

KEEPING THE SURGE GOING

A PLAN FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE ALLIANCE PARTY

WHY DIGITAL?



When we say digital, we mean any type of political engagement or campaigning that primarily happens online or via a digital device. This includes social media, use of apps and software for campaigning, designing algorithms to target seats and much more. The great advantage of building digital systems to promote a political message is the level of engagement they offer, not just in direct interactions with voters via Facebook or Twitter, but in the data produced by these interactions and the ways this can be operationalised to hone messaging and help parties understand what works best when reaching out to voters.

The 2019 General election was the first time the party invested significantly in online advertising, spending almost twice as much as any other party. Our strategy was simple: run targeted ads promoting Alliance policy throughout the election and use the data gathered to target 'lookalike' audiences in target seats and fill their newsfeeds with ads promoting the binary choice of Naomi Long and Stephen Farry against the DUP in East Belfast and North Down.

OUR 3 STEPS TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

1

INVEST IN CUTTING EDGE ORGANISING TOOLS



In partnership with the Liberal Democrats, we have agreed a licence of Connect, a voter activation system which is itself a version of the US Democrat's VAN database.

This will allow real-time data analysis across all constituencies, canvassing and outreach via a user friendly app and will enable the party to move from its current clipboard + paper system 'EARS'. This is a system that costs the Lib Dems almost £500k per year to use and would not be feasible for the party to run on its own.



Whilst Connect will track data gathered from doorstep outreach, we will use Nationbuilder to organise and engage with Party members, supporters and donors and allow the Party to grow sustainably whilst maintaining a small staff team. Nationbuilder can also be used to set up dedicated petitions, fundraising or volunteer appeals and policy/candidate websites which collect contact information from supporters and can be linked to Facebook ads.



Given the growth of the party, making training materials available to new members to allow them to play an active role is essential. Therefore, we want to set up a Learning Management System (LMS) via Talent LMS, which will enable all members to logon and complete courses on everything from the history of the party to how to run a successful campaign. It will also include downloadable resources such as templates for literature and social media graphics.

2

LEAD THE WAY WITH A DATA-DRIVEN ONLINE PRESENCE

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Party will run targeted advertising campaigns throughout the year, primarily to boost membership to aid the development of local associations and ensure each area has a strong base of committed, trained activists ready to hit the ground running in 2022.

WEBSITE

Our website will be optimised for user experience and member engagement. This will include having a regularly updated policy page, building on the success of our COVID information page, which was viewed by over 90,000 people during the pandemic.

3

IMPLEMENT BEST-PRACTICE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

RECEIVING PAYMENTS

Currently the party receives membership subs from 6 different sources, creating an unnecessary administrative burden and increases the risk of lapsed or missed. Some payment processors, such as PayPal, take a significant cut as well. This is not efficient for a growing party and we have set up new payment processors via Nationbuilder and GoCardless to collect regular payments and will work with all members to move onto one of these systems. This will save significant administrative time and money in the long run.

EFFECTIVE TARGETING

In the past, the party has based targeting decisions primarily on tally data (where available) and electoral quotas. We want to move into the next generation of data that can be used to build targeting heatmaps to decide a) what constituencies to target and b) what areas to focus resources in. This will help the party make data driven decisions about where to focus time and resources before elections.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE INTERNATIONALLY

As well as working closely with the Liberal Democrats to access their voter database, together with ALDE (Alliance of liberals and Democrats for Europe) officers, we have initiated a monthly working group of digital operatives from liberal parties across Europe. This will allow us to share knowledge and best practice and access tools not available or affordable locally.

WHAT WE NEED TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN:

ITEM	COST
Connect subscription	£10,000pa
Nationbuilder subscription	£1,900pa
Talent LMS subscription	£2,300pa
Design of training materials	£1,000 (one off cost)
Social media advertising budget	£2,500pa
Website changes	£600 (one off cost)
Total from October 2020-October 2022	£35,000

*We intend to offset these recurring annual costs through electoral gains and subsequent additional party resources from 2022 onwards