

NATIONBUILDER YEAR IN REVIEW



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Looking back on 2017

A letter from the editor

Lea Endres

Co-Founder and CEO

2017 was a difficult year. From the most deeply personal of events, to those that played out on a global stage, last year brought chaos and transition. Looking back on it feels like looking back on many years rolled into one.

Last year broke hearts. It certainly did mine.

In March, NationBuilder's founder and my business partner Jim Gilliam got

really, really sick. In April, he got better. In May he got sick again, and by June he was fighting for his life. He—and we—fought for the next two months straight, and by September he was healing. In October we shared this with our community and announced that I was stepping into the role of CEO. It all happened so fast, just a blink of an eye and suddenly our world no longer resembled what it had been before.

That experience was, of course, not unusual last year. Natural disasters, terror attacks, and mass shootings upended lives and wreaked havoc on communities around the globe. 2017 seemed to bring a steady stream of gut-wrenching upheaval, leaving the world around us, in many cases, unrecognizable.

And still, in the midst of it all—or perhaps because of it—2017 was a year of extraordinary strength and beauty. The most impossible and excruciating moments gave rise to community and solidarity. To love and courage, compassion and sacrifice. To heroism.

From all over the world, people stepped up to lead, helping neighbors and strangers alike. Brave individuals shared their voices, creating conversations and creating movements. It's exhilarating, because in this time of transition it is glaringly obvious that we need more leaders—and better ones—to help us navigate through the unprecedented challenges we face.

That is, in a nutshell, why NationBuilder exists. For the past eight years, we've

been building software for leaders so that it's possible for anyone, anywhere, to have the technological infrastructure they need to lead. In the coming year, we will continue to relentlessly pursue delivering on the promise of that software, making it easier and easier not just for people to choose to lead themselves, but also to distribute leadership to others.

Yet, on the path to more and better leaders, we've learned an inescapable truth: technology isn't enough. Over the past eight years, we've seen firsthand that to lead effectively in this new era, leaders need community.

That's why, in addition to aggressively improving the foundation of our software in 2017, we also revealed some of the work we've been incubating that offers leaders the community infrastructure they need. From our women's conferences, to NationBuilder Cities, to our new Leaders in Residence program, we laid the groundwork for the full expression of our mission. Because leading is hard, and none of us can do it alone.

And still, in the midst of it all—or perhaps because of it—2017 was a year of extraordinary strength and beauty. The most impossible and excruciating moments gave rise to community and solidarity. To love and courage, compassion and sacrifice. To heroism.

Part of this work is to uplift and share the stories of leaders who are paving the way for the rest of us. From post-Harvey relief to historic electoral victories, the leaders highlighted in this Year in Review are showing all of us what's possible. Inspiring people they may never meet to think: *maybe I can do that, too.*

And leaders also need spaces where they can get into difficult issues with each other and with their communities; spaces that facilitate conversation and deep dialogue, that embrace complexity and nuance. In 2018 and beyond, creating those spaces may be our greatest task—and we need more leaders who are equipped to do that.

There were many days
in the hospital
with Jim
where it
felt

like people had given up, resigned to the idea that he was either going to die or was never going to be the same. Dealing with the maddening bureaucracy for months on end made it seem impossible that he would recover. And still, we fought for it. We held on to a crazy vision that made most people think we were insane. We saw it, lived into it, and today his doctors call him "the walking miracle."

I think that's a pretty good metaphor for the task facing leaders today. When it seems impossible, we have to hold onto the vision and keep going—and bring as many people along with us as we can.

Thank you for all you do,
Lea



Evolving the NationBuilder brand

Jesse Haff
Co-Founder and VP of Design

Last year we launched the most significant evolution of the NationBuilder brand since our inception. The full expression of our mission required an evolution of our visual identity to reflect not just software, but also the in-person community building infrastructure we provide.

The foundation of our new visual language is the logo. With both boldness and simplicity, the logo communicates not only who we've become, but also where we're headed. It sheds the constraints of a physical building into two simple symbols which, when combined, can tell many stories relevant to who we are.

The octothorpe at the center represents the internet and creation. The color circle surrounding it represents community, diversity, connectedness, and inclusion. We also increased the depth and

warmth of our brand by expanding our color palette. These bold colors enrich our visual vocabulary and open the possibilities for a more layered and textured expression.

Together, these changes enable us to accurately reflect the company we've become—one that offers everyone the technology and community infrastructure to lead people to greatness.

2009-2013

2013-2014

2014-2017



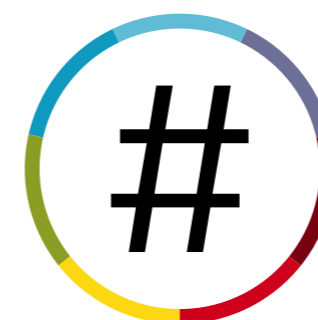
NationBuilder




NationBuilder



NationBuilder



NationBuilder



What is software for leaders?

At NationBuilder, we envision a world where everyone has the freedom and opportunity to create what they are meant to create, where more people can step into leadership, and where leaders have the resources they need to unlock their full potential.

Our software is the first of its kind. It's designed to equip and empower leaders to tackle the breadth of challenges they'll face in growing, engaging, and inspiring their base of supporters to take action. In a new era of digital engagement, identifying and connecting with supporters is more possible and more powerful than ever before—with the right software.

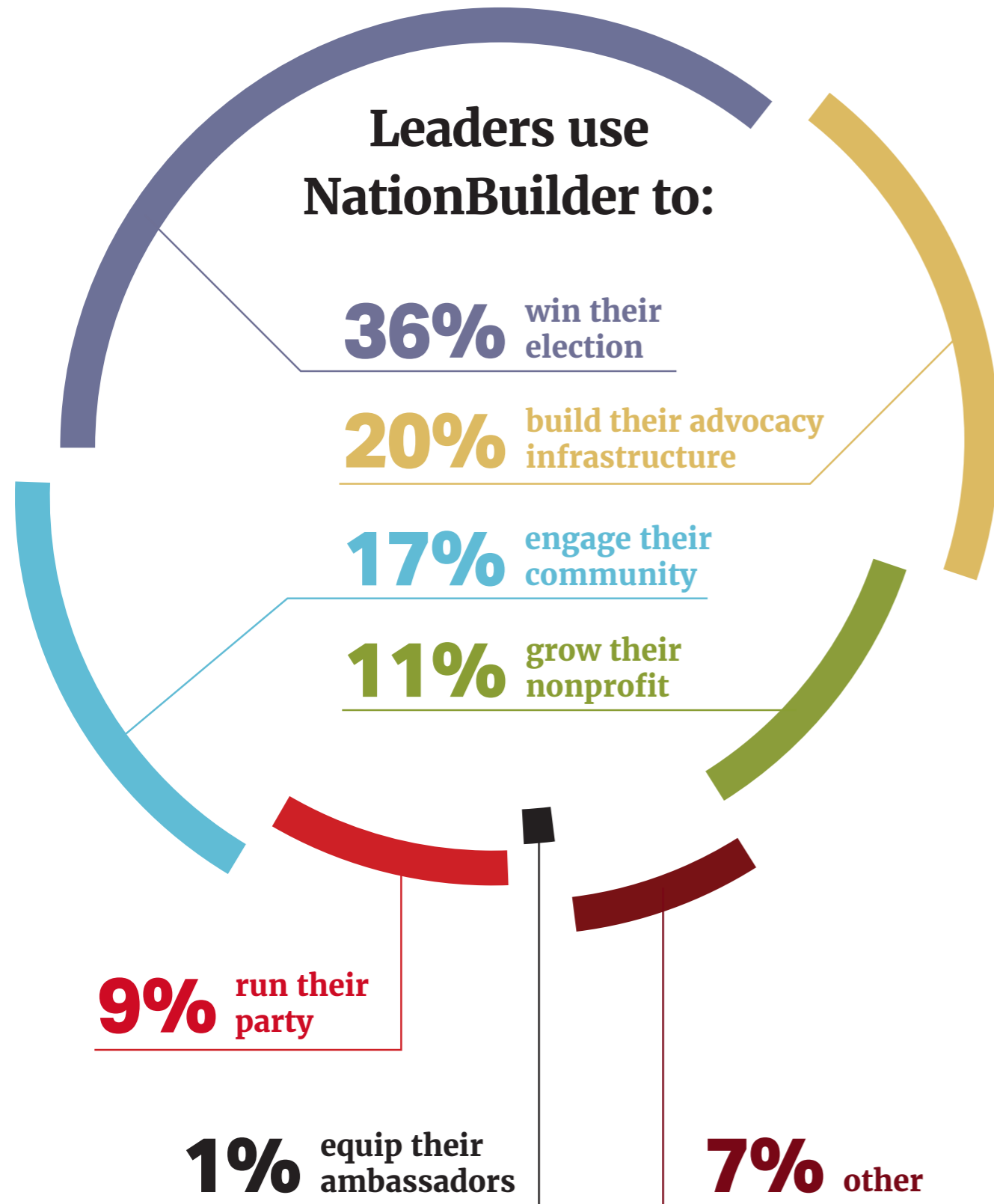
experience in community organizing, politics, advocacy, and the corporate sector, we've obsessively researched leadership, and we've observed what sets our most successful customers apart. The result is software for leaders—a product designed to equip leaders with everything they need to be as successful as possible in this era, across sectors and around the world.

