



SOURCECODE

2024

**ELECTION  
SEASON**

**COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

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**Disclaimer:** Please note that any recommendations shared in this document are general guidelines for approaching media and key communications audiences during a busy news cycle. Depending on your organization's viewpoints and needs, we'd happily arrange a separate discussion to offer a more bespoke strategy.

# High level media trends

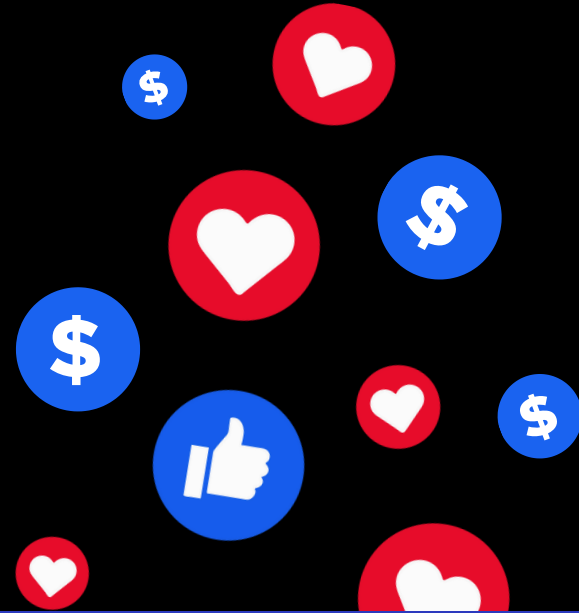
## leading into the 2024 election cycle

### 1 Political ad spending will reach record-breaking numbers

This year's election cycle ad spending is estimated to reach upwards of \$12 billion (triple what was spent in 2016).

Additionally, digital formats such as connected TV (CTV) and social media will play a major role.

We see many audiences turning to **social media channels** for real-time election updates. TikTok and Instagram are swaying an easily influenced generation of voters - but these platforms are also rife with election-related misinformation and outright falsehoods.



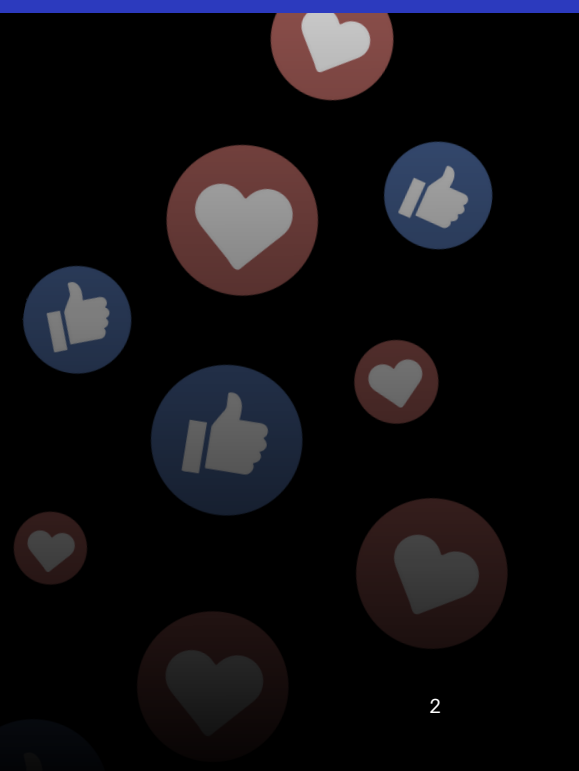
### 2 Media consumption habits shift during election years

The way that different demographics consume news and information will be a popular discussion topic during this election cycle, as certain demographics are markedly split in their viewpoints and candidate approvals.

There is debate on whether social platforms are an appropriate stage for political discussions, at all. **LinkedIn**, for example, has allowed US customers to opt out of political content on its platform. While communications professionals advise against using professional platforms like LinkedIn to share opinion versus fact, many professionals see their personal and political identities as inextricably intertwined.

## \$12 billion

Estimated spend for election cycle ad spending in 2024



# High level media trends leading into the 2024 election cycle

## 3 Combatting misinformation online and showcasing authenticity

Recent advancements in AI have exacerbated the ongoing problem of misinformation on social platforms. As the lines blur between fact and fiction, campaigns could suffer from a lack of authenticity – or else, a lack of trust from audiences that they truly are authentic.

As November 5 nears, we will likely see big tech brands taking a firmer stand against misinformation and/or providing a stronger POV around their AI approaches. We already saw brands responding to heightened pressure in June, when the Supreme Court called for more stringent reviews by the FBI of these social platforms.



## 4 Local legislation affecting national issues

Whether the issue in question is abortion, immigration or taxes, as candidates decide if certain laws should be left to the individual states, national media will be closely watching how these decisions could affect election outcomes.



## 5 Cultural issues at stake

As immigration, gender and racial diversity remain widely and fervently debated among different groups, the media - and individuals/organizations on social media - will look to lay out the various viewpoints of public figures and brands.



