



Pride North '24

A Social Media Engagement Strategy

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1. The Story

Pride North is a thing. And has grown substantially since its inception, as a less commercial—more politically active—alternate LGBTQ+ festival to the annual Chicago Pride Parade held in the Northalsted neighborhood, also scheduled for June 30, 2024.

The Chicago Pride Parade has itself ballooned over its 23 years into a behemoth that, besides the long and vibrant parade, also features live music over multiple stages, DJ-driven circuit parties, a Youth Pride Space, drag performers, a Proud Pet Parade, several exhibitions and over 150 food and merchandise vendors. The weekend is preceded by Chicago PrideFest, held over the June 22-23 weekend, which does the same thing as Chicago Pride Parade without a parade.

Pride North, also slated for June 29 and 30, 2024, started in reaction to the commercial Pride Parade where, as the culmination of Pride month, otherwise disengaged brands such as Target, CVS, and United Airlines capitalize on the atmosphere of Prideness by rainbow washing and hollow virtue signaling—inclusivity platitudes from a brand that is, well, not always *that* gay. Or reliable.

The Chicago Pride Parade has changed over the years, now serving more as an opportunity for allies to express solidarity and wokeness with the cause rather than the expression of anger and disenfranchisement it intended to be. Inebriated parade allies are not necessarily in it for the long haul, their Prideness not necessarily as pronounced—or dependable—at the ballot box.

Pride North, therefore, started as a ‘gimme a break from nail-polished twink’s’ gay pride expressions, and organically developed into a significantly more politically aware event. Pride North is aimed at an older demographic. Male. Its attendees less interested in Pride’s celebratory aspect; more aligned with “remember” awareness. Most of them are motivated by, or at least aware of, the AIDS pandemic either through loss, diagnosis, or political and social disenfranchisement. It is a demographic that is allergic to any form of rainbow pandering and performative—seasonal—

expressions of solidarity of the saccharine “love wins” flavor. This means they are politically engaged, viewing their sexual orientation and expression—and their gender identity—as a civil right and, in some cases, their form of civil protest.

To this end, Pride North is committed to using June 29 and 30, 2024 as a vehicle to inform the LGBTQ+ community of what is at stake during the 2024 general election. It aims to link legit advertisers and political figures with a traumatized community. It wants to help activate the LGBTQ+ vote and, after the weekend itself, sustain contact with the community to ensure an outcome beneficial to LGBTQ+ Americans.

Pride North is not bipartisan. It has no interest in promoting Republican rhetoric or causes. It is unashamedly pro-democratic and pro-democracy. It’s a political stance crafted as early as 2014 when Bruce Rauner, the Republican candidate in the Illinois Gubernatorial race, clarified his opposition to marriage equality. Given the recent fracas around the fall of Roe VS Wade, the organizers of Pride North in no way feel compelled to risk the Obergefell decision of 2015. In addition to that, Republican anti-LGBTQ+ legislation has flourished since 2020, most significantly, the recent 2023 Smith website decision, the outcome of which compelled Justice Sotomayor to sharply dissent, lamenting the LGBTQ+ community’s post-ruling “second-class status.” As if that wasn’t enough, significant Supreme Court cases will soon decide the future of PrEP HIV prevention medication. This issue threatens the lives of a community still traumatized by the systematic denial by previous administrations and the lack of early progress in combating the disease.

Heading into the 2024 election cycle, the LGBTQ+ community feels under attack. Again. And the best form of protest remains the vote, which is why events aligned with Pride have both a fiscal opportunity and a social responsibility. Pride North is up for the challenge. This strategy lays out *how* Pride North will go about engaging its loyal—and new—participants using social media.

2. Goals

In 1981, George T. Doran, a former director at the Washington Water Power Company, published a paper called “There’s a SMART Way to Write Management’s Goals and Objectives.” With this paper, Doran introduces SMART goals that help establish the criteria needed to improve the likelihood of success when setting goals. Doran’s SMART goals seem an excellent place to give shape to the Pride North Social Media Strategy.

The goal is to increase awareness of, and attendance at, Pride North through a calendar of social media posts during the 30-day campaign. Pride North wants to:

- improve attendance at Pride North 2024,
- activate attendees with the eye on the 2024 presidential election, while it hopes to,
- improve organic online traffic to the Pride North website and accounts and
- target specific—narrow—user segments that may coalesce into a politically engaged base.

A secondary stretch goal is the increase of voter registration by 50% in anticipation of the upcoming November 2024 election. Over time, Pride North wants its community to consider how the outcome of elections affect the broader LGBTQ+ community, especially intersectional Latin and Black members.

This secondary goal is mainly aspirational for the moment and part of a longer, more ambitious plan that will fall into the sphere of ambitious bi-annual milestones. Although the immediate Pride North strategy will be mindful and informed by the longer-term goal, the main focus of Pride North’s June Pride Month strategy will be on the shorter-term SMART goals that have been identified for the Pride North event.

Pride North's Pride Month SMART goals are, by definition, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-defined. It's SMART goals for this project are:

- Launch and implement a new-content campaign across social platforms over the four weeks leading up to Pride 2024.
- Engage with more prominent and community media, publishing editorial content that will augment the social media feed's output.
- Engage with third-party representatives to ensure further online coverage and increase awareness.

The overall project's goal can be summarized in one slogan, the application of which will be exhaustively adapted and reinterpreted for the creative output of the project.



3. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The success of the strategy will be monitored through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Each of the KPIs will have an attached assigned target metric as well as tracking frequency.

KPI 1 Volume of new users and registration per platform

Looking at new vs existing users on the Pride North social media account will show the proportion of new users. A high volume of new users will indicate that, on social media at, least, Pride North has been underrepresented.

KPI 2 Engagement

Engagement on social media is often reduced to a like. We want more than that. We also want to know the rate of comment, share, direct message, profile visit, link click, website visits, and follow requests.

KPI 3 Clickthrough rate (CTR) or percentage of clicks on links

CTR needs its own KPI. It is a key metric that shows how many times users click a link compared how many times the link was displayed. It will allow Pride North to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the Content Themes undertaken during tyhis campaign thereby measuring the level of engagement with the content. High CTR reveals that the content resonates while low CTR suggests the content be adjusted.

