

# RUN

A Guide to Seeking  
Local Elected Office



by The National Association  
of Home Builders

**INTRO-**

**IS NOW THE  
TIME?**

# YOUR LIFE IS NO LONGER YOUR OWN

Trying to decide whether or not to run for elected office can be very confusing. Torn between your principles, politics, and the demands of personal and professional life, the process can quickly become overwhelming.

Moreover, the campaign process will have long-reaching effects, regardless of the election's outcome. Careful planning is required just to make the decision to run. The temptation is to wait until everything is perfect. Politics is a fluid process. There is no such thing as static perfection.

## INTRO-

# IS NOW THE TIME TO RUN FOR ELECTED OFFICE?

### CAMPAIGN THRESHOLD CRITERIA

- ↳ Is there an open seat or vulnerable opponent?
- ↳ Is there enough time before Election Day to mount a credible campaign?
- ↳ Can I raise enough money to get my message to enough voters?

### SELF ASSESSMENT

Not everyone has what it takes to run, especially when you consider the grinding pace and constant public exposure of a campaign. You will be putting much on the line if you decide to run for office; therefore, examine these questions very carefully and with great honesty.

#### Motivation

**Why are you running?** It had better be a powerful and personally compelling reason. This process will demand 100% from you and your family. It will wring you dry before you're done.

What do you bring to the table that is unique and will add value to the lives of the people in your jurisdiction? Are there particular problems in your community that have compelled you to give your time, your "life" to this endeavor?

Do you have the ability to get committed people to rally around an issue you think is important?

Have you been asked to serve the community in some way or do community leaders come to you for your experience or counsel? Have you run for office before? Have you actually joined organizations, served on boards or commissions? Ask yourself, "Was I effective in public office and/or in my other endeavors in the service of the community?"

Is there a public record of your involvement and achievement? You could be a great human being, but without press clips only a tiny percentage of the voters will know it when you throw your hat in the ring. Who among the voter population at large knows who you are?

### **Ready for the Fish Bowl?**

Personalities are put to the test day and night, seven days a week during a campaign. Not only is there constant interaction with the campaign itself and voters, but, if you are viable, you will also be under constant scrutiny from the press and the opposition.

How well can you handle the “controlled chaos” that is the ever-changing face and persona of a political campaign? Do you know how to delegate authority? Are you good at managing a team?

Do you have a sense of humor, especially when it comes to laughing at yourself? Can you take criticism without taking it personally?

**LEARN TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND BE STRICT ABOUT IT. YOU NEED TO LOOK AND FEEL LIKE A WINNER IN ORDER TO CAPTURE THE PUBLIC ON ELECTION DAY.**

### **Skeletons in the Closet?**

Everybody has something they wish they hadn't done, some more so than others. It is not what you did, so much as how you handle its existence. You must closely scrutinize your past for anything that would detract from your positive appeal.

Moreover, you must explore the past actions of family and close friends with the same diligence. Even things that appear relatively innocuous or tame to you can be blown out of proportion by the opposition or the press on a slow news day.

Consider the overall impact on your family and career. Even if you come through the initial public investigations by the opposition and media unscathed, remember that your life and your family's are an open book for the duration. Moreover, the demanding regimen of the campaign will force you to put all other career activity on hold. Will the impact of this impair your ability to meet some contractual responsibilities or have a dramatically negative effect on your finances?

Learn to take care of yourself and be strict about it. You need to look and feel like a winner in order to capture the public on Election Day.

# 01



## PLAN YOUR WORK TO WORK YOUR PLAN

Campaigns revolve around two  
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money and contacting voters.

## CHAPTER 01

Campaigns revolve around two equally important functions: raising money and contacting voters.

There are only three resources available to a campaign: people, money, and time. Each of these is interchangeable but only TIME can truly run out. Campaigns with volunteers can accomplish things that campaigns with money have to pay for; campaigns with money can buy services that will be completed in a fraction of the time required for volunteer activity. The most critical resource is time. If you had more time you could always raise more money and find more people.

### STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS

Before you can bring into focus an overall game plan, you need to gather information about the district and issues of the day. These facts (in elections feelings can be considered facts too), most of which will describe the jurisdiction you are campaigning in, are facts over which you have no control, but that will have a significant impact on your campaign. Roughly, these facts can be divided into two categories:

- ① Characteristics of Jurisdiction
- ① Electoral Factors

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JURISDICTION

Demographic groupings of voters often share common values and points of view. Birds of a feather do flock together. To develop accurate targeting and effectively communicate your message, you must know who your voters are:

What sources are available for this data:

- Voter registration, census, and other government databases
- Local state, and national party organization
- Private list vendors



#### KEY RESOURCES



PEOPLE



MONEY



TIME

# 01

Key data to look for in creating voter profiles for different parts of the jurisdiction include voting history, gender, ethnicity, age, marital status, party affiliation, religious affiliation, occupation, and income. Other data of interest might include whether they own or rent a home, level of education, etc.

