

6 Lessons for Indian Elections From Barack Obama's Online Marketing Campaign

Watching the US presidential coverage on the news always provides entertainment, especially considering how intense the democratic nomination was. While watching one of these segments they mentioned that Barack Obama had raised 100% of his campaign funding through online contributions.

He has not accepted any campaign contributions from large companies or lobbyists. Instead, Barack Obama's campaign has been one of the most profitable in history, with the majority of campaign contributions made online through over a million small contributions.

In fact, Barack Obama has raised nearly \$200 million online, with a record \$55 million raised in February alone, or nearly \$2 million per day. Once you bring up www.barackobama.com, The next hour is just spent in admiration of the level of detail and expertise implemented by Barack Obama's online marketing team.

When you know what to look for in a good website and marketing campaign, you can really start to appreciate the level of skill behind his entire online marketing strategy.

Although there are way too many positive elements to cover in this article, here are 6 major strategies which really make the Barack Obama online marketing campaign a raging success:

1. The First Time You Visit Your Site You Are Asked To Join His Mailing List

Before you can view any part of Obama's site you are taken to a page where you are asked for your name and address:



Notice how he makes it very easy to subscribe, only asking for your email address and zip code. Also notice that the main call to action button 'learn more' is in red. This is done to attract the eye to the primary action that he wants you to take on this page. Importantly, you do not have to subscribe to view

the rest of this website, you can simply click on ‘skip signup’ to visit the main website – but this is not the focus.

Of course I entered my details in to see what happened, and was taken to this page:



What’s impressive is the wording used, such as ‘**Join the movement**’ and ‘**this campaign is about you**’. They are numerous reasons why you should fill out the form.

So the first step was a small yes, just email and zip code. The next step is to enter your full name, address and phone number. If all of this information was asked of you on the first page, the response would be much lower. Remember, getting people to say ‘yes’ on a higher number of small commitments is better than asking them to say ‘yes’ on one large commitment.

After you enter your details you are taken to this page:



There are 3 main actions for you to take on the ‘thank you’ page. The most important, as we can tell from the red button, is to ‘donate now’.The others are to register to vote and to visit the home page. Every image on the page is a link, ensuring that a visitor will be taken to a different page no matter what they click. The site makes it very easy to act.

Of course, once you subscribe you will start to receive high value emails from him driving you back to his website to take action.

2. Every Web Page Furthers the Primary Action to ‘Donate Now’

No matter what page you are visiting on the Barack Obama website, the red 'donate now' button draws your attention. It is essentially the only red image on a blue, grey and white website, which is a very subtle, yet powerful method of encouraging people to take the action.

When you click on the 'donate now' button you are taken to the following page:



This is a landing page designed to compel the visitor to donate to the Obama campaign. When you visit the page a very short video automatically starts playing, with very relevant information which explains WHY you should donate to his campaign.

By giving options for the donation amount, it makes it easy for people to make a decision on how much to donate. The website also pre-populates the fields with the information you entered on the previous page so that only minimum additional action is required of the person making the donation. The main call to action button is a red graphic, bringing attention to the action he wants you to take. Again, you have a 'skip donation' link at the top of the page in case you do not want to make a donation at the time.

The online donation process is by far his most valuable 'sales' system on the website.

3. Excellent Information Architecture

The way that the information is laid out and presented makes it easy to use and, more importantly, to scan. Website visitors have the shortest attention span of any mode of communication, quickly jumping between pages and leaving sites where they cannot quickly find what they are looking for.

When you visit the Barack Obama home page, the information draws you in. You can quickly find what you are looking for, and it is easy to take action to learn more:



A subscription box is included at the top right hand side of the page, to join the mailing list, and a picture of Barack Obama and inspiring quote is included to build instant credibility. Of course, the ‘donate now’ button is visible immediately, as well as additional actions which he wants you to take. All this happens BEFORE you start scrolling down the page.

The main ‘banner’ of the page rotates the main messages and actions of the day. An eye catching banner is used with a strong headline and a clear call-to-action ‘learn more’ to encourage visitors to visit the landing page. Each banner links to a different targeted landing page, ensuring maximum response on every click taken, such as:

“Fight The Smears” Campaign:



And ‘Supporting The Open Convention’ campaign:



Every call-to-action on the site leads to a landing page which is setup to convert.

4. A Blog Is Used To Communicate Messages

Posts are added to the blog multiple times per day to communicate with supporters on a daily basis as well as providing a channel for supporters who only consume news through RSS aggregator software such as Bloglines



Blogs are one of the best methods of communicating and building relationships with people, and Obama is using his very effectively.

