National Republican Congressional Committee

2018 OTT Advertising Case Study

Summary

The NRCC IE had a total media budget of over $60 million during the 2018 election cycle.

We broke OTT media into 3 categories – Connected Television, Addressable Satellite, and Video on Demand – and it served as part of the media plan in 18 different districts, for a total budget of just under $2 million.

Challenge #1

Very rarely will political organizations experience the luxury of having too much money to spend. Our goal in 2018 was to defend many seats against extremely enthusiastic and well-funded opponents. In situations like this, you must make hard decisions about the inevitable budget limitations that will be encountered.

Solution

The committee supplied us with 2 extremely useful resources: an audience file and an audience priority list. After onboarding the audience file and determining the size of the persuasion audience, we were able to go into each district and modify the size of the persuasion audience in accordance with the highest value voters to meet our budgetary needs.

Results

If the full persuasion audience in a district was very large, but seniors were listed as the top priority for our messaging, we would run our ads to only the 65+ portion of that audience. This approach allowed us to get more lead on the target and serve our priority audience with our desired message at a much higher frequency.

Challenge #2

Media consumption habits vary district by district and must be considered during any planning phase. When targeting a specific audience, it may not be immediately clear which medium is the most effective way to reach them. While there is no substitute for the firepower of traditional broadcast and cable, determining how to spend a media budget outside of those mediums involves inspection of many moving parts.

Solution

We used the Cross Screen Media Planning and Optimization tool to determine which medium was the most cost efficient and effective by district. The first step was integrating our rates for broadcast and cable into the planner. Next, we onboarded the audiences into the planning tool to give us a full understanding of the cost to hit that audience. We were then able to compare rates and reach on a district by district basis.

Results

By weighing the cost against the available inventory to serve our message to an audience, we were able to decipher where our OTT dollars would have a greater impact. This gave us a roadmap for each district's OTT budget allocation, instead of blindly allocating by district.

Challenge #3

Congressional districts often stretch across multiple media markets. With traditional buys, sometimes the only way to reach every voter in the district is to purchase airtime in media markets where there's a high percentage of waste and the ad will be seen by many people who are ineligible to vote in that election.

Solution

Not only was our OTT media audience-specific, we set geo-filters to prevent waste outside of the district. Several of our target districts were within media markets that qualified as "inefficient" so we allocated a larger percentage of the media budget to OTT.

Results

Millions of dollars overall were saved by lowering GRPs (gross rating points- broadcast) for districts in inefficient media markets and increasing TRPs (targeted rating points- addressable).

Conclusion

By the numbers

24 million impressions served: Over 13 million through Connected TV, over 8 million through Satellite, 2.5 million through Video on Demand

60 different spots shown

2.3 million voters targeted

Average total frequency of 10