Special constituencies are another area you need to examine closely. In addition to the political party organization, examples of other special constituencies include seniors, women, ethnic organizations, teachers and parents, homeowners, unions, professional associations, lawyers, police/fire associations, and issue-oriented groups (religious, environmental, gun-control, etc.). Major employers, universities, and hospital complexes in the jurisdiction are also worth taking note of. Also be cognizant of the differing concerns of rural and urban voters and the organizations they form.

Vital statistics about the jurisdiction are also very important, as well. Information on the unemployment rate, per capita income, projected growth, tax structures, total city/county/state budgets, the number of school-age children, landmarks and history are all things that you need to add to the equation. Not only are they important to you as you develop strategy, but such data better enables you to convey to the voters that you know and care about them.

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## KEY QUESTIONS

- ↳ Can you walk door to door?
- ↳ Can you drive the district in one day or need to find housing?
- ↳ When does it get too cold or hot to be outside?
- ↳ Are voters used to candidates coming to their door in every part of the district?

Given that a candidate's time is the campaign's most valuable resource, this data is critical to effective schedule planning. Moreover, it impacts your budget through phone and travel costs and possible shifts in voter concern from one end of the district to the other.

## OPPOSITION PROFILE

Do the same thorough profiling of your opponents as you did your own candidacy. You must "know the enemy" to defeat them. Moreover, being able to draw accurate contrasts between the opposition and yourself will be essential in crafting your message.

## MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

A "campaign message" is not a slogan or a set of positions, it is a theme. Theme has far more to do with style than with issues. Your campaign theme is a broad idea that makes a positive statement about your leadership qualities and values.

Your campaign theme must be easy to communicate to voters and should implicitly answer key questions in the voters' minds such as, why you are running, what you believe, how



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### KEY QUESTIONS REGARDING EACH OPPONENT

- ↳ Who are they and how does their presence affect your campaign? (Do you share a voter base?)
- ↳ Personal and family history? (Know it but don't get personal in campaign.)
- ↳ Previous performance or voting records in civic or political arenas?
- ↳ Business interests, past and present?
- ↳ Any legal or financial public records?

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### KEY ITEMS FOR CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

- ↳ Calendar days to election, holidays, other special days
- ↳ Number of days, as the candidate, you can give your campaign
- ↳ Legal deadlines for petitions, finance reports, poll-watching certificates, etc.

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**FOR THE THEME TO BE EFFECTIVE, EVERY LIKELY VOTER NEEDS TO HEAR IT AT LEAST 7 TIMES.**

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your beliefs are different from the opposition, and what you will accomplish in office.

The challenge is to coordinate the major campaign activities so as to reinforce the theme in the context and style of every aspect of your campaign. Remember, for the theme to be effective, every likely voter needs to hear it at least 7 times.

### BUDGETING TERMS

#### ○ Campaign Finance Laws

- What are the contribution limits (individual, union, corporate, candidate, family?)
- Can a candidate take out a loan?
- What are the rules governing in-kind contribution limits?

#### ○ Actual Resources at Hand

- How much can you, family and close friends contribute?
- Are there other individual key contributors and what can they be counted on for?

#### ○ Organizational Contributions

- What is the application process for PAC and other organizational contributions?

## CAMPAIGN MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AREAS

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### OVERVIEW OF CURRENT LOCAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES

#### ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES RELEVANT TO VOTERS

- What are the values and concerns of targeted voters?
- How strongly held are they?

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#### ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF YOUR CANDIDACY

- How do targeted voters perceive your campaign office?
- How do targeted voters perceive the opposition?

# 01

## PLAN YOUR WORK TO WORK YOUR PLAN

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ACCURATE CASH  
FLOW PROJECTIONS  
AND REPORTS ALLOW  
YOU TO RUN YOUR  
CAMPAIGN THE WAY  
YOU WANT TO RUN IT.

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### VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

#### Party Caucus Organizations and Local Party Precinct Offices

They keep lists of committed volunteers,  
but don't share them easily.

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#### Endorsing Organizations

Unions, teachers, interest groups, real-  
tors, etc. are likely to send volunteers.

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#### Endorsing Elected Officials

They will have fundraising lists and may be  
willing to share them.

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#### Other Citizen Groups

Groups such as women's clubs, youth clubs,  
neighborhood associations, and churches  
are also good sources of volunteers.

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#### Friends and Family

Those closest to you will be your early  
supporters, but don't burn them out.

#### o Individual Contributions

- Identify proven and potential contributors and how many are in each tier.
- What is the cheapest way to raise money from proven and potential contributors?

#### o Fundraising Timeline

- Begin drafting timeline of contribution collections set in relation to campaign spending needs.

