him better understand the political game. and realize his political ambitions. 2. Be seen and heard- Lift your profile. Even before his famous speech “ The Audacity of Hope” at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, there was a buzz in political circles about Barack Obama. So what did Obama do? He made his strengths as an engaging speaker work for him, making numerous speeches to various audiences ranging from community groups to carefully selected social clubs and influential professional groups. 3.

Powerful speeches- Good speakers know the power of words and how to use them to great effect. They anticipate the response of their audience to certain words or quotes. So when at the 2004 Democratic National Convention Barack Obama, a virtual unknown in US politics, roared into the public consciousness with the now famous quote, “ There’s not a liberal America and a conservative America – there’s the United States of America. There’s not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America; there’s the United States of America”, he was quite cognizant of the emotive reaction that those words would elicit.

When Obama mentions something that is very relevant to the people whom he is addressing or grabs the headlines with a memorable sound bite, it’s not by accident. 4. Create a winning Profile- How on earth could a bright, ambitious but relatively inexperienced African American senator expect to win the White House? How would Barack Obama’s handlers package him to appeal to an electorate that probably wasn’t ready for an African American president? In 2000 only 37% of Americans felt they were ready for a black
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president but that figure jumped to 59% in 2007, according to a Newsweek poll.

The 2007 survey no doubt gave Obama hope that he had a realistic shot at the Presidency but top campaign operatives also knew that there were a lot of dynamics at play in packaging Obama. Even though he was classified as African American, Barack Obama was unlike any other political candidate in US history. Obama's biracial roots (white mother, black father), middle class upbringing, Ivy league education, background in community work and his record of defying the odds to achieve the unthinkable, (he was the first black president of the prestigious Harvard Law Review. , resonated with people across racial divides. From this they created a profile of a positive, inspirational and cross-cultural candidate that people of all races and creed could relate to. 5. Surround yourself with the best people? Analysts continue to marvel at the sheer brilliance of the Obama presidential campaign, heralding the level of grassroots mobilization involved, his record breaking fundraising, effective and consistent message, successful communication strategies, effective management of media relations and the list goes on. How did he do it?

Obama surrounded himself with the best people, a fact acknowledged by Valerie Jarrett, his close friend and co-chair of his Transition Team. Obama sought to have bright, creative and experienced people who were not afraid to challenge the status quo and prove the pundits wrong. The three key figures in the top echelons of the campaign have all worked for him since 2004. Campaign Manager David Plouffe is a long-time Democratic Party campaign consultant. He is also a partner in the consulting firm AKP&D <https://assignbuster.com/obama-marketing-campaign-assignment/>

Message and Media, founded by David Axelrod, Obama's Chief Strategist and Media Advisor.

Plouffe, has been hailed by Axelrod as having done “ the most magnificent job of managing a campaign that I've seen in my life of watching presidential politics”. Communications Director Robert Gibbs who is now tipped to become Obama's White House Press Secretary ran a tight and disciplined ship when it came to managing the campaign's media relations and internal communications. Whereas there were leaks within the McCain camp, notice that the Obama campaign was able to avoid campaign leaks and public squabbles! . Strong and consistent Message: If there's one person on the planet who does not know about “ Change We Can Believe In” or never heard the phrase “ Yes We Can! ” they either live under a rock or is sadly still evolving like The Caveman. The key to the success of Barack Obama's campaign was the strength and consistency of the candidate's message? Change. Throughout the Primaries when his rival Senator Hillary Clinton pounded away at Obama's “ inexperience” for the top job, Obama stayed on message.

When the McCain campaign launched a similar attack throughout the race for the White House, Obama stayed on message, while the pundits criticized McCain for failing to stick to one solid message throughout his campaign. Despite numerous attacks from McCain? Bill Ayers, Socialist, Reverend Wright? the Obama campaign stayed on message, hammered it home and it paid off? big time. 7. Turn negatives into positives- Positive Spin. Two of the biggest challenges that seemed poised to go against Obama's bid for the presidency were: his race and his relatively limited political experience.

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But the Obama campaign was able to turn these negatives into positives. Throughout the campaign, Obama as much as possible avoided discussing race at his rallies. He purposefully avoided conveying any notion that race would seriously impair his chances of getting to The White House. Instead, he took the psychological approach of asserting his belief in the voter, daring voters to show the doubters that they are wrong? that Americans have come a long way and have moved beyond race as a deciding factor for their choice of president. I think that racial attitudes have changed sufficiently in this country that people are willing to vote for as president”, Obama told influential African American Journalist Gwen Ifill in a 2007 interview for Essence Magazine. If the Exit polls are to be believed, he was right. The inexperience factor also worked well with Obama’s message of Change. Essentially he was able to convince the voter that being inexperienced was a positive, as unlike his rivals, he was not a part of the old style politics in Washington. 8. Make the technology work for you.

