



# 10 Standout leaders in 2017

**Jane St. John**  
WRITER

Our goal at NationBuilder is to remove as many barriers as possible that prevent people from leading. The ten stories captured here, while diverse in focus, sector, and geography, share one theme: accomplishing the unexpected. From building a distributed political party infrastructure overnight and electing the youngest president of France, to turning text outreach into a full-scale search, rescue, and relief effort in Houston after Hurricane Harvey—these leaders made history. Here we share what they accomplished and how they did it.

**31**

days

**378**nations  
built**359**candidates  
elected

*In a single month, President Emmanuel Macron empowered hundreds of candidates to build a party from the ground up, win 350 seats in Parliament, and shift the dynamics of French politics.*

# La République En Marche

Building a winning party  
from scratch

When Emmanuel Macron won the French Presidency with an inspiring 66.1% of the vote in May 2017, he made history in more ways than one. Not only was he the youngest candidate to ever to take this office in France; he was the only one to do so from outside of the established left and right parties that had dominated for decades—and the first to find himself tasked with building a party from scratch that could campaign and gain ground in

Parliament, almost immediately. This would be a tall order even for a veteran politician, but it fell to the youngest French President and leader of the newly formed La République En Marche (LREM), who would prove capable of creating a seismic political shift in a single month.

As our partners at Tectonica, designers of En Marche's NationBuilder websites, pointed out in a recent case study, at

any other point in history this challenge might have been insurmountable. What Macron had at his disposal—in addition to the optimism, active participation, and appetite for change of the French people—were sophisticated digital tools to organize and synchronize campaign efforts across the party that could be set up and deployed in a matter of days.

As a platform, NationBuilder was able to facilitate the party's start-up style of "big organizing," allowing them to rapidly create a consistent digital infrastructure across campaigns while distributing leadership, so the party's hundreds of candidates from diverse backgrounds, disciplines, and points on the political spectrum could each run things their own way and remain united under the En Marche banner.

Working with a customer to launch such an expansive network in such a condensed time frame was also a first for the NationBuilder team. The goal? Set up approximately 400 nations, equipping each nation with an initial supporter list of geographically tagged voters who'd opted into communications and a host of action-focused web and email templates ready to customize, share, activate volunteers, and drum up grassroots support—by May 24. It was May 11.

So, in close communication and partnership with En Marche, our Data Services team got to work, knowing that each nation's setup would be complete and ready to customize in less than an hour. Over the next two weeks, we created candidates' digital campaign hubs batch by batch, in groups ranging from thirty to over 100 at a time. By the

time their goal date arrived, roughly 400 nations were up, running, and working toward victory in the June 11 legislative election.

All told, La République En Marche won 359 seats, a decisive majority of the 577-member National Assembly. LREM's historic victory proves that it's possible for leaders everywhere to create change faster and on a grander scale than ever before.

***"It's possible for leaders everywhere to create change faster and on a grander scale than ever before"***

As Toni Cowan-Brown, our VP of European Business Development, concisely put it, "This is digital organizing at its best, and speed will increasingly be a decisive factor for campaigns of the future."

*[LREM] had huge goals, and they did everything they could to reach them. But by being so ambitious, they managed to actually get something very big done. Instead of saying, "we're going to provide all that the candidates need and talk to them one by one," they distributed everything and thought in terms of hundreds instead of dozens. It was amazing to see how effective it was.*

*It was critical for them to excel at promoting this infrastructure, especially because there were so many candidates and not everyone had a huge staff that would be able to handle everything internally. So, they put together a team of people who could support the installation process across their many nations, and because they had this team, they could quickly communicate with us when they noticed anything we could change or help them with. They were really well-organized, and their team structure was a part of what led them to success.*

**Flore Blondel-Goupil**  
Enterprise Account Manager

## Partner Credits

DESIGN &  
FRONT-END DEVELOPMENT

TECTONICA



over  
**\$1**  
million  
raised

**14**  
point increase  
in support

**46**  
parliament  
seats won

*The New Zealand Labour party paired a strong digital infrastructure with a resounding message to beat their fundraising goals and rally a nation around their new leader.*

# Jacinda Ardern

## becoming New Zealand's youngest female prime minister

A mere two months after Jacinda Ardern became the youngest-ever leader of New Zealand's Labour Party, she became the country's youngest Prime Minister in 150 years, and its youngest female PM, ever. Her rise was so meteoric that it earned a proper name: Jacindamania.

To understand the factors behind this phenomenon, we connected with Andrew Burns, the certified NationBuilder architect on New Zealand Labour's digital team, who leads their email program and website development.

According to Burns, though they started with modest expectations, the

campaign outreach took on a decidedly different scope once former Labour leader Andrew Little resigned and Jacindamania took hold. "We were actually blown away by how successful we were in the end," he says. "[For her] to become the deputy leader of the party in March, to becoming the Leader at the start of August, and going on to become the Prime Minister by the end



time she ascended to Labour leadership, Burns and team had created the infrastructure to make the most of her natural momentum.

As Burns sees it, "Building the infrastructure—then using it well—is the most important thing you can do to succeed. We did have lots of people sign up for our list and express interest in joining our movement when Jacinda became the leader, but the majority of the upswing in the fundraising and volunteer space came directly from the people we had already brought on and been working with over the past three years. If you don't have a Jacinda, you still have to build the infrastructure to succeed. Because you can still succeed."

of October—being featured on the world stage alongside Trudeau, Abe, and other world leaders—it's been absolutely incredible to watch and actually be a part of."

Of course, much of that unexpected success came from their leader's unique connection to voters, specifically, "her ability to communicate with people and talk in an open and honest way that [didn't] sound like a traditional politician." Not only did voters believe in her vision for the country, they believed what she had to say and trusted her authenticity. Fortunately for the party, by the



Having established that solid ladder of engagement, NZ Labour was able to beat their fundraising goals in a matter of weeks. "There were times when we were like, 'we're just not going to make it,'" Burns says. "But, the day that she became Leader and within forty-eight hours, we raised over \$200,000. Within that whole first month, we raised more than our original target for the year." Eventually NZ Labour raised over \$1 million online in 2017—more than double their initial fundraising target.

Now that Labour has begun creating a government under Ardern's leadership, her team has every intention of keeping the same open relationship with her constituency and the world at large. Burns says, "We're trying to do videos on her social media most days, where she actually talks to people about what's going on. From the comments people are posting on our videos, they really appreciate that and find it to be a fresh and exciting way for the

government to communicate with them about what it's doing."



## Partner Credits

DESIGN &  
FRONT-END DEVELOPMENT

ANDREW BURNS



*After an innovative, memorable, and unifying campaign, the New Democratic Party made history by electing Jagmeet Singh as the first person of color to lead a national party in Canada.*

# Jagmeet Singh

Leading a national party with love and courage

Last September, a video made the social media rounds as an example of how to diffuse tension in the face of an angry heckler. In it, Jagmeet Singh, then an Ontario MPP and a leadership candidate for Canada's New Democratic Party, responds to a screaming woman who has rushed at him, interrupting his town hall meeting, with the following refrain: "We welcome you, we support you, we love you." When she eventually leaves the stage, Singh reassures those gathered that, "Growing up as a brown-skinned, turbaned, bearded man, I've faced things like this before . . . There's going to be other obstacles we're going to face, and we're going to face them with love and courage."