KPI 4 Donation Return on Spend

In this case, adjusted to reflect received donations, it is not a core metric for Pride North as many will choose to pay a donation as part of entry to the event. It is nonetheless a revealing metric to be aware of, given future events that may require further donations.

4. The target audience

Pride North is, by ethos and need, not aligned with rainbow capitalist brands. It does not link to Target or Budweiser. Most of Pride North's online presence is user-generated in the collaborative media sphere while relying to some extent on community publications and ally brands who choose to brand their allegiance to the movement through yearlong and sustained Pride efforts, often also linking Pride being a Chicago-based brand with LGBTQ pride efforts. Pride North also endeavors to align with pink-owned businesses where possible.

1. Social media for this event hinges on four distinct groups.

1.1 LGBTQ+ Prime. Preaching to the choir.

Pride North predominantly consists of gay men, but smaller adjacent events are more lesbian-oriented. This group primarily resides in the Greater Chicago area and is active and interested.

Some who identify as part of the the community reside in collar counties or adjoining states, and regularly attend LGBTQ+ and/or Pride events in Chicago.

Gay men in Chicago are mostly employed, have a high level of education and possess sophisticated cultural awareness.

In recent years, a "gay ghetto" mentality has been replaced by greater diversity across neighborhoods, although specific neighborhoods in the North of the city remain identified by its strong gay identity, especially the neighborhoods of Lakeview (the original Boystown) and Rogers Park, where Pride and Pride North take place.

It is important to note that marginalized groups feel welcomed and safe in these neighborhoods, with specific reference to the trans community as well as Black and Latin communities.

Besides various dating apps such as Tinder, most of this group spend digital time on apps and platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and X, which has a most robust—if highly explicit—adult side. Since Pride North does not have an advertising budget, paid-for advertising on dating apps is impossible. Most social platforms live in mental proximity to dating apps. Scruff and Grindr users regularly comment about their dating app experiences through social media verticals on non-dating platforms. Events are seldom advertised on dating apps but are heavily promoted on social platforms.

Social media consumption is elevated in this group and can be timed by one metric at least to the daily commute, during which the captive audience spends close to an hour between 16:00 and 18:30 on various forms of social media, most notably the Facebook, TikTok, Instagram trinity.

A high level of political and social awareness may present a pain point for the campaign as the group is more challenging to persuade and have preconceived ideas on what Pride events mean. The group may not adequately understand the full ramifications of a political shift.

Highly sophisticated, this group needs content to amuse first and then pose a reflection. Their preferred tone and style would relate to high cultural awareness and cultural references that may be hard for those outside the group to decipher.

1.2 LGBTQ+ Homebodies. The nice to haves.

Within the same catchment area, a large group of older gay men (and women) in committed relationships may be less inclined to attend events such as Pride North but are alert to its existence and the temperature of the political landscape.

The group is spread wide across the city, with many same-sex couples residing in suburban enclaves, collar counties, rural counties, and neighboring states such as Michigan, and Wisconsin. LGBTQ+ homebodies may choose to be physically removed from Pride and Pride North neighborhoods but are not ideologically distinct. They care—and their votes count in their districts.

This group is educated, sophisticated, slightly older, and less racially diverse. Some Latin and Black neighborhoods, however, have significant small pockets of same-sex couples that fit this profile. Lakeview, Uptown, Rogers Park, and Edgewater see a large number of interracial relationships.

LGBTQ+ homebodies consist of a fair number of HIV discordant relationships for whom the Pride North event may be less impactful. Still, legislation around HIV and AIDS medication is still a significant trigger.

This group spends digital time on platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram, but is also responsive to newsletters and SubStacks.

A particular pain point is the lack of inclusion suggested by specific media posts and platforms—and events—with this group often feeling disenfranchised and under-recognized by the more socially progressive groups.

Sophisticated, this group needs content to amuse somewhat and pose a reflection point. Their preferred tone and style would also relate to high cultural awareness and cultural references that may be hard for those outside the group to decipher. This group would be more aware of previous policies and campaigns and, as a group, fear a return to more restricted times.

1.3 Allies. Our neighbors, friends, and family.

Within the area is a group of heterosexual neighbors and allies perhaps less inclined to attend an event such as Pride North but would be alert to its existence and the political landscape and willing to fight for the right of those who identify with Pride to do so.

The group is spread wide across the city, with many in what used to be “Chicago’s gay ghetto” in the North of the city, specifically the Lakeview and Rogers Park neighborhoods where Pride and Pride North take place.

This group is educated, sophisticated, and diverse. Most of Chicago’s Latin and Black neighborhoods have LGBTQ+ alderpersons, and, in 2019, the Chicago unanimously elected Laurie Lightfoot, its first Black Lesbian mayor in record numbers, in every aldermanic district.

The group spends digital time on diverse platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram while responding to newsletters and SubStacks.

The group, for the most part, doesn’t know *how* to be allies. This is an excellent opportunity to help shape content, especially regarding the extended run-up to the general election.

1.4 Peripherals. The greater good

There is a significant number of heterosexual neighbors, friends, and family members who proclaim not to want to harm their LGBTQ+ neighbors, friends, and family while voting for legislation that does exactly that.

Many don’t grasp how their political actions harm the rights of people they profess to love.

These users will not necessarily be reached via TikTok algorithms or even those of Facebook, but some odd Venn intersections may occur.

Some may respond to content on sponsor sites or newsletters.

Pursuing this group is a separate and specialized process beyond this project’s scope.

From a tone and style perspective and cultural reference point, developing and deploying as if this market is watching may be helpful. And judging. This is an additional campaign pain point—the very nature of what the campaign endeavors may further alienate and galvanize.

This awareness may shape the narratives into something accurate, honest, humorous, urgent, and brave.

5. Platform selection

Finding the right platform for the job. But the audience is the deciding factor when selecting the social media platform. Audience outweighs size and even activity. Facebook is by far the biggest and busiest of the platforms, but if the Pride North audience is on TikTok, that will affect the selection. And since the average internet user now claims to have, on average, 6.6 social media accounts, the spread of the selection is key when we determine presence.