We've leveraged our collective

NationBuilder

by the numbers

In 2017, our customers...



raised

\$690

million



made

11.2MM

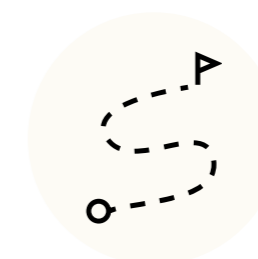
one-on-one contacts



sent

1.5B

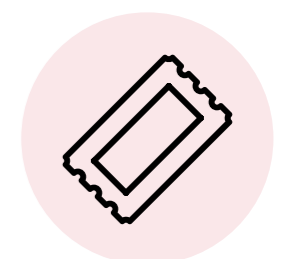
emails



mobilized

502k

volunteers



hosted

359k

events



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.



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

31

days

378

nations
built

359

candidates
elected

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

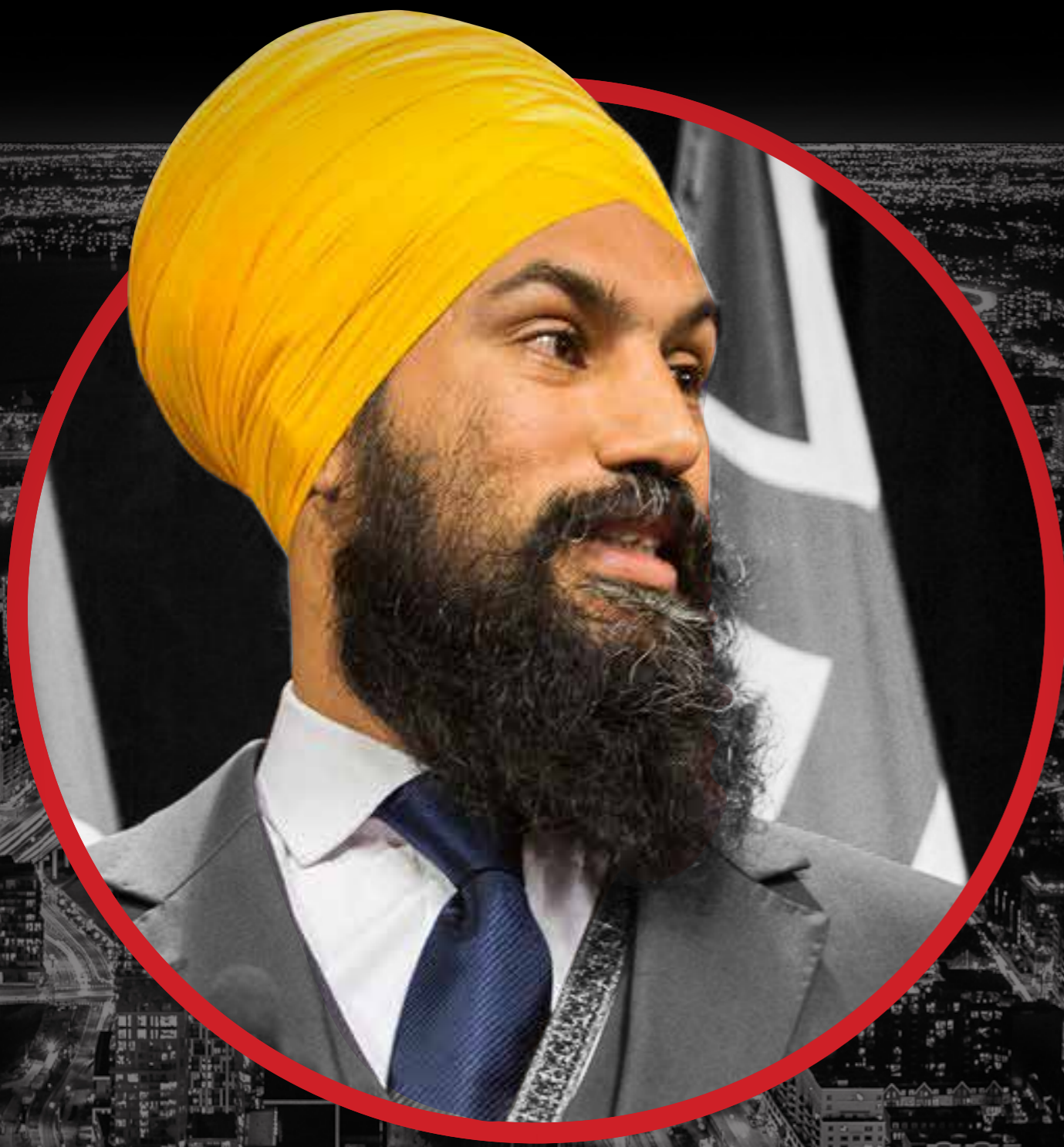
government to communicate with them about what it's doing."



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.

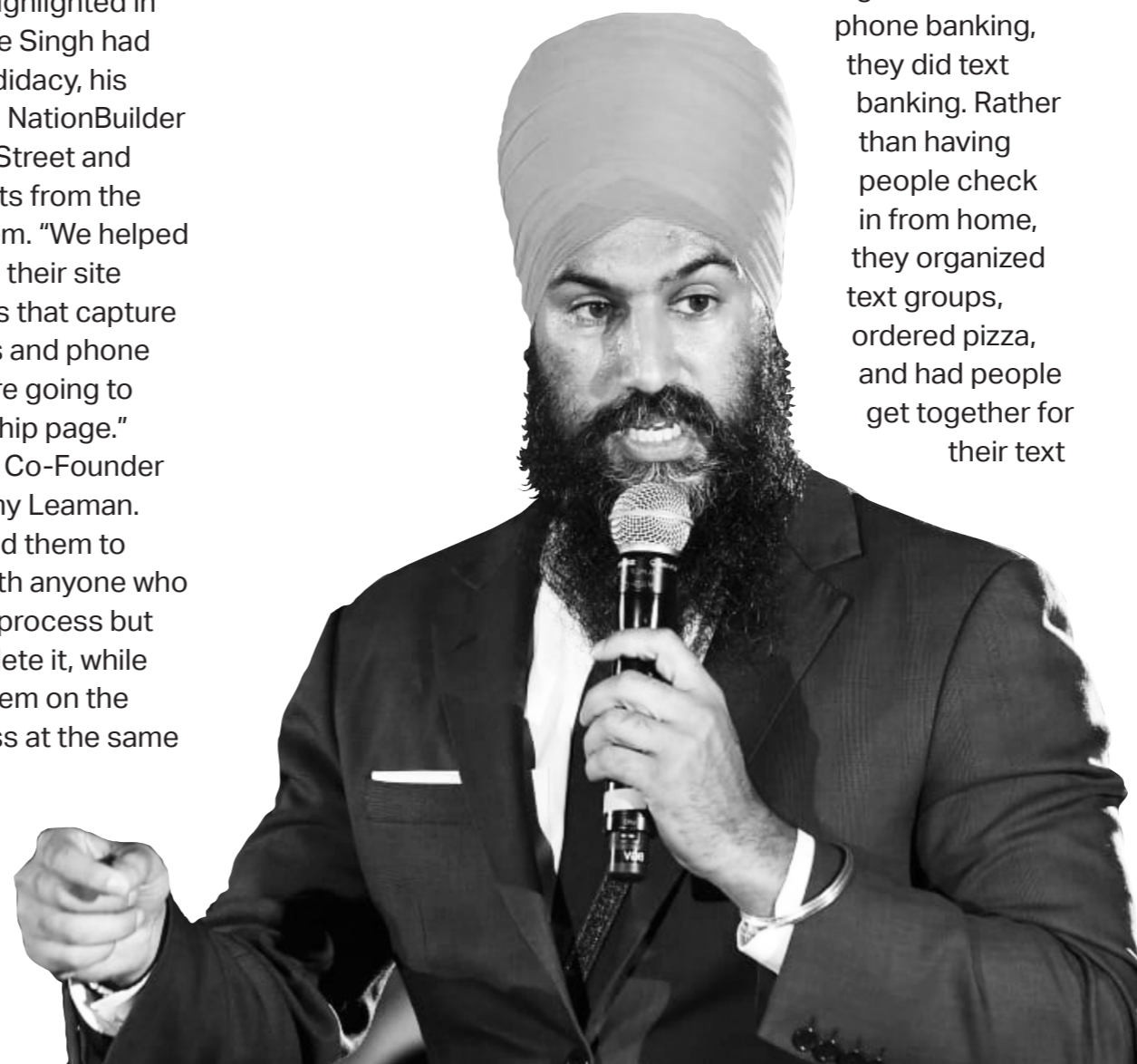
To move so quickly and efficiently, Singh’s team leveraged tools of the trade used by tech companies as well as political campaigns. Here’s how it looked from the perspective of Victoria Cross, Customer Success Manager at NationBuilder. “All of a sudden, they went from zero to sixty. A cutting-edge digital 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.



