



CASE STUDY

Amanda McDougall for Mayor

TARGETING AND ENGAGING WITH DIGITAL TOOLS

In October 2020, Amanda McDougall, Executive Director of an environmental non-profit and one-term city councillor was running against a two-term incumbent Mayor with long-standing ties to the federal and provincial Conservative parties. Amanda McDougall had already fought an uphill battle since her election to city council in 2016—breaking into the mostly older, white male dominated world of Cape Breton city hall. While facing obstacles, McDougall consistently presented a ‘watch me’ attitude and frequently achieved her goals, despite resistance from many on council.

With a message focused on sustainability and social issues, and a budget smaller than past progressive mayoral candidates, the McDougall campaign sought to use modern tools to reach out to constituents safely and from a distance during COVID-19. Stratcom was eager to help the McDougall campaign with texting, Broadcast Voice Messages (BVMs) and data services (landline phone lists and MobileReach likely cell phones) to reach voters and supporters in targeted, affordable and socially distanced ways. Stratcom and the McDougall campaign developed a strategy for calling that focused on identifying targeting, and connecting with McDougall’s core supporters.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY

Using Stratcom’s enhanced landline phonebook, we dialed phone numbers in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) with an Interactive Broadcast Voice Message designed to identify likely voters and definite supporters. Amanda recorded the campaign messages to help constituents become more familiar with her in an election otherwise lacking opportunity for in-person engagement.



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STEP 2: CONNECT

For the texting component of the campaign, we employed Stratcom's MobileReach list of likely cell phones and Prompt.io to identify and connect with likely supporters and engage with undecided voters. Through MobileReach we were able to generate 16,000 likely cellphones in the CBRM. Then, with Stratcom's texting tool, Prompt.io, we sent an initial text broadcast to these MobileReach numbers. To effectively maximize volunteer time and keep replies timely, we set up automated keyword replies to commonly asked questions. For those who had a unique question, we trained McDougall campaign volunteers to use Prompt.io for peer-to-peer conversations so they could respond appropriately.

STEP 3: TARGET (FOLLOW-UP)

We then used the results and responses from the first round of texting to guide getting out the vote (GOTV) text messages with a reminder about voting details to confirmed supporters, closer to Election Day.

THE RESULTS

McDougall, in her 30's and pregnant at the time, won against a two-time incumbent mayor who had more than 25 years of experience in local politics by just over 3,500 votes. She and her campaign were criticized by her opponents for being too polished, but also too young and immature. Despite the opposition, Amanda McDougall's campaign spoke to people and proved that change was on everyone's mind. Her use of innovative phone and texting technologies was an invaluable way to connect with supporters that was efficient, cost-effective and safe (during COVID-19). Coincidentally, McDougall's women-led campaign was matched by an all-female project team who oversaw all of Stratcom's strategic and technical services for the McDougall team. We joined forces and we're proud to have been part of the campaign to elect Amanda McDougall as the new mayor of CBRM.