



## **Maria Adams (A) A New Waterfront Baseball Stadium for the Central Coast *Seabirds*<sup>1</sup>**

The Central Coast's football team, the Sharks, had just failed to make a two point conversion and stay mathematically alive for the NFL playoffs. With mixed emotions, Maria Adams watched the game clock expire from her Robinson Stadium luxury sky suite, right next door to the Sharks' owners. A young 62 years old, Maria herself was the owner of a big time sports franchise, the National League's Central Coast Seabirds who, since 1972, had played baseball here and shared this indoor stadium facility with the NFL's Sharks.

The good news was that the Seabirds could now get a head start on the annual football-to-baseball transformation of Robinson Stadium's seating and playing surface.

The bad news was that the Sharks' failure to make the post-season could create cash flow headaches for NFL owner Steve Slyckes, Maria's prickly co-tenant at Robinson Stadium. The Seabirds lease had expired last year and Maria wanted to build a new outdoor, baseball-only facility in Central Coast's urban waterfront warehouse district. But she had signed a temporary three year lease extension largely as a favor to real estate developer Slyckes, who found himself overextended in a number of poorly performing high-end residential projects. The extension had also given Maria and her partners additional time to arrange their now nearly-completed funding for the new Seabird Waterfront Stadium.

In order to take the Seabirds to the next level and produce the cash necessary for a new generation of winning talent from the Seabird farm team system, Maria needed her own showcase stadium. She was ready to introduce her plans to the public and create the necessary popular and political support to assure there would be no snags with the city council or the state legislature. It was no coincidence that among the most frequent guests in Maria's sky suite were elected officials, their staffers, and other members of the Central Coast political class from both sides of the aisle. At every game or concert, Maria and her host staffers never failed to mention the Seabird Waterfront Stadium Development Project to the guests in the owner's suite.

Now she wanted to build public support and reach outside the elites. She placed a cellphone call to her newly hired sports marketing whiz Brian Becker. "We need a crash course in running an issue-type campaign, you know, like a political campaign – not a season ticket campaign." Maria told him. "Let's make it happen."

### **Baseball in Her Blood**

Born in Cuba, Maria Adams (née Delis) had a knack for making things happen. Her father, Oscar Delis, had been an accomplished businessman on the island, building successful pre-Castro sugarcane processing and rum distilling companies inside and outside Cuba. Maria's uncle, Juan Delis, left the island in the early 1950's to pursue a baseball career in the United States. (He experienced moderate success, reaching the majors during the 1955-1958 seasons.) Meanwhile Oscar, fearing for his family's safety and fortune, moved his corporate headquarters,

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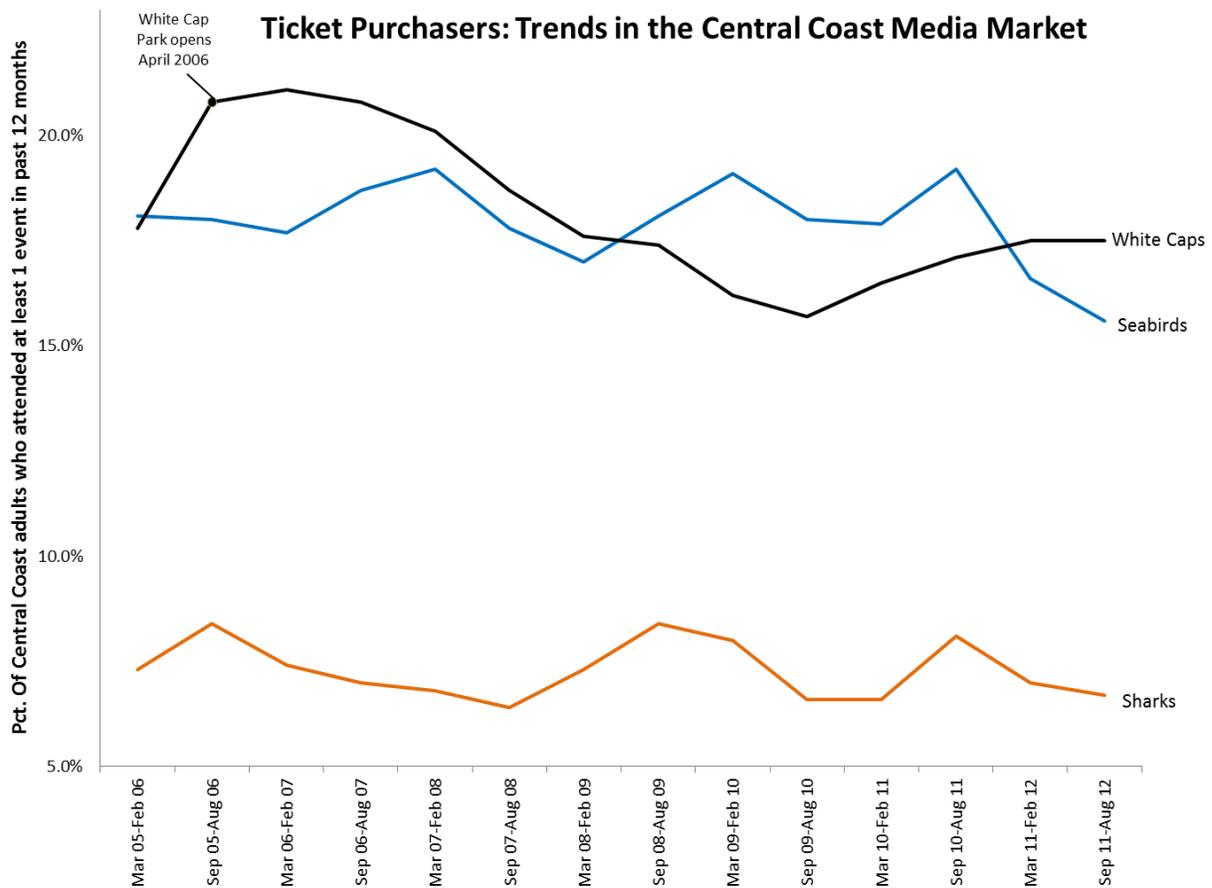
<sup>1</sup> The situation and organizations described in this case study are entirely fictional. Consumer and media research data for Central Coast are modeled using Scarborough Research and Nielsen data from a top-ten U.S. media market, and are altered for the purposes of the case. Population estimates, media audiences and costs, and other data do not represent any actual market conditions, and should be used only by competitors in the final round of the 2013 Washington Media Scholars Foundation scholarship competition. Copyright 2013 by WMSF. Do not reproduce or distribute without permission. More information at <http://mediascholars.org/case-competition/>

