

CASE STUDY



STIRISTA
FREEDOM TO REACH ANYONE

**GOVERNOR
NIKKI HALEY**





CLIENT

An IE group approached Stirista to raise funds for Nikki Haley and other Asian-American political candidates. Before her decision to run for governor of South Carolina, Haley represented South Carolina's Lexington County House of Representatives from 2005 to 2010. Haley was consistently finishing fourth out of four in the Republican run-offs, unable to gain an edge against her better-funded opponents.

STIRISTA

Stirista's services go beyond traditional corporate marketing and focus on electoral services, ballot initiatives, public affairs, fundraising, and nonprofits. Stirista uses a unique blend of digital marketing and consumer segmentation to create solutions for its clients. Stirista's consulting and data services open new doors for clients that need fresh solutions to reach hard-to-find audiences.

CHALLENGE

Nikki Haley did not have an obvious support base in South Carolina. A daughter of Sikh immigrants, she was not the typical Republican gubernatorial candidate in a southern state. Although she was a practicing Christian, many questions were raised about her Sikh heritage. Haley was alienated by a large portion of Republican voters and did not have a support base outside of the party. South Carolina did not have a significant Asian-American population and the largest minority group, African Americans, had not supported a Republican candidate in decades.



PLAN OF ACTION

Before Stirista's campaign, Haley was lagging in fourth place in the run-offs with very little name recognition outside of South Carolina. Members of the Indian Diaspora, though a numerically small part of the American population, are among the highest average earners in the United States. Stirista is one of the few companies that has the ability to understand the complexity of the Indian Diaspora, which includes over fifty language groups.

Stirista identified Indian-Americans and sub-groups within that classification. Indian-Americans from Punjab were of particular interest because of Nikki Haley's Punjabi origin. Stirista created an email campaign targeting high-income registered voters of Indian descent across the U.S. Each targeted sub-group received a slightly different message to appeal to the unique narratives influencing each group's understanding of their own history.

RESULTS

Stirista was able to turn Haley's perceived weakness as a minority in South Carolina into a strength by focusing on her unique background. The campaign brought unprecedented coverage not only for Nikki Haley, but also for a handful of Indian-American candidates running for office elsewhere in the U.S.

As a result of Stirista's email campaign, Haley gained free press from numerous Asian-American and Indian publications. IE groups then hit the airwaves in South Carolina with newly generated funds on Haley's behalf, effortlessly reaching major markets.

Haley's unique story propelled her to the top of the primary race, following with an endorsement from former Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin. Haley went on to comfortably defeat a Democrat in the general elections.