


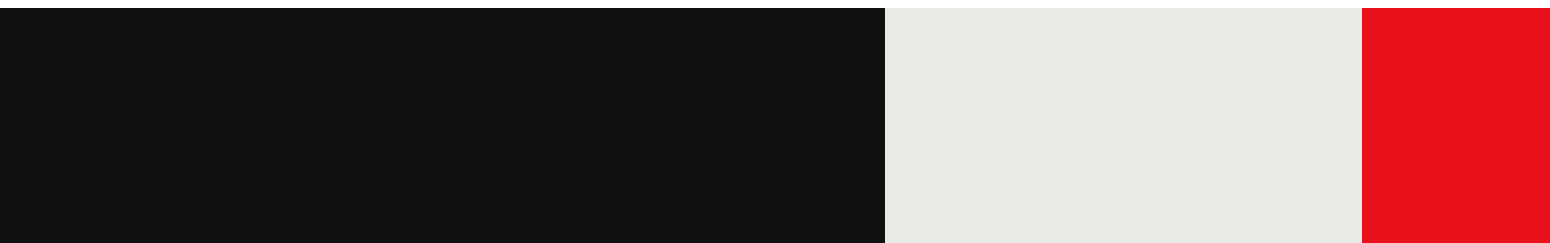
# Authenticity, timing, and brat: Political advertising summer 2024 style

Article



When vice president Kamala Harris launched her presidential campaign in late July, she needed to quickly make a splash with voters. [Social media](#), and [TikTok](#) in particular, was the ideal platform.

“It’s on TikTok where Kamala is really shining,” said our analyst Jasmine Enberg on a recent edition of the [Behind the Numbers podcast](#).



Here are three things to consider about Harris's social media and campaign strategy.

## 1. Authenticity is key to connecting with young voters

[This election is going to be the TikTok election](#), Enberg wrote in January. "I think it's now truer than ever," she said. "Within hours of the announcement of her candidacy, TikTok was really flooded with memes and with videos of memorable moments and soundbites from Kamala set to Charli XCX songs from the ['Brat'](#) album."

"Brat," Enberg said, has become the summer's slang for being "unapologetically yourself."

"I think Harris comes through with a lot of authenticity, which is something we haven't seen, certainly among Democratic candidates," said our analyst Paul Verna. "If you look back to Hillary Clinton's campaign in 2016, it felt very scripted. In moments when she tried to leverage celebrity culture, like she did with a rally late in her campaign featuring Beyonce, it was very awkward."

Harris has owned the space in a way that Trump and Biden, 20 years her senior, haven't, Verna said. "Maybe this is ironic, but Harris is 59 years old. She's not a kid, she's not a millennial, but she's really tapping into [millennial](#) and [Gen Z](#) culture through social media in a way that other candidates haven't since probably Obama."

While Harris might not be intimately plugged into internet culture, her team is, Enberg noted.

"Her team, as well as people online, have taken her awkward moments and some of those sound bites like, 'You just fell out of a coconut tree,' embraced them and made them into something fun and lighthearted," she said.

## 2. Social media can help you reach new audiences—but it's not for everyone

Over 70% of Gen Z and almost half of millennials in the US use TikTok on a monthly basis, according to our forecasts. Some 77% of Gen Z hear about news and breaking events from social media, per March 2023 data from Kagan, making it a smart place for Harris to mobilize young voters, said Enberg.

"Social media can be kind of a toxic place and the tide can turn really quickly," said Enberg. "And I also think that this strategy isn't necessarily going to be for everybody. She's clearly mobilized young people and generated a lot of enthusiasm, but there's still a lot of undecided

voters in swing states who are not Gen Z and who may not be as receptive to this kind of approach.”

### 3. Connected TV (CTV) may be one of the key campaign battlefields

US [political advertising](#) is expected to hit \$12.15 billion in 2024, according to our forecast. “A lot of donors had basically frozen their funds while Biden was deliberating what to do,” Verna added. “If you just see the amount of fundraising that's happening right now on the Democratic side, it is much more than I think Biden was on track for.”

[CTV](#) will account for \$1.56 billion of political ad spend in the US this year. The channel has the potential to target very precisely, and could play an important role, considering groups like “Men for Harris” or “White Dudes for Harris” emerging.

“These are targetable groups,” said Verna. “Men are the default in the political realm, so there would've never been a Men for Biden campaign, much less a White Dudes for Biden. “Now, you have these groups that are very important to reach because they are either persuadable as far as getting people to change their votes, or persuadable in the sense of just getting them to turn out to vote. CTV is going to be a key factor there...because it has a much younger demographic than linear TV.”

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