

Mark the Ballot Case Study

Integrated Election Campaign
for Washington's Office of
the Secretary of State

Submission for Indie Agency News Top 40: Design

HAPPYAGONY

For



WASHINGTON
Secretary of State



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Key Deliverables

This integrated campaign included the following core capabilities:

- Insights & strategy
- Graphic design and illustration
- Digital design
- Brand design
- Production design
- Inclusive design & translation
- Logo design
- Video/audio design
- OOH design
- Animation design
- Print design



The Ask

Build Trust in Washington's Vote-by-Mail System

Address growing voter distrust fueled by widespread misinformation and restore confidence in Washington's vote-by-mail system.

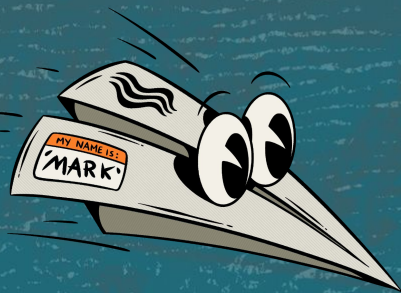
Our challenge: create a campaign that cuts through the noise of national turmoil, delivering clear, fact-based information.



Opportunity

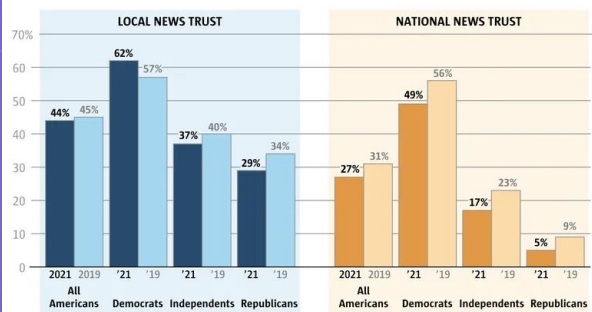
Engage Voters in a New Way

An opportunity to rethink how election information is delivered — transforming standard voter messaging into something engaging and memorable.



Local news remains more trusted

A new Gallup-Knight Foundation poll found local news remains more trusted than national news across the political spectrum.



Source: Gallup/Knight Foundation

EMILY M. ENG / THE SEATTLE TIMES



POLITICS | OCTOBER 13, 2023

Americans Trust Local Government Most, Congress Least

BY JEFFREY M. JONES

Research has shown that the brain chemistry governing our emotions also plays a role in trust. Paul Zak, a researcher on the cutting edge of the new field of neuroeconomics, has demonstrated, for instance, that [oxytocin](#), a powerful natural chemical found in our bodies (which plays a role in a mother's labor and milk production) can boost both trust and trustworthiness between people playing experimental trust games. (Even a squirt of oxytocin-laden nasal spray is enough to do it.) Other research has also shown how intimately oxytocin is connected with positive emotional states and the creation of social connections. It's well documented that animals become calmer, more sedate, and less anxious when injected with oxytocin.

Insights

People Trust At A Local Level. People Don't Trust When They're Angry.

Research revealed that voters trust government and media more when it feels local, and 80% respond better to positive, community-focused messaging.



Approach

We introduced “Mark the Ballot”—a friendly, animated character designed to make learning about vote-by-mail feel warm, engaging and accessible. This wasn’t just about presenting facts; it was about meeting voters where they are. Through playful storytelling, local references and relatable scenarios, Marked turned election security into something clear, familiar and trustworthy.

We didn’t just inform—we connected.





The Campaign

We took a multi-channel approach to ensure the campaign reached diverse audience segments.

Content covered:

- Voter and Election Security
- Accuracy
- Transparency
- Verification
- Accessibility
- Key Voting Dates



How to Make Your Mark

Follow along with Mark the Ballot in our step-by-step guide to voting in Washington state to see how simple it is to cast your vote and ensure it counts. From receiving your ballot to returning it, we've made the process easy, clear, fair, and secure!

Transparency

Ever wonder what happens after you turn in your ballot? 📦 Good thing you have Mark the Ballot to give you a tour of Washington state's secure and transparent election process!