### BUDGET

When most people think of a budget, they think of income and expenses over a specific period of time. Integrating cash flow into your early planning and tracking it throughout your campaign are equally important. Accurate cash flow projections and reports allow you to run your campaign the way you want to run it; not the way you are forced to by a sudden absence of funds at a critical time. In other words, you don't make a media buy because you now have the money; you do it because the campaign plan and having the money make it the right decision.

### CASH FLOW

Strategic decisions you'll make about how to run your campaign will, in part, be driven by how much money is available; how much money you'll try to raise will be driven by how you want to run your campaign. The two will meet in your cash flow planning and the reality of your efforts as they are made clear in your cash flow reports.

For budget planning purposes, develop a cost analysis of the strategic elements of your campaign. Lay those out on a week-by-week timeline so that you can clearly see when you will need infusions of cash. A system of weekly cash flow reports will allow you to track your efforts as your campaign unfolds, insuring that you will either have the cash when you need it or you have lead time to come up with alternative strategies.

### PLANNING SUMMARY

All program elements of your campaign, regardless of their nature, require three things:

- o A specific program goal and an understanding of its cost
- o Steps to implementation and a timeline to reach the goal
- o Review and refinement of goals and program elements

### SPECIFIC PROGRAM GOALS

Key word is 'specific'. The program goal must be clearly de-

finer. It must be quantified in actual and realistic numbers. “Many” is not a number—1004 is.

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION AND TIMELINE

1. The first step in developing a critical path timeline is carefully listing every single step needed to organize and implement the program.
2. Next, lay these steps out on a large block calendar, using realistic deadlines.
3. Be mindful of the interrelatedness of your various programs, particularly fundraising activities. Make sure timelines also dovetail in a manner such that information gathered by one program is available for another, when needed.

### REVIEW AND REFINEMENT

Campaigns are dynamic and operate in an environment that is not completely within your control. These facts mandate the creation of a review and refinement process.

This process has three elements:

- Daily monitoring of individual programs
- Weekly evaluation
- Periodic review of entire campaign plan

If you need to re-write or re-tool the whole plan due to budget or tactical changes (positive or negative) that is fine.



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**IF YOUR CAMPAIGN  
RUNS THE WAY YOUR  
ORIGINAL PLAN WAS  
WRITTEN, YOU WILL  
BE THE FIRST.**

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# RESEARCH

Developing a complete and accurate picture of your candidacy is crucial.

## CHAPTER 02

### CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Developing a complete and accurate picture of your candidacy is crucial. Such an evaluation will allow your campaign to identify ways to accentuate your strong points, minimize the weaker traits, and determine how to best deal with or defuse any hidden bombshells before the opposition can exploit them. Moreover, this profile will be vital to creating a potent campaign theme tailored to you, the candidate.

#### PERSONAL QUESTIONNAIRE



##### WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR OFFICE?

- Who encouraged you?
- What encouraged you?

##### ANY PREVIOUS POLITICAL EXPERIENCE?

- Voting record?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a leader?

##### ARE YOU RUNNING TO CHANGE SOMETHING?

##### WHAT PERSONAL VALUES MEAN THE MOST TO YOU; ISSUES THAT SPARK PASSION?

##### ANY HOBBIES, SPECIAL INTERESTS?

- What non-political experience exists?
- Occupation?
- Level of education?

##### DOES YOUR FAMILY SUPPORT THE CANDIDACY?

- What comes up on Google?
- Any skeletons in the closet, regarding either you or your family?

##### WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE?

- Civic involvement?
- What is your name recognition among the community?

##### WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS HISTORY?

- What is the current state of your finances?

##### WHAT ARE YOUR PUBLIC CHARACTERISTICS?

- Are you skilled at public speaking?
- How are you before small/large groups?
- How experienced are you with the media?
- What appearance on TV do you project?

# 02

## RESEARCH



### POLLS & FOCUS GROUPS

Types of information typically gathered include:

- Voter opinions, thoughts and feelings on candidates or issues
- How the opinion environment intersects with the campaign
- Perceived strengths and weaknesses
- How much voters care about information and new ideas
- What is important to voters

Opinion research can be used to balance the interests of vocal minorities with passive majorities, and allow you to hear from those you don't often hear from. You can write questions that test conventional wisdom, or even simulate an entire campaign.

Opinion research has a number of uses including providing information necessary to:

- Select effective messages
- Identify target audiences
- Respond to attacks
- Raise funds and bolster support among decision makers and opinion leaders
- Decide how, and if an issue will be communicated

Polls and surveys come in a variety of forms including benchmarks and tracking. A benchmark poll provides a look at the scene during the short period of time it takes to field the poll. These 10 to 20 question polls typically test the opinion environment, direction of the community, demographic characteristics, horse race standings of candidates, and important characteristics that cannot be derived from other sources.

Political opinion research should be conducted by a professional or outside firm, not by someone on your staff. As such, this should be budgeted into your campaign costs, with the budget dictating the extent of the research. As a general rule, opinion research should account for less than 10% of your total budget, but that may vary depending on your campaign's needs and resources. If you don't have much money, don't spend any of it on opinion research! Be sure to check around with different firms based on cost and quality.