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."

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

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

67

nations created

across

18

states & provinces

7.5gw

of renewables by 2020



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

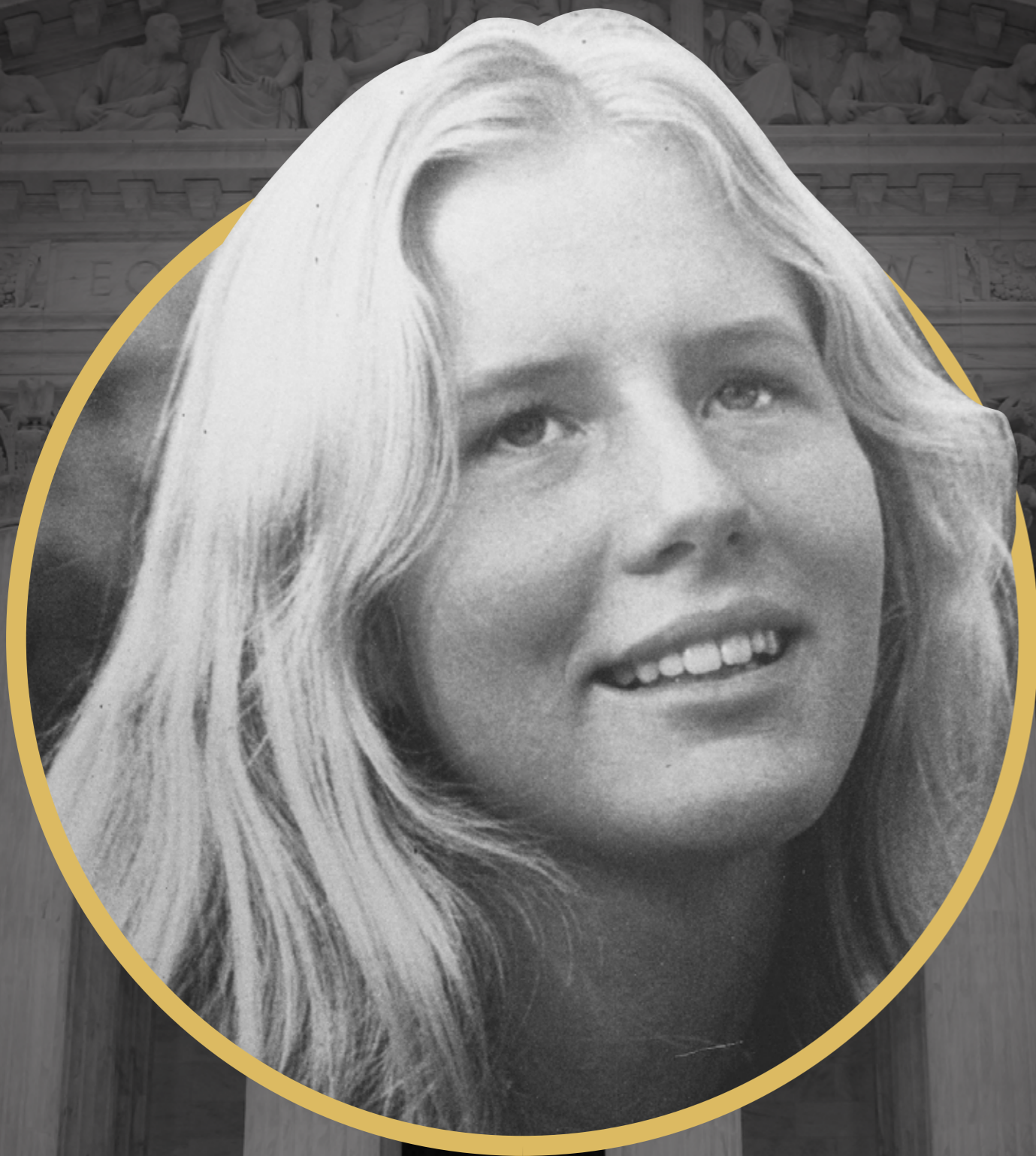
traditional PR, Wilson elaborates that "We're really trying to focus on building personal relationships with people. Instead of it being about newspaper ads and sponsorships of local little league teams—though it does include that—it's more about making sure that we actually have close personal relationships 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."



12

states

93k

new
supporters

1.2

million emails
sent

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

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.

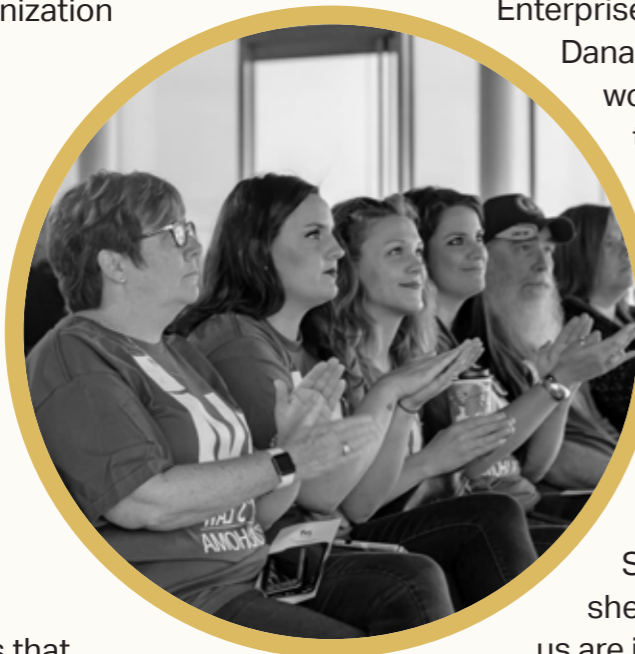
Even in the best of circumstances,

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]

