

A coalition of telecommunications companies called on BSD to develop and implement a coordinated media campaign calling for increased competition in the cable and pay TV industry. In about 18 months, BSD built a consumer list of over 110,000, contributing to legislative and court victories in four states, and increased legislative activity on the issue in state houses and Congress.

BSD brings together fundraising, advocacy, and constituency-building into a single Internet application, which is easy to integrate with your existing Web site. Use the BSD Online Tools Suite to raise funds, develop your online constituency, build legislative or opinion support for an issue or candidate, maintain an active public face for your organization, or any combination.

TV4US is using the BSD Online Tools Suite to drive a legislative and media contact campaign in support of regulatory reform in the cable television industry.



*BSD is powering a 12-state legislative advocacy campaign that has seen clear statehouse wins.*

**ready to get started?**

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## background and goals

For historical reasons, cable television is regulated differently from other communications industries, with a franchise system (which typically operates at the municipal level) controlling monopoly access to community markets.



This system protects the business interests of certain entrenched players (notably the half-dozen largest cable operators, who have large infrastructure investments to amortize), but makes it difficult for either smaller or larger providers to enter the market cost-effectively.

A coalition of 30 large and small telecommunications companies has mobilized to try to change this regulatory structure. For reasons that vary according to their circumstances, they all believe that some combination of uniform regulation, competitive content provision, and the decoupling of content from infrastructure (as in the deregulation of other utilities) would make it possible for them to enter this market or compete more effectively for cable franchises.

In 2006, they launched an organization called the TV4US Coalition to build a consumer movement behind regulatory change in twelve targeted states, and retained BSD to manage their communications and advocacy program.

## bsd's program for tv4us

The TV4US advocacy program is an inherently fragmented state-by-state effort, so the companion Web site needed to be localized to enable the organization to disseminate information by state and press for action by state.

BSD's TV4US Web site at <http://wewantchoice.com> combines information with advocacy and mobilization tools at the state level. These campaigns complement the existing lobbying efforts of TV4US's sponsoring companies and of other organizations with similar aims.

Making the case for change and using clear consumer benefits – lower cost, increased variety, more transparency, better local content – as the motivators, the Web site aims to build a constituency for deregulation and regulatory change, through frictionless opportunities for site visitors to sign up, lend their voices to campaigns, and – as importantly – spread the word to others via tell-a-friend tools, all powered by the underlying BSD online community and advocacy toolset.

BSD also managed the development and placement of print, video, and online promotional components relating to the TV4US campaign, including viral video.

## results

In 18 months through this program, BSD has built a national constituency for cable TV regulatory reform that is over 110,000 members strong, with an emphasis on the states in which TV4US is advocating most strongly for change. The "urgent alert" functionality provided by the BSD tools has been used half a dozen times to ensure that the voices of constituents are heard in state legislatures at the times when they can have the most significant impact on policy. Over 67,000 members have taken action in advocacy campaigns coordinated via the site, including almost 10,000 letters to the editor and over 100,000 communications to Congress and state legislators.

