WHERE DO POLITICAL AND CORPORATE CAMPAIGNS CONVERGE AND DIVERGE?

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Abstract

This review identifies specific articles and literature that provide insights into the history of and correlations between current political and corporate campaign strategies. The findings suggest that corporations should and do adopt some of the more refined campaign techniques used by political entities and that scholarly attention should be expanded to include more extensive reviews of corporate requirements in this area. The overarching goal of this study is to: (1) convey the history of both corporate and political marketing strategies, (2) summarize where political and corporate marketing constructs diverge, and (3) demonstrate the increasing converging entanglement of corporate and political marketing campaign tactics. This examination particularly highlights the more advanced methodologies utilized by campaign teams to galvanize the passions of the masses. While those in the political arena have accumulated considerable experience with these methodologies, corporations have made less use of certain types, and have, thus, failed to reap the benefits of their advanced techniques. The strategic parallels these institutions have shared for promoting acceptance and growth deserve intense analysis and reflection to determine how the tactics peculiar to their structures can be optimized to promote the success of each individually and both collectively.

From the British East India Company's take on lobbying to the corporate marketing campaigns of Bud Light, Chick Fil A, Delta, and Target, corporations and political factions have assumed vital roles in the development and continuing existence of our institutions, both public and private. This review will consider how the evolution and impact of societal sways have both informed and molded campaign strategies in both sectors. As a result, this analysis will, hopefully, help fill the void of academic information that is available in this area. Additionally, this examination will identify the parallels that exist between how the government achieves support of the population on the one hand with how corporations reel in clients on the other, (e.g., lobbying, PAC fundraising, targeting, messaging, third-party activists, and storytelling).

Official readers of this article include: Dr. Dorothea Wolfson, Dr. Alexander Rosenthal, Lester Munson, and Jason Linde.
Preface

During my 2003 graduation ceremony, when I received a Bachelor of Science degree from Auburn University, I received a phone call from someone requesting assistance with the election campaign of Bobby Jindal for Louisiana Governor. Some might view Jindal’s defeat as discouragingly portending. However, I shook off this first race loss and worked on a United States Congressional campaign in North Carolina for Patrick McHenry. That Patrick began his political career as an underdog is without question. As the youngest candidate in the race, he lived in the smallest portion of the district and had limited financial resources. Despite the obstacles, Patrick won that race! He has maintained uninterrupted tenure as a US Representative since 2004 and currently serves as Chairman of the Banking Committee. Thus, this is where my love for the art of politics began. From working for the youngest Congressional Member to now managing my own political/corporate relations firm, I have spent over a decade traversing the political landscape.

I have developed an extensive background in corporate lobbying, creating nonprofits, grassroots mobilization, fundraising, media buying, communications, polling, crafting policy, and overall campaign strategizing for both corporate and political entities. A dearth of knowledge exists as it pertains to both fields. Ironically, however, I have discovered a considerable void in understanding how political and corporate campaign strategies converge and diverge. The ever-increasing focus on recent corporate marketing missteps makes this topic timely. Thus, with this increasing interest in discerning how corporations have more frequently begun to insert themselves into the political limelight, I have decided to leverage my background to explore this topic and fill some of the vacuity within this study area.

I would like to acknowledge the political consultant Ward Baker for his contributions to this review. Additionally, I would like to thank my parents, David and Catherine Farrow, my friends, my business partner and Democratic counterpart, Mike Talboy, and my boyfriend, Chad Heflin, for their continued support during my pursuit of academia.
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Introduction

Corporate and political campaign strategy entanglements can be traced to the ploys of the British East India Company. However, the historical trajectory of these practices has mainly followed the traditional pathway of lobbying, as attested by the most recent tactics of corporate marketing campaigns. Some corporations such as Chevron have successfully injected appealing social messaging into their corporate marketing campaigns, while others such as Target and Bud Light have seemingly missed the mark. This study is timely in that it identifies the apparent absence of similar levels of research that highlight the advantage one achieves when testing a new tactic on a political campaign before implementing it in a corporate setting. As importantly, referencing relevant material resources, this examination will expound upon what appears to be insufficient research that focuses upon the comparison of strategies in these two distinct, but in many ways, comparable entities. This article, thus, explores the existence of current scholarly knowledge in such areas as those related to the implications of factions for strategic designs and actions in both the political and corporate worlds. Hence, this article will add to the conversations that consider the influence of political campaign methods on those of corporate campaigns.

Additionally, the review will stress the importance of employing field teams, identifying local influencers, utilizing polling, and campaign first as integral tactics for assuring the success of a corporate campaign. To add further substance, this review will then provide documentation acquired via an interview with Ward Baker, Senate Campaign Strategist, Senator Mitch McConnell Advisor, and Public Affairs expert. Hence, with research taken from both academic publications and real-life experiences, this analysis will make these critical comparisons.

Of the academic research reviewed about this grassroots topic, perhaps the material with the most profound substance was that delivered by UCLA Professor Edward T. Walker. Walker’s immensely comprehensive book, article, and review essentially serve as an amalgamation of the beliefs and conclusions of the other resources. He affirms that, since the beginning of their co-existence, government and corporations have utilized common strategies to solicit support of the people and manage discordant tendencies of the crowds. This examination has highlighted how both governments and corporations, in similar fashions, have continued to adapt to and utilize to
their advantage the sensations created by the factional entities that have come to play such a fundamental role in the evolution of both distinct sets of institutions. Moreover, all references were, not surprisingly, fairly similar in their analysis of corporate grassroots. However, there were instances when the undertones of some references diverged while others coalesced. Not surprisingly, the association journal studies and articles primarily fixated on tactics, such as call to action, message framing, and engaging third parties, as crucial to moving the corporate policy needle.

Therefore, this four-year study provides information about an ever-increasing emerging topic. While the material on this subject is still sparse, researchers are increasingly producing more meaty data about a unique, rapidly growing phenomenon with far-reaching implications for our society. Sharing in this research, professionals such as Simon Vodrey, Phillip Stutts, André Turcotte, and Samuel Woolley provide relevant, meaningful context for examining the converging methodologies we view more and more, forming vital parts of corporate marketing strategies and campaign tactics. Continual technological advancements have exponentially magnified the ability of institutions to reach individuals. This enhanced capability has forced political and corporate tactics to occupy more identical spheres. This article will highlight these tactics and find additional avenues for these two niches to find further succinct common ground.

“Chapter 3: Converging” underscores the practice of tailored messaging, also known as framing, targeting, and data. Emphasis on this type of messaging demonstrates and proves that both political and corporate campaigns utilize these types of methodologies. While writing this review, the author has become increasingly aware of the blatant empirical evidence affirming how these two sectors have shared and continue to invoke similar or identical ideological strategies. Stutts, political consultant, CEO of Win Big Media, commentator on ESPN, CBS, Fox Business, Fox News, MSNBC, and CNN, best-selling author, and consultant to Fortune 200 companies, most recently published several books on this topic. His writings and those of many others will play an integral role in demonstrating both the converging and diverging processes and tactics used in the corporate and political spheres. Ironically, the timing of this article is very relevant, displaying how the corporate application of these processes works in real time.
As a precursor to Chapter 3, critical information is presented emphasizing that the deployment of political data strategies only sometimes correlates and translates into similar messaging. Notably, the empirical evidence will point to how the converging of these two niches has led to potential precarious messaging predicaments for corporations. This article will address how these industries arrived at these messaging conclusions and where perhaps they could have applied the strategic political tactics differently. Current examples of these missteps will include Target, Chick-Fil-A, Bud Light, and Delta. While writing this article, the author continues to witness the ever-evolving world of data collection, intake, and interpretation, steps that will continue to dictate the messaging of both corporate and political campaigns. The future of data’s value is a given, and the critical importance of information at every level will remain a mainstay as professional researchers configure the correlations between corporate and political marketing constructs.

As mentioned above, in “Chapter 3: Converging,” case studies and examples in both sectors will unveil the history around and evolution of data collection, analysis, and application. In this passage, these critical data techniques will surface as ever-increasingly essential tools for developing sound marketing methodologies for political institutions and commercial enterprises. The application process will examine how both corporate and political campaigns target, craft, and leverage messaging to obtain the most significant probability of success. This assessment will emphasize the criticality of adeptly diving into and examining bits of data, a process delivering increased insight into why and how professors, professionals, and political advisors increasingly rely on this information in their studies and find a use for its application in their professions.

Importantly, a comprehensive study requires an understanding of how these entities diverge and how they come together. Therefore, this article will address both the uniting similarities and the contrasts between corporate and political constructs. The subtle irregularities ensuing from data application and targeting by corporations and political strategists are at times sharply palpable. That is to say, both sectors can make similar mistakes. However, throughout the study of this subject, the author is left to conclude that corporations appear to be more prone to display ideological missteps than political campaigns.
Hampered by their novice understanding of data and data applications, corporate marketing teams tend to be mainly responsible for producing diverging tactics between corporations and political campaigns. Empirical evidence demonstrates that these teams revert to old habits, targeting clients rather than evolving to newer, more effective methods for pursuing consumers. “Chapter 2: Diverging” will address how corporations’ previous, older habits are difficult to dismantle. Internal and external marketing firms must adjust to a rapidly growing and evolving technology space. This evolution demands that corporate entities and political campaigns remain agile, ready to evolve and adapt to an environment that advances and changes precipitately.

Evidence reveals that while political campaigns have adapted more quickly to the ever-changing environment, corporations’ marketing teams too frequently need to catch up in forming appropriate internal and external adjustments to the new landscape. Corporations continually rely on strategies focusing on generic data to create models for their marketing universe. However, reliance upon an extensive swath application of data to deliver a foolproof model for precision marketing has led to considerable missteps in developing and targeting messaging. Deploying a tactic that requires directing messaging toward large swaths of loosely defined audiences results in missed opportunities and frequent revenue losses for companies. Additionally, this type of “throwing everything at the wall” approach is commonly employed by campaigns that depend on assumptions for their direction or marketing teams that fail to conduct adequate research. While this research reveals that political campaigns have succumbed to the same pitfalls, a preponderance of the evidence clearly suggests that corporations, not political campaigns, have a higher propensity to make these mistakes.

Corporations’ inability to maneuver and adjust quickly to their environments’ chaotic gyrations naturally elongates their response time. These delays produce fewer opportunities for corporations to compete with new-age marketers. Therefore, political campaigns possess a profound advantage, enhancing their capacity to remain more cutthroat in their industry. Hence, political campaigns are armed with rapid response times, less hierarchical structure, more granular data, and fewer opinions to stifle their efforts. These traits strengthen these political
entities with a distinct advantage in crafting, targeting, and tailoring data and messaging over their corporate counterparts. In fact, evidence demonstrates that, more often than not, corporations cannot get out of their own way. Moreover, the data suggest that when corporations rely on marketing firms too continually, the relationship between these two entities evolves into one that misaligns priorities, placing a premium upon meeting contractual needs rather than delivering creative, tailored advertising.

Conversely, firm evidence points to a strict dichotomy between the correlations of political campaigns and their marketing teams versus those of their corporate counterparts. As it addresses the divergencies between corporate and political marketing structures, this article will attest to the enormous difference in results that can occur when marketing is delivered via a self-contained team (as generally seen in political settings) versus contracting marketing efforts (as frequently happens in corporations). This profound distinction between where the marketing efforts originate and how they are conducted profoundly affects how both political and corporate campaigns correlate. Marketing teams are more than in-house teams in political campaigns. They are the campaign. This article will establish then that a political campaign is a distinct variation, creating immensely impactful ramifications for an entire marketing campaign. The speed and agility of political campaigns set them apart from their corporate colleagues. Thus, via the domino effect, political campaigns can assert their inherent advantages when targeting clients via social media and moving quickly to undercut opponents and attract the masses.

Indeed, as they made plans for building the new nation, the Framers of the Constitution were compelled to consider the powerful impacts these forceful masses could bestow on their institutions. This study has derived much benefit from the material that primarily focused on the historical evolution of the campaign strategies and the importance of factions as entities representing the people. History reveals that the evolving of American politics and corporate marketing, with their overlapping influences, was significantly propelled by increased populist forces demanding their voices be heard both in the public and private sectors. Predecessors such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Madison, and Hamilton galvanized the populists to sell an ideology, all the while converting individuality into a collective movement. The 1800 Federalist versus Anti-
Federalist movements debated the role of government as an entity inserted in the lives of individuals. Today, social, economic, and climate campaigns continue to grow and flourish, demanding government and private sector support to achieve their objectives. The history of how corporate and political strategy entities have become entangled has become increasingly apparent. Generational forces against prior constructs and the presence of a progressive society have helped to create movements influencing how corporations would continue to look at marketing.

By the 1950s, factions such as the Civil Rights Movement would serve as catalysts, inspiring corporations (e.g., Women’s Rights and Climate Change). Indeed, history has continued to provide the critical fertile ground for encouraging the evolution of all institutions, public and private. Hence, history’s role in affecting the why and how behind today’s unique overlapping of public and private marketing is quite extensive. This study will also demonstrate that, while employing political tactics and strategies can be quite effective, the messaging does not always translate as desired in the corporate world. This very nuanced differentiation is essential to remember when reading the rest of this document. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how history has inspired the development and utilization of some of the current corporate marketing. It is equally important to discern what strategies have been viable assets, efficiently achieving the specific goals across public and private sectors.