### PRECINCT TARGETING

A successful campaign plan targets where the votes are and how to reach the maximum number of voters with the least effort. Every voter lives in a precinct (or the local term for the smallest geographic area for each designated voting location.) The number of precincts will vary depending on your race.

Each precinct needs to be analyzed. You need to know:

- How many voters are in each precinct?
- Which precincts are likely to contain your voters (ex. are there more Dem. or Rep., what messages resonate with each precinct)?
- How well do you have to do in each precinct to win the election (you don't always have to win each precinct but you should know how many votes you need from each precinct)?

# 03



## FUNDRAISING AND BUDGET

Where does the money go and how  
do people get it?

# 03

## CHAPTER 03

Probably the first question you have heard from friends is, “Where are you going to get all of that money?” Congressional campaigns can cost millions of dollars, and campaigns for local office easily run close to \$100,000. Where does that money go, and how do these people get it?

### FIRST AND FOREMOST

Know the law, and what you can do. You must know the acceptable sources for contributions, the limits of those donations, all of the filing requirements, including who must report, when the reports are due, and the information required for these reports. Depending on what office you are running for, your local or state board of elections or the Federal Election Commission can provide you with information regarding the campaign finance laws that will govern your race.

### WHERE DOES IT GO?

Well, the answer is that in a complex society, you need to communicate to people with powerful tools like television, radio, direct mail, phone, Internet, etc. That requires a level of funding that competes not only with your opponent, but with all of the other people saying “look at me” out there—commercials and messages for products and ideas—and that requires money.

### WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

It comes from a network of donors from an increasingly diverse cross-section of society. They are your friends, acquaintances, and a host of people you have never met. All of them, however, agree with your stances, your party; or, at least disagree with your opponent enough to support you.

### DONORS ARE INVESTORS—THEY WANT TO GIVE TO SOMETHING THAT WORKS

In effect, your campaign is a communications business. Your donors are investors; they must believe that you will succeed and that their contribution will be spent wisely. They must believe in your message and be willing to help you get that message to voters.

### TARGETING

Who are your donors, and where do you find them? Anyone can be a donor to your campaign—the key is to decide who the most likely donors are and how to approach them efficiently and effectively. Donors give for different reasons and their motivation for giving will drive how much money you ask for and how you ask for it.

The easiest group of donors for any campaign is the candidate, their friends and family. This group gives because it personally likes, believes in, and is already invested in the candidate. Even if this is not a wealthy group, it should be efficient in terms of percent of participation. Friends and family should be approached in a personal manner by the candidate themselves. If properly cultivated, they can play

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BE YOUR  
FIRST DONOR.

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an important role in expanding the candidate's donor base. They will give small and large contributions and are also likely to be successfully re-solicited.

Open a file on your computer and attempt to write down the names of 50 people who will give at least \$100. This list should be made up of everyone in the candidate's personal address book, email list, online social network sites, membership lists of groups the candidate belongs to—professional associations, alumni groups, the PTA, neighborhood associations, etc.

The most enthusiastic of the family and friends group should be asked to go one step further in addition to writing their own check. They should be asked to open up their address books and look for twenty or more they can call, invite to their home for cocktails, or ask the candidate to call to discuss the campaign and encourage them to contribute. Their belief in the candidate will be the selling point for their family and friends to hop on the bandwagon as well.

The second group of donors the campaign will want to consider approaching is those who will give because they are intrigued by or can benefit from the power of the office you are running for. These donors are potential sources of large personal, corporate or political action committee contributions and are also best solicited by the candidate themselves

through phone calls, in person meetings, and sometimes through events such as small breakfasts, lunches or dinners where there is an opportunity to talk about issues that can be affected by the candidate should he or she be elected.

The third group of donors shares a similar ideological approach as the candidate regarding issues and “social issues” in particular. These are donors who will give based on the candidate's stand on issues such as the environment, land use, taxes, gun control, etc. These donors are most efficiently approached through direct mail or large, rally-type fundraisers. They are also a potential source of hosts and attendees for house parties and coffees.

Next, you will want to consider approaching are those with “an ax to grind”. These are individuals or groups who may be motivated to give to your campaign simply because they or their group/industry is not enamored with your opponent. Maybe your opponent has voted against them, or simply takes an unfavorable stand on their issues. In any case, these are potential donors to your campaign.

In conducting your research of potential donors be mindful of the resources that might be out there to help you. Lists may be available of people who have given to other candidates, political parties or interest groups with which you are allied or in

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agreement. For instance, if you support environmental issues, it may be helpful to look at the lists of donors to environmental organizations or referendum campaigns.

If you are running for a spot in the state legislature, you may want to look at lists of those who have contributed to other legislators in your area.

