

Modern Political Marketing:
An Analysis of Tactics, and the Changing Role of the Media

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Abstract

Political marketing is evolving. Campaigns now rely on political marketing for success in elections, without the marketing tactics they employ; their messaging would not be distributed to the voting public. In many of the political marketing models and theories, however, there is a massive omission; the role of traditional media as an overwhelmingly influential factor over the voting public, which can misconstrue and negatively impact the message of the candidate. This study analyses classical marketing tactics a political marketer uses, and examines the changing environment of traditional media with the rise of social networking.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The fundamental difference between corporate business marketing and political marketing lies in the handling of the messaging, with the media taking an active role, rather than distributing the messages in a neutral manner. The media rarely takes a stance on a corporate product, yet the media personalities can all be found freely providing passionate criticism on all the political candidates' past and current actions. The public is thus largely influenced by the bias of the media, rather than drawing their own opinions and inferences from the facts and history of the politicians. Savigny argues: "First, that the media are political actors in their own right and that management-based marketing models in politics need to account for this; and second, that the media may play a corrective function to the democratic deficiencies that these models logically entail." (Savigny, 2010, p. 1050)

The current models for political marketing are seriously flawed by the omission of the active role of the American media, and its influence upon the voting public. By combining the Three-Stage Model with an appreciation for the role of the media in political marketing, the electoral candidates could form a solid marketing plan, providing a strong formula for electoral success.

Background of the Problem

Political campaigns are an inherent component of democracy practices in our country. Candidates who run for public office must market themselves to a mass audience, sometimes the whole nation, to win an election. Candidates now face the

problem of our increasingly digital world, where the consumer looks to the media for a great deal of direction. The media is obsessed with featuring the political arena; the highlights and background on a presidential candidate starts approximately two years before the nation has a chance to vote. A campaign manager for an electoral candidates is faced with creating a marketing and advertising plan to reach a mass audience. The candidate must maintain a positive image to establish his right to attain and hold office, while also battling and managing the influence of the media. “In all political systems the media are not only shaping and influencing the political ‘message’ candidates wish to transmit: their activities are also impacting upon the democratic process more broadly (Street, 2001). Savigny points out that, “The media are not neutral actors and that includes public service broadcasters.” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1054)

Purpose of the Study

According to the primary academic literature on political marketing, there are several models for political marketing and advertising, one being the Three-Stage Model. The theories, however, are omitting the crucial role of media bias, and disregarding the influence the media has upon voters.

This study will examine the role of the media upon the voting public, and its ability to change the opinions and sway the allegiance of its viewers. The study will also address the necessity for candidates to form direct discourse with the voters, making use of all forms of social media, to bypass the negativity and persuasion of bias in traditional media. By implementing this tactic and by realizing the severity of the media’s role in the political campaign, the realm of political marketing will have a complete model for future marketing plans.

Setting for the Study

This study will be done as part of the data collection for a Senior Project at California Polytechnic State University located in San Luis Obispo, California. There will be interviews conducted with; a political science professor at Cal Poly, a market research analyst, and a current elected member of the County Board of Supervisors. The experts will all be asked the same set of questions and probes. The questionnaire will be specifically formatted to answer the following research questions, and fill in the missing pieces of previous academic literature on the field of political marketing.

Research Questions

The study used the following research questions to narrow the focus of the paper and to fill the holes in the previous academic literature on political marketing models and the role of the media. Each question was written after the academic literature on political marketing was reviewed to acquire additional pertinent and necessary data from the fields of political marketing, communications, and management for the study.

1. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe the process of political marketing and the major difficulties the political candidate faces?
2. How is marketing for a corporation versus marketing for a political candidate different? Easier or Harder? Why?
3. Can social media be implemented by a political candidate to create a well-rounded marketing plan, to gain more success in elections? What types of social media do you think would be the most effective?
4. Do you believe traditional media plays an active and crucial role in the marketing and advertising of a political candidate? Please give an example of beneficial and negative instances of the influence of the media over the voting public.
5. In your experience, does the difference between positive or negative advertising messaging make a difference in the marketing campaign of a political candidate?

Please give an example.

6. Do you feel the use of social media to provide more direct discourse between the political candidate and the voting public should be increased? Why could this be instrumental in the election process? Is two-way communication the missing component of a political marketing plan? By eliminating the negative influence and power of the media in-between the candidate and the public, does the public then form its own opinions of the candidate?

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined to assist the reader to understand the terms in the context of the study.

Three-Stage Model:

In the Three-Stage marketing model, business organizations are assumed to identify consumer demand, feed this back into the product and refine it accordingly.

Step One: Identify consumer demand, feed this back into the product and messaging and refine it accordingly.

Step Two: Inform the consumers of the changes to the product due to their demands and needs.

Step Three: Delivery of the refined product which will satisfy the consumer demand better, thus producing incrementally greater profit for the company.

The Three-Stage Model assumes “that parties are able to establish what voters want using methods that include sophisticated polling methodology and feedback from focus groups. Conceptually, the suggestion is that parties/candidates listen to (targeted) public opinion, and provide the electorate with a ‘product’ that they want, in order to achieve electoral victory.” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1052)

Organization of Study

Chapter 1 included the background of the study, purpose of the study, and a definition of terms. Chapter 2 will identify the current models and trends regarding political marketing and advertising by reviewing current literature on the subject. Chapter 3 will present the methodology of the study. In Chapter 4, the findings will be presented and organized based on the original research questions [see Chapter 1]. The data will then be compared to the current literature. Finally, Chapter 5 will include a summary of the study and recommendations for professionals in the field of political communications, public relations, political management, and political science, to create a more comprehensive, and therefore more effective, political marketing campaign, taking into account the active role of the media, resulting in a successful electoral campaign.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The review of literature focuses on the review of literature and current best-practices for political marketing, multiple marketing models, and specifically examining the omission of the power of the media from current models of political marketing.

Segments of Political Marketing

“The government’s policies are like cornflakes -- If they are not marketed they will not sell” (Franklin, 2004, p. 5) Political marketing has become an invaluable part of the discipline of politics. The definition of political marketing can be broken down into three distinct segments in its most basic form: “communications, management, and political science” (Scammell, 1999, p. 718). “Political marketing is about political organizations adapting business-marketing concepts and techniques to help them achieve their goals” (Lees-Marshment, 2001, p. 692). Political marketing has emerged in recent years as an important process for the political campaign. However, there is disagreement within the field about how political marketing should be approached, due to the numerous theories and models within the discipline. “Communications centered approaches to political marketing tend to privilege news and media management strategies; management approaches reify marketing models; while the concern of political science (broadly defined) is with the potential impact of marketing on the political process” (Savigny, 2010), p. 1050). Those managing political campaigns must decide how to approach the campaign process, taking into account the three fields which influence the discipline. “Political marketing has hitherto suffered from significant confusion

(Scammell, 1999) because it is commonly perceived to be simply about political communication, but it is a potentially fruitful marriage between political studies and marketing” (Lees-Marshment, 2001, p. 692).

Current Models of Political Marketing

The most common theory for political marketing, the Three-Stage Model, has been widely accepted and discussed in academic literature. This model for political marketing consists of three distinct steps for the candidate to follow, providing a template to achieve a market orientation and eventual electoral success. (Savigny, 2010, p. 1050)

The Three-Stage model was built by Robert Keith in 1960 with his Three-Stage Evolutionary Model and Dominic Wring’s theoretical framework for political marketing in 1997, and further elaborated upon by Egan, 1999, Lees-Marshment, 2001, and O’Cass, 2001.

The first step of the Three-Stage model is identifying consumer demand, aptly applying the data to the product, and refining it accordingly. Step two consists of informing the public of the aforementioned changes. The final step is the delivery of a refined product which then satisfies consumer demands with the ultimate goal of changing voter’s behavior -- net, voting for the candidate (Savigny, 2010, p. 1050).

Applying this model to the political arena, translates into political parties and candidates listening to their targeted demographics for public opinion, thus providing the electorate with a ‘product’ that they want, eventually granting the candidate electoral victory (Egan, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Mauser, 1983; O’Cass, 1996; Reid, 1988; Shama, 1976).

While the Three-Stage model provides the basic framework for successful political marketing, it leaves out one crucial aspect of the communication chain between the

political candidate, the voting public, and *vice versa*, the biased and agenda-ridden media. The media is now acting as a loose-cannon, an uncontrolled additional source of influence, even beyond the message the candidates are trying to communicate. This action must be taken into account in any model that hopes to influence the voter's behavior.

Omission of the Media in Political Marketing

Political marketing has become dominated by management marketing theories, which lays important groundwork for candidates in the election process. The academic literature, however, is leaving out a fundamental aspect of political marketing, by not taking into account the active role of the media. Savigny most accurately describes the current situation in political marketing; "Marketing theory does acknowledge the existence of the media, and affords it a role as a conduit through which politicians communicate to the electorate -- in essence, the media are effectively assumed to be tools at the disposal of politicians. *However*, this assumption negates the *active* role that the media themselves play in shaping the political message delivered to the electorate. As such, this analysis will concentrate on what is arguably the major weakness in the political marketing approaches" (Savigny, 2010, p. 1050).

By melding the Three-Stage model of business organizations and implementing the inclusion of the active role of the media presented by Savigny, the world of political marketing could be radically transformed, providing the electoral candidates a concrete plan to follow for electoral success. "The 'inside job' played by political reporters and commentators in interpreting, changing, and challenging the message of the political

marketers is clearly vital in any marketing campaign, as are the interests of media organizations themselves” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1049).

Communication Distribution in Political Marketing

For traditional companies, the role of the media is strictly distribution; the channel by which the message is communicated, to whom, and how often, the media is paid for simply reproducing the messages provided by the advertiser. In the political arena, the media is transformed from a distribution technique to an active participant in the critique of potential candidates. “The media are also, with the arguable exception of some public service broadcasters, commercial entities beholden to other commercial organizations for their revenue. The media, including public service broadcasters, are political actors in their own right: they function to protect their own interests in addition to their theoretical role as defenders of democracy.” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1055) The various media entities play a vital role in the distribution of the messages of the candidates. The perceptions and understanding of politics for the general voting public are largely derived through the filters of the media. “The media do not, in any political system, confine themselves to a ‘neutral transmission function’ (Kuhn, 2007, p. 212). “To reiterate, a fundamental weakness of these models is a failure fully to appreciate that the conduit of messages is not neutral as it is in the presentation of marketing messages.” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1055)

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter presents the methods used to collect data for the study including the data sources, collection and presentation of the data, and delimitations.

Data Sources

For the study, one political science professor, who is also the former mayor of the city of San Luis Obispo, one market research analyst, and one current elected official, were interviewed using an identical questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to answer the research questions of the study, regarding political marketing and the subsequent influence of traditional media *reporting* upon the voting public.

Participants

The market research analyst was Matt Doyel, the President of Baker St. Solutions, a market research company. Before becoming the president of Baker St. Solutions, Matt worked for Procter and Gamble for over ten years in marketing research and brand management. He was also a US Naval Flight Officer and Graduate of Naval Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN). The current elected official interviewed was County Supervisor, Bruce Gibson. Bruce was first elected 2nd District Supervisor in 2006. Gibson has accepted the SLO County Environmental Achievement Award twice, both in both 2003 and 2005. He also serves on numerous environmental boards throughout the county. The professor interviewed was Dr. Allen Settle, a political science professor at Cal Poly. Dr. Settle has served on the city council board for ten years, and served as mayor of the city of San Luis Obispo for the last four years.