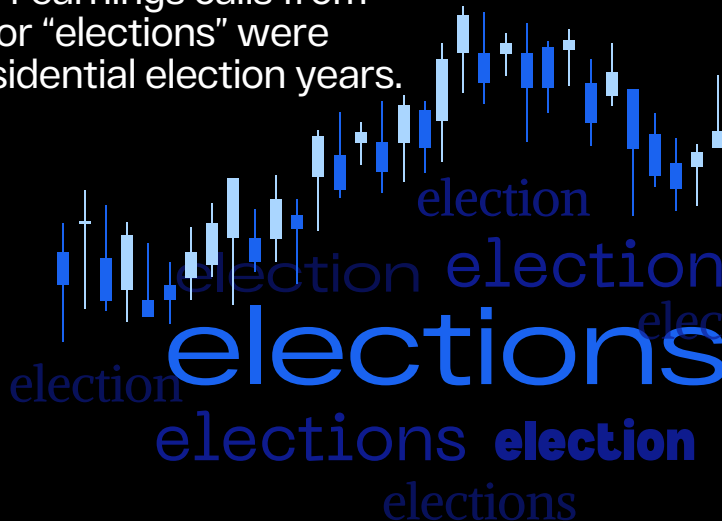
# Media

## feedback and guidance

According to a recent data pull from Q2 2024 earnings calls from S&P 500 companies, mentions of “election” or “elections” were **nearly double** that seen in the last two presidential election years.

### Prepare for political discussion in every situation -

Whether a media conversation is “on background,” “off the record” or expressly intended for an article, spokespeople must be prepared for political discussions to arise. While all media may not be covering the election directly, a majority of reporters associated with business or consumer outlets will likely ask questions about how election outcomes or policy changes may affect a given industry or the overall economy.



## What we're seeing

### across our clientele:

#### B2C

- During an election cycle, information-heavy news and hot-blooded debates collide to create a perfect storm of mental stress. Offering tips, tricks and data related to mental health and well-being will be resonant.
- The outcome of the presidential election stands to impact every state and jurisdiction differently. Leaning into local perspectives opens up opportunities for the deeply human storytelling that consumer audiences are drawn to.
- Money and the economy are always major rhetorical pillars in any election. This year, with recession rumors still swirling, the general public is split between being more conservative with their spending versus continuing their discretionary spending without fear. Financial planning tips and trends are likely to resonate with consumers.

#### B2B

- While the presidential election may be the main event, local and state elections will be just as important to watch, as they could greatly affect how enterprises conduct business within those US jurisdictions.
- With threats of security breaches at polling places and voter fraud running rampant, now is the time for enterprises to bolster their stances on these topics.

# Recommended

## external comms approach

### Business/National Media

**Timeliness is key** - The closer we get to November, the election will dominate the news cycle at national outlets. It will be difficult to entice their reporters with any other feature angles unless those angles have a political spin.

**SourceCode Recommendation:** When reaching out to business or national media from September through November (and into the inauguration in January), consider how the election cycle may impact your client's news or data. There may not be a direct tie, but you should prepare a reactive or clarifying statement should a reporter ask any election-related questions.

### Trade Media

**Consider the bigger picture** - Where national consumer and business publications will cover the election as the news of the day, trades are more focused on the long-term implications for the specific industries they serve.

**SourceCode Recommendation:** Trade publications aren't as likely to cover the election beat-for-beat, but expect them to write about election-related issues relevant to their vertical. Prepare your spokespeople for at least 1-2 questions related to any pending laws/regulations that could impact your client's space.

### Social Channels

**Be honest and authentic to your brand** - With concerns mounting around the spread of misinformation via social channels, how brands interact online will be the subject of heavy scrutiny during the election.

**SourceCode Recommendation:** To mitigate potential controversy, advise the corporate voices (and faces) of your organization to avoid engaging in public-facing political discussions online.

### Customers/Key Audiences

**Preparedness is a priority** - In today's political landscape, as businesses and brands experience increased exposure on channels where news travels in nanoseconds, it's critical to prepare an election-specific crisis comms guide for your organization.

**Gain industry intel** - Plan your crisis comms approach by analyzing various channels (particularly media outlets and social networks) for relevant news topics, threats and opportunities. Understanding how your business fits into the news cycle will help you to not only know what coverage might arise from a crisis, but will help your brand engage in relevant election-related conversations.

**SourceCode Recommendation:** Over the next few months, Work with your communications team to align your media relations strategies with the specific election-related priorities of your target publications and reporters.

# Recommended

## internal comms approach

### Establish clear guidelines for employees



Work with HR to set and communicate guidelines for how employees can engage in election discussions.

Support employees in navigating workplace political discussions.

### Align with company values



Help employees to focus on well-being to mitigate the impact of political tensions.

Encourage respectful dialogue among employees.

Clearly communicate the company's values on tolerance and respect.

### Be prepared



Develop a playbook to effectively handle post-election scenarios and outcomes.

## Issues management scenarios to consider



### Sample pivot statement:

*While we appreciate the request for our perspective on the upcoming election, we remain committed to focusing on our core business operations and serving our customers. It is in our best interest as an organization to not engage in any conversations that could detract from our wider mission and values.*

### Scenario

*Being unwillingly brought into a political conversation*

### Recommended approach

- Prepare a reactive statement
- Share it with key audiences as needed

*Navigating misinformation or misrepresentation of a perspective from your brand*

- Identify the root cause of misinformation
- Establish a strategy for proactive outreach to correct the information (externally + internally)

*When a customer/employee is causing disruption or tension around political issues (on external/internal channels)*

- Refer to any employee guidelines
- Share a proactive company stance

*Strong reactions to whomever is elected could elicit travel-related concerns on both local and global levels*

- Educate all employees on international travel policies and local ways of behaving and doing business in various countries