Since platforms have personalities, idiosyncrasies, and methods of communication, we need to balance the “What” component of the campaign. X is for conversation and trending opinion. It is also more masculine and reactive. Recently, downright pugilistic. LinkedIn is professional, devoid of fun. Instagram is positive, even toxically so.

The Pride North audience is found primarily on the following platforms. And it’s a good spread that will enable the event and its goals to reach a number of different users.

Platform 1

Name Instagram

Audience As of April 2023, Instagram has 1.628 billion users around the globe, suggesting that over 25% of people over 13 have an Instagram account. In the USA, Meta’s advertising tools indicate Instagram had 143.4 million users in the United States in early 2023. Instagram places fourth on the list of biggest platforms in the world, behind Facebook (also owned by Meta) at number one and YouTube at number two.

- Instagram is especially popular among 18- to 24-year-olds; 71% have an Instagram account.

- Usage drops off for older Americans; 54% in the 25 to 29 age group have an account, while only 40% in the 30-49 age group use Instagram, the figure dropping to 21% for the 50 to 64-year-old group.
- Meta claims that 500 million use Instagram daily.
- More women than men have an account: 39% vs 30%.
- Users are college-educated, affluent, and urban.
- The audience of Instagram is a good fit with the goals of Pride North.

Key Features

Instagram Insights segments reach and impressions, granular insights that indicate the sheer volume of visitors vs the level of repeat viewings, indicating brand affinity. Posting frequency on Instagram is tied to appearing in the Explore feed, showing up on another account, or attaining the top spot in search results for commonly used keywords.

- A persistent problem on the platform is the existence of Finsta accounts, but for Pride North's goals, this is not a hurdle, and one may view it as the most desirable section of the platform on which to end up. Where Instagram thrives on the idea of perfect lives consisting of "instaworthy" moments that give rise to worries about the rise of toxic positivity in our society, Finsta is the exact opposite. See it as the goofy, less edited and filtered cousin of Insta. Finsta accounts may have smaller circulations, but they provide the perfect breeding ground for viral shares based on a concentric spread instead of a more horizontal viral spread.
- Finsta is regulated and accounts are frequently suspended. It is not advisable or even possible to create *for* this group. The goal is to get noticed and shared. It echoes the comment by Marshall Simmons that "what is good for search is good for users and what is good for your users is good for search. It is the first

line of the SEO Bible that we operate from.” Translated to this context, if the content is non-performative and relevant to LGBTQ+ Finsta groups, it will spread and have an effect.

Content Type	<p>The platform offers a choice: Reels, Photo Posts, Carousel Posts, Video Posts, Live Videos, and Stories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will focus on Stories and Photo Posts during the lead-up to the event while encouraging attendees to do Photo Posts, Carousel Posts, and Video Posts. We will do a Live Video on the weekend from the event.
Frequency	<p>In the month leading up to Pride North, we will execute 3-5 mixed media posts per week, including carousels and static posts. Instagram Stories will be used more frequently, up to 2 daily Stories.</p>
Campaign KPIs	<p>We will gauge reach to evaluate how many unique users saw the Instagram posts.</p>
Impressions	<p>Brand awareness will be tracked by impressions, showing how often each post was viewed.</p>
True Engagement	<p>We are most interested in detailed, accurate engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will calculate using this formula: $\text{Engagement Rate} = (\text{Likes} + \text{Comments} + \text{Saves}) / \text{Impressions} \times 100$ • This accurate metric measures high-value Instagram engagement items’ engagement factors in saves. • Follower increase rate: this growth rate indicates more than the number of new users who “follow” the profile, instead revealing the speed by which follower numbers increase or decrease, thereby indicating both the value of specific Instagram posts and campaigns and spikes in followers tied to specific campaign messaging.

Platform 2

Name TikTok

Audience Exceptional market penetration with the LGBTQ+ audience, across age groups and interest levels. The platform has 113.3 million users over 18 in the USA as of 2023; in fact, the USA leads the world in TikTok users, with Indonesia in second place.

- U.S. TikTok users by age: 10-19 at 32.5%, 20-29 at 29.5%, 30-39 at 16.4%, 40-49 at 13.9%, and 50+ at a rate of 7.1%.
- TikTok claims that its base is aging up. 60% of the users fall into the Gen Z bracket, which increasingly affects elections.
- It equates to 74 million potential voters and is a market that has shown itself to be reliably allied to LGBTQ+ causes,

Key Features Questions around the app, data collection, how it tracks users, and how that information is used persist.

- TikTok is collaborative to the extreme.
- Much of the material is user-generated, and purpose-created material often appears staged and disconnected.
- It's ideal for influencers and creating "duets" with existing material that would cross paths with the user group.

TikTok users spend, on average, [95 minutes](#) each day on the platform.

Type of Content Original Short verticals. Influencer short verticals. Duets. Commentary. Also, there is a surprising level of political content and educational items.

Frequency Higher than average.

- How often one posts affects how content is disseminated across the platform (TikTok recommends 1-4 posts daily).

- A schedule that satisfies the TikTok algorithm and Pride North attendees will be attained by keeping a close eye on post performance until we find a frequency that works. The short format helps.
- Recommended weekends from Friday to Sunday, one weekend before and on the weekend of the event.
- This will overlap with user-generated content from the Pride Fest event the weekend before and the Pride North event itself.

Campaign KPIs Reach; Views; Engagement; Virality; Conversions.

Platform 3

Name X

Audience X has a higher male membership (56.4%) than a female membership (43.6%).

- The majority of its users are in the 25-34 years old category.
- The base is educated and high-earning.

Key Features The best-kept secret in the LGBTQ+arsenal is the existence of “gay alt Twitter.”

- This subset is the X version of the robust Finsta community and is mostly less policed.
- This accepting ecosystem means that the community is hyper-sexualized and it is essential to acknowledge gay alt Twitter as a site of idiosyncratic adult themes and fetish.
- It is a feature of the platform that is core to its reputation, but it’s important to remember that “crazy sex” is not the exclusive focus of this group.
- The hidden community is also the site of diverse opinions, discussions, and exchanges and serves as a community notice board when it’s not stuffed with erotic verticals.

