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The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

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The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Abstract

In the 21st century social media platforms have become influential tools for reaching target audiences and shaping public opinion. This study focuses on the presence of political figures on social media and studies the state of political marketing in CIS countries. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested through a survey, interviews with political marketing experts and analysis of social media pages using the online platform.

The research showed that political marketing in the CIS countries is still at its early stage, as evidenced by the lack of public awareness and negative perceptions. Social media platforms are considered very attractive for political advertising operations, with experts pointing to the successful marketing strategy used by politicians like Vladimir Zelenskiy.

Also, the research has found that inactive and unmoderated social media pages have a negative impact on a politician's image and political influence. Conversely, statesmen who actively interact with social media platforms face less hostility. Moreover, the research shows that politicians adjust their image and communication to the preferences of their target audience, as evidenced by the correlation between respondents' demographic characteristics and their interest in specific public and political figures.

To further enrich our understanding of political marketing in the region, future research will include additional interviews with experts, as they have proven to be an invaluable source of exclusive information in this area.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Table of content

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Introduction

The appearance of advertising and public relations in political campaigns can be tracked from the beginning of the 20th century, marking the emergence of political marketing. It could be explained by the growing recognition of the importance of effective communication in politics and the adoption of marketing tactics to influence public opinion.

The presidential election campaign in the United States in 1928 where Herbert Hoover, the Republican candidate, used modern marketing techniques with major success was one of the turning points in the development of political marketing. Hoover's campaign focused on appealing to emotions and creating a favorable image through carefully crafted messages and advertising. The campaign marked a departure from traditional political approaches that emphasized the use of mass media and public relations strategies to shape public opinions.

A further milestone in the history of political marketing was the implementation of Television as a communication medium in the mid-20th century. The Television debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon during the 1960 US presidential election demonstrated the power of visual communication and presentation skills. Andrews, E. (2023)[1] – stated that Kennedy's polished appearance and effective use of television helped secure his victory by highlighting the media's influence in shaping public opinion.

Moving forward to these days one of the best worldwide examples of a strong personal brand is, unsurprisingly, the U.S.'s 44th President Barack Obama. He is often referred to as 'the first digital President' and 'the first social networking President' according to Marketing Week (2008).[2] Obama's success on the elections was a contribution of many factors, but the most important one was social media

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[1]Andrews, E. (2023, April 25). The First Kennedy-Nixon Debate: Politics, Image. History.

[2]Marketing Week. (2008, November 20). Obama's election success is a victory for digital marketing.

[3]Stanford Graduate School of Business (2009), Obama and The Power of Social Media and Technology.

& technology and the way he, alongside his campaign team, used them in own advantage (Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2009).[3]

The 'new media department' that had been created for Obama's campaign was unique at that time and its responsibility was everything Internet related, as organizational, and communicational elements taking place online. Prior to his campaign he also created a profile on Facebook, which quickly gained attention from the potential voters on the platform. Furthermore, the person responsible for the change in marketing, social and political initiatives on Facebook, Randi Zuckerberg was amazed by how authentic Obama's profile was. He put all his favorite music, movies, hobbies out for public to see, which on its end helped for the success on his personal image: people felt rather connected to the future President, like they were having a casual conversation with him.

Since then, the field of political marketing has continued to evolve with the development of technology. The advent of the Internet and social media has opened new opportunities for political communication and interaction. Today, politicians and political parties around the world use the power of social media to connect with voters, spread their messages and mobilize support.

One sign of active development is the trend of creation and maintenance of social networking of government officials, which often with the help of marketing specialists and PR agencies build a clear personal brand, thus reaching their target audience among the people and bringing certain information. It is also worth pointing out that PR companies of government officials pay attention to the smallest details such as the physical appearance, a striking example today can be considered the President of Ukraine Vladimir Zelenskiy, who since the beginning of political events in Ukraine changed usual formal suites to military style uniform, thereby reminding at every speech about the difficult situation in the country and proximity to the people.

This has only recently become common in Kazakhstan. The active usage of social media as an image-building tool for political figures in order to connect with voters and attract them. The vivid cases of Mayors from cities taking public transportation, visiting rural areas, and simply stepping out onto the

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

streets and joyfully accepting selfie requests could be recalled. All of this simply gets them closer to the people and elicits good and trustworthy emotions.

The subject of this thesis is the use of political marketing in the CIS countries. The object of this thesis is a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials.

This work is timely, particularly in our time, due to the active development of digital marketing and the speed with which information is distributed, which affects people's opinions, who in turn rarely read more than one source and involuntarily spreads false information among relatives and friends, thereby actively forming a false civic position.

Research Objectives:

1. This study aims to track the influence of social media on shaping people's perceptions.
2. This study seeks to explore the history of the re-emergence of political marketing in the global context and its implementation in CIS countries.
3. The purpose of this study is to analyze government officials' use of social media and brand image building
4. This study seeks to find PR companies' blunders and the existence of propaganda.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the impact of social media on people's perceptions of government officials' personal image. Its goal is to provide valuable insights that can be used in the future to improve political communication and engagement strategies in Kazakhstan.

The hypothesis:
H1: Political marketing in the CIS is still in its infancy.
H2: Social media platforms are the most appealing for political advertising operations.
H3: Dead (un-updated and unmoderated) pages harm a politician's image and political power.
H4: Each government official's image is formed on the demands of its target audience.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Literature Review

The current section of this research project is intended to analyze existing academic literature about personal image creation, public relations of the politicians and government officials. The literature review also analyzed existing methods and techniques of the public image development.

1.1 Social Media and Political Elections

The development of the media and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) have provided with considerable opportunities for the politicians to utilize the marketing and communications by these technologies (Safiullah, Pathak and Anshul, 2017).[4] Moreover, such technologies have become an important influential force in case of the general elections as it occurred during the General Elections in 2014 in India. Safiullah, Pathak and Anshul (2017) analyzed more than 9 million posts related to the topic of General Elections on the social media and 100 buzzes created. The results of the research demonstrated considerable influence on the election results.

Moreover, Dmitrova and et al., (2014)[5] – stated the social media and marketing communications have become one of the essential tools in personal branding and marketing among the politicians. Based on the study of internet use evolution in politics, the authors noted that the U.S. Presidential elections of 1992 was the first time when the information about the candidate was placed on Internet, but the information was accessible to small proportion of the electorate. Nevertheless, by 2000 the internet had become one of the essential tools of the election campaign and the election in that year was named as 'the first Internet Elections'.

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[4]Md Safiullah, Pramod Pathak, Saumya Singh, Ankita Anshul, Social media as an upcoming tool for political marketing effectiveness, Asia Pacific Management Review, Volume 22, Issue 1, 2017, 10-15.

[5]Dimitrova, D. V., Shehata, A., Strömbäck, J., & Nord, L. W. (2014). The effects of digital media on political knowledge and participation in election campaigns: Evidence from panel data. Communication Research, 41(1), 95-118.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

It has to be noted that even if the application of the Internet and social media in political campaigns had been brought by the western countries, such tools had become undeniably crucial during the campaigns in other countries as well.

In fact, the use of the social media platforms could have considerable influence on the main political decisions as it occurred during the 'Brexit' during which Twitter had become an influential tool in public opinion making (Fujiwara, Muller and Schwarz, 2021).[6] Similar conclusions can be made about the role of Twitter during the recent presidential elections in the United States. The meta-analysis results demonstrated interesting findings during presidential campaigns in 2016 and 2020 and Donald Trump's victory and loss in two elections. It was found that 10% increase in Twitter accounts in the United States had decreased the votes for the Donald Trump by 0.2%, which was explained by the use of the famous social media platform by left-leaning youth (Fujiwara, Muller and Schwarz, 2021).[6] Moreover, Hong (2013)[7] – questioned which of the American political parties (Democrats and Republicans) benefited more from the social media platforms as Twitter. The study results discovered that the adoption of the social media by political candidates had increased the political donations outside of their constituencies. Moreover, the politicians with extreme political ideologies were found to benefit from the adoption of the social media. Lastly, the adoption of the social media could result in unequal distribution of the financial resources among the candidates' fund.

One of the key arguments explaining the engagement of the politicians in online campaign and public relations was the common belief that social media platforms foster political participation of different layers of population improving the democracy (Effing, Van Hillegersberg and Huibers, 2011).[8] By examining the elections in 2010 and 2011 in the Netherlands, the authors concluded that the social

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[6]Fujiwara, T., Müller, K., & Schwarz, C. (2021). The effect of social media on elections: Evidence from the United States (No. w28849). National Bureau of Economic Research.

[7]Hong, S. (2013). Who benefits from Twitter? Social media and political competition in the US House of Representatives. Government Information Quarterly, 30(4), 464-472.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

media and internet seem to be the most effective tools in increasing the political participation by citizens. It was argued that prior to application of the Internet and social media, it was challenging to engage people in parties and take active participation in political decision-making.

Interestingly, as opposed to the findings from other countries such as the United States (Fujiwara, Muller and Schwarz, 2021)[6] and India (Safiullah, Pathak and Anshul, 2017)[4] –, the 2010-2011 local elections in the Netherlands were not highly influenced by the social media. On the other hand, the national elections held in 2010 had been greatly influenced by social media where the politicians with higher social engagement obtained relatively higher votes in comparison with those who did not engage on social media platforms.

Moreover, Williams and Gulati (2013)[9] – examined the mass adoption of Facebook during the U.S. Congressional elections in 2006 and 2008 to the House of Representatives. The results indicated that the mass adoption and diffusion of Facebook occurred in this period and had great impact on the election outcomes. Interestingly, the challengers and potential candidates for the open seats were considered as early adopters of Facebook. However, incumbents in the House were the ones that extensively utilized Facebook.

Overall, it can be concluded that the Internet and social media platforms have become undeniably important tools during the political election campaigns in many countries. Indeed, analyzed literature has provided with main motives of using such instruments by the politicians that included increased publicity, influence on perceptions of the voters and increasing political participation among the users.

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[8]Effing, R., Van Hillegersberg, J., & Huibers, T. (2011). Social media and political participation: Are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube democratizing our political systems? In Proceedings of the Third IFIP WG 8.5 International Conference on Electronic Participation (ePart 2011) (pp. 25-35). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

[9]Williams, C. B., & Gulati, G. J. J. (2013). Social networks in political campaigns: Facebook and the congressional elections of 2006 and 2008. New Media & Society, 15(1), 52-71.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

1.2 The Role of Media in Public Image Creation

Media has been considered as an important aspect of power and influence for a political figure or a government representative as it enables the creation of favorable public image (McQuire, 2006).[10] With the evolution of the internet and social media, the concept of media has changed as well. Aichner and et al., (2021)[11] – defined the term 'media' as 'a collection of mass communication tools such as publishing, broadcasting and the Internet'. If previously, the media meant the use of the TV channels as well as printed publications, now media mostly encompasses internet and social media platforms. Given the fact that printed media publications have also become digital, the media can be regarded as a collection of both online and offline mass communication tools. McQuire (2006)[10] – stated that the public domain is no longer determined by the material structures such as streets and plazas. The author stated that the public domain is now derived from the complex interactions between material and immaterial structures. It was argued that the democracy had been shifted from being present in material structures towards the virtual space such as internet.

