

INTRODUCTION

The timeless principles that America was founded on are under near-constant attack from the media, special interest groups, and politicians.

The target of these attacks are moderate Coloradans. Not associated with either party, they are up for grabs in every election and policy battle. They have deeply held values – such as fairness, equality, compassion, and freedom – that shape their views of candidates and issues.

Can we shape their opinions, and better connect America's timeless principles to their values? Yes, but it requires us to think different.

As we demonstrate here, these Coloradans in the middle hold center-right views. But like all of us, they make emotional decisions.

In "Moving the Middle" you will discover how to better connect with moderates, get to know the demographic groups that represent many moderates, and leverage the communications channels best able to connect with these Coloradans.

LOOKING BACK...

THE LESSONS OF 2012

Why is it so important to move the middle anyway? Let's take a look back at the 2012 election. As Colorado voters left the ballot box on election day in 2012, they told pollsters the following:

54% wanted to repeal Obamacare

60% said government is doing too much

77% said the economy was "poor" or "not so good"

LOOKING BACK... THE LESSONS OF 2012

In spite of their views on the issues, Coloradans kept Barack Obama in the White House, handing him a **51% to 47% victory** over Mitt Romney.

Clearly, something happened. Voters who thought Obamacare was a failure, government was too big and the economy was in the tank re-elected the very man whose policies and ideology they opposed.

What happened?



LOOKING BACK... THE LESSONS OF 2016

Fast forward to 2016, and amid all the noise, exit polls find:

70% are dissatisfied or angry with government

**56% said the economy was "poor" or
"not so good"**

Specifically among moderate swing voters, in a post-election survey:

**62% believe the federal government's role in
people's lives "has gotten out of control"
and needs to be reduced.**

LOOKING BACK... THE LESSONS OF 2016

If the nation went the way of the Centennial state, we would have seen a very different inauguration in January.

Once again, Coloradans backed a candidate who did not share their values or concerns, going with Hillary Clinton **48% to 43%** over Donald Trump.

We are left with questions about why voters seem to have one set of views, but choose candidates with different views.



LOOKING AHEAD...

COLORADO LIKELY VOTERS

1,128,293	334,583	1,336,771
CONSERVATIVE	MIDDLE	LIBERAL

The picture isn't much better looking ahead. If every likely conservative-leaning voter in Colorado shows up and votes for the conservative-leaning candidate, and every liberal-leaning voter shows up and votes for the liberal-leaning candidate, conservatives will lose by over 200,000 votes.

For a conservative to win statewide in Colorado, they must carry **82 percent** of the small group of true middle swing voters in order to win.

That's the importance of Moving the Middle.

**SO WHO
ARE THESE
MODERATE
VOTERS?**

**AND HOW
DO WE
CONNECT
WITH THEM?**



A MESSAGE FROM THE MIDDLE



**In our research at Principles That Matter,
we have discovered a message from the Middle.**

That message tells us two things:

#1: MODERATES BELIEVE IN THE PRINCIPLES

Our research shows that while they don't always know how to express them, Colorado moderates do hold a principled view of the world.

Ideas like limited government, personal freedom and the free market are still a core part of their worldview.

These are not active Republicans. In fact, most never vote in primaries. But America's core principles still ring true with them, even if only abstractly.



#2: MODERATES MAKE EMOTIONAL DECISIONS

While the Middle believes in the principles at a high level, they make decisions on an emotional level.

This Cadillac ad sums it up perfectly. No one buys a Cadillac because they need one. They buy a Cadillac because they emotionally want one.

The Middle does the same thing when they make political decisions.