Caveat	<p>X, and especially “gay alt X,” is—for now—a support structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is, however, also an excellent example of what Pride North is concerned about going into the 2024 election cycle. • Since its rebrand, the site has become home to significant personal homophobic content—and politicized partisan homophobia—with little moderation. • Within the LGBTQ+ community, rumors persist that “gay alt X” is being surveilled and at risk of closure. This combative cyber standoff between right and left, or conservative and liberal, is wildly representative of the profound real-life social battle many “gay alt X” users face. • Recent X stewardship and its political connections and reach are part of why Pride North wants to alert X users of the nature of the beast they are playing with and remind those users to aggressively register and vote to retain the robust bulwark that is Chicago.
Type of Content	<p>Visual media that encompass a range, including images, videos, GIFs, and infographics or even memes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the nature of the event, the political atmosphere, and the engagement level of the target demographic, some themes to consider may include asking the user questions to gauge engagement. • It may be a generic or even more political question related to the event. • The idea is to get an X conversation started. • Tease posts around events and launches are frequently used. • Important news—or at least relevant to this user—especially stories the users should be aware of.

- X's short-form content rules—limited to 280 characters—suggest storytelling through visual content or memes as the most prominent narrative form.
- X provides functional polling capabilities, and soliciting user feedback is relatively uncomplicated. It also provides a social and political barometer when needed, easier.

Frequency Post 2-3 times per day on X for the three weeks running up to the Pride weekend, with most bursts in the morning between 9 am and 2 pm with slightly fewer bursts from Friday to Monday. The misconception is that any time is a good time to post on X—Sundays, frankly, underperform.

- The platform is news-centric, and Tweets have a short lifespan, meaning that more posts are required vs other apps.
- It is unlikely that Pride North will be a power user and post in excess of 50 times per day, but by sticking to a schedule of 2 to 3.
- A rule of thirds approach to X is ideal where $\frac{1}{3}$ of tweets will promote Pride North the event itself, $\frac{1}{3}$ will be posts around personal stories, and $\frac{1}{3}$ will provide informative insights from experts around the importance of community engagement in the run-up to the election.

Campaign KPIs

- Number of followers over the month
- Number of mentions; Retweets; Likes
- Engagement rate & reach
- Link clicks
- Impressions
- Click Through Rate (CTR)¹

¹ Calculated as link clicks divided by impressions

Platform 4

Name	Facebook
Audience	Since Pride North does not have a budget that would allow the large-scale use of Facebook Audiences or paid-for services from Meta. Due to the platform’s high visibility, Pride North has a robust Facebook page connected to a small but activated community, and this platform primarily serves the preaching-to-the-choir metric.
Key Features	<p>Heavily balkanized, LGBTQ+ content is highly moderated and subject to scrutiny and user complaints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook is a familiar ecosystem for LGBTQ+ members as the “hidden from view” nature of the groups feels familiar to many in the LGBTQ+ community, resembling a “don’t tell” or closeted experience. • Facebook is constantly updated, keeping up with trends and technology—Facebook was among the first social platforms to introduce live streaming and stories. • The interface is user-friendly and intuitive, meaning anyone can conveniently navigate the platform. • Most users share user-generated posts and content while messaging, although not entirely as collaborative as TikTok. • Facebook offers the Pride North complaint with share and collaboration potential while seamlessly allowing more formal long-form articles to be shared.
Purpose	The plan is to leverage Meta’s—and Facebook’s—enormous user base and its content capabilities to build awareness around the event, generate leads, and increase attendance and voter registration as Pride North is wont to do.

Type of Content	<p>Content will be shared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users will be encouraged to share with their connections. • Hyperlinked news stories will be submitted to three online community newsletters, each with a significant Facebook presence. • Instagram will be configured so that posts will automatically show up on the corresponding Facebook page.
Frequency	<p>It is recommended to post 1-2 times per day on Facebook. Facebook has been significantly affected by a drop in organic reach, and the numbers are not expected to improve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook’s Help Center <u>breaks organic reach down</u> into Viral and Nonviral, so it is recommended that longer articles be shared to and from linked or affiliated groups besides content developed specifically for the Pride North Facebook group. • Facebook presents a particular level of needed awareness. Its users are not keen to be bombarded with multiple posts, overwhelming their feeds without them complaining about the Facebook algorithms. • It presents a somewhat textured frequency curveball, as TikTok, for example, is highly prized for its algorithm and is more tolerant of multiple posts appearing in the feed. • Posting should be daily, as sporadic schedules on the platform tend not to get noticed.
Campaign KPIs	<p>Number of new users</p> <p>Impressions</p>

Demographics of new users, using Facebook Insights²

Engagement, as the calculation, gives an overall view of the strategy

Page Actions in terms of likes and shares

Reach according to each Post Type

Post-event activity and response

² Since Pride North has a Facebook Business account, Insights will show us how users connect and use the platforms allowing us to adjust tone and frequency of content.

6. Content strategy

The **Content Strategy** is divided into three sections, and, for this project is defined as an ongoing process of creation, completion, and management of applicable, functional, and persuasive content based on a distinct topic or cluster of subjects, as explained by Kristina Halvorson³. Content strategy aligns various forms of content, ensuring that total output amounts to a sustained and satisfying outcome.

1. A **Content Plan** will focus on the distinct themes we choose to present as part of the Social Media Engagement Strategy. It considers what type of media to deploy and where to do so as well as how the content will engage with the audience.
2. A **Live Event Coverage Plan** considers how updates on the days of the event will be posted as well as a suggested timeline for this coverage.
3. **Engagement Tactics**, specifically for this campaign, has had to be adjusted. Due to its nature and the precarious tone of the political ecosystem as we head into a contentious election cycle, events such as Pride North has been thrust into a mode of alertness and quick response. Pride North is aware of the risks and have accepted the challenge. Management of engagement has been adjusted accordingly.

Audit.

As part of the exploratory phase of the project, prior to considering a plan or strategy, a general audit was performed, the findings informing and shaping the strategy presented here.

³ Kristina Halvorson *Content Strategy for the Web* ([second edition](#), 2012)

Evaluation of available, current, and past content.

- Some knowledge base of quantity and quality of materials had to be established. It informs the 2024 campaign of previous campaigns and output, highlighting past pain points, preventing this campaign from hitting its head on the same wall, expecting a different outcome.

Studying the metrics revealed...