**54%**

of votes in  
first ballot

**47k**

new NDP member  
sign-ups

**38%**

of the members  
eligible to vote

*It's rare to, as a political candidate or party, truly distribute leadership and give people the tools to take your story and run with it on your behalf. He actually did that, embodied it, and united people from across different political spectrums and organizations—and he won because of the community that they pulled together.*

The Brampton, Ontario event may have been the most famous “JagMeet and Greet” of the election cycle, but it was emblematic of the radically inclusive approach Singh and his team employed throughout the campaign—an approach that would ultimately lead them to a decisive victory and make Jagmeet Singh the first person of color to be elected

leader of a major Canadian political party.

The spirit of inclusion extended to the campaign’s digital presence as well, as our partners at cStreet highlighted in a recent blog post. Before Singh had even announced his candidacy, his team was busy building a NationBuilder site in partnership with cStreet and other innovative architects from the NationBuilder ecosystem. “We helped the campaign set up their site with landing pages that capture email addresses and phone numbers before going to the membership page,” says cStreet Co-Founder and CEO Amy Leaman. “This allowed them to follow up with anyone who started the process but didn’t complete it, while educating them on the voting process at the same time.” And, bringing it all together was a digital

infrastructure they could trust with their database while their campaign picked up speed.

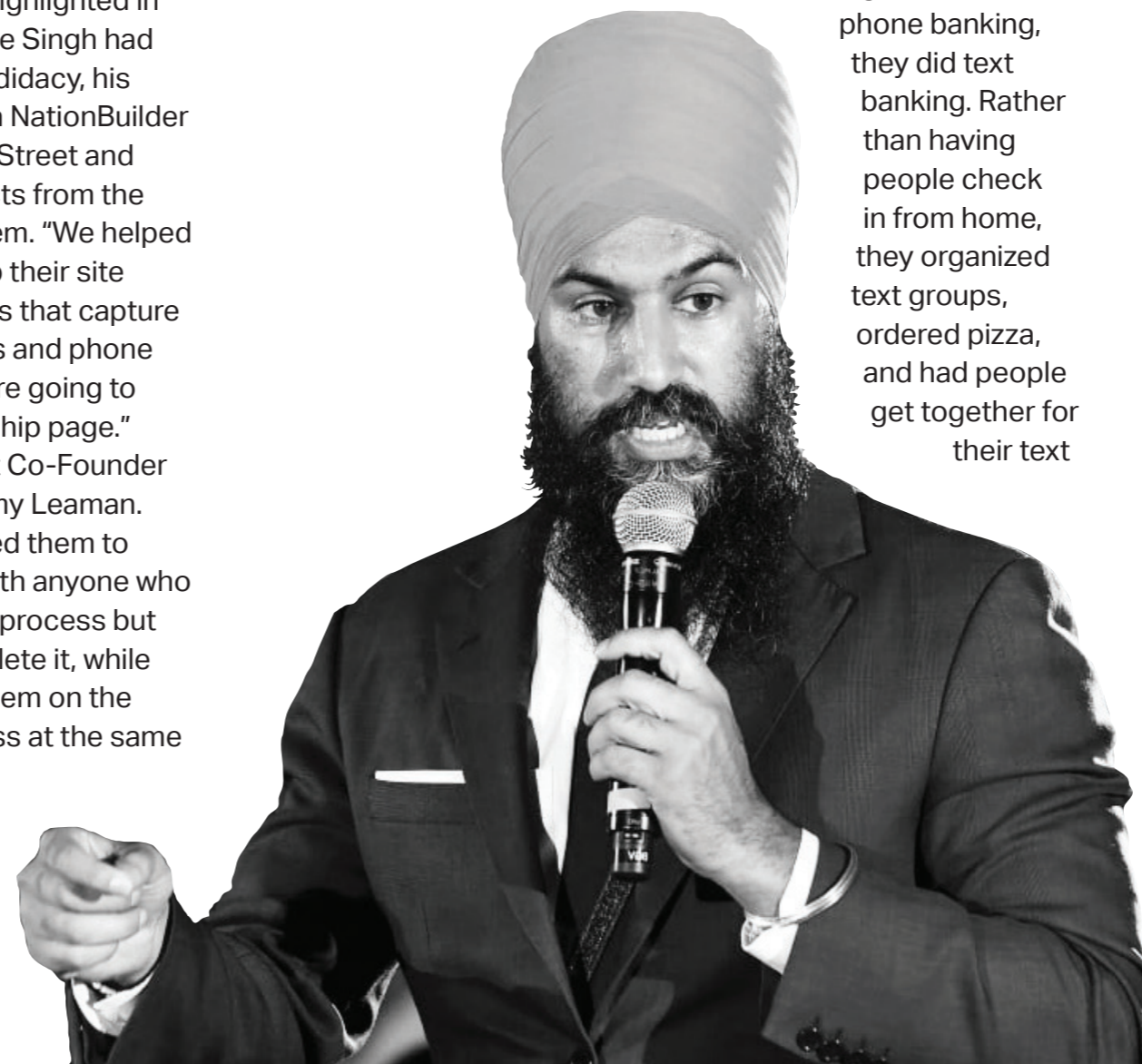
To move so quickly and efficiently, Singh’s team leveraged tools of the trade used by tech companies as well as political campaigns. Here’s how it looked from the perspective of Victoria Cross, Customer Success Manager at NationBuilder. “All of a sudden, they went from zero to sixty. A cutting-edge digital strategy that pulled together NationBuilder, Hustle, and Slack enabled the campaign to go all in on grassroots community engagement. They met people where they were at in many different ways, providing multiple ways for people to engage.

For instance, instead of doing traditional phone banking, they did text banking. Rather than having people check in from home, they organized text groups, ordered pizza, and had people get together for their text



**Nader Mohamed**  
NDP DIGITAL DIRECTOR

*Our NationBuilder nation was in so many ways the central hub of our digital strategy. It powered our ability to harness the momentum we built over the course of the campaign, across platforms and tools. Whether it was our use of Hustle, Slack, or any of the tools we used, we relied on our nation to be the main processor of our incoming data, and also our record of truth during the get out the vote (GOTV) phase. We knew that the only way we were going to win was to sign up tens of thousands of new members, and that would require us to organize and process an incredible amount of new data. But, it also required us to ensure our digital points of entry were tied to data workflows that were as automated as possible, and served our purposes. So using paths, drip emails, and other features to move volunteers on to Slack, or get new supporters connected to their regional organizers—NationBuilder allowed us to move many people, quickly, to meet our goals.*





**Jusleen Kaur Sodiwal**  
NB ENTERPRISE ACCOUNT MGR.

*I had the unique experience of working with Jagmeet’s team at the very beginning of his campaign when I was a NationBuilder Organizer, then, later, as an Enterprise Account Manager at the close of his historic race.*

*What was most memorable to me was in one of his victory speeches, when he talked about how, and with good intention, some people would say, ‘you’re not going to win unless you shorten your name or edit the way you look.’ He didn’t do any of that. Instead of going on the defensive, he tested assumptions and welcomed everyone into the fold.*

*It’s powerful to see him succeed while staying true to who he is. In the Sikh faith, there is the concept of the saint-soldier. You defend and fight for the rights of others before your own, even if they’ve done the opposite to you. In embracing the whole of his community—not just those who agreed—his campaign personified that belief.*

message shifts.

