

HURRICANE OF A DIFFERENT KIND TO HIT AMERICA: MEDIA PREDICTS MORE THAN 40,000 POLITICAL ADS A DAY UNTIL NOVEMBER



A storm is blowing and no, it's not the type that causes physical damages, but surely will cause considerable mental upheaval as television screens face an avalanche of political ads as the countdown for the elections begins. Kantar Media's CMAG says that their attempts to put into numbers what TV viewers will experience between now and November 6, could see a total of 3.6 million ads that is 43,000 a day. According to Kantar Republican advertisers are flush with money and their numbers are growing. Barack Obama campaign has come out with all guns blazing and there is no sign that the ammo is going to be exhausted. Moreover, Romney has hundreds of millions of unspent ad money still lying in his kitty and with barely eight weeks to go that money is going to buy a lot of ads. To the Presidential race, add aggressive cutthroat congressional and state legislative races and the ad-epidemic that is going to be unprecedented in the country's election history. It is also very important to know who is behind these ads. The Republican groups, Super PAC and others of their ilk are burgeoning and their money power is mind boggling. It is without doubt the single biggest contributor to the advertising onslaught that the nation is going to be besieged with. Merely at the presidential level since the Republican convention, outside groups have accounted for 55 percent of the ads compared to the 45 percent sponsored by Romney and the Republican National Committee. Last year at similar times, only 3 percent of total Republican ads were sponsored by outside groups. On the Democrat side the difference between then and now is trifling. A major portion of the ads are sponsored by either the Obama campaign or the Democratic National Committee. In 2008 it was 96 percent and now it's 91 percent. Kantar says that if we were to gauge how many ads were likely to be aired, one yardstick that would give a realistic figure was to calculate where we were at this time in 2008 and assume the same rate of escalation for the days ahead. In early September 2008, there were 832,291 ads for all political advertising, out of an eventual total of 2.29 million ads. This means that in September 2008, at this time only 36 percent of the ads had been aired. Presuming that to be the benchmark, this year we have already seen 1.3 million ads but, according to our assumed arithmetic, still 64 percent of the ads are still remaining, which translates into another 2.3 million ads still to be aired and that too in less than 60 days, that comes to around 43,000 spot per day. Both the Presidential nominees have adopted different strategies. Whilst the Obama campaign have been persistently at it for the last 7 months, Romney feels that a fast three month surge would be enough to take him to the White House. Both strategies have their pros and cons. Obama's campaign could reach saturation point and people might become exasperated or his early advantage that his ads may have given him, could have already made voters decide in his favor. Whilst the last minute race to breast the tape, will allow Romney to be fresh in the voters mind and also allow him to plan his strategy around what the Obama campaign has already finished saying. The ads are concentrating on projecting Romney as a capable businessman, a family man and savior of the 2002 Olympics and someone who has a vision for America. The storm is beginning to blow, what it leaves in its aftermath we'll only know after the blitzkrieg ceases and sanity is restored.