

# Electoral Advertising Based on Proximity Marketing

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## Abstract

This study seeks to propose a strategy for electoral advertising based on proximity marketing. It arises as a response to the problem detected through direct observation and structured interviews with specialists (experts in electoral marketing, politicians, publicists and ICT leaders) which evidenced the lack of technological tools for electoral advertising such as proximity marketing. In addition, theoretical methods and documentary analysis were used. The results include a proposed strategy with the following phases: search for a supplier, planning, multimedia documents, technological conditions, implementation, control.

**Keywords:** advertising, proximity marketing, electoral campaign

## 1. Introduction

Marketing is fundamental in political development and especially in electoral campaigns. Lindon (1977) states that marketing uses important characteristics, such as motivation —creativity to express the most persuasive advertising issues— and surveys, polls, and tests, to persistently control the performance of advertising campaigns; as well as to promote the ideals of the candidates. Additionally, Galarza (2014), Turban, King, Kyu Lee, Liang, & Turban (2015) mentions that the media are a fundamental part in the production and dissemination of political communication, stimulating the decision-making process of the voters. That is why the information must be truthful and updated according to the criteria of the political organization or regulatory body.

García Beaudoux & D'Adamo (2006), Alvarez-García (2010) and Moreno (2012) mention that electoral marketing is an interactive process that involves the transmission of information between politicians, media and voters. Likewise, García-Marbella and Jaimes-Legorreta (2010) establish that electoral campaigns focus on the demands of the voters and consider three important characteristics: the political product, the political organization, and the electoral market, supported by commercial techniques that create a visual impact. In addition, Díaz-Jiménez (2015) and Jácome-Santos, Dueñas-Espinoza & Mera-Alvarez (2015) mention that electoral marketing is a series of actions of political organizations, candidates or interest groups that seek to maximize their electoral performance that develop promotion techniques and financing to persuade and influence their behavior and inform the electorate about the candidate or party.

In addition, Salas & Jaramillo (2018) say that nowadays transmitting political ideology and having people feel identified with the party and with the authorities that are promoted is also known as political marketing, as well as using techniques such as spots, image campaigns, social networks, direct marketing, branding.

On the other hand, González (2010), Wahab, Wati Osman & Che Rose (2012), Dushinski (2012) and Palencia (2016) argue that proximity marketing is a tool that exchanges information via Bluetooth, through a mobile telephone in an area or radius of up to 150 meters from the placement of the device or antenna. It is used for sending and receiving images, music, data, audios, and videos which the user decides whether to accept or not. Romanov (2012), Rippetoe, Pitchford & Zeto III (2012) also state that proximity marketing is known as mobile marketing and is used to send specific wireless messages (audios, texts, videos, images) to each mobile phone user, when they are in a specific place or geographical area through a wireless connection —for example,

Bluetooth of WiFi— with prior authorization by the receiver. According to Sánchez (2016) and Escandell (2017), this technological tool has been implemented in cinemas, clothing stores, shopping centers and car dealerships such as Mercedes Benz (Madrid).

In Ecuador, elections are held every four years, where governors, regional councilors, provincial prefects and vice prefects, mayors, district and municipal councilors, members of rural parish boards are elected, clearly excepting national elections where the president and vice president of the republic are elected, as detailed in the Code of Democracy according to Art.90 Organic Electoral and Political Organizations Law of the Republic of Ecuador<sup>1</sup> (2018). In addition to this, according to Art.208, since the call for elections, political organizations may, on their initiative, carry out activities aimed at disseminating their ideological principles, government programs, work plans, and candidacies, provided that it does not imply hiring written press, radio, television, and billboards (Organic Electoral and Political Organizations Law of the Republic of Ecuador, 2018).

The problem, identified by direct observation and bibliographic research, is that for the transmission of electoral advertising conventional media such as radio, television, written press, billboards, posters are used (Pérez-Múnera, 2016) without using communication techniques such as proximity marketing. This leads to ignorance of the use of technological tools that support this activity. Therefore, the direct beneficiaries are the political parties that will transmit their ideology and the candidates as a new way of communicating their proposals to the electors. Meanwhile, indirect beneficiaries are companies dedicated to electoral publishing.

This research aims to develop an electoral advertising strategy based on proximity marketing for a political party and/or another proposal of popular election in Ecuador.

