
American Elections and the Competition to Govern

Lisa D. Spiller, Christopher Newport University
Jeff Bergner, Christopher Newport University

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The competition to govern in America is a dynamic process. This paper examines the major paradigm shifts that have occurred in political campaigning with a focus on the most recent development—the ways in which political campaigns have borrowed from the world of business and have become direct marketing campaigns, where the political consumer has replaced the deliberative voter as the target of these campaigns. This paper uses the Obama 2008 presidential campaign as a case study to explore the cross-sector communication and marketing strategies employed in contemporary American elections and offers competitive strategy recommendations for future political candidates.

Keywords: American elections, Political campaigns, Competitive strategy, Business, Political marketing, Democracy