

# POLITICS ★ 2020

## MAKING AN IMPACT WITH CROSS-SCREEN TV ADVERTISING

WHY TV ADS ARE MORE INFLUENTIAL THAN EVER





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# **POLITICAL ADVERTISING DURING COVID-19**

The 2020 election cycle was already poised to be historic – and then COVID-19 hit. Now, the already-fraught cycle has been completely upended. From new campaigning tactics to different voting processes, COVID-19 has changed virtually every aspect of the 2020 races.

With voters' opinions and priorities in flux and fundamental in-person campaign activities – like rallies, fundraisers, and door-knocking – at a standstill, candidate advertising could play an even bigger role than usual in swaying elections. And TV advertising – one of the most valuable platforms during a normal election year – may be the most influential tool available to candidates in 2020.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS



TV is the medium most likely to influence voter opinions and decisions.



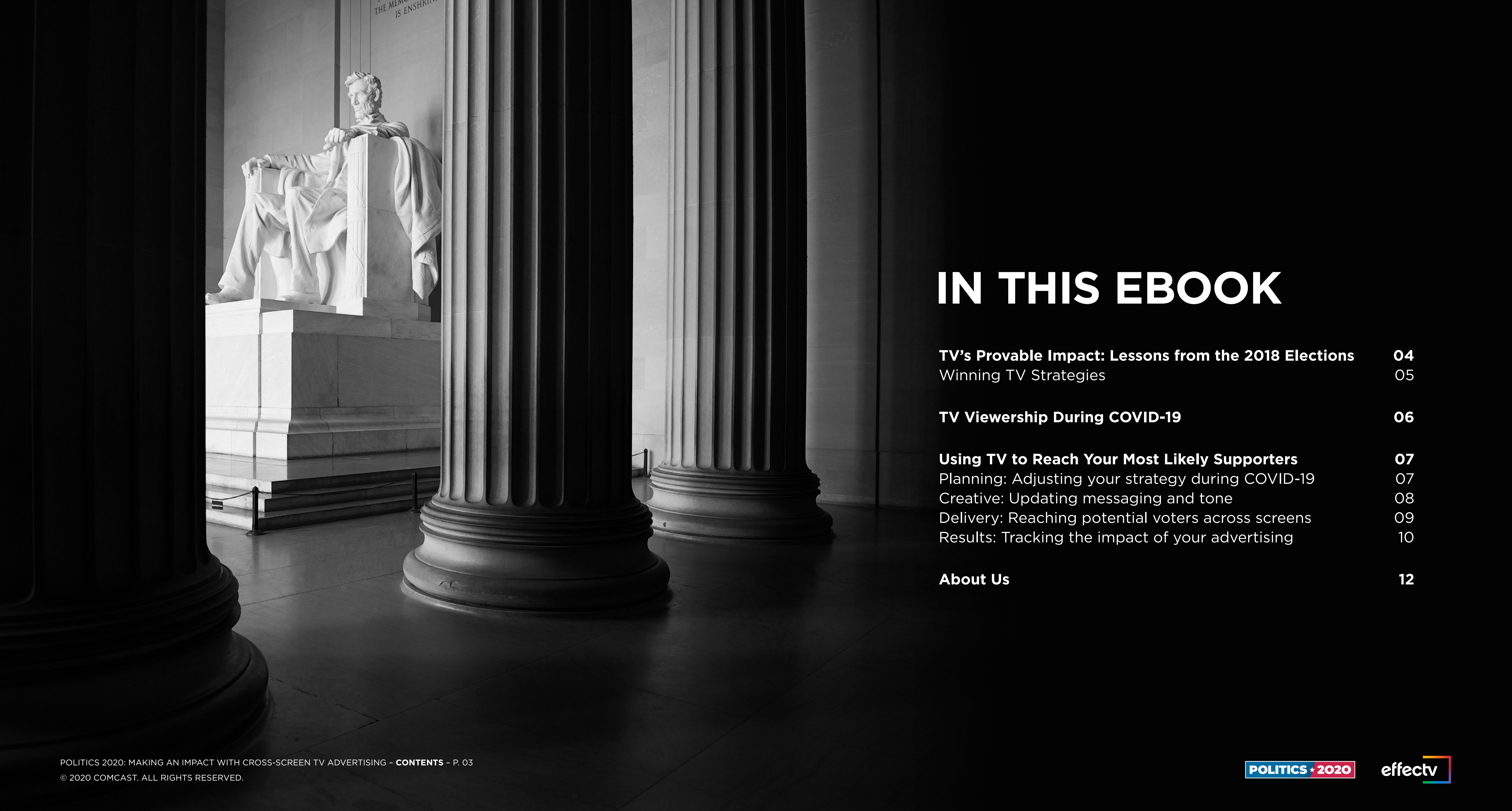
Viewership has increased substantially since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Candidates should rethink their advertising budgets for a more effective media mix, as well as adjust their messaging and tone to fit the current circumstances.