Examining the history of these two niches will help build an understanding of how both entities began to intertwine. The entanglement of corporate and political marketing tactics has evolved over many years. However, documentation about these collaborations is sparse compared to the material accessible for other topics. Interestingly, since the inception of this study, scholars and professionals have produced an increasing number of books and papers on this topic. Thus, this accelerated focus on this phenomenon further proves that history plays a vital role in shaping corporate and political marketing tactics.
Chapter 1: History
Most, if not all, literary sources derive the premises of their arguments from history. Grassroots literature provides many examples of lessons that have been learned. This learning process takes on particular significance and meaning as attention is directed to reviewing what has occurred and can manifest when the passions of the masses form the tailwinds that drive destiny. In fact, Tocqueville, Ginsberg, Hill, Walker, Bickford, and Clabough, along with other scholars, argue that the conceptual foundation for the modern-day word “grassroots” finds its origin in the history of the United States’ political development. In Democracy in America, Tocqueville examines the first observations of groundswell democracy permeating the environment when he describes “democratic revolutions, which stir up at the same time all the classes of which people is composed and also give rise to vast ambitions in the heart of every citizen.”¹ James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, authors of the Federalist essays, would concur with Tocqueville by arguing that a nation could not maintain homogeneity, rather insisting “One cannot rid the world of faction without at the same time getting rid of liberty.”² More currently, Walker’s book, Grassroots for Hire: Public Affairs Consultants in American Democracy, observes the increasing coagulation between present-day scholars and past historians whose writings continue to trace “the theme of civic privatism and individualism run amok...throughout our intellectual discourse in works going back\ to Tocqueville and continuing into the thought of Lippman, Riesman, Bellah, and, today, Putnam.”³ Indeed, whether or not the notion of grassroots invokes impressions of disruption or collusion for constructive purposes, its essence, as an integral part of American history, has done much to propel the direction and destiny of both public and private institutions.

Factions, a term that invokes images of the driving forces that have originated from the swell of grassroots energies and passions, have done much to paint the picture of American progress throughout history. Individualism, a recurring and primary component of this picture, is

the driving catalyst behind groundswell factions and movements, such as civil rights, women’s rights, and climate change. Arguably or not, the occurrences precipitating the development of factions and, in turn, the consequential actions of these groups have been a function of the natural progression of human history. Producing a mixture of highly desirable and some less desirable results, this natural progression has permeated the landscape of American history, just as it has infiltrated the happenings of the rest of the world. It should be well noted that “specialists did not invent abortion or segregation,” and nor did they anticipate the responses revealing “how ordinary citizens took civic action to address the economic, social, cultural, and political inequalities,” as reflected in public reactions to Jim Crow laws and reproductive rights. The galvanizing of the populists and the collecting of like-minded individuals under one umbrella during this era led to the formation of grassroots lobbying in the late 60s and “early 70s.” The evolution of “interest group” advocacy into institutional grassroots is illustrated in “Bayard Rustin’s knowing phrase from, protest to politics.” Hence, the evolution of factions as a grassroots powerhouse phenomenon is manifested in the tremendous impact that they have made on society throughout the decades.

Frequently engaging in actions that tend to incite the passions of the masses, today’s factions, better known as special interests, most often assume a reputation for being controversial. Because of the controversial nature of their activities, their identities as factions or special interest groups too often assume negative connotations. Hence, many, unlike Madison, have lost sight of the immense value that special interests have exerted on the development of our society, both historically and currently. Indeed, the literary reviews, journals, and books consulted during this research appeared to consistently concur with the notion that corporations and related interest groups are increasingly creating synergy through the effective use of tactical

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7 Walker, Grassroots for Hire, 143.
8 Walker, Grassroots for Hire, 82.
marketing. These sources, in fact, acknowledge that corporations and affiliated groups are marrying traditional messaging and engagement tactics while exploring outside-the-box tactics to generate legislative support for their policies. As such, the commonalities shared by the campaign strategies of both political and corporate entities, particularly as they seek to effectively respond to the forces demanding change, create a subject, in and of itself, requiring further research, analyzation, and conclusions.

Political and corporate constructs’ attempts to build strategic methodologies that master mass marketing has led to an undeniable symbiotic relationship between these two entities. This relationship has and will continue to define the co-existence of these two entities. The commonalities and entanglements of the public and private sector marketing campaigns have become meaningly different from their previous constructs due to the evolving nature of their symbiotic connection. The current model liberates corporations to invoke public policy issues to arouse public sentiment most fully. Hence, the recent mass marketing template defines restrictions and promotes licenses, allowing increased interexchange of practices between the political and corporate realms. This standard rejects the previous definition, with its more precise and inflexible vision of the relationship between these two entities but fosters a more open and adaptable one, promoting the interexchange of ideas and practices. Discussing politics in a company setting or at the kitchen table was once considered taboo. However, the marketplace now unveils the effects of displacing many of the antiquated marketing tactics of previous generations with current, innovative techniques, harnessing grassroots effort movements to expand corporations’ bases. Efforts to garner larger swaths of consumers have resulted in corporations vying for influence in the social-political sphere. As the evidence demonstrates, both corporations and political candidates still rely on lobbying efforts and PAC contributions to engineer and deploy campaigns. Divergence between the two entities again appears, operationally and from a historical perspective, when corporations must conform to social rubrics placed upon them by outside third-party groups. Corporations appear more willing to displace their base to achieve consumer expansion than their political counterparts. Ironically, this four-year study reviews the history and growth of this corporate trend.
However, corporations’ encroachment into the social realm has become an anomalous practice compared to the maneuvers used in prior years. Traditionally hidden from the social sphere, corporations have moved from behind the curtain, lobbying and extending personal philanthropic generosity. Many enterprises engineer themselves as stalwart promoters of social causes, assuming corporate countenances capable of delivering captivating outward-facing social campaigns. Prior generations may have dabbled in the social affairs arena, championing the need for societal change and individual advancement. However, seeking to avoid potential backlash, most businesses have refrained from transparent public political marketing. Once known for its radical political views, the Boomer generation has now become the target, labeled out of touch by Generation Z and select media outlets. Some media and Gen Zers, for example, may view Bud Light’s recent collaboration with Dylan Mulvany, a self-identified member of the transgender community, as precipitating this “out of touch” reaction among many of this beer’s traditional consumers. This partnership was assembled to target a small niche of Americans with the hope of expanding the base. Seemingly akin to other historical movements (e.g., women’s rights and civil rights), Bud Light had hoped to leverage the momentum of a rapidly emergent, though keenly controversial, movement while extending its base. The ad, airing for approximately a month, focused on women’s empowerment. Indeed, the enhanced energy and enthusiasm of March Madness were invoked to galvanize this message. Dylan Mulvaney, primarily known as a social media influencer, was tapped to promote Bud Light during the March Madness College basketball tournament. The online ad backfired immediately, and the ripple effects are still being felt months later. However, this misstep’s ramifications extend far beyond money, consumers, and shares.

The pressure from Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) scores and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) regulations have arguably steered corporations, like Bud Light, toward embracing more consumer-sensitive social and political marketing approaches. Historically, corporations have utilized more internal mechanisms, such as affirmative action and diversity boards, to evolve with society. Corporations are now abandoning their modus operandi or, at least, reconsidering how to delicately make inroads into the social landscape without
alienating their bases. In the past and moving forward, these private institutions have left economic and social imprints that gained form and meaning in and through boardrooms, lobbying, staffing, donations, philanthropic ventures, commercials, and influencer partnerships. Perhaps Madison may not have considered that such constructs as DEI scores and ESG regulations would one day exist to ignite their own unique forms of faction collaboration. Of course, Madison did not live when technology and the media would assume such a pivotal role in championing the societal progress of women's rights and civil rights. With this onslaught of outside pressure, corporations have responded by vigorously advancing into unfamiliar territories to advance factional needs and desires.

Historically, corporate missteps would fade with the pages of yesterday's newspapers and remain in the trash. Unfortunately, current corporations cannot claim the luxury or benefit of history's forgetful past. The longevity of corporate blunders is forever enshrined on the Internet. The Dylan Mulvany debacle failed to attract large swaths of new consumers and ironically offended the brand's base. As evidenced in this section, history provides ample examples of corporate sway in political and social circles. Dating back to the British East India Company, corporations have influenced both social and political policies. Over time and even during this study, corporations have increasingly extended their influencing techniques beyond the traditional lobbying and donor methodologies. This shift in strategic marketing can differ dramatically from the historical corporate campaigns of prior generations.

As discussed throughout this research, Chick Fil A's challenging circumstances reveal the immense pitfalls experienced by a corporation succumbing to DEI and ESG pressures. A brand historically like Bud Light, Chick Fil A has experienced its fair share of ebbs and flows from various outside forces attempting to influence the brand's social standing. In 2012 Chick Fil A experienced external pressures due to its Corporate Members' donations to Christian and conservative organizations. Bracing for public outcry, the company did not anticipate the lines of consumers seeking service outside its chains' doors and public support that would ensue in the days to follow. In this case, the company's brand, synonymous with impeccable food and service, generated, relative to the size and exposure of other firms, more gravitas and wealth than the
products and services of some longtime familiar, prosperous companies, now proponents of new-era social advancement. This example lends credence to prior historical evidence positing that personal philanthropic that quiet donations typically produce fewer consequences than outward-facing corporate campaigns. However, as seen later in this study, even Chick Fil A appears to have turned a blind eye to historical evidence and fallen into the trap of succumbing to DEI and ESG influence.

Harnessing political grassroots movements and converting the passion into viable resources for marketing campaigns is a strategy not transferable from the political to the corporate sector. Corporate social campaigns, referenced in the literature and articles, provided evidence that, based upon historical trends, corporate entities should refrain, for the most part, from social marketing. However, despite this caveat, corporations can still leverage political tactics to target purchasers. The Chick Fil A 2012 grassroots boycott attempt versus the recent Bud Light Dylan Mulvany grassroots boycott campaign reaffirms the power of and need for traditional corporate strategies to galvanize the masses. Therefore, Chick Fil A's adroit handling of its audience via traditional tactics (e.g., lobbying, donations, and corporate owners' philanthropy) quickly extinguished what could have become a major public relations explosion. Unfortunately, Bud Light chose to look past historical applications of lobbying, and other traditional strategies, preferring to enact social campaigns that could quickly alienate buyers.

Social pressures are a historical norm and constant for corporations and politicians. These pressures span a spectrum, reflecting the political, social, and economic ideologies of those making demands. Recently, the intensity of these pressures has highlighted the intense opposition of about fifty percent of the population with the other fifty percent. Throughout time, governments have highlighted and embraced outside influence. With its oppositional political parties, the United States government is structured to respond to and support these oppositional factions. Historically, the United States has generally been able to contain factional disruption (except during the Civil War) through compromise, as unpalatable as the outcome may have been to all parties. Massive media advancements, from traditional to online, and immense data analytics developments have significantly increased the depth and breadth of grassroots
movements. This development has created notable implications for the ability of governments and corporations to influence the masses most desirably. With the massive technological and media advancements, both political and corporate terrains are marked with strategists moving beyond the traditional confines of backroom political policy conversations pressuring corporations to take public political stances. Therefore, one begins to recognize what could be considered the origins of the convergence/divergence symbiosis. With this more recent inclination and ability to share skills and paradigms, political and corporate entities have become more transparent, increasing their accessibility to the public. Interestingly, this increased willingness to bare themselves to the public has compelled businesses to step onto the political stage. Corporations are now entering the ring where political strategists have long fought their fights. However, the terrain and rules have vastly changed since the days of smoke-filled rooms, with politicians constructing traditional tactical measures to move the masses. Much more recently, the application of data and marketing techniques and the usage of third-party groups have become increasingly more important in corporate and political circles. Diverging from their historical practices of avoiding the political fray, corporations must embrace the value that ensues from the evolution of third-party grassroots organizations and politicians, reaping the full benefits of fully replicating and leveraging advanced applications in technology and granular data.

In fact, all of the academic writings explored during this study cite the myriad techniques utilized in traditional grassroots campaigns. The tried-and-true traditional methodologies of utilizing message framing, third-party advocacy, targeting, lobbying, PAC fundraisers, and call to action tactics are highlighted in the journals, books, and articles researched. Additionally, while these tactics were cited throughout these publications, the models of civil action, (e.g., Jim Crow laws, reproductive rights, and climate activism), were similarly referenced by all of these manuscripts with the exception of the association journals. Moreover, academic literature, to include Walker’s works, Congress: The First Branch, Advocacy: Championing Ideas and Influencing Others, and Blessed Are the Organized: Grassroots Democracy in America, incorporate similar association citations (e.g., NRA, Unions, Black Lives Matter, and Right to Life) when illustrating how associations employ civic actions. Also, the cited literature
makes no notable differentiation when treating the subject of lobbying. All of the studies agree that utilization of personal narratives, fly-ins, call to actions, PACs coupled with interviews with everyday people and experts will achieve the most significant results. The panoply of research material consulted coalesced well around the topics of traditional corporate and political grassroots methodologies. However, the collective literature lacked the information that has evolved relatively recently regarding the actions of field teams, polling to deliver messaging, influencers, and campaign first techniques.

