

MicrO(hio)-Targeting

How Portman Won Ohio



"i360's ability to identify and target Ohio voters and accurately predict their leanings on hyper-local, timely issues was the difference in our ability to win over voters by showing we cared about the same things they did." - Corry Bliss, Campaign Manager

The Challenge

Right out of the gate, the Portman campaign knew it was going to be an uphill battle to victory with the first 2015 polls showing Portman a full 9 points behind opponent, former OH Governor, Ted Strickland.

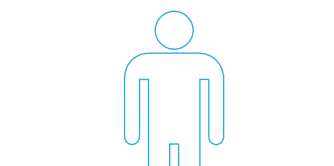
Being a former governor and often in the media spotlight, Strickland had high name recognition and with Ohio being a potential pick-up state for the opposing party, the full support of the Democratic party including the ad dollars that came with it.

On top of it all, Portman's campaign and the political atmosphere in Ohio were further complicated by the recent events and wild turns in the Presidential race.

To claim victory, the campaign knew they had to hit the ground running, literally, and that precise and accurate targeting would be key.

The Solution

The Portman campaign didn't waste any time, signing on with i360 in early February, 2015. Together, i360 and the campaign strategized a plan to execute one of the most custom-targeted, integrated campaigns to date with a focus on getting the right message to the right voter wherever that might be.



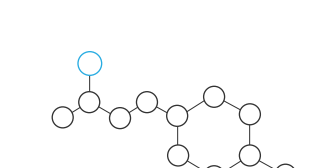
Ticket Splitter Model

At top two score ranges, more than doubled the likelihood of reaching ticket splitters



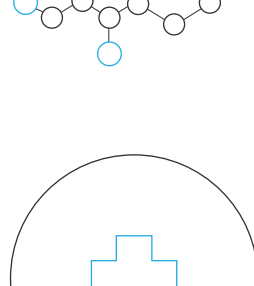
Portman/Strickland Model

Accurate in predicting Portman support in the top score range 89% of the time



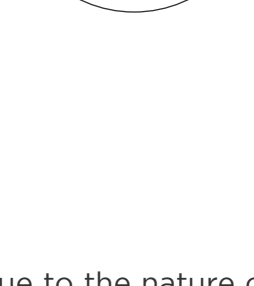
Lake Erie Model

Accurate in predicting that protecting Lake Erie is the most important issue 88% of the time in the top score range



Heroin model

Accurate in predicting whether an individual had been affected by the issue 75% of the time in the top score range



Heroin Treatment model

Accurate in predicting who viewed the issue as a healthcare problem 93% of the time and who viewed it as a criminal justice issue 79% of the time in the top score range

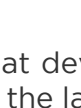
The Right Audience

Due to the nature of the 2016 Presidential election, the need for a candidate-specific predictive model was true more than ever as the support distribution for the Senate race would not necessarily mimic the Presidential. So i360 suggested they build a variety of custom models.

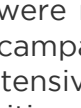
Each model was created specifically for the Ohio political landscape. Ticket-splitting was recognized early on as a reality of the cycle and identifying these voters, particularly those who might vote Clinton on the Presidential but still support Portman for Senate, and encouraging them to go to the polls on election day was paramount. To do so, i360 built three separate models - the Trump/Clinton model, Anti-Hillary Model and Ticket Splitter model. The Ticket Splitter model was a game changer more than doubling the likelihood of reaching ticket splitters at the top two score ranges.

The Right Message

In addition to identifying and speaking to the right voters, the Portman campaign wanted to ensure their message resonated with the Ohio electorate.



"The goal of our targeting is to not only identify the people in the middle but to identify what issue each person cares about and then how to have a meaningful conversation with that person on that issue." - Corry Bliss, Campaign Manager



Considering the recent algae blooms that devastated Lake Erie, a top-of-mind issue for Ohio residents was the protection of the lake so central to their everyday lives. By informing constituents of Portman's history of support for protection against and clean-up of algae blooms in Lake Erie, the campaign was able to connect with voters on a personal level.

The other key local issue facing Ohio was the opioid epidemic. Unlike the Lake Erie algae bloom, the issue of opioid abuse was particularly complex in that it was relatively unknown whether it was considered a healthcare issue or a criminal justice issue. The answer to this would dictate the most effective messaging. In addition, this was a particularly personal issue affecting some voters and not others. By leveraging two predictive models - the Heroin model identifying those constituents most likely to have been affected by the issue of opioid abuse and the Heroin Treatment model determining whether those individuals were more likely to view the issue as one of healthcare or of criminal justice - the campaign was able to effectively craft their messaging about Senator Portman's extensive work in the Senate to be tailored to each individual according to their disposition on the topic.

