

What marketers can learn from political campaign ad spending strategies

Article



The news: Google and Meta received \$619 million in political ad spending from January 2023 to August 2024, per a report from Open Secrets, Wesleyan Media Project, and the Brennan Center.

- **Presidential campaigns accounted for 64% of spending from campaigns for individual offices.** They purchased \$248 million in ad space on the platform, while Senate campaigns spent \$73 million (19%).
- The **Harris campaign** outspent the **Trump campaign** by more than three times despite launching far later, spending \$182 million versus Trump's \$45 million. That's [a significant reversal](#) from Trump's 2020 advertising strategy, when the campaign outspent most Democratic candidates on **Facebook**.

Spending boom: The 2024 election is expected to [contribute \\$12.32 billion in ad spending](#) across media channels, with Meta and Google emerging as clear winners.

- We forecast that Meta will bring in \$568.7 million in US political ad revenues this year, up 86% from 2020. [Google's gains are even more dramatic:](#) While it will generate slightly fewer political ad revenues than Meta at \$553.2 million, that represents a 215% increase from 2020.
- Languishing media channels are also getting their share. **Traditional TV will account for the majority of that \$12.32 billion in ad spending, taking in \$7.06 billion.**

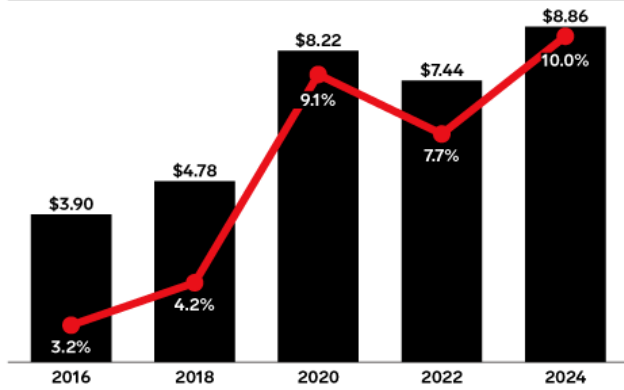
Despite its [steady decline](#), traditional TV lets candidates reach hyperlocal demographics in key battleground states and districts—though it's [ceding ground to connected TVs](#) (CTV). Spending on major, national platforms like Meta and Google, on the other hand, helps political campaigns effectively engage their bases to increase voter turnout.

What marketers can learn: Presidential campaigns' heavy spending on Google and Meta reflects their status as the two largest and most effective platforms for reaching consumers en masse. But shifts elsewhere signal that even cyclical ad spenders are making note of changes in the digital ad landscape.

CTV political ad spend growth is outpacing traditional TV: CTV can target highly specific demographics and is an easy transition from traditional TV. 30-second spots that work on TV are also applicable to CTVs, though marketers should also leverage the channel's [unique ad formats that drive higher engagement](#).

US Traditional Media Political Ad Spending, 2016-2024

billions and % of traditional media ad spending



■ Traditional media political ad spending

■ % of traditional media ad spending

Note: 2020-2024=7.8%; includes advertising related to federal, state, or local politics, including elections and lobbying activities; includes advertising directly related to legislative and regulatory issues

Source: Insider Intelligence | eMarketer Forecast, Dec 2023

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