People donate money to campaigns and political causes for different reasons—personal relationships, issues or ideology, a desire to be involved, self-interest, party affiliation, social contacts, or even a dislike for the opponent or an opponent's party.

But the bottom line is that they give simply because they were asked. You need to understand a potential donor's reasons for giving, and tap into that interest.

## FUNDRAISING IS A THREE LETTER WORD: ASK.

### IF YOU NEVER ASK, YOU WILL NEVER GET

Not even your mother will give you money if you don't ask. You personally must be willing to ask people for money, ask them again and again for money, ask them for a specific amount, and ask that it be given in a certain period of time. ASK!

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**BUT THE BOTTOM  
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[www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)  
[www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov)  
[www.opensecrets.org/states](http://www.opensecrets.org/states)



### WHAT DO YOU SAY?

You need to tell people why you are running, why you will win, and what you will do with their money. Then you need to ask for the money and pin down a date of receipt.

When you ask a donor for money, ask for a specific amount (based on your research), and wait for an answer. It may be uncomfortable, but let the discomfort work for you—if you don't wait for an answer, you may never get one. Too many times, candidates will go to a meeting with a potential donor, talk through the meeting, and never get a yes or no. So ask—and wait.

### CLOSING—GET TO YES

If you ask for a \$1,000, there are two answers to that request—yes and no. If they agree at first, then ask them to raise \$5,000 from five more people. “Yes” means you get the money and possibly something more. There is no “maybe”. “Maybe” does not buy you one second of airtime or one yard sign. Get a definite answer.

If they say “no”, you aren't finished. “No” means something less than \$1,000. Ask for \$750. “No” means less than \$750. Ask for \$500... and so on. Ask until they agree to help you, or flatly refuse you. Nine times out of 10, you will find a way for them to help you with a contribution.

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## YOUR TIME CAMPAIGNING WILL BE SPENT IN TWO WAYS—GETTING MONEY AND GETTING VOTES.

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### SIX QUESTIONS EVERY DONOR HAS ABOUT YOU AND YOUR CAMPAIGN

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING?  
(10 SECONDS)

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WHY ARE YOU BETTER  
THAN YOUR OPPONENT?  
(FACT-BASED 15 SECONDS)

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HOW DO YOU PLAN TO  
WIN? (SHARE A LITTLE,  
GAIN A LOT)

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HOW WILL YOU SPEND  
THEIR MONEY? (RADIO,  
YARD SIGNS, INTERNET)

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HOW MUCH SHOULD THEY  
GIVE? (AS MUCH AS POSSI-  
BLE BY THE END)

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WHO ELSE HAS GIVEN?  
(SHARE WITH PERMISSION)

## GET THE MONEY

You cannot spend money you do not have. After the potential donor agrees to make a contribution, find out when you can get it. Ask them to write you a check right now. If that is not possible, arrange to have it picked up on a specific date.

## AN ARMY OF FUNDRAISERS

Will you have to ask for all the money in your campaign? No, but you will have to be involved with all of it. You will have to create a system of requests (who's asking whom for what?) and administer those requests without overlapping. You will also have to calculate when you will have to satisfy specific financial needs over the course of your campaign and put a system into place that insures you have the money by the time you need to spend it.

## THE CAMPAIGN PLAN AND FUNDRAISING

The finance organization of your campaign will be a tree with many branches. It will tap into your network of friends, relatives, partners, acquaintances, and associates.

It will also incorporate those affiliations of others involved in your campaign.

## MESSAGE AND FUNDRAISING

Your time campaigning will be spent in two ways—getting money and getting votes.

Both require you to know your message. You need to tell donors, as well as voters, why you are running and what you will do if you are elected.

## PERSONAL SOLICITATION

The best, first-choice resource for fundraising is candidate time. Just as your campaign must develop ways to get you in front of as many potential voters as possible, so it is with potential donors. Direct contact between the candidate and potential donors is the most effective way to raise money, period. This can be accomplished through one-on-one meetings, phone calls, small group meetings, and events. Save personal meetings for big donors and utilize the other techniques for smaller contributions.

## PHONE TIME

The bulk of your time in fundraising will be spent on the phone. Phone solicitation is far and away the most efficient use of your time.

You, usually with the aid of a finance committee person, phone through a list of potential donors. The finance staff records the outcome of a call—a pledge, the amount, when to collect, and names of other potential donors offered by the prospect. Phone time is reserved for optimum times of

# 03

## FUNDRAISING AND BUDGET

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PHONE TIME IS  
RESERVED FOR OPTI-  
MUM TIMES OF THE  
DAY WHEN DONORS  
CAN BE REACHED.

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### PERSONAL SOLICITATION

PHONE TIME

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INTERNET FUNDRAISING

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MEETINGS AND HOUSE PARTIES

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EVENTS

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INDUSTRY GROUPS AND POLITICAL  
ACTION COMMITTEES

the day when donors can be reached—generally business hours. A well-disciplined campaign will have phone time scheduled each day of your campaign, with no interruptions—no press calls, special events, constituency meetings, campaign meetings—nothing.