Interview Design

The following questions were asked of each participant in the interview, and served as the data sources for the study:

1. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe the process of political marketing and the major difficulties the political candidate faces?
2. How is marketing for a corporation versus marketing for a political candidate different? Would you say one is easier or harder? Why?
3. Can social media be implemented by a political candidate to create a well rounded marketing plan, to gain more success in elections? What types of social media do you think would be the most effective? Why?
4. Do you believe traditional media plays an active and crucial role in the marketing and advertising of a political candidate? Why? Please give an example of beneficial and negative instances of the influence of the media over the voting public.
5. In your experience, does the difference between positive or negative advertising messaging make a difference in the marketing campaign of a political candidate? Why? Please give an example.
6. Do you feel using social media to provide more direct discourse between the political candidate and the voting public should be increased? Why could this be instrumental in the election process? Is two-way communication the missing component of a political marketing plan? By eliminating the negative influence and power of the media in-between the candidate and the public, does the public then form its own opinions of the candidate?

Data Collection

The method of data collection for this study was three individual interviews with each professional. The interviews were conducted during February 2012, and lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes each. During the interviews, the professionals were asked the identification questions, which were designed to answer the research questions, detailed in Chapter 1, to gain insight into the process of political marketing, along with the role of the media. Although the experience, connection to politics, and current roles of the interviewees were significantly different, the purpose and value of asking the identical question, as opposed to a more journalistic, investigative technique, was to discover the similarity of problems, as seen by all three panelists, in the political marketing process.

Data Presentation

The data collected during each interview was documented through audio recordings, using an audio recording application on an iPhone, as well as a traditional audio recording device. There were also written notes taken during the interview, to clarify any information given during the interview to understand the meaning and context of the response. This method ensures the data is presented in the most accurate and objective way possible.

Delimitations

There are delimitations for this study based on the nature of the interviews, the limited number of participants, and the type of data collected. The study focused on political marketing and the role of the media. Therefore, some limitations may exist

based on the assumption that the responses are qualitative and opinion-based and therefore cannot be generalized.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Chapter four will provide explanations of the three experts interviewed in the study and will summarize the respondents' answers to the questionnaire. Since each interview lasted approximately twenty to thirty minutes, the answers will be presented as direct quotations. The answers will then be analyzed and compared to the original research questions and existing academic literature on political marketing and the role of the traditional media, as reviewed in Chapter 2.

Description of Participation Experts in Related Fields:

Market Research Analyst: Matt Doyel

Matt Doyel was the marketing expert for the study. Matt Doyel began his career as a market research expert at Procter and Gamble, where he worked in marketing research, and brand management, and where he built the Consumer Focus Department. He also spent nine years in the Aerospace industry as a US Naval Flight Officer. He is a graduate of Naval Fighter Weapons School in 1990, where he flew TOPGUN. He was the director of Operational Test and Evaluation (F-14 Tomcat). He holds a BS in Physics from the University of Oklahoma. He joined the Baker St. Solutions team in 2006.

Political Science Expert: Dr. Allen Settle

Dr. Allen Settle was the political science expert for the study. Dr. Settle is a tenured professor at California Polytechnic State University and the Pre-Law advisor for Cal Poly. He has been elected for ten terms to serve on the San Luis Obispo City Council, as well as serving as Mayor for the city San Luis Obispo for four terms, and is

currently serving his fifth term.

Current Elected Official: Bruce Gibson

Bruce Gibson serves as the Supervisor for the second district of San Luis Obispo County, which is comprised of the coastline from Los Osos to San Luis Obispo. He was elected for his first term in 2006, and is currently serving his second term. Gibson has a Ph.D. in Seismology from Rice University. He also serves on the SLO local Agency Formation Commission as the County Representative. He is the Vice President of the SLO Council of Governments Board and also the President of the Integrated Waste Management Authority Board. During his time as Supervisor for the county, Gibson has twice received the SLO County Environmental Achievement Award, a prestigious award in the environmental realm.

Political Marketing Questionnaire:

Each expert was asked to respond to the following questions and probes regarding political marketing and the role of the media:

1. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe the process of political marketing and the major difficulties the political candidate faces?

Question #1 was asked to clarify what the process of marketing and political marketing meant to each respondent. By clarifying a definition of marketing, the interview could progress once a definition had been firmly established as basic agreement of the process for political candidates, making the rest of interview easier for the respondent and the reader. The expert was also questioned on his opinion for the most difficult portion of the political marketing process and to acknowledge and highlight the existing problems a political marketer faces.

Dr. Allen Settle: “I represent a city of San Luis Obispo, municipal government and its marketing is primarily one of very high level of transparency, particularly with the media” (Appendix A).

Matt Doyel: “Marketing is selling something by, specifically, creating the right message, and delivering it to the right person, at the right time. So, a definition for anything needs to be very concise, and very clear, and that’s what it is. Marketing is different from sales, cause sales is the actual selling of the object, marketing creates the message, which enables the sale to happen” (Appendix B).

Bruce Gibson: “The process of political marketing, politics is fundamentally human endeavor, its about making connections and making decisions on behalf and for the benefit of a community” (Appendix C).

2. How is marketing for a corporation versus marketing for a political candidate different? Easier or Harder? Why?

Question #2 was asked to investigate the experts opinion on the difference between corporate marketing and political marketing, and to identify if there was a noticeable difference between the two. It serves to compare the various problems both fields’ encounter, and to seek out solutions for the most problematic complications candidates might face.

Dr. Allen Settle: “Its symbiotic. What you try to do to market for companies and market for individual candidates is so much alike” (Appendix A).

Matt Doyel: “From the political standpoint, I think that the politicians would benefit from people who understand classical marketing. If the politicians have one big disadvantage, I think that so frequently in the eyes of the consumers, they don’t

stand for something, as opposed to, they stand against something else” (Appendix B).

Bruce Gibson: “You know, frankly, I think corporate probably easier, cause it’s a narrower, if your selling a car, dish soap, whatever it is, you have a very narrow universe you have to deal with” (Appendix C).

3. Can social media be implemented by a political candidate to create a well rounded marketing plan, to gain more success in elections? What types of social media do you think would be the most effective?

Question #3 was asked to explore the experts’ opinion of the growing tool of social media and its subsequent application for political marketing. The question was meant to probe the potential power of social media as contrasted by the role of the traditional media over the voting public.

Dr. Allen Settle: “It’s going to be, it already is, Facebook, all of these social media are in full bloom. The media has in some respect, been, shall we say, eclipsed by the social media” (Appendix A).

Matt Doyel: “I mean it can’t be ignored. I mean, clearly, its a very important medium, and a very important tool, to use. But you can’t hang your hat on it, it can’t be the only thing that you do, it only reaches a small percentage of the population, and we don’t really know yet, the efficacy of the actual medium” (Appendix B).

Bruce Gibson: “I mean clearly, the answer is yes, I mean you’ve seen it, but I’ll tell you in my instance, because of my generational, my age, lets be frank, that wasn’t the first place I turned” (Appendix C).

4. Do you believe traditional media plays an active and crucial role in the marketing and advertising of a political candidate? Please give an example of beneficial and negative instances of the influence of the media over the voting public.

Question #4 was asked to investigate the experts opinion of traditional media as a major influential factor in an election. Due to the gaping absence of the role of the traditional media in current political marketing literature, the question attempted to probe the potential influence of the bias of traditional media in a political election.

Dr. Allen Settle: “The other thing that’s dangerous for the media is, things have been moving from a healthy cynicism to a more corrosive skepticism, or make it worse, corrosive cynicism from a healthy skepticism. And because of that, now what you have is people saying I don’t trust what I read” (Appendix A).

Matt Doyel: “Historically, there’s always been a line between the journalist and the editorialist, and now, on TV, in the paper its really clear. You read the paper, and the reporting is the reporting, even though today its not classic reporting, and then you have the opinion papers, but then when you turn on the TV there’s no easy way for the average consumer to differentiate between the two. And so, you have somebody who is authoritative in demeanor or nature and they’re talking on a particular topic, and the person thinks that their actually reporting, when they’re not, they’re editorializing. And so I think it does effect how people form their opinions” (Appendix B).

Bruce Gibson: “Absolutely. I mean, and you know, I’ll give you the quick example for me, is the Tribune. They ran an endorsement of me, with a headline that ran

across the endorsement that read, ‘Gibson is a strong leader that the county needs to keep.’ People went ‘whoa’ (Appendix C).

5. In your experience, does the difference between positive or negative advertising messaging make a difference in the marketing campaign of a political candidate? Please give an example.

Question #5 was asked to distinguish the difference between positive and negative messaging, and to explore the power of each on potential voters. Historically, many political candidates have run ‘attack ads’ which is an extremely aggressive and negative message to distribute. The experts were asked their opinion on attack ads, and if they felt it was a powerful tool to use in political marketing.

Dr. Allen Settle: “Sure it does. Negative hit piece, people say they don’t like them, but they listen to it” (Appendix A).

Matt Doyel: “Oh absolutely, so there are exceptions to every rule, but by and large, ninety-nine percent of the time, your going to be more successful if you create a message that stands for something, rather than standing against something. They don’t work, until you get to a point where you spend enough money to dominate the medium” (Appendix B).

Bruce Gibson: “ Well again, I think from my particular experience, its clear to me that people in this county and in my district in particular, are very smart, and classical negative advertising is, does not work, and in fact, it probably has an opposite effect” (Appendix C).

6. Do you feel the use of social media to provide more direct discourse between the political candidate and the voting public should be increased? Why could this be

instrumental in the election process? Is two-way communication the missing component of a political marketing plan? By eliminating the negative influence and power of the media in-between the candidate and the public, does the public then form its own opinions of the candidate?

Question #6 was asked to explore the potential benefits of including social media in a political marketing plan. By removing the influential factor and persuasion of traditional media, can a political candidate manage a more positive, and eventually successful, campaign? The experts were asked to present an opinion to grasp the true importance of social media.

Dr. Allen Settle: “Voters for example ask policy questions, the media ask who’s ahead who’s behind. And they want to play I gotcha. Voters aren’t impressed with that, not in the least. Its a turnoff, but if you come and give them substance, now their going to listen to you” (Appendix A).

Matt Doyel: “So yes definitely, so people vote for candidates that they like. Ultimately they will vote for the person that they like, even if they have some disagreements on the particular standpoints. So the point where there can be personal engagement, when you’re trying to sell a person, which is what politics is all about, I think that is extremely beneficial, in the marketing process. So to have tools in the toolbox, that enable that to happen is a good thing. And that’s why town hall meetings and going to breakfast and going down the street and shaking hands and things like that matter a lot, cause people actually see the real person, and they see the demeanor, and ultimately will fall in ‘like’ with the person, and will vote for them” (Appendix B).

Bruce Gibson: “I don’t differentiate, to me there’s not a useful difference, a differentiation between each social medium, you reach such different audiences, you gotta take advantage of every channel that there is to talk to the people that you represent. You need to understand the differences in approach, the great democracy of the internet where nothing is filtered, to the very filtered traditional media, you have to be able to work in both fields” (Appendix C).

Political Marketing Research Questions

For this project, the following six research questions were established for the project to determine what were the problems and potential solutions for political marketing of a political candidate. The study collected the opinions of the experts in political science and marketing to determine the current situation of political marketing and the influence of traditional media.

Research Question 1: How would you, as an expert in your field, describe the process of political marketing and the major difficulties the political candidate faces?

“The term is now generally used to describe the use of marketing techniques such as consumer (voter) research, focus groups and advertising; that is, selling a political product in much the same way as any other manufactured product or service” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1051).

“Political marketing has hitherto suffered from significant confusion, because it is commonly perceived to be simply about political communication, but it is a potentially fruitful marriage between political studies and marketing” (Lees-Marshment, 2001, p. 692).

Research Question 2: How is marketing for a corporation versus marketing for a political candidate different? Easier or Harder? Why?

“Communication of a product in a commercial setting is largely through ‘paid’ media forms. Here the media simply reproduce the message that they are given by commercial companies. With rare exceptions, there is no tension between the demands of companies and media outlets. The difference is that, while both the media and the ocean are capricious, the media can also be malicious and are nearly always partisan – a political party will not be allowed to sell its product in the same way as Heinz” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1053, 1055).