THE GAP BETWEEN PRINCIPLE & EMOTION

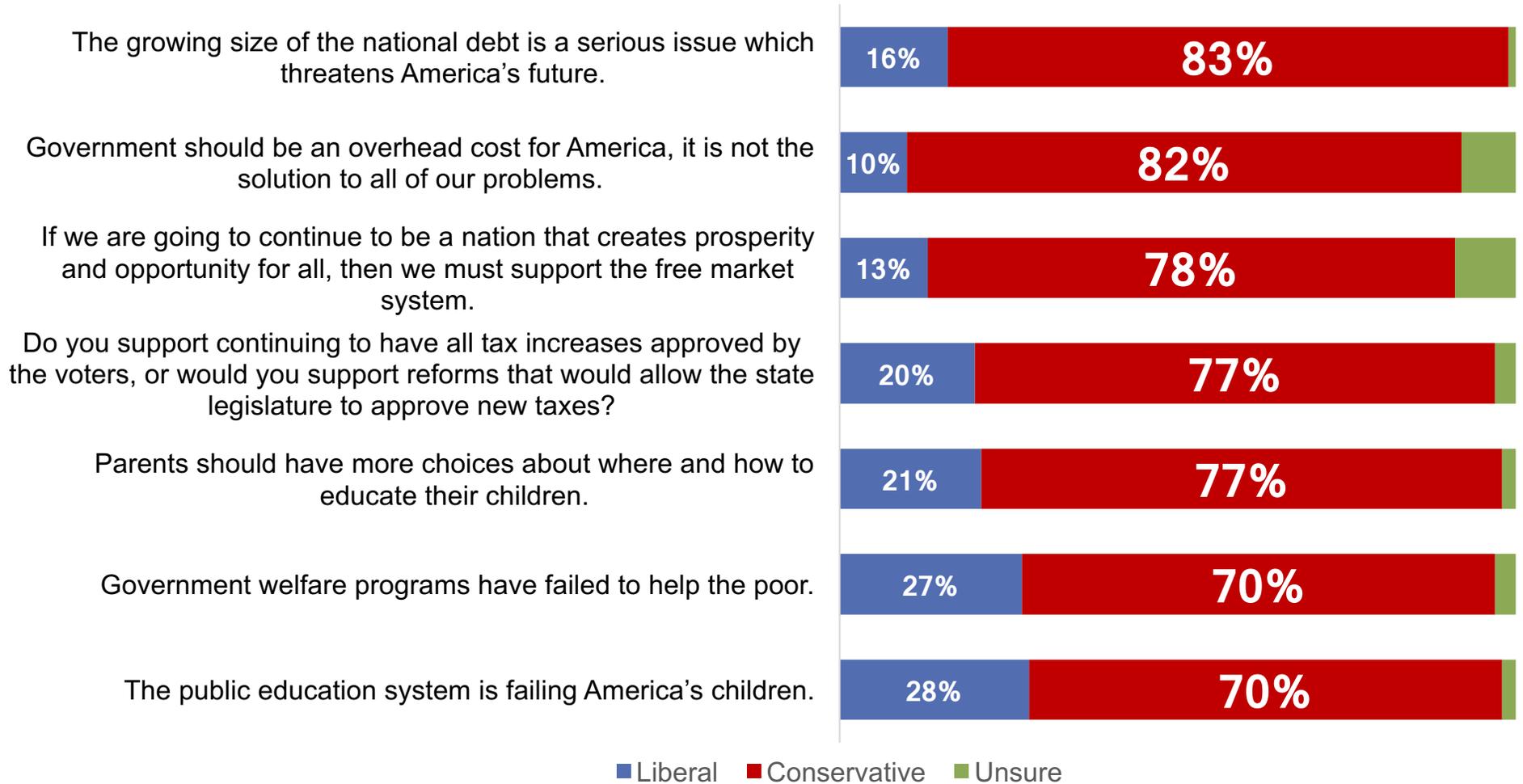
The separation in how the Middle perceives their principles and makes decisions leaves a gap that we must understand if we are going to Move the Middle.

The challenge is not to change our principles, but to change how we emotionally relate those principles to the Middle.



