

# Politics & Personal Branding – Lessons from the Trump Campaign



By *Jasmine Sandler, CEO, [Agent-cy Online Marketing](#)*

This is an interesting time in American history and American politics, and I feel like I had to open this blog post that way so you knew I wasn't talking about Pokémon Go. (By the way, that is a genius marketing strategy and if anyone tells you anything different, they're wrong.) The Republican National Convention showed us recently the fascination that Americans are having on what's happening outside the arena—protests, etc—than inside it. Politico, as usual had it right with the story they published on the eve of the convention, “ [GOP operatives dread Trump convention](#). This has been the most contentious political convention we've seen since 1968, and that's not a good thing.

There are important lessons to be learned on the business and [marketing](#) side here from the Trump campaign. I spend a ton of my professional life working on personal branding. I work with people almost hourly on personal branding, from individuals whose revenue stream is themselves to executives in transition to entrepreneurs and back again. It can sound like a buzzword—“personal branding” seems to imply you're making yourself a brand, which seems less authentic—but it's crucial. Nothing is handed to you professionally. You can have a great

job and a great manager and, three days later, you can be fired because your company takes a revenue hit. Is that common? *No*. But does it happen all the time to people? *Yes*. And when you're out there looking for new opportunities or trying to build up your own thing, your personal brand is all you have. It's reflected in what you write, what's on LinkedIn, what's on YouTube, and what people will find when they Google you (or you [Google yourself](#)).

That's all a long way of getting back to Trump. His personal brand offends a lot of people, but it's actually very strong. During the primaries when Trump's rise was happening, NBC's *Meet the Press* went to a Trump rally in Alabama and filmed a video with his supporters:

It's a quick video – less than 2 minutes and 20 seconds – and if you watch it, all his supporters tend to use the same words to describe him:

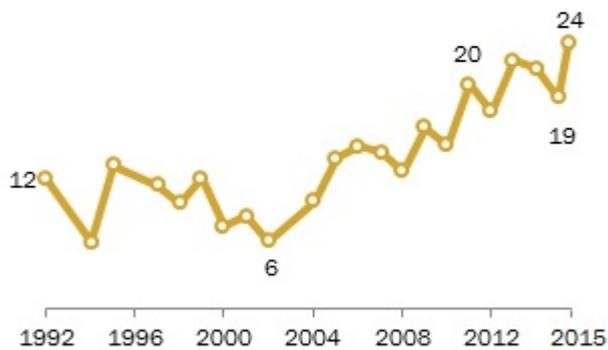
- Outsider
- Change
- Change the system
- Real
- Talks real
- Represents us
- Discontent with government

**Now look at this chart:**

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## Double Negatives: More People Express Unfavorable Views of Both Parties

*% saying they have an unfavorable view of BOTH the Republican Party and the Democratic Party*



Pew Research Center merged data. Data for 1992-2014 based on yearly averages, data for 2015 based on individual polls.

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Basically, it says this: in the 2000 Presidential election cycle, 7 percent of people polled had an unfavorable view of both parties. In 2016, it's up to 24 percent. So in four Presidential cycles, we've basically quadrupled the amount of people who don't like either of their options.

This is where Trump excelled in terms of **personal branding** and **marketing**. At base, marketing is just about positioning whatever your product or service is. We over-complicate it sometimes and talk about power branding and automation and all that—and I've worked with clients on all those things, so don't get me wrong—but it's really just explaining how your product is going to be better than some other product.

The climate Trump entered was one where 1 in 4 people in America didn't like either party. So he marketed himself as an outsider and that marketing got him 13 million primary voters and the Republican nomination.

My point is this: many people don't like Trump. But if you

think concepts like 'personal branding' and 'marketing' are fluffy and don't have impact or don't need to be considered, well ... turn on the TV during these elections you'll see it play out live in technicolor.

**About the Author:** *Jasmine Sandler is a global keynote speaker, trainer, author and consultant in Digital Marketing and Social Selling for global organizations. She is the Founder and CEO of Agent-cy Online Marketing, a Manhattan-based Online Branding agency, specializing in SEO since 2006. She has been named (2012, 2013, and 2014) as a Top 40 Global Digital Marketing Strategist in the industry, Top SEO consultant on Twitter and Top 17 Digital Influencers in Content Marketing. Jasmine has over 15 years' client Digital Marketing experience in helping corporations such as Citibank, Intercall, Doublerock, ISO and countless others use the web to drive online visibility and generate leads that have resulted in new business online. She started, developed and sold a social network before social networking was a widespread term. As the lead Digital Marketing Strategist for Agent-cy Online Marketing, Jasmine has led online marketing programs in Web Design, Web Development, Search Engine Optimization, Pay per Click Advertising and Online Marketing Campaigns, Social Media Marketing Strategy and Online PR for B2B professional services companies. Currently, she manages all SEO and Digital Marketing Strategy for the firm's top clientele.*