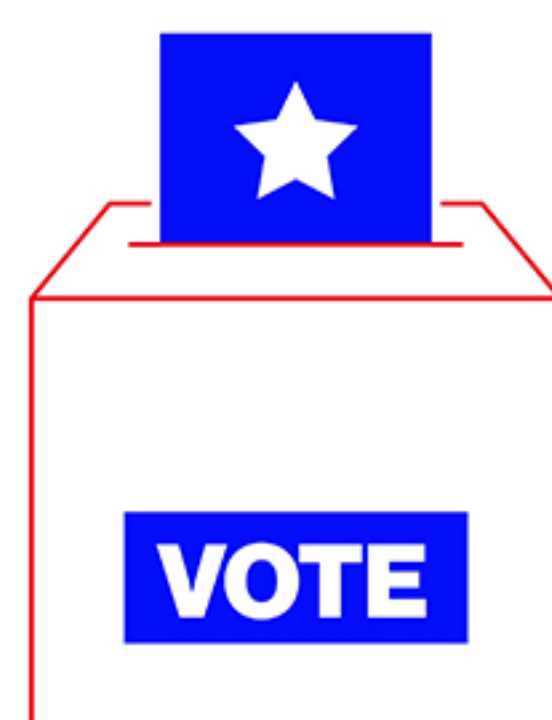


2022 US Midterm Election Trends

Demonstrate Insights Report



Demonstrate's US Midterm Insights

PART 1

The Clickbait of Our Union

A (brief) glimpse into the state of digital political discourse in 2022 — and how you can apply these insights to your brand's online presence.

A Digital State

Since 2016, the political sphere has dramatically shifted its presence from mainstream outlets to digital channels — in fact, in 2020, **53%** of online users relied on these channels for news updates and general discourse.¹

1. Pew Research Center, "More than eight-in-ten Americans get news from digital devices", 2021.

Stay(ing) On Line

Among these users, video-first platforms reigned supreme — with as many as **59%** turning to Facebook and Youtube to participate in civic outreach or engagement.²

2. Pew Research Center, "News Use Across Social Media Platforms in 2020", 2021

The Meme Economy

Increased platform use and new features begot new content styles. Creators viewed memes as the most effective way to share opinions and information with large audiences — and **35%** of online users reported themselves "very likely" to reshare this content on their own pages.³

3. Frontiers, "Internet Memes: Leaflet Propaganda of the Digital Age", 2020

Digital Canvassing

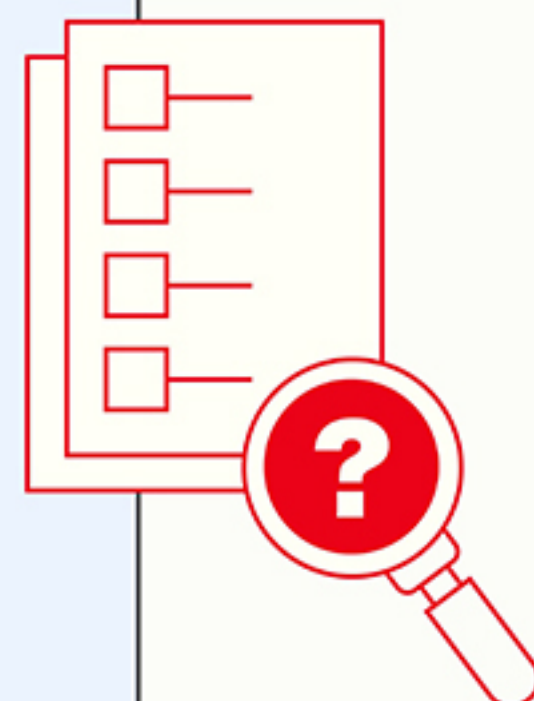
On top of organic online engagement, the rise of influencers are rendering door-to-door canvassing almost obsolete. The percentage of political groups using influencers to target voters before election day has grown exponentially since 2020.⁴

4. Teen Vogue, "Political Groups Are Paying Influencers to Spread Partisan Messaging", 2021

The Takeaway

Major digital platforms are fully aware of the shift towards political discourse online — and as the 2022 US Midterm Election approaches, they will likely take steps to protect their users from political tension.

This ultimately means that brands will need to adjust their digital strategies to cut through the noise, and continue to reach their audiences in a timely manner.



The Midterm Election's Short Term Impact On Your Social Channels

Brace your socials. Past election cycles have impacted social platforms in unexpected ways... and your brand should be prepared as we enter another.

Hashtags, ad spend, and election divisions

During the 2020 election, social platforms had to invent new ways of slowing the spread of political misinformation. As a start, entire election divisions were created at companies like Meta — and both organic and paid social algorithms began to shift.

