



Arcadia (CA) REALTORS® Put Facebook to Work in City Council Election Victory

John Wuo was a candidate who seemed to have it all: a successful and well-rounded business career; a thriving real estate office; a list of impressive board memberships and volunteer activities longer than his arm; two terms on the Arcadia City Council (including two terms as Mayor) under his belt; and the ability to speak Mandarin – the native language of the city’s largest minority group.

But he had no Internet presence.

In Arcadia, a comfortable suburb northeast of Los Angeles, the five members of the City Council hold four-year terms and take turns in a mayoral rotation. “It is a pretty deeply entrenched Council, with some of the members serving for many terms,” says Chip Ahlswede, Government Affairs Director of the 1,600-member Arcadia Association of REALTORS® [AAR.] In the past few decades, Arcadia has experienced a big shift in demographics, with a burgeoning Chinese population joining the Caucasian establishment and becoming much more involved in the most recent election cycles.

In April 2012, it was fairly clear that the incumbent candidate would win one of the two available Council seats; there was another Chinese-American running, and another REALTOR®. “We really had nothing against these opponents, but because of the potential splits in the Asian vote, as well as within the REALTOR® community, we needed to come out strongly for John,” explains Ahlswede, “to ensure that a champion of REALTOR® issues had a seat on the Council.”

The AAR Local Candidate Recommendation Committee threw its support behind John Wuo, who happens to be a past president of the Association. Then Ahlswede contacted NAR’s Campaign Services Department. “We talked out some options, and determined that Facebook advertising would be great,” he recalls. NAR funded the online advertising through its Independent Expenditure Program, helping to create Chinese- and English-language ads that were carefully targeted to Facebook members of voting age who were interested in Arcadia politics – and likely to vote.

Prior to the Facebook campaign, John Wuo had virtually no online presence at all. “The idea was to raise his profile among an audience that was beyond the traditional market,” says Ahlswede, “it really added a whole component to his campaign that simply hadn’t existed.” The ads ran for about two weeks, and were linked to a simple site that was created for Wuo on a local blog.

In fact, the incumbent Council member did keep his seat, and Wuo won the second, with 3,000 votes: 645 more than the next closest candidate. Did the Facebook ads make the difference? “It’s hard to quantify how much it helped, and local elections are hard to gauge,” says Ahlswede. “But he won by a significant margin, and we were certainly out-spent by other candidates who did not win.” The fact that the ads were in Chinese, clearly helped to put us over the top, he added.



During his past terms on the Arcadia City Council, John Wuo has pushed hard for the downtown revitalization effort now underway, and was instrumental in securing property development rights for the Santa Anita Park race track, where Sea Biscuit sprinted to fame. There is no doubt he'll continue to work to maintain and improve the quality of life in Arcadia, a city that was ranked one of the "Best Places to Raise Your Kids" in 2010 by *Bloomberg Businessweek*. The City Council is a part-time commitment, so Wuo remains an active Arcadia REALTOR® -- and perhaps now he'll be spending some of his time on Facebook.

Wuo Facebook Ads

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