



Case Study - Political Campaigns

Political Marketing Consultant

Jay Bedford

"A personal phone message goes a long way toward taking him or her to victory."

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Nowhere is the need for targeted communications greater nor the stakes higher than in politics. Smart politicians know that when all is said and done, people vote for people, not just parties or platforms. The more voters feel they have a personal connection to a particular candidate, the more likely they are to give him/her extra consideration - especially if they are part of the ever-growing "undecided" category.

Making that personal connection, however, is a challenge - especially in Canada where campaigns typically only last a few weeks from the writ calling for a vote to the actual election day. To solve that issue for both Federal and Provincial candidates, political marketing consultant Jay Bedford has started using broadcast voice services that allow candidates to reach out to large numbers of voters automatically - one at a time over the telephone.

The Customer

Jay Bedford is a political marketing consultant who works with the Conservative Party of Canada on a national basis and the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia locally. Jay's extensive experience as a writer and broadcaster, particularly his ability to bring a targeted message to a broad audience while still maintaining a one-to-one intimacy, have been invaluable in helping the minority party promote its agenda and its candidates since he joined the marketing effort in 2004.

Jay is a member of the Conservative Party, which first led to his being brought in. It has been his work in helping them bring out the vote and improve their candidates' positions in the elections, however, that has kept him there.

The Challenge

Unlike elections in the United States, which have fixed days and years on which they occur, elections in Canada may be called at any time by a request from the Prime Minister to the Governor General. Once the writ is dropped, there are normally only a few weeks in which to campaign before election day. This brief time period makes it difficult for new or unknown candidates to gain the visibility they need unless they already have a high profile.

Further complicating matters, particularly on the Federal level, is the widely dispersed population in some areas. Given the large geographic area with low population densities, limited campaign budgets, and short time frames in which to act, it is impossible for candidates to do the type of door-to-door campaigning they really need to do in order to establish a connection with the electorate. For candidates who are relatively unknown, this inability to make a connection becomes a particularly large barrier to winning.





Protus Voice - Political Campaign Solution

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When Jay began working with the Conservative party, he suggested broadcast voice messages as a way to overcome these issues. With this technology, a voice message from the candidate (or his/her proxy) is recorded and then pushed out via telephone to registered voters within targeted areas. It appeared to be an effective way to make that personal connection. The service he used, however, was so riddled with problems that Jay was uncertain whether the reality of voice broadcasting would be able to live up to the theory.

The Solution

In January, 2006 Jay received a call from Protus™ IP Solutions, whose Protus Voice service is used for business and political voice broadcasting throughout North America. Having been burned once Jay was leery of encountering similar problems, but he was assured that with Protus Voice his experience would be completely different and pleasurable. In fact, the salesperson gave him her personal guarantee.

"She was as good as her word," he says. "From the start Protus was there with us the whole way, helping us get the voice recordings set up, answering questions, and making sure everything worked well - even the paperwork required by Canadian law before you can do voice broadcasts. They could teach a class in customer service."

Jay has used Protus Voice several times since that initial call. The strategies have varied according to the type of campaign and the target audience's needs. For Kenzie MacNeil, a candidate in the Federal election, he set up two different voice messages using Kenzie's voice - a huge benefit to using Protus Voice. One message was aimed at answering machines. If the system reached an answering machine or voice mail, the message would begin, "Hi, this is Kenzie MacNeil. I'm sorry I missed you..." before launching into his positions on various issues. This method left the impression that the candidate had phoned the person personally. If a live person was reached, the system would automatically select a message that stated he knew how much people hate recorded messages, but what he had to say is important and it is the only way to reach enough people in time to take action at the polls.

For Provincial candidates Scott Boyd, Alfie MacLeod, and Todd Marsman, Jay used a different strategy. Answering machines and voice mail still received a "personal" call from the candidate. But if the target answered live, the recorded message was from Jay providing a reminder about the upcoming election and how the candidate was counting on that person to vote. Jay adopted this strategy because in the more densely populated areas covered in the Provincial elections, citizens were already receiving a lot of recorded calls so he didn't want his candidates attached directly to something the targets might consider a nuisance. By making the call from the candidate's office instead of the candidate himself, a degree of separation was put in place while still delivering the message.

At first, Jay says, the Provincial candidates weren't interested in using Protus Voice. "It took a lot of convincing to get them to go with it at first," Jay says. "Once they saw the results, though, they became believers. Each of them is already talking about how they can use it more effectively in the next election."

To make the illusion of a personal call more complete, all voice messages were recorded over the telephone using Protus Voice's equipment. "We thought about



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doing more of a 'broadcast quality' .wav file," Jay says. "But in the end it made more sense to go with true telephone sound so the voters thought the candidate had selected and dialed them personally. Even with the live pickups, it was warmer and less slick to use plain old telephone service sound."

For the next elections, Jay says he would like to put two or three messages out during the campaign, rather than just a single message at the end. The final one would be similar to the ones used in the past, but the others would be in a different way. "I believe a personal phone message from a candidate asking for money or help with the campaign would go a long way toward helping us take our candidates to victory," Jay says.

The Result

All of the campaigns were considered a success based on the goals set forth, especially considering that all were Conservative candidates running in largely liberal districts. Alfie MacLeod was elected to Provincial office, and Scott Boyd is now well-positioned to win a seat in the next election. On the Federal side, Kenzie MacNeil moved up from third place two years prior to second in 2006. He also is expected to win a seat in the next Federal election. Jay believes that the ability to reach out to voters in such a personal way was a strong contributing factor to these successes based on face-to-face feedback the candidates received from voters who said they'd "received their call."

Jay says there was another, unexpected benefit to using Protus Voice. "Many of the people we called in more rural districts did not have answering machines or voice mail," he says. "But they did have caller ID. When they saw our office's phone number on their missed calls, many of them called back, giving us the opportunity to present Kenzie and his positions in a more personal way, and answer direct questions. One day we received 350 calls in three hours. Four of us worked four straight hours answering them. We were actually able to turn some votes around by speaking directly with voters. Having our number, rather than the service's number, on there was as good as gold. It was a great door-opener for us."

About Protus

Protus IP Solutions – a high-growth application service provider – offers value-added voice, email and fax messaging services to businesses around the world. Our customers are involved in every industry sector, including finance, insurance, real estate, pharmaceuticals and retail. Whether they use our services across the company or for key operational requirements, our customers rely on Protus to simplify their voice, email and fax communications. We help them reach customers more effectively, process documents more efficiently, and access information with greater speed. Protus solutions are sold both directly and through a network of worldwide partners, including major service providers.

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