Candidates can maximize the impact of their TV advertising by delivering their message across screens and using addressable advertising to reach potential voters.



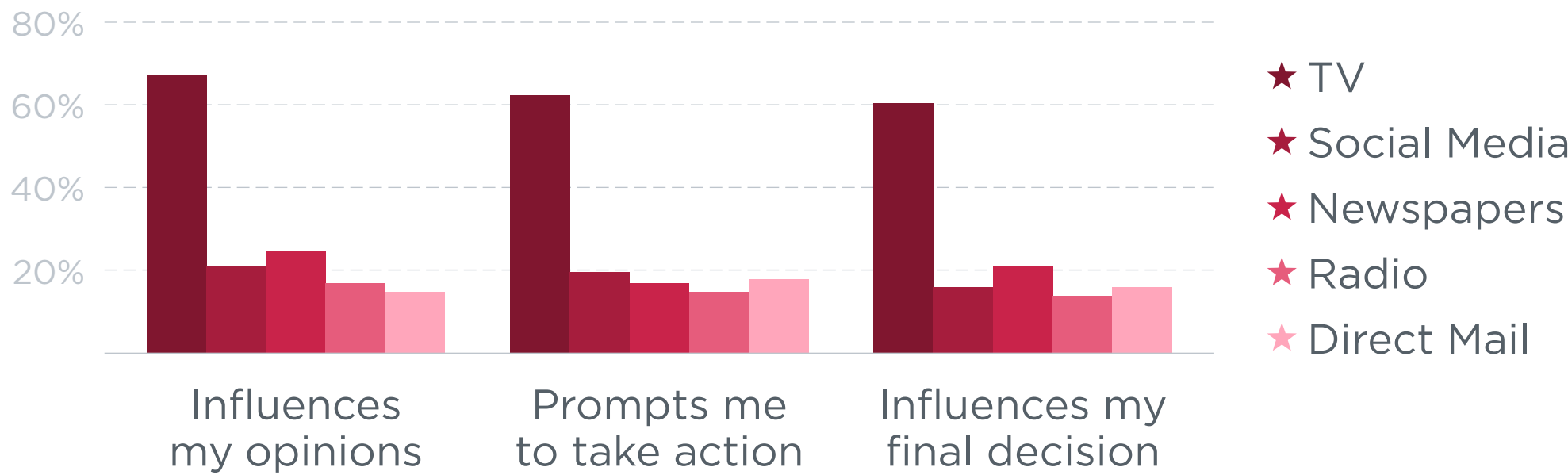
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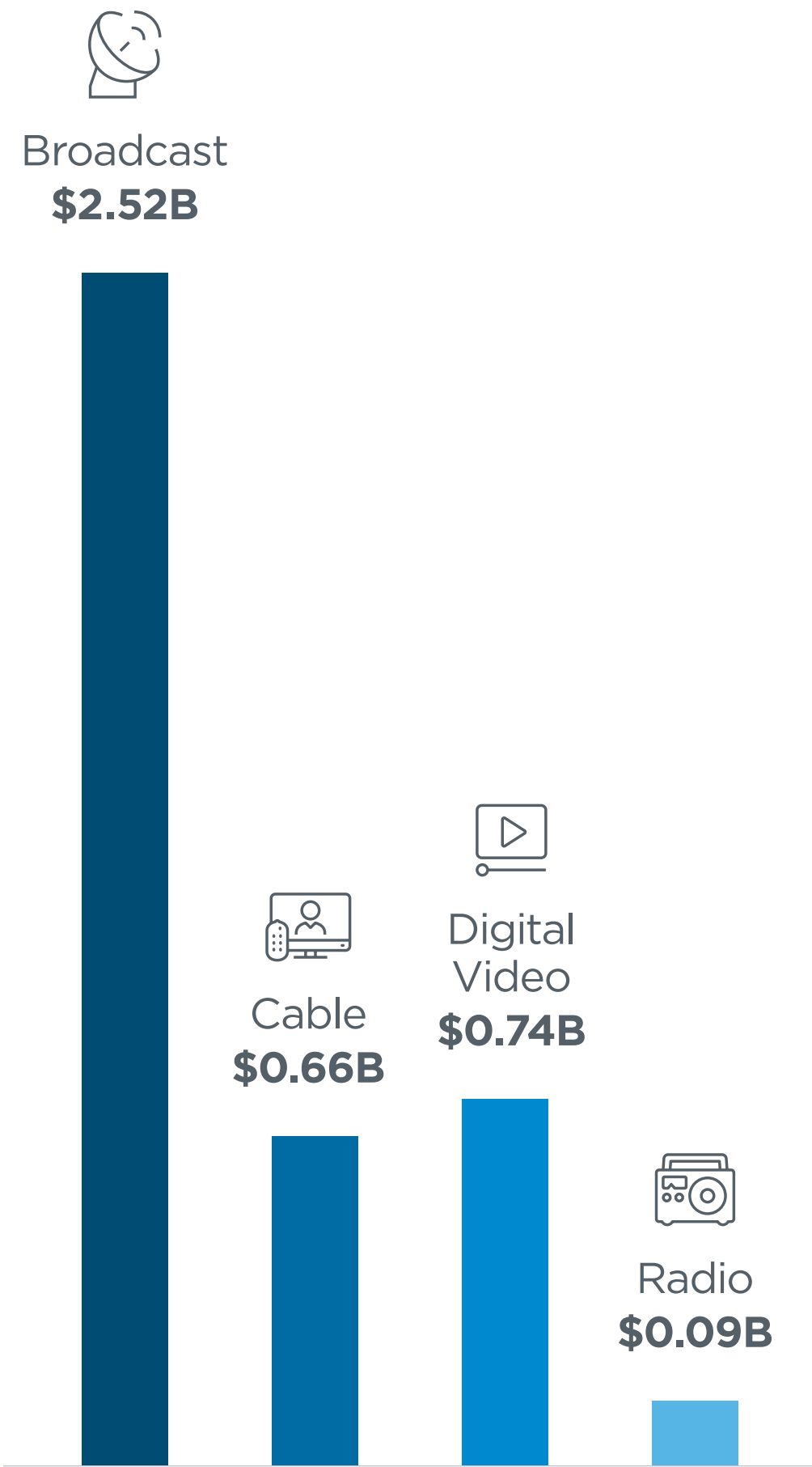
# TV'S PROVABLE IMPACT: LESSONS FROM THE 2018 ELECTIONS