- Past advertising had delivered on its goals.
- Attendance in previous cycles has been brisk, primarily due to word of mouth.
- The “Pride March” in Boystown is pervasive with much of Pride North’s growth due to a general voiced dislike of the traditional Pride March.
- No original content had been created on social media platforms.
- Editorial had been procured.
- Limited usable material exists, but it does reveal opportunities.
- Few if any negative triggers, and little in the way of undue risks having been taken.
- The event is loved, admired, and poised for massive growth.
- Pride North sparks much comment on other community and social pages, indicating a void in the customer journey and user comment is a primary source of promotion.
- There is a thread in the comment that the event “could be so much more.”
- Based on existing material the event has to engage cautiously and in an organic way.
- The key, based on the audit, lies in a “low maintenance” and neighborly tone.
- Pride North is repeatedly referred to as "Chicago’s biggest block party.”

The findings from the audit are most useful as they provide a sense of what it is that the community wants from a Pride event while expressing aspects that are less desirable.

Keyword research

Searching “Pride” for keywords proved frustrating, with questions on the colors of the Pride Flag and its meaning dominating with little in the way of Pride events or the meaning of Pride as a month.

There were some indications that “Pride doesn’t matter anymore,” opening up the possibility that the need for Pride has to be restated and heavily promoted.

A frequent search is “What does pride mean?” And “why pride matters.” The last is a slightly different tone and inflection to the previous search term.

Some top searches on “Pride” are:

Pride Month

Pride Flag

Pride Parade

Pride Parade 2023

Pride Month 2024

Searching “Pride North” for keywords showed little results except adding “Chicago,” indicating that the name may want to incorporate that. “Northern Pride” is confusing, indicating that most find “Pride North” lacking.

Pride North Chicago 2023

Pride North Carolina

Pride North Face

Pride North Bay

Pride North East

Pride North Wales

7. Content plan

The Content Plan focuses on distinct themes we choose to present as part of the Social Media Engagement Strategy. It considers what type of media to deploy and where to do so as well as how the content will engage with the audience.

The Pride North Content Plan will focus on three distinct themes each with unique iterations.

Themes 1A to 1 C cover Collaborative Media, with Theme A being about simple broad reminder—a save the date if you will—without too much visual disturbance. Theme 1 B and 1C will take the shape of longer verticals, with video each theme with a different tone and depth of engagement.

Theme 2 is newsletter and blog focused supported by shares and likes from the Threads and Facebook platforms.

Theme 3 relies heavily on on user generated content (UGC). Pride North is running a promotion during the month on June, encouraging neighbors, friends and followers to to post their own content to the Pride North accounts the various platforms. A customized QR code for the Pride North TikTok feed will be printed to increase participation. UGC includes polls selectively placed on certain platforms as well as the hashtags developed for the event.

A note on Meta in the content strategy:

- Facebook supports content between Instagram and Threads, meaning that creative is visible across multiple platforms without customizing content per platform.
- Facebook allows Pride North to piggyback on the feeds of sponsors, affiliations, and media newsletter outlets by sharing the Pride North content produced for those sites back to the Pride North Facebook Group.

- This translates to a comprehensive and somewhat exhaustive campaign harnessing the Meta group and the Meta account of allies and members.

THE THEMES OF THE PRIDE NORTH '24 SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Theme 1 A

Description	Carousels highlighting the dates and location of the event.
Target Group	LGBTQ+ Prime
Objectives	Save the date and take note of the location
Platforms	META (Instagram, Facebook, Threads) and TikTok
Content type	Carousels featuring images and text with hashtags.
Call to Action	Attend the event.

Theme 1 B

Description	Longer verticals highlighting a Pride theme with gentle reminders that the event coin with an upcoming election cycle.
Target Group	LGBTQ+ Prime, LGBTQ+ Homebodies, Allies, Peripherals.
Objectives	Engagement and awareness of the precarious political position we are in. To be single-issue voters during this campaign as right-wing rhetoric certainly is a single issue in its hate for the LGBTQ+ community.
Platforms	META (Instagram, Facebook, Threads) and TikTok
Content type	Stories, made up of video and text with hashtags.
Call to Action	Register and vote

Theme 1 C

Description	Longer deep-dive verticals made by Pride North highlight the need for political engagement over the upcoming election cycle, using personal testimonials on why Pride and voting matter.
Target Group	LGBTQ+ Prime, LGBTQ+ Homebodies, Allies, Peripherals.
Objectives	Engagement and education. Empathic responses to the need for an activated base.
Platforms	META (Instagram, Facebook, Threads) and TikTok
Content type	Stories, made up of video and text with hashtags.
Call to Action	Be an activist and vote. Participate in the process.

Theme 2

Description	Articles and opinion pieces in media that align with the values of those who are not in the LGBTQ+ group per se but who sometimes do not grasp how their vote abstentions or “conscience” harms outcomes for the communities they purport to support. Target Group Peripherals but with full awareness that all groups will benefit from this information.
Objectives	To think outside silos and of the needs of more single-issue voters. Empathic responses to the need for an allied base.
Platforms	Newsletters with Threads and Facebook shares
Content-type	Articles and editorial
Call to Action	Activate and vote. Think of the needs of those whom you share the community with.

Theme 3

This is a non-theme, in reality.

User-generated content is, however, proof of life.

User-generated content (UGC) is original, brand-focused content made by customers, and published on social platforms.

UGC may include pictures, videos, comments, testimonials, or duets on TikTok.

The immediate community (LGBTQ+ Prime) is a premier source of UGC content and may be overtly asked for it or as a reaction to visible content online.

Most UGCs may be viewed as loyalists, fans, or advocates.

UGC content will humanize Pride North since it is a vague entity—a name without a face—now associated with engaged community members.

UGC will reduce Pride North's workload since audience-generated verticals or duets require minimal editing since the content and authenticity, as opposed to video quality or conceptual purity, are valuable.

8. Live coverage plan

The **Pride North Live Event Coverage Plan** considers how updates on the days of the event will be posted as well as a suggested timeline for this coverage.

Since Pride North is a two day live event, it offers an opportunity to elevate awareness and engage the audience.