Research Question 3: Can social media be implemented by a political candidate to create a well rounded marketing plan, to gain more success in elections? What types of social media do you think would be the most effective?

“Social media, respond to the serious political challenge and support the promotion of the leaders, being the candidates in the election process. This means that the leaders may directly appeal to voters, aiming at a personal mandate which emphasizes their ability to create politics. Political marketing processes are gradually replaced by political public relations processes, and the one-way direction of the message, which is characteristic of marketing communication, seems to be systematically replaced by the two-way communication, which is typical for the public relations processes” (Piechota, 2011, p. 46).

Research Question 4: Do you believe traditional media plays an active and crucial role in the marketing and advertising of a political candidate?

Please give an example of beneficial and negative instances of the influence of the media over the voting public.

“Marketing theory does acknowledge the existence of the media, and affords it a role as a conduit through which politicians communicate to the electorate – in essence, the media are effectively assumed to be tools at the disposal of politicians.

However, this assumption negates the active role that the media themselves play in shaping the political message delivered to the electorate. The media may play a corrective function to the democratic deficiencies that these models logically entail”

(Savigny, 2010, p. 1050).

Research Question 5: In your experience, does the difference between positive or negative advertising messaging make a difference in the marketing campaign of a political candidate? Please give an example.

“With regard to tone, positive ads received higher ad evaluation and cognitive response valence scores and less reactance than negative ads, but negative ads led to a greater likelihood of turning out to vote. Moreover, those without a strong candidate preference were more likely to vote for a candidate supported by a negative ad” (Meririck, 2011, p. 666).

“Participants exposed to negative advertising found it less useful for political decision making and were more negative toward political campaigns than were participants exposed to positive advertising. Negative political advertising had no effect on participants' cynicism, efficacy, or apathy. The findings suggest that, though negative advertising contributes to citizens' disgust with campaigns, this

strategy does not automatically increase citizens' cynicism or apathy” (Pinkleton, 2002, p. 13).

Research Question 6: Do you feel the use of social media to provide more direct discourse between the political candidate and the voting public should be increased? Why could this be instrumental in the election process? Is two-way communication the missing component of a political marketing plan? By eliminating the negative influence and power of the media in-between the candidate and the public, does the public then form its own opinions of the candidate?

“The media do not, in any political system, confine themselves to a ‘neutral transmission function.’ The media help both to form and mobilize public opinion and they clearly have agenda-setting and reporting roles which constrain the approaches political candidates and parties can take. The majority of media are predisposed towards politicians or parties expressing viewpoints that chime with their own ideological or market preferences” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1055).

Political Marketing Data:

For this study, it was pertinent to see what the experts said on the subject, since there was such disagreement on the importance of the role of the media in political marketing. In order to acquire this data, Dr. Allen Settle, a former mayor and political science professor, Matt Doyel, a marketing expert, and Bruce Gibson, a current elected official were interviewed for the study. They were each asked the same set of interview questions specially designed to answer the original research questions in an individual interview setting. The following analysis and tables represent the respondents’ answers as their individual opinions on the research questions.

Research Question #1: How would you, as an expert in your field, describe the process of political marketing and the major difficulties the political candidate faces?

In the current academic literature, there are a plethora of definitions for political marketing. In its most basic form, political marketing can be broken down into three distinct segments: “communications, management, and political science” (Scammell, 1999, p. 718). It is also “a potentially fruitful marriage between political studies and marketing” (Lees-Marshment, 2001, p. 692). Political marketing varies from a classical approach to marketing, due to the differences between selling a product, and selling a person.

This question sets up the premise for the following research questions. It asks the expert to provide a definition for marketing, or specifically political marketing, and thus provides the framework for understanding the necessary roles and actions of the candidate during the election process. By addressing the major difficulties a political candidate faces, the potential to later discuss the role of the traditional media is presented.

Table 1 summarizes the answers of the interviewed subjects. While the candidates did not provide consistent responses among themselves, their answers were consistent with the current views in academic literature. All three respondents viewed political marketing as very similar to classical marketing, since both forms must implement a varied marketing mix while creating a connection with the consumer. Dr. Settle used his experience as mayor of San Luis Obispo implementing the half-cent sales tax as an example of a successful campaign where a goal was reached through adequate communication with the public. Bruce Gibson used his experience in running for office,

citing his successful direct mail pieces, where he formed positive connections with members of the district.

Table 1

Definition of Political Marketing

Respondents	Definition of Political Marketing	Example
Dr. Allen Settle	Working directly with the public and the media to accomplish goals.	The half-cent sales tax.
Matt Doyel	Marketing is selling something by, specifically, creating the right message, and delivering it to the right person, at the right time.	Using a comprehensive mix of marketing tools, to massage the message into the right form for the medium.
Bruce Gibson	It's about making connections and making decisions on behalf and for the benefit of a community.	Direct mail pieces, highlighting traits the voting public felt strongly about.

Question #2: How is marketing for a corporation versus marketing for a political candidate different? Easier or Harder? Why?

According to the academic literature, the main difference between classical and political marketing is, simply, passion. While classical marketing rarely inspires heated discussions, politics generally is a topic which often fuels strong opinions. “A fundamental weakness of these models is a failure fully to appreciate that the conduit of messages is not neutral as it is in the presentation of marketing messages. Few people (if any) shout at the television their hatred of Heinz baked beans. Party political broadcasts, on the other hand, generate considerable passion, especially from opponents of the party being promoted” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1056).

This question is asked to define the major differences between a classical approach to marketing, as opposed to a typical political election campaign. The differences in a media mix are explored (print, television, radio, outdoor, social media) to determine if one type of marketing is more successful. The experts were asked to assess whether selling a product, versus selling a person and political platform, were similar or different.

Table 2

Corporate Marketing versus Political Marketing:

Respondent	Difference	Easier	Harder
Dr. Allen Settle	It's very similar. It's symbiotic.	X	
Matt Doyel	You're just crafting the message to the right person, in both situations.	X	X
Bruce Gibson	Corporate is much narrower.	X	

Research Question #3: Can social media be implemented by a political candidate to create a well rounded marketing plan, to gain more success in elections? What types of social media do you think would be the most effective?

This research question was asked to delve into the implications of social media on the business world. According to the current academic literature, the rise of social media substantially effects marketing, particularly in elections. “Young adults used video sharing and social network sites to obtain campaign information and/or share campaign

news with others, exchange their political views, and express support for a candidate (Kohut, 2008; Smith & Rainie 2008)” (Kushin, 2010, p. 609). “Progressing development of the social media, such as the Internet blogs, Facebook, Twitter, as well as the development of political public relations, influences the changes in both: perceiving the role of the traditional media in the election processes and political communication and in the co-relation between the traditional media and the social media” (Piechota, 2011, p. 46).

In order to understand the developing role of social media, in conjunction with traditional media, the experts were asked to identify the role of social media in the political arena. Different types of social media were addressed (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) to determine whether investing resources in social media had direct correlation to a more successful marketing mix or a successful election campaign.

In Table 3, the benefits of social media in a campaign are discussed by the experts. The overall consensus from the respondents was very positive regarding the effectiveness of social media to reach younger generations. Both Dr. Settle and Gibson felt that the use of social media to reach their target audience was unnecessary. Doyel, was the most hesitant to commit to social media, as its efficacy has yet to be proven compared to traditional forms of advertising.

Table 3

Importance of Social Media:

Respondent	Is Social Media an important tool?	Why or Why not?
Dr. Allen Settle	It's going to be, it already is, Facebook, all of these social media are in full bloom.	The media has in some respects, eclipsed by the social media. Just relying on traditional media is archaic.
Matt Doyel	I mean it can't be ignored, but it only reaches a small percentage of the population, and we don't really know yet, the efficacy of the actual medium.	TV, radio, outdoor are all very well validated, we actually know how to measure it, how to measure its efficacy, how to gage whether its performing or not.
Bruce Gibson	I mean clearly, the answer is yes, but it depends on the age group you're trying to reach.	I got elected twice by a sizable margin, without using it.

Research Question #4: Do you believe traditional media plays an active and crucial role in the marketing and advertising of a political candidate?

Please give an example of beneficial and negative instances of the influence of the media over the voting public.

Current academic literature is very split on the role of the media; it is barely mentioned in several models for political marketing, while hailed as the most crucial component in other reports. However, all the sources acknowledge the emergence of social media as a potential threat to the hierarchy of traditional media as a viable news source. “The highest achievement of the Internet as well as the social media can be partial independence from the traditional media and the information passed by them.

Nowadays, journalists of the traditional media are somehow dependent on the Internet and social media. It should be expected that during the next few years the number of Internet and social media users will be growing” (Piechota, 2011, p. 50).

This question highlighted the main thesis of the study to analyze the importance of traditional media in an election. Much of the current academic literature on political marketing models or theories do not address the influence and persuasion-power traditional media holds over the voting public. The experts were asked to give their opinion on this discrepancy in the current models, and to discuss potential problems a political candidate could face if the media becomes involved in analyzing a candidates message, altering the opinions of the voting public.

Table 4

Role of the Traditional Media

Respondent	Role of the Traditional Media in Political Elections	Positive or Negative Influence on the Voting Public
Dr. Allen Settle	The role of the media has declined substantially. It has become very superficial.	Negative
Matt Doyel	Stories that are reduced to sound bites, or not particularly representative of the original story. TV personalities editorialize.	Negative
Bruce Gibson	The media absolutely play an active and crucial role. I used Direct Mail pieces to get elected, not by channeling my message through the local media.	Negative

Table 4 represents and confirms the academic literature cited in this study. Overall, the role of the traditional media has become diluted and does not hold the same influential power it once did. The advent of social media and the internet has changed the way people access and interpret information. All of the experts interviewed agreed the traditional media is a negative influence over the messaging of political candidates.

Research Question #5: In your experience, does the difference between positive or negative advertising messaging make a difference in the marketing campaign of a political candidate? Please give an example.

According to predominate academic literature, “attack ads” do more harm than good in the election process. “Individuals tended to perceive attack ads in traditional media to have a greater harmful effect on self and others than attack ads on the Internet. Contingent factors that account for the magnitude of third-person effects include social distance and knowledge. Further, exposure to attack ads was found to be the strongest predictor of perceived harms of such ads on self and others, but only perceived harm on others is a significant predictor of support for restrictions on attack ads.” (Ran, 2007, p. 367) “Research has indicated that exposure to negative political advertising can foster among individual’s feelings of alienation, distrust, and apathy toward government or the political process” (Dardis, 2008, p. 24)

Each expert was asked to discuss tone of advertising messaging and the difference in effectiveness. Attack ads are prevalent in political campaigns, however, their effectiveness is debatable, as opposed to positive messages highlighting the values a candidate stands for.

Table 5

Negative versus Positive messaging in Political Advertising

Respondents	Are Attack Ads a viable election tool?	Why or Why Not?	Examples
Dr. Allen Settle	Negative hit pieces, people say they don't like them, but they listen to it.	You take a look at some individuals, they don't know how to recognize its more important that they make people persuaded to vote for them, not against somebody else.	If the candidate makes no comment, well they must be guilty. That's the problem, and thus media is being used that way.
Matt Doyel	99% of the time, you're going to be more successful if you create a message that stands for something, rather than standing against something.	They don't work, until you get to a point where you spend enough money to dominate the medium.	California governor, editorial race, where you have Meg Whitman and Jerry Brown
Bruce Gibson	No. It absolutely turns people off.	Its clear to me that people in this county and in my district in particular, are very smart, and classical negative advertising is, does not work, and in fact, it probably has an opposite effect.	Personal experience in a 2006 election. Opponent tried to tie me to oil industry and money and permission to drill offshore wells cause I used to work for a company that did business with the oil industry.