Television plays an important role in any election year. Although the right ad strategy usually incorporates a mix of marketing channels, the biggest emphasis is usually placed on TV. During the 2018 election cycle, more political ad dollars went toward TV than any other medium.<sup>1</sup>

The platform's popularity in politics is a result of its strong and provable impact on election results. Data shows that cross-screen video advertising can effectively and efficiently deliver messages that can sway opinions and increase voter turnout. More than any other medium, it influences potential voters' opinions, prompts them to take action like researching candidates, and impacts their final decisions.<sup>2</sup>



2018 U.S. Political  
Ad Spending by Medium<sup>1</sup>  
\*Digital data begins in June 2018



# Winning TV Strategies

TV’s influence certainly held true in the 2018 midterms. Data shows that the primary win rates among the 414 federal candidates who ran TV ads with Effectv were 2.5 times higher than non-Effectv advertisers’ win rates, and their general election win rates were more than three times higher.<sup>3</sup>

Winning candidates had clear similarities in their approaches to TV advertising with Effectv as compared to candidates who ran ads with Effectv and lost. Trends among winning federal candidates included:



**Launching ad campaigns sooner**

Winners’ ad campaigns were 22% longer than losers’ campaigns.



**Advertising across more networks**

Winners advertised across 10% more networks and distributed their budgets more evenly across all networks.



**Running ads throughout the day**

Winners focused less on traditional primetime and advertised throughout all dayparts.



**Investing larger budgets**

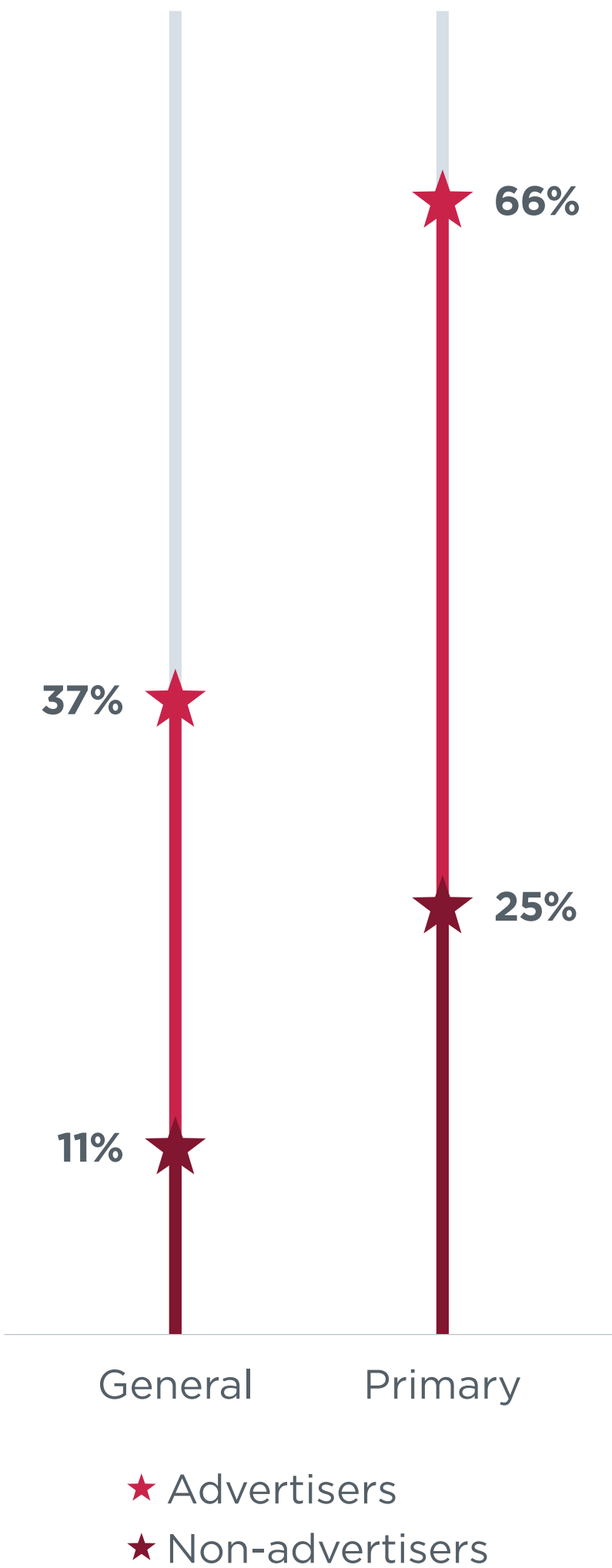
Candidates who ultimately won their general elections spent 50% more money on Effectv advertising than the average federal candidate advertising with Effectv.



**Using data to inform strategy**

Data helps candidates reach audiences with their desired demographics and even their desired opinions on specific issues like tax reform, Social Security, and health insurance, all in the locations that matter to them.

