# PubMatic

# PUBLISHERS PLAYBOOK

## UNLOCK THE FULL REVENUE POTENTIAL OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING

# INTRODUCTION

## Are you ready to capitalize on the vast revenue potential of political advertising?

Poised to become the fastest growing sector in advertising, political ad spending is expected to reach $12Bn+ in the US 2024 presidential elections, as per the 2024 eMarketer Political Ad Spending Report. As a publisher, maximizing revenue streams requires more than strategic foresight—it demands actionable insights that can be immediately implemented. That is why we have created a consultative playbook specifically designed to help publishers optimize monetization strategies throughout the campaign season with ten best practices:

# KEY THEMES & BEST PRACTICES

## 1. DEFINE YOUR AD POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Establish clear guidelines on acceptable ad content to maintain brand integrity and preserve your desired user experience. By having a clear stance on what you will allow on your platform, you can work with your demand partners to align with your policies and help prevent, identify, and manage violations. This is critical to ensure you tap into this revenue stream and still have confidence in what your visitors see. For instance, leading news and media platforms have strict policies against running misleading or inflammatory political ads, ensuring clarity, credibility, and reliability. After speaking with several publishers, we found that most define their policies along these lines:

| KEY TAKEAWAYS |
|---|
| ☑ **Ultimate Payor/ Beneficiary** |
| ☑ **Party-Affiliation** |
| ☑ **Location Dynamics** |
| ☑ **Hot Election Issues** |

   a. **Type of Payor/Beneficiary:** Paid for By Candidate, Paid for By Third Party

   b. **Type of Party-Affiliation:** Democratic, Republican or Independent / Non-Partisan

   c. **Target Location:** Federal Elections, State Elections

   d. **Prime Election Issues:** Climate Change, Guns, Immigration, Health Care, and more

## 2. LEVERAGE GEO-TARGETING CAPABILITIES

Make sure you are sending IP addresses and Latitude/Longitude parameters in your bid requests. This will make your inventory more buyable for political advertisers seeking specific audience segments and geos. Buyers will be setting up campaigns and targeting that will be laser-focused on delivering a message to locally targeted audiences. For instance, a regional news website could provide targeted ad placements which would appeal to political campaigns aiming to reach voters in crucial swing states.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- ☑ **IP Addresses**
- ☑ **Lat/Long Parameters**
- ☑ **Swing States Clusters**

## 3. UPDATE AD REQUEST PARAMETERS

Fine-tune ad request parameters to streamline the ad serving process, optimize inventory monetization, and increase campaign effectiveness. By adjusting parameters in the bid request, you can enable the maximum amount of information (ex. demographics, interests, browsing behavior) to enhance ad relevance and performance. This can  lead to higher CPMs, bid rates, win rates, and ROI for advertisers. This can significantly boost your revenue potential from political advertisers.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- ☑ **Age & Gender Parameters**
- ☑ **Content Object Signals**
- ☑ **Contextual Ad Parameters**

## 4. REVISIT BLOCKLISTS

Revisiting blocklists is an essential strategy for publishers looking to unlock the full revenue potential of political advertising. This will allow publishers to access the maximum amount of demand available and is the fastest and least resource intensive approach to political revenue. Your decision to enable the entire category (or not) will determine if you will have a reactive or pro-active approach to policing political ads. If you want to fully realize political demand, contact your demand partners to ensure you are unblocking IAB 11-4 for Politics and IAB-11, which is the parent category, Law, Government and Politics. If unblocking is not an option, speak with your demand partners to determine what types of tools they have to enable creative approval, whitelist specific advertisers, or facilitate more controlled spend with any other means. By doing this, the users can still hear directly from their candidates, which can help to fuel the democratic process.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- ☑ **Unblock IAB 11-4 for Politics**
- ☑ **Unblock IAB 11 for Law, Govt & Politics**
- ☑ **Ad Creative & Category Management Options**

## 5. ENABLE PROGRAMMATIC DEMAND

Many publishers are focused on allowing only political spending via PMPs, 1:1 deals, or IOs to maintain better control over creatives and pricing. This omits a large percentage of the overall political spend that is expected to flow via the open exchange, however. Opening political spending to the open exchange can help publishers capture spending from buyers that are looking to scale beyond PMPs. While buyers will be focused on hyper-targeting for certain campaigns, especially local ones, there are many buyers with campaigns that are looking for scale that can be achieved via open exchange buying. For instance, partnering with demand-side platforms (DSPs) and ad networks enables publishers to access additional ad demand and maximize revenue potential from political advertisers.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- ☑ **Private Marketplace Deals**
- ☑ **Auction Packages**
- ☑ **Open Exchange**