his wife, and eight year old Maria to Central Coast in 1959. Together the Delis brothers began investing in minor league teams; it was a hobby for Oscar and provided a job for Juan.

The Delis brothers' big break came in 1969 when Maria was a freshman in college. It was no secret that Oscar and Juan had their eyes on acquiring the Seabirds. When a major tornado damaged the old Seabird Park, Oscar loaned the Seabirds owners the cash necessary to make temporary repairs. Oscar also took a 50% stake in the new Robinson stadium, then under construction. By 1972, the Delis brothers owned a controlling stake in the Seabirds who were now playing their games indoors in the brand new Robinson Stadium.

Now, Maria wanted to get out of Robinson Stadium as soon as possible. Unlike the NFL Sharks, the Seabirds had a major league competitor in the Central Coast market -- the American League's White Caps. An underfunded perennial loser, the White Caps' attendance was historically 15%-25% lower than the Seabirds. That changed in 2006 when the new White Cap Park opened in a fast growing suburban area of the Central Coast metropolitan market and Cap attendance surged past the Seabirds. (See Exhibit A: Ticket Purchasers: Trends in the Central Coast Media Market) With its better teams, the Seabirds had come back to rough parity with the White Caps but the most recent trends did not look good. Maria believed a new stadium would boost attendance and broadcast audiences, and push her Seabirds into the top tier of MLB franchises.

Exhibit A



**Exhibit A:** Reported professional baseball and football ticket purchasers in past 12 months as reported by Scarborough Research surveys of Central Coast adults.

### **The Seabird Waterfront Stadium**

The Seabird Waterfront Stadium Development styled itself as “new urbanism.” Plans included revitalization of the old fishing wharfs and warehouses into mixed residential and commercial properties, all with pedestrian friendly roads and sidewalks, green spaces, local retail shopping, and easy access to public transportation. All stadium parking lots would be located outside the Waterfront district. The stadium was sited and designed so it would not dominate the skyline, and surrounding building heights would be kept low.

Maria had in hand the financing and the approval of all other Major League owners except one (White Caps owner Al Kerry had voted “present”.) The missing pieces were the necessary zoning permits and authorizations from the Central Coast City Council. But before those votes and hearings were scheduled, Maria wanted to make sure there was public support in place. Two years ago, Maria had started her own community organizing effort called the Waterfront Renewal Coalition (WRC) with a couple of staffers in a modest storefront office. They had been contacting individuals and building computerized files of residents and businesses in and around the Waterfront area.

There had been rumors that oilman Al Kerry was talking with environmental groups and lawyers about starting a Kerry-funded “grassroots” organization to demand that the waterfront district be designated as protected wetlands, but thus far nothing had materialized. Another unknown was Shark’s owner Steve Slyckes who had taken no public position on the new Seabird stadium.<sup>2</sup>

### **Brian Becker, MBA**

Twenty-six year old Brian Becker was the Seabirds new vice-president for marketing. He had joined the Seabirds organization five years ago after graduating from college. Brian’s fielding was good enough to earn him a 4-year baseball scholarship, but as a below-average hitter he failed to earn a spot on a professional roster. Instead, he was hired to do promotions for the Seabird’s Triple-A farm club. It was there that he caught the attention of the Seabird’s front office and owner Maria.

When Brian was accepted to the master’s program at a well-known eastern business school, the Seabirds offered to pay his tuition if he would come back to the Seabirds for at least three years. Brian had returned six months ago to Central Coast with his new MBA (“A masters in baseball administration,” as Maria called it.)