The fact that the Internet played such an integral role in Obama’s campaign was no accident. Obama wanted the youth vote and was smart enough to know he would have to win them over through the medium most likely to engage them. The campaign utilized various new media that were guaranteed to reach young voters and the tech savvy? such as mobile phones and the Internet. Text messaging was therefore a homerun strategy for the campaign and the official campaign website <http://www.barackobama.com> was designed to engage the voter from all angles.

Wherever the young voters were, Obama was there across various media formats. Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, you name it. This led to the creation <https://assignbuster.com/obama-marketing-campaign-assignment/>

of more than 35, 000 local organizing groups across 50 states! David Axelrod initially announced the Obama campaign by creating a five-minute Internet video! Perhaps one of the smartest moves the Obama campaign made was to create their own online community on the website at mybarackobama.com. This enabled members to share their thoughts. Ideas and experiences throughout the campaign.

Supporters who came to the Obama rallies were asked to give the names of five relatives or friends to whom the campaign could send an invitation to join their online community. There was even a prominently placed and open invitation on the website for Hillary Clinton’s supporters to join the Obama campaign. It read, “ Welcome Hillary Supporters. Get involved”. To top it all off, the campaign ensured that their website was prominently positioned in top search engines. 9. Project your wish image- What kind of temperament or mannerism should a president have? More so, the president of the most powerful country in the world?

If you’ve been following Obama’s campaign you would certainly have noticed that the pundits and analysts showered praise upon Obama for his calm demeanor and “ presidential posture”, in the aftermath of the economic meltdown. When McCain had a knee jerk reaction to the economic crisis by announcing he would “ suspend” his campaign to head to Washington, Obama remained calm, and appeared steadier in his approach to the situation. During the debates when John McCain allowed himself to become flustered, appeared impatient and angry and referred to Obama as ‘ That One”, Obama kept his cool.

On election night when Obama appeared on stage to deliver his acceptance speech, no doubt he was happy about his historic victory but his body language was very measured and very statesmanlike. “Majestic” is how The Reverend Jesse Jackson described it. It’s not just what others say about you that contributes to your image? it’s also about what you do. The fact that he works out at the gym and eats healthy also help Obama’s image. When was the last time you saw a President jogging, working out at the gym or playing basketball?

For relaxation, Obama played a game of basketball before each of the primary elections and on the day of the US Presidential elections. The political commentators loved it! Now if that’s not a “killer” image I don’t know what is. 10. Recognize and engage your supporters. “I’m asking you to believe, not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington... I’m asking you to believe in yours”. This statement is prominent on the Obama Campaign website and it’s there for a reason. Obama’s Chief Strategist David Axelrod is credited with implementing a strategy that encouraged the participation of people.

Throughout his campaign Obama never stayed far from his supporters and sought every opportunity to engage and recognize them. Obama seldom mentioned “I” in his campaign speeches. It was always “We” and “you”. He had his own blog on the campaign website and he used it to engage his massive network of staff and volunteers. His personal thank you call to the 106-year-old lady who voted for him was a nice touch and on election night, before he made his acceptance speech, Obama took the time to first thank the people who made his victory possible.

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He wrote on his blog: “ I’m about to head to Grant Park to talk to everyone gathered there, but I wanted to write to you first. We just made history. And I don’t want you to forget how we did it. You made history every single day during this campaign — every day you knocked on doors, made a donation, or talked to your family, friends, and neighbors about why you believe it’s time for change. I want to thank all of you who gave your time, talent, and passion to this campaign. We have a lot of work to do to get our country back on track, and I’ll be in touch soon about what comes next. But I want to be very clear about one thing...

