



# INFLUENCER INDEX: Public Affairs Spending on Email Newsletter Sponsorships

There is no shortage of companies, trade associations and other groups working to influence decision making in Washington.

One of the most prominent channels for making a large public splash on a topic in Washington is sponsoring political- and policy-focused email newsletters targeted at “influencer” audiences – elected leaders and their staff, other government appointees and career officials, political operatives, business leaders, media, and more. These week-long sponsorships are frequently a major pillar of larger public affairs campaigns, providing an incomplete (but still instructive) snapshot of which organizations are making notable investments in their policy and business priorities above and beyond what is reported in their lobbying disclosures.

Rational 360 tracked the sponsors of email newsletters over the first half of 2019 from POLITICO and Axios, two of the leading Washington-based media organizations offering sponsorships. The analysis reviewed their flagship newsletters – POLITICO Playbook/Playbook Power Briefing and Axios AM/PM – as well as a selection of their other newsletters that focus on the key topics of healthcare, finance, and technology.

## TOP 3 OVERALL EMAIL NEWSLETTER SPONSORS



**1.**  
PhRMA  
**36** Weeks Sponsored  
**\$1,430,000** List Price



**2.**  
Bank of America  
**8** Weeks Sponsored  
**\$1,050,000** List Price



**3.**  
Google  
**10** Weeks Sponsored  
**\$1,005,000** List Price

## TOP INSIGHTS

- **PhRMA was the top spender and the most prolific sponsor of tracked newsletters in the first two quarters of 2019.** The bulk of PhRMA's sponsorships appeared in Vitals, the healthcare-focused newsletter from Axios, where 12 of the 26 weeks analyzed were sponsored by PhRMA.
- **Large Fortune 500 companies leveraged multiple sponsorships of the flagship newsletters to broadly promote their messaging to Washington audiences.** All of the tracked email sponsorships from Google and Bank of America were of POLITICO's and Axios' flagship newsletters, rather than in their newsletters that cover specific policy areas.
- **Organizations and associations had more POLITICO sponsorships while companies had more Axios sponsorships.** Nearly 50 percent of POLITICO newsletter sponsors were organizations or associations such as Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, Save Journalism Project, and the American Addiction Center. Conversely, nearly 75 percent of Axios newsletter sponsors were companies, such as IBM, HBO, and Johnson & Johnson.

## TOP EMAIL NEWSLETTER SPONSORS BY TOPIC AREA



### HEALTHCARE



**PhRMA**  
31 Weeks Sponsored  
\$930,000 List Price



**Blue Cross Blue Shield Association**  
7 Weeks Sponsored  
\$420,000 List Price



**Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs**  
2 Weeks Sponsored  
\$60,000 List Price

Includes Axios Vitals, POLITICO Pulse, and POLITICO Morning eHealth



### FINANCE



**IBM**  
5 Weeks Sponsored  
\$200,000 List Price



**Cooley**  
2 Weeks Sponsored  
\$80,000 List Price



**iShares**  
2 Weeks Sponsored  
\$80,000 List Price

Includes Axios Pro Rata, POLITICO Morning Money, and POLITICO Morning Tax



### TECH



**T-Mobile**  
3 Weeks Sponsored  
\$54,000 List Price



**National Association of Broadcasters**  
2 Weeks Sponsored  
\$36,000 List Price



**Ticketmaster**  
2 Weeks Sponsored  
\$36,000 List Price

Includes Axios Login and POLITICO Morning Technology

**Methodology:** Rational 360 monitored Axios and POLITICO newsletters for the first two quarters of 2019 and tracked the sponsor of each newsletter as it appeared when originally sent to subscribers. Spending numbers were calculated using the latest available published list prices for sponsorship as provided by POLITICO and Axios; actual costs incurred by sponsoring organizations may be less, as sponsorships may be offered as part of a custom-priced advertising package, or discounted individually or in bulk. Sponsorships of POLITICO Playbook and Politico Playbook Power Briefing were counted as a single sponsorship, as they are sold together; sponsorships of Axios AM and Axios PM were counted separately, as they are sold separately.