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Bloomberg fills airwaves with his ads

Mogul piling up a $2.5M-a-week tab

By JOEL SIEGEL
DAILY NEWS SENIOR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Mayoral hopeful Michael Bloomberg is trying to transform every channel into the Bloomberg Channel.

The media mogul-turned-candidate has increased his spending on TV and radio advertising to at least $2.5 million a week, advertising executives told the Daily News.

The pre-Election Day ad blitz puts the Republican on a pace to burn through nearly $40 million of his own money by the time his campaign ends.

No candidate for any office has ever spent so much on commercials on a weekly basis in the New York market — not even Jon Corzine, who shelled out $60 million last year in winning a Senate seat from New Jersey.

"He's buying up everything, everything that's available," marveled a TV executive at a local station who processes Bloomberg's ad buys. "It seems to me like a very high budget. This man wants this job bad."

By contrast, Bloomberg's Democratic rival, Public Advocate Mark Green, did relatively little TV advertising in the days after finishing first in the Oct. 11 Democratic runoff for mayor.

Green plans to dramatically increase his ad buys as the Nov. 6 election draws closer, to approximately $1.2 million next week.

Bloomberg spokesman Ed Skyler declined to comment, saying it was campaign policy not to discuss advertising budgets or strategy.

Making a name for himself

TV and radio advertising has always loomed as the linchpin of Bloomberg's candidacy. The mogul was unknown to most voters before he launched his candidacy in early June, and his strategists always considered advertising the chief vehicle to create and shape his image.

Bloomberg's need to advertise now appears to be even greater than he had anticipated.

For one thing, Bloomberg must make up for lost time, after imposing a two-week moratorium on advertising following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

In addition, it's believed to be even harder to grab voters' attention these days, given the distractions posed by the anthrax scare and the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

On WNBC-TV, for example, the Bloomberg campaign shelled out $558,900 on advertising in the week that ended last Monday, station records show.

For this week, which ends tomorrow, the campaign boosted its ad buy on WNBC to $691,400, and arranged to show its commercials 151 times. By contrast, the Green campaign is spending only $16,900 this week on WNBC, to show its commercials a total of just four times.

On WABC-TV, the Bloomberg campaign is spending $295,000 this week, compared with $75,000 in spending by the Green campaign, station records show.

'Anyone with a pulse'

A similar disparity exists on WCBS-TV. Bloomberg is dropping $422,140 in advertising on the station for the week that ends tomorrow, compared with $36,000 in spending by the Green campaign, records show.

TV ad executives said Bloomberg is buying up so much air time, *he is not tailoring his* purchases to target particular audiences. Politicians on a limited budget often target specific kinds of shows, such as news programming.

"It's beyond looking for a specific audience," said the TV executive who processes Bloomberg's buys. "He buys sports programming, prime time, game shows. He's trying to find anyone with a pulse who will go out and vote."

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