Using Design Strategy to add
Value to a Political Campaign

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Preface

At the onset of a project, the first question designers like to ask is: why? It seems like such a simple question and yet far too often it goes unanswered, or the answer is, “Because we have always done it like this.” What has always attracted me to the concept of design strategy is that it provides a platform to help design better understood goals, objectives, and possibilities, while also providing tangible results showing better outcomes. Having seen the design process in a political campaign firsthand, I saw how the emerging challenges and unique problems facing communications for a presidential campaign could be improved through the inclusion of design strategy.

This thesis is an examination of the political campaign process, its communication history, how the private sector has utilized design strategy and how implementation can better improve the core brand, messaging, and communications of a campaign. The aim is to better understand the campaign process and how innovation will be a key factor in determining the success of future candidates. By defining the current problems and emerging challenges facing political campaigns, an explanation as to why implementing design strategy for a political campaign becomes relevant. Information gathered and researched for this thesis is meant to provide an understanding of why design strategy can be valuable to a campaign, as well as showing how it can be valuable.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Political campaigns have long been the followers of traditional communications strategies and are dedicated to tried and true persuasion tactics. They like to stick with winning formulas, believing what has worked before is bound to work again. However, political campaigns are now entering a new world filled with new media platforms, drastically changing demographics, social networking, and an increasingly segmented audience. Their challenge will be to innovate communication strategies that can reach undiscovered persuadable voters and develop new technology to aid ever-growing fundraising needs. Solutions for these problems cannot be borrowed from the private sector, so it is up to the campaigns themselves to resolve them. Currently, there are new opportunities, not only to persuade, but to engage citizens like never before and a campaign that invests in new approaches to meet these obstacles will certainly benefit. Although campaigns face a unique set of challenges, there is much they can learn from progressive businesses and organizations in the private sector that are using a design-driven philosophy to innovate solutions in their own markets.

On the onset of the 2012 presidential campaign, Jim Messina, the campaign manager for President Barack Obama’s re-election campaign, said, “If we run that same [2008] campaign, we stand a good chance of losing...we have to run a new campaign” (Baribeau, 2012). Messina recognized that in order to win, they needed to adopt a philosophy that was different than previous campaigns and implement innovative solutions to their unique communication problems. Progressive businesses have been using a design-centered philosophy known as design strategy to meet their own set of challenges (Creasey, 2006). By incorporating design strategy into their own internal processes and organizational structures, businesses have seen their growth rates exceed projections and have gained a competitive edge on their competition.
(“Centre for Design Innovation,” 2007). With the new challenges now facing political campaigns, the inclusion of an overall design strategy can help them meet these challenges and innovate new solutions for them.

Typically, design has not been considered an integral tool in political campaigns, mostly utilized solely as an aesthetic necessity rather than a strategic tool (Heller, 2012). President Barack Obama’s 2008 election campaign integrated design and branding in a way that had never been seen before and began incorporating them into a systematic design approach to reinforce the candidate’s core beliefs (Thomas, 2008). This campaign greatly changed the view of how utilizing a true branding effort can ascend a candidate from the fringes of the public eye to United States presidency. Yet, this is a new concept in politics and has yet to fully materialize as evidence of preceding campaigns.

**Political Campaigns and Design**

The backbone of political campaigning, and delivering a candidate’s message to potential voters, has historically been grassroots campaigning. Interacting with people on a one-on-one basis, knocking on doors, and organizing locally has been utilized by political campaigns since their inception, and this has been a trusted messaging method. But with the advent of television, the way a candidate was viewed and marketed radically changed, pushing grassroots campaigning to the background. The campaigns of candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon utilized television in then-unseen ways, and they revolutionized the way campaigns would develop communication strategies (Berman, 2010). Television became the leading platform of a candidate’s marketing strategy. Consequently, advertising firms were hired and partnered with top-level advisors to craft a candidate’s public perception. In the same way that television drastically changed the way that campaigns operated in the 1960s,
the Internet is affecting strategies in the 2000s. Designers are now employed by campaigns to craft a candidate’s digital presence, as advertisers once were employed to shape a candidate’s message on television.

Campaigns are now positioning themselves to be nimbler and faster in order to adjust to changing culture, bringing in new media departments to their organizational structure to manage the new messaging platforms. Since the 2000 presidential campaign, the web has been the fastest growing medium for getting information about an election. (“Pew Research Center,” 2012). Due to the expanse of cable television and the emergence of social media, the audience is more segmented than ever before. Both the Democratic and Republican parties are integrating new media teams into their political campaign structures, but their utilization and objectives are still in flux. However, design has moved past simply creating a logotype and pamphlet literature and is now needed to design these interactions across the Web, print, and mobile devices.

**Design Strategy**

While political campaigns have been slower to adopt new methods of communicating with their intended audiences, the private sector has begun to adopt more of a design-driven approach to innovate solutions for their audience’s needs. Companies have recognized that innovation will be the new driving force behind the future of the economy (Kelley & Littman, 2001). One way they can do this is by becoming co-creators with designers and implementing design strategy as a process of innovation within their own companies (Holston, 2008). With the rise of the innovation economy, designers will be the leaders of this movement (Nussbaum, 2011). How this approach of design strategy is implemented will determine those who succeed and gain the competitive edge.
Recent studies have shown design and innovation are linked. Companies employing a design strategy approach brought 27% more new products or services to market compared to their competition (“Centre for Design Innovation,” 2007). Not only are these companies innovating new products or services, but design strategy is helping them grow and maintain their growth (“Centre for Design Innovation,” 2007). Design-led businesses are building infrastructure within their companies to facilitate these results and instill a sense of brand within their employees. These companies are the beneficiaries of this approach, as they are outperforming their competition and becoming more profitable than companies who are not implementing design (The Economic Effects, 2003).

When it comes to brand, there is not a trusted metric used to measure its value for a company. This leads some in leadership positions to question if it is worth the time and investment for something that is viewed as non-essential. Yet, companies employing design strategy to strengthen their brands are enjoying a majority of market share and more dedication from customers and employees (Neumeier, 2006). The ability to innovate not only comes from the acknowledgment that a user-centered business plan engages an audience, but that the emotional connection associated with branding is equally important. Designers have long been connecting the bridge between emotion and usability, and this skill is not only valuable for business, but for political campaigns as well.

**Thesis Statement**

Political campaigns are now in a mode of transition and the incorporation of design strategy will help them adopt and innovate within the changing environment. By using companies and organizations who have adopted this strategy as examples, political campaigns can initiate their own innovations and solve challenges specific
to winning an election. By exploring the campaign process and internal structure and using design strategy as the bases for including a more design-centric approach, challenges moving forward can be planned for by including design strategy.

*Why will design strategy will be valuable for political campaigns:*

- To clearly communicate and resonate a candidate’s core beliefs and mission.
- Changing demographics and the emotional connection needed to persuade these new voters.
- Changing media platforms and the ability to maintain a consistent brand voice across them.
- Innovating and creating new technologies.
- Design and new political products and services will lead to creating brand advocates.
- Every interaction with a political campaign is now a designed experience.
CHAPTER 2
Background and Context

To understand how value can be added to a political campaign through the inclusion of design strategy, it is important to consider the process and history of campaigning. Additionally, it is important to examine how the private sector has formulated and developed their own assimilation of design strategy to meet their needs. By doing so, a comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing integration can be gained. In order to obtain that understanding, a thorough evaluation of campaign history, adoption of technologies, and utilization of design was completed, as well as an assessment of how businesses (including non-profit and for-profit) harness design strategy to innovate and produce measured results. The objectives are to establish the emerging needs that design strategy can solve for campaigns and to demonstrate how this philosophy has led to innovations within other fields.

With campaigns expanding their digital departments to meet the new demands of an evolving communications landscape, there has been an influx of designers into political organizations; however, their role is still new and requires further examination to determine how they may be best implemented. Currently, these design teams are primarily responsible for executing communication pieces and managing the aesthetic of a campaign. Companies utilizing design strategy go beyond this base level of utilization and integrate designers throughout their company’s process to foster collaboration with traditional stakeholders, which has been shown to promote innovation. Using these companies as a model, we can begin to see how these principles can be applied to political campaigns and how a more strategic approach to design can aid their communications efforts.
**Political Campaigns**

During an interview with *Cooper*, Scout Addis (a User Experience Advisor for the Obama 2012 campaign) said:

“Campaigns have traditionally relied on paper, phones, and volunteers to contact voters. Even in 2012 we still printed out a list of names, and then handed that to a person to make calls or knock on doors. They then recorded their notes on paper, and handed it off to someone else to do data entry to get that information back into our analytics systems. That is how phone banking and canvassing is still done. But all of that is changing...” (LeMoine, 2013).