Brian had spent the last two months putting together a media campaign aimed at increasing Seabird ticket sales and growing the television and radio audiences for game broadcasts. In the process, Brian got an on-the-job education about a wide-variety of media platforms, and learned how media was bought and sold. He was no media expert, but he now knew about gross rating points, cookies, cost per thousand impressions (CPM), reach and frequency, and other media concepts<sup>3</sup>. However, one thing Brian knew almost nothing about was political-issue advertising.

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<sup>2</sup> Because of his financial difficulties, Slyckes was expected to keep a low profile, but might be willing to publically endorse the new Seabird stadium.

<sup>3</sup> This case assumes a basic, introductory-level knowledge of media concepts. Students seeking more background about media terms and planning should see “Ryan Mellis (A)” the 2011 Washington Media Scholars Foundation finals case. Also see the media tutorial at <http://mediascholars.org/case-competition/2013-case-files/>

Fortunately, Brian knew who to call. Vicki Silverstein had been a section-mate at business school and now worked at a leading political polling firm in Washington, D.C. Brian had talked with Vicki and given her firm a contract to conduct a series of polls, focus groups, and advertising testing sessions to help shape messaging for a campaign in favor of the new Seabird Stadium.

Vicki's first-round of research would not be complete for several weeks, but meanwhile Brian had the immediate task of outlining a media plan and budget for presentation to Maria. Vicki pointed out that there were some political variables in a consumer research database that Brian currently purchased from Scarborough Research, which conducts marketing and media research interviews with over 200,000 American adults each year. Tucked away in the hundreds of Scarborough variables, Brian found the question he had been looking for: "How often do you vote in local elections?" Based on interviews with 8,273 Central Coast adults, 39% reported always voting in local elections compared to 47% always voting in statewide elections and 71% voting in presidential elections. Local election voters represented 2.9 million of the 7.4 million adults living in the Central Coast media market. How many of them were Seabird fans, and most likely to support the new stadium?

**Politically Active Baseball Fans**

During the preparation of the annual Seabird marketing plan, Brian had used Scarborough data to define a group of *core fans*. These were the 14.9% of Central Coast adults who both bought tickets and watched or listened to Seabirds broadcasts on television and radio. Using the Scarborough data analysis application, Brian cross tabulated his core fan group with turnout in local elections (Exhibit B).

**Exhibit B**

		<b>Seabird Core Fans</b> <small>(attended games and watch/listen to broadcasts)</small>			<b>NOT Seabird Core Fans</b>
<b>All Central Coast Adults</b>		<b>All Adults</b>			
Proj		7,411,361	1,105,963		6,305,398
Vert %		100.0%	100.0%		100.0%
Horz %		100.0%	14.9%		85.1%
Index		100	100		100
<b>Always Vote in Local Elections</b>		Proj 2,908,579	474,973		2,433,607
		<b>Vert % 39.2%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>		<b>38.6%</b>
		Total % 39.2%	6.4%		32.8%
		Index 100	109		98
<b>Sometimes Vote in Local Elections</b>		Proj 2,256,149	378,598		1,877,551
		<b>Vert % 30.4%</b>	<b>34.2%</b>		<b>29.8%</b>
		Total % 30.4%	5.1%		25.3%
		Index 100	112		98
<b>Never Vote in Local Elections</b>		Proj 2,246,633	252,393		1,994,241
		<b>Vert % 30.3%</b>	<b>22.8%</b>		<b>31.6%</b>
		Total % 30.3%	3.4%		26.9%
		Index 100	75		104
<b>Potential WRC Supporters</b>		<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">{</div> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">}</div> <div> <p>6.4% Seabird Core Fans heavy-voters</p> <p>32.8% NOT Seabird Core Fans heavy-voters</p> <p>5.1% Seabird Core Fans light-voters</p> <p>55.6% Non-Target</p> </div> </div>			

**Exhibit B:** There are 7.4 million adults in the Central Coast media market, including 1.1 million Seabird "core fans." Of these fans, 475,000 say they always vote in local Central Coast elections.