Indeed, the public image and Public Relations (PR) have transferred into virtual world. According to Lalancette and Raynauld (2019)[12] –, the public image created in social media space has been considered as the most significant driver of the public opinion and perceptions about a political figure. The electorate tends to evaluate a public politician based on the specific characteristics such as honesty, friendliness, intelligence, sincerity and trustworthiness when they make voting decisions. It was observed that social media engagement has become a new reality in politics.

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[10]McGuire, M. (2006), Collaborative Public Management: Assessing What We Know and How We Know It. Public Administration Review, 66: 33-43

[11]Aichner, T., Grünfelder, M., Maurer, O., & Jegeni, D. (2021). Twenty-five years of social media: A review of social media applications and definitions from 1994 to 2019. Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 24(4), 215-222.

[12]Lalancette, M., & Raynauld, V. (2019). The power of political image: Justin Trudeau, Instagram, and celebrity politics. American Behavioral Scientist, 63(7), 888-924.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Based on the analysis of Justin Trudeau's social media activity on Instagram after the elections in October 2015, the authors concluded that Instagram conveyed the image of Trudeau as more inspiring and trustworthy since he was able to combine personal and Liberal Party values and ideas in discussing the issues related to the environment, youth and technology. Justin Trudeau was able to mobilize public opinion about the key issues and collaborate with celebrity politicians in Canada.

Campus (2010)[13] – argued that the development of the social media and its active utilization by the political leaders has contributed towards the personalization of the politics. The author compared the public images of Berlusconi and Sarkozy.

It was argued that the political system in democratic countries is based on deploying effective communication strategy, which in turn is influenced by the personal image of a political figure. The findings suggest that both politicians related on the personal branding and public relations, which was achieved through development of the social media communication strategies. As a result, both politicians were considered as influential powers influencing the majority of the political decisions.

Moreover, Scammell (2007)[14] – reported that political branding has become a new concept in the politics. Personal branding has become inseparable aspect of political marketing. The author analyzed the public image re-branding of Tony Blair. Increasing numbers of dissatisfied voters during the leadership of Tony Blair as the prime minister before the elections in 2005 had caused significant hurdles for Blair. In order to change the public negativity that influenced the public image of the prime minister, a new strategy "Reconnecting the Prime Minister" was implemented. The strategy focused on changing negative

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[13]Campus, D. (2010). Mediatization and personalization of politics in Italy and France: The cases of Berlusconi and Sarkozy. The International Journal of Press/Politics, 15(2), 219-235.

[14]Scammell, M. (2007). Political brands and consumer citizens: The rebranding of Tony Blair. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 611(1), 176-192. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716206297842

public opinion about the prime minister before the General Elections in 2005. The hatred against Tony Blair decreased considerably as his team deployed the reconnection strategy that started from speech during the Labor Party Spring Conference. It has to be noted that the strategy was effective. Based on the case of Tony Blair, Scammell (2007)[14] – concluded that personal branding in politics could be regarded as elements of both soft and hard power. The key principle underlying personal branding in politics is the communication. In fact, personal branding underlines the importance of the personal communication and engagement between a political leader and the electorate.

Van Wyk (2021)[15] – stated that new forms of the media channels such as social media platforms provide with unlimited capability in developing personal brands of political figures. Personal branding of politicians mostly relies on personal storytelling techniques that increase the trustworthiness of politicians and their political agenda. Based on the South African context, the author stated that most of the politicians engage with the Public Relations agencies in creating their online persona and increase their public image.

To sum up, personal branding of political figures has become one of the essential aspects in developing the public image and communication by the politicians. In fact, personal branding based on the personal storytelling has become an effective method of engaging with the electorate. Moreover, personal branding could enable the political figures to become closer to their audiences by sharing the social media contents that are warmly welcomed by the social media users. The use of personal branding significantly influences on the public perceptions as well as more customized communication methods.

Karamat and Farooq (2020)[16] – examined the role of social media in public image building in the politics. Based on the survey analysis collected in Pakistan, the authors examined the impact of the social media platforms on the creation of a public image among the politicians.

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[15]Van Wyk, H. E. L. E. N. A. (2021). A conceptual framework for an online political brand persona from a social media-based political brand storytelling perspective (Doctoral dissertation). University of South Africa.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Moreover, the authors highlighted on five levels of influences made by the social media on the publicity of the politicians that included individual transformation, intergroup relations, collective actions, regime policies and the external attention. The individual transformation is related to obtaining personalized information and [7]close analysis of voter behavior in the virtual world. Intergroup relations can be interpreted as a social media's role in enhancing cooperation among different social groups. Moreover, social media platforms could have powerful impact on undertaking collective actions to address an important social issue and draw the necessary attention by the government officials. Regime policies mean that the social media could have considerable influence on the policy-making of a political regime by facilitating open public disputes about the laws and regulations.

1.3 Social Media Use by Government Officials

So far, the analyzed academic literature has focused on the personal branding, public image creation and social media marketing influences on political competition such as regional and national elections. The current section addressed the use the social media by government officials in the world.

Kavanaugh and et al., (2011)[17] – stated that the social media reliance of the governmental officials has become a new norm. The social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube usually generate the vast amount of the user-based content that is quite an important source of information for government officials. It was also stated that such platforms could be effective in managing crises that require immediate actions. While a lot of information needs to be processed and filtered, identification of the

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[16]Karamat, A., & Farooq, D. A. (2020). Emerging role of social media in political activism: Perceptions and practices. South Asian Studies, 31(1), 99-113.

[17]Kavanaugh, A., Fox, E. A., Sheetz, S., Yang, S., Li, L. T., Whalen, T., ... & Xie, L. (2011). Social media use by government: From the routine to the critical. In Proceedings of the 12th Annual International Digital Government Research Conference: Digital Government Innovation in Challenging Times (pp. 121-130).

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

meaningful patterns and monitoring the user activity hikes could be helpful for the government officials to obtain required real-time information in case of emergencies.

Djerf-Pierre and Pierre (2016)[18] – analyzed the use of social media among local government officials in Sweden. The authors conducted a survey research in order to identify the impact of the social media use on the news perception by local residents. The study covered the period between 1989 and 2010 years. It was found that the local government officials had incorporated social media in their work processes, but that reliance was on a moderate level. Furthermore, it was found that the social media usage hikes tend to occur when the local government becomes a target for a public scrutiny. It is also important to note that social media communication had not replaced the conventional communication channels with the local residents. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that social media is used often to improve public relations and personal images of the local government officials.

The use of social media platforms by the state officials could be motivated by different reasons apart from the personal image building. For instance, most of the government officials utilized social media platforms as an instant source of the latest news during the COVID-19 pandemic (Machmud and et al., 2021)[19] – or during the potential threats to the public safety caused by the natural cataclysms as it was in case of the California wildfires (Sutton and et al., 2008).[20] Bali and et al., (2023)[21] – discovered that the development of mutual trust between government officials and citizens via social media platforms was positively associated with the compliance of the COVID-19 pandemic instructions.

[18]Djerf-Pierre, M., & Pierre, J. (2016). Mediatised local government: Social media activity and media strategies among local government officials 1989–2010. Policy & Politics, 44(1), 59-77.

[19]Machmud, M., Irawan, B., Karinda, K., Susilo, J., & Salahudin, S. (2021). Analysis of the intensity of communication and coordination of government officials on Twitter social media during the Covid-19 handling in Indonesia. Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 10(3), 319-334. https://doi.org/10.2478/ajis-2021-0022

[20]Sutton, J. N., Palen, L., & Shklovski, I. (2008). Backchannels on the front lines: Emergency uses of social media in the 2007 Southern California Wildfires. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13(4), 582-618.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

In fact, such situations contribute to the creation of information hunger among ordinary people. Thus, social media platforms provide with fast and efficient way of communication between people and governmental officials about the matters influencing on them.

Carlo Bertot, Jaeger and Grimes (2012)[22] – declared that social media use by the government officials could lead to an improved transparency and accountability. Moreover, such practices could lead to the formation of more collaborative e-government, where people can interact with the state officials in a virtual world. In fact, by implementing social media marketing and communication, the government officials can easily reach their residents and address the concerns. As a result, it will increase the accountability of public servants as well as nurture trust in the government, which in turn can lead to an enhanced public image and public relations.

It is important to consider that media could bring benefits by increasing the accessibility of the public servants to ordinary people. One of the potential ways that social media could bring considerable benefit is to create online forums (D'Antonio, 2019).[23] Nevertheless, the abuse of power could be one of the potential challenges to be faced in facilitating online forums by the state officials as it was in the United States where governmental officials had blocked the users for their opinions and arguments rising the question on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Furthermore, it is important not to underestimate the collective power exercised in virtual communities as it occurred in Egypt and Tunisia during the Arab Spring in 2010-2011 (Howard and Hussain, 2011).[24] In other words, government officials relying on the social media should be aware of

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[21]Bali, A. O., Halbusi, H. A., Ahmad, A. R., & Lee, K. Y. (2023). Public engagement in government officials' posts on social media during coronavirus lockdown. PLoS ONE, 18(1), e0280889.

[22]Carlo Bertot, J., Jaeger, P. T., & Grimes, J. M. (2012). Promoting transparency and accountability through ICTs, social media, and collaborative e-government. Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy, 6(1), 78-91.

[23]D'Antonio, J. A. (2019). Whose forum is it anyway: Individual government officials and their authority to create public forums on social media. Duke Law Journal, 69, 701-728.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

the potential risks. and threats that could lead to an opposite outcome than creating positive public image and public relations.

The case of the Egypt and Tunisia demonstrates that the social media was the main source of the public's news perception and uniting forces calling for the mass protests that had led to adverse consequences.

Barbera and Zeitzoff (2018)[25] – stated the mass adoption of the mass media by political leaders is dictated by the demographic shifts and the emergency of the technologically savior electorate. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have become one of the vital tools in mass communication of the world leaders and shaping the opinions of the electorate.

In conclusion, academic literature review has focused on the several aspects of the media use by the state officials as well as political figures. Notably, there were no available academic materials about the social or any other media use and public image making focused on the post-Soviet republics. Nevertheless, the review findings have provided with ample evidence about trends in social media use by the political figures, personal branding, social media communication strategies and other aspects of the public relations management. Interestingly, personal branding and creating a positive personal image were essential aspects of the election campaigns in the majority of the developed countries. Indeed, social media platforms and the engagement of the political figures on such platforms are considered as a sign of democracy, transparency and openness all of which are valued and respected by the electorates. The academic literature review has also demonstrated that social media platforms can be powerful and effective ways of political communication, which in turn boost the personal image and enhance public relations. However, it can also underline the potential challenges and result in negative publicity of political figures.

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[24]Howard, P. N., & Hussain, M. M. (2011). The upheavals in Egypt and Tunisia: The role of digital media. Journal of Democracy, 22(3), 35-48.

[25]Barberá, P., & Zeitzoff, T. (2018). The new public address system: Why do world leaders adopt social media? International Studies Quarterly, 62(1), 121-130.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Methodology

In order to accomplish the objectives and test the hypotheses of this thesis, two research methods (qualitative and quantitative research) were selected. It was chosen to employ both strategies since using either one alone may not provide a clear outcome and would be more subjective. This will allow the understanding of the opinions of both political marketing and public relations specialists and those directly impacted by these methods.

