

CASE STUDY

Bernie Sanders' U.S. Presidential Campaign Elects Search And Mobile Video To Get Out The Vote

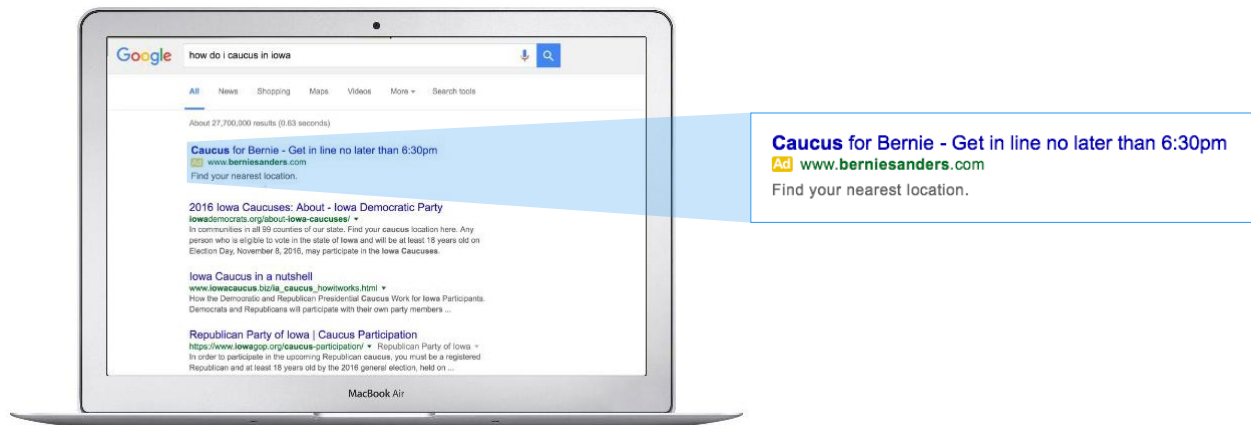
Senator Bernie Sanders, a presidential candidate for the Democratic party, faced a high-stakes battle when his campaign approached its first litmus test of 2016: the Iowa caucus. After [polling more than 50 points](#) behind Hillary Clinton one year earlier, the final 2016 *Des Moines Register* poll showed Clinton leading Sanders by just three points, though pundits claimed her grip on the lead was tightening in the final days before the event.

The Sanders campaign partnered with [Revolution Messaging](#), a full-service digital agency, to develop a strategy that would amplify its get-out-the-vote efforts in the critical hours leading up to the caucus.

Using Search and mobile video to get in front of voters

Bernie's team wanted to make sure they reached voters in the crucial moments before they went to the polls, like when they searched for caucus locations, or watched YouTube videos on the day of the caucus. To reach people in those moments and maximize the number of voters Bernie could reach on caucus day, Revolution Messaging developed a comprehensive strategy across Google Search and YouTube.

As an entry point for persuadable voters, [Google Search](#) was a key digital battleground for Bernie, and Revolution Messaging wanted to ensure that a Sanders ad appeared whenever a voter searched for caucus-related terms. The team's aggressive bid strategy achieved nearly 100% coverage on all searches for the senator's name, his opponents, and variations of "how to caucus," "where to caucus," and "when to caucus." Anyone searching these terms would be served an ad that directed to Bernie's caucus location tool.



A Sanders ad appeared whenever a voter searched for caucus-related terms.

YouTube was the perfect complement to search ads that showcased Bernie's platform to key voters, so Revolution Messaging implemented a strategy to deliver a "mobile blast" of Bernie video ads across mobile devices on caucus day. The campaign used three high-impact formats in the Iowa mobile blast: [YouTube Bumper ads](#) (six-second spots), [mobile video interstitials](#), and [TrueView pre-roll](#). Across the three YouTube formats, the Sanders campaign could deliver powerful messaging, with a strong call to action (CTA), in an engaging and intimate digital environment.



Bumper ads were one of three high-impact formats used in Bernie's Iowa mobile blast.

Earning votes with a sound digital strategy

More than 31,000 Iowa voters visited the caucus location tool from a Google search ad on the day of the caucus. In the hour before the caucus, 10,000 people were directed to Sanders' site. And when the Revolution team saw that over 50% of site visitors were on mobile, they quickly capitalized and increased mobile bids by +200%, ensuring voters could find information on Bernie in the final moments before voting.

The YouTube video ads were equally successful. 146,000 people were served Bernie's TrueView pre-roll video in the moments before the caucus and more than 15,000 chose to watch the complete video, even when given the option to skip. The Bumper ads delivered a compelling, caucus-specific message to more than 55,000 people and the mobile video interstitial generated over 143,000 engagements.

Through sophisticated execution of Search and mobile video, Revolution Messaging was able to deliver caucus information and Bernie's powerful message to more than 760,000 Iowans in the final moments before the caucus. In a primary that came down to a coin toss, the Sanders campaign believes these last-minute digital efforts helped close the gap and deliver momentum that dramatically propelled the campaign forward.