While the tech had a huge impact, Jagmeet’s campaign did two other things incredibly well: it put people at the center and leaned into the controversial nature of his candidacy. It’s rare to, as a political candidate or party, truly distribute leadership and give people the tools to take your story and run with it on your behalf. He actually did that, embodied it, and united people from across different political spectrums and organizations—and he won because of the community that they pulled together. He also had a strong personal story, proudly owned it, and, importantly, gave supporters the resources to share it in their own communities.”

In a recent Instagram post with musician Post Malone, Singh shared that he listened to the artist’s song “Congratulations” every day for the duration of the race. The reason? “Something about the bravado laced

confidence of the track touched on the spirit of our campaign. We were setting out to achieve something that had not been

achieved in the history of our country. It takes a little bravado to do that.”



## Partner Credits

**FIELD ORGANIZING**

**HUSTLE**

**DESIGN & FRONT-END DEVELOPMENT**

**C-STREET**



# Lone Star Veterans Association

Harnessing community for  
post-Harvey relief

**9k**

veterans & civilians  
connected

**60**

rescues  
performed

**284**

muck-outs  
performed

In early October, someone emailed our Support team with a link to his self-published LinkedIn article telling an incredible story: that of a veterans affinity group who turned a post-hurricane text outreach into a full-scale search, rescue, and relief effort for the Houston community they'd served for years. That person was Kevin Doffing,

Executive Director at the Lone Star Veterans Association, and what he accomplished during the two weeks that his organization ran an impromptu hurricane response call center was inspiring. With 150 calls per day (at a 90% response rate), they'd managed to contact more than 9,000 members of their community, deploy more than 200 volunteers, perform sixty rescues, and almost 300 muck-outs of flooded homes. Here's a snippet of the conversation we had with Doffing about his organization and the work ahead.

**Jane St. John:** Since you've already done such a great job of chronicling the work your organization did in the wake of Harvey, I'd like to get a sense of your goals and what your day-to-day work looks like.

**Kevin Doffing:** Our organization is based around servicing the new generation of veterans, what we commonly in the industry call post-9/11, veterans who have left the service after the towers fell and were originally Iraq and Afghan vets . . . The intent of the organization is about building community. So where NationBuilder works out really great is that we have this functional, decentralized leadership model of getting our leaders out into the field and working with people and running their own events, so it's similar to canvassing and creating different advocacy campaigns. We've seen a lot of really great traction, and the vision of the organization is to be an alumni network for veterans, so we're the new unit when you leave the military. We focus on advancing careers and strengthening families, and we do that in a very fun, positive, and inclusive way. We operate the state's only veteran LGBT group, the city's only veterans' spouse group, the city's only veteran entrepreneur group, and veteran Christian group. It's a very diverse group, but I think of it as one tent, many tribes.

As long as we're all focused on these positive images of veterans. My original draw to the organization was the fact that I didn't tell people

I was a veteran because there were really two images of veterans out there, and there still kind of are today: that veterans have to be either charity cases that all have PTSD, or they have to be some kind of war hero. Neither one is true, but there weren't examples of being really great business owners, parents, friends, community leaders, or executives. What I liked about LSVA was that it challenged that notion and promoted a lot of really positive engagement in the community with veterans, not as resource consumers, but resource providers.

We all have this shared experience of military service, but one brushstroke doesn't paint any of us. I'm probably not a great example of inclusivity as a middle class, six-foot-two white guy, but the military is actually a perfect cross-section. It's such a unifier, and we're able to go into deeper relationships and conversations immediately, just through our veterans [staff]. Then you start tying in other affinities, like the ones I've mentioned, or even professional affinities—we have a veterans group in energy, real estate, financial services, and we're looking at human resources. Because most people strongly identify through their profession, we're able to reach really meaningful relationships and engagements in a much expedited fashion that way.

**JSJ:** After the work you did in the Harvey recovery effort, what's next? How have you been building on the momentum you created?

**KD:** We have this big, vetted database of people who are in need, and every time I think, ok, we did a call center for two weeks, there's an established disaster recovery effort in place, let's just hand off, we're seeing that with Harvey, the need exceeds the capacity of existing organizations. Even as I'm like, "we're done with that, we're back to community-building and running socials and all these different things," [we'll have] an anonymous donor reach out and give us a six figure donation to do financial assistance, another donor giving a five-figure donation. We're funneling applicants to those opportunities because, at first it's like, the rescues are done, but now we need to do muck-outs; then the muck-outs are done, but now they need drywall; then they have drywall, but they need furniture; now they have furniture, but they're almost bankrupt because they were living in an apartment at the same time they were paying a mortgage.

We've seen this constant evolution of need as we peel back that [means it's] going to take months, if not years, of working with our members—both veteran and civilian—who were impacted. There are times where people that were in medium- to higher-income groups are devastated, but disaster relief organizations are focused on lower incomes. So, there's people who need help, and there's also a mental health and welfare piece that's being ignored if you're in that middle class. We're trying to make sure that, regardless of income level, people aren't left behind. So, it's challenging. When I see people we've known for years who have been



devastated and won't ask for help—they'll talk to us because we've been engaged in their life as community-builders for the better part of a decade—almost break down in tears about how

*. . . I see people we've known for years who have been devastated and won't ask for help—they'll talk to us because we've been engaged in their life as community-builders for the better part of a decade . . .*



**150**  
average outbound  
calls

**90%**  
outbound calls  
answered

they'd never asked for anything but needed to, and couldn't, that's melted my frozen heart. We're pursuing that more and more.

**JSJ:** It sounds like you built some really great relationships with volunteers during the time you were running the call center. How are those relationships evolving and what are the ways that you want to continue to mobilize them?

**KD:** We're getting a lot more volunteers, and the thing I try to drive people to is the financial assistance. It's where people want to make an investment in the organization, but I try to explain that it's a need, it's not an investment, because if you're going to give me \$10,000, I'm going to put \$10,000 back out there. I've already expended the time and energy vetting and assessing so that I can go back to someone and say, "Look, fill this out, send some pictures, I'll send you a check." We've already done the work in an unvarnished sense, but the reason the organization has been able to do what we've done is because of the years of community-building and trust that we've been able to engender in the veteran population, which is

typically a very untrusting population. Having a 90% call rate is largely dependent on the fact that we did text blasts, which we never really touched on before. Typically you have a 10% answer rate, if that.

I've seen a lot more volunteer engagement, and I think we're going to be able to build out our affinity group program faster. We asked for an eighteen-month commitment with about six to seven hours of volunteering per month from our volunteer leaders, which is a great opportunity for them to exercise those leadership skills. We also funnel them into other organizations in the city, like Project Blueprint or Leadership Houston, which now fulfills our vision of promoting people as leaders-comma-veterans, not veteran leaders. It's going to be interesting when I have time to breathe and sit back and reflect on what all the long-term impact on volunteerism this has.

I was really worried during all this, when I would take a breath during the call center, and just think: 66% of our revenue comes in the fourth quarter, and 10% of our revenue comes from one golf tournament that is currently under

four feet of water. The golf tournament was a month away, and I was like, "Are we going to survive this?" [I wrote] the LinkedIn article, [sent] it out, and am trying to do a better job telling our story, because the thing that I found once I got into the day-to-day is that I was amazed with what the organization had done that I never even knew about in three years on the board. There were success stories that just weren't being captured, organized, and messaged in a tight narrative. I've already seen with this and a few other things, [that] I've got two other media interviews, some random donations, and somebody wanting to fund us. I was worried about how our development was going to happen, but it's like, "Oh, we just need to tell people the good things we're doing."