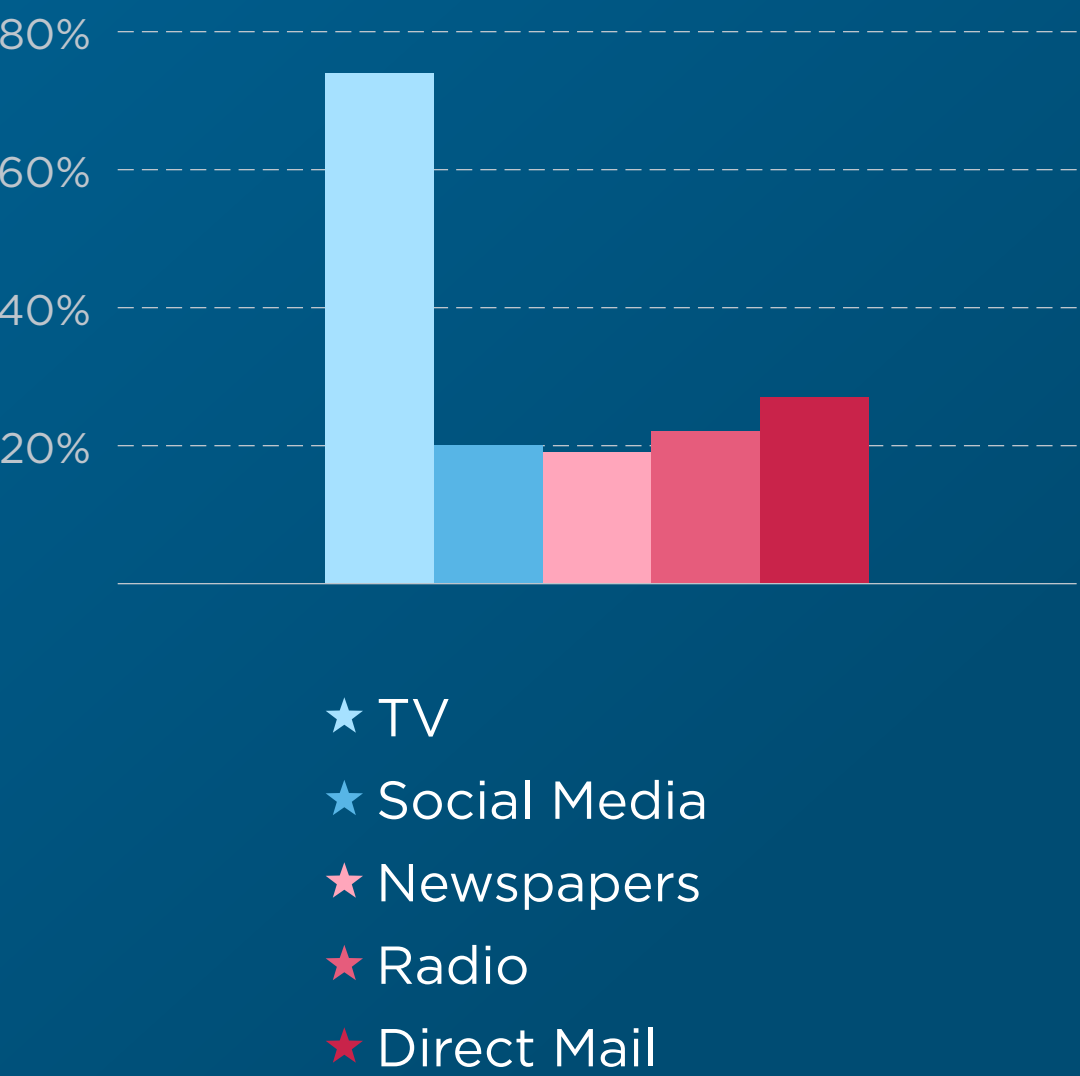
Wins Rates Among Federal Candidates<sup>3</sup>



## Getting Viewers’ Attention

TV’s strength in the political realm could be a result of viewers’ receptivity to the messaging. One survey found that, among registered or likely voters across all demographics, political advertising is most likely to get their attention if it’s on TV.<sup>2</sup>

Political Advertising Most Likely to Get Voters’ Attention



# TV VIEWERSHIP DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has expanded TV’s already-unparalleled reach and appeal. Viewers are now watching more TV and more varied content during more dayparts. These trends could help amplify television’s effect and help advertising make a greater impact.