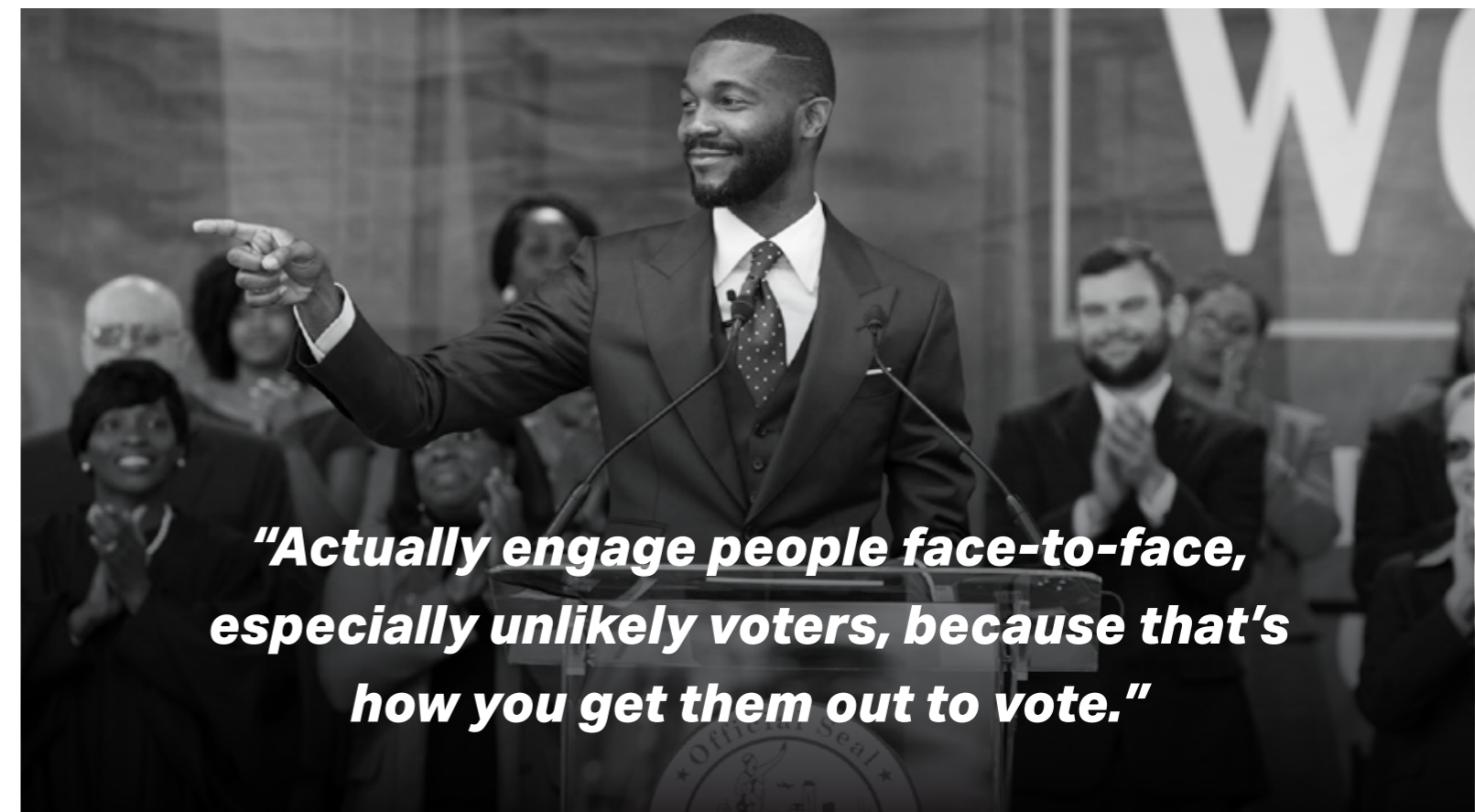
had a face-to-face interaction. So a big takeaway that I have from this campaign is: actually engage people face-to-face, especially unlikely voters, because that's how you get them out to vote."

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





297

Certified Partners

to date, worldwide

Our partner ecosystem

Where credit is due

Many of our customer stories highlight the power of our partner ecosystem. Though only a few collaborators were named in the story credits, we want to recognize the larger community of NationBuilder partners for their incredible work helping leaders around the world.

Whether building beautiful websites that reflect leaders' unique and vibrant missions, developing critical application enhancements to our core software, or consulting on how to best leverage NationBuilder—our partners make a lasting and immeasurable impact. We honor all they've helped our community accomplish, and what they offer every day to leaders of all stripes and sizes.

Our partners, by the numbers

154

Architects

Architects are certified designers who create custom NationBuilder themes.

143

Developers

Certified developers build custom apps and extend functionality using the NationBuilder API.

297

Certified
Partners

The sum total of Architects + Developers.

Ecosystem growth in 2017

20

new architects

23

new certified developers

7

new integrated
application launches

10

new data
partners

4,500+

partner app
installs to date

2,000+

custom theme
websites deployed



**I WANT YOU
TO RUN FOR OFFICE**



Run for Office

2017: The year of the candidate

How RunForOffice.org made democracy more accessible

Emily Schwartz

VP of Organizing

RunForOffice.org is an audacious undertaking with an ambitious goal—to make all the over 500,000 elected offices in the United States public, aggregated, and searchable by address for the first time in history.

The launch was more tepid than we

would have hoped. It was March 2016, and the United States Presidential election was heating up. Donald Trump had shocked people with a strong Super Tuesday performance, and the sixteen Republican candidates, one by one, dropped out of the race. While it looked like Hillary Clinton would win

40% of statewide races were being run (and won) uncontested by one of the two major political parties, with local elections across the country routinely cancelled because no one was filing to run

the Democratic nomination, Bernie Sanders' insurgent campaign as a self-proclaimed "democratic socialist" had hit mass popularity and sent shockwaves through the Democratic Party.

Needless to say, few were focused on one of the long-term, lingering problems of our democracy: there aren't enough candidates running for office. The stats were horrifying—40% of statewide races were being run (and won) uncontested by one of the two major political parties, with local elections across the country routinely cancelled because no one was filing to run. That would soon change.

If 2016 US political coverage was focused on the biggest, most expensive, and most newsworthy campaigns,

2017 was all about the little guy (or gal, really). There was a sudden surge in first-time candidates, and RunForOffice.org was there as an essential tool answering basic but critical questions for people first dipping their toes into the political process. Which offices am I eligible to run for? When do I file? How do I get on the ballot?

In the three months immediately after the 2016 election, demand for RunForOffice.org skyrocketed. We saw a three-fold increase in people expressing their interest in running, a 500% increase in call volume for those requesting additional help filing, and a 385% increase in volunteers signing up to help gather more political office data—people not quite ready to run, but ready to work.

2017 turned out to be the year for candidate recruitment. Though RunForOffice.org had more aggregated elected office information than any other platform, to get every available office searchable on the site we had

In the three months immediately after the 2016 election, demand for RunForOffice.org skyrocketed. We saw a threefold increase in people expressing their interest in running, a 500% increase in call volume for those requesting additional help filing, and a 385% increase in volunteers signing up to help gather more political office data—people not quite ready to run, but ready to work.



Oskar Müller
USC STUDENT VOLUNTEER

Doing the data research on this project was illuminating in itself. I was really able to see how different regions valued their information. Some states, especially Eastern ones such as New Jersey and New York, had every single date and election cycle listed. Other more rural regions, such as Arkansas, had no online information and could only be reached by phone . . . [It] was informative, innovative, challenging, and yes, at times tedious—but most of all, working on and completing this project was rewarding.



roughly 450,000 more offices worth of work to do.

We knew from user research that most people were coming to RunForOffice.org to search for local office information. Since school boards are often a person's first foray into politics, we set the ambitious goal of getting all of the over 80,000 school board positions live on RunForOffice.org before the November 2017 elections. While we had more volunteers than ever before helping us crowdsource this information, we knew we couldn't do it alone. This was going to take thousands of hours of dedicated work. We were lucky enough to find incredible, mission-aligned partners in XQ

Institute and Ballot Ready to get this project off the ground.

In the nine months it took to complete the school board mapping project, a total of 275 people (many of them volunteers) contributed at least 3,491 total hours of work to research 13,090 districts, resulting in 81,361 school board positions becoming available for public search. This is the first time U.S. school board election information has been free and publicly available on the national level for all school districts across all fifty states, which means that the data required to run for key local, entry-level offices is now more accessible than ever.

What helped send this ambitious project across the finish line, was a partnership among educational nonprofits and civic technology companies who believe

in the power of data to help lower the barriers to leadership. 2017 gave us a renewed sense of purpose to make democracy more accessible and participatory—in the hope of solving the crisis of there being a lack of local candidates that has been festering beneath the glitter of presidential election enthusiasm for years.

As we turn to 2018, we are cultivating an army of dedicated volunteers to help us publish every elected position for the over 2,500 counties across the country. It's another audacious goal that will only be possible to reach with coordinated volunteer-power and collaborations between the public and private sector, like the ones we achieved this year. County-level elected offices immensely impact our lives—important positions like County Treasurer, County Prosecuting Attorney, and County Recorder. This year, we had close to 300 volunteers work with us to make RunForOffice.org possible but next year, we need you. Volunteer at RunForOffice.org and let's democratize democracy together.

About the process

Technologically speaking, the task for our team and partners was twofold: to develop digital tools that create a standard for the necessary school board information, and facilitate the organization of volunteers who would use those tools to gather the data as efficiently as possible. Using what they had learned from a highly manual research process, the NationBuilder Data Services team created a list of inputs to minimize the guesswork required to learn how to run for a school board office, and then created a custom internal app to help track volunteer hours, assign volunteers to specific districts, and centralize the data collected for those districts. The data could then be "mapped" across the U.S. using the same technology NationBuilder customers use for auto-districting voters in their campaigns.





More and better leaders

The power of connecting IRL

We know that the world is facing a leadership crisis and that our way out of it is for more people to be able to lead—and to lead better. We're committed to knocking down any barriers that get in their way.

The technological barriers are significant, and we're, of course, working doggedly to make sure our software—along with RunForOffice.org and our free voter file—make it possible for anyone to step up and lead their community.