In order to collect quantitative data a survey was conducted. The survey was completed online using the Google Forms. This allowed respondents to stay anonymous and answer honestly, improving the quality of the study's findings. Citizens of Kazakhstan over the age of 18 and regardless of their gender, nationality, occupation, or other were the intended audience for this study. 103 people participated in the survey, consisting of 26 questions divided into four parts naming: demographic questions, media consumption, product & service, and customer behavior experience. The questioner was sent in two languages to ensure the ease of participation and to capture a more diverse range of responses.

It was decided to undertake extra research analysis of government officials' social media accounts as the topic of this thesis is closely tied to the personal brand of political figures. Political figures chosen for analysis include: the President of Kazakhstan Republic – Qasym-Jomart Tokayev, the Presidential Residence of Kazakhstan – 'Aq Orda', the President of Ukraine - Vladimir Zelenskiy, the mayor of Saran city in Kazakhstan - Yerzhan Temirkhanov, the President of Kyrgyzstan - Sadyr Zhaparov.

Using an online tool 'LiveDune' government officials' accounts mentioned above were analyzed and the key numbers like social media activity, ER rate, percentage of critical comments and feedback were indicated, which were helpful in better understanding of whether the marketing and PR team are being involved, the politicians' account types, their subscribers activity, feedback details, and other information like the quickness of the response during critical situations in the country or the world.

Lastly, three in-depth interviews with industry experts were conducted as a qualitative research approach: experts from Kazakhstan and Ukraine who are working for the government and who have built

their personal image on social media. The viewpoints of these professionals in the field of political marketing and those with a direct stake in enhancing the state's reputation, are introduced below.

Research Finding and Analysis

In this section the results of conducted researches with in-depth analysis is represented. Starting off with the survey results.

2.1 Survey results

Overall, 103 people participated in the survey, with almost the same ratio of male and female respondents (51% and 49% respectively) and with different occupations including students, office workers, business workers, freelancers, and unemployed. More than half of the participants (55%) were of the age group 18 to 24. 22% was accounted to people aged above 45 years and 16% to the age group of 35 to 44. Only 7 people of all respondents are 25-34 y.o. 80% were from the big cities like Astana and Almaty, the rest 20% of responses came from smaller cities and regions. Additionally, there were 3 individuals from cities outside of the country like Moscow and Bishkek. The results demonstrated that the majority of the participants have a degree of some type, half of them are bachelors, 19 people with a higher degree and the rest with none at all. The last indicator that was considered in the demographics section was income, which showcased that 50 participants' monthly income is below the average in Kazakhstan and the other half makes more than 250.000₸ a month.

Media consumption:

This part of the survey focused on the news consumption habits of participants to identify the primary source of news consumption, the most trusted communication channels for news consumption, the amount of time spent on news consumption, and the preferred time of the day for news consumption. Looking in detail at each question and its results several correlation and insights were identified.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

According to the results, spending on average between 30 and 2 hours, the main source of news absorption among 71% of respondents, consume news through social media, which is the most trusted source for Generation Z & Y. In addition, the research showed that young respondents are the ones who pay more attention to the credibility of the news they consume. The remaining responses generally concern and trust the use of websites, radios and TV and spend more than 3 hours during the day are representatives of generation X, however, it has been detected that social media engagement has shown rising tendency in recent years, which supports our hypothesis number 2, that social platforms are the most appealing for political advertising operations.

Product/Service

In this section the participants were tested on their knowledge and awareness of political marketing in the country. 69% of the citizens of Kazakhstan claimed not to have heard of any recent political marketing attempts from government officials, which can possibly mean that people are uninterested and do not pay attention. The majority of those who have heart of some marketing campaigns, mostly mentioned the presidential elections or Majilis elections that were taking place in 2023. Interestingly, people who follow those political marketing campaigns tended to share more positive or healthy constructive feedback compared to those who rarely interacted with the news. It was also assumed that mostly older generation would show the interest in politics, however the results proved it wrong as there was almost an equal number of people from all age groups. As a result of the survey, it can be confidentially states that the first hypothesis was verified as people in Kazakhstan either do not pay attention or do it on the surface level. Afterwards, the participants were asked on their perception of politicians' personal image during those campaigns and the answers were quite surprising. 85% of the responses evaluate the politicians' image as average and lower. However, the main insight taken from this section was in the noticeable difference in responses depending on people's monthly income. People with an income of 300,000 tenge and more often evaluated their image as 'below average' or 'poor', and

those who earned less tended to answer 'average' or 'good'. There were also noticeable similarities in the answers of respondents with secondary education, college, and bachelor degrees - they mostly have an average or positive attitude towards government officials' image. The results may conclude that people with higher education or higher income are more attentive to political marketing and politics in general.

It was noticed that respondents from large cities with average salaries tend to change their perception on government officials' image based on their public appearance. While an opposite tendency was shown from respondents living in the regions and smaller cities.

As expected, most of the people, when evaluating a politicians' image pay attention to such criteria as competency, transparency, and relatability; indicating that the majority of people, regardless of age, location, and income, are more inclined to trust governmental officials for those characteristics. However, respondents had the opportunity to write their own answer to the question, where the answers were divided into two camps. The first group wrote that no factors could influence their choice, while the second group spoke about effectiveness and/or KPI.

Another important topic raised in the survey was about participants' opinion on the improvement of government officials' personal image. Respondents were expected to share what factors would help politicians to gain their trust and respect. Not surprisingly, transparency was the most popular answer, being chosen by over 70% of people, followed by the need for more clear messaging and effective communication from the reader side. Interestingly enough, only 8 people would suggest governmental employees to share a more engaging content, but all of them were representatives of the generation Z, which proves that younger generation care about the news or other information they consume to be engaging the most.

Customer Behavior/Experience

In this part of the survey, interviewees gave their opinion on the presence of politicians on social media. To begin with, according to the results, in the question of how often respondents engage with

political figures on social media, 'rarely' was the most frequently selected answer (40%), followed by 'never' (35%), among the five available options. Interestingly, people of all ages, statuses and incomes preferred these answer options, which may indicate that the general public have little interaction with political leaders on social media, remarkably in a follow-up question, participants were required to state who they do follow on social media platforms. They were given several options to choose from, as well as the opportunity to name their own, nevertheless, the vast majority of respondents (51%) chose the current President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Qasym-Jomart Tokayev, additionally almost quarter of the participants, follow the official page of the local White House, the presidential palace – Aq Orda. However, 30% of the respondents do not track any political leaders on social media. It might be concluded, that respondents strongly prefer to follow the head of state rather than other government officials or mayors of regions and cities, which could also be another confirmation of the first hypothesis, that political marketing is underdeveloped in the CIS countries.

The survey also revealed, that the majority of respondents (45%) consider the presence of state officials with social networks important because it helps them be closer to the public and allows people to see the results of their work. This reflects the public's strong desire to feel more connected to their government and to have more transparency about the work that officials are doing. The purpose of the follow-up question was to find out whether respondents changed their opinion about politicians based on their presence on social media, the received responses to this question were classified as positive, negative or neutral. Among the respondents about 56% have an ambivalent attitude towards the presence of political figures in social media, which might indicate that they do not attach much importance to it, on the other hand about 18% of respondents had a positive perception towards political figures being active in social media. Respondents suggested that this is an effective approach for politicians to communicate their message and engage with the public, and they stressed that political publicity can educate people about the policies and initiatives of leaders, helping voters to make well-informed conclusions. Respondents were ambivalent about the political phenomenon in social media and acknowledged that it

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

can be both positive and negative, depending on the context and content. Overall, the findings suggest

that there is a need for greater transparency and accountability of political being on social media.

2.2 CIS government officials' social media pages analysis

Analysis of the social networks of the government officials was done, in order to identify the

pattern of actions and their impact on the personal brand, as well as to check the relationship between the

nature of publications and their impact on people's opinions.

For this analysis, 5 most interesting and active social media profiles of governmental employees

were chosen, which was conducted using the platform called 'LiveDune', which helped to track the

activity on the pages and calculate the engagement rates. The period from January to May of 2023 was

taken into account.

The first social media that was analyzed was President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Qasym-

Jomart Tokayev's Instagram profile with 2,633,961 of followers. The number of interactions accounted

for likes was 900,230 and 20,818 was calculated for comments. The President has shared on average 14

posts each week since the beginning of this year.

ER percentage as of May 4, 2023 was 1.399%, which is a good indicator, however this indicator

has decreased by 41.24% over the last 2 months, which may be due to either the fact that the number of

posts lessened or that the last posts were related to national holidays, which did not seem to be engaging

for the readers. It is also important to note that in March 2023 there were more than 10 publications, which

were related to the parliamentary elections, which caused active interest among the people, hence why

there were a lot of reactions in the comment sections under each post. After the election date a rapid

decline or decrease in activity was noticed on the President's page.

Interestingly enough, there was no video content on Qasym-Jomart Tokayev's account, which is

quite a questionable decision from the marketing team. Since, in recent years, video content has become

a real trend and an indispensable part of social media platforms, today less and less people are posting

photos, as video has become one of the crucial tools for promoting content and information in general. On the President's posts comments do not get deleted, yet still there is no feedback either.

Vladimir Zelenskiy, the Ukrainian President's Instagram page was analyzed next. At the time of this research, it accounts 17,081,300 followers, however just a little over a year ago this number rounded about 10,591,000. In the third quarter of 2022 Zelenskiy had 14,882,466 people following him on the platform. Overall, on his page there is 127,213,083 and 1,870,707 comments, which shows how much support he receives from people. The President has posted 782 times since the beginning of 2023, almost all of them were, for obvious reasons, related to the political situation in the country. The ER rate (for the period from January 2023 to May 2023) was 0.951%, which is quite normal. However, a decrease of 12.35% in the last 2 months was detected. Such an active decrease can be justified by a large number of posts per day. Although the minimum of 5 posts were being made recently, 97% of all publications did not pass the followers' attention. Majority of the content consists of conversational videos, where Zelenskiy shares about the current situation in the country, important meetings with representatives of other countries, as well as the situation in hot spots, which directly touches the people.

However, there are examples of unsuccessfully managed accounts as well. The President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov was chosen as an example of a poor personal image on social media. Japarov has 488,245 on Istagram, with only 260,000 likes and 2,406 comments on all posts combined. 4 publications were shared by Kyrgyzstan ruler in 2023 so far, the nearest post made in 2022 was in September, which shows that this Instagram account barely ever gets used to communicate to the public. No action no stories or reels were noticed, which is considered unacceptable for the social media page of a President. As a result, people actively complain about the problems in the country under these publications and ask questions, and never hear back, which in turn generates an even greater number of angry feedbacks. On the President's page, there are quite a few publications related to the issues of the country, but mostly all publications are related to sports, dubious quotes and duplicated publications. It is

clear that this page is not maintained by professionals, perhaps even by Japarov himself, which looks very unprofessional.