Political campaigns are now experiencing the challenge of going from analog to digital, and there is no precedent in politics for how to make this transition. New products and tools will be developed to meet the need and those who innovate will gain an edge against their competition. A campaign's communication strategy has long been dictated by the technology available, (figure 1) but with the speed of technological advancements, campaigns are now forced to reinvent methodologies every four years. With all of this, the need for design will expand and there will be many challenges to incorporating a successful design plan into the campaign process, as well as challenges for designers to consider as they become more involved.

The popular method of delivery a candidate's message has been known as grassroots organizing, which consists of dedicated volunteers talking to voters on the street or door-to-door, canvassing neighborhoods, or organizing locally. This was a trusted way to spread a candidate’s message undisturbed. Newspapers served as the primary media to deliver voters information about candidates, but campaigns did not have control over what was said. As communications progressed and campaigns began to focus more on
radio, television, and print, grassroots campaigning, while still an important political tool, lost favor to paid media. This is important to note because the renewed emphasis that the 2008 and 2012 Barack Obama presidential campaigns put on grassroots campaigning would reinvent the way citizens would interact with a campaign. These campaigns took an old idea and modernized it with new technologies like the Internet, which would come to support grassroots campaigning in a way that traditional media, like television, could not.

In the 1952 presidential election television made its debut and initiated a major overhaul of the political process. Noted political consultant Roger Ailes said, “Television is no gimmick, and nobody will ever be elected to major office again without presenting themselves well on it” (Kaushik, 2011). John F. Kennedy, whose campaign understood the importance of the medium, perfected its use in the 1960s and he became known as the “first television president” (Bates & Diamond, 1992). Kennedy’s campaign not only effectively presented its candidate through the use of advertising, but embraced other
ways television could enhance the candidate’s image, such as televised debates. In the first televised presidential debate, Kennedy appeared composed and confident, whereas his opponent Richard Nixon, who was underweight and pale from a recent hospitalization and had refused make-up, was perceived as frail by viewers. In the subsequent debates Nixon realized the power of the medium and performed much better; however, that first impression made a significant impact in what turned out to be a close election (Webley, 2010). This experience left an impression on Nixon; he refused to debate on television again and hired New York advertising agencies to successfully remake his image as the “New Nixon” prior to his next run for president (Berman, 2010). Candidates had become products and advertisers were now crucial to packaging their images to guide public perception. The advertising industry was integrated into the political process and eventually was viewed as essential to winning an election.

With the emergence of the Internet, designers are now being sought after by campaigns much like advertisers were when they needed to adapt to television. However, design’s perceived role is still very fluid within the field of politics. Historically, the use of design was limited to finding someone to develop a logotype and hiring people, who often were not trained designers, to make posters and printed pamphlets. During the television era, little changed in the designer’s role in politics, as campaigns maintained traditional motifs for their logos, which mostly involved the red, white, and blue color scheme and the stars and stripes imagery. A few presidential campaign bids tried to break from this format, such as the Edmund Muskie 1972 and the Jesse Jackson 1984 campaign. Jackson used a red, yellow, and purple color scheme, representing a unified culture rather than playing on patriotic imagery, and Muskie used a purple and orange color scheme (figure 2). Both were dark horse candidates that broke from established practices to differentiate themselves from mainstream choices; however, their design strategies did little more than to break from the traditional aesthetics.
The 2008 presidential election was historic for many reasons, not only because Barack Obama was the first African-American to be elected as President of the United States, but because of how his campaign was run. Bringing a focus back to organizing and harnessing the use of the Internet, Obama went from a little-known senator in Illinois to the Democratic presidential nominee. The campaign used the Internet to foster small donations from a large audience and build tools, as well as developed marketing strategies, to encourage repeat donations. This resulted in the highest amount of fundraising by a campaign in American political history (Scherer, 2012a). In 2008, the campaign also used the Internet to organize volunteers across the country and coordinated the largest voter registration effort ever seen, resulting in the largest voter turnout – 62% of registered voters – since 1968, and saw the largest amount of total people (131 million) vote in a presidential election (Associated Press, 2008). Following the election, Claire Miller, a New York Times reporter said, “One of the many ways that the election of Barack Obama as president has echoed that of John F. Kennedy is his use of a new medium that will forever change politics. For Mr. Kennedy, it was television. For Mr. Obama, it is the Internet” (Miller, 2008).

The Obama campaign was not the first to see the potential for the Internet as a fundraising and organizing tool. Howard Dean, a former governor from Vermont, was running for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2004 when his campaign
manager, Joe Trippi, made the Internet the focal point of their campaign (Berman, 2010). At the time, the Internet was a major part of daily culture, yet political campaigns were largely ignoring its potential. At the beginning of the 2004 primaries, even Dean, along with his top strategist, did not know what a blog was (Berman, 2010). The Dean campaign found bloggers to spread their message, arrange meet-ups, organize locally, and, most importantly, use online efforts to encourage small donations from a large group of supporters. This fundraising strategy kept the Dean campaign in a race where he was viewed as a significant improbability and provided the blueprint that the Obama campaign would later expand upon to set record-breaking levels (Berman, 2008).

Not only was the utilization of the Internet historic, but the 2008 Obama campaign was the first to truly use a modern branding approach (Thomas, 2008). Marty Neumeier, author of The Brand Gap, defines a modern brand not as a logo or identity system, but a “gut feeling,” an emotional connection with a product, person, or service (Neumeier, 2006). The Obama campaign connected his core ideals of hope and change to a visual representation of a horizon within an “O.” This is the first time that a presidential candidate was visually represented by a mark and not a logotype of his last name (Thomas, 2008). Its execution went beyond traditional political visual themes and combined the candidate’s message with patriotic imagery to create something that felt new. Having a concise, modern brand was important to the candidate, not only because it was a reflection of his ideals, but because it became a symbol of his campaign and of the movement that his supporters would come to embrace. Sol Sender, whose team created the original mark representing the brand, said that design helped facilitate this: “The identity was for the campaign, not just the candidate... some have termed it a movement, a symbol of hope” (Heller, 2008). A brand and visual identity that exceeded its function as an identifier was helpful to Obama because it attracted
many new participants to the political process and helped differentiate him from his competitors.

**Perception of Design in Politics**

With an emphasis on Internet communications and the expanded role of a visual brand, the Obama campaign hired designers to accommodate the growing need for graphic design. The inclusion of an in-house design department into the political campaign structure was another first by the 2008 Obama team, and when Scott Thomas and John Slabyk joined the campaign as full-time designers, they replaced political staffers who, up to that time, were managing all of the design for the campaign (Thomas, 2008). The campaign recognized that trained designers could implement a comprehensive visual system that could maintain quality and represent the brand. This was crucial because the cohesion of a visual style projected a perception of a well-run and professional organization to the public, which was necessary because the then-senator was viewed as too inexperienced to lead (Thomas, 2008). The designers were also creating multiple Web experiences for the campaign, not only to the main www.barackobama.com site, but other sites that were dedicated to countering attacks, like www.fightthesmears.com. Not only had designers been brought into the fray of politics, but their role was expanding. In 2008, the campaign employed a design team of eight. In 2012 it grew to a full-time team of 20.

The sentiment among participants in research for this thesis is that the role of designers will continue to expand. As the need grows, the role of the designer will need to be determined. Will they be viewed as strategic partners or as aesthetic finishers, who solely make things look good? As designer and author William Drenttel says:

“[Designers] take pride in being makers, but seldom identify themselves as thinkers. They claim to be emissaries of communication – to give form to ideas.
And while we would like to believe this is true, it seems to us that all too often, we, as designers, are called upon merely to make things look good – rather than contributing to the evolution and articulation of ideas themselves” (Holston, 2008).

The perception of designers’ value will be an issue as their roles are determined within the structure of a political campaign. One participant who worked as a designer for Obama in 2012 said, “We are not very highly thought of, and I think its because people in politics still don’t know how to use us, or maybe they don’t understand our capabilities” (personal communication, January 12, 2013). This is not a new problem for design. In a study conducted by the Centre for Design Innovation, 78% of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) polled in Ireland viewed design as important factor in staying ahead of their competition, yet only 15% of them intended to significantly raise their investment (“Centre for Design Innovation,” 2007). If design is to play a larger role in political campaigns and if designers are to be viewed as strategic partners, these perceptions will have to improve.

In The Political Campaign Desk Reference, which is promoted as a starter guide for anyone interested in getting involved with a political campaign, it mentions the campaign logo once: “A campaign logo – the image that is imprinted on signs, literature, television and all other materials, is something that some campaigns spend far too much time creating” (McNamara, 2008). This opinion is detrimental to the impact that design may have within politics. Matt Ipcar, former designer on the 2008 Obama campaign and current Creative Director for Blue State Digital (a digital consultancy that got its start servicing political clients), reflected on design's perception in the modern political landscape: “When I first starting working with people in politics it was pretty bad, but as we proved our worth and they began to trust us things got drastically better” (personal communication, March 4, 2013). As designers work more with political campaigns it will be imperative to build trust and to demonstrate value. In The Strategic Designer, author Dave Holston says
designers can build trust by following these building blocks: 1. Effective communication, 2. Active listening, 3. Honest interaction, 4. Transparent procedures, and 5. Consistent follow-through. Holston gives the following criteria on how to demonstrate design’s value: 1. Design as a consumer motivator, 2. Design as differentiator, and 3. Design as a risk-management tool (Holston, 2008).

