

YOUR PAST SELF COULD BE YOUR BIGGEST MOTIVATOR:

HOW A TIME CAPSULE LED TO A STRIKING INCREASE IN VOTER TURNOUT

VOTE
.ORG

ideas ⁴²

IN 2020, AMIDST A GLOBAL PANDEMIC, SPIRITED PROTESTS, AND A PIVOTAL ELECTION, VOTE.ORG AND IDEAS42 COLLABORATED ON A UNIQUE PROJECT TO HELP INDIVIDUALS BOTTLE UP THE INTENSE CIVIC ENERGY OF THE MOMENT.

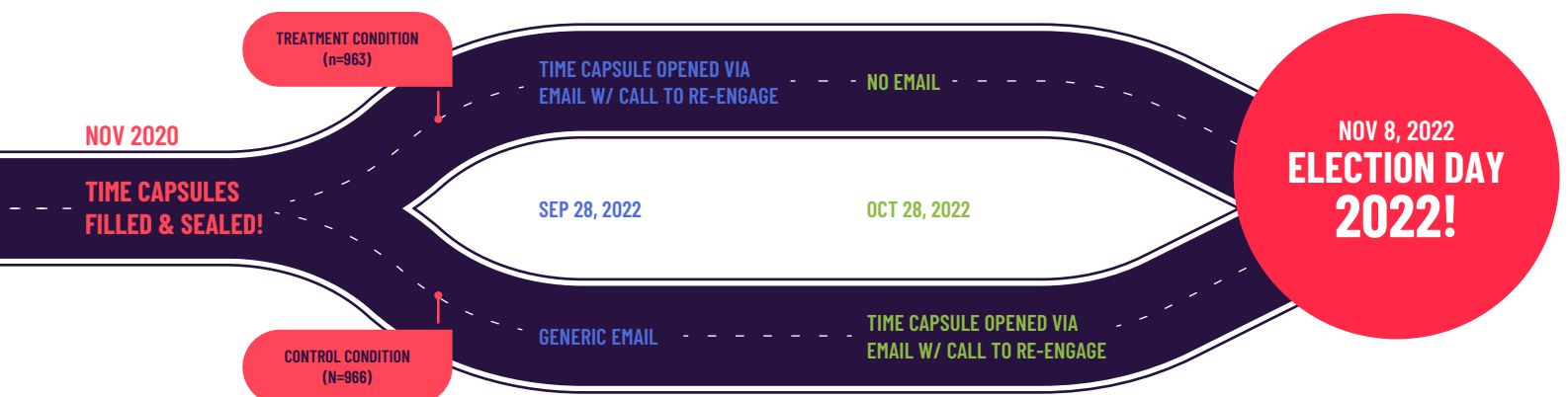
Following the 2020 election, the Civic Action Time Capsule invited individuals to reflect on and record their motivations, experiences, and civic participation during this historic time. This wasn't just a retrospective exercise - but also a strategic move towards fostering greater voter engagement.

WHY A TIME CAPSULE?

- Gave participants an easy and enjoyable way to record and preserve their personal journey in 2020
- Provided a vivid, personalized reminder of their civic passion and a nudge to reignite it in 2022
- Aimed at driving behavior change and building voting habits beyond traditional tactics for persuasion or GOTV (Get Out The Vote)

THE EXPERIMENT

We conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to understand how re-delivering the Time Capsule in 2022 could impact engagement. Here's how we did that:



THE RESULTS: SUCCESSFULLY MOBILIZING OUR FUTURE SELVES

The treatment condition, which involved reopening the time capsule more than a month before the election, generated a +6.8 percentage point increase in 2022 voter turnout among those who expressed satisfaction with their level of engagement in 2020.

THE OPPORTUNITY AHEAD

- **THIS SUCCESS OPENS DOORS FOR MOTIVATING PARTICIPATION NOT JUST FOR 2024 BUT ALSO FOR 2026 AND BEYOND, AIMING TO CULTIVATE LIFELONG VOTERS.**
- **WE'RE EXCITED ABOUT SEVERAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR REFINEMENT AND EXPANSION OF THIS TACTIC:**
 - Time capsules could capture different motivations, feelings, intentions - what is most effective for mobilization?
 - Could prompting people to fill out the time capsule prospectively just prior to an election serve as a commitment device for them to follow through on voting intentions?
 - Can multi-media capsules with photos or videos have even stronger effects than written capsules?

WE WELCOME OTHER GROUPS TO PARTNER WITH US TO USE THIS IDEA TO FUEL THEIR VOTER ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS.

JOIN US IN SHAPING A FUTURE WHERE EVERY VOICE IS HEARD AND EVERY VOTE COUNTS.