



US Congressman Drove Constituency Engagement and Cost Efficiency

"The way people communicate is changing, and finding a landing page solution that could allow us to relate instantly was critical. Digital marketing is essential to our progress as a team, and ion's product and services are a significant part of that program's effectiveness. Thank you ion."



Franking: The right, typically granted to certain elected officials by the government, to send mail for free. An authorized person exercises the franking privilege by adding his or her signature or a facsimile to the upper right corner of a letter or parcel in lieu of a postage stamp.

Background

Michele Hickford, Director of Outreach for United States Congressman Allen West, loves her job. Love is a strong word – but one she uses frequently when discussing her role as lead manager for all constituent communication – or “Franking” as it’s called on Capitol Hill.

“What does postal mail have to do with landing page optimization?” you ask. That’s just where this story gets exciting.

Congressman Allen West has a busy communication plan for his constituents that includes progress updates on various initiatives, events, and general congressional communications.

These communications are traditionally managed through direct mail. But Michele Hickford, Director of Outreach for Congressman West and her team felt there was a more efficient and effective way to get in front of their audience.

“We thought long and hard about our mission and goals, and felt that digital communication was a strong and viable alternative to direct mail alone. Our reasoning was three-fold: cost efficiency, better performance visibility, and ecological soundness,” said Hickford.

The Challenge

How can we most efficiently and effectively communicate with constituents? While Members of Congress increasingly use email, online advertising is still in its infant stages and landing page optimization is virtually unheard of. *“Many Members of Congress are strong in terms of a social media presence, but hadn’t expanded into online marketing. We felt it was an opportunity for us to really interact with our community in a more significant way. While it required a bit of creative thinking on our side to ensure we complied with the established guidelines, we knew that if executed correctly, it would undoubtedly be the right direction for our team.”*

Once they determined their online strategy, Congressman West’s team chose ion’s landing page solution to help drive performance. *“If we were going to do this, we wanted to be extremely efficient and effective in our online marketing. That’s why we decided to utilize the ion product to drive increased performance. The ion solution provides a vehicle for communicating in a clear and relevant way. That relevancy meant more dollar efficiency, and was part of the reason Congressman West was able to return unspent funds from his allocated budget back to the United States Treasury in his first session,”* said Hickford.

The Solution

Congressman West’s team tested QR codes, mobile pages, imagery, segmentation and a number of online tactics in an effort to drive improved performance. Not only did they gain major spend efficiency but their investment in generating an optimized communications campaign and ongoing tools has been “an obvious success” Hickford says. One example she cited (found below) illustrates how they used ion’s testing tools to identify an image strategy that proved to be nearly 400% more effective than another.

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Image Matters

In mid-April, Congressman West's team introduced a tax survey campaign. When the campaign initially launched, it had an image of a "worried female." The campaign was performing at about a 5.56% conversion rate, significantly lower than previous campaigns. It was decided to pursue a test to determine if the imagery was causing the decline in performance. They pitted the image of the "worried female" against a picture of Congressman Allen West. After several days of testing, the "worried female" imagery auto-optimized out. The imagery of Congressman Allen West resonated more with the audience and led to uplift from 5.56% to 22.01% conversion – an increase of 396%.



Congressman Allen West
Representing the 22nd District of Florida

Do you support more taxes to reduce the deficit?

Congressman Allen West
Representing the 22nd District of Florida

Do you support more taxes to reduce the deficit?

A number of tax provisions are set to expire at the end of this year, and coupled with tax increases from the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act going into effect, Americans will be hit with the highest tax increase in history. Not just "millionaires and billionaires," but all of us. Do you think this is the right way forward?

It's time for your voice to be heard on Capitol Hill.
Please fill out this quick survey.

We should reform the tax code.
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

We should raise taxes in a recession.
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Federal spending cuts are better than tax increases.
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

I support more taxes.
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

First Name

Last Name

Email

ZIP Code

Would you like to receive periodic email updates from Congressman West?
☐ Yes! Sign me up.

Submit >

You may unsubscribe at any time, and your personal info will not be shared with anyone.
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What's in store for January 1, 2013? According to the Independent Tax Policy Center:

- If the Bush tax rates are allowed to expire, American's current tax brackets of 10% to 35% will rise to 15% to 39.6%.
- Capital gains will increase from 15% to a maximum of 25%. Stock dividends currently 15% will be taxed as ordinary income with a top rate of 43.4% (39.6% regular income, plus a 3.8% tax on investment income as part of the healthcare overhaul).
- The death tax exemption will shrink from \$5 million to \$1 million. Inherited assets exceeding that amount will be taxed at a maximum rate of 55% with a 5% surcharge on estates over \$10 million.

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Know Your Audience

Having insight into how your audience will engage is critical to a successful program. Hickford wanted to experiment with mobile optimization, but knew it was important to be focused in her approach. They ran targeted campaigns incorporating QR codes and found that while mothers used the codes, other audiences, such as seniors and veterans, did not.

Having insight into how your audience will engage is critical to a successful program. Not only does it help to communicate with your audience in a way that relates to them, but it also proves to be a much more efficient way to allocate spending.

This allowed the team to enhance the relatability of their campaigns by incorporating elements of specific interest to specific visitors.

Results

"The ability to test was amazing, and the results were clear," Hickford remarked. For the Congressman Allen West team, testing led to increased performance and provided a much more efficient use of funds. While enhancing communication, the team was able to:

- Improve reach. The digital program yielded 85% further reach, in part by adding sharing capabilities allowing content to go viral.
- Be reactive. Digital lends itself to a significant amount of flexibility in the ability to change content on the fly. Consistently improving landing experiences led to consistent and significant conversion improvement (not to mention the value of reducing paper consumption).
- Reduce costs per conversion. CPC were 50% less than print campaigns.
- Reduce costs per impression. CPI decreased a staggering 98%.
- Reduce costs per respondent. This cost, a significant indicator of budgetary success, decreased 48%.

Driving the right channels with a sophisticated landing page program was paramount to their success.

What's Next

Congressman West's team has proven itself a pioneer for leveraging these technologies to effectively communicate with their constituency. With such success, they have attracted the attention of other elected officials who are increasingly recognizing the benefits of communicating in this way, both for their own efficiency as well as having a more engaged citizenry. Hickford regularly reinforces the need to be good stewards of every dollar they spend. "Elected officials have an obligation to communicate regularly with constituents, and a duty to contain costs." Keep watch for how civic leaders continue incorporating landing page optimization into their overall communications strategies in the coming years.

"The way people communicate is changing, and finding a landing page solution that could allow us to relate instantly was critical. Digital marketing is essential to our progress as a team, and ion's product and services are a significant part of that program's effectiveness. Thank you ion," said Hickford.

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The Best Landing Pages Start with You. And LiveBall.

LiveBall is ion's web-based platform that empowers marketers to launch and test advanced landing pages without code or IT. If you're looking to grow your landing page program, check out these resources and find out how LiveBall can help.

Next steps for your landing pages:

If you want to stay up to-date on the latest online marketing trends and best practices, subscribe to the **ion landing page blog**.

Learn more about how you can improve your online marketing ROI by checking the free **webinars**, **white papers** and **presentations** in our library.

Join us for a **Live Demo** and see just how easy it is to use LiveBall to create conversion-focused landing pages.

Ready for more effective landing pages? **Let's talk LiveBall!**



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