None of this would have happened if we didn't use NationBuilder. Being able to map out and turf cut and capture notes, have multiple sign-ins . . . The fact that [profiles are] tied to people's social media accounts and we tag people as they attend events [meant that] we had a history before we even called someone for the first time. Even if they texted in, "Hey, I need help," we could go back and go, "Ok, they've been



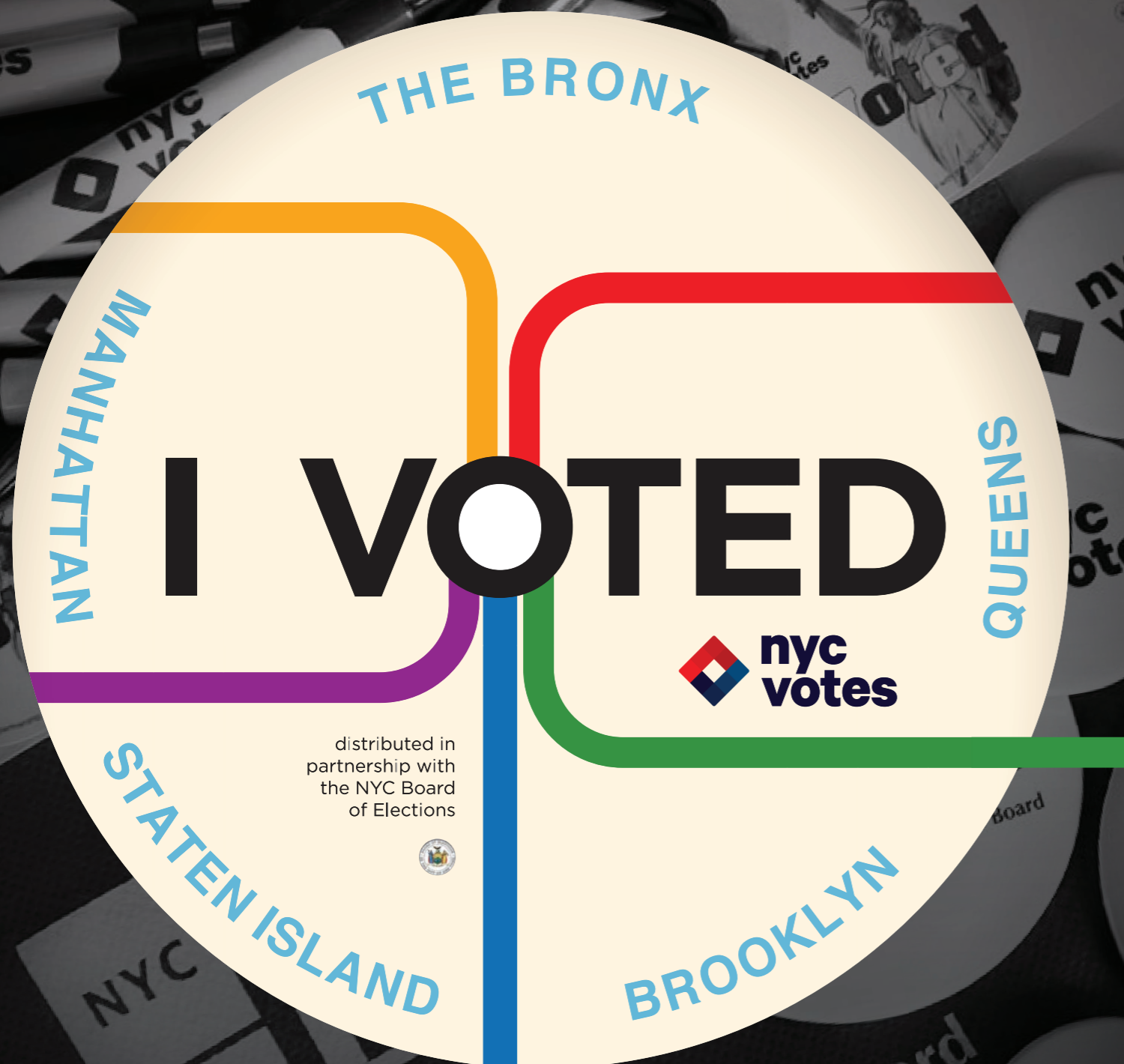
attending events in Southeast Houston, we know that's been hit hard; it looks like their address is from when they got out of the military in Nebraska but they're obviously living in Southeast Houston, let's make sure we update this." There's so many facets of the program that we use that we couldn't have done with other systems.

It just makes sense; the software just makes sense for what we do.

**512**  
volunteers  
signed-up

**216**  
volunteers  
deployed

**5.2k**  
volunteers hours  
coordinated



**9.3k+**

GOTV  
calls

**2.1k**

email  
sign-ups

**1k+**

text  
opt-ins

*The New York Campaign Finance Board used an inquisitive, data-driven approach to inform, engage, register, and drive voters to participate in the important election for NYC mayor.*

# NYC Votes

## Boosting civic engagement for local elections

If you happen to have New Yorkers in your social media feeds, you may have noticed a recurring image in posts from November 7, 2017: a boldly designed “I voted” sticker inspired by the iconic New York subway map and emblazoned with the logo of NYC Votes. As an initiative of the New York City Campaign Finance Board, NYC Votes dedicates itself to voter education and engagement—for instance, mailing voter guides to all 4.5 million eligible voters, running debates for citywide officials, rallying volunteers to make GOTV phone calls, registering new voters, and advocating in the state capitol for election reforms to make it easier for New Yorkers to vote. The eye-catching sticker and accompanying

social media push was one of several successful engagement strategies the organization used to inform and attract citizens they hadn’t reached before and drive a younger turnout for New York’s mayoral election.

A year ago, the Public Affairs team at the CFB was reaching out to its audience mostly through one-to-one communications that were being tracked in a number of places—important interactions in the field might be added to an Excel spreadsheet, while key public relations conversations might happen within Facebook, leaving team members responsible for keeping track of larger and larger data sets as

their efforts grew. Heading into the 2017 election, they needed a way to centralize their database and create efficient communication channels to get the right information to the right voters in time to make an impact.

As Amanda Melillo, the CFB's Deputy Director of Public Affairs, recalls, "We felt like there was an impetus that we had to look for ways to communicate with voters in the ways they want to hear from us. What we hear from people all the time is that they are just starving for information, but that doesn't mean they want to spend a day hunting it down. They really want it delivered to them and tailored and personalized, and they want it in their inbox, they want it on their phone. So we had voters for a long time saying, 'we want an email program. We want text message alerts from you.'"

After signing on at the end of 2016, they started using NationBuilder in full force in July of last year. "We did a lot of up-front work to really think through how we want to engage people, what outcomes we want to see," Melillo says. "We spent a lot of time talking through: what are the different paths we should

be creating, what does our universe look like, how do we want to engage people? Then, once we got that nailed down, we spent a lot of time thinking, 'ok, what's our acquisition strategy? How are we going to get people to sign up with us? Once we have them in the door, what are we going to be sending them?' So we spent a lot of time planning, and [we've] really [started] to see that pay off."