All of this happened because of you. Thank you”. It was simply signed? Barack. Note how many times he used the words “ you” and “ we”. Obama was making it clear that he valued their support and that they should take the credit for his victory. Marie Berbick-Graham is a communications specialist and freelance journalist based in Kingston, Jamaica. She is the publisher of masscommagazine. com, a news and resource website for communicators and CEO of Berbick Graham ; Associates, (<http://www.bgacommunications.com>)a communications and development consultancy based in Kingston, Jamaica. Marketing Lessons from the Obama Campaign

Microsoft partners can learn some valuable marketing lessons from Obama’s campaign successes. Here’s a list of eight that you can put to use now. *

By?? M. H. McIntosh * February 01, 2009 President Barack Obama’s \$700 million campaign budget dwarfed the marketing budget of even the biggest Microsoft partner company. But partners can pick up plenty of marketing lessons by examining what Obama did well during his 21-month presidential campaign. 1. Stick with a strategy. While his opponents kept changing

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direction, Obama had a clear strategy from the start: Leverage his community-organizing experience to build grassroots support. He stuck by this winning strategy even when things got bumpy in the primaries. I've watched many Microsoft partners repeatedly change their business-development strategies-usually before the strategy being replaced even had a chance to succeed. 2. View positioning as critical. Obama and his campaign understood early on that he needed to position himself as the candidate who could bring about the change that many Americans believed was needed. He also needed to help position his opponents as representing more of the same. He succeeded on both counts.

With thousands of Microsoft partners worldwide, you must similarly communicate why your company is the best choice. 3. Ask for e-mail addresses. E-mail is among the fastest and least expensive ways to deliver your marketing messages. Obama's campaign requested e-mail addresses at every opportunity. As a Microsoft partner, you need to do the same with every prospect and customer. 4. Recognize that database-driven direct marketing gets results. Obama started building a database of prospective voters early on. Then he communicated with them regularly, helping move them from awareness to consideration to voting for him.

You, too, need to market to a well-targeted database of prospective customers right away. 5. Tell prospects what's in it for them. People who visited barackobama.com or listened to his speeches heard Obama talk less about himself and more about the benefits they'd gain from electing him president. His campaign made offers or calls-to-action to prospective voters as well. Partners should take a similar approach, communicating benefits

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and offering calls-to-action designed to appeal to prospects for various stages in the buying process. 6.

Make it easy to respond and engage. The Obama team made it so easy for prospective supporters to engage that much of the nearly \$750 million that the campaign raised was donated \$25 at a time. Allow prospective customers to learn more about your company in the way they prefer. 7. Use both traditional and new media. The Obama campaign understood today's need to use both traditional media, like TV, radio and print, and new media, such as e-mail, blogs, twitter, Facebook, texting and IM, to get the message through. Know what media your prospects are using. 8.

Remember that shorter isn't always better. Obama's campaign understood that effective communication sometimes requires more than a slogan or sound bite. As a result, people who visited barackobama.com could find both top-line and in-depth information on topics. Besides running 30-second broadcast spots, Obama ran a prime-time TV infomercial. Many partners believe that everybody prefers shorter content. Not so. For best results, use long but easy-to-skim copy that appeals both to readers who skim and to those who want all the details before taking the next step.

It remains to be seen how well Obama will actually deliver on his pre-election promises. But the bottom line is that his campaign's marketing strategies succeeded at changing the course of American history. Using similar strategies can help Microsoft partners change their own business trajectories as well. On Inauguration day, it only makes sense to reflect back on how our new leader became President. As is evident, a number of things were

remarkable about the 2008 Presidential campaign, and many experts have reported on the adoption and widespread use of technology in determining the final outcome.

Few, however, have focused on what the Presidential campaign can teach marketing and PR professionals about effective brand building. Indeed, Barack Obama's Presidential Campaign, if viewed through a marketing lens, resulted in a perfect two-year "product" launch that created a consistent "slogan" or brand message, an empowered and passionate "consumer" base, and confirmed the importance of extended brand relationships. The Obama team even now has a wealth of consumer information with which to continue to grow the brand in Washington.

When Obama announced his intention to run for President in February 2007, there was little belief that he could actually win even the Democratic nomination. He first had to beat Hillary Clinton for the Democratic ticket, which at the time was viewed as a nearly impossible task. It was akin to Apple taking on the music industry a few years back ??? everyone knows how that turned out. Obama quickly established a consistent campaign slogan ??? "Change We Can Believe In" (later slightly altered to "Change We Need") ??? and surrounded himself with a loyal team who recited this mantra at every possible moment.

This consistent brand message throughout the entire campaign provided both a rallying point for his consumers and an effective counter to his entrenched opponents who argued that he did not have enough experience. It also provided the campaign with a brand "mission??(1)" that appealed to

their consumers, in sharp contrast to other candidates who changed their mantra with every speech. In addition, Obama and his team realized more than any prior political campaign in recent history that a grassroots community of consumers could be built through the use of technology.