But we know that that's not enough. Leading is hard. You make the choice to do it—and then you have to make that choice again a thousand times. To keep going requires resources beyond

software; to keep going requires community.

Whether it's training and education, mentorship and support, or digging into difficult conversations, leaders need both online and IRL infrastructure to overcome the challenges they face and to become better. That's why in 2017 we launched NationBuilder Cities, the NationBuilder Women's Conference and our Leaders in Residence program. We're creating the community infrastructure to help leaders have the conversations they need to have, to share their stories and resources, and to equip each other.



Iko Bako

NATIONBUILDER CITIES COORDINATOR

What has been most exciting for me has been our focus on community building events where diverse styles of leadership can be modeled and practiced, and the eagerness that people have had to share their personal experiences with others. A dinner and discussion event at our HQ gave me the opportunity to be vulnerable, share my story with an audience, and describe how the themes of courage and discrimination have played a role in my leadership development. It also created the space for politicians, activists, educators, “techies,” and others, to sit at the same table, share a meal, and listen to each other’s stories about the events in their lives that compelled them to become leaders. I believe these experiences are what make NationBuilder Cities so unique and important.

The best part of NB cities was connecting people IRL who have only ever known each other online. I heard from several folks that they left feeling connected, inspired, and motivated. I absolutely felt that way too.



Victoria Cross
NATIONBUILDER VANCOUVER

NationBuilder Cities

Bringing leaders together around
the globe

Hilary Doe
VP of Strategy

Before coming to NationBuilder, I was leading a nonprofit network of chapters all over the country, engaging young people in activism and public policy in their communities. It was rewarding and inspiring. But leading was also sometimes incredibly isolating, challenging, exhausting, and harsh.

At NationBuilder, we understand the power of networks like the one that I ran. Networks that distribute leadership across their members have an edge over hierarchical organizations. They allow you to crowdsource ideas and innovate programming and messaging across your organization, facilitate



Flore Blondel-Goupil
NATIONBUILDER **PARIS**

We gathered members of our ecosystem for the first time since the 2017 French elections. It was a great opportunity for everyone to connect, share knowledge, and get insights on success factors and challenges during the past election cycle. What I really loved is that we had former members of teams that had been opponents during the campaign, but who were really open to discuss and share their experiences with one another.



NATIONBUILDER **NEW YORK**



NATIONBUILDER **LOS ANGELES**

unprecedented scale by letting local leaders expand your footprint, and build deep community among supporters that translates into powerful, long-term relationships. And since launching our product, NationBuilder Network, we've been able to witness the power of networks in real time as our customers accomplish incredible things.

That's why, when we set out to address the challenges that leaders face, like the isolation I experienced, we knew it was time for NationBuilder to build a network

of our own. One that helps to equip leaders with the skills they need to be effective and offers a real community of other leaders—wherever they are in the world.

That network—NationBuilder Cities—acts as a home base for leaders to experience programming that pushes them, resources that serve them, wisdom from their peers, and support from their community. And, most importantly, local leaders set their own unique agendas to create the events



NATIONBUILDER **BOSTON**



NATIONBUILDER **PARIS**



Jon Bratsis
NATIONBUILDER **CHICAGO**

NationBuilder has a proud and vibrant community of leaders in the Chicagoland area. As the first member of our staff based in Chicago, I am thrilled about engaging this community in person. Our first NB Chicago event had more than a dozen customers, partners, and new faces in attendance. There was a lot of interest in future gatherings, and we're looking forward to making that happen in 2018!"



NATIONBUILDER **LOS ANGELES**



Ryan Cole
NATIONBUILDER **TORONTO**

We can be pretty siloed in Toronto. Whether it's competing against one another for clients, votes, donors, or just attention, we often forget to talk to each other. Our Toronto social was a great chance to meet each other and nerd out about NationBuilder, digital organizing, and our city. I'm looking forward to learning more from the terrific NationBuilders who call Toronto home.



NATIONBUILDER **NEW YORK**

they need and support each other's specific goals and challenges.

In October 2017, fourteen cities launched: Boston, Brussels, Chicago, Detroit, London, Los Angeles, Melbourne, New York, Paris, San Francisco, Sydney, Toronto, Vancouver, and Washington D.C.

To date, these cities have hosted training sessions, leader stories, community dinners, and powerful

conferences to bust down barriers to leadership and support leaders in the field. And we're just getting started.

In 2018, we'll be rolling out programming in cities around the world, identifying places where our customers and the world's leaders need to gather to solve for the challenges they face and the support they need to be successful.



Toni Cowan-Brown
NATIONBUILDER **LONDON**

This year we partnered with Fleishman Hillard, a large international agency, to run an event on the new rules of corporate campaigning, which brought together FHF clients, NationBuilder customers, and a wide range of people interested in this field. With the help of a great partner like FHF, we were able to combine our complementary areas of expertise to create a great and informative event.



Josh Gray-Emmer
NATIONBUILDER **LOS ANGELES**

As a NationBuilder Architect, Expert, former employee, and overall fan of the company, I really enjoy helping customers get the most out of this incredibly powerful software platform. That's why I jumped at the chance to participate.



NATIONBUILDER **LONDON**

To learn more about NationBuilder Cities and join or start a NationBuilder City near you, check us out at:

nationbuilder.com/cities

The most authentic and powerful conference I've ever attended. It brought to life Pablo Picasso's mantra, 'The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of your life is to give it away.'

-Kay Lynn Gabaldon

The NationBuilder Women's Conference

Not your normal conference

Lea Endres

Co-Founder & CEO

Deeply embedded in NationBuilder's mission is the fierce commitment to removing barriers that prevent people from leading. At the beginning of 2017,

it was impossible to ignore the urgent need to focus on obliterating barriers to women's leadership as quickly as possible. That's why in May, we hosted





the first ever NationBuilder women's conference "for those that care deeply about women and leadership—and how we make it possible so all women (and all people) can lead."

We piloted a three-day conference in Los Angeles in May and a one-day conference in London in July. The word "conference" is a bit misleading, as the intent was really to create a highly facilitated and highly curated experience where women could share their stories,

build lasting community, and dig deep with each other. No traditional keynotes, no panels. Just a commitment to talk about the nuanced and complex issues that rarely get talked about.

To create that kind of space is not easy, and wouldn't have been possible without the power of **HERE WE ARE**—a film based experience created by director Laura Harris (see inset). The results of our time together, which women called "nourishing," "inspiring," "activating,"

[The conference was] a beautiful event where women were able to come together, be vulnerable, share with, learn about, and challenge one another, and tell their stories in a supportive and non-competitive safe space.

—Sarah Starpoli

HERE WE ARE is a film-based experience that accelerates meaningful, hard to have conversation in live groups. It includes an intimate film series of simultaneous realtime conversations between 21st century leaders. This format should not be viewed online—only in community or groups intending to begin or deepen relationships with each other.

In 2015, my team and I created an initial **HERE WE ARE** prototype to answer this question:

Could film be used in new ways to scale meaningful, hard-to-have conversations?

After extensive interviews with a series of 21st century leaders, we began experimenting with physiology and film, working to create a process that would lift leaders out of isolation and into community. By 2016, we were equipped with a novel 4-hour module that was repeatable, adaptable, and showed holy grail promise in high stakes groups. In 2017 we tested the **HWA** module in diverse groupings across the country, to the following results:

Here We Are

A note from the director

HOW HWA WORKS:

1. Engages and strengthens the physiological reflexes required to listen more deeply.
2. Unlocks a group's ability to work through complex social issues that are not easily addressed.
3. Facilitates and fosters inclusivity and trust in communities at threshold points.

fear of injury, shame or brand devastation. It is a very intimate journey into the stakes of 21st century leadership—where a leader's ability to build strong, resilient relationships both interpersonally and at scale is the crux that predicts which communities, companies and movements will live or die.

It is my deepest belief that the heart of successful 21st century leadership is not just hyper connected — it is hyper-relational.

WHO HWA WORKS FOR:

1. Leaders and aspiring leaders looking to transcend difficult social issues in their community.
2. Leaders looking for profound community support in their own leadership journey.
3. Leaders looking for active ways to build powerful relationships across sectors.
4. Leaders looking for ways to distribute leadership within their organizations.
5. Anyone ready to have a very hard conversation that needs having

Personally, this project has been a quest to see what is possible when leaders are provided with a place and a method to dialogue honestly without



Laura Harris
DIRECTOR, **HERE WE ARE**, VP OF FILM

[The conference gave me] an opportunity to reflect on where I am as a leader, learn from a diverse group of women, and consider how to use our considerable power as a catalyst for a better world.

