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CQ Roll Call's Guide to Building Engaged Communities

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Advocacy in Action by Gerry Gunster

## How to Target Paid Media

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Last week I talked about why it's so important to connect an advocacy campaign's message to a finely honed target.

Now let's go into *how* it's done.

When I started in this business 20 years ago, paid media strategy meant print, radio, and television advertising. "Targeting" was limited to choosing publications, programming, and the "prime" or "drive" times that the desired audience was most likely to read, listen to, or watch.

But while print, radio, and TV remain key components in advocacy message delivery, the targeting process has become more sophisticated than I could have ever dreamed as a fledgling campaign strategist.

For instance, digital advertising algorithms now make it possible for us to microtarget—not just by demographic or geography—but by people's values and motivations. In essence, we can now pinpoint what actions an individual is willing to take on for the benefit of a specific campaign.

Last week, microtargeting intelligence firm CEO Bryan Gernart shared some insights about how leveraging the known values of "soccer moms" can enable us to target them with messages about emissions regulations. This week, we'll examine how we go about getting that data in the first place and examine what we can do with that information in more detail.

### **How do we know what a soccer mom values in the first place? Here's the nitty gritty:**

Bryan's team at Resonate conducts 20,000 surveys each month with questions about people's values, attitudes, and beliefs on topics ranging from issue positions and engagement activities to consumer preferences and shopping habits. These responses are then cross-referenced with individual online behaviors, providing a robust, holistic view of any audience.

### **How does that information get used?**

By combining surveys with behavioral data, we are able to break down the walls that have traditionally existed between research and activation. For instance, now that we know where our soccer mom hangs out

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in the digital space, we can deliver media to her directly on her preferred sites. We can then monitor whether or not our ads are prompting any kind of action on her part.

### **How does all this behavioral data translate into audience mobilization?**

According to Bryan, both cookie and site-based data can ensure you reach targets based on their shared values and motivations. After that it's just a matter of filtering those individuals by demographic and behavior.

It's also worth noting that vastly different types of audiences all use the same sites.

Let's say you want to mobilize targets by connecting with them on Twitter. Not a bad idea when you consider that individuals who use Twitter on a daily basis are 73% more likely to volunteer for advocacy groups than the average online adult. (Comparatively, daily Facebook users are only 16% more likely to volunteer for advocacy activities.)

With this information in mind, we would want to direct more ads through Twitter than Facebook to achieve our desired outcome.

Instead of creating one ad and hoping the right audience will find it respond to it, we can now create multiple ads that will appeal specifically to individual audiences, find those audiences, and then serve the ad to them at their preferred sites.

Now imagine what we'll be able to do in another 20 years.