Obama met early on with Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, to discuss ways to mobilize his campaign. Four years earlier, Howard Dean's campaign established the Internet as an effective way to fundraise and communicate. By 2007, political consumers had caught up with technology, and indeed, the Pew Internet & American Life Project found that 46 percent of Americans used the Internet, e-mail or text messaging to get information about the 2008 campaign or to mobilize others ??? more than the 34 percent who read newspapers daily, the 39 percent who watch cable news or the 29 percent who viewed network TV news.

The Obama campaign first built a database of brand supporters (essentially an Internet-enabled direct mail list) that the campaign then mobilized for fundraising; voter registration drives, phone banks, videos on YouTube, and posts on every social networking site. Obama and his team effectively created and empowered a core of brand consumers online to then spread the product message throughout a broader community. Finally, a key component of building any brand is responding quickly and effectively to criticism (negative “ reviews”). Once again, the Obama campaign effectively tackled bad reviews the moment they surfaced.

During the course of the campaign, the minister at a church Obama attended in Chicago, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, made a number of speeches that

contained harsh racial rhetoric. Obama himself admitted to having been a member of Reverend Wright's congregation, but immediately distanced himself from Reverend Wright. His campaign realized it was not simply enough to distance one's self, but that any negative publicity must be addressed head-on, and that the Obama brand must prove that it can maintain its message and rise above the negative press.

Obama effectively did both by tackling the difficult issue of race in his famous speech on March 18th????? the video of this speech has been viewed more than four million times on YouTube??(2). To conclude, there are a number of key takeaways from the 2008 Presidential Campaign marketing and PR professionals: Be consistent????? Companies that provide a consistent brand message that conveys the core of their product maintain a loyal base of consumers. The message does not change with trends (it may modify slightly, as when the Obama campaign changed from " Change We Can Believe In" to " Change We Need"), but is lexible enough to be widely embraced over time. Think of Nike's iconic " Just Do It" or Microsoft's recent " I'm a PC. " Build local, and then go global????? Obama's campaign was effective in part because it started at a grassroots level, and built from the ground up. A number of passionate, early adopters act as a tipping point and an effective testing ground for brands. Obama was able to put his product and his brand message out there, and receive instant feedback from a small, core group.

Empower and engage your consumers????? The best consumers feel actively engaged with a brand (their feedback is valued, they contribute to spreading the brand message and they assume some level of brand ownership as in <https://assignbuster.com/obama-marketing-campaign-assignment/>

the case of the campaign's MyBO website), and develop a passion for their product. These consumers provide feedback, reviews and spread brand awareness. The Obama campaign also leveraged new technologies and social media to make it easy for their consumers to feel empowered.

People these days are happy to engage but they need to be able to do it in less than five minutes. Actively respond to negative reviews/bad press????? Negative reviews are often underestimated by companies. An extreme example of a company not responding to negative reviews and bad press is The Sharper Image, which is now going through a messy bankruptcy partially related to poor product reviews. In a desperate move to boost sales in 2004, the company became an early retailer of air purifiers, in particular the Ionic Breeze purifier.

By 2005, air purifiers accounted for 28% of the Sharper Image's sales. A Consumer Reports article that year, however, stated that the Ionic Breeze purifier could be a health hazard for consumers as it released small amounts of ozone while in use. Sales of air purifiers for the Sharper Image tanked, and the company did little to respond to consumers about this particular product ??? there were few alternative options offered, no "bring your purifier back" campaigns, and indeed, not even an open apology to loyal consumers.

Instead, the Sharper Image funneled efforts into suing the manufacturers of the Ionic Breeze. Clearly, the Sharper Image bankruptcy is more complicated, but there is no doubt that a failure to respond to poor product reviews added to the company's demise. Of recent note, companies like Dell

are now actively responding to product criticism on outlets like Twitter. New technology can be an effective tool for marketing professional to instantly respond to any bad “press” regarding a product. Brand relationships do not end with a “purchase”????? Brands need to move beyond the point of sale as the ultimate goal. Brands that extend their consumer relationship beyond the purchase and into daily life guarantee future success. Now that Obama has secured the Presidency, his campaign did not end ??? consumers receive emails asking for input, details of current Cabinet appointments, information about upcoming events, and opportunities for community engagement. One can only imagine that with time, the Obama brand’s database of consumers will be a powerful tool for change in Washington. ??? Leah