-Jeanne Fauci

"grounding," "transformational," "life-altering," "bolstering," "invigorating," and "extraordinary," surprised even us.

It wasn't just that women left and returned so visibly different that colleagues, friends, and family asked about it. It wasn't just that they got promoted or started their own initiatives or companies. It wasn't just that they met lifelong goals like writing books, speaking in public for the first time, or booking their first national TV appearance. The most incredible result was the lasting community that formed amongst those who attended. There were pictures of women



who met at the conference on a road trip together months later, invitations to speak and participate in each others organizations, companies, events. For me, it was the conversation I had a few months ago with someone sharing her post-conference experience—which blew my mind—and her offer of support

at a time when I needed it most. The gift of these "conferences" was undeniably the unexpected, lasting friendships; the ongoing community of women showing up for each other, supporting each other as they face the challenges of leading in this era.

On the last day, I told people I am a whole new person but that isn't right. I am not a new person, I am more of myself. I feel like for the first time in a long time I am filling up my whole body. I leave the weekend knowing powerfully and profoundly that I am a leader. Without a title. Without a job. Without accolades. Without thousands of Twitter followers or a best-selling book. I am a leader because leadership is a way of being. And after this weekend, a leader is how I am being.

-Tenaya Wallace

Leaders in Residence

Lea Endres

Co-Founder and CEO

In October of this year, we launched our Leader in Residence program—an idea that's been brewing for years. The purpose of the program is to amplify the voices of exceptional leaders from different sectors who have something important to teach us all about leadership right now. Our commitment is to help these individuals share their stories, give them a bigger platform, support them in all the ways we can—and infuse their wisdom and experience into the fabric of NationBuilder.

I can't imagine three more perfect people to pave the way for this program. Mpumi Nobiva, Pat Callair, and Omar Brownson are each defining and redefining what it means to lead. Each of them are not just committed to becoming better leaders themselves, but to bringing as many people as possible along with them. Here they share their stories and the questions they are pursuing on their quest to serve their communities—and the world.

I wondered, how is it that young women are the demographic most impacted by socio-economic issues everywhere in the world, but especially where I'm from?



Mpumi Nobiva

How do you create justice? How do you make an equitable world where everybody has a chance to live up to whatever it is they're supposed to live up to?

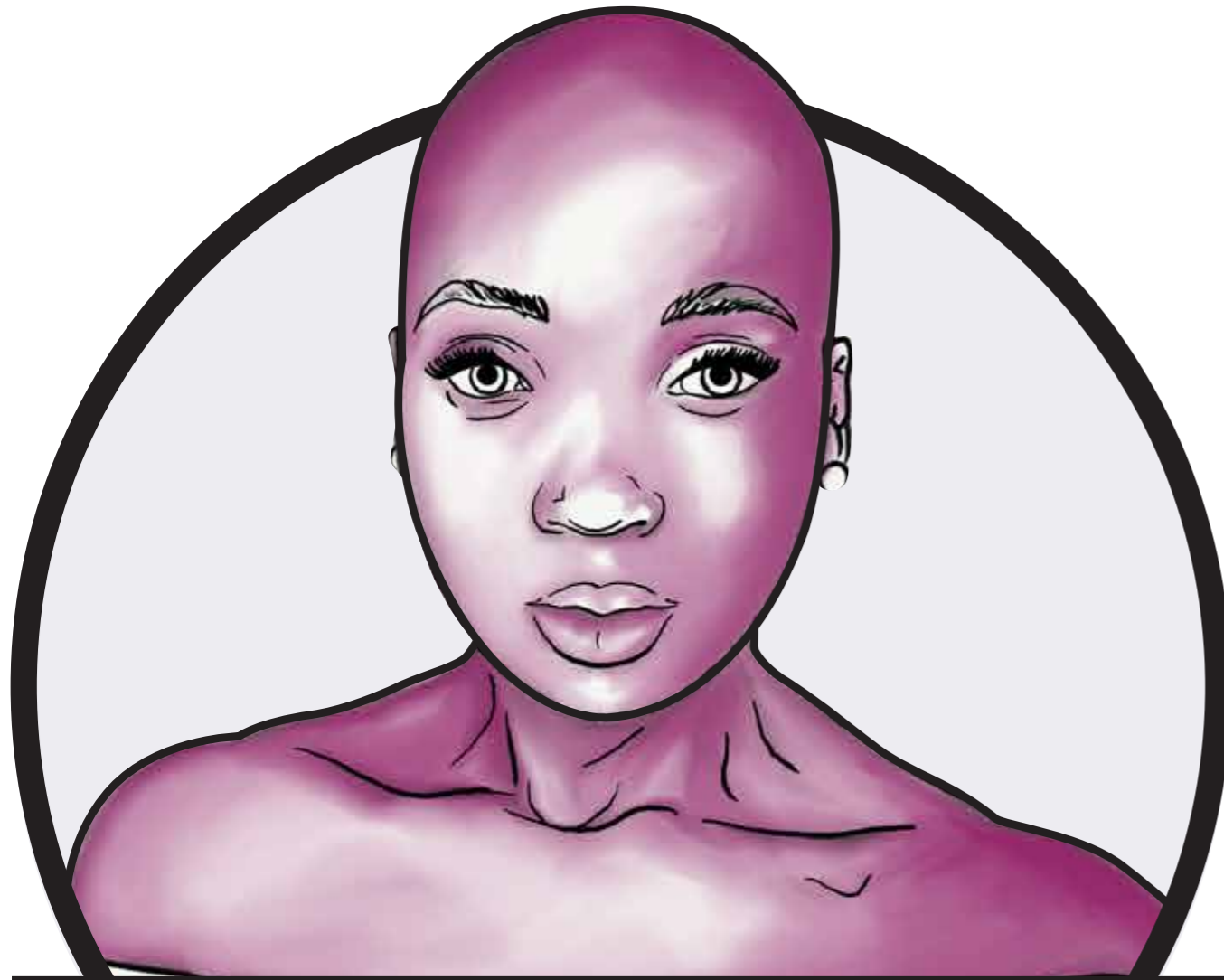


Pat Callair

We've allowed technology to disrupt social systems. So, the question becomes: what social systems do we want to create, and how do we use technology to create them?



Omar Brownson



Mpumi Nobiva

International Speaker & Communication Strategist

NationBuilder's first Leader in Residence, Mpumi Nobiva is developing the digital infrastructure for Share Your Story Africa—an initiative inspired by her advocacy work uniting youth against HIV/AIDS and domestic violence in South Africa—all while sharing her powerful story at events around the world. What follows is a transcription of one telling, a summation of the leadership journey that led her here.

I was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1993. My country was going through huge transitions politically as we were approaching our new democracy. I look at the time and situation I was born into—abject poverty, with a young mother with little education and a young father who didn't stick around long after I was born—and I realize that a lot of those circumstances set up a reality that was hard to navigate for a young girl, especially on the African continent. I like to say that I was born in “a world full of no's, with my name written on it.” I was born in a world where men led everything and if you were a young girl with a voice, you were out of place.

My journey really began around the age of eight, when my young mother sat me down one afternoon when I came home from school and

told me she was HIV positive and that she was going to die. It was as if she could feel the fear in me, because she quickly got me to promise that I would never stop working hard in school because she wasn't afforded that opportunity when she was younger, that I would never stop believing in God because we were raised in a spiritual family, and that I would never stop being respectful to my grandmother because our values around family are very important.

The eighteen months I experienced after that day, watching someone I love wither in a time and place of abject poverty, truly stripped away my humanity because it was all happening in such a close space. My mother became one of millions of her generation wiped out by the epidemic on the African continent, which was a secret I had to carry alone because of the

taboo surrounding HIV/AIDS.

Nobody was really talking about it, we weren't able to internalize what was happening because we hadn't acknowledged it or had the education required to understand the circumstances we're presented with when dealing with HIV/AIDS.

My grandmother was in her fifties, a very intelligent woman but not educated, and I remember when she and I were working through health materials trying to figure out what this epidemic was. That's what inspired this curiosity in me about HIV/AIDS, and, later on, about economic inequality and how it affected everything in my country—from access to education, medicine,

and opportunity, to the surge in domestic violence affecting my community. I wondered, how is it that young women are the demographic most impacted by those socio-economic issues everywhere in the world, but especially where I'm from? How is it that that very same demographic is also so oppressed in terms of

I managed to graduate among the top of my class and get a scholarship to come to the United States. And I did it while staying true to who I was and sharing my story: how I was born into abject poverty, how my mother died, and how I refuse for her memory to be tainted by the stigma that surrounds those socio-economic issues.

expressing its voice and its views, its truth and its authenticity? Those questions would really guide the sort of individual that I've become.