Typically, U.S. adults spend an average of 5 hours and 43 minutes with video content daily, and live and time-shifted TV reaches 85% of U.S. adults each week.<sup>4</sup>

Among the approximately 33 million Comcast subscriber households, viewers spend even more time with TV content. Typically, subscriber households spend an average of 7 hours and 3 minutes watching TV content daily.<sup>5</sup>

And in the age of COVID-19, time spent with TV is even higher. All 60+ markets Comcast serves have had increases in total TV time. For the four-week period between March 30 and April 26, total TV time increased an average of 8% across the board, as compared to the same period last year. Likewise, live and video on demand viewing increased 6% and 38%, respectively. Cable news viewing increased 79% and daytime viewing was up 22%.<sup>6</sup>



Live and time-shifted TV reaches **85%** of U.S. adults weekly<sup>2</sup>

Viewing Time in Top 5 Markets, 3/30/20 to 4/26/20, compared to same period in 2019<sup>6</sup>

DMA	Total TV	Live TV	Video on Demand	Cable News	Daytime
New York	+12%	+10%	+46%	+77%	+32%
Chicago	+8%	+6%	+37%	+84%	+21%
Philadelphia	+6%	+3%	+40%	+82%	+23%
San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose	+5%	+3%	+40%	+85%	+19%
Washington, DC	+6%	+3%	+35%	+73%	+24%

# USING TV TO REACH YOUR MOST LIKELY SUPPORTERS

Political advertisers should adjust their TV plans based on the current atmosphere and trends and use the existing capabilities of TV. This means not only adjusting messaging, but also ensuring cross-screen and addressable delivery.



## 1. Planning

While most candidates already have campaign advertising strategies in place, COVID-19 is causing them to rethink their approaches. In particular, candidates should reconsider the allocation of their ad budgets.

### REALLOCATE BUDGETS

Many candidates' marketing budgets have shrunk as a result of the economy and lack of activities like fundraising events. Budget issues have had the most profound effect on local candidates, newcomers/challengers, and others with low name recognition.<sup>7</sup>

Whether budgets have been slashed or they remain at pre-pandemic levels, candidates should be rethinking how to use their ad dollars. Although some candidates are going dark during this period, it's important to maintain a healthy media mix to continue reaching potential voters. Continue incorporating a mix of TV, digital, print, radio, and other platforms, but reconsider the breakdown.

The best option is to prioritize TV and try to maintain TV spending. If the overall budget hasn't dramatically decreased, consider adding to TV campaigns and reducing spending on other outlets, as these can be less effective.

If budgets need to be reduced, digital display and social advertising could be a good place to trim spending for two reasons. First, many online ad rates have dropped – likely due to increased page views as people stay home, combined with less competition for ad space as many industries sideline their outreach efforts – so each dollar goes further than it normally would. Second, data shows people are clicking less, which experts chalk up to people being distracted as they balance work and home responsibilities.<sup>8</sup> This combination of digital being both less expensive and less effective means a smaller digital budget may be adequate.

# 2. Creative

Candidates should consider adjusting their messaging and tone to fit the current times. Candidates’ planned messaging may now seem outdated or tone-deaf, and candidates need to pivot to address the issues currently on people’s minds. As one political media consultant put it:

“If you’re not providing information about how to address COVID-19, your advertisements are probably not being heard.”<sup>9</sup>

## ADJUST MESSAGING

How to effectively address the pandemic depends on office level (local, state, or federal), party affiliation, and incumbent/challenger status.

If running for **federal office**, consider addressing COVID-19 head-on. Candidates who have already

pivoted their messaging are speaking to the federal government’s response or their own qualifications in crisis management or medical response. Also consider highlighting plans for bills that would help essential workers and first responders, or running ads that simply express gratitude.

At the federal level, Republican incumbents tend to tout the federal response, and other Republican nominees commend it, while Democratic nominees are criticizing the government’s delayed action.

At the **local level**, consider discussing how COVID-19 affects the community and what is or could be done to address it. With the pandemic highlighting the shortfalls of many local governments, messaging could focus on increasing funding for education and municipal programs.

For those seeking office at the **state level**, a combination of these strategies may be best. Address the federal response if it makes sense for the campaign, and discuss local and state issues that may affect constituents more directly.

## ADJUST TONE

Regardless of the exact message that feels right for a campaign, be careful to strike the right tone. Candidates should consider following these advertising tips during COVID-19:



Discuss how you’re **responding to the situation**, or what you could do as an elected official to add value in a situation like this.



Demonstrate **empathy and understanding**. If appropriate, deliver reassurance. Be sure to do this in a way that feels authentic for your candidacy.