The Right Place

The Portman campaign was innovative in more ways than one, embracing i360's latest technologies and mediums while maintaining consistency in their targeting. Using i360's Deep Dive analysis product, they were able to get a clear understanding of the political landscape and exactly what they were up against. They skillfully used the results of the analysis to inform their targeting and vote projections from the start.

For grassroots activity, the campaign was one of the most active on i360 Walk and i360 Call having logged more than 6 million voter contacts by the end of the cycle. They also took full advantage of the nimbleness of the i360 analytics team to create custom dashboards quickly, ensuring their team had the most useful data possible at all times. By using all of these i360 solutions, the campaign was able to ensure that all their data and analytics were updated in real time as they gained more information about voters through field work, web and social data, AB/EV returns, and other data sources.

By working with i360 to onboard the same universes used for grassroots outreach into online digital segments, the campaign could talk to the same voters online with the same level of targeting sophistication as they were offline - ensuring each voter saw only the most optimized message no matter where they were. The same tactic was employed for the TV media buys as well as for traditional mail outreach as the campaign knew, *"The greatest TV ad, the greatest message in the world shown to the wrong people is nothing but a waste of money."* - Corry Bliss, Campaign Manager

The Right Time

As aforementioned, The Portman campaign embraced the motto, "the early bird gets the worm" and began an aggressive ground game much earlier than the common campaign. This enabled them to collect more data and assume an advantage once the race really began. By the end of 2015, the campaign had logged more than 1 million voter contact attempts through i360's grassroots tools - **that's nearly 11 months before the November election!**

Relying so heavily on several different predictive models, it was important that each model was built on the most up-to-date information possible - taking into account changes in voter attitudes and behaviors. By refreshing the models nightly throughout the cycle and implementing Bayesian updating (a method of statistical inference that updates information on voters based on information learned from other voters), i360 ensured all models reflected the most recent ID work the campaign was collecting in the field.

Contrary to their common use for post-activity measurement and reporting, the real-time dashboards developed and used for the Portman campaign were actionable from the start. The Custom Model dashboard enabled them to identify contact lists and pair them with the most effective message while the Grassroots and Daily Toplines dashboards kept them up-to-date on the progress of their field work. The campaign also relied heavily on a custom AB/EV dashboard built specifically for them to refine their targeting continually as data returns were processed.

The Results

Despite trailing the opponent initially, the Portman campaign steadily gained ground closing the gap between Portman and Strickland throughout 2015 and into early 2016 largely due to their early and aggressive ground game. By the end of the cycle, the campaign had logged approximately 6.1 million voter contacts through i360 Call and i360 Walk - approximately 2.6 million calls and 3.5 million doors respectively.

In early summer 2016 Portman began to take command of the race, quickly out pacing the Strickland campaign. By Labor Day, Portman steadily out-pollied Strickland by double digits. This was sign enough to the opposition and Democrat affiliated groups accepted defeat, canceling an estimated \$20 million in TV ad buys in the state.

Portman's early lead also meant less need for party ad dollars - freeing up budget for other contentious races which some have attributed to being the difference in securing the Senate majority for the GOP.

Ultimately defeating Strickland by a resounding 21-point differential, Portman's success was revered by many as the most effective campaign in the country.

Overall, the Portman campaign's commitment to smart, data-driven campaign tactics founded on i360's integrated solutions, including i360 Portal, i360 Walk and Call, custom dashboards and deep dive analyses, as well as shrewd a cycle of i360's custom models enabled them to claim victory in a cycle like none other in history and ultimately set the standard for statewide campaign operations of the future.

About i360

i360 is the leading data and technology firm for the free market political and advocacy community. As a first-of-its-kind enterprise, i360 fully integrates and continually updates a database of all 260 million 18+ Americans, including the 190 million who are registered to vote. The information in the i360 database goes beyond voting data and includes hundreds of variables on every individual including survey response data, consumer demographic, lifestyle and behavioral data, census data and precinct level election returns, and more that can be used to determine and reach your targets.

i360's comprehensive data is a unique combination of hard data points and predictive modeling. The dataset incorporates extensive political identification, coalition and membership information collected by way of in-person, phone and online surveys, as well as through partner relationships. In addition, this data is enhanced by a team of data scientists who build and refine sophisticated predictive models, or microtargeting, that predict how likely voters are to support issues or candidates and how likely they are to take an action, like voting.

It is i360's combined involvement and expertise in data, technology, advertising and analytics coupled with our dedication to helping our clients win that make us the perfect partner for campaigns of any size.



The Data Is The Difference