

CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE STANDS OUT IN A CROWD

Problem

In a highly competitive primary election, a congressional candidate in Michigan used outdoor advertising to stand out in a crowd of competitors and win the race. Six Republican candidates jumped into the race after 12-year incumbent US Representative Nick Smith (R-MI) announced that he was stepping down. Schwarz spent a significant portion of his media budget on outdoor advertising – the only candidate in the race to do so.

Solution

“Joe Schwarz used outdoor effectively, with attractive signs to boost his name identification,” said Paul Cook, president of Wolverine Sign Works, and a member of the OAAA Legislative Committee.

Strategically, Schwarz concentrated his outdoor buy in the home base of a competitor (Jackson County).

Background

Six Republicans were on the August 3 primary ballot in Michigan's 7th congressional District (nearly 4,300 square miles in southern Michigan that includes Battle Creek, Jackson, Adrian, and part of Lansing). Schwarz won the hard-fought six-way primary with 28%. As the Republican nominee, he was heavily favored to win the general election in November because the congressional district is solidly Republican.

Result

“We were very pleased with the results from outdoor advertising,” summed up winner Joe Schwarz of Battle Creek, MI.

“We started with a base vote of 7-to-8 points in Jackson (initially 7 to 8% of voters said they would vote for Schwarz), and ended up with more than 19%,” said campaign manager Matt Mardsen. “In other words, our performance more than doubled in the area where our outdoor advertising was heaviest.”