**Challenges facing Design in Campaigning**

Since introducing design teams into the political campaign structure is still relatively new, designers will have to work at building trust and demonstrating their value. Additionally, it will be important to understand how different a political campaign is when compared to an in-house, design firm, or advertising agency job. Dan Ryan, the Director of Front-End Development for Obama for America 2012, stated that biggest challenge was, “the sheer volume of requests we got each day... Turning around new designs through approvals by messaging, policy, research, legal, etc., then launching those projects within a few days or often a few hours was the single largest challenge” (Cutrell, 2012). Designers unfamiliar with the political campaign process will have to adapt to this time crunch, which can involve cutting the standard four to six months of design time for a typical Web site down to a week. A campaign views time, money, information, and people (TMIP) as their four major resources, and how they operate revolves around how these resources are utilized (McNamara, 2008). Time is particularly important because it is finite during an election, so the speed in which a project can be completed is crucial. “Really, we only have a three month window to make a rather large impression,” a participant who worked on the 2012 presidential election said (personal communication, January 10, 2013). This illustrates how important planning and design can be in order to maximize the opportunity to reach voters.
Another challenge facing political campaigns will be how they recruit talent (people resource) to their organization. Like most businesses and organizations, campaigns recruit through a linear process of hiring. First, hiring a director or department head, who is then responsible for hiring a team further along in the process. Potential employees, or staffers, as they are known in politics, are already being drawn from a limited pool of candidates. Depending on the campaign’s political affiliation, potential staffers need to share their candidate’s ideology. A campaign needs to recruit people who are passionate and driven for their candidate, because the amount of stress put on staffers by the time commitment, the speed of deadlines, and pressure to win will amass and their belief in what they are working for is critical. Justin Ahrens, of Rule29 in Chicago, Illinois, works with many clients on social good initiatives and says that finding people who are passionate about a cause is important, but also believes “if you’re working purely on financial motivations it’s really easy to feel like you’ve lost your soul. Working on something you believe in can save you from becoming bitter, jaded, or burned out” (personal communication, March 22, 2013). When Google tells their employees that the mission of the company is to organize the world’s information and make it easily accessible to everyone, it creates a level of excitement and attracts potential employees, which has helped Google become one of Fortune’s top 100 companies to work for (Neumeier, 2009). Promoting this type of excitement in a cause and expressing passion towards the work will help campaigns recruit beyond politics.

Campaigns are now facing new or evolving challenges with the advancements in technology over the last decade. With this rapid progress, campaigns and politics are trying to adjust to a growing segmentation of audiences, an electorate with new demographics, and the need for new emotional appeals that can attract these new voters and cultivate them into campaign advocates.
The segmentation of the audience is proving to be a major difficulty for political campaigns. No longer can campaigns rely on large media buys that serve broad messages to a broad audience. They are now using more targeted messages on cable television for specific demographics. In the 2012 presidential election, the Romney campaign focused mostly on large buys with the traditional television spots, that is prime-time and news programs, while the Obama campaign focused on niche cable networks to target precise audiences (Rutenberg, 2012). While this seems like a small shift to meet the segmentation challenge, a larger shift was happening digitally. As more people have transitioned into getting their information about an election online, campaigns have had to devise new strategies to reach segmented audiences through online ads, before any sort of best practice could be established on this medium, the 2012 presidential election showed that the digital audience had further segmented from 2008 to mobile devices. Dan Ryan said that early on in the 2012 campaign, “We were seeing 25% of our traffic coming from mobile devices, but almost none of our donations.” This forced the campaign to adjust to the influx of mobile users and rethink how those devices could be rethought to encourage donations (Cutrell, 2012). The Obama campaign now had to overhaul its online experience to accommodate for the users accessing the site through a browser or through a mobile device.

Changing and evolving demographics are also posing new challenges for campaigns. In both the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, President Obama would not have won with the electorate as it was going into these respective races, each time his campaign had to create a new electorate by reaching out and engaging new demographics. The way businesses communicate with audiences has changed (figure 3). By interacting with audiences in this new communication model, they have become more engaged and connected to businesses. The Obama campaign also used this model, not only to attract new voters in emerging demographics, but to utilize them as advocates for recruiting new people to the campaign.
A persuadable voter that receives information from an unaffiliated source or a friend is more receptive to that message than if they were to receive that same information from an advertisement or a candidate’s campaign (Issenberg, 2012). By fostering connections and emotional engagements from advocates, campaigns can arm them with tools and information to use towards recruiting their friends and neighbors to a candidate, and they become a powerful asset to a campaign. In 2012, the Obama campaign began to use this philosophy through social media by creating targeted sharing on Facebook. They would use information gathered from supporters to find persuadable voters via their friends list. 600,000 supporters signed up and this gave the campaign access to 5 million new contacts. The Obama campaign was than able to have the supporter provide campaign information to the potential voter, thus accessing the potential voter through a trusted friend (Scherer, 2012b). The campaign saw the potential of a new medium (social networking) and was able to benefit from it. Previously, in the 2008 election, Facebook had one-sixth the number of users it would have in 2012, and had now become a new channel in which a campaign could find voters (Scherer, 2012b).
Business and Design Strategy

In the private sector, businesses and organizations are consistently evolving to meet customers’ needs, gain competitive advantages, and maintain growth. Many of these companies are utilizing design strategy as a means to innovate, stay relevant, and gain consumer loyalty. In an interview with Dave Holston, he defined design strategy as:

“...the integration of design thinking and business strategy. There is a lot of overlap between the two and in many ways they are inseparable. Both involve planning, research, creative thinking, competitive strategy, measuring outcomes, and ongoing refinement. Eames defines design (design strategy) as a plan for arranging elements in such a way as to best accomplish a particular purpose” (personal communication, March 18, 2013).

Political campaigns will need to innovate to keep pace with technology and to engage their audiences through an emotional connection with the brand. One way to plan for this is to incorporate design strategy into the political process. To do this, campaigners will have to understand how design strategy helps innovate through human-centered design. Additionally, they will have to understand its value and how the investment of resources not only pays off with results, but with audiences developing brand loyalty.

Design strategy has developed slowly within the business sector, but it is now growing as companies begin to recognize its value. Like most new strategies, it has been developed out of a necessity, which is that in order innovate you have to understand the end user and how they live. Business executives list innovation as the top priority for success and it is considered to be driving factor of the future economy (Neumeier, 2009). A 2007 study by McKinsey & Company found that companies are growing and succeeding at innovating incorporated design (Neumeier, 2009). Additionally, The Design Difference
report, published by the Centre for Design Innovation, states that design-led firms are outperforming competition and are more profitable than those who are not employing design (“Centre for Design Innovation,” 2007).

How Design Strategy is Working

Businesses are not only using design strategy to breed innovation, but are also using it to focus on human-centered design and connecting a product or service to an emotional response to a brand. This connection of product or service to brand is something that Marty Neumeier in *The Designful Company* calls this the “sweet spot,” because it is here that people gain a loyalty to the brand and start to consider themselves a member of a ‘tribe’ (that is, a group of people who associate a product or service with themselves and like-minded people) (Neumeier, 2009).

Innovation is considered the main reason why design strategy is incorporated within business. Its ability to foster new products and services is giving its utilizers a distinct competitive edge. *The Design Difference* report shows that 78% of companies utilizing design strategy are bringing new products or services to market, while only 51% of companies who do not use design strategy brought new products or services to market (“Centre for Design Innovation,” 2007). Additionally, 72% of businesses developing these new products or services achieved growth, compared to 56% for their counterparts. 47% of these companies credit design as a key element in their success and to maintaining competitiveness. Conversely, companies not experiencing growth credit design 30% of the time as a key element of success (“Centre for Design Innovation,” 2007). The study goes on to state that the more strategic the implementation of design is, the more likely a company will enjoy growth.

Much of these successes can be attributed to design strategy’s ability to focus on the user and to stir companies to a human-centered, or user-centered, focus. Jared Lavy of
Conifer Research says that this shift, “helps companies understand what they do, rather than what they make” (personal communication, March 22, 2012). The inclusion of a design-centered approach ensures that a company is user-focused in its delivery of products, services, brand, and communications by not only appreciating how their user interacts with their product or service, but how their user lives. This helps companies and organizations find new opportunities to meet their users’ needs, and thus lead to innovations.