Live Event goals for Pride North

- Engage Pride North's audience through an event hashtag and QR code
- Start and continue interaction between the wider audience and Pride North
- Provide a platform for questions around Pride North's initiatives and events
- To elevate Pride North's social profile in the wider community
- To continue discussion around Pride North's clear call to action: to declare that we are VOTERS in the run-up to the election.



Real-time content will capture moments.

X is earmarked as well as TikTok. Instagram Stories is equally useful for sharing experiences.

- Scheduled posts on platforms during the event will promote what's coming next in terms of entertainment.
- Pride North will preemptively consider speeches by invited speakers to prep visuals that support and announce in-the-moment events.
- We anticipate local celebrity and influencer posts.
- Pride North will conduct regular livestreams providing a perspective from the event in real time.

Post event

- Pride North will utilize Twitter Moments as well as Facebook and TikTok to further develop community experience.
- Attendees will be encouraged to post their favorite experiences at the event.
- A newsletter is recommended as mechanism to continue and evolve political aspects as the election cycle kicks into gear.
- Continuing the social media conversation will exponentially boost the goal to take a more proactive role in the post-event, pre-election phase of 2024

9. Engagement tactics

How we engage, specifically for this campaign, has had to be adjusted. Due to its nature and the precarious tone of the political ecosystem as we head into a contentious election cycle, events such as Pride North has been thrust into a mode of alertness and quick response. Pride North is aware of the risks and have accepted the challenge. Management of engagement has been adjusted accordingly.

Dealing with Hate.

Alongside the target audience is an unavoidable segment that chooses to hate.

A strategy needs to be put in place on how to deal with negative comments and vitriol.

This is not a desirable group whom Pride North is selecting or communicating with voluntarily.

But it's a group that needs to be negotiated. An actionable plan must be implemented to deal with possible reactions or fallout. A "procedure of engagement" strategy, if you will.

There are two possible strategies to deploy in case of anti-LGBTQ+ or hate comments during any of the planned campaigns.

Content Engagement

2.1 Hide the Hate

The first option is to hide homophobic comments on platforms, specifically on Pride North, during the event and election cycles. This is a strategy that aims to secure an online safe space for LGBTQ+ members of the community by deliberately suppressing the proliferation of hate speech.

2.2 Show (some) but Tell (the others)

The second option is to leave selected semi-inflammatory comments visible and to respond in an informative way. In response, Pride North emphasizes a commitment to diversity and inclusivity while it informs people about LGBTQ+ issues. But, choosing to hide specific comments (even after replying), Pride North reserves the right to provide a platform free from homophobia.

This strategy means that Pride North can confront legitimate concerns or misunderstandings while refusing to spread malicious content.

User Engagement

Pride North, as a brand invested in education and accuracy of information as we head into an election, would be well served by a Show But Tell strategy. There are those LGBTQ+ journalists such as Dan Savage who, I am sure, would show all negative comments while relentlessly waging war on bigotry and lies. It's an approach noted by the LGBTQ community themselves and highly prized. This approach is labor-intensive and costly. Auto-hiding is more cost-effective, and comment moderation may have to be selectively applied.

Pride North will establish clear boundaries and enforce those when needed.

Mild criticism and opinion may be siphoned off to educational counter comments, but escalated and homophobic statements have to be hidden as these types of comments may inflict emotional damage on the very group Pride North is trying to recruit for the election.

Pride North encourages content sharing, and it supports positive content engagement. It is, however, aware that the safety and emotional well-being of its community and event attendees are paramount. User-generated content (UGC), specifically on platforms such as TikTok, will be evaluated and monitored for any level of intimidation or threats of violence along predetermined

criteria for such content. To be clear, UGC content is not part of the plan or strategy, and as such, when it ceases to function positively and constructively, it has to be rejected or, at least, moderated.

UGC tactics encouraged for Pride North include collaborations, articles, newsletter inclusions, and viewing Facebook as the site for information and opinion in addition to its Events page.

Pride Month Hashtags

Pride North will use social media posts to reach its intended audiences and use various iterations of Pride hashtags. Social users search hashtags to find content related to their interests.

- #PrideNorth
- #Election2024
- #PrideChicago
- #U=U
- #Pride2024
- #lgbtq
- #loveislove
- #gaypride
- #lovewins

10. Content ideation

10.1 Customized Social Media Profile Labels and Tags

- Available to add to all social media accounts and downloadable for personal use.
- IRL stickers available when arriving at the event.



10.2 NEWSLETTERS

— Press Release Article supplied to local news sites and subscription newsletter sites

Pride North eyes LGBTQ+ issues as 2024 election looms

For the queer community and our allies, the 2024 presidential election is perhaps the most crucial election of our lives. It is a challenge taken up with much energy by Roger Park's Pride North event at its annual Morse Street neighborhood block party over Pride Weekend.

"We're a community that has come together, and we are more unified than ever," Bob Eagar of Pride North said. "We know that anti-LGBTQ+ bills in Iowa or Florida impact LGBTQ folks everywhere, not just the few who live in Iowa or Florida. An attack against a small LGBTQ+ community impacts the bigger community."

The Trump administration rescinded many critical protections for transgender Americans, appointed three new anti-equality justices to the US Supreme Court, prevented transgender troops from openly serving in the military, and habitually pushed policies that have since opened the door to significant LGBTQ discrimination in various aspects of life including [public accommodations](#), [healthcare](#), and [housing](#), under the coded guise of "[religious liberty](#)."

The 2024 presidential election will determine whether a possible second Trump administration's attacks on LGBTQ rights will be allowed to resume – or whether we will continue the task of restoring our democracy, as have done under the leadership of President Biden. And, while the stakes could not possibly be higher, for LGBTQ folk in particular, this is also an exceptional moment to engage with the broader community and engender foundational change.

Over several election cycles, the LGBTQ community and our allies have asserted more political power, gained several positions of authority, and dramatically shifted our political landscape.

And the numbers bear this out: [11 million LGBTQ voters](#) nationwide will play a decisive role in the 2024 elections, from local to presidential. Added to this, [57 million "Equality Voters,"](#) allies who actively prioritize LGBTQ-aligned policies, have been identified by the Human Rights Campaign.

A specific moment of covers arrived for LGBTQ voters when [news broke](#) that the Supreme Court of the United States, by a 6-to-3 vote, sided with Colorado web designer Lorie Smith, who opposed same-sex marriage and challenged Colorado public accommodations law, by asserting the state was unconstitutionally compelling her to serve everyone equally.