## **2. Methodology**

The theoretical methods used were documentary analysis and systematization, which make it possible to organize and extract notable information based on the literature review carried out, which at the same time favored the argumentation on electoral advertising and proximity marketing. Related articles were considered and extracted from the bibliographic search in the databases SpringerLink, Google Scholar, ProQuest, Scopus, E-book, Ebook Central, magazines, international and national scientific events, and studies of national organisms such as the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC), which regulates statistics and censuses in Ecuador, whose search criteria matched the keywords.

To obtain relevant information, a structured interview was carried out with the campaign directors of the political organizations (specialists) with the purpose of knowing the means used for electoral advertising.

Additionally, direct observation of the use of digital and conventional media was made in the last elections of March 2019 in Ecuador, which evidenced the ignorance of innovative advertising techniques such as proximity marketing.

### *2.1 Participants*

The study involved 17 political organizations and movements registered in the National Electoral Council (CNE) in the province of Tungurahua with a political representation of 9.42% (National Electoral Council, 2019). The capital of the Ambato-Ecuador province, which has a registry of six (6) organizations of which one (1) was discarded due to lack of collaboration in the study, was taken as a reference.

### *2.2 Procedure*

The following steps were established after the literature review: First, an inquiry was made about the political parties and movements registered in the province of Tungurahua. Second, a selection of political organizations in force in the city of Ambato was made. Third, six (6) of them were contacted to make a diagnosis through an interview about how they conduct the campaign and the means they use. Fourth, the strategy was designed. Fifth, communication of the proposal.

## **3. Results**

An analysis of different authors is presented chronologically on the media used in electoral contests according to each stage provided by the author.

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<sup>1</sup> Ley Orgánica Electoral y de Organizaciones Políticas de la República del Ecuador

Table 1. Evolution of the media and its electoral process

Author	Characteristics	Means and process
<b>Norris Pippa (1997)</b>	Uses a model called “shopping” or “import-export”. Communication strategies according to 3 phases during the campaign: Pre-modern, modern and post modern.	<b>Pre-modern</b> National and local press, local brochures, posters, radio speeches <b>Modern</b> Television (main national channels) <b>Post-modern</b> Television (fragmented or thematic channels), mailing (sending) of advertisements (according to selected audience)
<b>Martín Marta (2001)</b>	It is based on establishing a cause-effect relationship of the political party and candidates.	<b>Campaign</b> Newspapers (local and national), television (public and subscription)
<b>Quesada Juan (2005)</b>	Essence in the text and image to define the political philosophy of the party and candidate	<b>Pre-campaign</b> Meetings, sectoral events, surveys on voter needs <b>Campaign</b> Written press (newspapers, local and national magazines), radio, television (spots, interviews), billboards, posters, brochures, digital media (Fan page, blogs)
<b>Pérez Carlos (2016)</b>	It is based on strategically directed advertising according to the segments analyzed by the political party.	<b>Pre-campaign</b> Events with artistic shows (campaign launch and presentation of conversational candidates), email <b>Campaign</b> Mobile telephone services (sending short messages about shocking proposals daily, monthly, or prior to debates or speeches), radio, television, press, election campaign vehicles (use in the cars of all party members), billboards, flyers, posters, leaflets, Internet <b>Campaign closure</b> Events in open places or outdoor plazas with artistic shows with messages about the proposals <b>Post-campaign</b> Radio, television (press conference)
<b>Rivero Jesús &amp; Huerta Rodrigo (2017)</b>	It is based on clear, simple, memorable and credible communication. It also focuses on a two-way communication between the political party and citizens.	<b>Pre-campaign</b> <i>Focus Group</i> (know the acceptance of the political party and the future candidate and needs). <b>Campaign</b> Television ( <i>spots</i> ), radio, banners, newspapers, magazines, brochures, flyers, billboards Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp), web pages. “Memes <sup>2</sup> ”
<b>Hernández Carlos (2018)</b>	It focuses on a strategy known as <i>todo terreno</i> with pragmatic political campaigns (militant-electoral). It is based on electoral coalition agreements with partisan militancies. Uses simple and direct language.	<b>Pre-campaign</b> Survey (knowing the needs) <b>Inter-campaign</b> Television (presentation of candidates and proposals), radio, press (interviews), billboards at strategic points <b>Campaign</b> Digital media (Exchange of direct information), social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp), spots (in electronic media from 30 seconds to 1:15 minutes), television (debates, spots), mass events (speeches and gifts)

Source: own elaboration

With the exposed background, an evolution in the media used within the electoral contests is detailed with the

<sup>2</sup> “Meme” is a word used on the Internet to describe an event, material or idea that can be an image, video, music, phrase or joke that is selected or modified, and is transmitted from one person to the next through Internet menas García-Huerta (2014).

use of traditional media such as television, radio, written press, as well as the use of the internet with digital media or social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube among others. On the other hand, it is observed that proximity marketing is not used under the characteristics exposed with this type of technological tool.