Among those early "payoffs" were email open rates upwards of 45% along with healthy click-throughs and engagement with the weekly content they shared. Notably, the content that performed best wasn't always as straightforward as they expected. Melillo says, "We have this feature called Voters of New York on Facebook and Twitter and Instagram, where we post voter profiles and talk about their story and why voting is important to them. People tend to like that and connect to it in a personal way, so we're just thinking of more creative ideas to appeal to people and get them engaged beyond the nuts and bolts information that we're getting in their hands."

Recognizing the importance of data



**VOTE**  
FOR THE CITY YOU WANT.  
November 7

in decision-making, they also made the most of each outreach opportunity by rigorously testing their content and messaging, constantly questioning how they could improve their communications. This led to some informative surprises about what performed best and provided value to voters—for instance, "Know Your Vote," a weekly blog feature aggregating news clips about under-covered races for City Council and Borough President.

Within a few months they had doubled their number of volunteers, and once they began their GOTV effort in earnest, they were able to host their most successful phone banking event ever, mobilizing as many as eighty volunteers per day to make more than 9,300 calls over the course of four days. To sum it up, Melillo says, "Using NationBuilder, we were able to recruit new volunteers,

*We were able to recruit new volunteers, make more GOTV phone calls than ever before, and provide individualized help to voters . . . We were also able to e-mail voters important resources before Election Day, and for the first time, send text reminders to urge them to get to the polls."*

make more GOTV phone calls than ever before, and provide individualized help to voters who wanted to know their polling location or get an absentee ballot. We were also able to email voters important resources before Election Day, and, for the first time, send text reminders to urge them to get to the polls."

**VOTE**  
FOR THE CITY YOU WANT.



Partner Credits

**SOCIAL  
ENGAGEMENT**

**ACTIONSPROUT**



**4.6**

million emails  
sent

**93%**

drop in  
unsubscribes

*AllSaints harnessed NationBuilder to find a collaborative solution to a challenge all high-end brands face: how do you build mass email campaigns as expertly targeted as they are beautiful?*

# AllSaints

## Strengthening customer relationships, one email at a time

For any leading brand in the competitive fashion retail space, spot-on creative direction and aesthetic consistency are critical. Often, the tools brands use to understand their audience are very different from the ones they use to create the stunning visuals employed to highlight their products. In order to reach their goal of using email marketing to boost sales, the AllSaints team needed to manage their email program and database all in one place, without sacrificing the look and feel they'd worked to create.

NationBuilder's Implementation Manager Jeff Dunne took on the process of adapting AllSaints' existing email designs into readymade templates they could store, mix, and match

depending on desired content, region, and gender breakdown of recipients. He says, "They now have these emails stashed away as a starting point, with placeholder images, documented



*They're always thinking in that campaigning mindset of: what's the action that we need people to take? Why should people open the email in the first place?*

resolution sizes, and sample text they can edit for their copy. They start on one of those, clone the email, customize it, and that's how they get around the design challenge."

Of course, with what they're aiming to achieve in the long run, the look is only a small part of it. "Every day of the year they're sending emails to increase their open rate and click-through rate, and they're always thinking in that campaigning mindset of: what's the action that we need people to take? Why should people open the email in the first place?" Toni Cowan-Brown, NationBuilder's VP of European Business Development

says. "It's thinking about what other types of emails we can send, write, or put together that get people excited. Then we can start looking at different subgroups of people—for instance, the stylists signed up to your newsletter who may spend a fortune with you but you don't know exist in your database—and put them into effective email programs."

What began as an effort to identify AllSaints shoppers near new and soon-to-open stores, turned into a sophisticated targeting approach that would impact their entire database and email strategy. As they looked at the data they'd gathered and prepared

*It's thinking about what other types of emails we can send, write, or put together that get people excited. Then we can start looking at different subgroups of people—for instance, the stylists signed up to your newsletter who may spend a fortune with you but you don't know exist in your database—and put them into effective email programs.*

personalized email blasts about store launch events, it became clear that the tangible insights they'd gained could benefit many more of their email campaigns if they could manage their communications, and not only their database, within NationBuilder.

According to Cowan-Brown, "Their major work was to move away from sending one big bulk newsletter to the whole database and start getting much more targeted and tailored. They went through the exercise of dividing by region for US versus Europe, then different regions in Europe, then between men and women. The idea was to do a slow progression, getting more and more personalized with their email program."

With a solid process in place and an ongoing effort to sync valuable purchase information with NationBuilder

profiles well underway, AllSaints are positioned to create the kind of personalized relationships with the people in their database that only the world's most beloved brands can achieve.





*Apex Clean Energy is leveraging a powerful network and strategic digital outreach to advocate for renewable energy—overcoming organized opposition and paving the way for a growing number of successful wind projects.*

# Apex Clean Energy

## Forging a path for wind farms around the US and Canada

**67**

nations created

across

**18**

states & provinces

**7.5gw**

of renewables by 2020

With at least fifty active projects in development across dozens of states and around 220 people in its employ, Apex Clean Energy is fiercely taking the lead in developing wind power across the United States. In some ways, there's never been a better time for this emerging industry—prices are low, it's easy to stay competitive, and companies like Apex are seeing more and more interest—not only from utility companies, but also from tech

giants like Facebook and Google; major corporations like Ikea; and the military, all looking to invest in renewable energy. For so many, it just makes sense.

That's part of what drew Dahvi Wilson, Apex's Public Affairs Director, to this line of work in the first place. "My professional background is varied, but at every step, I've sought to do work that supports communities and our environment," she says. "How do we



make change, how do we make our society more sustainable? How do we promote a more responsible relationship with the natural world?" Those questions led her to pursue work in environmental education, policy, academia, strategic engagement, and politics before carving out a niche in wind energy. She notes, "I was interested in getting into the renewable space because I think promoting renewable energy is going to make a big difference in our nation's sustainability. What was really interesting to me, coming from the government and nonprofit sectors, was that participating in the business of renewable energy offers an opportunity to help us do the right thing in a way that also makes clear financial sense."

The attractiveness of this idea isn't lost on Apex's competitors, either. As the popularity of wind and other renewables has grown, so has the organized opposition from more established energy sources. Launching a new wind project in a new community requires skill at countering misinformation,

activating supporters, and utilizing a variety of digital and non-digital strategies to be accessible to those with questions, in addition to traditional press outreach and marketing efforts. "It's actually very challenging work right now and it's

teaching us to get smarter about organizing. We have to turn out our supporters and find ways to keep them engaged for years. It's hard to manage all of these people and campaigns in so many places, and we've found that we need a tool capable of helping us do it," Wilson says.

That's where NationBuilder, Enterprise Account Manager Sorcha Rochford, and a rigorous digital strategy come into play. To drive community outreach and government support on each project, Apex's Public Affairs team employs a six-point approach. They work hard to identify supporters, keeping track of their progress in their NationBuilder database; they activate those supporters by establishing a good ladder of engagement and identifying defined actions supporters can take; they build relationships with government officials as well as local media, actively reporting and documenting their communications; they maintain a positive presence in the community through their website, social media accounts, local philanthropy, and participation in community events and meetings; and, finally, they share compelling local messaging about their

***"We need to get smart about organizing and we need to figure out how to activate our supporters, because there's a real battle going on. We need to find ways to use tools like NationBuilder if that's what it takes to be able to effectively organize."***

projects via regular email and texting campaigns.