**Review messaging** from your audience’s point of view and adjust accordingly.



Keep a pulse on how other candidates are **adjusting their messaging**.



Remember to **carry the same tone** through visuals. Avoid showing handshakes, large groups, and other imagery that could seem insensitive to the situation.

# 3. Delivery

The key to making the most of TV advertising is to utilize all the capabilities it offers. By mixing traditional TV with cross-screen TV content, addressability, and OTT, TV can be a full-funnel political advertising solution, driving awareness, interest, research, voting consideration, and actual voting.

## START WITH LINEAR

Traditional linear TV advertising is the backbone of a solid TV ad campaign. It delivers messages to a broad range of viewers, which can help gain upper-funnel awareness and interest. Use traditional TV to introduce positions, gain name recognition, and create a strong foundation for the ad campaign.

When advertising on traditional TV, choose various networks and dayparts for an ad. Instead of focusing on primetime and a few top networks, use data insights to plan more efficient and effective campaigns. For example, insights show:<sup>5</sup>

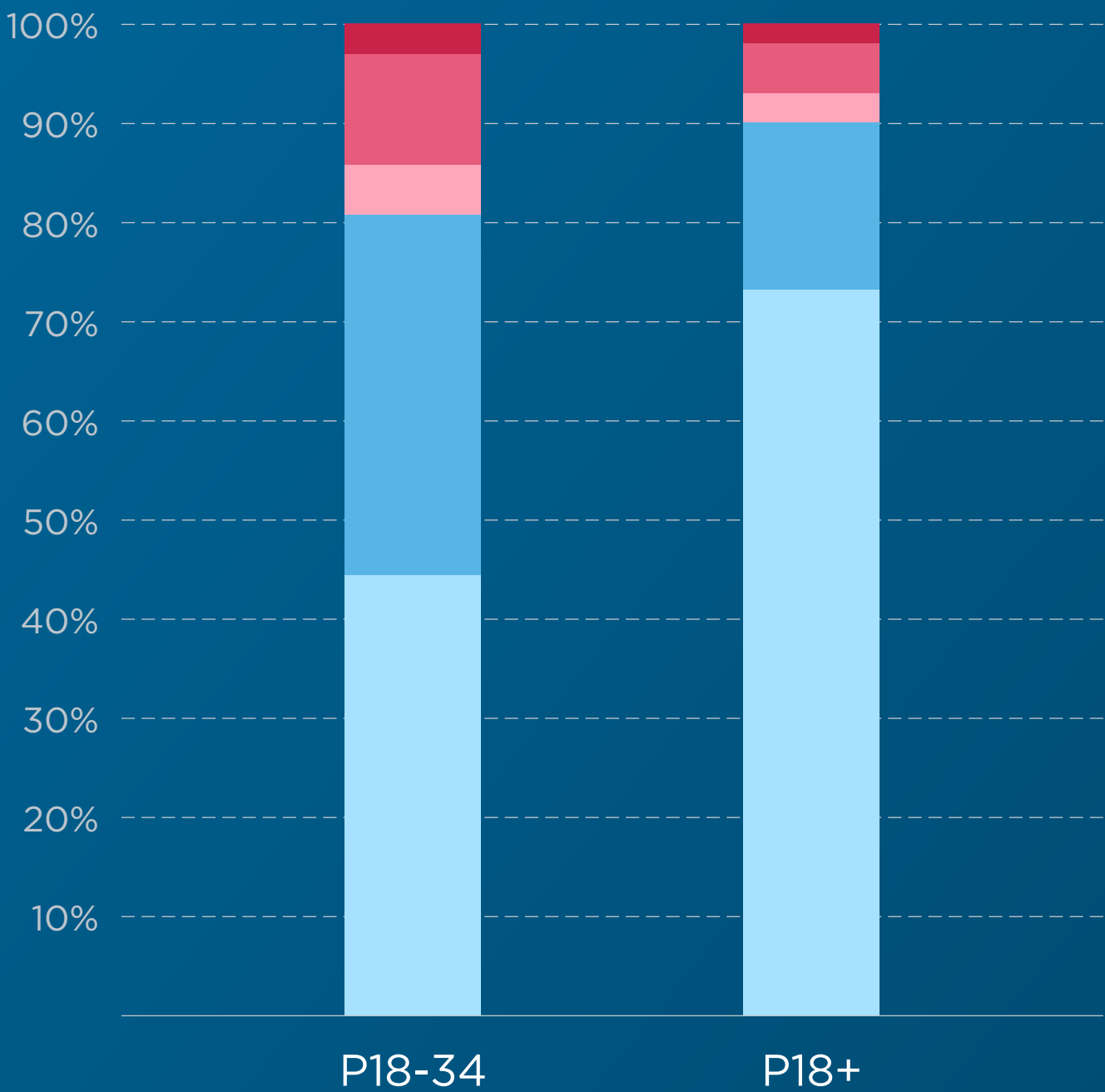
This type of information can help provide a true understanding of what, how, when, and how long audiences are watching TV. This enables advertisers to make more informed decisions and identify the networks and dayparts that are best for broad-reach advertising.