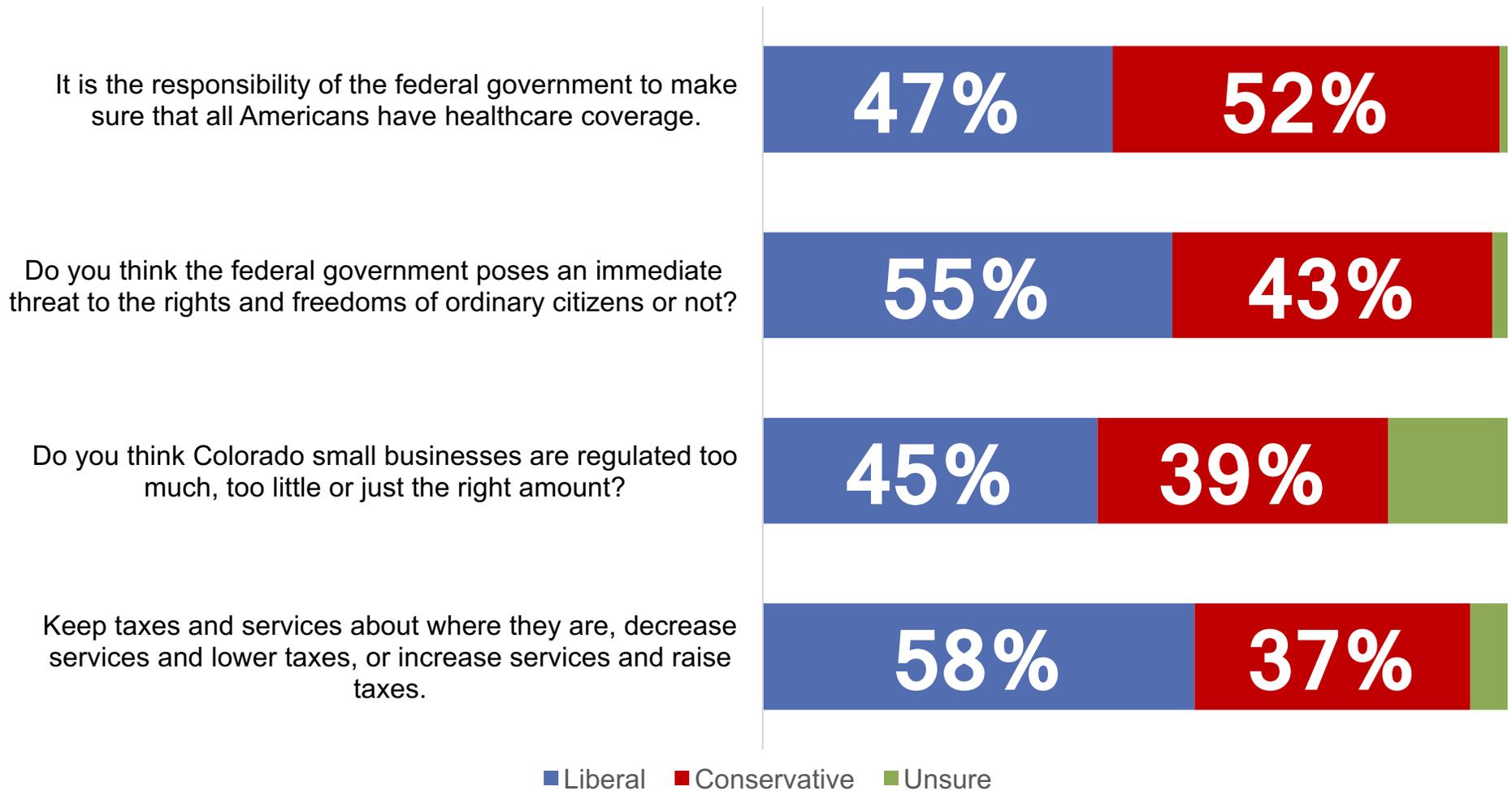
STRONG PRINCIPLES

We recently polled the Middle in Colorado, and found very strong principles:



EMOTIONAL DECISIONS

But when we asked more specific questions about policies, the tables flipped:



WHAT CREATES THE GAP?

A good analogy for the gap is to think about someone who wants to get in shape.

To get in shape, you must exercise and eat well. But exercising requires getting out in the cold. Eating well means passing on desserts.

When faced with a choice of going to the gym or going for ice cream, ice cream wins. Even though you are aware of what needs to happen (the gym) the emotional alternative (ice cream) is too appealing.

That's the gap between the Middle's understanding of the principles and their emotional decisions.



HOW LIBERALS MANIPULATE THE GAP

In our surveys, we ask lots of open-ended questions to hear from the Middle how they feel about principles in their own words. And over and over, they use the words "freedom" and "opportunity" to describe their feelings about the principles. Below is a word cloud of responses to a question about the American Dream:



So it should come as no surprise that liberals try to wrap their ideas in the language of "opportunity" and "freedom".

For example, this email from the Democratic Party sells entitlement programs that trap generations in poverty and drive up the debt, as the path to "level the playing field" and "give every American the chance to achieve their dreams."

Liberals very much understand the principles and emotions of the Middle, and they are working tirelessly to fill the gap in between.

☆ Luis Miranda, Democrats.org To: Allen Fuller ▾

10/23/15, 12:59 PM    ▾



Allen --

"Free stuff." That's how the Republican Party talks about programs like Medicare and Social Security

"Free stuff." That's how the Republican Party talks about programs like Medicare and Social Security, health insurance subsidies and student loan forgiveness -- programs that level the too-skewed playing field of opportunity and give every American the chance to achieve his or her dreams.

In short,

2 THINGS

matter to effectively
move the Middle:

PRINCIPLE

+

EMOTION

PRINCIPLE + EMOTION = AN INSPIRING MESSAGE

We remember Ronald Reagan as an effective messenger for America's founding principles. But why?

Reagan often spoke of the principles, but he spoke with emotion and a tone that connected with people.

On July 17, 1980, during his nomination acceptance speech in Detroit, he mentions "people" over 80 times. Later, in his State of the Union addresses, he talked directly of the impact of his policies on people.

When you combine a principled message with an emotional tone that connects with people, you're talking like the big guy.



MESSAGE + TIMING

To move the Middle, our message not only needs to be consistent with America's founding principles and connect with people emotionally, but also it needs to be delivered in a timely manner.

Liberals have mastered the art of the **MICRO MOMENT**, the brief moment when a specific story or topic is in the news, to push their own message.