Journey of a Ballot

Mark showcases the meticulous steps taken from the moment they leave the elections office to visit voters, to when they return and votes are certified.

Voter Roll Accuracy

Vote-by-mail elections make voting in Washington easy. Hard-working election staff regularly update our statewide voter roll, ensuring it's accurate.



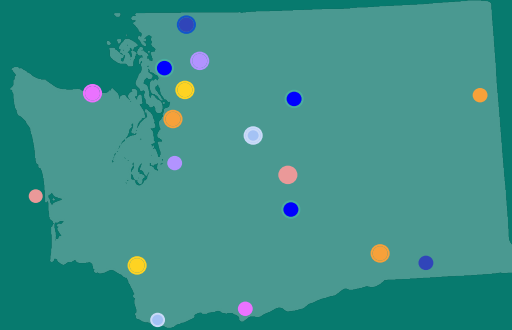
Vote-By-Mail IS SMOOTH SAILING!

Mark
THE BALLOT
FOR
Port
Angeles



Out-of-Home

We strategically placed billboards in key locations across the state, each tailored to the communities they were in.



A voter roll as cared for as Duncan Garden

The statewide voter roll is regularly updated by trained election officials using reliable information from various sources across the country.



Change of address



Name update



Eligibility change



Record of death

Learn how Spokane County helps keep the voter roll up to date at:
sos.wa.gov/elections

MAKE
YOUR
Mark



Paid for by the Washington Office of the Secretary of State

JULY 25, 2024 INLA

Local Media

We tapped into local media outlets, ran print ads, and used trusted local radio DJs, knowing these were the sources voters turned to for reliable information.





Partnerships

We partnered with the Seattle Seahawks, Mariners, Kraken and the University of Washington to bring the campaign to game day, integrating athlete-driven messaging for fans.

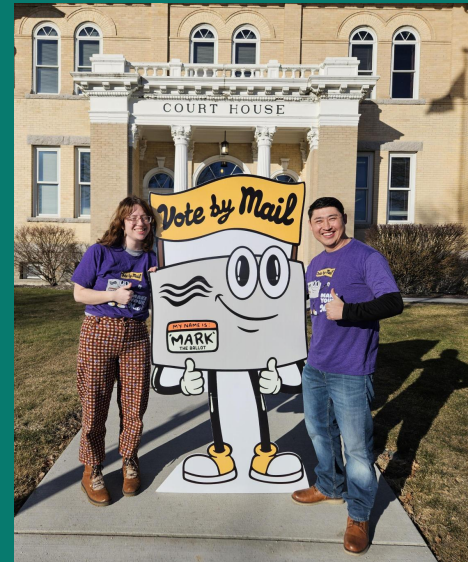


This ain't our first rodeo!



Community Activations

We brought educational content and events directly to colleges and fairs across the state, engaging with students and local communities in person.



The Media Results

The campaign was executed in three strategic phases aligned with electoral moments:

Presidential Primary
Primary Election
General Election (with increased visibility)

The campaign exceeded expectations, delivering 58 million impressions across all platforms—*43% above our target.*

This comprehensive reach was achieved through both digital and traditional media channels.

58MM

Impressions

2,685,448

Video Views

1,588,537

Social Engagements

1,570,879

Audio Listens

0.09%

CTR

The Survey Results

41%

**Of Washington
survey respondents
reported some
exposure to the
Mark campaign.**

+36%

**More confidence
in Washington's
government to act
in the best and
fairest interests
of the people**

+15%

**More knowledge
of the security
measures
Washington has
taken to ensure
election integrity**

+12%

**More trust in
election officials,
reinforcing
confidence in the
system as a whole.**

The two-wave campaign survey, conducted by YouGov from December 2023 to January 2024, surveyed 2,400 respondents, including oversamples of rural and minority groups. The post-campaign survey measured exposure within key communities and tracked shifts in trust, focusing on how “Mark the Ballot” impacted voter confidence.