### INTERNET FUNDRAISING

If your campaign has a website, then you should install a page that will enable visitors to contribute to you. If they are interested in your site, they may be willing to make a contribution. It is an easy and inexpensive way to capture some funds you otherwise might have missed. One thing to remember—you will only raise money on your website if people are going to your website so don't count on this as a major source of funds, you should not bet the farm on Internet fundraising.

### MEETINGS AND HOUSE PARTIES

One-on-one meetings should be reserved for soliciting large donors, asking prospects to serve on the finance committee, and to recruit fundraisers.

Small gatherings can be used for groups of donors who have a certain affiliation—doctors, lawyers, business leaders—people who can band together for the purpose of funding your campaign. Such groups are a golden opportunity for talking about funding your campaign and utilizing peer pressure to get to “yes”.

Coffees and house parties raise small amounts of money, but usually don't require a lot of candidate time. Again, within legal limits, volunteers can produce, pay for, and send out the invitations, make sure of attendance, and cover expenses. Have a friend in the audience ask about the financial needs of your campaign, and how the group gathered can help.

### EVENTS

Fundraising events are the most misunderstood activities of campaigning. Events themselves do not raise money—the money is raised and committed well before the event. The event provides a “due date” for fundraising, and also provides an entertaining way for the fundraising to culminate. By the time of the event, the fundraiser should already know how much money will be raised, and hopefully have most of the money in the bank. Start the planning and inviting at least four weeks before the event date, more time should be allowed for events that go beyond the traditional ‘reception’ style.



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## EVENTS PROVIDE A 'DUE DATE' FOR FUNDRAISING.

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Whatever the event is, do not make the mistake of turning the fundraising event into a fund-spending event. Within legal limits, get everything donated, the hall, the food, the entertainment, even the printing for the invitations and postage. High overhead for fundraising events are the bane of a campaign—they send a signal of extravagance that contradicts and confuses your appeal for needed funds.

### INDUSTRY GROUPS AND POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES (PACS)

Industry groups play an active part in their community. Many participate in the political process, either formally through political action committees or informally through raising funds from members.

Raising funds from these groups requires the same kind of research and knowledge called upon for raising funds from large individual donors. You need to target your efforts, know the appropriate levels of contributions you should expect, and know what motivates PACs to give.

Sending a letter or email to every PAC in town is fine to do once, but do it early and only as an introduction to a phone call to be made in near future. PAC managers are not in the business of handing out money—they are in the business of shepherding their resources wisely and making contributions to those candidates that merit the support of their organization.

PACs support candidates and incumbents who are known supporters; they lean towards incumbents so don't take it personally if you are a challenger. Usually, a PAC will have a questionnaire that pertains to their issues. Filling out the questionnaire and attending a PAC interview is just the first step in obtaining a contribution.

More than with individual donors, PACs regard "electability" as a major determinant of a donation. They want to use their hard-raised dollars effectively, and that means backing winners. Do not be surprised if PAC managers ask for poll numbers, amount of funds raised, or other "yardsticks" of viability of your campaign. Even though the first threshold for a contribution will be ideology, PACs are unlikely to give to a campaign unless it can prove it can win.

Once a PAC has made a contribution, make sure they can protect their investment. Show PAC directors' ways to encourage other PAC participation. Invite members to finance committee meetings, keep them posted on important milestones like meeting fundraising goals, or share good press clips with them. Make them champions for your campaign.

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**FUNDRAISING  
AND  
BUDGET**

THANK YOU,  
THANK YOU,  
THANK YOU.

DONORS WHO ARE  
RECOGNIZED AND  
THANKED FOR THEIR  
CONTRIBUTION WILL  
GIVE AGAIN.

---

**FINANCE ADMINISTRATION**

The fundraising operation is not just in charge of collecting dollars. It is also in charge of keeping track of those dollars and donors in an orderly way for accounting and legal purposes. The fundraising operation must ensure that every donation is permissible under the law, does not exceed legal limits, and does not cause controversy that detracts from your message.

Thank you, thank you, and thank you. Donors who are recognized and thanked for their contribution will give again. Donors who are not thanked will not. Create a system for timely written thank-you notes to donors and stick to it.

Keep track to go back for more. Another reason to have an accurate and easy database of contributors is to track contributor levels. Re-solicitation is an important part of the fundraising strategy; your campaign should be able to list donors by contribution level. That way the finance operation can easily see who is a likely candidate to give again and who should go solicit the additional contribution.

# 04



## VOTER CONTACT

The key to victory is finding your voters, and ensuring they vote.



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WHO  
+  
WHAT  
+  
WHEN  
+  
WHERE  
=  
VOTES

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## CHAPTER 04

Every candidate believes that if they could only meet everyone that was going to vote in the election and talk to them for five minutes, the election would be a snap.