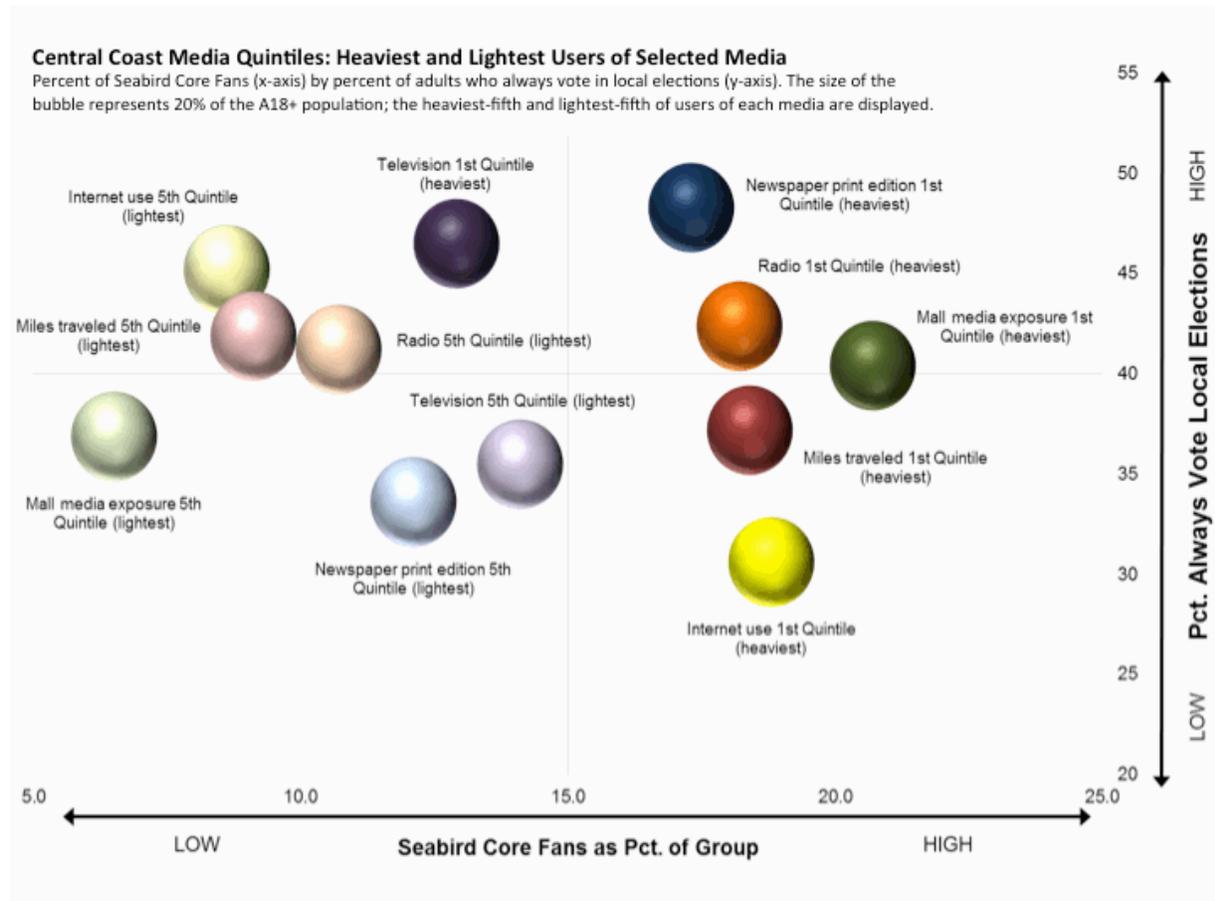
About 43% of his core fan group reported always voting in local elections. This was only marginally higher than the 39% local election turnout among all adults (indicated in exhibit B by the 109 index value—43% ÷ 39% equals 1.09.) About 23% of core fans said they never voted in local elections (an index value of 75). Seabird fans overall were somewhat more likely to vote than the average adult, and definitely voted at higher rates than Seabird non-fans.

Brian saw a potential problem – high turnout voters who were not core fans outnumbered his voting fans by a margin of 5 to 1, or 2.4 million to 475,000. If an active opposition campaign emerged, it would almost certainly target this larger group of non-fan, high-turnout voters.

**Mapping the Media Landscape**

At business school, Brian had been exposed to bubble charts as a way to visualize data relationships (a graphic technique originally popularized by the Boston Consulting Group.) To get an overall view of how potential target groups used media, Brian first plotted a chart using media quintile data.