Beyond using a user focus to gain understanding, companies employing design strategy have been more successful in uniting a product or service with a sense of brand. Buckminster Fuller has a popular quote, “When I am working on a problem, I never think about beauty but when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong,” which he uses to illustrate the importance of both usability and aesthetics in solving a problem. The emotional connection made with the user from how they interpret the aesthetics of a product or a service is as important as the use and strategy behind its development. Companies that successfully make this connection have a distinct differentiation from competitors and experience more brand loyalty from their users (Neumeier, 2006). In The Brand Gap, Neumeier says that making this connection is no easy task and for most companies it is separated by a “mile-wide chasm” (Neumeier, 2006). What leads to the gap can be attributed to the divide between left brain and right brain thinking. Neumeier notes that left brain thinkers who favor analytical, logical, linear, concrete, numerical, and verbal thought processes tend to be strategists and business people, while right brain thinkers who favor intuitive, emotional, spatial, visual, and physical thought processes tend to be creatives. Business executives listed “aligning strategy with consumer experience” as one of their top ten wicked problems in a survey conducted by Neutron and Stanford University (Neumeier, 2006). The success and failure of a project or product in today’s market often depends on bridging this gap
and cultivating an emotional connection. This instills the belief in a user’s mind that a company’s product or service cannot be replicated, and that their quality cannot be reproduced.

Although design strategy is not practiced by all successful companies, it is providing a competitive edge for burgeoning companies fighting for market share and for established businesses looking to either reinvent their perception or adapt to new practices. Companies are implementing new ways of doing business by focusing on design and switching the roles of how traditional companies have operated (figure 4). These changes in how business is conducted and internally structured are an example of how a design-centered company can not only promote innovation, but provide an emotional benefit to their employees (Neumeier, 2009).

**FIG. 4: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS OF DESIGNFUL COMPANY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRADITIONAL</th>
<th>DESIGN COMPANY</th>
<th>EMPLOYEE BENEFIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on cost</td>
<td>Focus on customers</td>
<td>Connectedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command and Control</td>
<td>Vision and creativity</td>
<td>Excitement and satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs are role oriented</td>
<td>Jobs are project oriented</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk averse</td>
<td>Risk is accepted</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers are siloed</td>
<td>Workers collaborate</td>
<td>Feeling of shared success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics are tacked on</td>
<td>Aesthetics are built in</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Companies that implement this shift to a design-centered approach have been able to validate the move with results. Typically, companies who hire outside firms to create or manage a brand are dependent on their availability and deadlines. However, when integrating design internally or in-house, this can improve efficiency, turnaround times,
and allow the company to become stewards of their own brand (Holston, 2008). For a business like Kraft Foods, which has a well established brand and is one of the largest food and beverage companies in the world, implementing design strategy into their process was essential to their workflow. The company manages over 220 brands under the Kraft umbrella, and management of the massive workload, as well as improving turnaround time to market, was a significant issue for their internal design team. Pamela DeCesare, the director for global packaging at Kraft Foods, decided to integrate more design strategy into the process to improve their efficiency. The redesign of their process, workflow, and system of approvals allowed an increase in creative development while improving their turnaround time on projects. They were now managing over 175 projects at one time, and working more efficiently than before, while also maintaining strategic focus (Holston, 2008).

The amount of time and resources that companies invest into design has also been shown to produce results. The Danish Design Centre (DDC), interested in charting the extent in which companies utilize design within their business, created what is known as the Design Ladder (figure 5). The Design Ladder ranks companies based on the strategic importance they attributed to design; the higher the importance, the higher the company would rank. In a 2003 survey, the DDC studied 1,000 Danish business’ investment in design and their economic impact. The results showed that a company’s investment in design was tied to economic growth, and companies what were immersed in design displayed greater success (“SEE Project,” 2011). Another study by the National Agency for Enterprise and Housing titled “The Economic Effect of Design” saw that companies employing design had gross revenues 22% higher than other companies in general (“National Agency for Enterprise and Housing,” 2003). Idiom, a design consultancy based out of India, has used their immersion of design as a primary method of launching new businesses. Idiom has helped its clients launch 80 successful companies out of 100 attempts by implementing
their design process, called Mind to Market. This took those start-ups from launch to profitability in nine months (Nussbaum, 2011). These examples have shown design’s ability to affect business. As this investment continues to grow, one author argued that designers will become drivers of economic success over the next decade (Nussbaum, 2011).

**FIG. 5: THE DESIGN LADDER**

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Speed is critical for any business, but unlike political campaigns which have a definitive end date, they have the luxury of time. For those skeptical that the implementation and overhaul of design within a company can take place within the time frame of a typical political campaign, they need only to look at the emphasis that Google has put on design. When CEO Larry Page took over in 2011, he delivered a company-wide objective to redesign all of their products within six months, a daunting task for such a massive company with a wide range of products and services (Bohn & Hamburger, 2013). The company was able to accomplish this by establishing a design vision rather than a tight set of design standards, allowing their departments to design for their own challenges, but having enough visual language established to feel consistent with other Google products. The company promoted cross collaboration and emphasized a design-centered approach.
resulting in what journalist said was “a beautiful revolution” (Bohn et al., 2013). They accomplished a redesign of their suite of products and continue to instill a design culture throughout the company and on new projects.

In order to move at this pace and put such a strong emphasis on design, companies will have to show faith in the design culture. Often times this will have to start at the top. Page was able to instill a culture of usable and beautiful within a very short amount of time by making it a priority within the company. In an article about the redesign, one author says this about the new emphasis: “While Larry Page served as Google's product president for a decade, perhaps he realized that the company needed a design dictator, not to point out that a button needs to be four pixels right, but to finally make design a true priority at the company” (Bohn et al., 2013).
CHAPTER 3
Defining Structure and Opportunities

Most organizations, whether they are businesses or campaigns, are set up through a linear structure. The hierarchical system of organizing is easy to understand, easy to implement, ensures accountability, and has historically been the standard model of management. This results in a top-down method of ideation, where high level executives are creating directives for those below them to execute. It is a similar situation for political campaigns. A campaign manager, who is the equivalent of a CEO, works closely with campaign advisors and strategists to determine courses of action. Businesses that employ design strategy are moving away from this method, encouraging collaboration and multi-disciplinary teams. This has also reversed the direction of ideation from top-down to bottom-up, so that the end users act as inspiration for new directives.

In order to explore opportunities for design strategy to integrate into the political campaign structure, it is important to understand the current campaign structure and how it has recently evolved. For the purpose of this thesis, presidential campaigns were used as the primary research focus, as they offer the greatest opportunity for the implementation of design strategy. Their challenges of size, mass communication, and national appeal exhibit a large need for design. By studying previous campaigns and interviews with political staffers, the makeup and structure of a campaign has been shown to vary from candidate to candidate; however, there are consistencies and generalities that apply to most campaign structures. Additionally, by studying integration methods and the internal structures of businesses utilizing design strategy, opportunities for its inclusion in political campaigns can be ascertained.
The Political Campaign Structure

Politics naturally lend themselves to a top-down method of management because the government itself is set up in this manner. The ways in which a campaign needs to operate in the field supports a hierarchical structure. As a former senior level political staffer noted, "It’s modeled in some ways after a military structure, so that an army of volunteers can divide and conquer a given state or region in the most organized, accountable way possible" (personal communication, February 7, 2013). Although this type of structure is beneficial in many ways, particularly in emphasizing the importance of grassroots organization, the advance of technology and the evolving communication mediums will dictate a change in how campaigns are managed. In an interview with *Bloomberg Business Week* during the 2012 presidential election, Jim Messina stated that he was now convinced that modern presidential campaigns will have to mimic fast-growing tech companies rather than follow previous campaigns (Joshua, 2012). Messina said, “What they’ve done is more readily applicable to me, because they all started very small and got big very quickly,” signaling a shift in belief of the traditional method of organizing a campaign to one allowing them to move at the same pace of a tech company (Joshua, 2012). The possibility that what has been developed in the previous presidential cycle will be obsolete by the next election cycle is a problem for future campaigns.

Campaign structures vary from candidate to candidate, depending on the size of an organization. A typical campaign structure is provided in *Campaign Craft. The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*, which is a text assigned to political science majors, that shows a baseline example of how a campaign is organized (figure 6). This organizational structure shows the candidate at the top, who is directly followed by the campaign manager (Burton & Shea, 2010). Also listed at the top level are the advisors and the outside consultants. Recent presidential campaigns have seen some of these subsects under outside consults moved into the internal structure of
the campaign with their own department heads reporting to the campaign manager (Appendix B).

