

Media Channels

Selecting the best media channels (such as television or social media) for reaching your target voters is crucial for every media campaign. Research has shown that some channels are better than others for persuading or mobilizing particular demographic groups.

Media Channel Advertising Selection Chart

Channel	Overview	Advantages	Disadvantages
Television	Television reaches a broad audience. It is still viewed as one of the most effective ways to reach a target audience and persuade or mobilize them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers entire media market • Compelling, good for appeals to emotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Not targeted • Paying to reach a large audience beyond target groups
Social Media	Best used as “sound bites” of messages in a continuous campaign. Advertisements can target specific demographic users of different Social Media networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasingly used • Low cost • Targeted groups • Focus on ongoing communication in small messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not viewed as trustworthy • Ineffective with rural voters • Not all groups use social media
Radio	Radio ads may seem less significant with the rise of other technologies, but they are still common in campaigns and can be used effectively as an inexpensive way to increase issue recognition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost and wide reach • Great for older and rural voters • Radio audiences are likely voters • Audiences listen all day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to reach young and urban demographics • Narrower audience than TV
Newspaper	Advertisements in newspapers, local shoppers, and regional magazines, whether online or delivered to voters’ doors, can be used to effectively target specific demographics who subscribe or receive these publications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for narrow targeting of groups (who subscribe) • Trustworthy sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller audiences than TV and Radio • Limited to groups that subscribe or reach in print or online publications
Direct Mail	Particularly effective for local or state-level campaigns. Direct mailers sent to addresses in targeted regions can be effective to increase issue recognition and frame the way an issue is viewed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very targeted • Effective to introduce policy or frame a message • Effective for older voters and for a political party’s base voters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • No chance of reaching those beyond target group