Along the way, I've been given so many great opportunities, such as being in the first class of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls. That's where I learned the value of leadership, sharing your story, speaking up for yourself, and putting in hard work. I managed to graduate among the top of my class and get a scholarship to come to the United States. And I did it while staying true to who I was and sharing my story: how I was born into abject poverty, how my mother died, and how I refuse for her memory to be tainted by the stigma that surrounds those socio-economic issues. In that telling, I discovered that there is a power in a young woman like myself seeking to find a voice and a place in the world where she can speak with confidence, where she can draw power from all these experiences and say, "this is an

area where I can make an impact."

NationBuilder came about in my pursuit of a place where I would not only be employed—because as an African child you automatically are responsible for your family so I needed employment—but where I would also be empowered: a place where I could bring all my experiences, where I could bring myself and my life, and say what's really going on. Beyond that, I wanted to find a place that could really equip me with the skills, resources, and thought processes to express that message in a way that is scalable and practical—in a way that creates accountability for myself as a leader and for the investments that have been made in me throughout my life.

When Lea was coming up with this title, I think she was thinking "Leader in Residence" as in, "at NationBuilder." But it truly is Leader in Residence within yourself. In my life, I've had to unpack the dehumanization of poverty, the loneliness of not having a father, the trauma of watching my mother die. I had to unpack all of that and finally see myself, feel the essence of who I am. A lot of that I didn't even realize, because I didn't know that that's what I was doing. I was just surviving. But now, I'm aware.

Being a Leader in Residence allows me to go to that place deep inside myself and bring it out every day. I can challenge myself to align to it in every moment. Being a Leader in Residence, to me, means that I get to really channel every part of my being toward the belief that I can always be better.

Right now, I am in a place where everything feels aligned. I'm so grateful, because I'm able to take risks knowing that I am building a solid foundation of leadership, and because I have the time and the capacity to really study this life as I live it. It gives me confidence to move forward. Let's see how far we can take it, and whatever the outcome, it's a part of the journey.



Being a Leader in Residence, to me, means that I get to really channel every part of my being toward the belief that I can always be better.





Pat Callair

Community Facilitator & Activist

A longtime member of NationBuilder community, Pat Callair has been working with the company for years through the Foundation for Community Encouragement, an organization dedicated to facilitating community among people from diverse backgrounds and beliefs. She brings with her years of experience helping communities overcome differences, have difficult conversations about racism and other systemic issues, and work together toward a common goal.

I started doing civil rights work when I was a teenager, thirteen or fourteen. All of my life, my trajectory has been toward answering the question: how do you create peace? How do you create justice? How do you make an equitable world where everybody has a chance to live up to whatever it is they're supposed to live up to? It's the thing that got me into civil rights work, it's the thing that got me into the women's movement. It got me into school, graduate school, the Foundation for Community Encouragement (FCE), and NationBuilder.

When I came to the Foundation for Community Encouragement, it was as an activist. I thought that we all yearn for peace, that we don't quite know how to get there because so many things that have happened have led to mistrust, dissent, and division. The FCE principles of relating with care and respect, resolving conflict with integrity while seeing yourself in the other person, and extending empathy and compassion, felt to me like a prescription for how to teach people to get along. I thought, those are pretty good principles to live in. As facilitators, we were inviting people to come into a space, and as they connect and build community with each other, to live in those principles.

FCE was pretty much all white. I wasn't the first person of color facilitator—I was the second. So, it became a real question for me, as I was getting oriented and talking with Scott Peck. He talked about his vision of building community in the world, and I said, "ok, that's good," but what I noticed is that there were only white people in the room. I asked him, "What's your picture of what a community is? Is it a community only of white people?" And this is the the thing that really enabled me to stay. He looked at me and quite honestly said, "I didn't think about that." Of

course, that raises all kinds of other questions, like—20-30% of the American population and more than 50% of the world are people of color, and you say you didn't think about it? What does that say about your world, where you live, and what you're paying attention to?

My journey through FCE has been to help us as an organization recognize and understand

It was painful and it was frustrating, but the thing that worked was our commitment to the principles of relating with care and compassion, resolving conflict with integrity, extending empathy, and trying to see ourselves in the other. Those are the things that kept us in the room and kept us moving. However faltering our steps may have been, we agreed to take them.

what we may not have in the past, and that led to some significant changes. We welcomed more people of color as facilitators, we committed ourselves to understanding this racial dynamic, figuring out how it fits within our mission to build community, and asking what adjustments we need to make to ensure that our process belongs to everybody, and anyone can come into it. We've had fits and starts. Because it was a majority white group, talking about racism, how we understand and face that in ourselves and in our organization, was hard work. It was painful and it was frustrating, but the thing that worked was our commitment to the principles of relating with care and compassion, resolving conflict with integrity, extending empathy, and trying to

see ourselves in the other. Those are the things that kept us in the room and kept us moving. However faltering our steps may have been, we agreed to take them.

Right now, I'm a therapist and I own an outpatient therapy agency. Going forward, my life will be less about one-on-one individual therapy, and more about working with groups and creating possibilities for people to come together using the sound principles I've learned from the Foundation for Community Encouragement. So, being a Leader in Residence creates an opportunity for me to do more of that work, to do it with NationBuilder, to do it with Lea, a person I absolutely admire and adore and believe in. It's a gift to have a chance to do it in this context.

Lea brought me into NationBuilder to facilitate difficult conversations about race, violence, and overcoming difference within NationBuilder so the team could continue to do great work. Throughout the last three years of working with the team, I've been impressed by NationBuilder's willingness to even take this on, because this is not easy work. And you're taking it on. I am thankful, I am grateful.

Being a Leader in Residence means that I can help create those possibilities for how people come into the room, how they talk to each other when they get there. I know some things about

the nature of structural racism. I've lived it, I've pushed up against it. I've done circles and anti-racism training that could be useful. Most of all, I am interested in getting people who don't normally talk to each other, to talk to each other—maybe even teach them how to talk to each other, because that's not that easy. Though it comes naturally, we tend to block our ability to trust and be vulnerable with each other. There are walls and masks that go up and prevent us from coming together. I know something about how to break through that resistance, those masks, and that unwillingness to trust. I've been studying it nearly all of my life.

I believe that the work that we do, we also need to live. I'm always looking at who I'm around, how we are doing with each other, and how we are managing our own tensions, conflicts, and disagreements. To me, this is an organic process where we as leaders come together and look at our own relationships with each other. We look at how our relationships help or hinder us in what we say we want to do, and invite people to not only attend to their own success, but to commit themselves to the success of their neighbor. The extent to which we all experience some measure of progress in our lives, helps us all.

In this society, we certainly know about rugged individualism, about setting out on your own, making your own way, becoming successful, and achieving your goals, whatever those might

be. What we forget is, in actuality, there isn't much that we do alone. Even with our greatest measure of success, we had help. We had somebody who supported us and trusted us, gave us money or fed us, and gave us a roof over our heads, paved the streets, or put the lights up. We're not living our lives in a vacuum.

The other thing I know is, if you're going to be in an authentic community where you build an energy of trust, compassion, deep caring, friendship and confidence, you have to have internal, emotional strength. You have to have a healthy sense of self before you can function well in a community. So, we need individuals, with different ways of thinking and different ways of being. But we also need communities, and we need each other. That has come to hit us in a very powerful way over the last year or so. We now see what division, strife, conflict, fake news, and ugliness does to us. To me, this is an excellent opportunity to start inviting people to think with us about what it means to be in

To me, this is an excellent opportunity to start inviting people to think with us about what it means to be in community.

community.

I'm really excited to have the opportunity to do this, and to advance the work that I've believed in and lived in nearly all my life.

We look at how our relationships help or hinder us in what we say we want to do, and invite people to not only attend to their own success, but to commit themselves to the success of their neighbor. The extent to which we all experience some measure of progress in our lives, helps us all.





Omar Brownson

Entrepreneur & Advocate

Since 2011, Omar Brownson has served as Executive Director of River LA, a nonprofit organization working to revitalize the fifty-one-mile Los Angeles River and surrounding areas—with many active projects fostering sustainability, public transit, civic engagement, and inclusive economic growth around the city's central natural feature. Here's his account of what drew him to creating community and how the concept of the Leader in Residence program came to be.