FIG. 6: CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE

Most presidential campaigns share similar organizational titles and departments. Campaigns of all types and sizes share essential needs, such as leadership, fundraising, volunteers, and communications. These departments vary in size and importance depending on the level of office that is being pursued (McNamara, 2008). A campaign’s leader, or CEO, is known as the Campaign Manager, and together with the candidate and their senior advisors they determine the overall strategy for a path to victory. The candidate’s role is to work with this leadership team in the planning phase, helping
them set the primary objectives, and then his or her role shifts to meeting donors and persuading voters (McNamara, 2008). The campaign manager is then responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the campaign, developing strategies as they arise, and determining how they will execute directives. Departments that are found within presidential campaigns consist of Communications, Fundraising, Legal, Field, and New Media or Digital (figure 7).

FIG. 7: DEPARTMENT POSITIONS AND ROLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAMPAIGN MANAGER</td>
<td>Acts as CEO of campaign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLITICAL DIRECTOR</td>
<td>Works with campaign manager to implement strategy and execute tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR</td>
<td>Works with media, manages campaign image and communication outlets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHEDULER</td>
<td>Manages the candidates time, works closely with events coordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINANCE DIRECTOR</td>
<td>Responsible for fundraising, works with donors, and manages campaign finances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR</td>
<td>Manages volunteers and coordinates their activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICY ADVISOR</td>
<td>Manages issue development, research, and message development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drawing from similarities of these campaigns’ organizations, they fall into a tiered system of organization (figure 8). Tier one consists of leadership, political consultants, and strategists. Overall strategy and the path to victory are developed within this first tier. The second tier consists of the department heads and their full-time staffers. They are responsible for adopting strategies into their respective divisions, strategizing on how to execute that vision, and overseeing its implementation. The third tier consists of interns, volunteers, and surrogates. These are people who are not full-time staffers and may not be paid, but are affiliated with the campaign. They are responsible for the execution of the vision and working directly in the field.
Recent Developments

The Obama campaigns in 2008 and 2012 followed this tiered approach to organizational structure; however, with the focus of both campaigns so fixated on the use of the Internet and digital networking, this necessitated organizational modifications. In 2008, they took new media, which consists of online communications, out of the communications department and put it on an equal level with other divisions of the campaign (Delany, 2009). This new emphasis on digital communications made the move necessary and the new department would eventually work with traditional departments to implement digital directives. One way they did this was to use online organizational tools to assist their grassroots efforts (Vargas, 2008). This new departmental collaboration led to a record-breaking $500 million in online fundraising and a record-setting amount of online involvement, with 2 million profiles created on the my.barackobama.com web site (Vargas, 2008). The 2008 campaign also used new media to assist analytics, giving prominence to tracking e-mail statistics, text messages, web site visits, and traffic source information, which was then used to guide decisions on how to spend and use resources.
By 2012 campaigns were accounting for new media and online communications within their organizational structures, but the Obama campaign continued to push its importance. For the 2012 election cycle, they built the largest technology and analytics teams in political history, which *Time* magazine called “unprecedented” (Scherer, 2012c). Not only was this increased importance focused on technology and data, but they also built the largest grassroots effort in modern politics (Ball, 2012). How the campaign integrated and managed human resources would become important to their victory. By collecting data online and in the field, the campaign was able to use this information to inform strategy and shift resources. They used their tech team to collect all of this data into a central location known as “Narwhal” and made it accessible to campaign operatives. The Romney campaign dedicated similar efforts to collect data and called their system “Orca;” however as one participant noted, “they didn’t allocate the time, the testing, or resources to ensure its success” (personal communication, January 12, 2013). In lieu of Election Day, the Obama campaign had ran simulations and tested every server to guard against any kind of failure that would compromise get-out-to-vote efforts. The Romney campaign’s data system shut down on Election Day. One Romney volunteer said, “30,000+ of the most active and fired-up volunteers were wandering around confused and frustrated when they could have been doing anything else to help. Like driving people to the polls, phone-banking, walking door-to-door, etc. We lost by fairly small margins in Florida, Virginia, Ohio and Colorado” (Ekdahl, 2012). This type of planning and cross-collaboration between departments and disciplines will be crucial for the success of future campaigns.

The shift of organizational structures and emphasis on new disciplines being incorporated into politics will an unprecedented impact on future campaigns. If the level of attention on grassroots efforts continues, the ways in which large amounts of staff and volunteers are managed will become a challenge. Challenges may also arise in the growing or emerging departments, like technology and analytics. The easy
approach would be to follow the precedent set by the Obama campaigns, but there are difficulties in planning for a landscape that is rapidly changing, and relying on what has been successful before will not be enough to ensure a victory. Even Obama’s campaign manager warns against simply following what has been done before, “I studied every campaign for the last 60 years, and the ones that tried to run a re-elect like the first one ended up losing” (Dickerson, 2012).

The Design Strategy Structure

As technology and communication methods have advanced and proved problematic for political campaigns, similar difficulties have caused the private sector to adopt new practices to meet the challenge. Like campaigns, businesses often organize in a linear structure. Their basis for this, born out of the assembly line model, was to outproduce their competition; however, business has shifted so that the goal is no longer to outsell but to out create, thus manufacturing a demand. The assembly line method lacks the emotion and humanity to meet the new economic landscape (Neumeier, 2009). It produces results that are predictable and allows no time for exploration. The twentieth century practice meant to perfect products and followed the Six Sigma model, which was pioneered by Dr. W. Edward Deming as a system to ensure absolute quality. The Six Sigma model has become so ingrained that this type of quality is now expected from the public and no longer provides a competitive advantage (Neumeier, 2009). Now companies are gaining advantage through innovations and fostering an emotional connection between user and product. The integration of design strategy has been effective in promoting both of these initiatives, but what makes this inclusion unique is there is no standard out-of-the-box model like Six Sigma that a business can employ. Integration of design strategy varies from company to company and is based on individual needs and situations.
Implementing Design Strategy

Businesses moving towards integrating design strategy into their internal structure design their own method of incorporation. When asked if businesses should follow a standard way of adapting design strategy, Dave Holston said:

“The challenge isn't about getting two distinct groups to cohabit – business people and design partners – but more about having a common way of solving business problems. Design Thinking is the model of choice. This model allows for both the analytical side of things (profit, operational efficiency, distribution) and the intuitive side (people’s needs, excitement, curiosity, desire). Solutions cannot be just about how to provide a product or service, but it must also consider how to create “delight.” In the end it’s about integrating the two mind sets” (personal communication, March 18, 2013).

Since the use of design strategy varies from situation to situation, there are various ways of accomplishing the integration of these two mind sets. There are, however, several ways that can help guide a company making this switch: 1. Assessing the depth of design integration, 2. Considering positions of change, and 3. Design internal structure to foster collaboration.

Assessing the Need

Since integrating design strategy is fluid and dependent on each company’s specific situation, a business will first gauge their level of design commitment to determine how much depth they should apply to their process. This assessment of need is not meant to be a means to an end, but rather a way to provide a starting point for integration. The Design Staircase has been developed by the Design Council in the United Kingdom (figure 5), which, (also known as the Design Ladder), measures the current use of design and provides
a footprint on how to move up the ladder. Companies higher on the staircase have shown a correlation to results and successes (“SEE Project,” 2011). In another study, integration of design is determined by a “design management” model (figure 9) which maps out three major areas of an organization where design strategy can be implemented and shows how integration within each section can take place (Acklin & Hugentobler, 2007).

FIG. 9: DESIGN MANAGEMENT MODEL

![Diagram of Design Management Model]

By using the design management model, the study compared two companies with their research, one using the highest level of design and the other using the lowest level of design. The comparison visualized their level of design depth and they then applied the design management model to map out integration methods, providing several success factors (Appendix F). One of those success factors included “design champion” at the top level of management (Acklin et al., 2007).

Positions of Leadership

The inclusion of a top-level design representative within a business’ leadership represents a position of leadership. This is a new position within a company that is meant
to manage their implementation or use of design strategy. This also gives design a “seat at the table,” ensuring that early immersion of design is taking place at the decision-making stage. Including design at the top management level is new both in ideology and what has traditionally been the perception of design as back of the chain and nonessential (Holston, 2008). Elevating a designer to a leadership position within a company helps shift the perception of designers from makers to thinkers and implies a level of expertise that is crucial to the company’s success. Some of these new leadership positions include Brand Manager, Chief Branding Officer, and Director of Brand Innovation.

Although the titles might be different, they do share similar roles. They are the representatives of the brand within a company, charged with managing the brand’s value as opposed to fixating on revenues. They look for new opportunities to grow the brand and foster innovation within their organizations. The Behavioural Design Lab, sponsored by the Design Council, defines these leadership positions as, “the uniquely assigned ‘owner of the brand experience.’ The CBO should be rigour and creativity personified. Rigour, in that guidance comes from the CEO’s business strategy. For this reason alone, CBOs sit – deservedly – at the right-hand side of the CEO. They also have to be creative to transform this strategy into a preference-generating experience that taps into the emotional currents of customers” (“The Behavioural Design Lab,” 2012). These positions give design the “seat at the table” and aid in its ability to affect brand loyalty, user experience, and clear communications.