Fortunately, all of the references that were consulted have comprehensively identified the elements that are common to both political and corporate campaign strategies. Moreover, grassroots literature has effectively underscored how factions, commonly known today as stakeholders, third parties, coalitions, and activists, have generated monumental movements. Understandably, the magnitude of their impacts would logically produce such monumental movements as those related to civil rights, women’s rights, and environmental protections. Extending their reach beyond the public to the private sector, these action groups have also, ironically, been instrumental in generating a new methodology for affecting corporate strategy. The impact of their efforts in the corporate arena has culminated in some interesting outcomes, including the coupling of strange bedfellows (e.g., Black Lives Matter and the Koch Brothers teaming together “against the overcriminalization of America.”)⁹ (Interestingly here, while educational professors acknowledge the pulling together of two ideologies, little to no reference of this coordination exists in the association journals or studies).

Most, if not all, current resources examine not only this new methodology by which corporations operate but also the history of factions, the evolution of campaign strategies (both corporate and political), and the current tactics that are often vital to a successful campaign. However, there remains limited emphasis on some vital topics, such as the utilization of polling, campaign first techniques, the implementation of field teams, and the application of influencers, all of which appear to be frequently left on the cutting room floor by the authors of the articles and

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books pertaining to this subject. Due to the paucity of research focused on these tactical areas, this study will make a concerted effort to elevate their importance with a more extensive review of these techniques.

A myriad of techniques do, in fact, exist for developing and refining the images of both political and corporate structures. These techniques include employing issue-focused organizations/associations, developing and delivering messaging, and supporting political activists’ movements. Ironically or not, all of the literature reviewed during this study consistently cited the same institutions and organizations as exemplary models of what both political entities and corporations have utilized to carry their messaging and promote their causes.

The panoply of literature consulted during this study collectively concurred that when these public and private institutions have had a need, organizations have arisen. For example, the extensive range of just such organized responses to critical needs can be found in the embodiment of a vast array of organizations, such as Right to Life, Planned Parenthood, Black Lives Matter, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), The National Rifle Association (NRA), The Academy of Nutrition and Science, the Washington State Psychological Association, the American Petroleum Institute (API), and the American Banking Association (ABA). All with varying agendas, these entities share the same essential goal of influencing Congress. As research reveals, in the area of politics, one encounters the syndrome most aptly labeled “vote on issues, not on candidates.”

Similarly, in corporate campaigns, policy issues reign supreme. When organizing, most corporations and associations employ a “bottom up” or ground-up approach in structuring their movements. Studies have revealed that influential members recruited by factions for purposes of advocacy campaigns consist of a “mixed bag of experience and expertise – they consist of an eclectic assortment of skills and interests, such as real estate agents, homemakers, PR professionals, veterans, teachers, nurses, and small business owners, among others.”

Hence, fortifying the core of factions with the assistance of everyday individuals who serve as key

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12 Crutchfield, 18.
“influencers”13 (those closest to the policymakers) helps to create echo chambers by marrying an organization’s messaging to a voice and an issue.

As demanding a process as it may be, selecting the exact method for delivering appealing messaging in any grassroots campaign “is an essential component in any overall government relations and advocacy communication strategy.”14 With very similar approaches, for example, both political operatives and corporate marketing utilize micro-targeting to target and frame messaging. Scholars identify this technique as an effective means for advocates to target Representatives with townhalls, “phone calls, mail, social media, and email.”15 Additionally, and very importantly, micro-targeting can be utilized in conjunction with digital platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, to recruit new members to a cause. While plenty of avenues exist to deliver a message, both public and private bodies must come to realize that the most successful tactics “include a specific ‘ask.’”16 As recognized by current scholars, “Too often organizations fail in their quest for achieving a specific goal because they have too many issues.”17 It is here, in the area examining the methodology for formulating a specific ask, where corporation-related research, thus far, appears to be insufficient. Perhaps because it is a newer field of research, the study of micro-targeting, as a tool to poll individuals for developing corporate advocacy messaging, still has a way to go before satiating the appetites of those demanding more precise answers. This research appears to lack the support of data derived from empirical studies, such as those conducted in the political arena, to develop more informed conclusions. Science has demonstrated that “humans are a categorizing species.”18 Humans create “schemas”19 to “mentally sort events, objectives and ideas into categories.”20 The polling that corporate campaigns utilize for messaging is employed in much the same way as humans generate “file

13 Crutchfield, 167.
15 Ginsberg and Hill, 108.
18 John Daly, Advocacy Championing Ideas and Influencing Others (Cumberland: Yale University Press, 2014), 44.
19 Daly, 44.
20 Daly, 44.
However, with polling, we refer to these “file cabinets” as cross tabulations. Cross tabulations are created in both political and corporate campaigns to frame a message. Campaigns utilize this type of data for messaging to not only recruit advocacy members but also to incite the public to action. In response to the question - “What is the significance of polling in micro-targeting for a corporate grassroots campaign?” - Ward Baker, Republican Senate Advisor, Senator McConnell Advisor, and Public Relations expert, responded, “You should always follow what you know, not what you think - and that means following the data. Polling helps inform your broader outlook on a specific issue and based on that knowledge, you can accurately decide what type of custom micro-targeting is necessary. Essentially, polling allows you to see if that specific subgroup exists and the significance of it. The actual modeling allows you to make that subgroup actionable.” His emphasis on the importance of data highlights not only the aspects of message framing required for a successful political and corporate campaign but also the importance of identifying like-minded, actionable individuals who have distinct backgrounds or relationships. Hence, Baker, with much campaign experience in both fields, has shared an interesting perspective and, in so doing, has emphasized core components of this process. Thus, he has provided useful knowledge, which can be used to both validate and augment existing documentation, particularly that which exists in the arsenal of information pertaining to corporate micro-targeting.

Seeking to derive the benefits that tend to come part and parcel with this newer, shared campaign methodology, corporations such as Wells Fargo, Exxon, Pharma, and Solar join associations and third-party groups to utilize them as conduits for their corporate messaging. In this manner, diverse organizations, like the American Banking Association (ABA), the American Petroleum Institute (API), the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and The American Society for Cell Biology often funnel, through their members, corporate-backed messaging into targeted political officials. The technique labeled “story banking” can generate potentially unlimited

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21 Daly, 44.
22 Daly, 44.
collections of personal stories from which organizations can draw compelling content…”

In addition to utilizing “story banking,” associations or third parties ask members to “volunteer their time to educate lawmakers and government officials” by “traveling to Washington to meet with delegates on Capitol Hill” in person to deliver stories. Fly-ins, as they are called, encourage the everyday advocates and constituents to congregate all at once, for the most dramatic effect, and meet with officials to convey their personal stories in person. Hence, this potent technique combines, onsite and in person, the target organization with compelling messaging, to include the specific ask of constituents, with officials who can deliver the desirable outcomes. The efficiencies gained through such campaign strategies, particularly for corporations that are not as familiar with such refined, strategic techniques, leaves a lasting impression. Political and corporate structures have learned from the best, because much as with fly-ins, politicians have always relied upon the time-tested technique of traveling from town to town to engage in grassroots campaigning.

Indeed, political history can serve as a treasure trove for producing ideas about how to most effectively tap into and galvanize the energies and passions of the people.

All of the research highlighted the importance of lobbying. In fact, lobbyists have traditionally served as a mainstay for both political and corporate structures as these entities have sought to exact legislation achieving whatever results they deem necessary at the time. Indeed, for corporations, lobbying has remained for many years the main instrument for influencing lawmakers and achieving major corporate objectives. In 1946, the Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act defined “a lobbyist as ‘[a]ny person who shall engage himself for pay for or any consideration for the purpose of attempting to influence the passage or defeat of any legislation of the Congress of the United States.’” As such, Congress has taken important steps to identify those individuals who receive financial compensation for influencing the development and/or enactment or non-enactment of any legislation. This identification becomes significant when...

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24 Trevisan, Bello, Vaughan, and Vromen, 146–60.
25 Trevisan, Bello, Vaughan, and Vromen, 146–60.
28 Ginsberg and Hill, 176.
ascertaining the motivation of players involved in the development and implementation of policy. The motives driving policy formation and delivery carry important legal implications. Hence, both political and corporate structures must remain vigilant to ensure that any measures and actions involving lobbyists, particularly as relates to new marketing strategies, adhere to legal requirements.
Chapter 2: Diverging
Both convergence and divergence of style and techniques exist between political and corporate entities as they seek to optimize political relations synergy. This chapter will focus on the divergence of metrics between these two sectors. By examining the empirical evidence, we can still find causes through data, such as desired outcome, audience, and motivation that restrict these two sectors, at least for now, from fully merging. There appear to be two worlds - markets and non-markets. However, a third world involving corporate political behavior has increasingly emerged as a separate structure requiring scrutiny. This third world is of sufficient importance to merit its review in the third chapter of this thesis. As society continues to evolve so too does the empirical evidence surrounding the market and non-market divides. Once regarded as structures focused solely on consumer concerns, corporate entities are slowly creeping beyond their traditional normative boundaries and entering new spaces via technology and social media advances. To understand where we are going, we need to clarify where corporations and politics diverge currently.

The current juxtaposition of political and corporate marketing strategies leaves us with two critical questions: How did we get here? And, where are we going? An episode of a popular television series highlights tactics that have been employed for some time by both the public and private sectors to mold human behavior. In *The Big Bang Theory*, the character Sheldon utilizes an age-old and frequently invoked method to change the behavior of his roommate's girlfriend Penny. By regularly serving her chocolate as positive reinforcement, Sheldon encourages Penny to behave in a manner that suits him. Using the same tactics as those employed by Sheldon, Public Affairs specialists across sectors continue to recognize the validity and importance of using behavioral modification as a tool for achieving desired performance. Ironically, or perhaps not so much, this form of cognitive behavioral influence has been studied for years by not only marketing experts but also by physicians. Charles Duhigg, author of the recent bestseller, *The Power of Habit*, has written extensively about how behavioral modification has impacted the history of marketing, particularly within corporations. Thus, this research will reference the insights Duhigg provides about the history and evolution of corporate efforts to advance market images and sales via behavioral modification.
This chapter will consider the empirical evidence collected by scientists and scholars regarding the marketing direction selected by public and private sectors and the concomitant application of behavioral influencers. Additionally, this chapter will examine the interplay between the processes of choosing the most effective behavioral influencers and those involving the decisions to target divergent audiences in both the political and corporate campaign spheres. The paper overview details the product of Deborah Stone’s notable architectural efforts, having created a conceptual division between the corporate and marketing sectors. Her chart breaks down the different behaviors and driving forces behind the scope of each sector’s target audience. Furthermore, her chart lists the motivations, marketing, sources, analysis, preferences, and informational sources tied to these two industries. Proving that a distinctive difference remains between the types of audiences these two entities target, scholars and resources have delivered sufficient empirical evidence supporting Stone’s findings. Author Lewis C. Winters highlights these differences in his articles that examine corporations that market to hostile markets. Thus, the research will show that while we are starting, as of late, to observe a convergence of strategies, particularly due to the choices made by politically outward-facing corporate entities, there still remains a divide between marketing tactics when it comes to audience targeting.

Stone, Professor of Government at Dartmouth College, writes at significant length, arguing that there “is a divergence between market thinking and political thinking, between market reasoning and political reasoning, and between market policy outcomes and political policy outcomes.” Her argument derives from the belief that there is a divide between non-market entities. Stone writes of market entities as a “social system in which individuals pursue their own welfare by exchanging things with others whenever trades are mutually beneficial.” However, she delineates non-market entities as polity. Polity is defined as political communities

that reside under the same governance rules, structure, and status of citizens.\textsuperscript{31} She provides empirical evidence of their contrasts in a market versus polity chart.

\textsuperscript{31} Healy, 47.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society Motivations</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Polity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals motivated by self-interest</td>
<td></td>
<td>Individuals motivated by community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Conflict</td>
<td>Self-interest vs self-interest</td>
<td>Self-interest vs. common problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>How to maximize self-interest</td>
<td>How to promote common interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Often are zero/sum</td>
<td>Strive for win/win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange sources</td>
<td>Material, wealth, money, goods</td>
<td>Ideas, alliances, persuasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit of analysis</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of preferences</td>
<td>Self-generated by individual</td>
<td>Influences from outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of information</td>
<td>Accurate, complete, available</td>
<td>Ambiguous, interpretative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: This table demonstrates the relationships between society and individual marketing drivers. Robert Healy, Corporate Political Behavior: Why Corporations Do What They Do in Politics Table 3.1 Source Adapted from Stone 1997:31
Robert Healy, a professional lobbyist and part-time professor, paraphrases Stone’s beliefs by describing the market as a rational area within which one can determine the meaning of an outcome. However, a polity would experience difficulty in reaching a similar conclusion or outcome. In analyzing the graphic above, one can easily conclude that markets rely heavily on decision-making efficiency, while polities focus upon achievement of the common good to determine the solution to a problem. Political and corporate marketing expert Phillip Stutts echoes this sentiment writing, “Largely, that’s because business owners have an advantage that political marketer don’t: time. Most business owners don’t feel like they have to move quickly. They have the luxury of talking about their brand ‘status’ or projecting a campaign ‘into the next quarter.’”

Moving forward, we will see how these two differing methodologies will eventually intersect, creating a third entity – corporate political behavior.