'Aq Orda' - the residence of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan was decided to get checked. It has over 195.6K followers on the TikTok platform with 1.2M of likes and 102 videos. Patriotic, thematic content is actively covered on the account. It prominently features important news, visits from notable guests, and congratulations on various holidays, fostering national unity and pride in the country. What was unique about this profile was this account is the use of mobileography. This allows content creators to present current information and events in an accessible and dynamic format.

Continuing with the TikTok analysis, the Mayor of Saran city Kazakhstan, Yerzhan Temirkhanov was chosen. The Mayor's TikTok account has gathered almost 1 million followers. The focus of the Temirkhanov's attention is on Saran city, and he has been showing the ongoing construction work that is taking place at the moment. This allows viewers to follow the process of developing and improving the city. In addition, the page includes snippets of interviews and speeches by the mayor that get the most views. This demonstrates the interest of the audience in Mayor's opinion and position. Comments and reactions from subscribers on the page are overwhelmingly positive. The Mayor responds to comments in videos, which helps maintain a loyal audience and create a closer connection with them.

Yerzhan also often shows parts of personal life and city life, including various events. This enables viewers to get to know the mayor better and to better understand his role and contribution to the development and improvement of Saran city.

2.3 Qualitative Research and Analysis of the Interview

In order to gather insights on the topic of building personal image on social media platforms and how government officials may effectively use them to create and maintain one 3 face to face interviews were conducted. Three experts naming Nadezhda Fomina (marketing expert from Ukraine with 27 years of experience in the industry), Yerzhan Temirkhanov (the mayor of Saran city in Karagandy region) and

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Sharkhan Tursunbayev (the mayor of Auezov region in Almaty city) had participated in our research answering a list of questions. In this part of the paper the key points and insights from each expert were analyzed and the identified correlations are recorded.

Nadezhda Fomina

In the following part, the main insights from the interview with Nadezhda are listed based on each question. The importance of creating a single, unified personal brand image: Fomina suggests that having a consistent and coherent personal brand image can be an effective strategy for building and maintaining a personal brand across different social media channels. The appeal of relativity and openness: Fomina notes that creating an image of transparency and accessibility can be persuasive to the public, especially for politicians and public figures who may seem distant or inaccessible. The importance of visibility and authenticity in politics: Fomina cites the example of the current Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskiy and political party 'Servant of the People' as an example of inclusiveness and transparency in politics. She believes that the idea of transparent and open political parties can strengthen the professional and public reputation of a politician. As Nadezhda Fomina claimed: 'One of the reasons why Vladimir Zelenskiy became a President, who is much loved and respected by Ukrainian, is a competently built marketing strategy'. Major work has been done by Vladimir's PR team in creating this strong image of his, she says. The potential impact of political events on personal branding: Fomina notes that supporting Ukraine during the current conflict with Russia can be seen as a way to project a genuine and invested personal brand image. Building a personal brand in the age of marketing 5.0 requires being realistic and showing multiple aspects of oneself. People are more willing to trust other people than advertisements, so it's important to talk about oneself and uncover different facets of one's personality. Rather, it's okay not to be ideal, because ideal people don't resemble themselves. On the contrary, creating a role model of oneself that includes an expert, a family man, a public figure and shares one's attitude to life can help

make a person appealing to an audience. It is essential to talk about their hobbies, how they cope, and their perspective on the future in order to engage the audience and provoke relevant questions.

To build a recognizable personal brand, it is crucial to have a consistent visual style across all social media channels. Nadezhda suggests looking at examples of other opinion leaders and experts who have successfully created their personal brand, such as Sergey Bidenko, author of a book on anti-crisis PR, and his wife, who worked on Poroshenko's team. It is also vital to be present on all social channels where your target audience is, including Instagram and Telegram. If you want to be an international expert, LinkedIn is a must, where you can also get recommendations and build your network. For politicians, it is also essential to have a personal brand and a presence on all social media channels. However, it is not enough to simply provide dry content about their activities. To establish a personal brand, politicians need to reasonably disclose their personality, including their family, pets and hobbies. Nadezhda gave the example of Poroshenko's unsuccessful communication strategy, which was perceived as closed, while Zelenskiy successfully engaged the audience during presidential campaign, speaking in clear language and making himself approachable. Zelenskiy's personal brand is built on creative talent as a showman, even though he has no political experience. Nadezhda highlights that prior to Zelenskiy, there were no strong and positive examples of a successful personal brand for politicians in Ukraine. She notes that Yulia Tymoshenko had attempted to create a successful campaign around saving a tiger named 'Tigryulya', but the campaign did not work out. Nadezhda suggests that Zelenskiy's personal brand was practically genius, and it is not clear whether it was invented on the fly or planned in advance. In answering the following question about the most effective social media platform for promoting a personal brand, Nadezhda suggests that Facebook is the most powerful platform in Ukraine, as it is equivalent to the business press. In addition, she notes that Instagram is convenient for glossy content, while YouTube is a television on your phone. However, in Kazakhstan, where Facebook is not as well developed, she believes that Instagram is still an essential tool, while TikTok should be seen as a channel for a younger audience. Potential risks of using TikTok for a politician's personal brand: Nadezhda believes that while

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

TikTok can be a great channel for a politician to experiment and engage a young audience, however, there is a risk of negative results if it is not done thoughtfully. She notes that it all depends on the personality of the politician and whether he or she can accommodate the format of the platform. She also advises that if a politician is considering using TikTok, he or she should start by experimenting a little and observe how it works. Building a holistic personal brand on social media: Nadezhda believes that building a holistic personal brand on social media involves showcasing oneself - both as an expert and as a mere human being. She emphasizes the importance of showcasing yourself as an individual through personal posts about family, pets, sports, cooking and volunteering. She notes that this strategy attracts audiences from a variety of areas of community life, and when a consumer observes this, they are convinced that they know the person well and are more likely to trust them. Answering the question about what other tools or media channels besides social media do you use and can you use to create and promote content, Fomina says television is still one of the relevant channels. According to her, it is still used by politicians as a tool to appeal to their audience, especially in the mornings when people are leaving work and they have a TV playing in the background. It is important to understand the target audience, their wants and needs, what they will vote for and what communication channels they use, and their media consumption habits. Nadezhda states that every politician has a certain target audience hence they need to communicate through the channels that their audiences use. It is important to use surveys to understand the consumption habits of the audience. For example, if the age range of the audience he or she are trying to gain support from is 50+ then television is the way to go, because that is exactly their channel of choice (as confirmed by the results of our survey). Continuing with the physical appearance of political figures, striking example of President Zelenskiy, where he appears on the screens in khaki t-shirts, wearing a jacket and looking tired, she was asked if it was done purposefully. Fomina shared her own experience, when she was dressing in a semi-sporty her audience feel positive towards her and relate more, they feel belonged to the team, also that Zelenskiy's choice to dress in military apparel reinforces the idea that he is 'with and among the people'. It must be noted that recognizing the significance of personal branding and the

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

President of Ukraine Zelenskiy's successful personal branding serves as valuable lessons for marketers and individuals alike. Building a personal brand requires authenticity, consistency and a clear strategy that can help establish trust, credibility and a loyal audience. This knowledge can be applied to political marketing strategies in Kazakhstan, where an easily recognizable personal brand can help politicians connect with voters on a more personal level and build trust. By showing many aspects of themselves and being honest about their shortcomings and difficulties, politicians in Kazakhstan can build a personal brand that resonates with audiences and helps establish trust in them. In addition, effective use of social media, as Zelenskiy has done, can help Kazakhstan's politicians reach a broader audience and create a strong online presence. Overall, Nadezhda stresses the importance of developing a successful personal brand for politicians and talks about the different strategies and platforms that can be used to do this.

Yerzhan Temirkhanov

The second expert - one of the most well-known Kazakh government officials, the mayor of Saran city of Karaganda region, who currently has almost 100 thousand followers on Instagram and, as mentioned previously, a little less than a million on TikTok – Yerzhan Temirkhanov. Our group had prepared 3 questions and contacted Yerzhan via Instagram, which only proved how easy it is to reach out to the mayor. The next paragraphs will demonstrate a detailed analysis of the expert's answers.

In response to a question about organizing presence on social media, Yerzhan Temirkhanov stresses the importance of adopting new approaches in the digital age. He acknowledges the pervasive influence of social media on people's lives, emphasizing that it fills a significant part of everyone's daily experience. This recognition underpins Mayor's decision to actively maintain his own Instagram page.

'New times call for new approaches. Both to the implementation of government programs and to any other activity, whether it's just the development of a business or any other cause. Today there is no doubt that social media fills 70% of everyone's daily routine, because almost everyone has a gadget in their hands and their presence is constant'.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Yerzhan Temirkhanov expresses desire to be easily approachable to the public, stating the importance of being 'two clicks away from people'. By actively engaging with social media, he aims to bridge the gap between government and citizens, making it more convenient for people to reach out and solve their problems. 'For me, as a political government employee, it is important to be as close to people as possible. It does not burden me in any way, I get a thousand appeals, sometimes less, and we solve them promptly, as we are doing now with you'. He goes on to emphasize the power and effectiveness of using social media platforms as a means of solving public queries and problems. By responding promptly to questions and concerns raised through social media, he demonstrates a proactive approach to providing solutions and maintaining an open line of communication between the government and citizens. If a citizen asks a question about a power cut in their home or some other basic domestic need, Yerzhan believes that their personal information, like their occupation or status is unnecessary, he immediately gives the task to the right government agency, which in turn solves the issue. Yerzhan Temirkhanov acknowledges the importance of social networks in modern society, understanding that they occupy a significant part of people's daily lives. By personally managing social media presence, he aims to establish direct and convenient channels of communication with the public, enabling a prompt response to citizens' requests and concerns. Social media allows problems to be resolved quickly and efficiently, as it eliminates the need to provide extensive personal information and bureaucratic processes. This approach helps to effectively address the basic needs of citizens. Yerzhan Temirkhanov's approach to managing social media presence reflects a commitment to transparency, accessibility and responsiveness, which ultimately contributes to effective public relations for civil servants. Responding to the question about keeping a distance between personal and public life on social media, Yerzhan Temirkhanov states his point of view. He states that he does not keep distance at all and actively demonstrates his activities in social networks. He believes that there should be free reporting meetings in various public places such as markets, playgrounds, hospitals and public transport. He stresses the importance of responding directly to the questions and difficulties of the people, without allowing them to be ignored.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

'That is, I don't think distance is necessary, if there are questions - they should be solved, and they shouldn't be avoided, because they are people's troubles. Yerzhan Temirkhanov believes that it is necessary to be accessible and responsive to the basic needs and problems of the people he serves. He does not see the need to clearly separate personal and public life on social media platforms, as focus is on addressing and solving the problems faced by citizens. Yerzhan Temirkhanov 's approach reflects a belief in transparency and direct engagement with the public. By actively showcasing his activities and being available for meetings, he creates a sense of openness and accessibility, building trust and connection with the community he serves.

When asked about the biggest mistakes that politicians should avoid when entering the social media space, Yerzhan Temirkhanov emphasizes the importance of avoiding hypocrisy and dishonesty. He highlights the need for politicians to conduct their work truthfully and refrain from fabrication. By remaining authentic and honest, politicians can maintain consistency in their messages and avoid confusion.