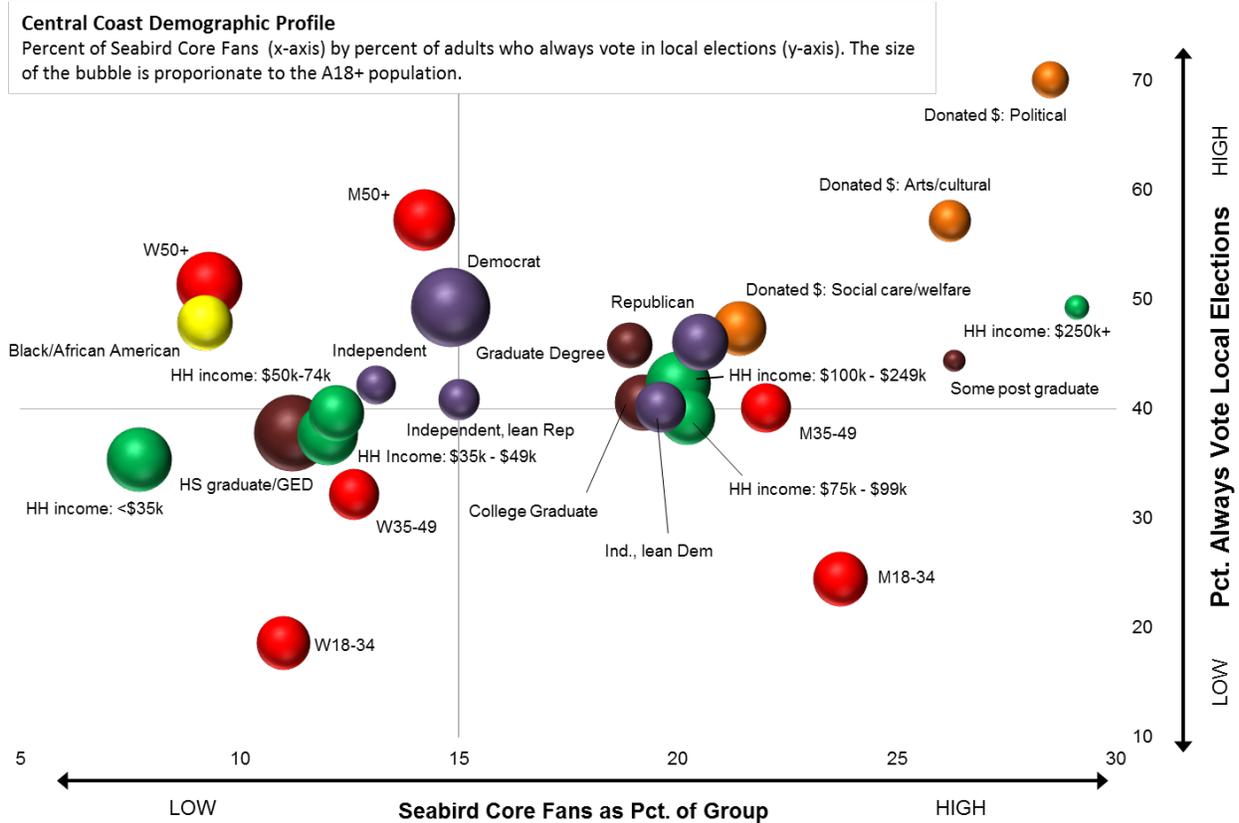
Exhibit C



In the upper right-hand quadrant, newspapers and radio reach those Seabird fans that are more likely to vote in local elections. Meanwhile, heavy Internet users are more likely to be interested in the Seabirds, but less likely to vote. Television is good for reaching high turnout voters but less effective at reaching the core fan group. Brian would use this sort of analysis to help him allocate his total campaign spending across various media vehicles.

Brian prepared another bubble chart showing select demographic and political groups. He found it interesting that donors to politics, arts organizations, and other charities were also more likely to be Seabird fans. Brian's research showed that Seabird fans tended to be more upscale than fans of other Central Coast sports franchises. (See additional bubble charts in Appendix A.)

Exhibit D



Finally, Brian prepared an Excel spreadsheet that would function as his "shopping list" while he prepared his media plan and budget (Exhibit E). Brian might decide to add other communications tools not on this list.

To simplify things, Brian priced each media vehicle in terms of its cost per 1000 impressions (CPM). For example, local early-morning news on Central Coast stations averaged \$12 per 1000 viewers. If Brian bought 1 million impressions on the local news, he could expect to pay about \$12,000.

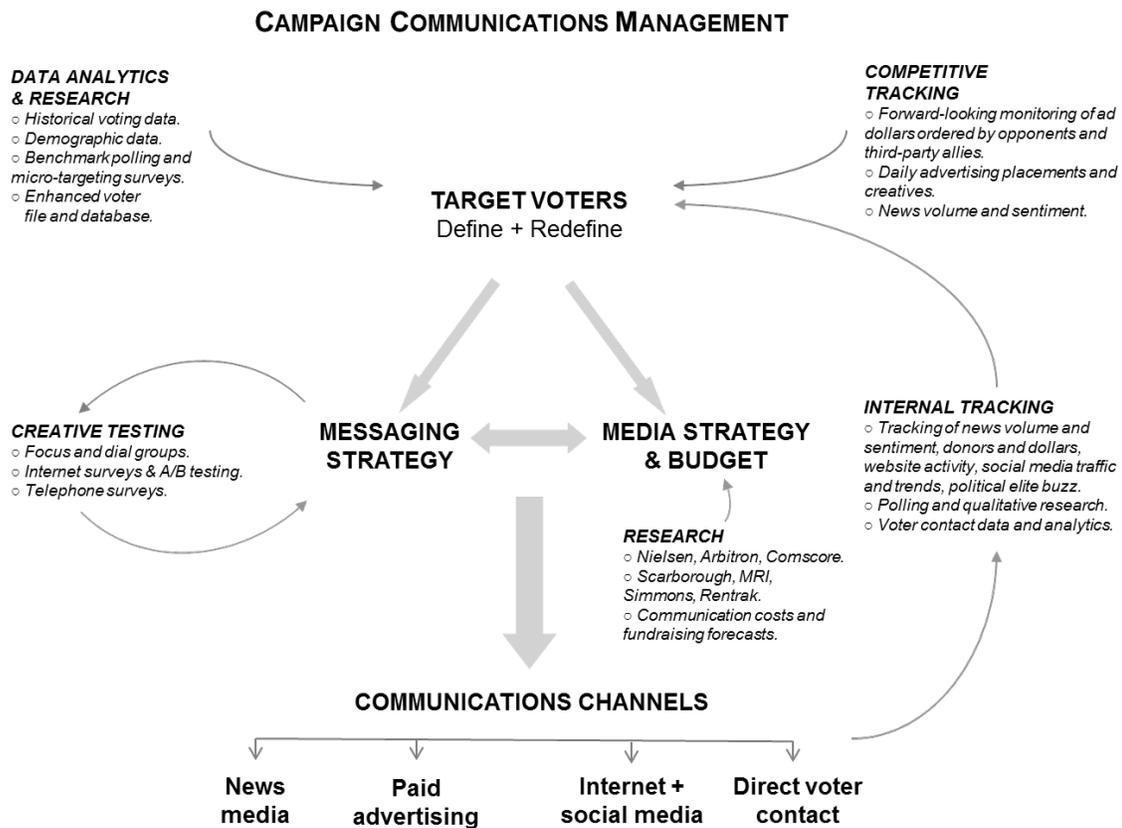
**Exhibit E** (Also provided in an Excel file format)