Organic Obstacles

Social channels like Twitter and Meta severely limited organic reach across all keywords and posts on the platform prior to, during, and well after the 2020 election — a phenomenon many users and brands refer to as a “shadowban”.

Paid Problems

There has also been a significant increase in political ad spend during this midterm cycle — **+184%** over the last 3 months, compared to the same time period in 2018's midterm cycle.⁵

5. FOX Business, "Political ad spending soaring in this year's midterm election", 2022

In that time, social platforms have heavily reinforced their guards to fight against misinformation, especially around the election dates — so a drop in paid reach and engagement may be expected around then.

The Takeaway

A downward trend in both organic and paid reach is to be expected during the upcoming election cycle... and while there may not be a whole lot of solutions

to circumvent the restrictions imposed by social platforms, here are **three things** your brand CAN do to maximize its reach.

Post notifications.

Ensure your brand's followers never miss a post by encouraging them to enable post notifications.

Hashtags.

Avoid hashtag fatigue and potential shadowbanning by varying the hashtags your brand uses in posts.

Experiment.

Utilize new platform features as they roll out to continue engaging your audience.

HOW TO

Manage When You're (Community) Managing During An Election Year

To post... or not to post? What to post? And what should you do post-post? Here are a few things to consider when approaching community management during an election cycle.

The Call Is Coming From Outside The House

+184% of marketing leaders feel compelled to have their brands "speak up" during major political and cultural events — believing that these conversations lead to positive coverage and increased conversions for their brand.

And these marketing leaders are onto something — because over **50%** of Americans consider a brand's moral values before purchasing products and services from them. ⁶

6. Loyalty Science Lab, "How to Make Brand Activism Work", 2020

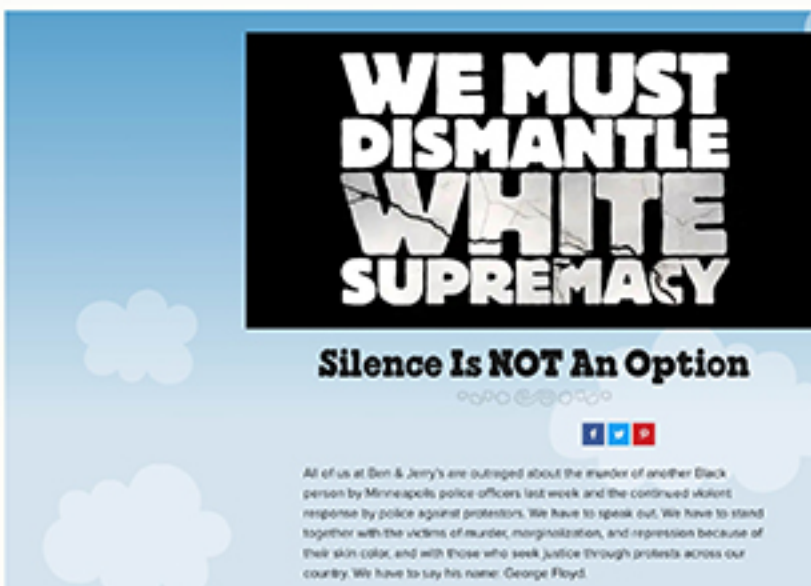
Sometimes It's Okay To Say Nothing

But these stats don't always indicate that a change in strategy is needed. While consumers do appreciate a brand's acknowledgement and action over real-world events and important issues, political fatigue is real — and consumers will opt out of a brand's funnel if their social messaging feels overwhelming. ⁷

7. Business 2 Community, "Marketing in an Election Year", 2020

Best-In-Class

When it comes to socio-political messaging, it's very possible for brands to alienate their consumers with bad messaging... but with that being said, some brands manage to always get it right.



The Takeaway

Brands choosing to engage in digital discourse this November (and beyond) should consider their mission and community as they shape

messaging authentic to both the brand and its consumers. ⁸ Here are a few best practices to follow while crafting a brand's strategy.

8. Planoly, "How to Respond to Current Events on Social Media", 2021

Entice.

Find common ground between your brand and potential followers through expansive community outreach — and **build value from there.**

Educate.

Share information with your audience that falls in line with your brand's niche — for example, climate action for "outdoor" brands, or food insecurity for food and beverage brands. This gives your brand's messaging **a sense of authenticity that is built on established authority in the subject at hand.**

Engage.

What's important to your customer? This is an opportunity to make your digital channels a collaborative and vibrant community, as opposed to a media page — so, **find opportunities to engage in REAL conversations relevant to your niche, and take all feedback in stride.**