'You have to conduct your work truthfully, tell things like they are, because then you don't have to make things up, next time you will never be confused about what you are saying'. Yerzhan Temirkhanov points out that consistency and transparency in communication is a must in order to maintain a positive image and effective interaction with the audience.

Overall, Yerzhan Temirkhanov's approach to social media presence focuses on direct interaction, accessibility and honesty. He believes in actively addressing citizens' concerns and avoids unfair practices. These strategies help to build trust and credibility among the public, which is crucial for effective public relations in the field of public officials.

Sharkhan Tursunbayev

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Another one of the experts is who made an impact to our diploma work was Sharkhan Tursunbayev, the Auezov region mayor in Almaty city. It was an online video call and he was asked three questions as well as the previous expert. In the next paragraph there is an analysis of Sharkhan's answers.

First, he was asked if he is the one running his own social media accounts or if there is a team helping him with it. Sharkhan said straight away that he is the only one behind all his posts on Instagram and Facebook. He explained that it is a lot of work and is much easier if he manages all the questions and requests coming from the citizens on a daily basis himself. He also mentioned the importance of using social media regularly to connect to the public as it is the easiest and fastest way to communicate with citizens and vice versa for the people to address their concerns to the government.

Next question was if he uses any other social media platforms other than Instagram, as he is the most active on there. He turned out to be using Facebook as well, however this answer was quite surprising: Sharkhan states that on Facebook he keeps in touch with the older part of his followers while Instagram is for the younger generations. TikTok is not used by this political figure as he believes that mostly generation Z and younger use it and mostly for entertainment purposes. Which can be refuted by looking at a successful example of Yerzhan Temirkhanov's TikTok accounts. Here one of the main insights noticed was that Sharkhan knows where his target audiences are and acts accordingly.

Lastly, Sharkhan was asked about the common mistakes public figures like government officials should avoid when showcasing their lives and work on social media platforms. The answer was quite similar to the previous experts' viewpoints: he believes that being transparent and authentic is the key. The main insight was that Sarkhan does not follow certain rules when running his accounts on internet: he posts, says and acts 'as it is' without any embellishments. 'It makes people trust you more, they relate to you, feel like we are all on the same level' he said. This only endorses what other experts shared about how to build a strong personal image among the target audience effectively. Sense of sincerity is the most valued feature in a persona exposed to the public especially political figures.

Conclusion

To summarize, the aim of this paper was to create a clearer understanding on the situation of political marketing in and outside of Kazakhstan, analyze people's awareness and perception, and identify some valuable insight. Reviewing what has been done, first the research objectives, its purpose, subject and objects were indicated and four hypotheses were identified. Much of the secondary data was analyzed in order to capture the situation on political marketing in the global world from past and present, as a result it was stated that social media has a similar vast influence in political marketing in many countries. Afterwards, to reinforce the gathered existing information it was decided to commence to establish two methods to make an equivalent research for the CIS countries, more importantly for Kazakhstan. Based on those (quantitative and qualitative) research results it was identified that there is a reveling lack of understanding of the term 'political marketing' among Kazakhstan citizens and effectively managed social media platforms, with correctly detected target audience and their needs, play the key role in building personal image for government officials. Thus, all four of the assumed hypotheses were proven right. An explanation of how each hypothesis was proven is listed below.

H1: Political marketing in the CIS is still in its infancy.

The first hypothesis could be confirmed based on the results of the survey and the first conducted interview. Due to the survey, by analyzing the participants' responses, it was concluded that in Kazakhstan political marketing is not often noticed by people or even perceived in a negative way, which indicates an insufficiently developed concept.

H2: Social media platforms are the most attractive for political advertising operations.

This hypothesis was confirmed by experts during the interviews, who were constantly mentioning about social networks being used as a fairly strong tool. As Yerzhan Temirkhanov claimed, that in the current digital environment it is crucial to use social media for higher efficiency on the daily duty of the government employees as well as to diminish the distance with the public. 'It is important to me to stay 2 clicks away from the citizens' he shared. This hypothesis was verified while surveying the participants,

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

where it was demonstrated that nowadays people in Kazakhstan prefer keeping up with political news on social media to the traditional channels like TV and radio.

H3: 'Dead' (non-updated and unmoderated) social media pages damage the image and political power of a politician.

With the help of the 'LiveDune' service an up-to-date data on the Instagram and TikTok accounts of political figures were provided. In particular, the ER indicator, which implies audience engagement, was important. Taking out the numbers it became clear that political figures with social media accounts that are managed inconstantly, like in the example of the President of Kyrgyzstan, face much more negative feedback and are less trusted by the public. Whereas other government representatives like Yerzhan Temirkhanov, who posts both his work and lifestyle on the daily basis, recieve a more positive reaction from the majority of followers.

H4: Personal image of each government official is formed at the request of its target audience.

The last hypothesis was confirmed by the interviews conducted with experts. All of them believe that giving the audience what they want as well as being completely transparent makes a difference in strengthening politicians image within the public.

In the future perspective, for an even more detailed analysis of political marketing in Kazakhstan and the CIS countries, additional research may be conducted with experts and a few governmental officials with whom the planned interviews did not take place due to their busy schedule. Moreover, in order to reinforce all the theoretical information, a practical experiment is suggested to be undertaken. The experimental project consists of taking a political figure in Kazakhstan with weak personal image and develop their branding in the short period of 6 months on social media platforms.

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

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The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

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The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Appendix

Survey questions:

Demographics:

1. What is your age range?

2. What is your gender?

3. In which city do you currently reside?

4. What is your educational background?

5. What is your employment status?

6. What is your monthly income range?

Media consumption:

7. How do you primarily consume news?

8. Out of channels below which one do you tent to trust the most with the news?

9. How much time per day do you spend consuming news?

10. What time of the day do you usually watch/read the news?

11. How often do you fact-check the news stories you read/hear?

12. How important is it to you that the news you consume is unbiased?

13. Have you ever changed your opinion on a political issue based on the news you consumed?

Product/Service:

14. Have you seen or heard of any political marketing campaigns by government officials in the past year?

15. How would you rate the brand image of government officials based on their political marketing campaigns?

16. What factors influence your perception of government officials based on their political marketing campaigns?

17. How likely are you to support a government official based on their political marketing campaigns?

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18. What improvements would you suggest for government officials' political marketing campaigns to improve their brand image?

Customer Behavior/Experience:

19. How frequently do you engage with government officials' social media accounts?

20. To what extend do you think government officials' social media presence is important for their brand image?

21. Which politicians have you subscribed to on social media, and why?

22. Which social media platforms (Instagram/TikTok/YouTube/Facebook/Telegram/other) do you prefer to follow those politicians and why there exactly?

23. Whom do you follow/watch and trust more on social media?

24.How would you rate the image of government officials who you follow on the scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 represents negative image and 5 represents positive image)?

25. How do you think government officials can use social media to better engage with their constituents?

26. Have you ever changed your opinion of a government official based on their social media presence?

Interview questions:

For Nadezhda Fomina:

1. What strategies have you found to be most effective in building and maintaining a consistent personal brand image across various social media channels?

2. Which specific social media platform do you find to be the most effective for promoting your personal brand, and why?

3. What are the key steps that you take when building your personal image on social media?

4. In addition to social media, what other instruments or media channels do you use to create and promote content that aligns with your personal brand image, and how do you integrate those channels with your social media strategy?

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5. What specific tactics or techniques do you use to showcase personal brand and build a strong, positive image that resonates with target audience on social media?

For Yerzhan Temirkhanov:

1. How has your personal brand has changed since you took office, and what steps have you taken to develop it?

2. Concidering the growing influence of social media on political marketing, how do you use Instagram to connect with your constituents and effectively deliver your political message?

3. While showcasig your political and public activities on Instagram, what do you think it is important to maintain a distance between your personal and public life, and how do you balance it when comes to your social media presence?

4. Since social media increasingly plays role in politics, what do you think are the biggest mistakes politicians should avoid when entering the social media space and why? How do you ensure that your social media presence is in accordance with your political message and values?

For Sharkhan Tursunbayev:

1. Do you personally manage your Instagram page or do you have a team that manages your social media involvement? Could you describe your approach to managing your social media presence in general?

2. Apart from Instagram, what other social media platforms do you use to connect with your constituents and why?

3. As social media plays an increasing role in politics, what do you think are the biggest mistakes politicians should avoid when entering the social media space and why?
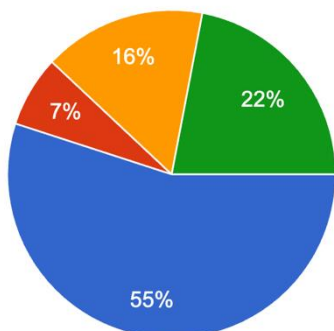

Survey Results Graphics:
Google Survey;

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS
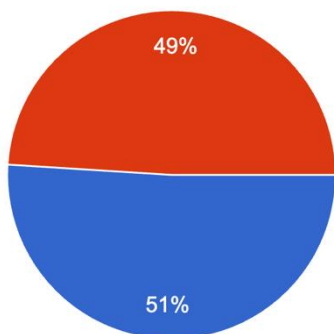
Сколько Вам лет?
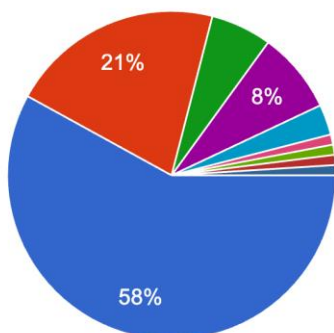100 ответов

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-62
- 63+

18-24: 55%
25-34: 7%
35-44: 16%
45-54: 22%

Ваш пол?
100 ответов

- Мужчина
- Женщина

Женщина: 49%
Мужчина: 51%

В каком городе Вы проживаете на данный момент?
100 ответов

- Астана
- Алматы
- Шымкент
- Караганды
- Актобе
- Уральск
- Атырау
- Бишкек

△ 1/2 ▽

Астана: 58%
Алматы: 21%
Актобе: 8%

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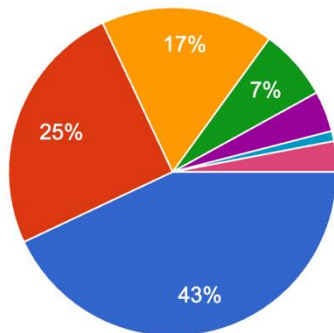## Ваше полное образование на данный момент?
100 ответов
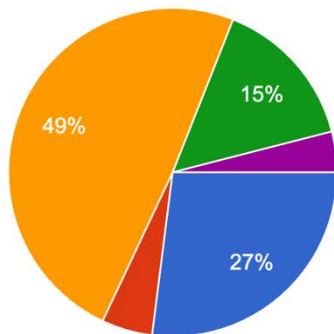
- ● Среднее образование или ниже
- ● Колледж или профессиональное обучение
- ● Бакалавриат
- ● Магистратура
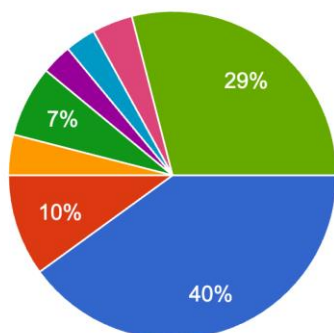- ● Докторская степень или другая ученая степень