<b>Seabird Waterfront Stadium Development Project:</b>					
Media Planning Costs and Audiences					
		<b>Seabird Core Fans</b>		<b>High Turnout Voters</b>	
	<b>Avg Planning Costs per 1000 impressions (CPM)</b>	<b>As Horz% of Media Audience</b>	<b>Seabird Index</b>	<b>As Horz% of Media Audience</b>	<b>Local Voting Index</b>
<b>TELEVISION (:30)</b>					
<b>Combined Broadcast Television Networks (by daypart)</b>					
Early Morning	\$ 12	15.1%	101	44.3%	113
Daytime	\$ 10	12.6%	85	43.9%	112
Early Fringe	\$ 13	15.0%	101	45.9%	117
Early News	\$ 14	14.5%	97	46.4%	118
Prime Access	\$ 24	13.8%	92	46.7%	119
Primetime	\$ 47	16.5%	110	42.8%	109
Late News	\$ 18	16.2%	109	47.0%	120
Late Fringe	\$ 15	16.0%	107	46.7%	119
Local Broadcast TV Sports - weekend	\$ 36	19.4%	130	45.5%	116
<b>Spanish Language Broadcast Television</b>					
Mix of daytime, news, and primetime	\$ 33	8.7%	58	21.5%	55
<b>Combined Cable Network Groups</b>					
News: Daytime	\$ 24	17.3%	116	48.2%	123
News: Primetime	\$ 47	16.2%	108	46.5%	119
Arts/Culture/History: Daytime	\$ 15	15.0%	101	47.9%	122
Arts/Culture/History: Primetime	\$ 29	16.2%	109	41.0%	104
General Entertainment: Daytime	\$ 14	15.0%	101	39.0%	99
General Entertainment: Primetime	\$ 27	17.9%	120	40.4%	103
Sports: Daytime	\$ 19	23.2%	155	42.9%	109
Sports: Primetime	\$ 38	24.8%	166	39.0%	99
Lifestyle/Info-tainment: Daytime	\$ 14	12.6%	84	37.9%	97
Lifestyle/Info-tainment: Primetime	\$ 28	14.6%	98	38.0%	97
Other/Niche: Daytime	\$ 16	14.3%	96	37.9%	97
Other/Niche: Primetime	\$ 31	13.8%	93	39.2%	100
Satellite Dish Viewing: Daytime	\$ 6	16.4%	110	39.1%	100
Satellite Dish Viewing: Primetime	\$ 10	11.9%	79	34.4%	88
<b>RADIO (:60)</b>					
<b>Combined Radio Formats**</b>					
Newstalk	\$ 25	16.6%	111	48.3%	123
Urban	\$ 29	15.1%	101	33.2%	85
Contemporary, Country and Rock	\$ 26	17.1%	115	35.7%	91
Spanish	\$ 27	10.3%	69	24.3%	62
Sports	\$ 32	23.0%	154	42.0%	107
Satellite Radio	\$ 18	19.7%	132	48.1%	123
**Mix of drivetime and daytime					
<b>PUBLIC BROADCASTING UNDERWRITING</b>					
PBS non-political underwriting announcement	\$ 58	12.0%	80	47.3%	120
NPR non-political underwriting announcement	\$ 45	18.8%	126	42.1%	107
<b>PRINT</b>					
<b>Full Page B&amp;W Ad</b>					
Central Coast Tribune	\$ 49	18.2%	122	45.5%	116
Central Coast Tribune 12 page, full-color magazine insert	\$ 250	18.2%	122	45.5%	116
Other Local Newspapers	\$ 46	16.1%	108	46.1%	117
Central Coast Magazine	\$ 50	21.8%	146	54.2%	138
<b>DIGITAL ADVERTISING</b>					
<b>Display</b>					
Local Central Coast Media Websites	\$ 14	19.2%	129	38.1%	97
National News Websites (geotargeting Central Coast users)	\$ 12	20.0%	134	36.6%	93
National Sports + Local Teams Websites	\$ 20	28.1%	188	37.3%	95
Mobile (impressions purchased per website)	\$ 11	19.3%	129	33.1%	84
<b>Pre-Roll Video (:15 or :30 second ad)</b>					
Local Central Coast Media Websites	\$ 19	19.2%	129	38.1%	97
National News Websites (geotargeting Central Coast users)	\$ 17	20.0%	134	36.6%	93
National Sports + Local Teams Websites	\$ 25	28.1%	188	37.3%	95
Mobile (impressions purchased per website)	\$ 16	19.3%	129	33.1%	84
Hulu	\$ 29	13.7%	91	34.3%	88
Pandora	\$ 20	18.5%	124	26.5%	68
<b>Social Media</b>					
Facebook (\$2 average cost per click)	n/a	17.5%	118	32.8%	83
Twitter: Promoted Accounts / Tweets (\$5,000/month)	n/a	20.4%	136	29.2%	74
<b>Search</b>					
Google, Yahoo!, Bing (\$3.25 average CPC; geotargeted)	n/a	19.2%	129	34.8%	89
YouTube: Promoted Videos (\$2 average CPC)	n/a	17.1%	114	30.1%	77
<b>OUTDOOR</b>					
Digital Signage/Display and traditional highway billboards	\$ 4	18.4%	123	37.2%	95
Transit Ads (Buses, Metro Stops, etc.)	\$ 3	19.7%	132	40.8%	104
<b>THEATER</b>					
Movie Theater ads (:60)	\$ 64	20.0%	134	39.4%	100