Table 5 represents a clear mistake many political candidates make in an election. Attack ads are prevalent in election culture, however, there is overwhelming evidence against their effectiveness in providing electoral success. Rather than attacking the actions of an opponent, a candidate should highlight the positive actions they have made in the past, which would foster the potential for more electoral success. All three experts agreed, while negative hit pieces might grab the attention of a viewer, the long term effects are overwhelmingly negative.

Research Question #6: Do you feel the use of social media to provide more direct discourse between the political candidate and the voting public should be increased? Why could this be instrumental in the election process? Is two-way communication the missing component of a political marketing plan? By eliminating the negative influence and power of the media in-between the candidate and the public, does the public then form its own opinions of the candidate?

Much of the current academic literature places immense value on creating direct discourse between a political candidate and the voting public. (Dardis, 2008, p. 24)

“The media do not, in any political system, confine themselves to a ‘neutral transmission function.’” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1055) The increasing demand for public discourse is discussed with the interviewed experts. “Public demand for more direct forms of political participation is increasing and politics is responding to this demand.” (Schuck, 2011, p. 182)

The final question posed attempts to understand a potential alternative to relying on the traditional media as the primary distributor of a candidates message. By implementing social media as a primary tool in an election as a forum for discussion directly between a candidate and the voting public, the sway and role of traditional media is diminished. The experts were asked to consider whether they thought this would substantially change the habits and decisions made by the public during an election.

Table 6

Role of Direct Discourse in Campaigns

Respondent	Is direct discourse necessary in a political election?	Why?
Dr. Allen Settle	If a political candidate gives voters substance, they will listen to the candidate.	We operate on the basis of mannerisms, appearance and that which you say in that order.
Matt Doyel	Definitely, people vote for candidates that they like, even if they have some disagreements on the particular standpoints.	That's why town hall meetings and going to breakfast and going down the street and shaking hands and things like that matter a lot, cause people actually see the real person, and they see the demeanor, and ultimately will fall in 'like' with the person, and will vote for them.
Bruce Gibson	In each social medium you reach such different audiences, you gotta take advantage of every channel that there is to talk to the people that you represent. You need to understand the differences in approach, the great democracy of the internet where nothing is filtered, to the very filtered traditional media, you have to be able to work in both fields.	You have to make connections with people to show an expression of my values. Direct mail an expression of my values, knocking on doors an expression of my commitment to meeting people and understanding them which eventually helped me get elected.

Table 6 shows all the respondents firmly agree upon the importance of direct discourse in an election. Creating an emotional connection with your audience is crucial for all forms of successful marketing. A political candidate must creating lasting connections and emotionally resonate with the voting public to win elections. This is an active role, and is essential to overcoming the ‘voice of the media.’

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

This study was conducted to analyze the impact from the recent inclusion of social media into a comprehensive marketing mix for a political candidate. Today, political marketing has become a fundamental part of the election process; without it, candidates would not win elections. In order to fully comprehend what would provide the best strategies for a candidate, tactics and expertise were drawn from experts in the fields of classical marketing, political science and communication.

To probe more information on current tactics and glaring issues within the world of political marketing, one expert from each field was interviewed based on a single questionnaire designed to answer the following questions for the study:

1. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe the process of political marketing and the major difficulties the political candidate faces?
2. How is marketing for a corporation versus marketing for a political candidate different? Easier or Harder? Why?
3. Can social media be implemented by a political candidate to create a well rounded marketing plan, to gain more success in elections? What types of social media do you think would be the most effective?
4. Do you believe traditional media plays an active and crucial role in the marketing and advertising of a political candidate? Please give an example of beneficial and negative instances of the influence of the media over the voting public.

5. In your experience, does the difference between positive or negative advertising messaging make a difference in the marketing campaign of a political candidate? Please give an example.

6. Do you feel the use of social media to provide more direct discourse between the political candidate and the voting public should be increased? Why could this be instrumental in the election process? Is two-way communication the missing component of a political marketing plan? By eliminating the negative influence and power of the media in-between the candidate and the public, does the public then form its own opinions of the candidate?

Each research question was asked identically, and then investigated slightly differently for each expert, in order to probe different viewpoints to create applicable responses in regards to their field of study. The questionnaire elicited a variety of responses which were all tied to political marketing, and the roles of traditional media and social media in an election campaign.

Discussion

By analyzing the data collected from Chapter 4, parallels made between experts' responses provided in the interview process, and the current academic literature highlighted in Chapter 2, made it is possible to draw inferences regarding the following original research questions.

Research Question #1: How would you, as an expert in your field, describe the process of political marketing and the major difficulties the political candidate faces?

All three experts responded by providing their definition of marketing and the

major differences between classical marketing of a product versus marketing a candidate or proposition. Gibson and Settle gave examples from their personal experience of creating connections with the voting public. Doyel provided an insightful definition of marketing, “Marketing is selling something by, specifically, creating the right message, and delivering it to the right person, at the right time.”

The academic literature provided a similar perspective. The definition of political marketing can be broken down into three distinct segments in its most basic form: “Communications, Management, and Political Science.” (Scammell, 1999, p. 718) “Political marketing is about political organizations adapting business-marketing concepts and techniques to help them achieve their goals.” (Lees-Marshment, 2001, p. 692) Their ultimate goal being “vote for me.” Gibson gave the example of his direct mail pieces, which highlighted scenery of the central coast, which created an emotional connection with his intended audience.

Overall, it is possible to conclude that the basis of political marketing rests in forming emotional connections and lasting impressions on the voting public, which will eventually lead to greater electoral success.

Research Question #2: How is marketing for a corporation versus marketing for a political candidate different? Easier or Harder? Why?

The comparison of classical marketing to political marketing provided affirmation of the clear similarities. While Gibson and Settle felt that marketing a product, rather than a person, was easier, which was disputed by Doyle, they all agreed that both are focused on selling a product, and the other a person, both relying on the basic principles of crafting the right message and placing it into the right medium to reach the audience and

convince them to change their behavior.

The literature reflects the comparison as well. According to the academic literature, the main difference between the two is, simply, passion. While classical marketing rarely inspires heated discussions, politics generally is a topic which often fuels strong opinions. “Few people (if any) shout at the television their hatred of Heinz baked beans. Party political broadcasts, on the other hand, generate considerable passion, especially from opponents of the party being promoted.” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1056)

It is safe to conclude that classical marketing and political marketing are very similar in their approach and use of a marketing mix. The main difference lies in the investment and passion invested by consumers. Politics inspires passion.

Research Question #3: Can social media be implemented by a political candidate to create a well rounded marketing plan, to gain more success in elections? What types of social media do you think would be the most effective?

The experts interviewed all came to the same conclusions concerning the importance of implementing social media in create a well rounded marketing mix. While Doyle was more hesitant in his praise of social media, preferring to implement the classical advertising tools, since “TV, radio, outdoor are all very well validated, we actually know how to measure it, how to measure its efficacy, how to gage whether it’s performing or not.” Both Gibson and Settle acknowledged the value of social media for larger political campaigns, but did not implement social media into their own campaigns, based on the demographics of their audience.

The academic literature regarding social media is fairly limited, due to its recent

emersion and creation. However, the literature that does exist is extremely positive. The rise of social media substantially affects marketing, particularly in elections. “Young adults used video sharing and social network sites to obtain campaign information and or share campaign news with others, exchange their political views, and express support for a candidate (Kohut, 2008; Smith & Rainie 2008)” (Kushin, 2010, p. 609). According to Campbell, “Social media data-mining tells politicians what we want. The way we live our lives online will make it easier for political parties to target their message. Do you live in Ohio and tweet about your church? The Republicans would like to have a word with you. Live in California and post pictures of your Toyota Prius? Barack Obama would like you to start a fundraising page. We are sharing more information about ourselves, our interests, social connections and online behavior than ever. Savvy candidates can increasingly use this data to predict how we are likely to vote, which of us to target and how best to reach us.” (2011, p. 28)

Overall, the basic conclusion that can be drawn from this data is social media is an emerging force that cannot be ignored. More than that, it is a very effective and positive tool that can neutralize the media bias in an election cycle by making it possible to connect directly with the voter. Even more important, it can act as a third-party endorsement mechanism if your “Facebook friends” endorse you. While the older generations are still targeted through classical advertising tools, the younger generations will someday rely on social media as a primary source of communication. Thus marketers should undoubtedly implement social media into their marketing mix as a viable and important tool in a political campaign.

Research Question #4: Do you believe traditional media plays an active and crucial role in the marketing and advertising of a political candidate? Please give an example of beneficial and negative instances of the influence of the media over the voting public.

All of the experts interviewed agreed the traditional media is a negative influence over the messaging of political candidates. They all concluded that the media plays an active and crucial role over voting public, especially over those who are undecided and independent voters. Doyel pointed out that TV personalities editorialize much of their content, giving strong opinions concerning political candidates, yet do not inform their audience they have stopped reporting the news and have become biased in their opinion.

The academic literature shows us that media holds considerable power and influence over their audience. According to Hoffner, “Although most research has shown no consistent liberal or conservative bias in mainstream news media (e.g., D’Alessio & Allen, 2000; Shah, Watts, Domke, Fan, & Fibison, 1999), people tend to perceive media bias against their own political views and candidates” (Hoffner, 2011, p. 734)

Overall, it is safe to conclude traditional media still influences the public due to its editorializing and strong opinions. While its power may have diminished in the recent years due to the advent of the internet and social media, traditional media still holds some powerful sway.

Research Question #5: In your experience, does the difference between positive or negative advertising messaging make a difference in the marketing campaign of a political candidate? Please give an example.

Each expert firmly agreed that negative messaging, seen in attack ads, is prevalent

in election culture. However, there is overwhelming evidence against their effectiveness in providing electoral success. Doyel stated that, “99% of the time, you’re going to be more successful if you create a message that stands for something, rather than standing against something.” Until you spend enough money to dominate the advertising of a particular election, negative advertising will be less effective than positive messaging.

The academic literature supports the same conclusions, showing that negative advertising is substantially less effective than positive messaging. “With regards to tone, positive ads received higher ad evaluation and cognitive response valence scores and less reactance than negative ads” (Meirick, 2011, p. 666). According to Pinkleton, “Participants exposed to negative advertising found it less useful for political decision making and were more negative toward political campaigns than were participants exposed to positive advertising. The findings suggest that, though negative advertising contributes to citizens' disgust with campaigns, this strategy does not automatically increase citizens' cynicism or apathy.” (Pinkleton, 2002, p. 13)

Overall, the conclusion regarding the effectiveness of negative political advertisements was strongly opposed to their use. If a candidate wants to become successful in an election, he or she must create advertisements that highlight their best traits, rather than the weaknesses of their opponent. All three experts agreed, while negative hit pieces might grab the attention of a viewer, the long term effects are overwhelmingly negative.

Research Question #6: Do you feel the use of social media to provide more direct discourse between the political candidate and the voting public should be increased? Why could this be instrumental in the election process? Is two-way communication the missing component of a political marketing plan? By eliminating the negative influence and power of the media in-between the candidate and the public, does the public then form its own opinions of the candidate?

The experts gave similar responses to the research question, agreeing that direct discourse and creating emotional connections with people was ultimately the most influential factor in a political campaign. Candidates who could connect with the public had a huge advantage in the election. Doyel summed up the answer perfectly; “people vote for candidates that they like, even if they have some disagreements on the particular standpoints.” Both Gibson and Settle strongly agreed that a political candidate must make connections with people to show an expression of their values, if they ultimately want to be successful in an election.

Much of the current academic literature places immense value on creating direct discourse between a political candidate and the voting public. (Dardis, 2008, p. 24) “The media do not, in any political system, confine themselves to a ‘neutral transmission function.’” (Savigny, 2010, p. 1055) “Public demand for more direct forms of political participation is increasing and politics is responding to this demand.” (Schuck, 2011, p. 182

Overall, candidates must spend quality time with the voting public, creating connections and forming relationships with individuals, who will then in turn, vote in

favor of the candidate.