In his [opinion](#), Justice Gorsuch felt that since possible potential clients may ask Smith—she had not designed a website, let alone an LGBTQ+ one, at the time of her [filing the case](#) in 2016—to contribute to their wedding creatively, she could expect to be constitutionally shielded from such participation. This was, however, familiar terrain. It felt like a repeat of the Colorado [wedding cake case](#), which, in turn, felt like when Red-state governors dragged their heels legalizing marriage equality in 2015, which felt like, well, an entire history of queer second-class status.

“American democracy is in peril,” Eagar says. “The Supreme Court is blatantly showing itself more sympathetic to ultra conservative causes. And Donald Trump, the leading Republican cross bearer, has, at last count, been indicted three times for, amongst other charges, orchestrating an insurrection using collaborative media and conspiracy-based online platforms.”

The Republican party has shown that issues affecting trans people and the greater LGBTQ+ community will be weaponized leading up to the November election.

This blatant prejudice was abundant as the field of Republican presidential candidates grappled for the party nomination. Donald Trump and his erstwhile vice president, Mike Pence, took turns hitting out at trans youth and gender-affirming healthcare. At the same time, Ron DeSantis raged relentlessly against what he saw as the threat of “wokeness” in the US, ably supported by figures such as Elon Musk, who railed against the “woke mind virus,” whatever that meant.

During early 2023, [over 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills](#) were introduced in statehouses across the USA, most aimed at trans and non-binary people. Over the same period, The Trevor Project [2023 US National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People](#) revealed queer youth reported deteriorating mental health due to surging anti-LGBTQ+ efforts.

“So this is a bit of a silver lining—that our community is actually coming together. It’s also crucial as quality elected officials, especially LGBTQ+ ones, can actively change the conversation. Pride North is all about the fun. But we are reminding folk that come the end of the year, we need to also be engaged citizens.”

“When there are multiple queer voices, this power “just gets strengthened so much more,” he adds.

“Pride 2024 is a moment to reflect on how, more than fifty years ago, a brick was hurled at Stonewall in New York and since, a modern and activated LGBTQ-rights movement was born. But, as the Trump presidency had shown, wider and more visible support for LGBTQ+ equality does not protect it from administrations that wants to marginalize us back into the closet.”

10.3 SUBSCRIPTION NEWSLETTER

— Image and article supplied to Block Club Chicago

The screenshot shows the Block Club Chicago website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the site name 'Block Club Chicago', a 'Login' link, and a 'SUBSCRIBE' button. Below this is a secondary navigation menu with categories like 'NEIGHBORHOODS', 'CITYWIDE', 'LATEST STORIES', 'ON THE BLOCK', 'THE BALLOT', 'SHOP', 'NEWSLETTERS', 'SEND NEWS TIPS', and 'DONATE'. A 'TOPICS' section lists 'Arts & Culture', 'Openings & Closings', 'Proud City: LGBTQ+ News', 'Restaurants & Bars', 'Sports & Outdoors', and 'Business'. An 'ADVERTISEMENT' placeholder is visible below the navigation. The main content area features a large 'PROUD CITY Block Club Chicago' banner with colorful illustrations of diverse people. Below the banner is a section for 'Most Recent Stories • LGBTQ+ Resources In Chicago • Block Club at Pride Jam'. The 'LATEST NEWS' section contains three articles: 'At Wrightwood 659 Gallery, Artists Explore What It Means To Live In Digital World' by Jake Wittich, 'At This Weekend's Trans Media Fashion Show, Nonbinary Joy And Style Collide On The Runway' by Aviva Bechky, and 'Constant Homophobic Harassment May Force Edgewater Shop To Move, Owner Says' by Kayleigh Padar. A large image of a Pride parade with a sign that reads 'LOVE IS A HUMAN RIGHT' is positioned between the second and third news items.

Pride North eyes LGBTQ+ issues as 2024 election looms

10.3 SUBSCRIPTION NEWSLETTER

— Image and article supplied to City Cast Chicago

The screenshot shows the City Cast Chicago website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with a 'Menu' button, the 'CITY CAST Chicago' logo, a search icon, and a 'Subscribe' button. Below the navigation bar is a horizontal menu with categories like 'Chicago's Best', 'Chicago Life Hacks', 'Chicago, Explained', 'Neighborhood Guides', 'Food & Drink', 'Urban Almanac', 'Local Civics', 'Chicago History', and '3 Questions With'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Listen To Our Podcast:** A section featuring a podcast player for 'ShotSpotter's Future, Renaming Chi Birds, and Thanks...'. It includes a play button, a progress bar, and options to share, subscribe, and view the description. Below the player is a 'PLAYLIST' section with 10 of 674 episodes, including 'ShotSpotter's Future, Renaming Chi Birds, and Thanksgiving Meal Deals' (23 min), 'Chicago's Indigenous History You Probably Didn't Learn in School' (18 min), and 'City Council Drama, Friendsgiving Tips, and Is New Cubs Manager Worth It?' (32 min). There are also icons for listening on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, and an RSS Feed.
- HEY Chicago Newsletter Sign-up:** A section titled 'YOUR DAILY GUIDE' with the 'HEY Chicago' logo and 'BY CITY CAST'. It includes a short description: 'Want to know what's happening in Chicago? Sign up for our free newsletter, Hey Chicago. Packed with local news, curated event recs, local life hacks, and more, it's your daily toolkit for getting the most out of the city you love.' Below this is an email input field and a 'Subscribe' button.
- Article Grid:** A grid of article thumbnails with titles, category tags, and dates:
 - 3 Questions With:** '3 Questions About Creative Reuse in Chicago' (NOVEMBER 14). The thumbnail shows a person in a library or bookstore. The text below reads: 'Ahead of America Recycles Day Wednesday, Hey Chicago talked to Barbara Koenen, the executive director of the Chicago Creative Reuse & Exchan...'
 - Chicago, Explained:** 'How Do You Define Chicago Neighborhoods?' (NOVEMBER 13).
 - Local Civics:** 'What Does Censuring a Chicago Alder Even Do?' (NOVEMBER 9).
 - Food & Drink:** 'Chicago's Best Thanksgiving Specials for Every Occasion' (NOVEMBER 9).
 - Neighborhood Guides:** 'Get to Know Norwood Park' (NOVEMBER 8).
 - Chicago's Best:** 'How to Have a Cozy Chicago Fall' (NOVEMBER 7).
 - Chicago, Explained:** 'How Ed Burke Rose to — and Fell From — Power in Chicago' (NOVEMBER 6).
 - Urban Almanac:** 'Is Floral Fashion Show Hottest Ticket in Chicago?' (NOVEMBER 2).
 - Neighborhood Guides:** 'Get to Know Andersonville' (NOVEMBER 1). The thumbnail includes a rainbow flag icon.