This all happens across more than fifty nations, with the help of as many as forty project developers in addition to Wilson's mighty team of ten. In the past year, they've worked together to commercialize projects in Iowa, Texas, and South Dakota—in addition to delivering the largest renewable energy project serving the US Army at Fort Hood, Texas. In the case of

Upland Prairie Wind in Iowa, Apex sold the project to large-scale utility company Alliant Energy, the outcome of a successful public affairs campaign to secure important permits and approvals from multiple county boards, even in the face of local opposition.

At each project, the Apex team works to integrate the lessons they have learned elsewhere to enhance their future success. One of its early-stage projects in Michigan is an excellent example





of this approach. Of Apex's progress on the Isabella Wind project, Wilson says, "We started our outreach early, and we've been working to execute our six-point campaign strategy very comprehensively there. We're using NationBuilder to keep track of all our communication and connection to key stakeholders and community members, and that's been really exciting because it shows what we can do. So far it's been

a great model for us to employ on our other projects. When we build these databases early and use them to keep a record of all our relationships in a community over time, we can maintain steady momentum, work more efficiently as a team, and, ultimately, be more effective on the ground."

Drawing the distinction between her team's campaign strategy and more

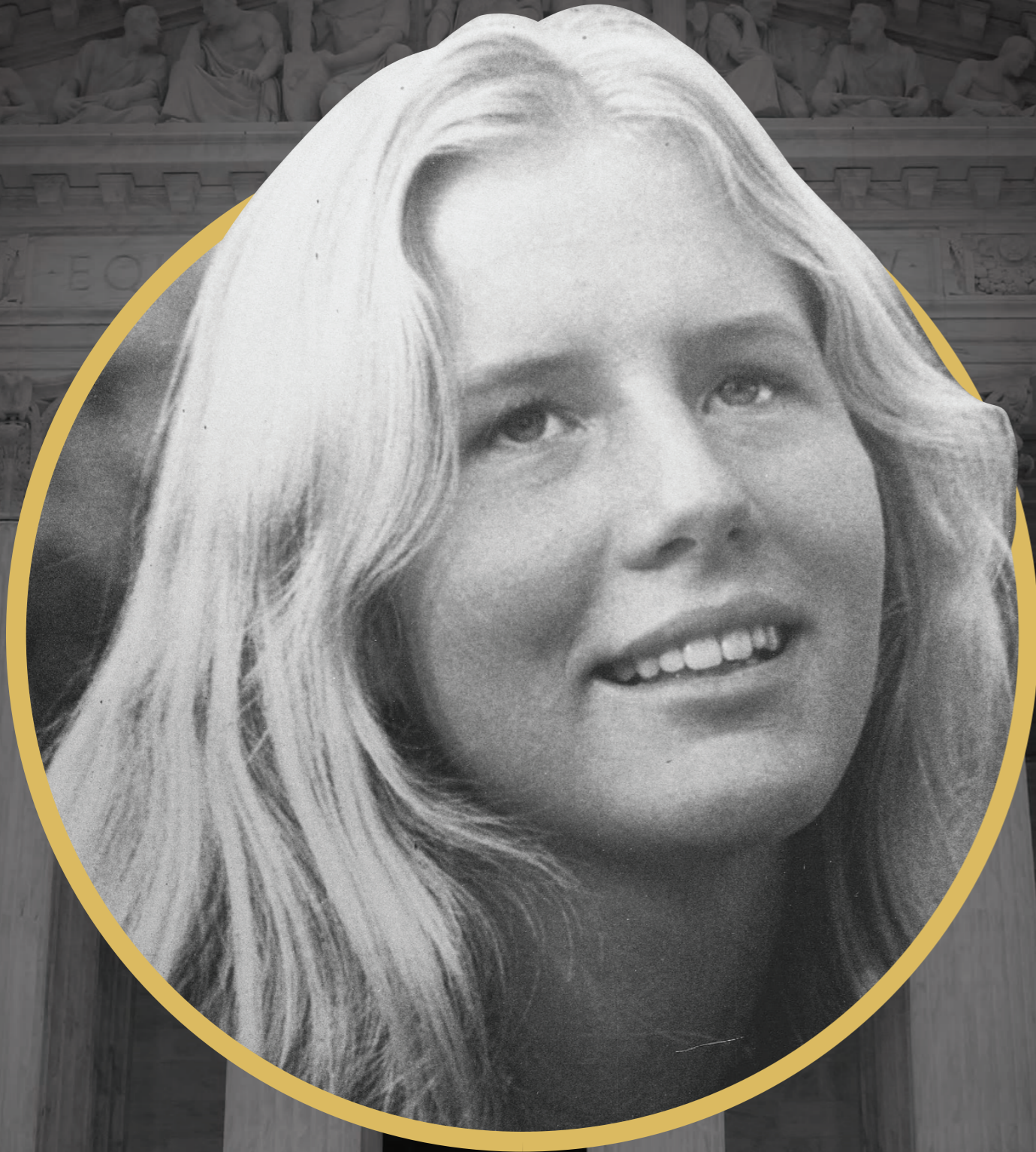
traditional PR, Wilson elaborates that "We're really trying to focus on building personal relationships with people. Instead of it being about newspaper ads and sponsorships of local little league teams—though it does include that—it's more about making sure that we actually have close personal relationships with landowners who are participating in the project, with stakeholders, and with decision-makers in that community. When that's your goal, having a tool like NationBuilder is really key, because you just can't track all those relationships and their complete histories in a spreadsheet. When you have multiple people working on a project, having one place where all of that information is kept up to date is really important. Without it, it's easy to lose touch with the connections you've previously made as fast as you're gaining new ones."

Staying ahead of the curve will be important for Apex as the company continues to pursue an aggressive growth path in the coming year. To reach and exceed their goals, Wilson and team will follow a model they've created themselves.

"What we're doing is really unique in our industry," she says, "and I think it's really important for our industry. I believe that most of our colleagues are still thinking

in much more traditional terms about what public relations should be in these communities, and as such, they may not need a tool like NationBuilder. What's unique is that we're saying, look: times have changed. We need to get smart about organizing and we need to figure out how to activate our supporters, because there's a real battle going on. We need to find ways to use tools like NationBuilder because that's what it takes to be able to effectively organize."

***"You just can't track all those relationships and their complete histories in a spreadsheet. When you have multiple people working on a project, having one place where all of that information is kept up to date is really important. Without it, it's easy to lose touch with the connections you've previously made as fast as you're gaining new ones."***



*Over the last two election cycles, Marsy's Law For All has passed victims' rights legislation in six states. Now, they're taking a networked approach to win in six more and expand nationwide.*

# Marsy's Law

## Advocating for victims rights across twelve states, and counting

Centered around the idea that victims of crime should have access to the same rights and protections provided by the United States legal system as those accused, Marsy's Law For All is an advocacy group working to pass victims' rights legislation on a state-by-state basis, with the ultimate goal of passing its eponymous law on a federal level. They've already succeeded in California, Illinois, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Ohio, and as of February 5, they will be active in a total of twelve states, with more on the way. To keep this ambitious operation running, members of its central team have to think big, move fast, and wear many hats. Breeanne Howe, the person

in charge of online communication management, is no exception.