The history of division between corporate and political entities can be traced as far back as to Aristotle’s era. Like Stone, Aristotle believed in the existence of a divide among marketing entities. This notable Greek philosopher and writer recognized that the rhetorical styles significantly distinguished the nature of the divide. “Aristotle divided rhetoric into three main types: legal (or forensic) rhetoric which was to be used in courts of law, deliberative rhetoric which occurred in political assemblies and finally epideictic (or ceremonial) rhetoric which aimed to praise or blame a figure for an idea.”

In analyzing Aristotle’s three-bucket system, one can conclude that marketing (corporation) rhetoric “is naturally concerned with the epideictic environment” as its intentions “seek to convince others of the value that are brands, clients, products or services have to offer” while the polity will be marked by legal and deliberative rhetoric. By examining both Stone’s and Aristotle’s divisions, one can observe a pattern that explains what creates the division among sectors and how these divisions can determine intended audiences. It is within these separations that we witness the persuasive tactics utilized to communicate to and influence audiences and the diverging factors applying these strategies.

34 Miles and Nilsson, 1259–71.
Traditionally, corporate marketing and communication have primarily derived from the philosophy of influential persuasive rhetoric. When directing a consumer to a particular product, sellers must persuade their potential buyers, for one reason or another, as to why they should choose the targeted brand. In turn, those touting the products must persuade the buyers to “do things (consume things, obsess about things, pay attention to things) that we should not.”

Reflecting on Stone’s belief that it is self-interest that drives corporate marketing, one observes the correlation that exists between her view and that scholarly marketing reference known as lingua suspектa. Lingua suspектa, “clever tongue” is the vernacular behind the traditional marketing practices of persuasive rhetoric.

The clever tongue, a tactic most recently popularized by the television show Mad Men, provided advertising agencies with a form of cover from which to market products to consumers. Charles Duigg, presented later in this research, explores the relationship between marketing strategies, or the clever tongue, and an individual’s behavioral reaction. Believing that this tactic would transcend genres, Madison Avenue advertising firms in the 1950s began to examine “managing the national television campaigns for presidential candidates.” However, this confidence in the marketing arena’s ability to successfully transfer tactics between these two sectors was short-lived. Sentiments “began to change in the 1960s as advertising agencies discovered that involvement in a presidential campaign might compromise relations with their commercial clients.” Perhaps, as Stone proposed, there are concrete differences in the manners with which marketing and polity communicate with their audiences.

Seeking to look beyond Stone’s marketing and polity evidence, Sidney Kraus takes a deeper dive into schema to determine what type of conduit should deliver a message. Both the verbiage and the methodology used for delivering the messaging remain essential to how a marketer’s communication is received. He argues that “agenda-setting analyses” based upon...
what mediums, “newspapers, news-magazines, radio, television, and so on,” and how those conduits present the issue help to identify the story people consume. Thus, Graber determined that outlets “make major contributions to schema formation and development by providing the public with partially processed information in various domains of knowledge and by signaling the relative importance of stories.” In turn, Bennett argued, “perhaps the most universal and politically important distinction to be drawn about political information is the manner in which it is controlled.” Noting both Graber and Bennett’s assertions, one can understand the importance of politicians selecting the proper genre of outlet through which to deliver their targeted messages. Depending upon the environment and the targeted audience, the type of outlet selected may or may not bear resemblance to those utilized in the corporate world. Kraus, Graber, and Bennett focus on medium method and control of information for political and corporate targeting. However, as Stutts notes, companies “spend hundreds of thousands—if not millions on tactical guesses like Facebook. He states the following regarding the divergence of corporation strategies from those of political marketing, “Politics works the other way around…..You have an overall game plan that will work and eliminate your risk.”

Target’s experience, a topic for review below, serves as an example of unexpected consequences yielded due to the methodology selection process. In the end, one can readily discern the differences between genres of interest when political and corporate marketers apply data. Hence, Kraus, Graber, and Bennett’s analyses collectively emphasize medium selection and information control as mechanisms for enhancing audience persuasion. With its focus on political versus corporate targeting, this study quickly makes us aware of the critical challenges public and private sectors face in selecting the correct mediums for information dissemination and for managing the data to produces desired responses. This awareness became all too real for the architects of Target’s public affairs advocacy when a calamity involving a pregnant girl and her

41 Kraus, 4.
45 Stutts, 13.
father forced the popular chain’s marketing strategy into the public domain. Whenever one shops with this marketing chain, either online, in person, or over the phone, the store assigns an id to the individual’s information. Target uses a “guest id” per each individual shopper. The id can contain one’s phone number, “credit card, name, or email address.” As one shops, data is collected and stored under the id containing the respective person’s information. Via the use of an algorithm, retailers data-mine shoppers’ habits to target or micro-target advertisements.

Citing the topic of pregnant women as the example, Charles Duhigg of The New York Times wrote specifically about the methodology labeled as corporate advertising data-mining and micro-targeting. Andrew Pole, a statistician for Target, spoke to The New York Times regarding Target’s analytics process and this specific story.

[Pole] ran test after test, analyzing the data, and before long some useful patterns emerged. Lotions, for example. Lots of people buy lotion, But one of Pole’s colleagues noticed that women on the baby registry were buying larger quantities of unscented lotion around the beginning of their second trimester. Another analyst noted that sometime in the first 20 weeks, pregnant women loaded up on supplements like calcium, magnesium, and zinc. Many shoppers purchase soap and cotton balls, but when someone suddenly starts buying lots of scent-free soap and extra-big bags of cotton balls, in addition to hand sanitizers and washcloths, it signals they could be getting closer to the delivery date.

While not foolproof, this methodology provided what appeared to be valuable tests for predicting the consumers’ potential needs. Moreover, Pole’s data-mining analytics produced “25 products… when analyzed together” and generated and assigned each consumer a “pregnancy prediction score.” In the case of Target, a father/family started receiving coupons for pregnancy and baby items based on the shopping history of the daughter. Not realizing her current state, the father, in this particular case, drove to the local Target located nearest Minneapolis and demanded to speak with a manager regarding the coupons that were arriving in the mail. "My daughter got this in the mail. She’s still in high school, and you’re sending her coupons for baby clothes and cribs?

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47 Hill.
48 Hill.
49 Hill.
50 Hill.
51 Hill.
Are you trying to encourage her to get pregnant?” he questioned. The father’s interrogation eventually revealed that the daughter was indeed pregnant.

This case presents evidence that lends credence to Stutt’s belief that corporations focus on individuals with little regard as to the application of the consumer’s data when advertising. Additionally, this case further demonstrates and emphasizes the division between political and corporate targets. Here, the corporation focused less on what Graber and Bennett would suggest in politics to be preferred genres of targeting (e.g., age, gender, region, political ideology, and social issues). Rather, this private-sector entity maintained stronger focus, again referring to Stone’s argument, on the individual rather than advertising application.

In the meantime, corporate entities have begun to shift more and more to the utilization of political marketing tactics, a transition about which we will explore later. There still remain, however, a few fundamental differences between individual targeting and its strategic application in the political and marketing domains. As noted earlier, Stone, Graber, and Bennett have touched upon the varying genre focuses of both political and corporate institutions. Another article involving an interview with statistician Andrew Pole provides additional evidence affirming these particular differences between corporate and political campaign marketing methodologies. Armed with a Master’s Degree in Economics and a passion for studying human behavior, Pole began employment in Target’s Marketing Department. Equipped with an understanding of key corporate marketing behavior, he, as did other corporate marketing executives, knew that shoppers frequently do not purchase all of their products at the same store or in the same location. Recognizing the difficulty of studying consumer-shopping habits, corporations created, as referenced earlier, a guest id to track consumer shopping habits. This particular article about Pole, however, presented an interesting caveat:

There are, however, some brief periods in a person’s life when old routines fall apart and buying habits are suddenly in flux. One of those moments— the moment, really—is right around the birth of a child, when parents are exhausted and overwhelmed and their shopping patterns and brand loyalties are up for grabs. But as Target’s marketers explained to Pole, timing is everything. Because birth records are usually public, the moment a couple (has) a new baby, they are almost instantaneously barraged with offers and incentives and

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52 Hill.
advertisements from all sorts of companies. Which means that the key is to reach
them earlier, before any other retailers know a baby is on the way.53

Stone’s 2012 comments would later serve as proven empirical evidence explaining what
occurred during the 2019 Minnesota Target baby story. As Stone’s graph suggests, Target
employed a strategy consistent with that utilized by many other corporations—one focusing on
the person rather than on the genre. The creation of the guest id helped to maximize the attention
that corporate entities could direct on any one individual. By harvesting personal information (e.g.,
age, marital status, “how long it takes you to drive to the store,” income levels, types of credit
cards used for purchases, and websites visited) corporations, such as Target, can attach the data
to a guest id and utilize predictive analytics to ascertain consumers’ shopping habits. A study
conducted by David T. Neal, Wendy Wood, and Jeffrey M. Quinn of Duke University55 produced
findings helping one to understand the rationale for the effectiveness of such methodological tools
as those used by Pole. Their review “found that more than 40 percent of the actions people
performed each day weren’t actually decisions, but habits.”56 Examining studies such as those
conducted at Duke, Charles Duhigg determined that human brains generate habit on a “three-
step loop,”57 “cue, routine, reward.”58 This habit, looping along with Target’s “predictive analytic”59
algorithms, allows corporations to foresee an individual’s shopping behavior. Hence, human
behavior and corporate tools intertwine to create a perfect environment for maximizing gains that
can be made from understanding the individual psyche. Concentration on this particular
environment, where success is gained through granular focus on an individual’s behavior rather
than through monitoring a community’s needs, supports Stone’s view. Ultimately, corporations
traditionally have found that their fate resides more firmly in the hands of individuals rather than in
the collective will of communities.

53 Charles Duhigg, “How Companies Learn Your Secrets,” February 16, 2012,
https://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/19/magazine/shopping-habits.html.
54 Duhigg.
55 David T. Neal, Wendy Wood, and Jeffrey M. Quinn. “Habits—a Repeat Performance,” Current Directions in
57 Duhigg.
58 Duhigg.
59 Duhigg.
Reflecting on Stone’s chart, we can further study the differences between the predictive analytics of these methodologies as they continue to play out in current political and corporate campaigns. While polity appears to remain narrow, we are seeing a shift in some marketing techniques, the results of which are merging the techniques utilized by both corporate and political campaigns. As evidenced in the Target case, one can see that this retail giant focuses on the habits of individuals rather than the applications of the marketing. The successful targeting of consumers is what leads to the vitality of industries and marketing firms like Target. In an effort to eliminate risks, such as the interception of advertising by a father, Stutts explains, “With most corporate marketing agencies, there’s a lot of pasta thrown at the wall, and frankly, very little of it sticks. Politics works the other way around. So, before you even boil the water for your marketing pasta, you’ve got a fully formed plan based on your customer data.”

Procter and Gamble also uses predictive analytic methodologies similar to those of Target. In his *New York Times* article, Duhigg references corporation marketing synergy by yet again discussing the habits of individuals who use Proctor and Gamble’s product Febreze. In this particular case, he determines that individuals can be joined as comparative marketing subjects not only in their shopping habits but also in their everyday lives. For example, the average person’s inability to smell his or her own odors significantly curtailed the success of the Febreze product.

Sales started small and got smaller. Febreze was a dud. The panicked marketing team canvassed consumers and conducted in-depth interviews to figure out what was going wrong, Stimson recalled. Their first inkling came when they visited a woman’s home outside Phoenix. The house was clean and organized. She was something of a neat freak, the woman explained. But when P.& G.’s scientists walked into her living room, where her nine cats spent most of their time, the scent was so overpowering that one of them gagged. … A similar scene played out in dozens of other smelly homes. The reason Febreze wasn’t selling, the marketers realized, was that people couldn’t detect most of the bad smells in their lives.

Once again, marketing efforts to improve Febreze’s attraction to potential consumers deliver a revealing case study. Indeed, Procter and Gamble’s specific marketing strategy in this instance

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60 Stutts, 13.
affirms the notion that corporations generally seek to bolster their success through reliance upon targeting backwards pasta-making techniques tied primarily solely to identification of self-interest/individual needs and not marketing application.

However, Procter and Gamble’s recent marketing campaign to promote the image of the Gillette razor once again demonstrates a turning of the tide in corporate campaign marketing application. In a 2019 Gillette razor ad, Proctor and Gamble targeted its audience with a super bowl ad on “toxic masculinity.”62 Focusing on the social #MeToo movement, the ad promoted a “new kind of masculinity.”63 While the televised ad ran nationally during the Super Bowl, a source from Facebook confirmed with the author of this thesis that there were additional targeted Facebook ads directed to only Democratic states. Confirming Procter and Gamble’s suspicions that the ad would play better in Democratic states, Bernice King’s comment echoed the praise from the Left: “This commercial isn’t anti-male. It’s pro-humanity.”64 However, disagreeing with King, the conservative magazine The New American retorted that the ad “reflects many false suppositions.”65 Hence, in this case, Procter and Gamble’s outwardly facing social campaign enters into what Bennett, Stone, and Graber would refer to as community or genre-focused marketing. In turn, corporations have taken notice, and some are following suit. Community marketing tactics can be laudable. Ironically, however, as we will see in other portions of this article, politics does not always translate well into corporate marketing efforts. Currently, corporations continue to inch forward slowly into that outwardly facing social-marketing sphere. However, evidence of skepticism exists revealing concern among corporate entities about the costs and risks involved. Some of these institutions are beginning to realize that reckless forays into highly sensitive, controversial areas could produce corporate-image damage that could significantly undermine business success.