Recommendations for Practice

After completion of the study, substantial data has been collected and analyzed on the topic of political marketing and the role of the media. Given the information, it is important to focus on the most important learning's to present it for future political candidates, market analysts, marketers for all products, and journalists. Some recommendations for political marketers include forming their marketing campaigns and marketing channels, implementing social media as a way to foster direct communication with the voting public, and creating positive messaging, rather than negative attack ads, to inform the audience about your accomplishments.

Create a Clear Message

In a world where the average consumer is bombarded with thousands of advertisements per day, it has become vital to create a clear message for the public, especially when you are attempting to market a candidate to a massive audience, such as the presidential campaigns. Political candidates should create advertising campaigns, using tools and tactics from classical marketing, which will help the voting public form interest and desire for the candidate, thus inspiring them to action; ultimately to vote in favor of the candidate.

According to Lees-Marshment, "Political marketing is about political organizations adapting business-marketing concepts and techniques to help them achieve their goals" (Lees-Marshment, 2001, p. 692). Matt Doyel, the marketing expert, stated that, "Marketing is selling something by, specifically, creating the right message, and delivering it to the right person, at the right time." Overall, it is possible to conclude that

the basis of political marketing rests in forming emotional connections and lasting impressions on the voting public, which will eventually lead to greater electoral success.

Create a Positive Message

Many political candidates focus much their energies, passion, and funds into creating attack ads about their opponents. Their efforts could be channeled much more efficiently into creating advertisements which highlight their political record. The academic literature supports the same conclusions, showing that negative advertising is considerably less beneficial than positive messaging. According to Pinkleton, “Participants exposed to negative advertising found it less useful for political decision making and were more negative toward political campaigns than were participants exposed to positive advertising” (Pinkleton, 2002, p. 13).

In the end, it may be as simple as this: consumers buy benefits, voters are buying confidence their candidate will deliver what they want. This is why changing voter’s behavior rests with the positive message. Candidates need to create confidence.

“Research has indicated that exposure to negative political advertising can foster among individuals feelings of alienation, distrust, and apathy toward government or the political process” (Dardis, 2008, p. 24). Matt Doyel, President of Baker St. Solutions, a successful marketing firm, stated that, “99% of the time, you’re going to be more successful if you create a message that stands for something, rather than standing against something.” By highlighting the political candidates positive record, the audience has a chance to emotionally connect with the candidate, which substantially improves his or her chance of electoral success.

Foster Opportunities to Directly Associate with the Voting Public

In current political campaigns, candidates do spend time meeting with individuals and answering questions in town hall meetings. However, according to the academic literature and the experts interviewed, this is a critical step in the election process, and can make the difference between a winning election, and a loss. Whether candidates stick to classical methods of interacting with the public, or they include newer methods, such as social networking, they should channel as much effort and energy into creating emotional connections with the public as possible.

According to the current academic literature, “Public demand for more direct forms of political participation is increasing” (Schuck, 2011, p. 182). Candidates who connect with the public have a huge advantage in the election. In the interview with Matt Doyel, he stated, “People vote for candidates that they like, even if they have some disagreements on the particular standpoints. That’s why town hall meetings and going to breakfast and going down the street and shaking hands and things like that matter a lot, cause people actually see the real person, and they see the demeanor, and ultimately will fall in ‘like’ with the person, and will vote for them.”

Study Conclusion

In conclusion, given the general findings of the study, there should be several actions taken by political candidates to maintain a positive message and to foster connections with the voting public. Overall, the study presented the collective opinions of several experts in applicable fields and a review of literature of political marketing. Of course, political marketing is a treacherous field, inspiring passion and strong opinions in the majority of individuals. Political campaigns are notorious for their sweeping claims

and bold promises, but if candidates can remain truthful, and make strong positive impressions on people and emotional connections, their chances to become the elected official vastly improve. The study serves as a guide and educational tool for classical marketing, political science, communications, and journalism professionals who are interested in political marketing and the role of the media, or someone who is considering a potential political campaign, either on a local, or even national level. Consumers buy benefits; voters are “buying” confidence that the candidate will deliver what they want -- essentially, the benefit(s) they want the elected official to deliver. They change the voter’s behavior and therefore win elections when they connect emotionally with the voting public. They overcome the effect of media bias when they connect with, speak directly to, and interact with their potential voters. This is the importance of the new emerging campaign tool -- social media.

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Appendix A

Interview Transcripts: Dr. Allen Settle

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from an political science professional and former mayor based on a questionnaire about political marketing and the role of the media.

Interviewer: Jill Donovan

Respondent: Former Mayor of San Luis Obispo, and current professor of Political Science at California Polytechnic State University
(Dr. Allen Settle)

Date of Interview: 2/8/2012

Interview Transcription:

Jill Donovan: “Ok so, I am writing my senior project on marketing tactics and the marketing models used for political marketing. And specifically the role of the media that isn’t addressed a lot of the time as the middleman and the negative influence that really can bias and influence voters. So I have seven questions here and I’d just love your professional opinion.”

Dr. Allen Settle: “Ok.”

JD: “So, first off, how would you, as an expert in your field, describe the process of political marketing, and the major difficulties that a political candidate faces?”

AS: “I represent a city of San Luis Obispo, municipal government and its marketing is primarily one of very high level of transparency, particularly with the media. Because we move to pass a proposition Y to increase the sales tax, and we did that specifically to allow more funds, which is several million dollars, for a half cent in sales tax, for a period of four years, to help the city pay for infrastructure and basic operations such as traffic management, two things that people here want.”

JD: “Yeah.”

AS: “Next, the city did that by putting and taking advantage of its own promotional coordinating committee, which also serves to help promote tourism, which is a big source of revenue for the city. And part of this was to, uh, have this pass, it did pass, and I fully expect they will come back and want to renew it again, because that was a huge difference, in helping balance the budget. Its the same analogy as the University here, at Cal Poly, is making reference to the college based fees, and now more recently the college success fees. They’re trying to say we need the extra revenue to pay the operations since the state is cutting back, you’re making up the difference. The downside of that is, there’s no expiration date to it, that’s why I have a problem with it.”

JD: "Yeah."

AS: "How much can a student take before they're out of business? Uh, but the city does have an expiration time, I said that's what's necessary, in order for you to put this in front of the ballot. Now, under proposition thirteen, since it's a general revenue for government, not specifically, you only needed a majority vote. It was for specific purpose under prop thirteen, Jarvis Gann 1978, you would need a two-thirds vote, like schools would have to have a two-thirds for school ban, but cities if they do a general, they only need a majority vote. So that's the first thing they do, is they have a major transparency with the media first, have neighborhood groups meet, have the chamber of commerce get involved, have the promotional coordinating committee get involved, go down with the finance director, the city manager, the mayor, a council member, and meet with the editorial board, of the local Tribune newspaper. If necessary offer to do the same thing with KSBY, uh which was done, and basically you say to the voters, this is to help improve your downtown, help improve the city collectively, mainly for infrastructure that is your water sewer lines, uh but things that need to be replaced, but also traffic signals, parking facilities, and street maintenance. Now, yes, some of its going to be used for personnel, but uh that's again on a timeline. And its not focused on police and fire, that's a general fund, that's a general function, police and fire, uh this would be more specifically to help enliven the enterprise fund, which is fee supported. So that's where we are at this point in time with the half-cent sales tax, several cities have done this, why we did it at this particular period of time is because the passage of proposition twenty-two, which says in essence a state can no longer take our money."

JD: "Right. Ok, Do you think that marketing for a big corporation, like a fortune 500 company or corporation, versus marketing for a political candidate is different in some way?"

AS: "It's very similar."

JD: "Ok."

AS: "Its symbiotic. What you try to do to market for companies and market for individual candidates is so much alike. For example, if I do political and consulting, uh for a candidate or a ballot measure and then when those are over, well you just do the same thing for trying to get, as I did, Trader Joe's to come. And that worked just fine! You call up Lee Orstein, and say uh how bout Trader Joe's in San Luis Obispo. Uh Home Depot, same thing. But it doesn't have to be a fortune 500, uh because basically some stores are not well revered, that is to say, the stores like Walmart, would not be acceptable."

JD: "Right."

AS: "Because they are looked upon as being predatory to local small businesses."

JD: "Yeah."

AS: "But, on the other hand, Home Depot, uh would be alright, but its located on the peripheral portion of the city, where it has the greater acreage uh operate. Uh little more problematic turned out to be Costco, but like anything else, people like to have access to some of these retailers, but they don't want it in their backyard, but they don't realize that it has an effect on the sales tax."

JD: "I see that. That makes sense. Do you think that one is easier versus harder, marketing for a business versus marketing for a political candidate?"

AS: "It depends what type of business it is, and it has a lot to do with a larger bigbox retail store, is going to be harder, uh Trader Joe's, much easier."

JD: "Yeah, Right that makes sense. Umm do you think that, not only on the local level, but on the national level of political campaigning do you think that social media could be implemented by the political candidates?"

AS: "It's going to be, it already is."

JD: "Do you think that,"

AS: "Facebook, all of these social media are in full bloom."

JD: "Yeah."

AS: "And it's a problem because the FPPC, the fair political practices committee, will want to regulate that, its really hard to do. And you also have some citizen united versus FEC in 2010, and you also have the issues come up that have the 527's, and also the Super PACS, LLC's, you can't find out where that source of money comes from. So as a result of that, the media has in some respect, been umm, shall we say, eclipsed by the social media, people for example aren't buying newspapers."

JD: "Right, yeah."

AS: "I mean, I'm looked at as a person who is rather archaic, I actually get a newspaper, and I read them, Uh but I can get everything I want on roughandtumble.com on the computer here, plus new york times, Washington post, wall street journal, local tribune, and everything else. Its all available to me. I don't even have to leave the house, or office. And that's changing the nature of how people operate, People used to wait for the paper to come out, and read the articles, read the news, and so on. Not as much anymore. And the papers got to do more to get people to pay attention. What they have done is gone the wrong way, they've become more into the field of entertainment and sensationalism, that is they cover the police blotter, who got shot, robbed, whatever. And then a bit about weather, and then sports."

JD: "Definitely."

AS: "And maybe why dogs are psychic or something. Uh it doesn't, and the media, broadcast is no better."

JD: "Right."

AS: "So as a result of that, uh the voters in this community, they have found the media has slowly declined and is slowly failing. That's sad, because, I will learn more about what's happening here from the Sacramento Bee, that I will from the Tribune newspaper, and the local television station. Not good."

JD: "No, not good."

AS: "And the news director doesn't seem to quite understand that, and you take a look at, you talk to people like Sandra Duerr, uh, they have to realize they're the passers, of this news, uh, like Aroback said its a bad pass, its the fault of the passer, than the media is the passer. The other thing that's dangerous for the media is, things have been moving from a healthy cynicism to a more corrosive skepticism, uh or make it worse, corrosive cynicism from a healthy skepticism. And because of that, now what you have is people saying I don't trust what I read."

JD: "Yeah."

AS: "And once that happens, uh the future of the newspapers, are in jeopardy. So they've tried to then do two things, which have not helped, one, more sensationalism and entertainment value and the other is a tend to editorialize the front page. Big mistake. Even I, as a term paper, would say don't start your paper off with an editorial comment, uh that's like me walking into a classroom and saying you all must vote for Obama or Romney, or Gingrich or something like that, if you want a good grade you're going to have to vote that way. Yeah that would just offend people, certainly offend me. Uh and its, when it comes to campaign finance they're not really doing good investigative reporting, why, the reporters aren't paid much anymore. I've had several reporters say to me, I'm leaving the profession. They can't afford to live here."

