



MMA CASE STUDY

SMARTIES

DoSomething.org Text with the President

Campaign Summary

DoSomething.org used an SMS platform to connect young Americans directly with the commander in chief in an attempt to get a new generation involved in the political process.

Strategy

Objective and Context:

The average U.S. college student graduates with over \$26,000 in debt. In the past eight years alone, total student debt has tripled. DoSomething.org, the largest nonprofit organization for young people and social change, wanted to give America's youth the opportunity to ask the president of the United States directly about the issues most important to them. Research showed that young people often feel disconnected from the political process. They have strong opinions, big ideas, and a willingness to create change, yet they feel like they are too far removed from the people making decisions that affect their lives.

DoSomething.org decided to give young Americans the chance to begin a dialogue with the president of United States via text messaging. Student debt, the rising cost of college tuition, and the state of the current economy were all issues that young adults across the nation found troubling. Because text messaging was the most ubiquitous form of communication among this demographic, DoSomething.org decided to use it to field questions rather than other social channels such as Twitter, Facebook, or Reddit. By using text messaging, DoSomething.org made it easy for all users to participate in the campaign anytime, anywhere.

Target Audience:

DoSomething.org's target audience was young adults ages 13 to 25, the demographic most affected by student debt and the rising cost of college tuition. Since 90 percent of young adults in the U.S. own a mobile phone, the brand was able to ensure that by using SMS as a platform, almost everyone in its target demographic would be able to text President Obama their questions.

The average 16- to 24-year-old carries a cell phone 24/7 and sends and receives over 3,335 text messages per month. By bringing the president of the United States directly "into the hands" of young people, DoSomething.org was able to personalize civic engagement.

Creative Strategy:

The organization launched a text message campaign called "Text with the President." Students could text their questions directly to the Obama administration for review. Throughout the five days of the campaign, DoSomething.org and the Obama administration reviewed all the questions that were sent in and selected the best and most-asked questions to forward to President Obama. President Obama then composed a text message response, which was sent directly to everyone who signed up for the campaign.

Execution

Overall Campaign Execution:

“Text with the President” worked as follows:

- Young people joined the campaign by texting “PREZ” to DoSomething.org’s short code 38383.
- DoSomething.org asked users to submit a question for the president.
- Each day, DoSomething.org staff reviewed all questions that were sent in and submitted the top 10 most popular questions for the Obama administration to review.
- The Obama administration picked one question to forward to the president.
- President Obama submitted a brief response to the question to DoSomething.org.
- DoSomething.org texted the chosen question and the president’s answer to everyone who was opted-in to the campaign.
- A dedicated microsite featured each day’s questions and answers for everyone to follow.

Mobile Execution:

DoSomething.org wanted the text message exchange with the president to feel like a conversation, so it guided the Obama administration through SMS best practices so that President Obama’s responses would sound like something he would say if he were having a face-to-face conversation with someone. They avoided boring jargon, political speak, and stock answers to ensure that the experience was authentic to the platform and consistent with the experience young people are used to while texting.

Results

Over 70,902 people opted in to the campaign and asked more than 52,500 questions across a range of topics. DoSomething.org created a national conversation on an issue that was relevant to its target demographic using the platform that young people use the most. The campaign was featured on MSNBC, the *Huffington Post*, Mashable, Fan La La, MMA, *U.S. News and World Report*, and MTV.com. In total, more than 98,271,425 media impressions were generated for the campaign, with over 15,908,000 of them directly from DoSomething.org and the White House channels.

Source

“DoSomething.org Text with the President.” 2014 MMA Smarties Silver Winner Messaging. Brand: DoSomething.org. Lead Agency: Mobile Commons.