63 Topping, Lyons, and Weaver.
64 Topping, Lyons, and Weaver.
While John Hopkins professor, Adam Sheingate, writes mainly about the convergence of political and corporate entities, he does subtly reference the differences between these two domains in his book. As we have seen with Gillette and Target, corporations have tended to maintain a broad approach for reaching consumers through such devices as television commercials, mail, radio, and social media. Once again, the empirical evidence demonstrates that a campaign’s success hinges on the deft application of messaging with an individual’s data. Moreover, campaigning in the political arena has revealed that “door-to-door voter contact”\(^{66}\) has been a “more effective tool than television when it comes to voter turnout.”\(^{67}\) In their study, *Political Campaigns and Big Data*, David W. Nickerson, Professor of Political Science at Notre Dame, and Todd Rogers, Assistant Professor of Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School of Government, write about the political campaign need for the development of databases about citizens to inform “electoral strategy and to guide tactical efforts.”\(^{68}\) The electoral strategy allows for creating a smaller net for casting in state and local governments and for enabling micro targeting based on party. Hence, this approach facilitates politicians’ efforts to focus on a narrower scope of a community in delivery. Referring to Healy’s chart, one observes the polity created by the amassing of lists and targeting of constituents that are “motivated by community,”\(^{69}\) (i.e., social issues), the need to group people by similar “ideas and alliances”\(^ {70}\) (i.e., party), the reliance on poll numbers and adjusted policies in response to surveys (i.e., ambiguity on stance), and the requirement to promote common interests (i.e., engage like-minded voters).

One can observe the relevance of Stone’s chart for the tactics used by political campaigns today. Appending Sheingate’s door-to-door philosophy, Nickerson and Rogers highlight the importance of marketing delivery strategies via highlighting the importance of telephone volunteer interactions. The ability to coagulate information to amass lists of like-minded


\(^{67}\) Sheingate, 5.


\(^{70}\) Healy, 47.
individuals “gives candidates and their advisors powerful tools for plotting electoral strategy.”

Unlike their corporate counterparts, political campaigns target constituents primarily through, as referenced by RNC Press Secretary Mandi Merritt, “voter registration files.” Data taken from these files can include: party registration, age, gender, address, years voted, primaries voted in, general elections voted in … etc. Armed with this voter information, volunteers employ, as Sheingate mentioned, a door-to-door methodology seeking to extract additional information, primarily social issue concerns, from constituents. “While a volunteer knocking on doors will make successful contact with 2–4 people/hour, a volunteer making phone calls can reach 10–15 people/hour.”

The methodologies, including door-to-door, phone to action, and voter data files coupled with “consumer data” extraction, combine to generate the perfect nexus to produce the desired voter turnout results. Examining and strategically utilizing minute details (e.g., “voters who have gym memberships are more reliable voters”) remain vital to ensuring that voters will get to the polls. In the meantime, data drive “technology allows campaigns to simultaneously target campaign outreach tactically at particular individuals and aggregate these predictive estimates up to the jurisdiction-level to inform large-scale strategic decisions.”

Rather than focusing on moving one individual marketing, political campaigns are often looking to move a voter block. Hence, as corporations rely heavily upon devices such as commercials, mail, and social media to move the masses, political campaigns diverge from their counterparts by also employing phone 2 action and door-to-door to garner successful results.

The methodologies used for motivating consumers/constituents to purchase a product or go to the polls, as we have observed, are increasingly becoming similar to data mining and the harvesting of data. However, the scope of political marketing and corporate marketing still remains, as of right now, different. With their specific marketing tactics, corporations maintain a

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72 Fowler.

73 Fowler.

74 Nickerson and Rogers.

75 Fowler.

76 Fowler.

77 Fowler.

78 Nickerson and Rogers.
larger base for targeting as political campaigns traditionally narrow their scope immediately by party and voter frequency. In fact, the Communications Act of 1934 provided additional guardrails for the scope of advocacy by mandating broadcasters “allow proponents of opposing viewpoints equal time to air their side of the controversy.”  

79 Winters continues to expand the targeting scope of his argument in his writings regarding corporations and the benefits of advertising to hostile audiences.  

80 As an example, Winters cites Chevron’s belief that consumers’ opinions about a company derive from its products and services rather than from its social standing. However, during its “Yes” campaign, Chevron discovered that consumers were seemingly interested in the company’s social conduct.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Factor I Marketing</th>
<th>Factor II Social Conduct</th>
<th>Factor III Contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Makes high-quality products.</td>
<td>Shows concern for the public's interest.</td>
<td>Contributes money to health, education, and social welfare needs in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provide good services at its stations.</td>
<td>Pays its fair share of taxes.</td>
<td>Contributes money to cultural organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Would be a good company to work for.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Is a good stock investment</td>
<td>Cares about how people feel about them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Is making efforts to develop alternative forms of energy.</td>
<td>Makes public statements that are truthful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Is making efforts to find new sources of oil and gas, including drilling offshore.</td>
<td>Charges fair prices for products.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Makes too much profit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Table 2: Graph of Chevron’s “Yes” Marketing Campaign. Lewis C. Winters, “Does it Pay to Advertise to Hostile Audiences with Corporate Advertising?”
Examining the “Yes” campaign chart, one discovers that a corporation’s social conduct does not translate into its official public position on outward-facing social issues. We do, however, observe through other data points that other target audiences would like to see more social conduct messaging moving forward. Attempting to reach the public spectrum that maintained a greater interest in a corporation’s social conduct rather than its products or services, Chevron responded by launching the “People Do” campaign. Unlike their corporate counterparts, political campaigns do not have the funds and/or time to expend on hostile audiences. In the case of the “People Do” campaign, the “$4 million” spent on media per year created an advantageous corporate campaign that generated a “favorable” response among the once hostile audience.

This study’s empirical evidence highlights the subtleties and nuances that demonstrate the type and scope of audience targeted by political and corporate campaigns. As observed in the Target and Chevron campaigns, corporations enjoy a much wider scope of audience and the ability to focus on individuals. However, political campaigns look to like-minded individuals and communities to drive the base. While both industries are data-driven, a significant difference exists between what is required to incentivize people to travel to stores versus that required to drive voters to the polls. Stone, Healy, Graber, Winters, and Bennett lay forth a convincing case, asserting that corporate data is built around the importance of the individual and that political data centers around the significance of the community. Stutts addresses this difference regarding political campaigns writing, “Not to mention they’re also selling ideological messages. Changing someone’s mind about gun control or the death penalty is a lot harder than getting a customer to try a new brand of laundry detergent.” Duhigg adds to the conversation by highlighting the subtle, nuanced divide that remains between corporate and political audience targeting. The experiences of corporate campaigns such as those of Gillette and Target, have demonstrated just such divide. While companies like Chevron were able to navigate the political social waters to
deliver a message that speaks to all audiences, parties cannot always easily connect with the masses.

The ventures of outward-facing Procter and Gamble with its Gillette #MeToo marketing and technology have led to corporations engaging within the divisive social issues sphere and targeting the respective audiences. There appears to be a notable social shift happening among corporate entities. Yet, the long-term trends and effects remain indeterminable. Is it advantageous for companies to potentially alienate half of the American population by solely directing marketing that speaks to a specific community? Smaller brands, like Patagonia, have succeeded to some extent in this niche corporate environment. However, industries such as Coca-Cola, Delta, Nike (in China), Target, Chick-Fil-A, and Bud Light appear to have suffered negative ramifications resulting from their choice to shift their audience targeting models. Analyzation of the basic question posed in the introduction—where are we headed?—has led us to some interesting conclusions. This examination appears to have directed us to the discovery that there is a diverging trend between corporate and political marketer tailoring of messaging, application of data, and targeting of individuals. The nuanced differences between these two entities have ultimately led to a crossroads in corporate behavioral audience targeting. However, the where are we headed question seemingly ebbs and flows daily. The recent evidence of failed audience targeting and political messaging not transitioning to corporate marketing is revealed in the announcement that “Coke is rethinking woke.” In full spectacle, this event revealed the caution that must be had when a private, commercial entity enters on the side of one or more contenders in the sensitive public opinion arena. In fact, “Coca-Cola’s top lawyer, who had made a public push to diversify the ranks of outside attorneys serving the beverage giant, is vacating the post after less than eight months amid company challenges tied to taxes and social issues.”

Clearly, uncertainty lingers among corporations about the degree to which, if any, they should participate in the social issue sphere. As there is so much uncertainty, Stone’s chart may play a

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more significant role in examining the benefits of the full immersion and blending of both sectors' campaign and targeting strategies.
Chapter 3: Converging
While the previous chapter addressed the diverging aspects of corporate and marketing strategies, this section will dissect the converging sectors of political and corporate campaigns. As this dissertation has repeatedly maintained, understanding palpable similarities and dividing factors demand meaningful analysis, careful comparison and contrast of corporate marketing and political electioneering. The empirical evidence presented in this section will spotlight corporate and political campaigns possessing more significant similarities than contrasting traits. The evolution of this topic over the last four years has included a notable expansion of observations, case studies, and literature. This evolution has culminated in a formidable growth of data revealing the significance of this phenomenon for public and private sector marketing efforts.

Bud Light, Nike, Disney, Adidas, and, most recently, Target have entered the political fray. These large, influential corporations have decided to attach their brands to political policies and ideologies for marketing purposes. Therefore, we witness corporations continually taking more significant risks to capture the eye of targeted consumers by generating buzz among younger consumers. The competition to obtain higher Corporate Equity Index scores is fierce. Perhaps these corporations strive to excel by leveraging the opinions and attitudes of some of society’s most visible and audible elements. Indeed, some corporations have allowed the passions of portions of our society to establish the baseline, defining marketing strategies utilized in some of the most recent high-profile corporate marketing controversies. The question then becomes: how did a corporate marketing team arrive at these marketing campaign decisions? And what data drove these executives to launch these campaigns? Additionally, an analysis must be made explaining why politics and policies are creeping increasingly into everyday affairs—both public and private. Politicians have been kicked out of restaurants, shunned from corporate events, and chastised publicly by corporate officials. The full ramification of these actions has not yet manifested, but the increasing correlation between these events and the ever-blurring line separating politics, policies, and corporations remains very apparent.

Ironically, politicians are not shying away from the corporate political fight. Leveraging the social-political stances of corporations, politicians weigh in on corporate marketing strategies now more than ever. Does data exist conveying how corporations choose to promote client and
customer patronage compared to the methods employed by politicians soliciting votes? The answer is yes. From a historical perspective, corporate and political sharing of marketing techniques has led to what may, in some cases, seem like odd couple bonding. In fact, the empirical evidence throughout this section will demonstrate what would appear to be a bizarre similarity between both political and corporate marketing strategies. Data, polling, grassroots influence, messaging, marketing, social media, traditional media, and geo-tracking are methodologies both corporate marketing teams and political campaigns use to attract consumers/voters. These tactics, especially recently, comprise a strategy invoked to hone in on what moves the needle with a particular individual.

Further in this section, empirical evidence will demonstrate, via case studies, that both groups, desiring similar outcomes, employ comparable tactics. Political campaigns and corporations must dive into the minutia to extract the data pertinent to a campaign’s success. Conversely, when relevant data is not analyzed in either genre, the results for both are equally catastrophic. When miscalculating a marketing strategy, political candidates lose votes, and corporations lose consumers, money, and sometimes staff. Attracting individuals is extremely vital to the success of both political and corporate campaigns. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that similar, unique tactics can generate desirable results in both genres.

In recent interviews, Marketing CEO Philip Stutts describes the correlations between corporate marketing strategies and those techniques employed by political campaigns to garner voters. Nothing is new about the availability of data showcasing how corporate and political campaigns utilize similar media outlets to achieve their objectives. Stutts understands that these similar methodological approaches have propelled and will continue to produce much potential for yielding immense success in both the public and private arenas. However, this marketing expert has highlighted primarily the failures and missteps that can occur in targeted marketing campaigning. When interviewed by Village Living, Stutts revealed, “I saw a gap in the business world and thought that I can make a difference there.”99 The gap about which he speaks

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underscores the critical point where the corporate marketing strategies and political strategies initially diverged. Having worked on “eight presidential campaigns”90 and having “contributed to over 1,545 election victories,”91 Stutt’ can boast of a background making him uniquely qualified to compare the two marketing sectors, corporate and political. In a Fox News interview, Stutts “compared several high-profile news organizations to political campaigns that fizzle out in general elections when they continue to only cater to their base-serving only the most hardcore subscribers.”92

Comparing and contrasting news organizations to political campaigns provides an alternative window through which to view corporate marketing, yielding a vision that transcends stereotypical opinions of consumer corporations (e.g., clothing firms such as Target/Nike/Adidas and beverage establishments such as Coca-Cola/Bud Light). On a mass scale, corporations are currently becoming willing participants in the push and pull of everyday political policy evolvement. Indeed, some corporations appear quite willing to forcefully utilize their economic and social prestige to affect social and political change. However, in his Fox News interview, Stutts recognizes that, in dissecting corporate gaffs, a marketing error is generally the underlying root cause. Regarding the collapse of news organizations, he concludes, “They’ve grossly underestimated what the market is. They think at a mass scale people want a niche.”93 Ironically, this marketing pundit’s advice has merit when marketing is executed correctly. Empirical evidence supporting his commentary includes the layoffs at CNN, The Washington Post’s announcement about cutting staff, and NPR’s “near total hiring freeze.”94 A common causal factor prompted these institutions, renowned as global information leaders, to take drastic cost-saving measures. Stutts explained, “People don’t want mass news. They want to get the news from the people that they believe, and trust, and they don’t want any more fluff. And that’s the model.”95 Dictating conclusions to consumers is no longer a viable marketing ploy. Colleges, tech companies,

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90 Chambers.
91 Chambers.
93 Lanum.
94 Lanum.
95 Lanum.
airlines, amusement parks, and clothing stores (anything consumer-based) can no longer rely upon outdated, ineffective marketing tactics that assume consumers’ persuasions and provide them with a pre-packaged canned solution.