### *3.1 Some Models of Electoral Campaigns*

Perez-Dámazo (2013), García-Beaudoux, D'Adamo & Slavinsky (2013) and Pérez Múnera (2016) mention that the electoral campaign model with which Tony Saca became president in El Salvador in the 2004 elections and Felipe Calderón Hinojosa in Mexico in the 2006 elections was based on negative spots on television and radio against other political organizations and candidates for the presidency that sought to reduce the credibility of the opponent. With the use of attacks on the principles of morals, capabilities, techniques, structure, history, and performance of the party and candidates during the electoral process, its impact is generated according to the phase of the campaign. If it is used at the beginning, it helps demobilize independent voters. Using it at the end of the election makes it possible to mobilize them favorably because it allows a greater capture of memory.

Additionally, Pérez-Barber (2009), Valdez-Zepeda & Huerta-Franco (2009), Castro-Martínez (2012) Pérez-Múnera (2016), Maeshima (2018), and Falasca, Dymek & Grandien (2019) note that Barack Obama, who was elected president in the 2008 elections in the United States, used the broadcast model and the participatory model based on personal contact with the electors plus a campaign called mobile communication with him sending text messages (SMS) to keep all his supporters informed of all activities on a daily and direct basis. He also used e-mail marketing to inform throughout his campaign about his errands, debates, fundraisers or simply send support messages to create a link of trust, also focused on the use of internet and social networks on sites such as: Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, blogs and the official website of the candidate, all with their distinctive "Obama" as a brand for advertising within the campaign.

In addition, Slimovich (2017) refers to Mauricio Macri in the campaign that led him to the presidency of Argentina in 2015. His campaign was based on a hybrid model that used conventional media (radio, television, press) and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat or YouTube, focusing on advertising strategies through Facebook and Twitter. This makes it easier to segment voters in detail and send ads according to their tastes or interest and thus ensure that the message is of interest. Its characteristic was to seek to maintain direct contact with the citizens. He also implemented "national bell", which involved random visits to Argentinian homes to have a conversation about the problems or needs that they had regarding their place of residence.

In the Ecuadorian context, the investigations of Moreno-Morán (2017) and Parra-Barragán (2018) regarding the presidential campaign of Lenin Moreno in 2017 state that a political communication strategy was used. It focused on the main social networks —Twitter, Facebook, YouTube— as well as traditional media such as press, radio, television (spots) and billboards, regulated by the National Electoral Council<sup>3</sup> (CNE). Events with artistic shows were also used as well as election campaign vehicles, posters, caps, among others for the broadcast of advertising. It is worth mentioning that, in March 2019, a national electoral process was carried out for various authorities, where the use of strategies similar to President Moreno can be observed.

## **4. Preparation and Structuring of the Strategy in Stages**

The following authors were considered in the development of this work: Norris (1997), Martín-Llaguno (2001), Quesada-A (2005), Franco-Marcos & Dader-García (2009), Ralph F & James B (2010), Pérez-Múnera (2016), Hassan Salamah (2017), Rivero-Casas & Huerta-Montiel (2017), Visuri, Hosio, & Ferreira (2017), Begoña-Gómez (2018), Hernández-Alcántara (2018), Hassan (2019), Medina-Chicaiza, García-García, & Jarrín-Arias (2019), Chaoyong, Chunhong, & Jie (2019). In that sense, the following phases are presented for the electoral advertising strategy from proximity marketing: provider search, planning, multimedia document characteristics, technological conditions, implementation, control. They are explained below:

### **Phase 1: Search for a supplier**

A web exploration is carried out, in which a total of 20 proximity marketing providers were found, three (3) of which were contacted through emails and calls via WhatsApp, which facilitated obtaining information about their products and services.

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<sup>3</sup> Article 115 of the Constitution of Ecuador establishes that the State, through the media, will guarantee in an equitable and equal way the electoral promotion that propitiates the debate and the diffusion of the programmatic proposals of all the candidacies (Consejo Nacional Electoral, 2019).