Ваша деятельность?
100 ответов

- ● Студент
- ● Офисный работник
- ● Владелец бизнеса
- ● Фрилансер
- ● Домохозяин/Домохозяйка
- ● Пенсионер
- ● Безработный

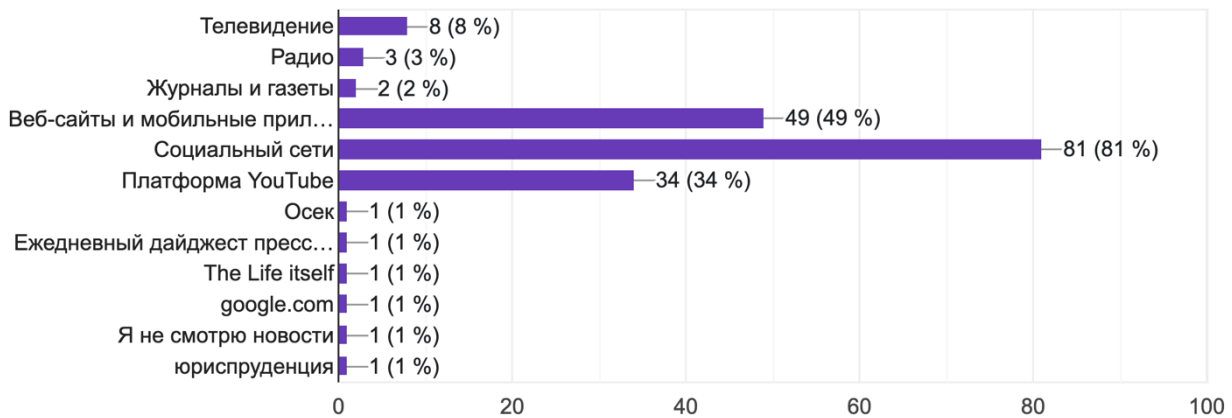## Диапазон Вашего дохода в месяц?
100 ответов

- ● До 150К тг
- ● 150-250К тг
- ● 251-300К тг
- ● 300-350К тг
- ● 350-400К тг
- ● 401-450К тг
- ● 450-550К тг
- ● 550К+ тг

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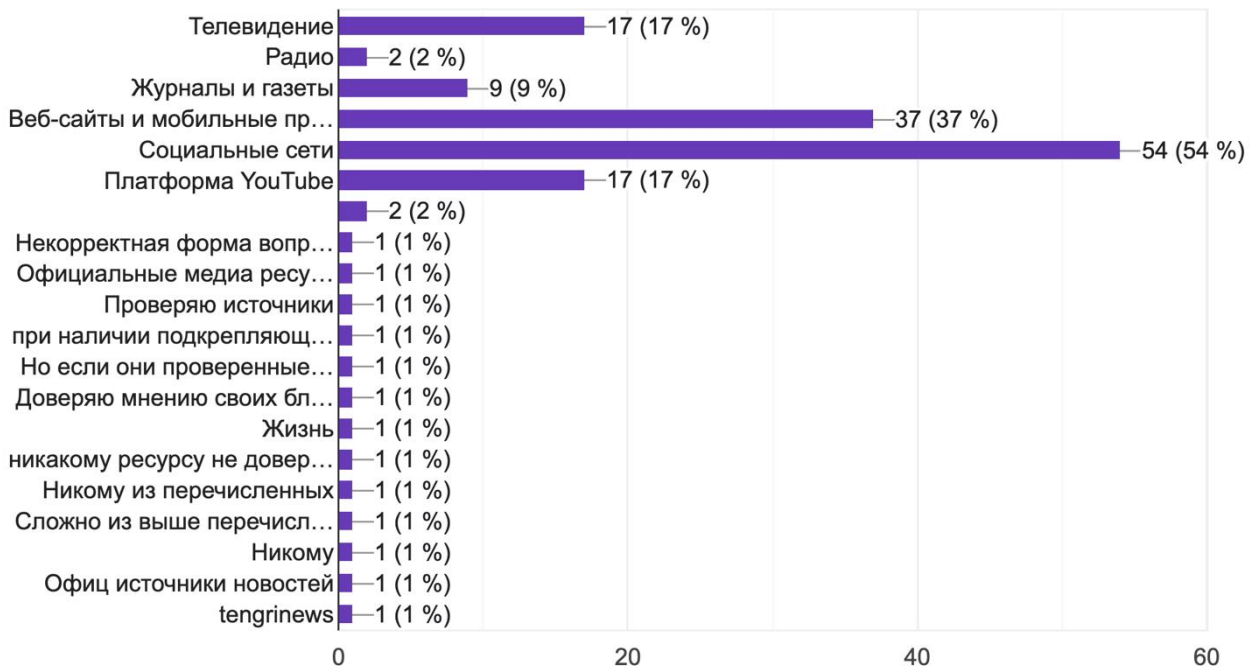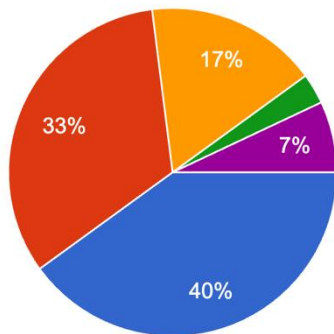
Какой Ваш главный источник потребления новостей?
100 ответов

Источник	Значение
Телевидение	8 (8 %)
Радио	3 (3 %)
Журналы и газеты	2 (2 %)
Веб-сайты и мобильные прил…	49 (49 %)
Социальный сети	81 (81 %)
Платформа YouTube	34 (34 %)
Осек	1 (1 %)
Ежедневный дайджест пресс…	1 (1 %)
The Life itself	1 (1 %)
google.com	1 (1 %)
Я не смотрю новости	1 (1 %)
юриспруденция	1 (1 %)

Из нижеперечисленных каналов коммуникаций какому Вы доверяете больше всего в потреблении новостей?
100 ответов

Канал	Значение
Телевидение	17 (17 %)
Радио	2 (2 %)
Журналы и газеты	9 (9 %)
Веб-сайты и мобильные пр…	37 (37 %)
Социальные сети	54 (54 %)
Платформа YouTube	17 (17 %)
	2 (2 %)
Некорректная форма вопр…	1 (1 %)
Официальные медиа ресу…	1 (1 %)
Проверяю источники	1 (1 %)
при наличии подкрепляющ…	1 (1 %)
Но если они проверенные…	1 (1 %)
Доверяю мнению своих бл…	1 (1 %)
Жизнь	1 (1 %)
никакому ресурсу не довер…	1 (1 %)
Никому из перечисленных	1 (1 %)
Сложно из выше перечисл…	1 (1 %)
Никому	1 (1 %)
Офиц источники новостей	1 (1 %)
tengrinews	1 (1 %)

42

Сколько времени Вы проводите за потреблением новостей в день?
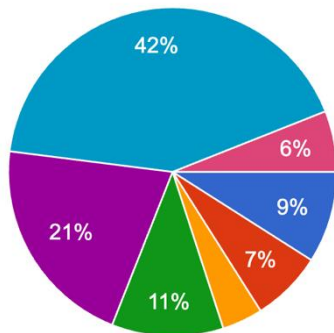100 ответов

- ● Меньше 30 минут
- ● от 30 минут до 1 часа
- ● от 1 до 2 часов
- ● от 2 до 3 часов
- ● Больше 3 часов

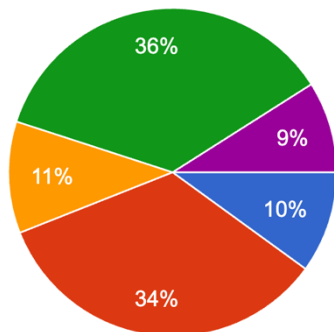## В какой части дня Вы обычно читаете / смотрите новости?
100 ответов

- ● Утром / Во время завтрака (06:00 – 09:00)
- ● До обеда (09:00 – 12:00)
- ● Во время / после обеда (12:00 – 15:00)
- ● Вечером (14:00 – 20:00)
- ● Перед сном / Ночью
- ● В неопределенное время среди дня
- ● Я не смотрю / читаю новости

Как часто Вы проверяете прочтенную / услышанную новость на достоверность?
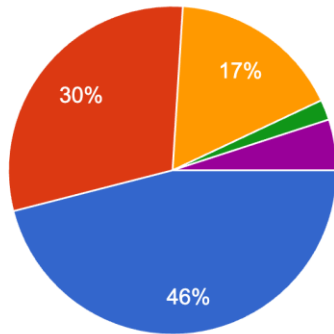100 ответов

- ● Для меня достаточно прочесть / услышать новость один раз в интернете и я сразу поверю
- ● Я ищу еще 1-2 других источника чтобы убедиться
- ● Я ищу все возможные новости на эту тему на всех каналах коммуникации
- ● Я жду, когда официальные источники подтвердят новость, только в это сл…
- ● Я не слежу за новостями

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Насколько для Вас важно, чтобы новости, которые Вы потребляете, были беспристрастными / непредвзятым?
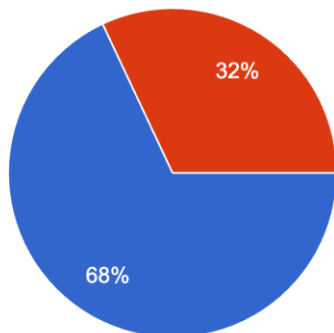
100 ответов

- ● Очень важно
- ● В определенной степени важно
- ● Нейтрально
- ● В определенной степени неважно
- ● Неважно совсем

Меняли ли Вы когда-нибудь свое мнение по какому-либо политическому вопросу на основе новостей, которые Вы просматривали?
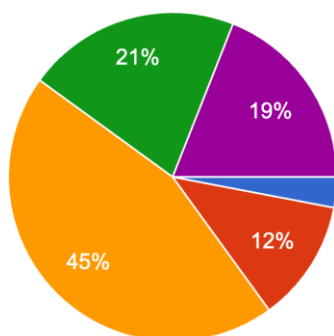
100 ответов