The invention of niche sectors within industries, such as independent journalists and substack publications, has led to the gradual whittling down of the traditional corporate base. Stutts speaks about this corporate phenomenon, insisting, “They’re just arrogantly running out there and letting their employees dictate what their customers want. That’s a huge problem. That’s why these companies are falling all over themselves.”96 “This is suicide. It’s business suicide.”97 (On a larger scale, we can observe similar consequences manifesting in a college admissions deceleration. According to CNBC, college enrollment is down 9.4%.) The elements that lead to the gradual erosion of a corporation’s base are like those that result in the erosion of a candidate’s base. As mentioned above, Stutts stresses the deleterious impact a candidate’s misstep can have when focusing on the broad base during a general election. This focus then transitions into alienating additional voters/consumers due to the candidate’s inability to read the new marketing atmosphere. Rather, the candidates would benefit from remembering that independent writers like Matt Taibbi offer a unique ability to “court readers on the left right and center.”98 Understanding the imperative to reach and inspire clients at all points on the persuasion spectrum forces marketing pundits to discern what tactics can be utilized by both marketing executives and campaign staffers to attract the largest consumer/voter base.

This study will examine the converging techniques both industries leverage to attract individuals. Additionally, this review will carefully analyze the specific tactics utilized by both sectors and, particularly, scrutinize the parallels in the comprehensive strategy roadmap shared by both. Once guided by different tactics and roadmaps, corporations and politicians now possess arsenals of tools that either match or closely resemble those adopted by their sector counterpart. Validating the congruency of a relationship between political campaigns and corporate marketing strategies, Stutts provides a five-step roadmap for generating the most

96 Lanum.
97 Lanum.
98 Lanum.
effective strategy. The first step requires a “deep dive into data.” The digital age has significantly enhanced the abilities of lobbyists and other campaign strategists to grab the attention and influence the beliefs of the masses. Indeed, the advent of high-speed digital communication has helped to transform the landscapes of grassroots marketing in both the political and corporate arenas. As previously mentioned, both politicians and corporations reach constituents via many different online mechanisms, such as Facebook and Twitter. Micro-targeting, accomplished using this digital technology, allows campaigns to hyper-focus messaging onto drilled down targeted audiences. Also, with this technology, strategically placed banner ads on highly-trafficked sites allow users, in conformance with the advertised policy requirements, to click and send a message to their officials. Due to a lack of internal infrastructure to support such activities, corporations generally rely on grassroots teams to “mediate for like mass email or other types of ‘clicktivism.’” During my tenure on the Hill with Congressman Patrick McHenry, this type of tactic was used to sway members in support of the Affordable Care Act. The intent of the “call to action” via overwhelming emails, texts, calls, and letters sent to Members’ offices was to bolster the confidence of the Members, particularly the vulnerable ones, in favor of voting for the legislation. Continuing advancements in technology have clearly provided both the political and corporate structures with sophisticated tools for shaping the opinions of the people.

Even though we continue to move forward into this new technological era, research has failed to keep up with one of the most integral of corporate campaign tactics – campaign first. Working alongside other strategic instruments that have been highly effective at molding personal beliefs and values, (e.g., polling for messaging, field teams, and influencers), this tactic has proved to be highly successful. Indeed, campaign first represents a highly powerful tool for inducing desired personal responses and actions. Perhaps the dearth of information on this topic has resulted from the lack of knowledge about the details of this tactic. At least partly due to its limited exposure, this vital technique has remained unknown to or overlooked by corporate

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99 Chambers.
100 Walker, Grassroots for Hire, 108.
advocacy campaigns. Ward Baker stressed the importance of this crossover campaign technique when asked, “What crossover techniques have you identified that are used in both political campaigns and corporate campaigns?” He explained, “Very often new techniques and tactics are used first in political campaigns, instead of corporate campaigns. That is because campaigns cannot be as risk averse - in September of an on-year there is not another quarter; you need to move numbers now before Election Day. Specifically, I think the biggest crossover is on digital targeting and modeling. Campaigns started investing heavily to be able to run different messages to hundreds of different buckets of voters - and now that same technology is being used at the corporate level.” While most campaign operatives are well versed in using this evolving technology, with its sophisticated messaging and delivery landscapes, the advances in these fields have not been shared with most corporate personnel and scholars. Thus, increasing dissemination of information about these marketing strategies and expanding education about their operational features and tactical advantages should help to bridge that gap between the political and private sector structures. This gap becomes evident as observation reveals the preeminence of the political structures in exacting major successes due to their almost exclusive utilization of these tools. With knowledge comes power. With this knowledge, corporations should be able to reap tremendous gains from extensive and effective utilization of advanced marketing strategies practiced in politics for years. The private arena needs only to follow the footsteps already mapped out by the political arena, perhaps with only a few modified steps tailored to meet their corporate needs.

Drawing on lessons learned from past political history, corporations and Representatives continue to engage supporters in targeted locales to maintain the echo chamber of their messaging. Corporate government relations groups will often hire field operatives to garner local support, generate momentum for in-state efforts, and gather intelligence about the political landscape. These efforts are like those conducted during political door-knocking campaigns where one finds the exertions of robust boots on the ground. Baker opines that corporations lack sufficient knowledge regarding the need for “a strong field team” that can report in real-time “valuable intel” and “influence change from the ground up.” Researchers have provided limited
information regarding the advantages of conducting advocacy campaigns that require hiring local operatives to supply pertinent political intelligence, produce bottom-up momentum, or craft messaging. Frequently, these in-state operatives or field teams tap into already generated local advocacy groups (that may or may not be corporately affiliated) along with local influencers. In turn, these field teams coordinate with corporate advocacy groups to engage supporters and influencers to participate in state town hall meetings, send letters to the editor, and produce op-eds. Just like that which occurs during political campaigns, corporations can enlist the services of influencers who often then become experts and strong advocates for campaign issues. Public Relations experts stress the notion that “Advocacy is all about relationships, including with your representatives.”

Because they have a personal relationship with targeted officials, influencers differ from other advocates. However, both influencers and advocates drive home messaging by attaching a “personal narrative.”

Mainly understood in the political arena and becoming more apparent to those in the corporate world is the notion that constituent personal narratives are by far the preferred manner with which to reach and resonate with an official. Also, both political and corporate entities acknowledge that op-eds and letters to the editor are easier to place if their respective angles attach to human interest issues. Finally, as political structures have vigorously sought to gain advantages through the utilization of message framing around candidates’ store of personal narratives, they have done much to educate the corporate world on robust ways to engage the public. As established above, strategic tactics exist that both corporations and political campaigns can leverage to increase consumer participation. As Stutts counsels, “Too many business owners just ‘throw up a bunch of Facebook ads,’ which often do not get results.”

The failure of this strategic approach is also applicable to campaigns. “It doesn’t work because your customers may not be on Facebook, so why are you spending money there?”

This acknowledgment leads into step two of Stutts’s roadmap.

104 Chambers.
105 Chambers.
In step two, Stutts suggests businesses should build a strategic marketing plan. A marketing plan "is essential because 95% of all businesses right now are just throwing up a bunch of tactics"\textsuperscript{106} with the hope that "they stick."\textsuperscript{107} The correct utilization of data is paramount in building a successful campaign, whether it be political or corporate. Aligning data properly to identify the customer, the product, and "where the customer spends their time"\textsuperscript{108} becomes an exercise in casting a wide net, collecting extremely beneficial information to expand the customer/client base. Samuel Woolley made a particularly profound observation in a Brookings Institute article. In this publication, he professed, "The future of propaganda may in part be location based."\textsuperscript{109} Much evidence currently exists to validate his assessment.

Location is a data point shared by marketing influencers across all sectors. According to Woolley, "Location-based targeting is nothing new in the ad industry, and just as advertising techniques provided the inspiration for many of tactics used by Russia to meddle in the 2016 U.S. election, the cutting edge in the ad industry may now inform the way propaganda and disinformation are reaching the individual citizen."\textsuperscript{110} The crossover from advertising to politics and vice versa remains evermore present in today’s technological world. Highlighting this relationship, Woolley interviewed an unidentified political consultant who spoke about the interchange of location-based propaganda. The consultant stated, "We’ll work with a company, we’ll give them an address, they’ll draw a perimeter around an area ..... and they will actually pull all the mobile device IDs, unique to your personal cell phone."\textsuperscript{111} In addition, "He elaborated ‘Then we can upload that list into Facebook or into other ad platforms to target them directly. Or use that mobile device id to feed it to one of our data partners who can then pull data insights for users who were in that venue.’"\textsuperscript{112}

Emphasizing the importance of data and location, Woolley employs this article to underline how both corporate and political campaigns use this tactic. As a result of technological

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  \item \textsuperscript{106} Chambers.
  \item \textsuperscript{107} Chambers.
  \item \textsuperscript{108} Chambers.
  \item \textsuperscript{110} Woolley.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Woolley.
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Woolley.
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advancements, tracking people’s habits, likes, and dislikes has become increasingly valuable to marketing. This profitable data tracking applies not only to commercial consumers but also to political opponents. As mentioned above, other countries, such as Russia, have taken advantage of these new technological techniques to influence and sway American voters. Stutts and Woolley agree that data and location play an integral role in both political and corporate marketing. As a part of the data collection and analysis process, “Geo-propaganda,”113 “geo-tracking,”114 and geofencing have become relatively new terms defining the virtual boundaries technologically generated via mobile devices or computers. These techniques allow the collection and utilization of data/information for marketing targeting purposes. Woolley notes, “Versions of this type of location-data oriented messaging have existed in U.S. politics and internationally, for several years.”115

One of the most prolific examples of how this tactic became an integral decision-making tool in a highly charged crisis-management environment occurred during the recent pandemic. During “the Covid-19 pandemic, location data has never been more sensitive, nor more actively used by companies and public-health agencies trying to do digital contact tracing and outbreak tracking.”116 Several key takeaways can be gained from this quote and the previous quotes. First, Woolley acknowledges the use of this tactic occurred initially and primarily in the political sphere. Next, he highlights that relatively recent events have generated a stronger correlation between political and marketing campaign tactics. Last, he acknowledges that political tactics have played a major role in forming corporate targeting campaigns. Empirical evidence affirms targeting and marketing ramifications in the public and private sectors. This evidence abounds as relates to issues surrounding Covid-19 and the increases in political leveraging maneuvers in ad campaigns. These indicators signal significant alignment growth between the two divisions.

While reliance upon data in advertising is not a new strategy, the uptick in coordination between political consultants and corporate marketing teams is noteworthy. Both Stutts and

113 Woolley.
114 Woolley.
115 Woolley.
116 Woolley.
Woolley recognize that as technology use increases, so do the similarities between corporate and political marketing campaigns. “From the 2016 U.S. presidential election to the 2019 Indian general election political operatives have actively worked to combine personal data with pernicious online advertising tactics in order to spread various forms of computational propaganda.”\textsuperscript{117} Thus, it appears that as data becomes more readily available, more extractable, and easier to cross-tabulate, more and more corporations are incentivized to recreate political targeting efforts, fashioning their own forms of propaganda.

This methodology has spurred increasing support for its transformative power, acknowledging that “Geo-fencing represents the likely next turn in how political advertisers will leverage personal data to target global publics with individualized propaganda.”\textsuperscript{118} New technology will not attempt to replace data collected via previous tracking approaches. Marketing experts will, however, layer the data on top to ensure that the collected information creates a more precise, robust representation of the target. A proponent of this methodological approach, Woolley explains, “Political campaigns are already leveraging information on whether people went to the polls, church, or the shooting range[,] ... From there, it would be relatively easy for campaigns to compare that information or disinformation on the voting process.”\textsuperscript{119} As previously noted, data collection has remained a prevalent technique for some time. However, with ever-increasing technological advancement, empirical evidence again suggests that the lines separating corporate and political marketing strategies have become increasingly blurred.

Predictive analytics generates an atmosphere for predictive scoring. Collected data must be analyzed with a productive method to prevent alienating voters and/or consumers. Predictive scoring methodology depends on assembling and amalgamating data (e.g., socioeconomic, demographics, online opt-ins, and offline activities). After thoroughly compiling and analyzing the data, campaigns and corporations will generate a “predicative score”\textsuperscript{120} for individuals. Retailers use this methodology to determine the amount of money customers may spend; universities

\textsuperscript{117} Woolley. 
\textsuperscript{118} Woolley. 
\textsuperscript{119} Woolley. 