JD: "Yeah, the media is definitely declining. Do you think that, umm, on the national, like presidential level, that if the candidates would use more social media they'd have more success in elections?"

AS: "This is very much of an imponderable. Uh Obama, took advantage of that and had success. But that's because Bush just blew it on the economy came. It was a total disaster. Now, uh, you know the Republicans have made more of a pitch, where they're using social media now, to various degrees, uh their committees, but has still the issue of money. Romney's got the money. Gingrich does not. Santorum is short, Paul is short. And so money still talks. Secondly, uh, individuals when you look at the media, its a case, where the outside groups are now calling the shots more than the candidates are, cause we could run a candidate, uh run on behalf of a candidate, without communicating with you, and make you the best thing since sliced bread, or worse, make you look like

the worst person that ever existed.”

JD: “Mmmhmm.”

AS: “And I now can put out issue advocacy ads, that would make all sorts of allegations, none of which are substantiated, and kill your campaign. That’s being done.”

JD: “Yeah. Do you think that, for example, umm where you can just run horrendous ads about them, do you think that positive or negative messaging really plays a role for people?”

AS: “Sure it does. Negative hit piece, people say they don’t like them, but they listen to it. Visualize if I ran a campaign for your opponent, and I’m going to put out, here’s your name, here’s your face, in black and white, and I say, alleged drug user, alleged child abuser, don’t vote for this person.”

JD: “Yeah.”

AS: “Uh, filling have any good ethics. Well even your mother might call you up and say is that true? And if I don’t hear from you, then I say hmm, conscience of guilt. You’re silent. Did you rob the bank? You make no comment, well you must be guilty. That’s the problem, and thus media is being used that way. Gingrich got stepped on by Romney, he fought back, stepped on again in Florida, he fought back, and basically, its gonna get nasty. But you wind up now with a billion dollar campaign. The news media people are happy, now the solution to that problem, course you have to get it past congress, which is of course bought and sold, mean money buys access and drives public policy,”

JD: “Yes.”

AS: “Is you have, depending upon the level of office, each candidate will have so much free air time, that is both radio and television in their local market, if you get the message out it doesn’t make any difference who spends what if you get your message out. And free franking privilege from the postal system, after all, you own the airwaves, and you own the postal system, lets use it.”

JD: “Ok.”

AS: “I don’t think Rupert Murdoch would have liked that, but that’s tough. Rupert Murdoch, by the way, also is the one who has been nailed for phone hacking and all the rest of this business, and also argues he doesn’t want you to see certain things on television and you don’t. Hate to say it, but I can see things happening on international news on Al Quizera and Russian Television, broadcast out of Washington D.C. more than I can, say, out of Fox news.”

JD: “Do you think that the traditional media play an active and crucial role in between the candidate and the voting public?”

AS: "The traditional media used to be referred to as ABC, NBC, and CBS."

JD: "Right."

AS: "They have declined substantially to CNN, Fox news and all the other news networks that have come out there, uh so its diluted and the result is the average person will still, one, rely off of television as their number one source of information, even now, but television is very expensive, but its also very superficial. So if I want to talk to you about some very significant things happening in the Euro zone, and dabble Switzerland, you're not going to hear it. But you will hear plenty about, oh, lets see, uh, the Casey Anthony case. The media got stuck on that and just simply can't let it go."

JD: "Yeah, they were obsessed."

AS: "Or Conrad Murray, did he do this to Michael Jackson, Ok enough already! I mean the jury is not even sequestered, the basis for the appeal. Casey Anthony, the jury was sequestered, and look at the difference. The public said she's guilty, the jury said, no, she's innocent. And that's a good example of sequestration. But nevertheless, uh to your point, the major media, markets have now been diluted because of satellites, everybody can download everything they want, anywhere in the world."

JD: "Do you think that they've lost some of their influence and power over the American public?"

AS: "Oh, of course they have."

JD: "People take it with a grain of salt?"

AS: "Well no, its not that they take it with a grain of salt, its just that they don't have the same media exposure. Consider, prior to 1970, the film bags, coming in from Vietnam, could only be shown on the major networks. And Walter Cronkite, was the premiere, honest reporter. If Walter Cronkite says its true, then it has to be true. You had no questions and you had Huntley Brinkley, two very revered people, like the Edward R. Murrow, I mean these were revered reporters. No longer. Its not that they did anything wrong, but when the media shifted over to entertainment value, and you put people on their own point of view, and politics, then everyone's painting with the same brush, and you've lost your credibility. So you asked the question, who are you to believe, and uh, what's my source of references to what's true, thats the problem."

JD: "Ok, Do you think that the missing portion of political marketing is really two way communication, now that we have the ability, to do social media, and the political candidate can talk directly to the voting public, do you think that would really make a difference in political marketing or advertising? If they spent more time talking directly to the voters, rather than channeling their messages through the media?"

AS: “Well first of all, the voter may not be listening. That’s the one fallacy in your assumption. Secondly, who are the voters? If you take any candidate, they’ll say if your Republican, that constituency is on your side. Democrat, likewise. But you have to find the middle of the ground. Of all the times I’ve run for public office, I’m always looking for the independent, yet to decide. And those people don’t stick out with a flag, on their head, saying I’m an independent, in the middle person. We all like to call ourselves moderates. But those are the people that decide the elections. And so from that standpoint, who you gonna talk to? You might go to an event, and you have this problem called rule by enercia, but a lot of people pay no attention to it, including students, one reason why candidates aren’t coming on campus like they used to. You have the selective perception, exposure, and retention, that holds true for everyone. And like anything else we operate on the basis of mannerisms, appearance and that which you say in that order. So when it comes down to this, those individuals when they look at marketing, delegate it to people who are professionals in this. They do data base survey research and they do cross tabulations and with that they can find out who you need to talk to and then you send them the communications even if its by mail. I did that myself, I will send my brochures out to those individuals who voted in the last four elections and who are of the same party affiliation or independent or who are of certain categories, say labor, teachers, corporate whatever the case may be, uh homeowners, thats all available on your database, and thus I am able, I’m not going to spend my time sending my literature to a person that has not voted anymore than once in the last four times, their not going to likely show up, and also education has a lot to do with it. The higher your level of education, the more they tend to participate, cause the more income you have the more you have to loose, and the more you have to pay. And so in that sense, the marketplace has changed. Uh therefore the um strategy is database surveys. I mean politicians don’t read books very often, but they read the polls.”

JD: “Oh yes.”

AS: “And I do enough data base surveys with SPSS to do cross tabulations and I can tell you where your support is, how to get to them, and what to say to them.”

JD: “What would you, in a political poll, for the people who are running for office?”

AS: “Everyone, I don’t care what it is, democrats, republicans, there are certain trigger words that you get people to go for, and if you know how to hit those, you’ll get their attention. I find many of the candidates come up, they tend to want to berate their opponent. Hey that’s old stuff. If I could sit in front of the presidential candidates right now, and I hear the candidates say, I wanna do away with Obamacare, the first thing I’m gonna do is say, Ok, uh candidate, your name, I understand that you wanna do away with the presidents healthcare plan, can you tell us now specifically, what you’d replace it with? Be specific! Ok now you’ve done away with it, two how are you gonna get congress to go along with it, if the senate can filibuster it? What are you gonna do then? hmm? They don’t ask those questions! We tend to ask, why do you think your opponent is a scumbag? I don’t care about that, voters for example ask policy questions, the media ask who’s ahead who’s behind. And they want to play I gotcha. Voters aren’t impressed

with that, not in the least. It's a turnoff, but if you come and give them substance, now their going to listen to you. Voters are collectively quite intelligent, and you have to say I represent everybody here, not just my constituency, like the tea party. Ok uh, and you take a look at some individuals, uh they don't know how to recognize, its more important that they make people persuaded to vote for them, not against somebody else. Don't operate with a negative, operate with this is what I plan to do. Now Newt Gingrich tried that out, uh I know they made fun of him, for the moon colony, and so forth, but uh in one respect he was appealing to the NASA program because he's basically saying, we don't have a space program anymore, and he's right. Now people might think, when Saturday Night Live comes out and they have a character of, you know what I'm going to say, Romney showing up to Gingrich saying well I made a mistake, and I changed my mind, can I join your "moonistration?" You know, and of course Gingrich said, the character, said well you changed your mind? I'm surprised! You know, its these type of things. We love to satirize people. But if you came out and said, this is why I want to do this, I want to put our space program back on track, and not contract it out to the Russians. If you watch Russian television, they made it very clear, that all rockets that the United States uses, are now purchased from the Russians."

JD: "Right."

AS: "What happened to our technology? Talk about outsourcing."

JD: "Mmmhm, yeah definitely."

AS: "And you talk about higher education, uh corporate America, has they're basically uh free riding the system. They're saying, you train and educate and we'll hire. Really, what have you contributed to the educational process lately, corporations? How bout zilch. If they do, as a deductible business expense. No, you're on your own. You know, and their out for profit. They are satisfying their stockholders and wall street. Now I understand why their doing that, cause it's organizational survival. But if you wanna have a work force, you know, the whole name of the game of our university, like all of them, is the skill of the work force. If you don't have a good skilled work force, you're not going to be number one in the county, the world. In fact, you might live in the United States, but you'll earn third world wages, even if you live here."

JD: "Yeah."

AS: "And I still complain about the supreme court decision on Ledbetter, where women were paid less then men, for the same job, now they've reversed that, by the president signing executive order, but that's another story."

JD: "That's another rant for another day. I guess that's all the major questions I have for you."

AS: "Ok good."

JD: “Thank you for your time though, I really appreciated talking to you, you’re very helpful.”

Appendix B

Interview Transcripts: Matt Doyel

The following interview was conducted to get an expert opinion from a marketing professional based on a questionnaire about political marketing and the role of the media.

Interviewer: Jill Donovan

Respondent: Matt Doyel, President of Baker St. Solutions

Date of Interview: 2/19/2012

Interview Transcription:

Jill Donovan: "I'm writing my senior project on political marketing and the role of the media, so I really needed to talk to an expert in marketing and get that side of it. So I understand that some of these questions are a little more geared towards political stuff, but I would love you're input on them."

Matt Doyle: "Happy to give it."

JD: "I have seven questions, so it shouldn't take a super long time."

MD: "That's fine."

JD: "But, Ok question number one, how would you as an expert in the field, describe the process of marketing and the major difficulties that you face?"

MD: "I think the most major difficulty that we face as marketers is that most people don't understand what true marketing is. And so I think it's important to have very clear and concise definition of what marketing is, and do you want me to tell you what I think it is?"

JD: "Yeah please."

MD: "Cause everybody thinks its something different."

JD: "I would love your opinion."

MD: "Marketing is selling something by, specifically, creating the right message, and delivering it to the right person, at the right time."

JD: "Ok, that's a great definition."

MD: "So, a definition for anything needs to be very concise, and very clear, and that's what it is. Marketing is different from sales, cause sales is the actual selling of the object, marketing creates the message, which enables the sale to happen. So marketing, so sales

people can't do anything without good marketing. Right, and but marketing is not advertising, it is not twitter, it is not facebook, those are all tools that the marketer has inside the marketers toolbox. Because at its core, marketers have to create the right message, to enable the sale, and it doesn't have to be selling a product, it can be selling an idea, or it can be selling person, or it can be selling anything. Or and a lot of people don't think PR's about marketing, but PR is a branch of marketing, cause public relations is selling an idea or a concept."

JD: "Or a company."