I grew up modestly, and we moved around a lot. I always had a roof over my head and food to eat, but by the fourth grade, when I moved to Los Angeles in 1984, I had been to four different schools in two different countries. I was always the new kid. I often felt invisible or less than because it seemed that everywhere I went people could only see what I was not, and I was not one of them.

In high school, at the top of every standardized form, I was asked to complete my name and check 'one' box for race or ethnicity. I always hated that moment of having to choose. My mom is a fourth generation Chinese-American, and my dad is a white guy from Iowa who converted to Islam. Invariably, I would check "other."

These experiences motivated me to not just accept what I was given. I hustled and sought out opportunities, like going to a top-tier school, so I could have better choices. Not all of my friends were so fortunate. They may not have had a family or support systems like I did, encouraging them to succeed, or even more importantly, catching them when their hustle wasn't enough.

As a child, I knew what it felt like to be seen as an outsider. Now, as a father, I seek to encourage my daughters to succeed and to catch them when they fall short. Either way, they know they are loved and live in a home that accepts them for who they are. No one should feel like a stranger in their own home or feel like progress doesn't include them. We all belong.

Lea and I have been talking about the idea of a Leader in Residence, in some form or another, for four years. With Lea—a woman well-versed in activism—leading the company, there's a unique opportunity to try to define the role of technology in social change. Technology is neither good nor bad; it's a tool. We've allowed experts to define

a value system around a tool from a technical point of view and not from a social impact point of view. Now, we need to move the conversation into stating the impact that we want to create as well as the role of technology in that vision. We've allowed technology to disrupt social systems. So, the question becomes: what social systems do we want to create, and how do we use technology to create them?

We live in physical, spiritual, and digital dimensions. NationBuilder is really at the confluence of what it means for people to come together—both in a physical way with NationBuilder Cities, and in a digital way with the leadership software itself. How do we look at governance issues in our country, around the world, and what is going to be the role of technology? I think NationBuilder can be an important player in that conversation.

On my social media profiles I write, "curiosity, grit, and gratitude." That spirit is what I'm bringing to NationBuilder and what I enjoy about working with Lea and the NationBuilder team. It begins with a sense of wonder, then the grit of actually building something. It's not always pretty—democracy is messy—but I'm grateful that there's a platform by which these things can actually move forward.



A black and white photograph. In the upper left, a person's hand with a ring on the ring finger rests on the dark leather of a sofa. The sofa has a tufted backrest. In the foreground, a wooden crate is filled with four glowing light bulbs, arranged in a 2x2 grid. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the bulbs in the crate. The text 'Looking forward to 2018' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Looking
forward
to 2018**



Guiding leaders forward

Hilary Doe

VP of Strategy

Ben Handzo

VP of Product

As we work to deliver on the promise of software for leaders, the NationBuilder product principles are our north star. We know that to fulfill our mission our software needs to:

- **put people at the center**
- **give leaders control of their own data**
- **help leaders move people to action, and**
- **distribute leadership among their supporters.**

These principles represent the future of the

digital tools leaders will need to run for office, grow their nonprofits, advocate for their communities, build their base of supporters or customers, and grow their networks. At its best, NationBuilder gives our customers a world-class “chief of staff”—a partner that facilitates effective communication and engagement, that encourages them to define their goals and the steps it takes to reach them, and that optimizes for achieving real results beyond what would have been possible before. From the most basic tasks leaders need to complete—like identifying

their supporters, sending emails, and creating webpages—to complex targeting, analysis, and strategic communications, we’re building and optimizing comprehensive workflows for leaders.

That means we’re always striving to generate and stay on top of the latest research into what makes the companies, organizations, and campaigns who lead the pack truly successful. We have to be experts in the challenges leaders face, and listen to our customers at over 9,000 organizations, in over 100 countries, across sectors, who offer an invaluable vantage point on what gives leaders the edge they need to win in this evolving digital world.

The result? We’ve learned that winning has changed. What it takes to win your customer’s business, your alumni’s loyalty, your donor’s dollars, or your election, is fundamentally different today than it was a decade ago. The landscape has been forever altered by the internet, social media, the ways in which we connect, consume information, and engage in activism. The reality is that people everywhere now have the power to start a movement, influence decision-makers, and lead communities.

Software, for the most part, hasn’t kept up with this changing reality. Instead, most software has oriented around helping manage one task. With that “management” orientation, even the best CRM, DMS, CMS, AMS, or email tools won’t get the job done. These systems don’t offer the insights and features organizations need to lead their sectors, or appeal to new voters, or improve their communities. Your software shouldn’t require you to string together a series of siloed systems housing email, social, donor, and supporter data. It should integrate to give you a full picture. It shouldn’t just chart your outcomes; it should help you improve them. It shouldn’t just manage the data you’ve collected; it should allow for insights and action on those insights by the community of supporters with the best ability to affect them. We should expect

more from our software than we expected a decade ago, because more is possible. And more is required.

That is the promise of leadership software. In 2017 our focus was making NationBuilder faster and easier to improve, so that we could better the day-to-day customer experience more rapidly than ever before. In 2018 our customers will see this payoff. This year marks a new phase for us. Equipped with new insights, data, and our customers’ stories, we’re employing the full might of our organization to deliver even more of the features, updates to core work flows, and innovations that leaders need to win today. This is how:

We’re making the software even smarter.

Among NationBuilder’s greatest assets are the insights our customers get as a result of having all their data integrated into one platform. Successful leaders make good, strategic decisions because they know more than anyone else about their current supporters—and those who might support them tomorrow. Leaders need comprehensive, rich data to engage their communities and prospects in ways that are more targeted, more timely, and more human.

NationBuilder customers know if the same person who retweeted them today also donated last week, or if a supporter signed up for their email list and RSVP’d via text for an upcoming event. Our customers can see who in their database has the most social influence, has taken action on their website, and lives within 15 miles of their new store opening.

And in 2018, we’re pushing the power of integrated data even further. We’re uncovering new data points for our customers, integrating additional functionality, and improving reporting.

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We’ve also launched NationBuilder Insights to offer new machine learning and algorithm-driven insights into your data, including political ideology predictions from supporter social media behaviors, and similarity scoring to ID people in your database who are most like your best customers or donors.

We’re making it easier to distribute leadership.

We know that organizations, campaigns, and companies are most successful when they distribute leadership. When brands substantively equip and engage potential brand ambassadors, they expand their reach and increase their awareness. Organizations that give some responsibility for fundraising over to well-equipped groups of supporters raise more money. And no matter what kind of organization you run, less than 5% of the people in your database control your word of mouth.

Leaders can’t win today with a centralized structure alone. Organizations at the vanguard are building networks of supporters empowered and emboldened to be advocates for their organizations, drive growth, and increase loyalty and engagement for the long-term. That’s why in 2018, we’re continuing to expand the capabilities of NationBuilder Network to power

distributed organizations, and we’re investing in more tools to grow your members, equip your ambassadors, and engage individuals as fundraisers, recruiters, organizers, and advocates.

We’re listening.

Listening to our customers’ experiences is central to identifying and solving the challenges that get in a leader’s way. We’ve invested in technology to better capture and act on customer feedback. We’ve dedicated resources to innovate alongside leaders in sectors and countries where we haven’t previously worked. And in 2018 we’re launching the daily online workshop NationBuilder Live to get up close and personal with our customers every single day.

Our customers inspire us. They demonstrate what our product principles look like in the world, affirming our commitment to software that helps leaders put people at the center, control their own their data, move people to action, and distribute leadership to their supporters. In 2018, we’re doubling down on our commitment to leaders. From the individuals leading for the first time, to the campaigns and companies leading their peers, we’re committed to providing the most secure, most powerful, and smartest software available for all leaders, in all sectors—worldwide.

Closing

This new year has arrived with an explosion of possibility. Leaders around the world are harnessing the beauty, strength, and resilience born of 2017 and creating lasting organizations, thriving movements, and innovative enterprises. At NationBuilder, we have never been more committed to serving those leaders.

In 2018, we will aggressively improve and evolve our software to make sure anyone who makes the choice to, can lead. We will continue to tell the stories of those leaders and expand the ways we bring them together. And we'll do it knowing that the most extraordinary accomplishments of this community are yet to come.



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Finally, thank you to all the members of our community who said yes to leading. And who say yes everyday. We are grateful.





We envision a world where everyone has the freedom and opportunity to create what they are meant to create. We build the infrastructure for a world of creators by helping leaders develop and organize thriving communities.

We make the tools of leadership available to everyone regardless of race, age, class, religion, educational background, ideology, gender, sexual orientation, or party.

We do not endorse any candidate or cause.



NationBuilder