He is also taking advantage of Web 2.0 websites within his blog posts, such as Flickr, the photo sharing site:



And [YouTube](#), the video sharing site:

Notice the integration of social bookmarking 'quick links' at the bottom of every blog post.

5. Social Networking Is Used To Maximise Exposure

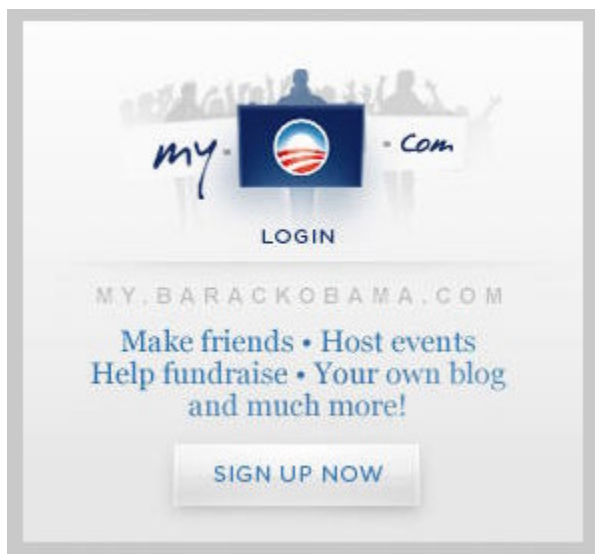
One of the most impressive elements of Obama's online marketing campaign is the reach achieved through social networking, which is one of the fastest growing and far reaching methods of online exposure available today.

If you scroll down to the bottom of Obama's site you will see the following:



Barack Obama has an account with every high traffic social networking site on the Internet. More importantly, each of those accounts listed above are very active and drive traffic to the main website. This type of strategy is not for the faint hearted, and requires a significant amount of management to achieve the levels of success achieved by Barack Obama.

Not only does Barack Obama actively participate in all of the largest social networks online, but he owns his own social network, where supporters can 'network' with other supporters:



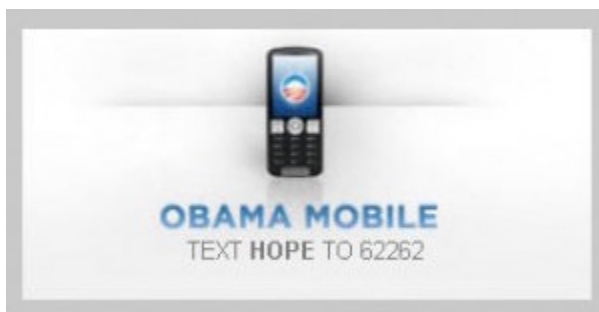
Of course I joined to see what it is all about:



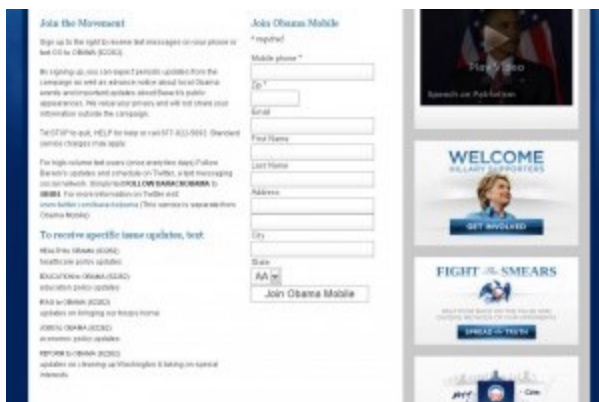
Giving supporters a voice on his website is a masterstroke.

6. Mobile Marketing Is Used To Further His Message

Barack Obama includes a mobile subscription section on his website where you can join his SMS mailing list:



This links to the following landing page:



Notice how you can select the SMS updates you want to receive. That way, you can keep up with the latest updates on the topics which matter to you.

The best part about mobile marketing is that the deliverability is nearly 100%, that is, everybody opens a text message when they receive it.

Summary

If you have ever wondered what a perfect online marketing campaign looks like, just look at the Barack Obama campaign. Their online marketing team are implementing every online marketing strategy available, including social networking, search engine optimisation, pay per click advertising, email marketing, mobile marketing and a number of other strategies. Not only that, but their implementation is flawless.

The cost of running an online marketing campaign like Barack Obama's would be outside of the budget and resources of most companies, but we can learn a lot about any particular strategy which we are thinking about implementing.

For example, if you are looking at ways to improve your website's conversion rate, look at how the Obama website is designed. If you are looking at ways to implement social networking, check out the profile pages on MySpace or Facebook.

Start thinking about how you can implement what we have just spoken about in this article on your own political website and online marketing campaign.

And most importantly...

TAKE ACTION! NOW & WIN BIG IN THE ELECTIONS AHEAD