You don't have the time, people or the money to undertake that kind of effort.

Make prioritized decisions about how to deliver your message based on:

- What you want to say
- To whom you want to say it
- Where these voters are
- When you are going to say it
- How the message gets delivered

Think of the last movie you went to. How did you find out about it, and why did you decide to go? Did a neighbor mention it? Maybe you read a good review in the paper from a columnist you trust. You probably saw a television advertisement, heard an advertisement on the radio, or saw an advertisement in the paper or website that caught your eye. Maybe you go to movies every week and this one got your attention on the theatre marquee. Or, as is frequently the case, you may have a favorite actor or actress and if he or she is in a movie, you'll be likely to line up to see it.

Compare the movie business and campaigns: consider how they have the same communications requirements. Both have to identify an audience and send them a message in a variety of ways that convinces them to get up out of their chairs at home, come to a specific location (theater or polling place), and perform an action (buy a ticket or vote). In either case, the movie is at the theatre for only a short time.

In fact, your movie is at the theatre for only one day—Election Day. Like the movie industry, you have to figure out who will be likely attendees, and get those people information that will get them to make the right choice—voting for your candidate.

### TARGETING

Sinners, Saints, & Savable—To Whom Do We Talk?

Getting the majority of the vote is the name of the game. How you determine who the voters are, and on how to extend your precious voter contact resources, is of paramount importance. Refine your search into the smallest areas that data will allow. Determine who in those areas votes, who might support your campaign, what voters you need to swing your way, and who is likely to do so. The key to victory is finding your voters, and ensuring they vote.

# 04

## VOTER CONTACT

The single most important denominator for all campaigns is scarcity: not enough people, time or money. The most important decision your campaign will make is the determination of the target audience—who will vote, to whom do we talk, and, who do we ignore?

In any campaign, there are three kinds of voters: those for you, those opposed, and those undecided (otherwise known as saints, sinners, and savable). Your campaign must determine how to differentiate these voters, because you will approach each category differently. Your “base” voters (saints) will be targeted for motivation and turnout; you will ignore those who you determine are against you (sinners); and your persuasion efforts will be focused on those with an open mind (the savable voters).

So how do you find these voters? You have to understand two things about voter behavior. First, voters tend to be “repeat offenders”. That is, they tend to retain the same electoral preferences over time. They will vote in primaries over and over if they are tied to a political party, or they will vote absentee each year if possible. Speak to them when they are paying attention.

Second, people tend to live near folks who vote like them. These “birds of a feather” not only flock together, they vote alike, for the most part. Taking these two things into consideration, much is revealed about the areas where your campaign is being waged. Depending on who is running in a given year, certain areas will be more Democratic, more Republican, more persuadable or more competitive.

By examining electoral returns from a historical perspective by precinct, ward or even county, we can learn a lot about what to expect in any given election year. You can know how many voters are registered, how many can be expected to vote, how a particular party will perform and even how many “ticket-splitters” or “swing voters” are in each jurisdiction. By learning these things, we can then rank these areas in terms of priority and which voter contact tools available would be most effective. This insures a much more effective application of candidate time, media, mail, phones, volunteer activity, visibility and get-out-the-vote activities.

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THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT DENOMINATOR FOR ALL CAMPAIGNS IS SCARCITY: NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE, TIME OR MONEY.

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### KEY RESEARCH ELEMENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL VOTER CONTACT PROGRAM INCLUDE:

① Collecting Voter Data



② Quantifying Collected Data



③ Voter Targeting



## COLLECTING VOTER DATA

Much of this data will have been gathered during the phase in which you established your strategic assumptions. Utilize voter characteristics such as income, age, education, ethnicity, occupation, and religious affiliation to guide your targeting among the voting population. Consulting firms which specialize in matching voter files to consumer data (magazines, homeownership, car registrations, etc.) can also be useful in deciding which voter matches your message.

What have past voting patterns been? Normal turnout, party registration, average party turnout, relevant swing vote and split ticket patterns will help sharpen your focus.

## QUANTIFYING COLLECTED DATA

Now you need to break down the collected data into the smallest possible political subdivision (usually the precinct). Factor in individual data, such as voter history, age, sex, race, party identification, etc.

## VOTER TARGETING

Utilizing the targeting you've arrived at by analyzing your data and factoring in the current context of your election, establish a baseline number of votes you believe it will take to win. This becomes your vote goal.

Determine the relative importance of all data to your campaign, and use it to profile favorable and potentially persuadable voters. How many favorable voters are there? You'll need to contact them to reinforce their support. How many undecided voters are there? They will require repeated contact to persuade them to support you and to reinforce that support over the course of your campaign.

At each step in the process, you will need to determine your vote goal. In each county, town, ward, and precinct, determine how many votes you will need to win.