Examples of these positions in action are scarce and the idea of a CBO or Brand Manager, in respect to design strategy, is a new concept within business. Although, as the value of incorporating design strategy becomes more apparent to business leaders, the demand for these types of positions will grow. Some universities, such as the D School at Stanford University and the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology, are melding business thinking and design thinking to create curriculum and degree paths to
train for this emerging discipline. There are companies that are currently employing these positions, such as Timberland, McDonalds, Samsung, IBM, and CitiGroup. Non-profit organizations, like The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, have appointed brand managers as well. The Gates Foundation named Tom Scott as their Director of Global Brand and Innovation. Scott said about his role, “We’re catalysts... Could we have greater impact if we leveraged our brand in different ways? What difference could it make to attach our logo to things to move conversations forward or elevate certain issues? Can we use our brand to elevate other brands?” (Kylander & Stone, 2012). His goal was to elevate the foundation in the public discourse and increase its social impact. He was less focused on revenues and concentrated more on this type of image-building, as well as internal organizational cohesion (Kylander et al., 2012).

**Collaboration is Key**

Innovation is considered the most valuable aspect of design strategy success, and in order to foster this innovation companies are designing their structures to support collaboration. This mix of disciplines and viewpoints is the catalyst for new ideas. Companies succeeding with design strategy are planning their organizational charts to pair new viewpoints with traditional stakeholders. Rob Swan of BrandImage Desgrippes & Laga says, “The most important facet of developing design strategy is collaboration” (Holston, 2008). Promoting more collaboration within an organization is essential to innovation because, as Marty Neumeier says, “the most interesting solutions lie at the boundaries of disciplines” (Neumeier, 2009). Breaking out of the silo approach and the top-down method of ideation not only promotes innovative solutions, but also helps companies with increased motivation, lessening resistance to change, widening the knowledge pool, fostering trust, managing risk, and offering multiple solutions (Holston, 2008).
At IDEO, a design and consultancy firm, they have been using cross-discipline collaboration for years to meet their clients’ needs. Tom Kelley, a partner at the firm, believes that “the myth of the lone genius can actually hamper a company’s efforts in innovation and creativity” (Kelley et al., 2001). As their company grew, they empowered some of their best people to create their own internal studios based on the work they wanted to do. They then allowed their employees to select which studio interested them and for which they wanted to work. This type of organizing promoted more bottom-up decision making and empowered everyone to be a part of the process, which has helped position IDEO as the leaders of innovation. By disregarding traditional organizational structures based on discipline backgrounds, IDEO organized by interests and was able to feed innovation by fostering collaboration between people sharing the same passions rather than the same training.

Opportunities for Political Campaigns

Political campaigns looking to integrate design strategy into their organizations can look to the private sector for guidance, but there is not a play-by-play rule book to manage the process. Campaigns can plan for this inclusion by following business’ lead; assessing their need, considering positions of leadership, and designing a more collaborative work environment. These considerations can help campaigns move away from the linear, top-down structure and move to a more horizontal, bottom-up structure that supports innovation and user-centered ideation. These changes to how a campaign organizes not only support innovative solutions to problems, but also an instillation of brand throughout the organization, much like how non-profits are now utilizing design strategy.
Design Strategy and Non-Profit

Non profit organizations share many of the same challenges that face political campaigns. They have to be able to persuade, they often represent a cause, and they must be successful in raising funds. Like campaigns, resources are often tight, which leads many in leadership positions to favor low-risk communication strategies. Justin Ahrens, who has worked on branding projects with many non-profits, says these executives believe, “A dollar spent on design is a dollar I take away from my cause” (personal communication, March 22, 2013). But as non-profits invest more into bringing design strategy into their organizations, they more success in creating differentiation and engagement they are having.

In a study conducted by Harvard University and the Rockefeller Foundation, 73 non-profit executives from 41 organizations where interviewed to determine the role of brand in their sector. In an article about the study, the authors say, “the emerging paradigm sees brand as having a broader and more strategic role in an organization’s core performance, as well as having an internal role in expressing an organization’s purposes, methods, and values (Kylander & Stone, 2012). Increasingly, branding is a matter for the entire nonprofit executive team. At every step in an organization’s strategy and at each juncture in its theory of change, a strong brand is increasingly seen as critical in helping to build operational capacity, galvanize support, and maintain focus on the social mission” (Kylander et al., 2012). The study was able to determine how brand can be implemented throughout an organization to influence these types of objectives (figure 10). They go on to say that not only is the strategy helping the performance of these organizations, but that the more strategic the approach, the more it helps their social impact and organizational cohesion (Kylander et al., 2012).

Companies who are integrating design strategy have a distinct advantage over political campaigns: time. Although the benefits of design strategy can help accommodate
the management of time for a campaign, the progress and innovations they make during
their cycle can easily be lost after an election. One participant who worked on the Obama
2012 campaign said that this problem will be crucial for future campaigns to solve.
“Reinventing the wheel every four years is an irresponsible waste of resources. How
breakthroughs are passed from campaign to campaign will determine a party’s ability to
hold a majority” (personal communication, January 20, 2013).

FIG. 10: THE ROLE OF BRAND IN NON PROFITS

There are problems that businesses face as they integrate design strategy
into their company’s infrastructure, such as communication between the disciplines,
Demonstrating a return on investment, and inclusion throughout the process (Holston,
2008). In addition to a campaign’s limited life span, these problems will also prove to
be difficult for integration into the campaign organization. How quickly and effectively
they are able to manage this process will determine the success of design strategy within
politics. Christopher Dilts, a designer for Obama 2012 designer and the Democratic
National Committee noted, “A political party can go beyond having design in just a campaign. They can also use their national committees... That at least provides some permanence” (personal communication, February 23, 2013). The Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee are both full-time political organizations. They operate during and between elections for the sum of their party. If these types of organizations begin to implement design strategy, this can provide a distinct advantage for a political campaign. They can hit the ground running, so to speak, and save on time, one of their most valuable resources.
CHAPTER 4
Implications and Moving Forward

An evolving global economy is changing the way business is conducted. A new approach is needed to compete and the methods necessary to accomplish this have to be adapted to ever-changing technological advances. Companies are now designing their own economy by either manufacturing a need or meeting the needs of customers in new ways. Businesses that are implementing design strategy are using this philosophy to aid this transition and help those companies innovate. One participant, who is a political staffer, said, “Political campaigns will have to innovate in order to compete” (personal communication, March 25, 2013). When it comes to adapting in this new economic and communication landscape, political campaigns share many similarities with the private sector, yet they have many unique problems and challenges that separate them from any business case study. The timeline of a campaign, the speed at which they operate, and the need for new technologies positions to develop design strategy as a potentially asset to political campaigns.

Future challenges dictate that innovation is needed in order to succeed, either in business or politics. Political campaigns are in a unique situation, where they start and end without much carry over of lessons learned or information gathered. How they structure their organizations and position themselves to accommodate for innovation needs will give candidates a distinct competitive edge, as well as help dark horse candidates compete with better known and more highly funded competition. These new challenges means new people will have to be brought into the political campaign process that are uniquely skilled in communications and new technology. More designers will be needed to sync these disciplines, develop an authentic brand, and give the brand character. The consequences for the designers, and for the field, are high. Presidential campaigns have a vast amount of exposure, so if this work is done correctly, it can help shape the way design is perceived.
Communicating a Candidates Message

Sol Sender has stated that a brand represents a campaign and not just a candidate (Heller, 2008). This is a shift in viewpoints for the political field and has added more importance to the idea of branding a politician. The Obama campaign successfully embraced this idea and it was considered an integral part of his campaigns; however, if future campaigns wish to replicate this brand effectiveness, they can not simply mimic what was done in 2008 and 2012. Branding is not an easy task for any business or campaign; each solution must be developed specifically for each unique situation in order to feel authentic to a product, service, or candidate.

When discussing the branding for the 2008 election, noted designer and designer critic Michael Beirut said, “Obama himself was his own best logo. Young, African-American, charismatic – change wasn’t just a message, it was the candidate's very embodiment. When it was all said and done, Barack Obama was a smart guy with a unique message and a good product. And what designer wouldn’t wish for that in a client?” (Thomas, 2008). Obama had a clear brand before hiring any design to visualize it, and when it was visualized in into a well-crafted identity it felt authentic and new. Obama was such a unique talent and generational candidate that, going forward, it may not be such a clear solution in visualizing a candidate's brand. Design has the ability to help identity and then clearly communicate a brand. This will become critical for future candidates if they wish to reach a level of brand success that is now the standard. Designers brought in earlier in the process will help guide a politician's brand to a more effective visual representation and a clear path for embodiment in the organization. Designers are skilled communicators and have an understanding of how goals, missions, and problems can be aligned to a brand (Holston, 2008). There are complexities in the planning phase of any new product, service, or campaign that design can help navigate. Megan Fath from Conifer Research said that designers can help during early immersion by “...bringing an open mindedness
and ambiguity, so there are no biases and they can connect bigger picture with a focus on detail” (personal communication, March 22, 2013). When designers are immersed early on in the process, communications will be more effective and the brand will be more consistent throughout the organization.