Whether a riot, a crime, or a Supreme Court case, liberals are very good at rapid response messaging that shapes opinions.

In the words of Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel, "You never let a serious crisis go to waste."



HOW LIBERALS LEVERAGE MICRO MOMENTS

In the summer of 2015, China's markets sputtered, sending world markets into disarray. The US markets were impacted as well and the Dow Jones crashed rapidly.

As stories of China's economic troubles bubbled up in news reports across the country, the left-wing website Vox.com took advantage of that micro moment to attack federalism.

That's right, ***federalism***. This is the game liberals play. No matter the facts, they have an agenda to push and are very good at pushing it, especially in the very moment people are aware of an issue and looking for answers. We must be ready, in the moment when the Middle is paying attention, to share a principled, genuine message.



China takes federalism way further than the US, and is paying the price for it

Updated by Josh Freedman on August 31, 2015, 2:23 p.m. ET

**Now that we know
more about the
messages that
resonate with
the Middle...**

**WHO IS
THE MIDDLE?**



THE MIDDLE – BY THE NUMBERS

In Colorado, there are approximately **3.8 million registered voters**.

Of those, there are almost **2.8 million likely voters**, meaning those are voters most likely to cast their ballot in a general election. As the most active voters, these are the ones we want to get to know.

These active voters are split almost evenly among **Republicans (926,000)**, **Democrats (919,000)** and **Unaffiliated voters (889,000)**.

Traditionally, we would look at voters in these segments by party, but it turns out that party registration is not a particularly accurate way to really understand Colorado voters, especially those in the Middle. Aren't some unaffiliated voters conservative? Aren't some Republicans liberal?

There had to be a better solution.

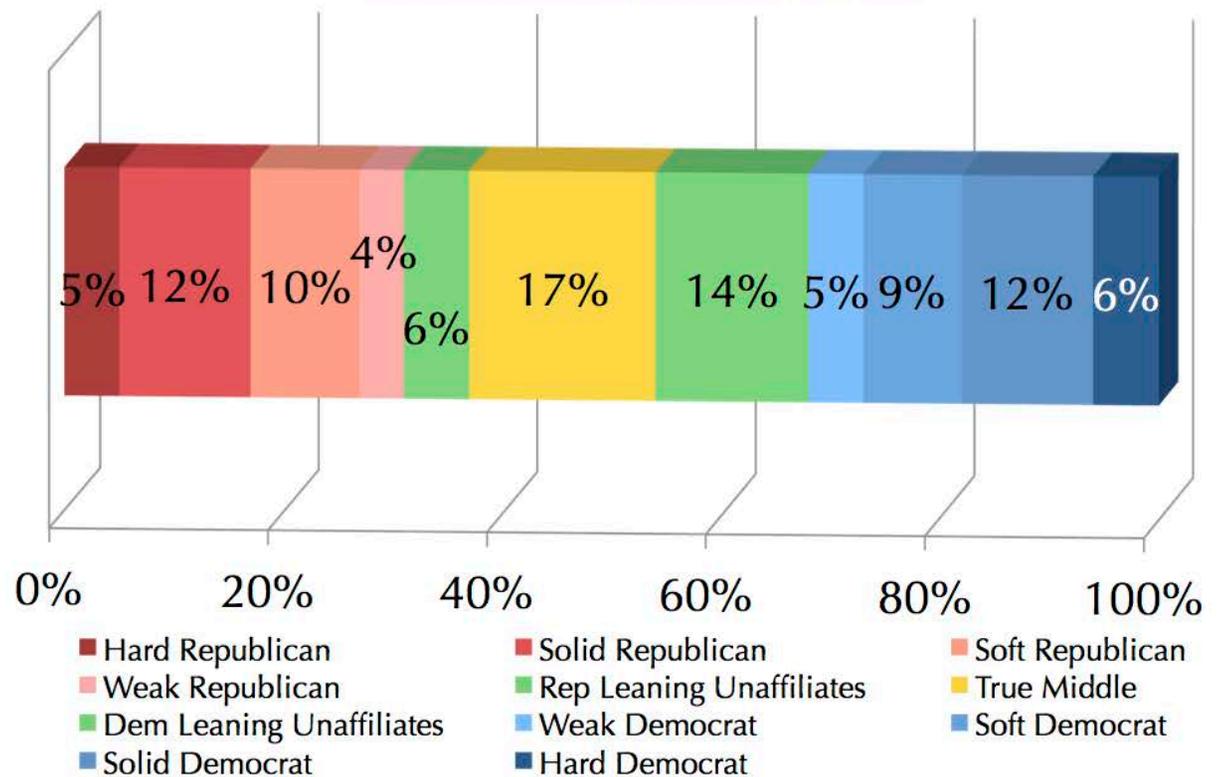
COLORADO VOTER SEGMENTS

In 2013, working with Magellan Strategies, the Colorado Women's Alliance created 14 models of Colorado voters based on demographics, geography, consumer data, and responses to a large-scale survey asking for voters' opinions on key issues.