Having started her career working for political change, Howe was drawn to Marsy's Law because of its nonpartisan stance. She appreciates the way the organization brings people from all sides of the political spectrum to work together and give support to those who need it. "To have something personally fulfilling that is also your day job—who doesn't want that?" she observes. But one of the biggest challenges of her position has been creating unity and visibility across all the states campaigning to get the legislation passed, both in ensuring she can send

**12**

states

**93k**

new  
supporters

**1.2**

million emails  
sent

clear and effective communications to supporters nationwide and receive valuable data from state campaigns to let her know what's working, what's not, and how the whole organization can learn from the work being done in individual states.

Early in 2017, Marsy's Law For All transitioned from a being a decentralized organization without a CRM to launching NationBuilder, which has created continuity between state-level efforts and allowed Howe's lean team to make great strides in nurturing supporters on a national level. "[It]

has totally given us that capability to be able to really see who's interested in what we're doing, engage with those people, and leave people alone who aren't that interested," she says. "To see hundreds, thousands of people who've gotten back in contact with us—it's been amazing. We really couldn't ever measure that before."

The proof, she says, has been in the response to the Marsy's Law national newsletter. "The first one that I sent out [since launching NationBuilder] beat all the open rates for the newsletters that I had sent over the last year," she says. With better ways to turn those supporters into advocates, their most committed ranks will keep growing.

Even in the best of circumstances,

moving to a single, centralized, digital platform from several different communications and data management sources is no small task, and Howe felt the pressure—at least at first. "When we first got into the implementation process," she says, "we were all going, 'wow, this is a lot, and this is exciting, but how on earth are we going to do all this?'" Enter NationBuilder's "superstar"

Enterprise Account Manager, Dana Saydak, who worked with Howe's team from their initial trainings to national-level implementation, and throughout their experience in ramping up each local team's use of the software. Of Saydak's expertise, she says, "None of us are in the same state,

so everything has to be done online. [Dana] has walked us through every step and took it immediately from a huge, overwhelming task to breaking it down into smaller tasks . . . throughout the entire process. So it's been pretty painless."

Marsy's Law is unique in its use of the product for advocacy—perhaps blazing the trail for other state-by-state initiatives. "Typically, people interested in NationBuilder Network are chapter-based organizations who want to know all the members in each of those chapters," Saydak says. "Political campaigns and initiatives operate a little differently, and historically they operate autonomously. This is an



*NationBuilder has given us [the] capability to really see who's interested in what we're doing, engage with those people, and leave people alone who aren't that interested. To see hundreds, thousands of people who've gotten back in contact with us—it's been amazing. We really couldn't ever measure that before.*

instance where that was making it really hard at the national level to understand the impact Marsy's Law was making and also continue to make incremental progress . . . Now, they're giving the 'chapters'—their state teams—what they need to be successful, and HQ is getting all the information they need to understand the success they're having and communicate with everybody who cares about Marsy's Law."

To Howe, it's about finally having her end goal—and what it takes to get there—in full view. She says, "Prior to this, it just felt like I had all these puzzle pieces scattered on the floor, and all the pieces are needed. NationBuilder puts all of those puzzle pieces into one great picture. I recommend NationBuilder more than any other CRM because it puts everything in one place, and that takes a load off your mind when you're overseeing a project in which many pieces are required for success."



Partner Credits

DESIGN &  
FRONT-END DEVELOPMENT

HINES DIGITAL



**69**

networked  
nations

**54**

candidates

**15**

committees &  
county parties

*The Maryland GOP built a scalable network with an innovative cost-sharing structure to both reduce barriers to entry for new candidates and share valuable data with their larger party.*



# Maryland GOP

## Creating a network model for a whole party to follow

Regardless of their affiliation, staffers for state parties in the United States can identify with the same digital organizing challenge: how do you help provide candidates with the tools they need to win while efficiently managing your budget? Over the last year, the Maryland GOP used NationBuilder to pursue a solution that just might bear repeating on a national level. Interestingly, it also takes a few pricing and service cues from the software itself.

As the Political Director of the Maryland state party, Patrick O'Keefe is charged with building its digital infrastructure for candidates up and down the ballot, and with rolling out websites for county parties, state senate and house

members, and even some congressional candidates. According to O'Keefe, "For a long time we've had a lot of people who would get completely destroyed by vendors who were trying to overcharge them for websites . . . We have a service

option out there where they know they can get a website, they know what to expect, and they also get all the beautiful functionality of NationBuilder.” Beyond simply providing the sites, O’Keefe (a certified NationBuilder architect) and MDGOP’s Data Director Adam Katora use their hands-on experience to work with the party’s website themes and provide strategic support to help candidates make the most of features like social media matching and email targeting.

In the six months since the state party began using NationBuilder Network, they’ve signed on more than fifty candidates and county parties. One of the most unique aspects of their strategy is the way they’ve managed to finance their network account while running their party at scale. O’Keefe says, “we created a pricing scheme that worked well for our people down-ballot and allowed us to subsidize to help them out. We were able to create a model that made sense for both the party and the county parties . . . something that



worked for everyone.”

Previously, the party worked with a system that allowed all candidates to chip in a very low flat rate per month, but that arrangement placed too much emphasis on the state party and didn’t spread enough support down-ballot. Now, candidates can benefit from the MDGOP network at affordable tiered pricing based on the number of emails in their database. “Our argument was: you’re going to pay [an entry-level price], within tiers, and get [premium] support, both from NationBuilder and from us,” O’Keefe says. “So, up to a thousand-email database is \$40 per month, and then it scales up from there.

Most candidates only run for about a year, so they budget \$500 for their website, their email, their Google forms, and all the different [platforms] that NationBuilder [has an] equivalent of, so it’s a no-brainer for them. That’s been the sweet spot for first-time candidates. It allows them to get their feet off the ground and really start moving.”

*[Candidates are] more likely to come to us, we’re more likely to know what’s going on on the ground, and we’re not caught by surprise . . . We’ve gotten closer and met people we typically wouldn’t be as close with.*



In addition to the benefits this networked approach provides to political newcomers, it allows the MDGOP to both build stronger relationships with its candidates and centralize valuable data that can help the party on both a local and national level. “They’re more likely to come to us and we’re more likely to know what’s going on on the ground, and we’re not caught by surprise . . . We’ve gotten closer and met people we typically wouldn’t be as close with,” O’Keefe says.

As more party contemporaries take notice, MDGOP’s long-term hope is to share the value of their approach with the RNC and create an effective model for sharing data between down-ballot candidates and state parties. MDGOP Data Director Adam Katora said, “NationBuilder allows us to harness the power of the RNC data ecosystem and share that power with all of our candidates.” As of when we

spoke with O’Keefe earlier this year, he mentioned that though he’d seen similar approaches used by large-scale parties in France (like La République En Marche, for instance), they seemed to be the first to use the network model on such a scale for a state party in the United States. “It’s funny,” he said, “even earlier today the data director from North Carolina was calling and asking me, ‘hey, how did you guys do this?’”

The value, as he sees it, is simple. “All of our candidates—state senate, state house, congressional—they’re all collecting a ton of data, and being able to have access to all that is massive. And I think that’s the biggest advantage of the network, is that it allows us to really run more targeted lead generation campaigns based on warm leads rather than just cold leads . . . Once you put the tools in front of people, the ideas that they have are pretty astounding.”