- ● Да
- ● Нет

Как бы Вы оценили имидж государственных чиновников на основе их политических маркетинговых кампаний?
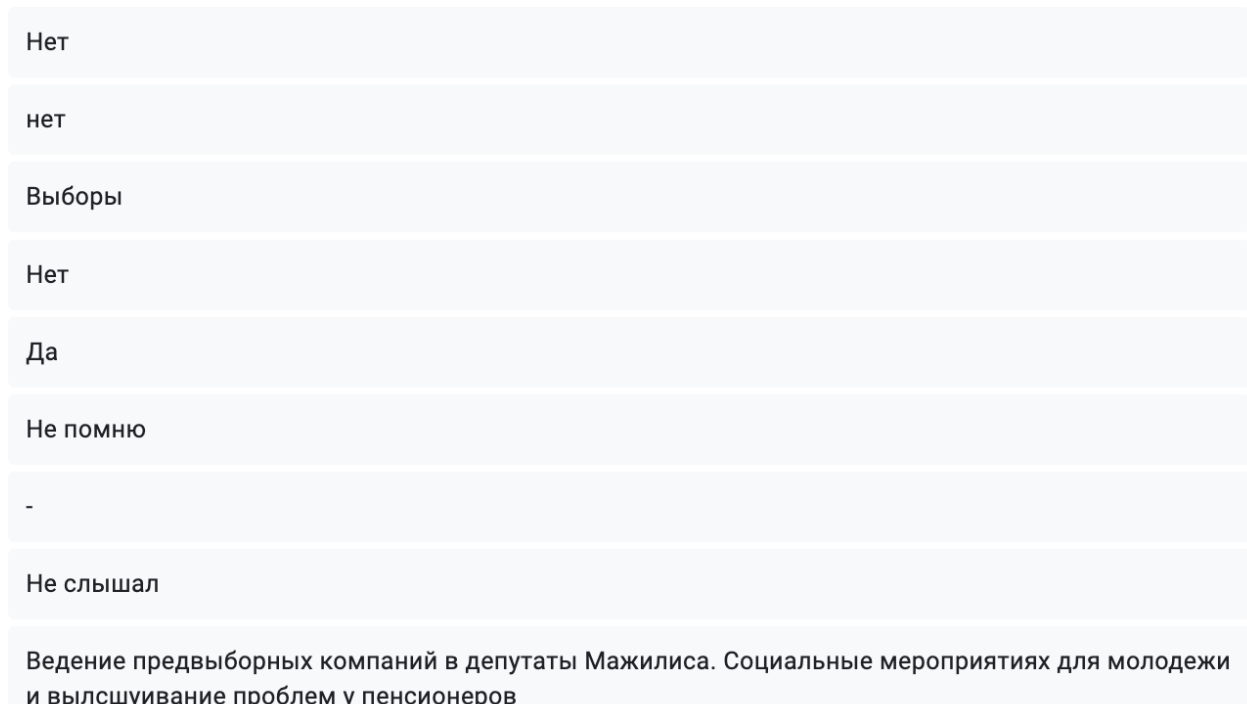
100 ответов

- ● Превосходно
- ● Хорошо
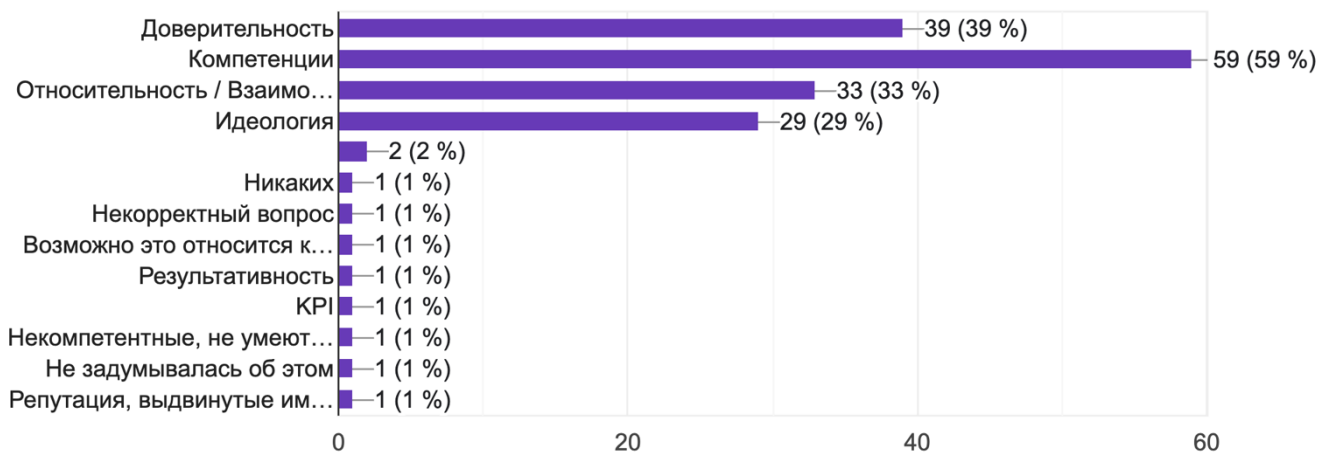- ● Средне
- ● Ниже среднего
- ● Плохо

Видели или слышали ли Вы о каких-либо политических маркетинговых кампаниях правительственных чиновников за последний год? Если да, то о чем шла речь?

100 ответов

Нет
нет
Выборы
Нет
Да
Не помню
-
Не слышал
Ведение предвыборных компаний в депутаты Мажилиса. Социальные мероприятиях для молодежи и вылсшушивание проблем у пенсионеров

Какие факторы влияют на Ваше восприятие государственных чиновников на основе их политических маркетинговых кампаний? (выберите все, что применимо)

100 ответов

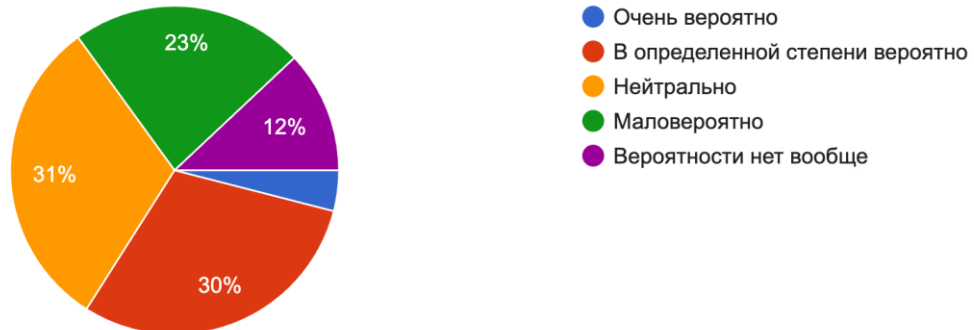| Фактор	Значение
Доверительность	39 (39 %)
Компетенции	59 (59 %)
Относительность / Взаимо…	33 (33 %)
Идеология	29 (29 %)
	2 (2 %)
Никаких	1 (1 %)
Некорректный вопрос	1 (1 %)
Возможно это относится к…	1 (1 %)
Результативность	1 (1 %)
KPI	1 (1 %)
Некомпетентные, не умеют…	1 (1 %)
Не задумывалась об этом	1 (1 %)
Репутация, выдвинутые им…	1 (1 %)

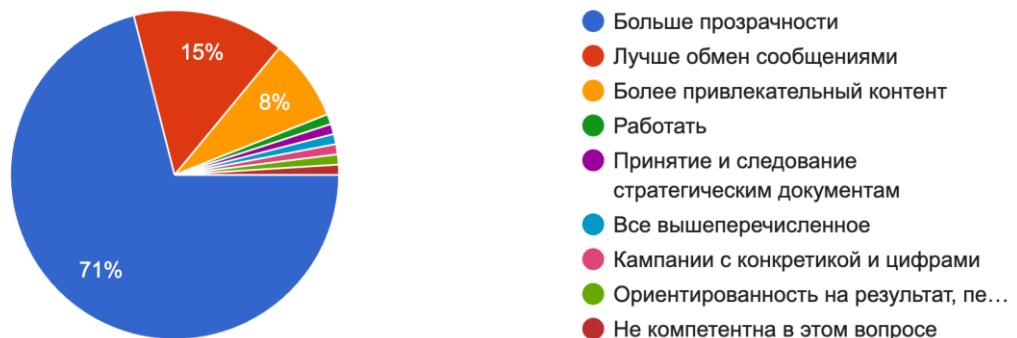The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

Насколько вероятно, что Вы поддержите правительственного чиновника, основываясь на его политических маркетинговых кампаниях?
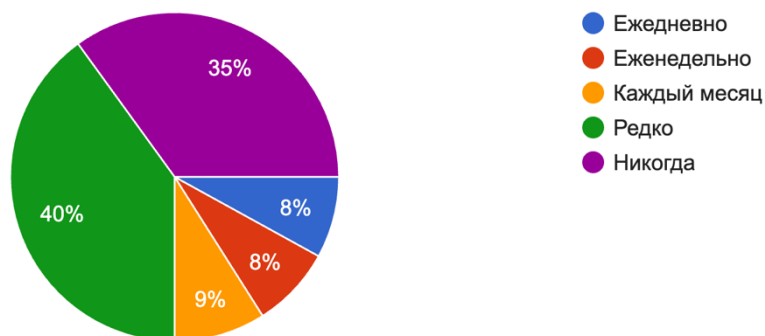100 ответов

- Очень вероятно
- В определенной степени вероятно
- Нейтрально
- Маловероятно
- Вероятности нет вообще

23%
12%
31%
30%

Какие улучшения Вы бы предложили для политических маркетинговых кампаний государственных чиновников, чтобы улучшить их имидж?
100 ответов

- Больше прозрачности
- Лучше обмен сообщениями
- Более привлекательный контент
- Работать
- Принятие и следование стратегическим документам
- Все вышеперечисленное
- Кампании с конкретикой и цифрами
- Ориентированность на результат, пе…
- Не компетентна в этом вопросе

15%
8%
71%

Как часто Вы взаимодействуете с аккаунтами государственных чиновников в социальных сетях?
100 ответов

- Ежедневно
- Еженедельно
- Каждый месяц
- Редко
- Никогда

35%
8%
8%
9%
40%
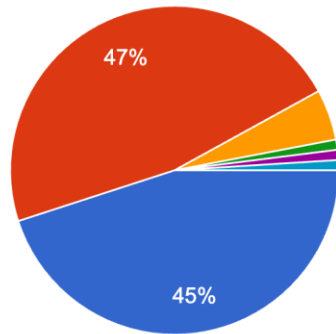
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Насколько, по Вашему мнению, присутствие государственных чиновников в социальных сетях важно для их имиджа?
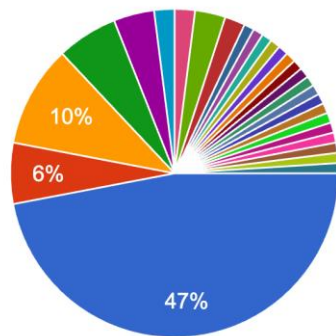
100 ответов

- Очень важно, я думаю, так они становятся ближе к публике, и мы м...
- Отчасти важно, я думаю, что их присутствие в социальных сетях мо...
- Это совсем не важно, я думаю, им не следует тратить свое время на соци...
- Незнаю
- Мы не публика, не население. Мы народ
- Чиновников из соц сетей надо искл...

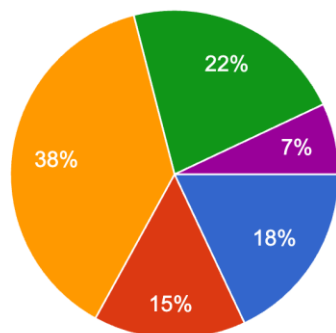За кем вы следите в социальных сетях и кому больше всего доверяете?