MD: "Yeah, or a feeling. Exactly, so you can be selling anything in the world, but marketing is focused on doing that, by creating the right message and getting it to the right person, because the same message isn't going to be applicable to every person, at the right time, because I'm not going to be receptive to the message when I'm sitting here talking to you, as opposed to when I am interested in whatever the message is pertaining to. So at the right time. Now the vehicle, that you use, can be any of the tools in the toolbox. It can be a billboard, it can be radio advertising, it can be TV it can be twitter, anything like that. And so so frequently today, it gets misunderstood. Advertising is very unique from marketing, it a different discipline. Advertising is one of the tools that marketers have at their disposal, as a medium for getting out their message, or a different medium, cause you have radio, TV things like that. And you'll hear a lot of people say, uh, the "medium is the message," which is a fairly common thing for people to say, and its completely wrong. Its an actual corruption of the original phrase, that was written by a PR maser, guru. He originally said, the medium is the massage. Which is what's really going on, you have to take your message, and you have to massage it into the right form, for the right medium. Uh so a sixty second TV commercial, will get your message across, in a different way, than a online banner ad, or a blog post, or a radio spot, or a interview with somebody on a TV show. So you have to massage the message into the right form for the medium. A long winded message to your first question."

JD: "No, that was a great answer. Do you think that, just off the top of your head, what do you think the major difficulties a political candidate or political marketer would face? Is it just exactly what you said, in getting the message to the people at the right time?"

MD: "I think that the political side, its interesting, cause I don't, now with two little kids, I am exposed to even less media and messaging than I used to be, which in a way is bad, but in a way it's good, because now the thing's I'm exposed to have to count even more, cause I just don't have that much time, in between work and family, two little kids, and things like that. And from the media, from the political standpoint, I think that the politicians would benefit from people who understand classical marketing, really well. Cause I hear things, for instance, I believe it was speaker Gingrich, saying, we might just do all online marketing, we might do only online marketing. And to me that said, and I think his justification was that, that's just the trend, or whatever, I don't remember exactly what the justification was, but for me it was basically, Ok, you're missing the boat on creating a comprehensive marketing plan, that gets your message to the right people, at the right time, Ok so the right people are not all online. And when they are

online they may not be receptive to the message.”

JD: “Mmhhmm.”

MD: “So, I think that, probably, the biggest challenges, for political marketing is probably, number one budget, cause they aren’t going to be nearly as big when your selling a product that makes money. Uh even if its soap, soap makes a lot of money. Political campaigns rely purely on donation and self contributions.”

JD: “Fundraising.”

MD: “Yeah, fundraising. I think budget is one thing, so you have to be uh even more strategic in your choices and being strategic in your choices means your choosing not only what your going to do, but what your not going to do, so that you can maximize your dollars, but you have to use what I think are these very fundamental business-like ways of looking at marketing, as opposed to just, oh this is just the latest fad or whatever.”

JD: “Right.”

MD: “Like we’re only going to be online, we’re only going to use Facebook, or Twitter, or whatever, um, so I think probably the biggest challenge, is or politicians could do better with a more fundamental approach to their marketing.”

JD: “Ok, do you think that marketing, so how do you think marketing for a corporation versus marketing for a political candidate is really different, what do you think the main difference is? Other than the monetary stuff obviously.”

MD: “Yeah so the budget is one thing, but I would say just off the top of my head, I think that uh, the probably, good marketing is universal in that it is trying to resonate with somebody, in trying to sell them something, whether is its a message or product or a feeling, or hope or whatever.”

JD: “Yeah.”

MD: “So I think its universal from that standpoint. If the politicians have one big disadvantage, i think that so frequently in the eyes of the consumers, they don’t stand for something, as opposed to, they stand against something else.”

JD: “Ok.”

MD: “So I really think that a lot of politicians don’t have their messaging down right, umm, I don’t know if thats the best answer to your question, because I think your question was maybe a little bit more umm executionally related, or technically related, as opposed to umm strategically related?”

JD: "No, strategical answers are good too."

MD: "So would you repeat the question for me, so I can reframe it in my mind?"

JD: "Yeah, so how is marketing for a corporation versus marketing for a political candidate different, is one easier or harder?"

MD: "I don't know if I think that one is particularly easier or harder, because your just crafting the message to the right person. You're just trying to sell something, and um so, selling a bar of soap or a can of deodorant, is one thing, and your trying to figure out what it is that will be believable for people, what will resonate with them, what their interested in. The same thing for a political message. What's the mood of the constituency? Who are you trying to appeal to, what's the right message to activate them so they come out to vote for you. Similar things."

JD: "Do you think that I would be harder, its just harder cause for a corporation you can just umm look at the different segments of the population and make your target and a positioning statement, but for a political candidate you really have to appeal, you're trying to appeal to everyone?"

MD: "You know, thats an excellent question, and I don't know I know the answer to that, I think that definitely you know, in the business world we do a lot of work on targeting, and segmenting, and crafting you know, the right message. We also do a lot of work on looking at the size of the segments, saying Ok, these are segments that we don't need to spend a lot a time effort against, because we can't, their not interested, we can't change them. These other segments are already using this so we need to make sure we don't screw anything up, and then you know, these other segments over here, they're somewhat high potential so what could we do to try to move these people over, I get the sense that politicians you know, what to think that way as well. But I also get the sense, that in the end, they try to be all things to all people,"

JD: "Yes."

MD: "And in the end, it doesn't really work. Also it only works for one."

JD: "Yeah that's true. Umm do you think that social media, in the advent of social media, that's a good tool for marketers and political candidate, and do you think they should implement that more, or is that not really something they need to worry about?"

MD: "I mean it can't be ignored. I mean, clearly, its a very important medium, and a very important tool, to use, and i think that umm the way that I, and I tell people this in business as well. Umm but you can't hang your hat on it, it can't be the only thing that you do, it only reaches a small percentage of the population, and we don't really know yet, the efficacy of the actual medium. TV, radio, outdoor, all very well validated, we actually know how to measure it, how to measure its efficacy, how to gage whether its performing or not, social media, I mean even online banners, we know much more about

that, rather than social media, I mean what really works well, what doesn't work well, how to measure it, but you can't ignore it. You have to be there. I don't think that it can be the one thing you stand on, in terms of an executional standpoint."

JD: "Ok, so you think that traditional media; print, TV radio, outdoors, that media plays an active and crucial role in political marketing, of a corporation and a political candidate?"

MD: "Yeah I would expect so. Umm there's all sorts of studies done on people on how they consume media, and if their receptivity is high. For serious political candidates on a national level, umm TV is going to be a requirement, cause you can reach the audience, there's such a breadth of availability to get the eyes and ears you. You have that forefront. Radio is probably next, you know, outdoor is probably next, and print is a little bit lower down."

JD: "Fading."

MD: "On the list, just because, yeah, just the way things are working out, you know the cycles in print, not having as many eyeballs as it used to have."

JD: "So my paper is focusing a little bit on basically television and the personalities that are on there, and their influence over people. I've looked at a lot of political marketing models and theories and they totally don't even talk about the influence of and a lot of the time, the negative connotations of the TV personalities have on the voting public, because in marketing, media is only really the implementation of the message, they just distribute it, but in political marketing, the media is the in between, which can misconstrue the message, do you think that plays an active and crucial role, do you think that's really a big influence?"

MD: "So when you say TV personalities, are you talking about the actual candidates?"

JD: "Uh no, like the anchors."

MD: "Ok the anchors, oh yeah, like clearly, I see that a lot. Umm I definitely see that, and I see that in all different aspects of news reporting. Stories that are reduced to sound bites, or not particularly representative of the original story. You know, journalism as it was originally taught, you know early nineteenth hundreds, you know the majority of the world, consumed it and information was through the written word, It is largely non-existent these days. When you think of the TV personalities, from a reporting standpoint, do influence the message, and put their own spin on it, some of them intentionally, some of them unintentionally. And there's a whole spectrum of them, there's some that are very egregious at it, and other who are really good at not doing it, and the other thing is, historically, there's always been a line between the journalist and the editorialist, and now, on TV, in the paper its really clear. You read the paper, and the reporting is the reporting, even though today its not classic reporting, um and then you have the opinion papers, but then when you turn on the TV there's no easy way for the average consumer

to differentiate between the two. And so, you have somebody who is authoritative in demeanor or nature and their talking on a particular topic, and the person thinks that their actually reporting, when they're not, they're editorializing. And so i think it does effect how people form their opinions.”

JD: “Ok so, in your experience does the difference between positive or negative messaging make a big difference for a corporation?”

MD: “Oh absolutely, so there are exceptions to every rule but by and large, the ninety nine percent of the time, your going to be more successful if you create a message that stands for something, rather than standing against something, or stands for the lack of a negative, I don't want to talk about how my competitors products are formed, the bad chemicals or something like that, its how about, I don't have any bad things in my product, I want to talk about why a product is and what it can do for you. Its just, you know historically proven that those types of messages resonate better and are more persuasive, than drawing peoples attention to negative things or to the competition.”

JD: “So would you say in the political arena, so you know the attack ads, umm do you think the attack ads are less helpful than creating an ad about yourself that would focus on the good points?”

MD: “Right yeah, I completely think so, and umm they're they don't work, until you get to a point where you spend enough money to dominate the medium, so you have an example of the California governor, editorial race, where you have Meg Whitman and Jerry Brown, and you had Meg Whitman who did a good job in standing for something and having messaging, and was doing well, and then Brown created these attack ads and didn't really work or didn't take hold until he honed in on using the exact same words that Governor Schwarzenegger used, and matching it up with the words Meg Whitman had used, and then they put so much money behind it that they basically owned the conversation, so if you have an equal or fairly equal playing field, then attack ads don't stand a chance. From a strategic standpoint or even from a tactical standpoint. But, when your able to spend so much money that you have complete ownership of the airwaves and the messaging,”

JD: “Then the other person is done for.”

MD: “Right exactly.”

JD: “My final question is just about whether you think political candidates should try to focus on personal two-way communication to try to incorporate the needs and wants and desires of the voting public to try to take it in a two-way fashion, instead of the one-way communication where they just pick a stance on something and then tell the public about how they feel?”

MD: “I think its a tough situation, how would they, what would be an example in the first part, are you talking about like town hall meetings or?”

JD: “Yeah, and like incorporating social media, you can now talk directly to the people instead of the in between middleman of the media.”

MD: “So yes definitely, so people vote for candidates that they like. Right, people go out and look at a bunch of different cars and they buy the car they fall in love with, and ultimately they will vote for the person that they like, even if they have some disagreements on the particular standpoints. So the point where there can be personal engagement, when you’re trying to sell a person, which is what politics is all about, I think that is extremely beneficial, in the marketing process. So to have tools in the toolbox, that enable that to happen is a good thing. And that’s why town hall meetings and going to breakfast and going down the street and shaking hands and things like that matter a lot, cause people actually see the real person, and they see the demeanor, and ultimately will fall in ‘like’ with the person, and will vote for them.”

JD: “Mmhhmm Ok, alright that makes sense! Ok perfect, thank you so much for letting me interview you, I really appreciate it you were very helpful.”

MD: “Sure no problem.”

Appendix C

Interview Transcripts: Bruce Gibson

The following interview was conducted to get an expert opinion from a current elected official based on a questionnaire about political marketing and the role of the media.

Interviewer: Jill Donovan

Respondent: Bruce Gibson, current Supervisor of the 2nd District of San Luis Obispo County

(Bruce Gibson)

Date of Interview: 2/22/2012

Interview Transcription:

Jill Donovan: “So I know you have my questions here, so I’ll just go through them and get your professional opinion!”

Bruce Gibson: “My professional opinion, yeah professional for five years.”

JD: “That’s plenty professional.”