**Demographics are Changing**

During an interview, one political staffer remarked on how demographics are perceived by campaigns: “When you think of a voter, what do you think of? Most campaigns think of old white males” (personal communication, March 25, 2013). The demographics are moving away from a majority of older Caucasian voters. Woman, Hispanics, and young voters are the growing demographics, and communication strategies will have to be developed in order to make a connection with these emerging audiences (Appendix E). An article in *The New American* stated that future elections will be determined by these demographics, “Future elections will no doubt increasingly be decided by women, young people, and minorities, as the greying, over-age-65 voters diminish in numbers and influence.” (Adelmann, 2012). The article also notes the emphasis on young voters: “Turbocharging all these changes has been the rise of a progressive younger generation, the Millennials. Young voters (18-29) defied skepticism about their likely levels of voter turnout this year, comprising 19 percent of voters – up from 18 percent in Obama’s historic campaign of 2008. These voters supported Democrats by a 23-point margin in the 2012 election (60 percent to 37 percent). This is strong support, by far Obama’s best performance among any age group, just as was the case in 2008, when Obama performed even more strongly among these voters (66-32).” (Teixeira, 2012). Neumeier says that younger demographics are increasingly making their decisions on products and services on based brand rather than a promise of quality or features (Neumeier, 2006). Young voters are the prized demographics for campaigns and represent the future of political affiliation. In
order to establish a long, dedicated relationship with this demographic, political campaigns will have to continue to grow and develop their idea of brand to connect with them.

In the book *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds*, author Ted Brader makes the case for emotional appeals in political campaigns as being the most effective form of persuasion (Brader, 2006). Robert McNamara also suggests this in *The Political Campaign Desk Reference* and adds that when supported with data, the claim becomes increasingly more effective (McNamara, 2008). The need to develop specific appeals that can reach these specific demographics can be aided by immersing in a design process. This can help develop more specific visual approaches that appeal to emerging demographics on an emotional level and can help connect these appeals to a brand. The involvement of design strategy can help take this development beyond basic ethnography. In his article “Designers Are The New Drivers Of American Entrepreneurialism,” author Bruce Nussbaum says, “We also need to know a lot more about what is truly meaningful to people. Right now, ethnography is the basic methodology and gives us a good slice of knowledge when done right. But ethnography is too shallow for what we now need. We need to go much deeper into the historic context and wider into the lateral connections of people in society” (Nussbaum, 2011).

**New Media**

New media in politics has put an increased importance on the need for designers, and Scott Thomas says that this technology has put “design on center stage” (Thomas, 2008). How this media is utilized and adapted will be a crucial problem for campaigns to solve, and how they interpret and gather data dictates how effective their use of media can be. This shift to interpreting data and using it to make decisions represents an emerging discipline for campaigns: “Politics long has been ruled by truisms, conventional wisdom and intuition, with millions spent based on a murky mix of polling and focus groups. The shift to data-driven decision-making has been gradual and steady – becoming increasingly
sophisticated as political parties amass more information about individual voters through traditional means, such as polls, and new ones, such as data mining” (Hennessey & Parsons, 2012). Data has changed how campaigns utilize even a traditional media source like television, while also dictating decisions for the Internet. New tools and services could be developed to better serve campaigns and further engage their supporters, using them as advocates to help attract new voters to their candidate. Designers who bring an expertise on designing these types of products and services can greatly aid in the creation of these assets for political campaigns. This is not an easy task, and it is breaking away from traditional methods of campaigning, but as stated in the book The Designful Company, “Business as usual will not give you a competitive advantage, and that bold moves in strategy and structure are needed to succeed today” (Neumeier, 2009).

Segmentation of Audience

With audiences moving away from traditional media outlets and into media such as the Internet and social networking, there has been a change in how people get information about elections. Campaigns are dealing with how to best reach these audiences through new media channels. Not only has cable television significantly segmented the traditional broad television audience, but the Internet has further segmented the population into very small, succinct groups. Broad messages are not penetrating and connecting with audiences in this environment, as more targeted and specific messaging is proving to be more successful (Rutenberg, 2012). The jump in segmentation from 2008 to 2012 was extreme. As Steve Jobs told Jim Messina at the onset of the 2012 presidential campaign, “Last time you were programming to only a couple of channels... this time, you have to program content to a much wider variety of channels – Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, YouTube, Google – because people are segmented in a very different way than they were four years ago” (Joshua, 2012). Campaigns are now in need of creating and designing content to each of these specific channels.
Audiences are grouping together based on interests, values, and technology, and the more segmented these audiences become, the more important design will be for campaigns. Designing communications that will reach these audiences and work in their preferred medium will be vital in getting the right message to the right demographic. Design can help create more effective technologies to accomplish this, and, as Dave Holston notes in *The Strategic Designer*, “designers can create targeted communications that reflect their attitudes and values, as well as the social environment in which they live” (Holston, 2008).

**Moving Forward**

The new challenges facing political campaigns as they move forward in the Information Age will need to be solved and accounted for, either with or without the inclusion of design strategy. Business has been using design strategy to solve similar challenges in innovating new communication technologies, reaching segmented audiences, and fostering emotional connection to their brands. Design strategy provides a unique value for political campaigns in that it is a means to innovate and better engage voters. The need to innovate will continue to grow and, because of the unique time situation facing campaigns, the speed at which they create is critical. Design strategy can help make this an efficient and effective process during the planning phase and improve results within their finite time line. It will be important for campaigns to recruit new, highly-skilled communication experts to help their organizations manage this process and collaborate with traditional stakeholders in order to innovate.

As previously mentioned, innovation is the most important factor to success for business and will be for political campaigns as well. Due to the fact that technological advancements will be different during every major campaign cycle, the need to design an innovation strategy specific to that time and place is essential. Design strategy has
been implemented by businesses to help successfully accomplish this, so as campaigns go forward they will need to innovate, rather than mimic previous campaigns. Shifts in the mindset of how to best develop technologies to assist campaign staff and empower advocates will lead to more successful outcomes. In order to innovate, campaigns will have to reconsider who they empower to make these decisions, as well as the process by which they come to these conclusions. By incorporating design strategy, which promotes collaboration in order to foster innovation, campaigns can rearrange their organizational structures to meet the challenge within their time frame. At the end of the 2012 presidential campaign, Dan Ryan, Obama’s Director of Frontend Development, said the future of successful innovation will come from reimagining the campaign structure in order to promote collaboration:

“The top down approach assumes the senior management knows best how to implement tactics, which just isn’t true in a tech-savvy world. The collaborative approach allows the most seasoned talent to focus on goal-setting, while the most experienced technicians focus on implementation. Having groups set up around outcomes instead of skill set encourages holistic thinking and sharing across the organization” (personal communication, March 11, 2013).

In Designing Obama, Scott Thomas states that he and his co-director, John Slybk, were chosen specifically because they were from outside of the political process. This was important because of the level of trust given to their opinions and expertise, as well as their ability to raise the bar and willingness to try new techniques (Thomas, 2008). Their ignorance to tried and true political methodologies was seen as an advantage. The importance of including political outsiders will be vital to meeting the new technological advances and to innovating within the political field. The ability to not only successfully
execute vision but to innovate is, as Matt Ipcar said, “a reflection of the candidate himself and the type of leader [he or she] will be” (personal communication, March 4, 2013). Bringing on designers and other new disciplines will require that trust and respect is given to those professionals in order to successfully accomplish their goals and meet expectations.

Politics must change its perception and value of design in order for design to make a sufficient impact. The best way for a designer to do this is to put the results of design strategy in the hands of political stakeholders. Resources such as the Design Council and the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) provide studies showcasing design strategies, results, and benefits. These case studies have helped businesses adapt these philosophies. As one participant noted, “Branding is hard to understand, numbers are easy” (personal communication, January 20, 2013). Studies on design strategy have consistently shown positive results. Even one of the first known studies, the Commercial Impacts of Design (CID), which was commissioned in 1987, displayed similar results to later studies that supported design’s value (Holston, 2008). The CID report showed findings such as profitability and return on investment (Appendix G).