100 ответов

- Главы государства
- Акимы
- Министры
- Никому
- Не слежу
- Никем
- Никому не доверяю
- Ни за кем

▲ 1/4 ▼

Как бы Вы оценили имидж государственных чиновников, за которыми вы следите, по шкале от 1 до 5 (где 1 соответствует негативному имиджу, а 5 - позитивному имиджу)?
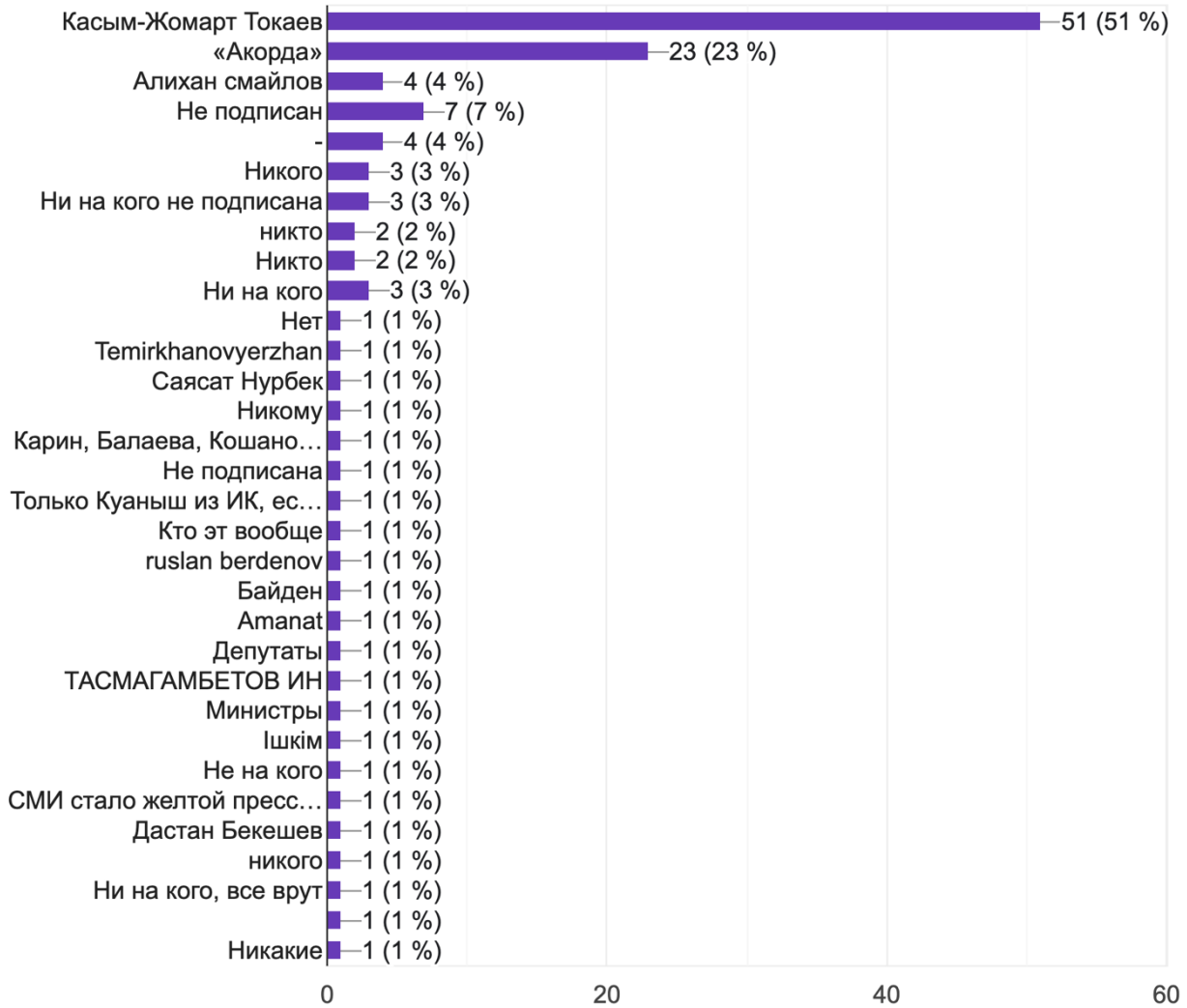
100 ответов

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

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На каких политических личностей/представителей Вы подписаны в социальных сетях и почему? (выберите все, что применимо)

100 ответов

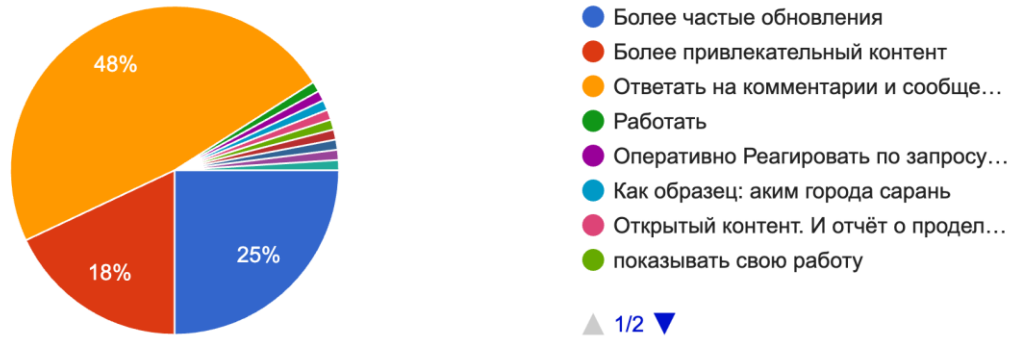| Личность	Количество
Касым-Жомарт Токаев	51 (51 %)
«Акорда»	23 (23 %)
Алихан смайлов	4 (4 %)
Не подписан	7 (7 %)
-	4 (4 %)
Никого	3 (3 %)
Ни на кого не подписана	3 (3 %)
никто	2 (2 %)
Никто	2 (2 %)
Ни на кого	3 (3 %)
Нет	1 (1 %)
Temirkhanovyerzhan	1 (1 %)
Саясат Нурбек	1 (1 %)
Никому	1 (1 %)
Карин, Балаева, Кошано…	1 (1 %)
Не подписана	1 (1 %)
Только Куаныш из ИК, ес…	1 (1 %)
Кто эт вообще	1 (1 %)
ruslan berdenov	1 (1 %)
Байден	1 (1 %)
Amanat	1 (1 %)
Депутаты	1 (1 %)
ТАСМАГАМБЕТОВ ИН	1 (1 %)
Министры	1 (1 %)
Ішкім	1 (1 %)
Не на кого	1 (1 %)
СМИ стало желтой пресс…	1 (1 %)
Дастан Бекешев	1 (1 %)
никого	1 (1 %)
Ни на кого, все врут	1 (1 %)
	1 (1 %)
Никакие	1 (1 %)

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Как, по Вашему мнению, государственные чиновники могут использовать социальные сети для лучшего взаимодействия со своими избирателями?

100 ответов

- ● Более частые обновления
- ● Более привлекательный контент
- ● Ответать на комментарии и сообще…
- ● Работать
- ● Оперативно Реагировать по запросу…
- ● Как образец: аким города сарань
- ● Открытый контент. И отчёт о продел…
- ● показывать свою работу

△ 1/2 ▼

Меняли ли Вы когда-нибудь свое мнение о государственном чиновнике, основываясь на его присутствии в социальных сетях? Если да, приведите, пожалуйста, пример.

100 ответов

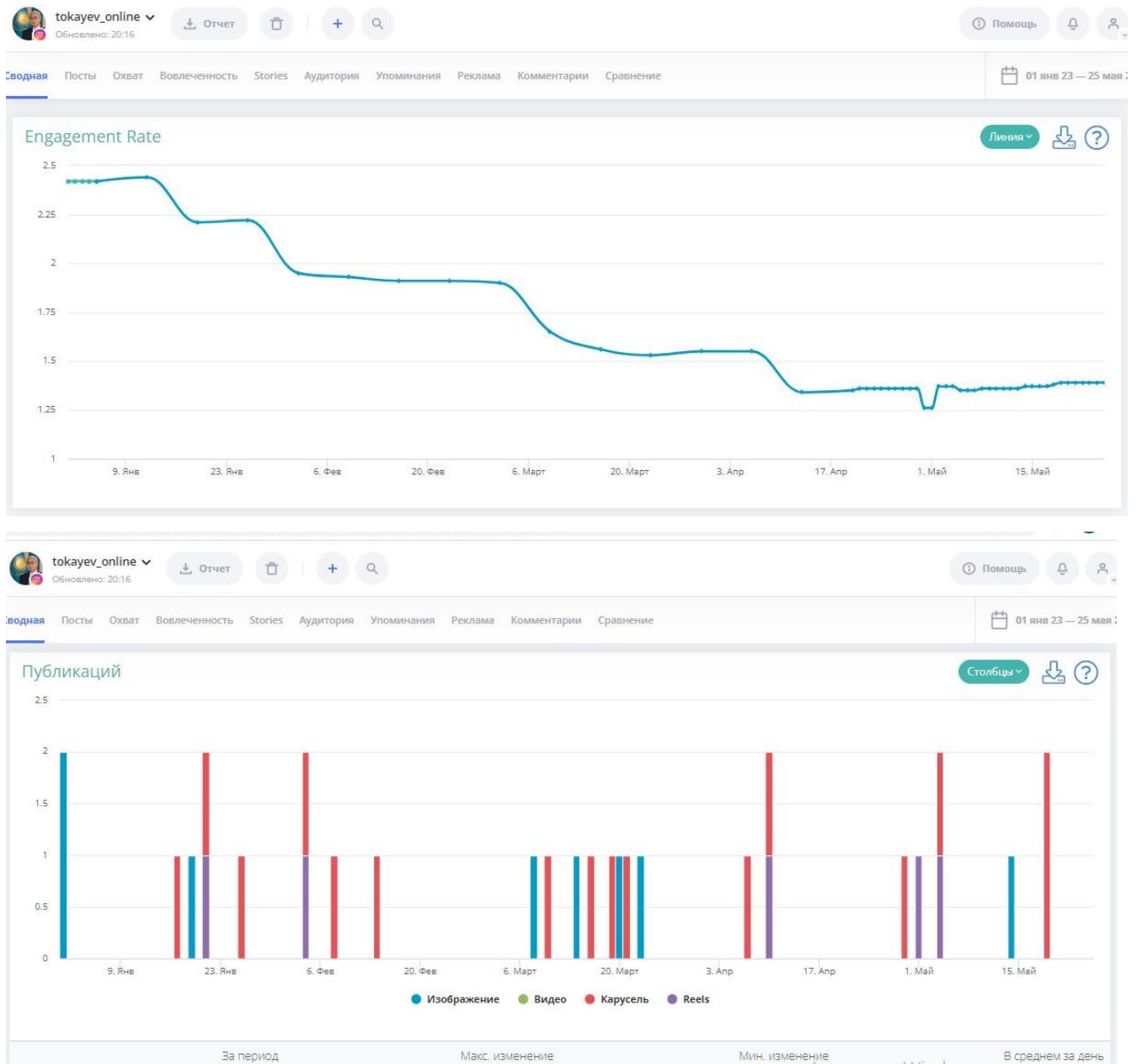| Нет |
| нет |
Нет
Да
Не менял
Еще нет
Смаилов
Да, Жумаксанов Максюта. Мусин и тд

'LiveDune' Graphics:

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS

The importance of creating a personal image in media channels for public relations of government officials in CIS