Table 2. Proximity marketing providers

	SocialWifi Poland	Seeketing Spain	Beaconstac USA India
<b>Coverage</b>	Any country, city or town in the world that has internet. You only need to contact the supplier.	All countries in the world with shipping charges, taxes and international fees after hiring	All countries in the world with shipping charges, taxes and international fees, for 24 hours after purchase
<b>Minimum requirement</b>	Company platform and Internet	Wireless nodes provided by the company, you need internet	<i>Beacon Bluetooth</i> does not need Internet
<b>Characteristics</b>	Captive portal Communication with the customer Analytics Simple page design. Login in social networks. Welcome pages Opinions Advertising mail Network monitoring Remarketing	Customer identification and registration Analytics Automation and <sup>4</sup> CRM integration SMS, WhatsApp campaigns, push notifications, email Offline sales and integration cycle, online They work with batteries or 125/220 volt power. Send messages to phones by proximity with or without APP installed	Transmission of offers at the right time and the right location Informing consumers about offers when they are close to the product Proximity marketing without application Creation of own and easy to use application Analytics Using accumulated data from the application to personalize the message
<b>Software Cost</b>	Necessary Small businesses \$450 a year Hotels \$450 per year <input type="checkbox"/> Companies agree the price according to their need.	Necessary \$7690 per year including hardware	Necessary Basic plan (small and medium enterprises) \$490 per year Software Subscription Premium plan (for companies that require more control and advanced capabilities) \$990 per year. Reseller plan (for proximity marketing agencies) \$2990 per year
<b>Hardware cost</b>	It is not necessary to make the purchase of a hardware you can use a router or router that you have while it is compatible such as: Cisco, MikroTik, Ruckus Wireless, Zebra, OpenWrt, Ubiquiti Networks, Cisco Meraki, Aruba to Hewlett Packard Enterprise company, Aerohive Networks, Extreme Networks, Teltonika, Fortinet.	Pack of 10 wireless nodes.	The purchase of banks is necessary: Pocket: 3 \$69 package USB: 3 \$78 package Keychain: 3 \$69 package Outer vests: 3 \$108 package Interior squares: 3 \$78 package
<b>Reach</b>	It depends on the router you want to install, it may vary depending on the hardware.	15,000 square meters	Pocket: signal range 0.15-50 meters, battery up to one year. USB: range 0.15-80 meters, battery never dies. Keychain: range 0.15-25 meters, battery up to 5 months. External vests: range 0.15-80 meters, battery up to 2 years. Interior squares: range 0.15-80

<sup>4</sup> CRM or customer relationships management as well, tool that manages strategies according to customer preferences and preferences (Montoya Agudelo & Boyero Saavedra, 2013)

			months, battery up to 2 years.
<b>Payment type</b>	Monthly Annual (receive 15% discount for the annual payment)	Annual (Software and Hardware)	Monthly (software) Annual (software) Hardware (one purchase)
<b>Method of payment</b>	Credit card, PayPal, Bank transfer, payment at the bank	Credit cards	Credit cards: Visa, MasterCard, American Express
<b>Companies that use it</b>	RedBull, Kontigo, Innogi, McDonald among others	Carrefour, Movistar, Claro, Santander, among others	Google, KFC, Uber, Latam, among others

Source: own elaboration

### Phase 2: Planning

Here, the criteria that are planned for the electoral process are established with the support of proximity marketing.

Table 3. Parameters of the planning phase

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Pre-campaign:</b> Issue party philosophy and indicate future candidates <b>Campaign:</b> Submit candidate profile and proposals
<b>Strategic place</b>	Headquarters of the political party
<b>Content of the message</b>	<b>Pre-campaign:</b> Information about the philosophy of the political party, candidate profile (images, videos, audios, text). <b>Campaign:</b> Proposals of the candidate, agenda of places of next visits (images, videos, audios, texts)
<b>Time</b>	Duration of the campaign
<b>Responsible for monitoring</b>	Campaign director

Source: own elaboration

### Phase 3. Multimedia document features

Audio, image, video and text formats are established for sending advertising to smartphones.

Table 4. Multimedia document features

Audio	Image	Video	Text
The formats can be MP3, MP4, AAC, WAV	Jpg, png or Gif file Generic banner size of 468x60 pixels. Image size 320x 480, 300x400, 300x250 pixels Use of shocking or funny images	The formed must be MPEG-4 Duration of 30 seconds up to 1 minute.	Short messages of up to 120 characters. Sponsoring Messages.

Source: Own elaboration

### Phase 4: Technological conditions

This stage shows the scenario that Ecuador has regarding the use of smartphones and internet access. On the other hand, people can exercise their vote in accordance with the provisions of the Organic Electoral Law (2018) according to Art. 11 that states that the vote will be mandatory for Ecuadorians over eighteen, optional for people between sixteen and eighteen years of age, and those over sixty-five years old.

