

MSN case study:

MSN network hooks in voters



Electoral Enrolment Centre goes online to woo voters

Campaign overview

With New Zealand's 2008 general election on the horizon, the Electoral Enrolment Centre knew online channels were critical to enticing 18-29 year-olds eligible to vote, but not enrolled.

The government organisation's media partner MEDIAEDGE:CIA was tasked with building a broadly based six-month campaign to do the job, concentrating a significant chunk of activity online and in the three-month run-up to the November 2008 elections.

In a relatively small country, like New Zealand, finding an online media partner with the critical mass to support a big ongoing campaign can be difficult. MSN, with its industry-leading news and entertainment website and million-plus users of Windows Live Hotmail and Windows Live Messenger, delivered the goods.

MSN solutions

MSN Homepage Medium Rectangle: a prominent floating tile on MSN's homepage, offering hundreds-of-thousands of impressions in single day placement. Windows Live Hotmail Medium Rectangle: a similarly proportioned floating tile in the foundation online destination for more than one million Kiwis. Windows Live Messenger Conversation Text Link. Other than sheer audience volume, the central beauty of Windows Live Messenger as an advertising medium is the certain focus and attention only text conversation delivers. A simple one-line solicitation was positioned directly beneath the message sender's text box, directing users (potentially 660,000 monthly visitors aged 15-34 years) to the campaign website. MSN run of-site and leader-board advertising: a series of ad placements on MSN's news, weather, sports and entertainment pages.

Execution

Delivering the 'general online' audience component of a national campaign spanning both traditional mainstream and digital channels, MSN's network was used to promote a simple short-copy entreaty to enrol online and check and update voter details. Click-throughs took people to a secure elections website to do what they needed to.

Reflecting the sheer size of MSN's network, an impressive volume of impressions was delivered by a mixture of flights. Specifically, three one-day MSN homepage medium rectangles delivered 1.4 million impressions, generating 2,251 click-throughs; three two-week Hotmail campaigns delivered 3.0 million impressions, generating 1,423 click-throughs; a Messenger text-link across one week delivered 7.4 million impressions, generating 9,922 click-throughs.

Results

Government policy forbids Google Analytics on government websites, which prohibited a direct assessment of traffic delivered by the MSN network to the elections website. However, for the promotional period, media agency MEDIAEDGE:CIA identified an upswing in site visitation and enrolment activity (figures unavailable).

Lessons

Reaching a large and dispersed target audience online discounts many local online media properties in a small country like New Zealand. They simply don't offer a sufficient volume of audience numbers to support a national campaign. MSN New Zealand, with two million-plus people using its network each month, offers the audience critical mass required by big campaigns.

Jodie Faulder, media group head at agency MEDIAEDGE:CIA, said she was initially sceptical of MSN's ability to deliver necessary audience volume – a suspicion springing from MSN's relative youth and Hotmail heritage. "But I've been proven wrong and MSN delivered great results, both in terms of audience delivery and cost effectiveness."