**Vicki’s Political Campaign Model**

This afternoon Brian would be meeting with Maria to discuss the overall timing and budget of the campaign to promote public support for the Seabird Waterfront Stadium Project. At lunch he reviewed a diagram that political pollster friend Vicki Silverstein had sent him. Brian was going to focus on the media strategy and budget part of the flowchart, and leave the messaging decisions until after Vicki finished her first round of consumer research and polling.

The flowchart was something that Vicki's firm used for presentations to political clients and candidates running for office. Brian was not running a candidate campaign but he wondered what other aspects of the diagram might be applicable to his Seabird campaign. According to Vicki, one of the biggest differences between political and consumer campaigns was that political campaigns placed more value on so-called "direct contact," including volunteer door-knocking, telephone calls, and other forms of personal interaction. Brian wondered if he should make some allowance for this in the budget he would be preparing.



**Maria's Marching Orders**

Brian was flabbergasted when Maria told him that she was willing to spend up to \$6.5 million next year in order to generate public support for her new stadium. This was more than twice as much as Brian's total annual budget for the Seabird team marketing.

"If you don't have to spend it all, I would of course appreciate that," said Maria. "But make sure you spend as much as we need." Maria suggested that he plan a five-month campaign. The first phase of the campaign would be January, February, and March before the Seabird season began. The second phase of the campaign would follow in October and November. "If we win the pennant, we won't have to spend anything in the fall!" Maria joked.

Brian asked Maria about spending on personal contact and other political coalition-building activities. "I don't really know anything about that or how much it costs but you might want to hold some money aside to cover those sorts of things."

Back in his office, Brian considered the key strategic questions that he would need to answer: (A) Who were his targets for the new stadium campaign?, (B) How could his targets be reached?, (C) What mix of vehicles would be a cost-effective way of reaching them?, and (D) How would he schedule the spending of the \$6.5 million budget next year?

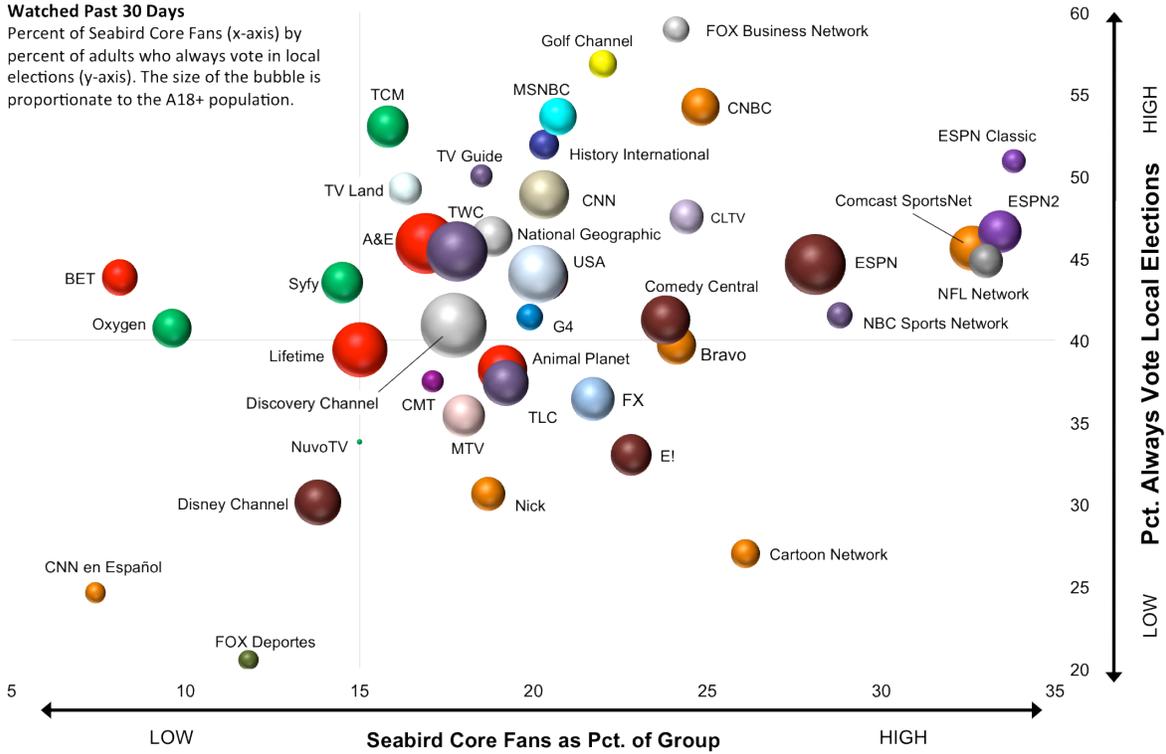
Brian would have to prepare a written document for Maria. He didn't know exactly what the written document would end up looking like, but he wanted to include the following:

- a. A month-by-month media plan in an Excel spreadsheet. The columns would be months. The rows would be different media vehicles that Brian wanted to include in his plan. The spreadsheet would show how much she would spend each month on each different type of media, how many impressions she would get each month and estimate her total gross rating points over the course of the campaign.
- b. Summary tables and graphs for presentation to Maria and other Seabird top management and project investors. These would show the thinking and analysis behind his budget recommendations.
- c. A memorandum that included a narrative description of the proposed media plan along with any supporting tables or graphics. Brian wanted to keep the memo to 10-15 pages long, including any tables or graphs that he decided to insert.

Appendix A

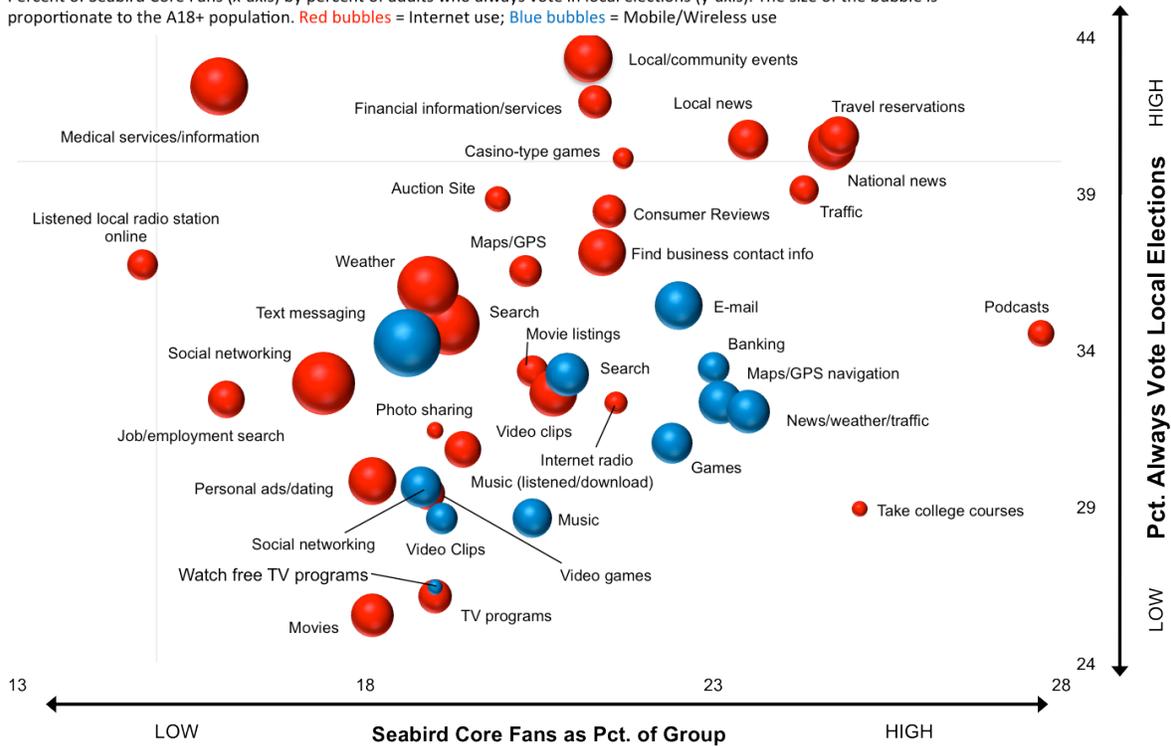
**Central Coast Profile - Cable Networks Watched Past 30 Days**

Percent of Seabird Core Fans (x-axis) by percent of adults who always vote in local elections (y-axis). The size of the bubble is proportionate to the A18+ population.



**Central Coast Profile - Ways Internet/Mobile Used Past 30 Days**

Percent of Seabird Core Fans (x-axis) by percent of adults who always vote in local elections (y-axis). The size of the bubble is proportionate to the A18+ population. Red bubbles = Internet use; Blue bubbles = Mobile/Wireless use



**Central Coast Profile - Type TV Programs Typically Watched**

Percent of Seabird Core Fans (x-axis) by percent of adults who always vote in local elections (y-axis). The size of the bubble is proportionate to the A18+ population.