These 14 segments created a more precise way of looking at Colorado's voters.

Of these 14 segments, there are three that stand out as being part of the Middle.

Let's meet three voters who represent these key segments to moving the Middle:



PEOPLE WHO MATTER



SARAH
Soccer Mom
Soft Republican



MEREDITH
Millennial
Weak Republican



BILL
Blue Collar
True Middle



SARAH

**SOCCER MOM
SOFT REPUBLICAN**

**ABOUT SARAH:
34 YEARS OLD
LIVES IN PARKER
NURSE
COLLEGE DEGREE
ONE CHILD**

**THERE ARE
203,585
LIKELY
SOFT REPUBLICAN VOTERS
IN COLORADO**





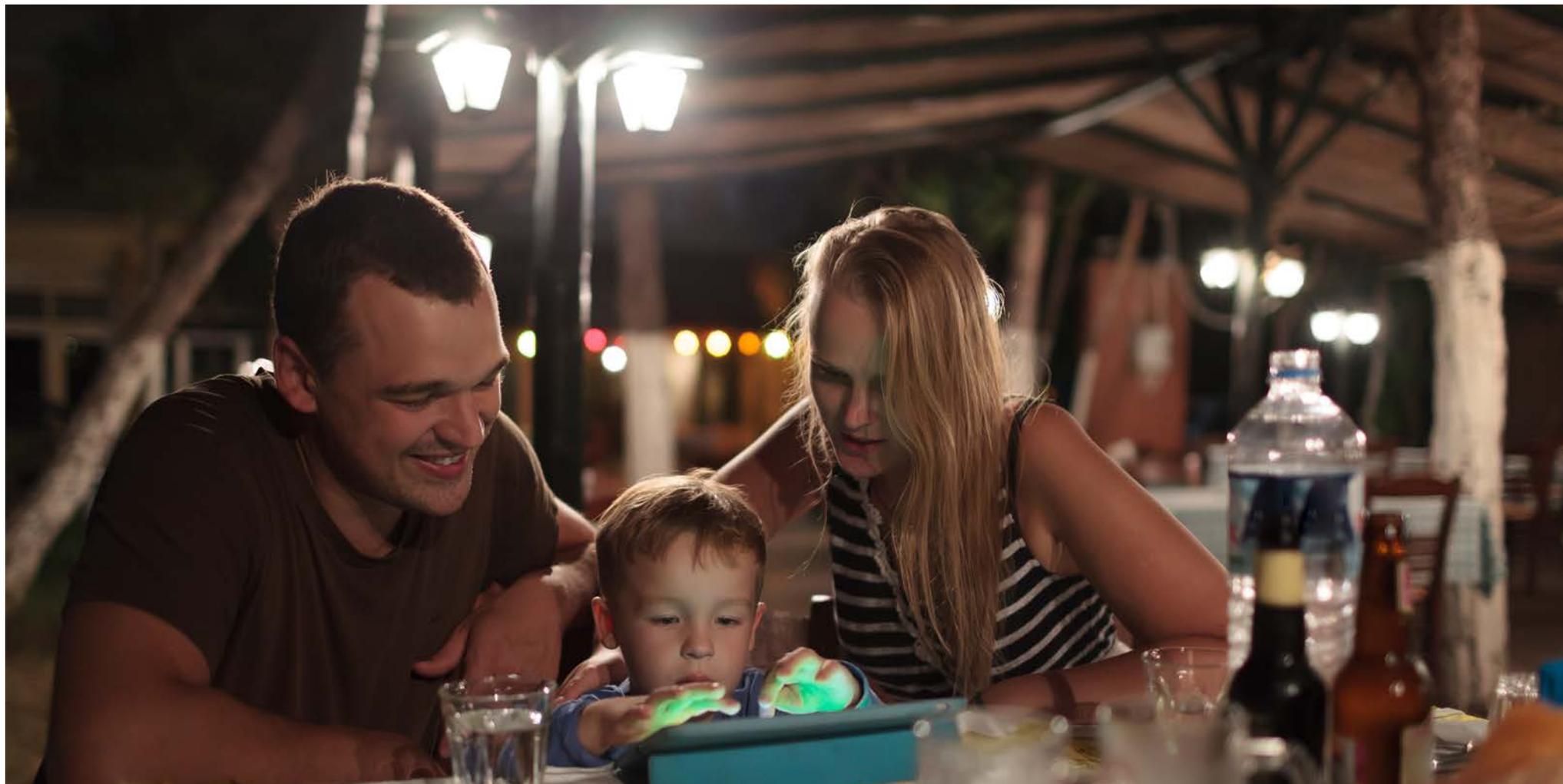
TOP BRAND ATTRIBUTES

When Sarah goes shopping, she looks for brands that have values like:

- Safety
- Convenience
- Value
- Good reviews / friends endorse
- Simplify her life

These are important brand attributes for consumers like Sarah.