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apply this tool to identify retention probabilities; and political campaigns seek to ascertain the probability of voting and likely candidate choice.

Much as Target employed predictive analytics to validate the pregnancy of its young shopper, political campaigns are following suit. In fact, political voter files “are often enhanced with commercially available details on consumers like net worth, education level, occupation, home value, number of children in one’s household, gun ownership, pet ownership, political donations and hobbies or habits such as cooking, woodworking, gambling or smoking. Such details can be purchased from data aggregators that acquire information from customers’ loyalty-card records and other sources.” Corporations and political entities have enjoyed the immense benefits of freely purchasing and utilizing consumer data. The enormous advantages gained by this vast data flow between the two sectors optimize success for both. Optimal performance is achieved via the utilization of data interchangeability. Many trials have validated the efficacy of this methodology, allowing corporations and politicians to target customers and clients most effectively at a granular level. If corporations and political campaigns use these techniques successfully, corporations will gain much clout with their consumers and influence the passage of beneficial legislation. Additionally, political operatives will reap a wide range of advantages from voters, particularly as these campaigners seek to bridge the gap via grassroots efforts.

Sharing a data collection strategy as a niche variant is one of many ways political campaigns connect to their sector counterparts in corporate marketing. The question then becomes one of ascertaining why one should leverage the feats of political operatives rather than invoke traditional corporate marketing principles as guidelines for goal attainment. In today’s environment, the answer to this question is multi-pronged. Technological advancements, increased media speed, and an escalated need for influencing have immensely accelerated the demand for political advisors. Additionally, the intermixing of state and federal politics continues infiltrating corporate lobbying and operating functions. For example, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) index is a persuasive corporate scoring system. However, outside political lobbying groups determine the rubrics for this system. The pillars of DEI include:

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121 Singer.
Ensuring equal access: The intentional promotion of equal opportunity through processes and practices ... to provide personalized development and eliminate barriers to opportunities so all can thrive. Valuing differences: The company says it seeks to understand and honor unique experiences and perspectives, as they ‘strengthen us as we unite around something bigger than ourselves.’ Creating a culture of belonging: Promoting and sustaining a culture where all individuals can thrive and contribute.122

Thus, branding for corporate bodies has become increasingly more important.

Branding is essential for any successful campaign. Stutts’s step three requires “building or rebuilding the brand.”123 Stutts argues that this step is critical because the owners too often make the “mistake”124 of building a website before “they know what their customers want.”125 Both political and corporate marketing tactics require myriad data points and multiple focus groups before launching a campaign. However, in today’s environment, Stutts’s fundamental conclusion could not be more applicable — businesses fail too frequently to adequately capture all pertinent data before a campaign launch. Due to this oversight, recent campaigns of Nike, Bud Light, Target, and Disney have garnered the ire of a specific demographic of consumers.

CEOs have revealed their willingness to support key political platforms by making DEI principles core mandates of their operating structure(s). Designating their businesses as vanguards for social change, the leadership has endorsed mandates that have, in some way, uniquely affected and transformed their marketing branding. Nick Mordowanec’s article, Chick-fil-A Faces a Conservative Revolt, addresses the pervasiveness of this phenomenon, explaining that “Approximately 80 percent of United States employers have DEI initiatives, according to Corporate Compliance Insights.”126 Desiring to woo political officials and the public, corporate

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123 Chambers.
124 Chambers.
125 Chambers.
126 Mordowanec.
officials have taken additional steps to appeal to the masses, using this appeasement model as a
guide for developing marketing strategies and executing political lobbying. Joanna Schwartz, a
marketing professor at Georgia College & State University, succinctly addresses the irony
affecting Chick Fil A, noting, Chick Fil A “‘has a very religious focus, but that focus has never
included LGBTQ+ equality as one of its basic tenets.’”127 “‘In fact, the Human Rights Campaign’s
Corporate Equality Index doesn’t even have a rating for the company because they’ve never
participated in those equality studies.’”128

As previously mentioned, using popular political ideologies to structure corporate
marketing does not always achieve the initial goal of affecting desired social change. Attempts to
appeal to popular opinion do not always result in positive reactions. In fact, the attempts may
produce quite the opposite results. Nevertheless, private sector officials continue to commit
missteps, providing empirical evidence of corporations’ willingness to adopt risky political
campaign strategies. In his fourth step, Stutts suggests that “you start testing the messages that
you find in the data about your customers.”129 Demonstrating the correlation between corporate
marketing and political campaigns, Stutts provides examples explaining how “in 2016, Donald
Trump’s campaign found one message they knew would be effective.”130

Enduring an arduous

As scenes in the hit TV series Mad Men demonstrated, political campaigns, much like their

As scenes in the hit TV series Mad Men demonstrated, political campaigns, much like their
corporate counterparts, test and retest branding messaging and deliver over and over until the
prompting sticks.

In his book Political Marketing Alchemy: The State of Opinion Research, André Turcotte
investigates the conceptual nature of the branding strategies used in political and corporate
marketing. In particular, the chapter titled “Market Intelligence: Glamor and Grief” underscores the

127 Mordowanec.
128 Mordowanec.
129 Chambers.
130 Chambers.
131 Chambers.
132 Chambers.
value of the evolved nuances embedded in the political and corporate marketing influence.

Turcotte writes,

“Giving advice based on opinion research findings is the essence of the profession, whether it is for commercial clients, politicians, or consumers of media polls. However, it is particularly important in the political arena. What is now known as “Market Intelligence” is the most coveted and prestigious application of public opinion research. It guarantees name recognition, media, political, and corporate exposure as well as substantial revenues for those involved.”

Additionally, he echoes Stutts’s beliefs, submitting, "Unlike any other aspect of public opinion research, mistakes are unforgivable and unforgiving and mistakes tend to be glaringly obvious." The result is that both political and corporate marketing campaigns must ensure that the mined data is comprehensive, accurate, and capable of being read correctly. It is true that “Commercial opinion research begins with an understanding of the needs of a specific client.”

However, empirical evidence reveals that the term client could be interchangeable between corporate and political entities and/or individuals. The convergence of these two sectors is undeniable, as evidenced by the data mining tactics and potential branding and launching missteps. Ironically, Turcotte reminds us of how the Edward Snowden saga brought attention to “how our personal data is collected and used to guide corporate and political strategic decisions.” Increasingly, we are finding individuals, such as Stutts, traversing from political to corporate strategy and marketing tactical influence. The convergence of these two sectors has far surpassed what was once deemed a partnership owned by lobbyists. In his doctoral thesis, Simon Vodrey echoes Stutts, Turcotte, and Woolley, noting,

(1) Political opinion researchers appear to have greater experience, comfort, and ability in harnessing speed for the purpose of crafting effective marketing than do their commercial marketing counterparts.
(2) The political is bleeding over into more facets of modern life, and this is advantageous to political opinion researchers more so than their commercial counterparts since, by their very nature, political research have always had to craft marketing campaigns that are not value neutral.
(3) Market intelligence is a “briefcase business”—especially here in Canada—and, therefore, those practitioners are more resourceful and efficient marketers who are better at doing more with less than are their commercial colleagues.

134 Turcotte, 74.
135 Turcotte, 58.
136 Turcotte, 94.
Tribal marketing is becoming a more recognizable, commonplace, and effective way of marketing and market intelligence is well suited at building and mobilizing tribes. Market intelligence is well ahead of other subfields of opinion research in the practice of microtargeting and is practicing more sophisticated microtargeting than others. Third-party technology vendors—especially digital political consultants—who practice their trade within a feedback loop which includes interacting with both political and commercial clients are pushing the development of new campaign technologies.\textsuperscript{137}

The preponderance of empirical evidence once again proves that, indeed, political and corporate marketing strategies converge more than they diverge. "Just like a political race is mostly about the voter, and less about the politician, successful corporate marketing is all about the customer or client."\textsuperscript{138} With convictions reinforced by prior evidence provided in his book \textit{The Undefeated Marketing System}, Stutts emphasizes the need for granular data to tie all components of a campaign together. He notes, "You need all granular information about your customers and clients because that’s what’s going to help you understand them."\textsuperscript{139}

"Interestingly, it appears that political data strategy tactics are now driving corporate campaign marketing. Stutts states, … I explained that every company – B2B, B2C, big, small, every kind of company – could transform and amplify their business if they adopted political marketing methods."\textsuperscript{140} As mentioned previously, recent campaigns from Coke, Bud Light, Delta, and Target have seemingly missed the mark with their base. Utilizing similar marketing strategies does not necessarily translate into mirroring political messaging. It is merely the strategic methodologies that traverse both spheres. Attracting large marketing swaths of consumers can be difficult, and there remains a fine line to prevent alienating one base while enticing another. For example, this analyst learned a valuable lesson when reading a \textit{Customer Insight Report}. He discovered that the "target audience"\textsuperscript{141} or customer base of the company he reviewed was turned off by discounts. "The economy had come roaring back, people were making plenty of money. They didn’t need to-or want to-buy cheap products. Marketing that repeatedly hammered

\textsuperscript{138} Stutts, 39.
\textsuperscript{139} Stutts, 39.
\textsuperscript{140} Stutts, 15.
\textsuperscript{141} Stutts, 43.
customers the ‘discount’ now felt cheap and untrustworthy to the customer base.”\textsuperscript{142} In turn the company had lost “$2 million in market share”\textsuperscript{143} and was thus “repelling”\textsuperscript{144} their consumers. Data-backed tailored marketing specific to each company is becoming ever more important. While some marketers continue to put “ads in the same reliable places,”\textsuperscript{145} the ramifications of such actions are akin to “telling every customer at a restaurant to order chicken and waffles, regardless of whether they’re diabetic or vegetarian.”\textsuperscript{146} If not adhered to, the results for businesses that do not follow data marketing strategies can be catastrophic. Just as political campaign strategists drill down to target voters, corporations “need to know who”\textsuperscript{147} their “customer is-and what they value.”\textsuperscript{148}

A political example of this type of targeted marketing would be the March 1 primary Marco Rubio won in Minnesota. “Out of 114,254 votes cast, Rubio came out with 41,397,”\textsuperscript{149} 36.24\% of the vote over candidate Donald Trump who received 21.42\%. By leveraging the data points in a “political version of the Customer Insights Report,”\textsuperscript{150} Rubio’s team was able to deliver the exact messaging on the number one issue Minnesotan’s desired. What was that issue? “Change.”\textsuperscript{151} Catch phrases such as “Your choice could reset everything,”\textsuperscript{152} and “Here’s your chance for transformation”\textsuperscript{153} reverberated on constituents’ televisions. Understanding the importance of this data point, converting it into exact messaging, and applying the delivery appropriately demonstrates the success of data in a marketing campaign when marketed and targeted correctly. Thus, the empirical evidence once again demonstrates that there are correlations between the methodologies employed by corporate and political campaigns.

How one examines and interprets data remains just as important as the data itself. When reviewing marketing data, corporations should be guided by: the assembled data on consumers’

\textsuperscript{142} Stutts, 43.
\textsuperscript{143} Stutts, 43.
\textsuperscript{144} Stutts, 43.
\textsuperscript{145} Stutts, 114.
\textsuperscript{146} Stutts, 114.
\textsuperscript{147} Stutts, 114.
\textsuperscript{148} Stutts, 114.
\textsuperscript{149} Stutts, 130.
\textsuperscript{150} Stutts, 130.
\textsuperscript{151} Stutts, 131.
\textsuperscript{152} Stutts, 131.
\textsuperscript{153} Stutts, 131.
culminating motivations, “behavioral and contextual research,”\textsuperscript{154} and “demographic data.”\textsuperscript{155} This data, in turn, becomes the messaging for advertising campaigns. Targeted and tailored messaging provides the best opportunity for a positive outcome. Emphasizing the methodology and formulation of targeted, tailored messaging, Stutts provides the following organic product company case study. The goal for this company was to “dominate”\textsuperscript{156} the marketplace during the coronavirus outbreak. Taking this aggressive approach and leveraging the current environment, the client wanted to focus on “3 magic coronavirus values: safety, trust, and helping others.”\textsuperscript{157} The data demonstrated “that out of 200 million American consumers, 150 million were actively searching for coronavirus-related products.”\textsuperscript{158} This awareness allowed Stutts and his team to immediately eliminate “50 million”\textsuperscript{159} consumers due to lack of engagement. They then compartmentalized “150 million”\textsuperscript{160} vegans and vegetarians as a result of their high propensity to purchase organic products. To increase their return on investment, they explored geographic regions. Surprisingly, during Covid, the “lowest hanging fruit”\textsuperscript{161} regions such as New York which were shielded from public interaction actually maintained a high interest in products that could “improve their immune system and help them stay healthy and comfortable in that scary moment.”\textsuperscript{162} Data, targeting, and tailor marketing produced the following messaging: “Don’t compromise your family’s health with toxic products.”\textsuperscript{163} “Horrified by the ingredients in your skin care products?”\textsuperscript{164} “We make safe, natural, plant-powered products that support your immunity.”\textsuperscript{165} These ads resulted in the highest performance of ads the client “ever had.”\textsuperscript{166}

Like Rubio in the Minnesota primary, this client understood and pursued the path of data, targeting, and tailored messaging. As Stutts succinctly puts it, “If you want your business to flourish, you must be both relevant and unique to the customer— from their perspective, not

\textsuperscript{154} Stutts, 95.
\textsuperscript{155} Stutts, 95.
\textsuperscript{156} Stutts, 96.
\textsuperscript{157} Stutts, 96.
\textsuperscript{158} Stutts, 96.
\textsuperscript{159} Stutts, 96.
\textsuperscript{160} Stutts, 96.
\textsuperscript{161} Stutts, 97.
\textsuperscript{162} Stutts, 97.
\textsuperscript{163} Stutts, 97.
\textsuperscript{164} Stutts, 97-98.
\textsuperscript{165} Stutts, 98.
\textsuperscript{166} Stutts, 98.
Moreover, it is important to recognize and understand that your “ideal target market is critical, and your data is your map.” The case studies in Stutts’s book *The Undefeated Marketing System* perfectly coagulate and amalgamate the marketing tactics utilized by both corporations and political campaigns. He marries the differing markets by providing case study examples of how both niches leverage each tactic to their favor.