Table 5. Technological conditions

Age range	Active cellphone holding	People that own a smartphone	Internet use	Access to the internet	%
16-24	69.3%	57.4%	85.2%	Urbana	60.4
25-34	82.9%	62.7%	73.9%	Rural	39.9
35-44	82.9%	52.0%	59.6%		
45-54	79.0%	39.3%	44.0%		
55-64	72.6%	25.4%	27.2%		

Source: ( National Institute of Statistics and Censuses, 2017)

Table 5 shows the technological conditions in Ecuador: on average, 47.36% of people between 16 to 64 years of age have a mobile device. Therefore, the necessary elements for the implementation of strategies based on proximity marketing exist.

**Phase 5: Implementation**

Below is a step implementation model:

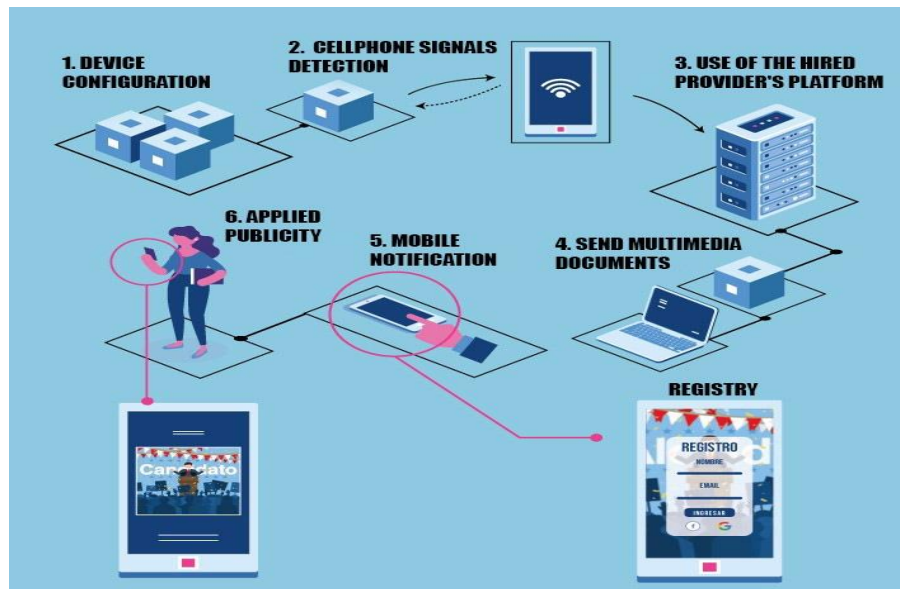


Figure 1. Steps of sending and receiving advertising

Source: Own elaboration

**Step 1:** Configuration of the device for sending multimedia documents (image, video, audio). Then, the place for the placement of the device in the political headquarters or another site is defined.



Figure 2. Platform configuration

Source: own elaboration

**Step 2:** Detects the signals, then sends the message that shows a pop-up window for registration. Thus, a database is also created that will allow segmenting, and then add advertising via email to the election campaign. Finally, the user receives the advertising on their smartphone.

#### Phase 6: Control

The control will be carried out throughout the electoral process: pre-campaign, campaign, and end of the campaign, through evaluation processes to verify if the publicity has the expected impact and if it adequately transmits the proposals, philosophy of the candidate among others.

The validation of the preparation of the strategy was carried out through interviews with specialists in the area. Ten (10) experts with more than five (5) years of experience in the labor and academic field were selected. Five (5) campaign directors (expert in electoral and political marketing) of different political parties in the country, three (3) multimedia designers (publicists) and two (2) ICT managers, participated, who from their experience and academic knowledge verified the applicability of the proposal with the determined conditions.

#### 5. Conclusion

Based on the literature review found, it is concluded that in the electoral process the candidates carry a campaign model based on traditional media such as television, radio, and press. However, currently, the digital era has allowed the use of unconventional media such as social networks, forming a more direct and communicative link between the candidate and voter and favoring voter participation throughout the electoral campaign in this medium.

In short, the proposed phased strategy meets the requirements for the implementation in the electoral processes in Ecuador since it has the necessary technological conditions such as mobile telephone services, smartphones, and internet in urban and rural areas. In addition, any political party or candidate can hire the services of the different proximity marketing providers according to their needs. On the other hand, there is no restriction according to the Electoral Organic Law in the use of this type of technological tools. Therefore, it can be used before, during and after any political campaign.

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