They are also important attributes for voters like Sarah when they consider how to vote.



HOW SARAH GETS HER NEWS:

Sarah is less likely than most people to get her news from a newspaper, the local TV news, or even a desktop or laptop.

Voters like Sarah are most likely to watch video from an online streaming service, like Netflix, or time-shifted TV via DVR. She is likely to get her news from a tablet, or even more likely to see it on her ever-present smartphone.



MEREDITH

**MILLENNIAL
WEAK REPUBLICAN**

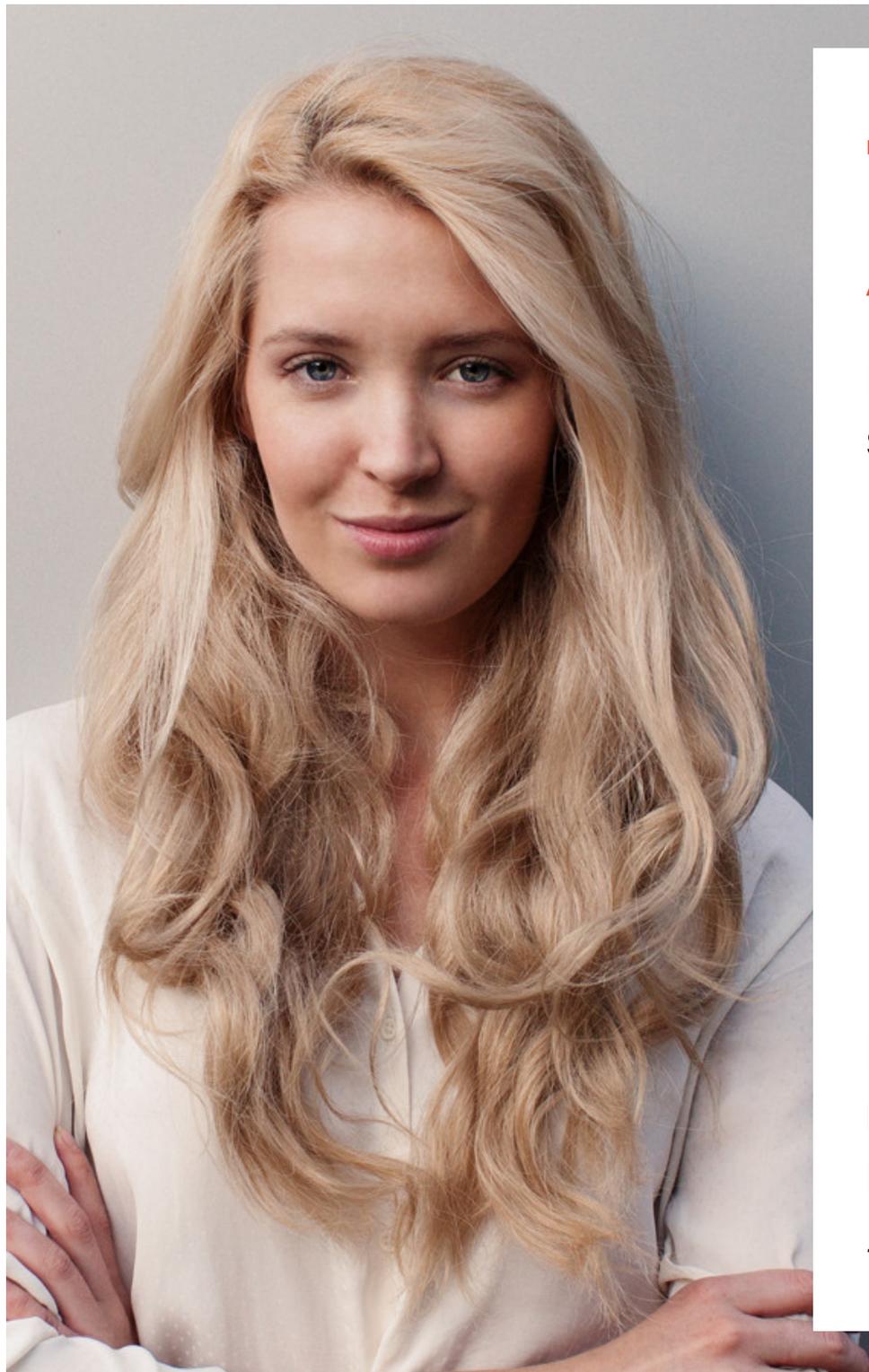
ABOUT MEREDITH:

**24 YEARS OLD
LIVES IN DENVER
AD EXECUTIVE
COLLEGE DEGREE
SINGLE**

THERE ARE

49,563

**LIKELY
WEAK REPUBLICAN VOTERS
IN COLORADO**



TOP BRAND ATTRIBUTES

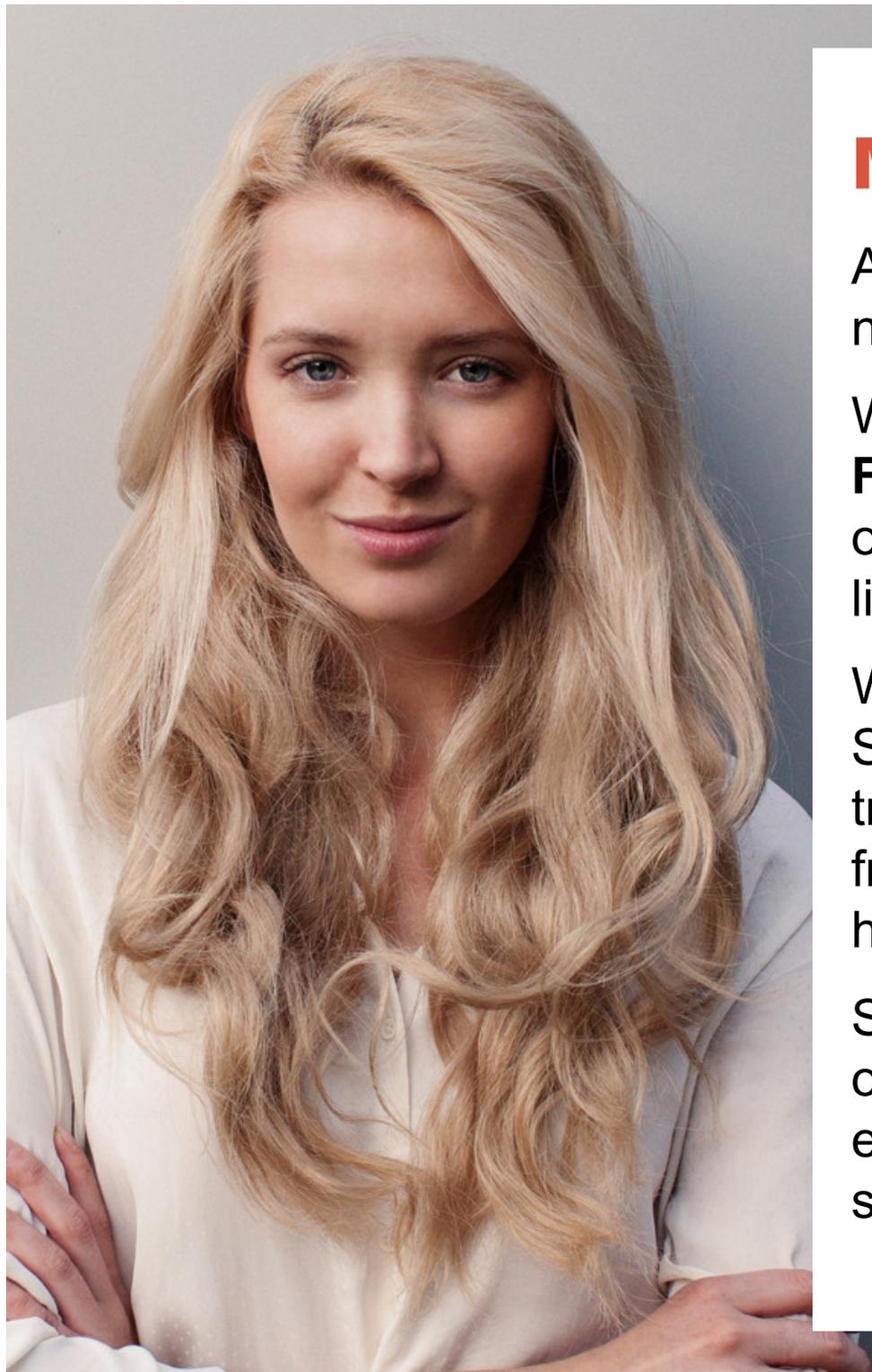
Meredith connects with brands that share her values:

- Trustworthiness
- Creativeness
- Intelligence
- Authenticity
- Confidence

DO SOMETHING

Millennials “have less of an interest in rebellion and revolution” and **tend more toward problem-solving.**

- Havas



MEREDITH'S MEDIA

As a savvy millennial, Meredith gets her news **mobile first**.