BG: “So yeah lets just go off the first one, about the difficulties, the process of political marketing, politics is fundamentally human endeavor, its about making connections and making decisions on behalf and for the benefit of a community. And so you know, when you say political marketing you can think in terms of campaigning, or you can think in terms of communicating once one is in office, and really I don’t the intent to me is not widely different, I mean you’re trying to establish a connection with people, when you campaign, and so for your background, understand that I’m technically trained, I was a Physics undergraduate, and a graduate, and I have a Ph.D. in seismology, of all things, never expected to be doing this at this point in my life, and you can imagine if you know any physics nerds, that we have a very patterned, very analytic way of thinking, which is a really good tool to have, but its not necessarily, in fact its almost guaranteed to not be the way your going to make connections with people. Certainly, in any kind of short time frame. So I get teased slash criticized for going on at length about this that and the other thing and going on in lectures, and being wonkish, which is just fine, that’s where I come to this job from. But what I had to learn in campaigning was, to make an emotional, what amounts to an emotional connection with people because, a couple reasons, one of them, thats important. People are going to elect somebody to do a particular job want to have a sense of trust, they want to know that that person cares about them, cares about issues that they care about, has an emotional side to them, and frankly, you know how it is when you meet people, your impression is very quickly forged in many cases, just by how you resonate with that person emotionally. So that was a set of skills in reaching out in a campaign, that I had to learn, and even at this level of politics, I have a guy who is know a very very good friend of mine, that is my strategist, and you know, its a lot about

talking in ways that are not all about the details, its about the vision. And when we do campaigning we would do radio ads, but more importantly direct mail pieces. My direct mail piece was predominantly a beautiful picture of the county, I represent the north coast, I represent from Los Osos to the county line, and i care about preserving land, and I care about growth and these things. So you show people a picture of a beautiful piece of coast, and you connect the ideas that this beautiful piece of coast, is my value, and uh it was very cool, we'd send out eight and a half by eleven flat card stock on one side that was more than half, sometimes almost completely a picture and then talk about what i'd done. And i knew it resonated, when i'd go knock on doors, more than once I saw those magnetted-up on peoples refrigerators."

JD: "So you definitely knew you made an impact on the house."

BG: "It wasn't about me, it was about something that they cared about. That's to me the first thing, the values connection or emotion."

JD: "Ok so you think that was the hardest thing that a political candidate would face?"

BG: "You know, yeah. It was a challenge for me cause I come to this job from a more analytic side."

JD: "Do you think a lot of people struggle with creating an emotional connection?"

BG: "I think that people have a range of skills in that, and I think people have a range of abilities to learn those skills, you know there's a very interesting article you might read in the Atlantic, this months Atlantic is about Obama, whether he's a pawn or a chess master. And they speak about his shortcomings, and his perceived coldness, and his analytic side, and his ability to be emotionally empathetic, is not his strong suite."

JD: "Right."

BG: "But you compensate, he has given very wonderful emotional speeches. I think people who are successful in forging that emotional connection, have an advantage, lets put it that way."

JD: "Do you think it gets harder as you are trying to reach a larger audience, like for a political candidate to create an emotional connection?"

BG: "It's different, I suppose because of the complexity of the issue that people care about, and you see it as you watch the marketing of the republican candidates, you see them struggling, you know they have to talk about certain issues, so you see that appeal to values, like Santorum's appeal to values, whereas Romney is much more analytic person, as is Gingrich. But religion doesn't come in at this level, no one cares that I'm basically a heathen and don't go to church. So that doesn't play at this level, but it obviously does at that level."

JD: "It makes a big difference at the national level."

BG: "Yeah so it continues to be a big issue."

JD: "Ok, so would you say that marketing for a corporation versus marketing for a political candidate, is different or similar in some respects?"

BG: "Having almost zero connection with corporate life, I worked for a piece of a large corporation, I don't have much answers, I haven't ever marketed corporate stuff."

JD: "That's Ok... Umm just objectively, do you think it would be harder to sell a product, versus selling a person?"

BG: "You know, frankly, I think its probably easier, cause it's a narrower."

JD: "Which one is easier, I'm sorry?"

BG: "Corporate."

JD: "Ok."

BG: "If your selling a car, dish soap, whatever it is, you have a very narrow universe you have to deal with."

JD: "Alright, so umm can social media be implemented by political candidates, to create a more well rounded campaign? Did you use social media in your campaign?"

BG: "What is social media again?"

JD: "Ha ha very funny."

BG: "I mean clearly, the answer is yes, I mean you've seen it, but i'll tell you in my instance, because of my generational, my age, lets be frank, that wasn't the first place I turned, uh we had zero of it when I first ran in 2006, we had, we didn't actually get up on Facebook up until the last year, and I'm still struggling to figure out how to use it. So seriously, why do I want to be on Facebook? Well its because I'm supposed to be on Facebook. Ok that's fine. Umm my colleague next door, Adam Hill, would be a very interesting person for you to chat with if you could get an appointment. He's in his mid forties, very active on Facebook, he sends facebook messages from his iphone, I mean he'll be doing stuff at an event, he'll take a picture, he'll make a post, the whole thing. He finds it very important to him, thats the place where stuff happens. Cool, I got elected twice by a sizable margin, without using it."

JD: "So you don't feel the need to use it."

BG: "I'm not, I guess I feel that I need to understand it, I need to be able to use it. And

i'm gonna start, I've got a little project that I'm gonna be rolling out some posts on Facebook, just to give it a try, just to see how it goes. But if you look at the demographic of my district, its a a huge elderly population, and yeah they probably use Facebook, but that's not where they go first. So for more, stay tuned."

JD: "Ok so a lot of my Senior Project, I've looked at a lot of political marketing theories and models that have been published in academic literature, and a lot of the time they totally discount and don't include the role of the traditional media, at all. As the middleman. They don't talk about how, when you sell a product from a corporation, the media is just the implementation of the message. Its just a channel."

BG: "Yeah just a channel. That's what they see it as."

JD: "But, when you are in politics, the media becomes very involved, and very interested in what you have to say."

BG: "They become a filter."

JD: "Very much a filter. So do you feel that traditional media plays an active and crucial role in marketing for a political candidate?"

BG: "Absolutely. I mean, and you know, I'll give you the quick example for me, is the Tribune."

JD: "Yes."

BG: "Traditional as it gets, second election in 2010, they run endorsements, they ran an endorsement of me, with a headline that ran across the endorsement that read, Gibson is a strong leader that the county needs to keep."

JD: "Ok."

BG: "I xeroxed that out, handed it out across the doorstep several hundred times as I walked precincts, and people went 'Woah' they didn't see anything more than that headline it, came from some authoritative source they may not have ever read the Tribune for years, they may not have even known it was the Tribune, but it was clearly a newspaper that made this very strong statement and, it was huge. That's their editorial side and I take a lot of time, not a lot, I have good relationships with the reporters and the editorial staff, I've gone to editorial board meetings when we have complicated projects, like the Los Osos sewer, we walk them through the issues, we spend a lot of time. The Tribune is just one little slice though, thats really the key thing and I think that would be another really interesting journalism project, to understand how people get their information in the county, cause you have the Tribune, and thats narrow, and you've got the New Times, and thats narrow, you've got the Cal Coast News, if you tune into them, that is narrow, KSBY does a very poor job at covering local political stuff, but thats where people go. Congleton's show is another place where people go. That, and none of

these things seem to have minimal overlap, which is really interesting to me, and they seem to all be working independently, the community seems to be hugely fractured in how they pick up their news, so speaking about traditional media is hard to know how much traction they have.”

JD: “Ok, on a national level, when you think about the political candidates that are running right now, do you think that their messages are influenced by the traditional media, do you feel that the public is really swayed?”

BG: “Oh sure. You see how many millions in dollars are being spent on TV ads, on attack ads. Yeah absolutely, but even there they have a bigger challenge than I, they got to cover a wider spectrum of things, I didn’t do any television advertising, I don’t have to answer any hard questions from KSBY, even though apparently they’re going to interview me thing afternoon about something, I don’t expect its going to be a difficult, its not going, this person is not going to understand the issue, I guarantee you that, and I mean no disrespect to them, they are very nice people, they’re young and energetic and I wish them well, but they are not going to ask me a hard question.”

JD: “Ok.”

BG: “And at the same time, to be honest, I don’t need their advertising channel to get my message out, cause it just doesn’t reach the people I care about.”

JD: “Ok, speaking of attack ads, in your experience does the difference between positive or negative messaging really make a difference for voters?”

BG: “Well again, I think from my particular experience, its clear to me that people in this county and in my district in particular, are very smart, and classical negative advertising is, does not work, and in fact, it probably has an opposite effect.”

JD: “It turns people off?”

BG: “Absolutely. And my opponent in my first election in 2006, toward the end, just before the election, went massively negative, on me, trying to tie me to oil industry and money and permission to drill offshore wells cause I used to work for a company that did business with the oil industry. “

JD: “Ok.”

BG: “That I owned a certain amount of stock in the Chevron corporation as an investment at some point and that I wasn’t looking out for the interests of, this guy was a republican who was trying to position himself as a better environmental candidate, and had all the classic, you know a picture of me with my normal fairly neutral expression, which I’m told is a fairly stern expression, just not a flattering picture of me, just did his best to say this guy is not trustworthy, that was the message. And he had people that were long time friends and supporters of him calling my campaign saying, I’m not voting for

Roger, cause that's just ridiculous. We have an exceptionally engaged, well informed public here, its a pleasure to do politics. At the same time, my advertising in that campaign, You know I'm talking mostly about my direct mail pieces, went right after his record, you know, he was the mayor of Morro Bay for a couple terms, and I asked him at one forum, have you ever voted against a development project, and he hesitated and basically said no. So we used that, this is a guy that's never voted against a development project. And this is what i've done, this in land conservation, and this in public service land commission and here's the chart, this is what Roger has done, no no no. So some people thought that was negative, certainly was aggressive, but it was on his record and so we made that,"

JD: "Not false accusations."

BG: "Not trying to suggest that he is untrustworthy, just trying to suggest that his record does not fit with the values of the district. So that's where it gets back to values, so these are my values, these are my actions in support of these values, these are his actions, which don't support these values and you want to discuss it with me, argue with me, thats fine, You've never voted against a development project Roger. So that's, thats a real fine distinction, but its an important one."

JD: "My last two questions are really about social media, but I know that social media doesn't really need to be the route, basically the gist of the questions is do you feel like the political candidate should really focus on creating that emotional connection with the public, using social media if you want to, or campaigning, walking precincts, or whatever, do you feel that what they really should do if they want to be elected?"

BG: "As opposed to?"

JD: "As opposed to channeling your message through the traditional media."

BG: "Well I don't think its an either or."

JD: "Ok."

BG: "So both times I'm elected I did no TV, did beautiful direct mail, knocked on a ton of doors and did radio, so you listen to my radio spots which were some of them a minute, some of them more of them thirty seconds, me talking sometimes an announcer saying vote for Bruce at the end, sometimes not, you know, nice music, not classical music, but you know, you know Aaron Copland? Wonderful American composer, I recommend his music to you, but its very American, not quite symphonic, but you know just cool music in the background, very low key, and me just talking. So that was again an expression of my values, umm direct mail an expression of my values, knocking on doors an expression of my commitment to meeting people and understanding them, and you know, that expression of my values can be through facebook, I don't, I confess I have a Twitter account that I was using to follow Lady Gaga, no, umm one of our state associations in the county was using it, was tweeting as the budge issues were going

through, in Sacramento. 140 characters was not doing it for me. There was nothing, the content of that was just ridiculous, I just couldn't, and yeah I understand that motivated the Arab uprising, and all sorts of interesting things happening, but I just can't not see the content, and I am willing to play around with Facebook, I still have yet to figure out what Twitter makes any substantial difference going on."

JD: "That's debatable."

BG: "But I don't differentiate, to me there's not a useful difference, a differentiation between each social medium, you reach such different audiences, you gotta take advantage of every channel that there is to talk to the people that you represent. You need to understand the differences in approach, the great democracy of the internet where nothing is filtered, to the very filtered traditional media, you have to be able to work in both fields."

JD: "Ok, perfect."

BG: "Ok, that's what you needed?"

JD: "Yeah!"