## Partner Credits

**DESIGN &  
FRONT-END DEVELOPMENT**

**NATIONMEDIA**



*With a fresh approach to politics and strong grassroots support from his community, Randall Woodfin inspired thousands of young people to vote for the first time in a municipal election.*

# Randall Woodfin

Defeating a two-term incumbent to become one of Birmingham's youngest mayors

Amid an upsurge of new candidates running for office under the progressive banner in the first half of 2016, a thirty-six-year-old former school board president in Birmingham, Alabama campaigned for mayor, energized record numbers of new voters in his community, and became the youngest mayor in more than a century of the city's history. Randall Woodfin's win

made national news, in part because he managed a nineteen-point victory over a seven-year incumbent to reach this significant milestone.

Aside from the rising progressive tide in the Democratic Party, Woodfin's campaign benefitted from a savvy mix of targeted digital organizing and more traditional, face-to-face interaction.

**19**  
point  
lead

**11.5k**  
1st time municipal  
voters

**5k**  
new voters ages  
18-35

His team included field organizers from both Bernie and Hillary's 2016 Democratic campaigns, each bringing unique competencies to the table for a charismatic candidate they believed in. For Field and Operations Director Daniel Deriso, working for Woodfin was a valuable opportunity to make change locally after working at a national level. "We built a real grassroots movement here in Birmingham, in my own home town, which was amazing," Deriso says.

While campaigning for a presidential candidate in a Democratic primary meant following a rather rigid structure, this mayoral campaign allowed Deriso to exercise more creative freedom in the strategies he employed, like focusing on people who don't typically vote in local elections. In his estimation, "You can focus on those people if you have the right candidate with the right message. We turned

**"We turned out 11,500 people who'd never voted before, which is insane . . . and 5,000 of those people were [ages] 18-35."**

out a lot,  
11,500

people, who'd never voted in a municipal election before, which is insane, and 5,000 of those people were eighteen to thirty-five" Using NationBuilder for their website and email communications, the Woodfin team saw particularly good results with petition and pledge to vote pages, which they linked to from targeted digital ads.

But, this effective digital outreach was only half of it. Perhaps the most key element to the this campaign's success was a candidate who knew how to be the reason voters show up at the polls. Deriso is quick to add, "We did it because we actually went and talked to [voters] or made phone calls and got them engaged. 8,500 out of the 11,500 [first-time municipal voters]

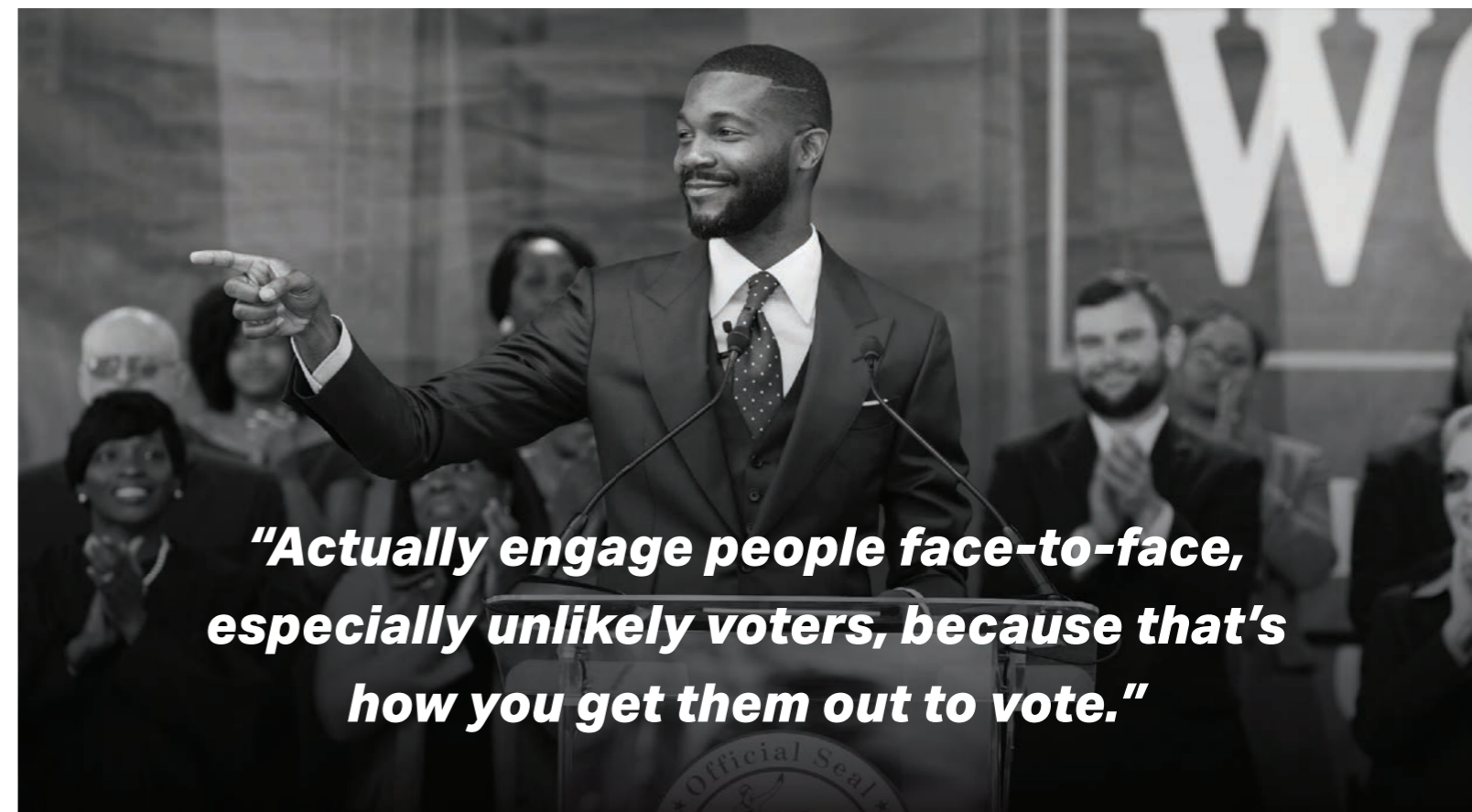
had a face-to-face interaction. So a big takeaway that I have from this campaign is: actually engage people face-to-face, especially unlikely voters, because that's how you get them out to vote."

At the beginning of Woodfin's campaign, Enterprise Account Manager Sorcha Rochford traveled from our LA HQ to Birmingham for an intensive day of software training to help his team hit the ground running. Working directly with Woodfin and his staffers at the home of Woodfin's campaign manager, she walked them through everything from handling

campaign finances to pulling in social media data sets to inform competitive research. But what seems to stick with her most about that day is how Woodfin engaged with his community. "On every street we turned on were people being like, 'Randall, so good to see you!'" she says. "It was really cool to get the feel of that community and what he was doing before he was a well-known politician."

For Sorcha, also a long-time political pro, this was no ordinary campaign. "He's so young, [particularly] for old south politics . . . The fact that Ed, his

campaign manager, had never engaged in politics before gave me the sense that he was a fresh face and didn't have the same baggage as other campaign managers, who are jaded from it. The whole campaign was so young—the most senior person was forty-two, with field and organizing leaders at twenty-four, twenty-two, and even support from teenagers. As opposed to campaigns I've seen where people have a chip on their shoulder, this was like, 'We love Randall, we're excited, so let's figure out how to do it.'" And figure it out, they did.



**"Actually engage people face-to-face, especially unlikely voters, because that's how you get them out to vote."**

Partner Credits

FIELD  
ORGANIZING

HUSTLE