While 88% of millennials get news from **Facebook**, they are also usually active on three or four other social networks like YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat.

When she wants news, she will find it. She pulls information from sources she trusts via **Google**. This is very different from older generations who are used to having messages pushed to them.

She enjoys movies, TV shows and other video, but watches them almost exclusively streaming via her phone. If she does watch TV news, it's **CNN**.



BILL

**BLUE COLLAR
TRUE MIDDLE**

ABOUT BILL:

**52 YEARS OLD
SINGLE**

ELECTRICIAN

**HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
RENTS AN APARTMENT IN
AN OLDER SUBURB**

THERE ARE

129,537

**LIKELY
TRUE MIDDLE VOTERS
IN COLORADO**



BILL'S MEDIA

Bill gets his news the "traditional" way. He listens to talk radio, reads the newspaper, and watches the evening news.

The Pew Research Center asked voters like Bill how hard it would be to give up the following devices:

Device	"Very" or "Somewhat" Hard
Television	69%
Cell phone	65%
The Internet	56%
Landline phone	39%
E-mail	39%
Social media	13%

DISENGAGED

Voters like Bill are often called "low-information" voters, but that's not an accurate term. Bill is **intentionally disengaged** from politics. He simply wants nothing to do with it.

Among voters like Bill, only 10% have an interest in current affairs politics.

To put that in perspective, 11% have an interest in sweepstakes contests!

So in other words, if Bill had a message to all politicians, it would be the sign he is holding here.



RESOURCES TO MOVE THE MIDDLE

We don't have all the answers, but we do have the methodology to find out what works and what doesn't.

To connect directly with Coloradans in the Middle, we have created three brands, each targeted to a specific segment.

THOUGHT.BUZZ: Millennials

THOUGHT.TODAY: Soccer Moms

THOUGHT.GUIDE: Blue Collar

These brands, along with their websites and social media, provide examples of messages that resonate with the Middle.

THOUGHT.BUZZ

Think better. We'll help.



RESOURCES TO MOVE THE MIDDLE

Each website features landing pages that introduce visitors to new thoughts about current issues. These pages are not A-Z resources, but provide an introductory thought that can be easily shared.

They also include lots of anecdotal stories about the topic that provide examples of the principle in action.



Education

Few things are as critical to improving our lives and our society as a quality education. A great education allows children to pursue the American Dream. We have an obligation to promote quality education opportunities that puts our children first.

Signup for Email Updates

Signup below for occasional emails, no more than one a week, and stay in the know on this issue.

Name *

Email *

[Get Updates](#)



Guns & Crime

Will Gun Control Keep Us Safe?



Equality

To Fight Income Inequality, He's "Doing The Scariest Thing I've Ever Done In My Career"



Economy | Equality

How One Country Fought Poverty, Then Screwed It All Up



Government

If Uncle Sam Chipped In For Your BBQ, You'd Buy This



Religious Freedom | Responsibility

An Eye-Popping Statement On The Role Of Religion In America



Energy Independence | Government Regulation

This Law From The 70s Could Send Gas Prices Back Through The Roof

WRAPPING UP

We have a problem.

There is a concerted effort to replace the timeless principles of America's founding with new ideas and greed for raw political power. It won't be easy to combat the growth of government and the erosion of our rights and freedoms.

We can move the Middle & stand by our principles.

Coloradans in the Middle still believe in the principles, but like all of us, they make emotional decisions. We should not abandon our principles, but lean into them as a way to connect authentically with the Middle.

There's a formula.

By relating our principles to the individuals in the Middle and providing them an emotional reason to support our ideas that is every bit as strong as our principles, we create an inspiring message that wins both their hearts and their minds.

We are here to help.

The challenge of persuading the Middle is a big one, and we are all more effective working together. At Principles That Matter, we are a resource for you to better understand, connect with, and move the Middle.

MEET PRINCIPLES THAT MATTER

Principles That Matter is an education and research-focused project that seeks to better understand the modern American electorate and relate solutions to them based on the successful principles that are the foundation of America Exceptionalism.



THE PRINCIPLES THAT MATTER

The principles that matter to PTM are those that should matter to all Americans.

These timeless ideas across government, economics and culture created the foundation that enabled America to flourish and grow over the past two centuries.

Government

- Equality
- Natural Rights
- Limited Government
- Rule of Law
- National Security
- Consent of the Governed

Economics

- Free Markets
- Fiscal Responsibility

Culture

- Religious Freedom
- Quality Education

OUR PURPOSE

At Principles That Matter, we have two objectives:

1. Persuade citizens to embrace America's founding principles using the best messages and the best technology, and
2. Help our leaders do the same.

Learn more at:
www.principlesthatmatter.org/about/



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