## 6. PARTICIPATE IN AUCTION PACKAGES

To drive incremental revenue, collaborate with partners like PubMatic wto get included in auction packages tailored to specific audience segments, driving incremental revenue. Demand partners are setting these up with DSPs, agencies, PACs (Political Advocacy Committees), and other buyers focused on political budgets. These auction packages are being created around different segments such as Democratic, Republican, or Independents, battleground states, and more. By leveraging auction packages targeting audiences interested in political news and analysis, you can drive incremental publisher revenue during the election season.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- ☑ **Liberal Voter Packages**
- ☑ **Conservative Voter Packages**
- ☑ **CTV Auction Packages**
- ☑ **Swing State Packages**

## 7. IMPLEMENT DYNAMIC FLOORING

Test different floors for political ads to capture increased eCPMs and develop a revenue-maximizing strategy. Political campaigns are expected to have varying bid floors so publishers can create different placements with different tiers of floors; these can be monitored and modified as the political season ramps up to determine the best revenue-driving strategy. We also expect non-political advertisers to modify their bid floors to be able to compete with political budgets, which will contribute to fluid eCPM movements.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- ☑ **Test Different Floors**
- ☑ **Non-Political Advertisers Bids**
- ☑ **Higher eCPMs**

## 8. ENSURE AD QUALITY & STAY VIGILANT AGAINST DEEPFAKE AI

In conjunction with creating your political ad guidelines, partner with demand partners who can guarantee ad quality and provide tools and resources for you to stay in control. Speak to your partners, SSPs, and DSPs to determine what safeguards they are using to ensure that you can monetize political ad spending in a safe and responsible way. There are also different technical solutions for you to use on your sites. For example, AI-driven content moderation tools help publishers detect and remove ads containing hate speech, violence, or misinformation before they are served to users, ensuring a safe and positive user experience. By taking these proactive measures, publishers can play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of the digital advertising ecosystem. Publishers should remain especially vigilant against emerging threats such as deepfake AI, implementing safeguards to detect and mitigate deceptive content. Example: Leveraging AI-powered detection tools and manual review processes helps publishers identify and remove deep fake videos or manipulated content from their platforms.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ☑ **Brand-safety Tools**
- ☑ **Deepfake Ad Policy**
- ☑ **AI detection tools**

## 9. EMBRACE TRANSPARENCY

Prioritize transparency in ad buyer relationships and campaign reporting to build trust and credibility. For instance, advertisers who comply with the "political ad" tag (as part of the Digital Ads Alliance political transparency program) breed confidence and transparency with publishers and users about who is running and paying for the ads. Publishers can foster trust with advertisers by providing transparent reporting on ad performance metrics such as impressions, clicks, and conversions. For example, providing detailed campaign analytics and insights enables advertisers to assess the effectiveness of their political ad campaigns and optimize their campaigns in real time.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ☑ **DAA Political Tags**
- ☑ **Provide Performance Reporting**
- ☑ **Update Media Kits**

## 10. ESTABLISH CUSTOMER SUPPORT PLAN

Develop protocols to promptly address instances of incorrect or inappropriate ads appearing on the platform, ensuring a seamless user experience. Publishers can establish either a dedicated support team or a playbook to handle ad-related inquiries and complaints to resolve issues quickly. It is important to remember that political ads can elicit an emotional response from users, even if an ad may not be considered problematic. Having clear policies will help you decide how to best address user complaints, and having a system in place will help you trouble-shoot quickly.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- ☑ **24x7 Customer Support**
- ☑ **Process to Report Ads**
- ☑ **Takedown Collaboration Dashboards**

# CONCLUSION

## Empowering Publishers for Success

The US 2024 election presents an historically ripe opportunity for publishers to capitalize on political ad spending, but success requires meticulous planning and execution. By adhering to ad policies, embracing transparency, optimizing monetization strategies, and prioritizing user experience, publishers can meaningfully fuel the democratic process in a mutually beneficial way.

**So, think political; think PubMatic!**

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**Get in touch** with PubMatic's best-in-class team to learn more about how they can help you strategically monetize your political ads in a safe and scaled way.

## About PubMatic

PubMatic (Nasdaq: PUBM) is an independent technology company maximizing customer value by delivering digital advertising's supply chain of the future. PubMatic's sell-side platform empowers the world's leading digital content creators across the open internet to control access to their inventory and increase monetization by enabling marketers to drive return on investment and reach addressable audiences across ad formats and devices. Since 2006, our infrastructure-driven approach has allowed for the efficient processing and utilization of data in real time. By delivering scalable and flexible programmatic innovation, we improve outcomes for our customers while championing a vibrant and transparent digital advertising supply chain.

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