As design strategy can help political campaigns, the field of politics can also elevate the field of design. Drew Roper, a designer on the 2012 Obama campaign, said that, “for one year you are working on the most important brand in the world” (personal communication, January 7, 2013). The 2008 Obama campaign brought unprecedented exposure and dialogue to the idea of branding. Due to the impact and size of a presidential campaign, it can help elevate design’s value, perception, and cultural significance. Being successful in politics creates opportunities for design, like including them in the campaign process. New businesses and consultant firms have been started after both the 2008 and 2012 campaigns to specifically provide digital services to other political campaigns.
CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The difference between how business and politics communicate with their audiences is lessening and there is now crossover in how they both connect with users. Candidates have become similar to products themselves, requiring a clear brand and accessibility to their audiences. The overlap requires political campaigns to adopt new methodologies and to keep pace with technology. As businesses have used design strategy to innovate and meet their needs, political campaigns will need to do the same. The evolving economic landscape has dictated that business must innovate to help design a need and campaigns will have to innovate in order to expand the electorate in their favor. There is much that politics can learn from business and much that business can learn from politics, and within the current landscape both need design more than ever.

The future success of campaigns will be determined by those who can efficiently and effectively meet future challenges. Emerging demographics, segmentation, audience engagement, and the need to establish a succinct brand are all major obstacles for political campaigns. Solutions to these problems may lie within the inclusion of design strategy into the political campaign structure, establishing a system and process by which campaigns can assess the current landscape and develop strategies that are appropriate for the people they are talking with and for the time in which they are taking place.

Campaigns implementing design strategy will also gain a distinct advantage over their competition, which parallels business. The innovations put into practice during the 2008 campaign helped Barack Obama go from a dark horse candidate to nominee, and in 2012 it helped him get reelected, even though he was in the midst of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Not only by developing new tactics and strategies, but by using brand to foster an emotional connection with voters it brought millions of new people into the electorate and empowered them to become advocates for their
candidate. As the accessibility between communicator and audience increases, the ability
to design the experience for either a business or a campaign becomes more valuable, thus
the inclusion of design strategy as a means to innovate becomes more vital.

Every interaction with a political campaign is becoming a design experience.
Whether accessing information through a social media network, a mobile device, on the
Internet, or in a face-to-face conversation with a supporter, design is playing a central
role in every interaction. The effectiveness of these interactions will be determined by the
quality of the strategy and the design. By implementing design earlier in the process and
including design strategy into a political campaign’s organization, as business has done,
the ability to clearly communicate a candidate’s core ideals and positions will improve.
This is not only valuable for campaigns looking to truly engage their audience, but it is
valuable for the people who can confidently put their support behind candidates they
understand and believe.
Appendices
Appendix A

Presidential Campaign Logos
Appendix A

Presidential Campaign Logos
Appendix A

Presidential Campaign Logos
Appendix A

Presidential Campaign Logos

Forbes 2000

McCAIN 2000

BUSH CHENEY '04

Kerry Edwards
A STRONGER AMERICA

Howard DEAN for America

Hillary for President
HillaryClinton.com

MITT ROMNEY

McCAIN

Obama

ROMNEY
Appendix B

Presidential Campaign Structures Reviewed
**Appendix B**

**Presidential Campaign Structures Reviewed**

**GOALS:**
Review of recent campaigns and their internal structure was used to determine consistencies across development of a campaign staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAMPAIGN</th>
<th>CAMPAIGN MANAGER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OBAMA 2012</td>
<td>JIM MESSINA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMNEY 2012</td>
<td>MATT RHOADES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBAMA 2008</td>
<td>DAVID PLOUFFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCCAIN 2008</td>
<td>RICHARD DAVIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLINTON 2008</td>
<td>MAGGIE WILLIAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAN 2004</td>
<td>JOE TRIPPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSH 2004</td>
<td>KEN MEHLMAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KERRY 2004</td>
<td>MARY BETH CAHILL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSH 2000</td>
<td>JOE ALLBAUGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GORE 2000</td>
<td>DONNA BRAZILE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Participant Backgrounds
Appendix C

Participant Backgrounds

**SELECTION:**
There were 27 participants chosen for interviews, and selected from three main backgrounds: 1. Design strategy 2. Political 3. Design and branding. Participants were given the option of being attributed directly or have their identities kept confidential.
Appendix D

Participant Questions and Goals
Appendix D

Participant Questions and Goals

OVERVIEW:
Questions for interviews were based on the participants background and experience within their area expertise (design/branding, design strategy or politics). There were several overall goals for each discipline and base questions that each participant was asked.

GOALS FOR POLITICS
Determine internal structure and process, role and perception of design with politics, emerging challenges for campaign communications.

BASE QUESTIONS FOR POLITICAL BACKGROUND PARTICIPANTS:

How do you perceive design’s role within a political campaign? How do you believe design and designers are best utilized?

As technology advances and the need for design grows within political campaigns, what do designers need to know to adjust to a campaign and what do political campaigns need to know about incorporating design?

How can new technologies/media help engage audiences for a political campaign? Why was this beneficial?

What are the major challenges for political campaigns as they move into the next presidential election?

How would you describe the internal structure of a political campaign? Is it typically a linear, top-down structure? If so, do you believe that is a positive or negative?

How do you think demographics are changing within the electorate? and how do think design will play apart with appealing to those emerging demographics?

How do you think a brand represents an emotional appeal for a political campaign?

What are the benefits of working on a political campaign? How can that persuade a designer to want to join the staff full-time?
Appendix D

Participant Questions and Goals

GOALS FOR DESIGN STRATEGY
Determine challenges facing integration of design strategy, design strategies benefits, why is involving designers early better than later, why design strategy is important for connecting with users.

BASE QUESTIONS FOR DESIGN STRATEGY BACKGROUND PARTICIPANTS:

Do you believe there a model for incorporating strategic design partners into a business/organizations infrastructure? Or is variable?

When incorporating further design integration how is buy-in achieved? Is the main focus on the idea of a designer as co-creator?

Potential challenges of integrating design strategy into a business or organization?

Why is it important for building a message, strategy or product that designers are included sooner rather than later?

The difference between business thinking and design thinking? Best practices for getting the two to work together?

The perception of designers as makers rather than strategic partners?

How does design strategy foster user engagement?

How does a focus on human-centered design better connect an audience to a product or service?

In your opinion, what does the inclusion of design strategy do for the perception of design and designers?
Appendix E

Demographics Research
Appendix E

Demographics Research

DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS
Provided by the Pew Research Center:

Share of Votes in 2012, by Race and Ethnicity

![Circle diagram showing the share of votes in 2012 by race and ethnicity.]

Notes: Blacks, whites, and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Other groups (2%) are shown, but not labeled.
Source: 2012 exit poll data from the National Election Pool.

Change in Voter Turnout Rates among Eligible Voters, 2008 and 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>Change (% points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Blacks, whites and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Native Americans and mixed-race groups not shown.

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Voters, 2012 and 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. Blacks, whites and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race.
Appendix F

Design Management Model Success Factors
Appendix F

Design Management Model Success Factors

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR DESIGN MANAGEMENT
As found in the Design Management for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises: Development of a Design Management Guide for the Use of Design and Design Management within Corporate R&D and Decision-Making Processes study by Claude Acklin & Hans Hugentobler (full citation in References section):

These success factors can be summed up as follows:

Include a design champion on the level of top management and create a design management function that has direct access to the decision-making processes of top management.

Formulate a design philosophy as part of the mission or vision of the company, which then informs a design strategy and a consistent design language for all products and services.

Implement processes for design such as the coordination of all internal stakeholders who make design contributions to strategy/brand, product/service, corporate design/communication, marketing/sales, etc.

Alter the “typical” process of improving products towards a design-based innovation process.

Allocate budgets, time and people to projects and establish adequate measurement tools. Start with pilot projects before company-wide implementation.

Include design competency into all design-relevant business activities either through internal designers or through cooperation with an external design service provider. Provide professional design briefings.

Create and foster a climate of innovation and creativity within the company and use every opportunity to communicate the strength of design as a strategic resource.
Appendix G

Commercial Impacts of Design Study Findings
Appendix G

Commercial Impacts of Design Study Findings

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS
As listed in The Strategic Designer, by Dave Holston (full citation in References section):

90% of the projects were profitable. Projects that were designed had an increase in sales of an average of 41% over projects that were less design savvy.

48% of projects recovered their investment in design within a year.

89% recovered their investment and made a profit.

41% of repackaging products led to an increase in sales.

Graphic and packaging design proved to have the highest return on investment.

Of projects that failed, the losses were relatively small compared to the investment. One cause for failure was the lack of collaboration between the design consultant and the company’s internal team. Other causes included several non-design-related factors, such as external financial reasons. Some participants whose projects “failed” still considered the project worthwhile, as it introduced them to design-management techniques they could use for future projects.

28% of the survey participants admitted having issues with the design consultants they hired, though only 10% indicated that the issues were “major.” The problems were grouped into four categories: quality of work, poor design management, communication, and service-related issues.
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