**Conclusion**

Research demonstrates that both political and corporate institutions have enjoyed immense success by effectively swaying the masses via the instruments known today as campaign strategies. While the marketing strategies of corporations may, in some ways, be less sophisticated than those in the political arena, they are certainly making gains that could soon put them on par with their political counterparts. Regardless of any disparities in the respective tactics of the two entities, the multiple forms of the literature analyzed during this research conclude that these two distinct types of institutions share notable commonalities in campaign methodologies. This study reviews a wide range of tactics scrutinized by many scholars and evaluated in all-encompassing writings. While this research underscores the need for further academic review of the subject, hopefully, this analysis, to some degree, adequately elevates the current understanding in this area.

Differentiating between political and corporate campaigns is an exercise that stresses the importance of time and timing. Page 8 of this thesis identifies the critical political campaign attributes - rapid response time, less hierarchical structure, more granular data advantages, and fewer opinions stifling efforts – that fortify the strategists’ ability to reach and influence a universal audience. These attributes have fortified political entities with significant advantages over their corporate counterparts. For example, political campaigns must adhere to fixed primary and general election dates. Conversely, corporations are generally not bound by fixed marketing dates. The absence of this constraint provides corporations with a valuable asset – the ability to rebound more quickly from public relations blunders. For example, Target’s micro-targeting

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167 Stutts, 98.
168 Stutts, 99.
pregnancy mishap generated fewer public relations media storms due to its nonpolitical nature and the absence of heightened campaign media attention. However, as the research also denotes, political-driven corporate campaigns can suffer the ire of public scrutiny like their political colleagues (e.g., Target trans-gender tuck bathing suits and the Dylan Mulvaney Bud light endorsement). Corporations are increasingly making efforts to replicate the accomplishments of the political world, reducing the gap between the political strategists' level of success and their own success. Bias focus on achieving ambitious goals often carries many demands and volatile risks. Corporations continue to be reminded of this lesson the hard way, like their political counterparts.

Corporate requirements to meet EGS and DEI rubrics counter historical mandates demanding that these entities refrain from social-political marketing. However, pressures from outside groups and from DEI score tabulation requirements have increasingly compelled corporate marketing companies to adapt and conform to cultural trends. Most recently, the government has issued demands compelling responsible governance with particular attention paid to protecting the environment and maintaining social parity. Ironically, in today's world, a trend today could be viewed as a faux pas tomorrow. Unlike the past, the Internet captures all in perpetuity, and recall can occur immediately. Therefore, this instantaneous retrieval of moments, producing controversial images that would better be left forgotten, requires that corporations very carefully consider how to select and execute political marketing tactics. Corporations should always remain highly circumspect when deploying mass media overtures, particularly to extricate themselves during moments of public discontent. Chick Fil A certainly felt the need for this relief during the debacle surrounding personal employee contributions to various Christian conservative organizations. Fortunately, this Company avoided social marketing pitfalls and enjoyed overwhelming support due to its overall wholesome image and spectacular branding. Equally important, empirical evidence demonstrates that the recent Target tuck bathing suit boycott and the Dylan Mulvaney Bud Light advertisement received far more backlash than the Target pregnancy marketing campaign. This revelation affirms that politically motivated corporate
missteps usually garner more media attention, increased consumer backlash, and decreased revenue.

For Target, Chick Fil A, Bud Light, and other corporations, the imperative remains as simple as knowing thy base. Page 21 of the thesis article differentiates between corporate and political influencers. Unlike strong voices in corporate campaigns, political influencers are typically those who have their finger on the pulse of the local community. Political influencers generally are representatives of the electorate and potentially, even better, are agents for an elected voter block. Conversely, the Bud Light Dylan Mulvaney campaign misstep resulted simply from the corporation’s lack of appreciation for and understanding of its base. Acting upon the approval of marketing executives with limited knowledge about the brand’s consumers, Bud Light attempted to maximize support among DEI and ESG supporters. Essentially, the corporation promoted an ad that did not adhere to historical precedence nor honor data-driven information. Businesses refer to their base as their “cash cow.” In business, just as in politics, killing the cash cow can mean institutional destruction or, at least, the creation of severe consequences for the well-being of the entity.

Grassroots efforts, third-party groups, and associations add to the political engagement tactics in both industries. Trade associations have become an arm of many corporations to help move legislative bills. Hopefully, as political campaigns and corporations work hand and hand, internal corporate lobbyists will experience increased capacity to navigate the political landscape. The evidence strongly suggests that smaller corporations with fewer funds should invest in trade organizations. The rationale for this investment is based upon the inference that, as we say in grassroots jargon, a collective whole is much more powerful than a sole entity. Additionally, trade organizations often have local counterparts with their finger on the pulse of local communities. Therefore, they could potentially provide helpful marketing tips and local lobbying assistance to corporate organizations.

The evidence points to the importance of third-party pressures and third-party/association solutions to navigate the advancement of woke culture adeptly. Coca-Cola’s expansion of political engagement and rhetoric permanently attached the corporation to movements that could and
would receive criticism from the public in the future. Some may argue that a confluence of occurrences resulted in removing the All-Star baseball game from Atlanta. Immense factional opposition occurred when Coke and Delta, both headquartered in Atlanta, chose to engage with woke issues, and Georgia passed its new voter legislation. Removing this major sports event caused a tremendous loss in revenue, jobs, and city promotion. Democratic officials awkwardly straddled the messaging line, keenly aware that removing the game from the area would cost the state and individuals appreciably. The spotlight landed on those groups supporting the event removal (e.g., Black Lives Matter and proponents of the Defund the Police movement), creating backlash from those with opposing views. Ultimately, the effects extended beyond Georgia’s borders. Not only in Georgia but also in other states, the public began to embrace the voting bills that had kindled criticism from the likes of Coke and Delta. Currently, corporations are trying to gain a steady foot on a political and social landscape pierced by opposing factional demands. Their challenges are intensified by headlines highlighting the mismanagement of association monies (e.g., BLM), factional support of controversial legislation, the uptick in crime, and the need to jump on the IED and ESG bandwagon. Therefore, these corporations can no longer avoid the direct line established between them and political discourse, a zone once buffered by third-party groups. Association arms of corporations (e.g., the American Banking Association (ABA), the American Petroleum Institute (API), the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and The American Society for Cell Biology) help minimize the risk of public exposure when businesses donate to third-party groups (e.g., NRA, Unions, Black Lives Matter, and Right to Life). Particularly in the current volatile environment, corporations are increasingly cautious about extending financial and other assistance to specific social organizations, recognizing that their selections could produce public delight and public outcry. Corporations should continue supporting their favored social causes, gaining comfort in knowing that trade associations are available as critical instruments that can immensely assist with navigating choppy political and social issue waters.

Grassroots groundswell generated in a political campaign is difficult, at best, to replicate in a corporate campaign. Pressure to weigh in on social issues and attach political rhetoric to corporate marketing is ever more evident in today’s technological world. Again, corporations must
be careful how they respond to political and social pressures. Rushing to embrace perceived popular trends too often leads to unintended, harmful consequences, leading to boycotts and the resignations of figures in visible positions, like Bradley Gayton from Coke. Even corporations in the financial sector, like BlackRock and Vanguard, are receiving similar scrutiny as Coke. Perhaps these private sector institutions could benefit from persuasion guidance offered by inveterate political operatives who excel at harnessing trends and appropriately applying messaging, even within extremely truncated timelines. Like their skilled corporate counterparts, these strategists can utilize third parties to navigate complex, timely topics. However, direct grassroots tactics offer political operatives a unique ability to target individuals straightforwardly. Once again, empirical evidence underscores the reliability of the tactical application of messaging and the simultaneous tailoring of rhetoric to assist in attracting the masses. Direct phone calls and door-to-door contact are part of an exact methodology that ensures the intended target receives the messaging. While certain political campaign tactics like door-to-door communication may not be appropriate or fiscally viable for corporations, alternative solutions, like granular targeted online marketing, may be utilized as more direct, practical channels for reaching the intended consumer.

It is important to note that throughout the study, a considerable increase in corporate social issue marketing, also known as woke campaigns, has occurred. The article recognizes that social change generally occurs during major historical events. Arguably, the onset of Covid and the quarantine of millions of people could directly correlate to the more sensational corporate and political marketing messaging. However, the increased attention to and pushback on the corporations participating in this arena is also noteworthy. Unlike politicians, corporations must attract various portions of the population to sustain themselves fiscally at any given time. Thus, associations and third-party groups offer viable solutions to counter controversial messaging in both sectors.

Indeed, any universal strategist who wishes to accurately deploy cross-sector trends of messaging, research, and application must become intimately familiar with the sophisticated forms of tactical linkage between corporate and political strategies. However, empirical evidence
provides a specific roadmap, revealing the evolution of political campaigning and corporate marketing throughout history. This roadmap delivers a picture of how these two sectors have responded to environmental pressures by producing creative strategies that diverge and converge in complexion. Certainly, each sector contains viable marketing strategy and direction counterparts, each entity mirroring, at least in part, the methodologies utilized by the other sector. Moreover, all literature cited/referenced in this study emphasizes the evolution and push and pull impacting both political and corporate institutions. Each article, study, journal, and book collectively establish the operational effects of these two converging and diverging constructs. As expected, some of the sources were more comprehensive in analyzing the commonalities of the strategic approaches than others. Thus, all have highlighted how both political campaigns and corporate marketing teams, in similar fashions, have continued to adapt to and utilize to their advantage the sensations created by the factional entities that have come to play such a fundamental role in the evolution of both distinct sets of institutions.

The “Diverging” chapter examines corporate inabilities to deliver messaging in a targeted and timely manner. Corporations have made advancements in the retrieval of data. However, some high-profile companies have committed missteps when trying to duplicate the exact style and data targeting practiced in the political world. Therefore, empirical evidence points to how these institutions have experienced marketing growth pains, particularly recently, as they have sought to catch up to their political counterparts. As Stutts notes, businesses have typically become more reliant on the tried-and-true marketing tactics of their marketing firms, and the need for innovation has slowly begun to creep into corporate industries. Additionally, corporations have eagerly attempted to acquire marketing teams with creative agility to shorten marketing response times and drill down on tailored messaging. Indeed, successful political campaigns have delivered an important message to corporate marketing teams—an abundance of relevant data is useless if their collective application is directed to the incorrect audience. Again, the Target pregnancy story details the calamity that can emerge when the benefits of collecting copious amounts of data are more than offset by the disastrous results of delivering the messaging to the wrong target. Unlike their political counterparts, corporations are unlikely to employ the beneficial
tactics of door-to-door and/or phone banking salesmanship to deliver messaging. However, perhaps by utilizing more advanced political strategic messaging placement methodologies, corporations could more accurately pinpoint messaging placement. Corporations would benefit immensely by deploying more frequently the practices of geo-fencing and geo-targeting, tactics employed by both the political and private sectors. Yet, as the empirical evidence demonstrates, political operatives have appeared to be better equipped to wield these skills.

Nevertheless, this article’s findings point to an indisputable evolution of converging marketing tactics between corporations and political campaigns. Undeniably, corporate marketers have become increasingly more reliant on political polling, lobbying, and marketing efforts to reach and persuade the diverse masses. As trends continue to shift, evidence points to a continuation of the entanglement process, resolutely empowering corporate marketers with the knowledge and experience of political campaigners. Again, with increasing time, corporate marketing teams should have accumulated the wisdom and know-how to become at least level with their political counterparts in gaining approval and participation from selected audiences. Grassroots efforts and groundswell marketing tactics will continue to become an ever-increasing avenue for corporations to advance their advertising efforts. Thus, increasingly, political consultants will seek to traverse the political landscape and transition into corporate advertising roles. Perhaps, these uniquely equipped consultants can steer corporations away from political messaging missteps while keeping the most polarizing social campaign in the confines of the political campaigning sphere.

This review has attempted to fill that void in knowledge about some very crucial marketing strategies which have achieved much success in the political arena. With their adoption and utilization, these strategies stand to transform the way corporations market their research, mold messaging, and conduct data applications. This massive corporate marketing transformation will produce levels of success heretofore never seen. This research has examined some of these crucial campaign strategies—data, marketing, messaging, and delivery with, hopefully, enough detail to bridge the gap in knowledge or at least, to induce others to pursue further research.
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