

Case study: Stakeholder Management

A German political party votes for TNS' stakeholder management solution TRI*M to improve voter support

Background

In 2005 Germany's national election was called one year early, leaving political parties the challenge of organising an election campaign in just a few weeks.

Objective

A leading political party commissioned TNS to:

- Find out the most important issues amongst the voters
- Identify preferences amongst the voters for different candidates
- Identify specific target groups
- Provide overall strategic insights and recommendations

Actions

TNS proposed its stakeholder management solution TRI*M which measures, manages and monitors stakeholder relationships. TNS used TRI*M to define the target groups, identify key factors relevant for the voters' affiliation with a political party and then measure these factors in terms of both their importance to the voters as well as the party's performance.

Results

In the course of the research, TRI*M was shown to have significant advantages over other, traditional research methods, by the way in which it reduces the complexity of the data and provides simple, easy to understand outputs, which have a proven track record in the political arena. For this particular political party TNS' TRI*M solution provided:

1. A TRI*M Index – a single number score which indicated the intensity of the political party's relationship with its key voter groups and could be benchmarked across political parties, groups of voters within a political party as well as over time.
2. A TRI*M Grid – a simple illustration which showed the strengths and weaknesses of the party, as well as how relevant these items were for the relevant target groups. By plotting all the factors for voting behaviour in four quadrants (Motivators, Hidden Opportunities, Must Haves, and Less Relevant), priorities could be identified in terms of actions.
3. A TRI*M Competitive Analysis – to identify issues that could be used to address voters who switched to a different political party. The analysis indicated how switch voters viewed the strengths of their newly preferred political party and which aspects of their previously preferred political party they viewed most negatively.

Recommendations

In the German 2005 election, TNS TRI*M's specific recommendations helped campaign strategists in the political party and advertising agency develop their communication and advertising strategies. The key issue in the election was unemployment, along with how to implement potentially harsh economic reforms whilst still maintaining social justice. Using TRI*M, TNS were able to clearly indicate the type of arguments which ought to be used, which duly balanced both sides of the issue, as well as were perceived as having the highest credibility. TNS also contributed on other key issues in the election such as the flooding of the Elbe, the Iraq crisis and environmental policies. These research results had a direct influence on the campaign and were very valuable for directing communications to specific target groups. The political party felt they had a competitive advantage in the campaign and furthermore their success was measurable. At the start of the campaign the party was behind in the opinion polls. On Election Day, the party in question had gained a 7 percentage point rise in voter support during only a few weeks.