Pride North eyes LGBTQ+ issues as 2024 election looms

10.3 SUBSCRIPTION NEWSLETTER

— Image and article supplied to Windy City Times, a prominent LGBTQ+ site and newsletter

WINDY CITY TIMES
THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BI, TRANS AND QUEER COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

Home, Search, Social Media icons

Search News

ABOUT WCMG PUBLICATIONS NEWS ENTERTAINMENT FEATURES DONATE BARS & CLUBS CALENDAR ARCHIVES MARRIAGE

THE PROM NOV 10 - 19
Tickets & Info At: WIRTZ.NORTHWESTERN.EDU

THE PROM NOV 10 - 19
Tickets & Info At: WIRTZ.NORTHWESTERN.EDU

DOWNLOAD ISSUE

BREAKING NEWS

- UPDATE: Ramirez-Rosa apologizes, steps down from roles on Chicago City Council
- George Santos survives U.S. House expulsion vote
- Jamaica court upholds sodomy law; activist ends fight in that country
- Berlin Nightclub workers urge customers to boycott as they fight for fair contract
- Suspect arrested in gay Philadelphia journalist's death
- UPDATE: Illinois school district approves LGBTQ+ musical 'The Prom'
- Community marks 10th anniversary of marriage-equality march
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois faces LGBTQ+ fertility lawsuit
- UPDATE: Suspect arrested for arson at San Diego queer women's bar

Pride North eyes LGBTQ+ issues as election looms

EMPOWERING LOCAL TECH SUPPORT
ChristopherMich.com

CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP FOR THE WINDY CITY TIMES E-BLAST

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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Mavor Johnson names new CPDH commis-

SUBARU 4.9%
2024 Subaru Crosstrek

GH
Gerber / Hart LGBTQ+ Library & Archives

10.4 SINGLE IMAGE POSTS

— Instagram



Instagram interface showing a post from 'PRIDE NORTH '24 I VOTE!' featuring a person holding a sign that reads "IF GOD HATES GAYS WHY ARE WE SO HOT". The sign has "GAYS" in rainbow letters and "HOT" in red. The post has 849 likes and a caption: "TRUTH! #election'24 #pridenorth'24...more".



Instagram interface showing a post from 'PRIDE NORTH '24 I VOTE!' featuring a group of people at a parade, including Gove Pritzker. The post has 1,245 likes and a caption: "Gove Pritzker in the Parade and speaking at noon today—the crowd is amped! #election'24 #pridenorth'24...more".

Instagram

PRIDE NORTH '24
I VOTE!



404 likes
SUNDAY VIBES—EVEN BETTER—GET HERE #election'24 #pridenorth'24...more
View all 9,294 comments
July 30

Instagram

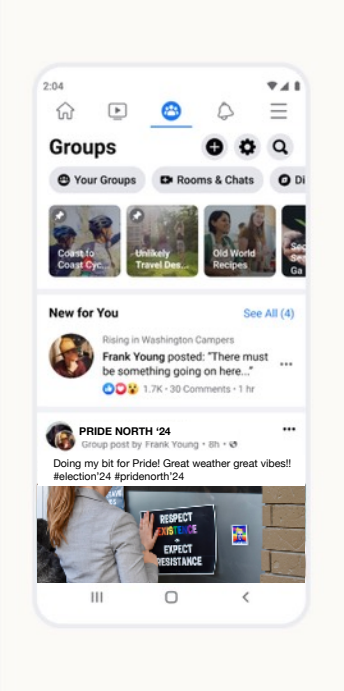
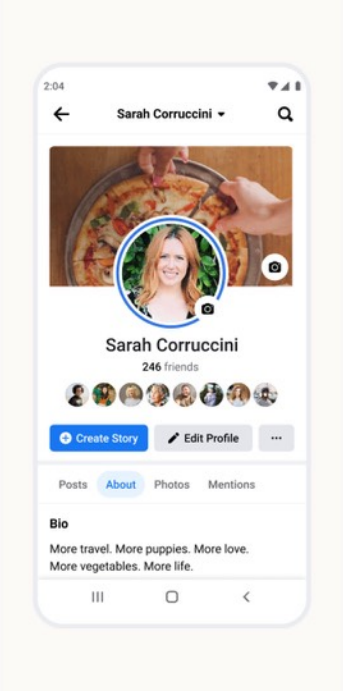
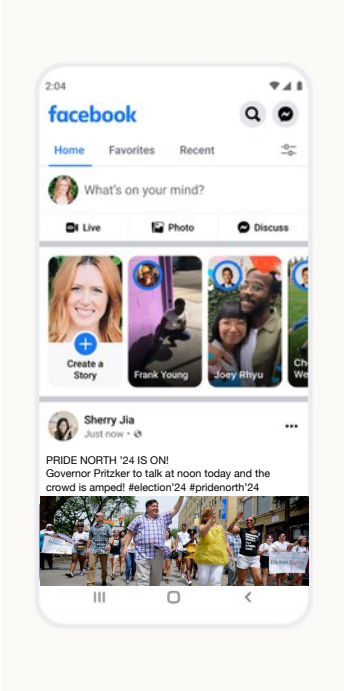
PRIDE NORTH '24
I VOTE!



849 likes
OMG the heat. Get here Chicago PRIDE!! #election'24 #pridenorth'24...more
View all 9,294 comments
July 30

10.4 SINGLE IMAGE POSTS

— Facebook



10.5 TIKTOK VIDEO VERTICALS

[Pride North '24](#) TikTok channel is live with mock-up samples..