★★★★★☆☆☆☆☆  
Only 31% of linear viewing occurs during **primetime**, defined as 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

★★★★★☆☆☆☆☆  
Two-thirds of TV time is spent with **cable**

★★★★★☆☆☆☆☆  
The **top 5 networks** account for just 15% of all viewing time

Share of Daily Video Usage by Age



- ★ Live and Time-Shifted TV
- ★ Connected TV
- ★ Computer
- ★ Smartphone
- ★ Tablet

## EXTEND ACROSS SCREENS

Audiences are not just watching traditional TV through a cable, satellite, or telco provider. With increasing popularity, people are watching on-demand content via connected TVs as well as using their phones, tablets, computers, and gaming consoles to watch other OTT content. Use TV ads to reach potential voters across all screens at any time of day.

Advertising across TV types can be particularly beneficial in reaching the youngest voters. Whereas the average U.S. adult’s daily video time still skews toward live and time-shifted TV, those aged 18-34 are much more likely to watch connected TV or use other devices to watch video content.<sup>4</sup>

## USE ADDRESSABILITY

Addressable advertising uses insights from household-level viewership data and demographic data to deliver ads by audience rather than by daypart or network. Effectv licenses data from demographic data providers including Experian, LiveRamp, and L2, which specializes in political data. Effectv also has the ability to work with advertisers who want to use their own data to identify audiences.

By using data insights, addressable advertising takes the guesswork out of finding the right audience and enables candidates to focus on audiences most likely to be receptive to their unique messages.



### Target geographically

Deliver messages to potential constituents and reduce ad waste.



### Target demographically

Reach audiences that match desired demographics.



### Target voter segments

Use insights from data to reach audiences with desired political demographics such as political party, voting propensity, lifestyle, or issue-specific opinion.

Addressable advertising also enables candidates to deliver variations of their messages to different audiences, making it ideal for driving mid-funnel research and consideration, as well as lower-funnel decisions and voter turnout. For example, candidates can deliver one message to audiences with members of their political party, and another message to an

audience of swing voters. Candidates can deliver one message to an audience likely to care about tax reform, and another to an audience interested in the Affordable Care Act.

By optimizing messages for specific audiences, candidates can more effectively and efficiently make an impact at the polls.

## 4. Results

Effectv makes it easy to see the impact of TV advertising, even before the polls close. Our tools make TV as accountable as digital, so when candidates run TV campaigns, they can see metrics like in-audience reach, frequency, and ad completion rates. Effectv can also use candidate-provided analytics to show correlations between advertising and metrics like increased web traffic.

These results may even be actionable in real time, and Effectv can help optimize efforts for the greatest possible impact. For example, a candidate may want to tweak the target audience, fine-tune a message, or adjust spending level.

# THE OTTOM M LINE

TV is an exceptionally strong medium for political advertisers, and even more so in the age of COVID-19. Advertisers can strategically use cross-screen TV advertising as a full-funnel solution to help increase name recognition, consideration, and voter turnout.

# ABOUT US

Effectv combines the power of TV with advanced analytics to bring advertisers and audiences together. As the advertising sales division of Comcast Cable, Effectv delivers traditional television and premium digital video advertising to efficiently and effectively reach the right audiences.

Discover how Effectv can help you achieve your political goals.

Visit **[www.Effectv.com/political](http://www.Effectv.com/political)** or call **888.877.9799**



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