## VOTER FILES

A voter file is a computerized list of registered voters in a particular area: precinct, town, county, congressional district, or state. The voter file is organized by individual voter attributes and frequency. These attributes can be selected in such a way that your campaign can receive lists of voters that are alike in age, gender, party identification, neighborhood or precinct, income, housing type, education level—all sorts of combinations.

Used together with precinct targeting and polling, voter files help your campaign learn more about who is living in a certain area and match up those voters to specific messages based on who those voters are and what is important to them.

Quality of the data varies from voter file to voter file. Some files are professionally maintained by database companies and have been enhanced with all kinds of demographic information. Some are maintained by county officials alone



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### VOTER CONTACT

IF THEY VOTED  
BEFORE THEY WILL  
VOTE AGAIN

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# 04

## VOTER CONTACT

### VOTER CONTACT STRATEGY

If you have low name identification, your campaign should undertake programs to raise that name ID before you try to go through a voter identification exercise.

If you have a natural base that is traditionally poor at turning out, then more funds and volunteers should be reserved for get-out-the-vote (GOTV) activities.

If you have no such base, then your campaign should focus on persuading those that you know will turn out.

If your campaign is flush with money, then you may want to send out mail and go on TV early to “lock in” voters and define the issues for your campaign. If it is strapped for cash, then you may be forced to think of ways to utilize volunteers on a more grassroots-type campaign.

and are available only on paper. Most states and counties will allow a candidate to purchase their voters files at a minimal cost. Moreover, many state political parties have the voter files available for their candidates. Find out what shape the voter file is in. Make decisions about how to enhance the file based on what your campaign needs.

Used with targeting analysis, voter files will go far in answering questions about who to talk to and where they live. What’s great about the voter file is that it will give you exact counts of the type of people you want to target.

Voter identification is a very potent tool in helping your campaign focus on the right voters. You can call them up, ask them who they support, and ask them what they care about in your campaign. If they support you, you make sure they get to the polls. If they are undecided, you can send them mail and other messages based on what they tell you they care about. And if they support the other guy, you forget them, and not waste any more money or time on them.

### VOTER CONTACT TOOLS

Voter contact tools range from the least personal and most broadly-based to very voter-specific. Every campaign is different. Use the right mix depending on what your communications needs are and the political landscape and culture of the area in which you live.



### LITERATURE DROPS

Dropping off leaflets is what people conjure up when they think of field campaigning. Recruiting volunteers, targeting precincts, and taking your campaign message from neighbor to neighbor is basic to campaigns.

Easy to think of, but a massive amount of planning is required to do a literature drop well. The precincts must be targeted, volunteers must be recruited days and weeks before the planned lit drop, routes must be drawn up, maps put together, food and drinks for volunteers in place, etc. All of this needs to be done in a business-like fashion, or volunteers will only do it once. If it isn’t meaningful, purposeful, and fun, you won’t get any repeat volunteers.

Each volunteer should be given a lit drop kit or packet. In the packet is a thank you note from the candidate, brief instructions, a map and directions to their designated lit drop area, a phone number to call if there is a problem, and a button or sticker for your campaign. Take some time to train your walkers before they go out. Try to be on hand to rev up the volunteers, and even go with them for a short time.

For the most part, lit drops early on are simply “cold drops”—the volunteer simply leaves the literature at the door without ringing or knocking to speak with the voter. It is more



efficient this way. It is a great way to build a little name identification and get some important basic messages about your campaign to the voter. Remember to tell people to avoid placing literature in mailboxes—it is against postal regulations.



#### **VISIBILITY**

Used early and late, visibility methods get name ID up and call attention to the race. Like leafleting, it is extremely difficult to target voters through using visibility, and it is made worse by a limited message platform. You can usually only get a slogan like

“Johnson for Jobs” or “Experienced Leadership—Vote for Smith” on a sign, bumper sticker, or button. The general rule for these types of materials is to do enough so that people don’t complain that you don’t have a real campaign, but don’t do so much that you’ve wasted campaign money that would be better spent elsewhere.



#### **YARD SIGNS**

Effective yard sign campaigns are a brisk operation. That is, they all should go up at once to create instant momentum, if possible. In every campaign, there is someone who is the yard sign “czar.” They will run the operation, place new signs and make sure they are maintained.



#### **DIRECT MAIL**

You know direct mail—you sift through it every night when you get home. You know the mail that works, and the mail that doesn’t. Generally, the direct mail piece has a life span of about seven seconds—in that time, the reader walks from mailbox to trash can.

Mail is highly effective because it is both impacting and targeted. As the cost of radio and TV has risen, mail has become a cost-effective way to deliver emotional messages directly to the voter. Well done mail can really break through the din and get your name and message in front of voters. Pictures and large-type headlines can make an in-your-face statement about you or your opponent. Soft pictures of family, of a candidate’s heritage or career can also project warm emotions.

At the same time, unlike broadcast efforts, direct mail can be refined and discretely targeted. Females aged 25-45 can receive a piece of mail about schools, while seniors can receive a candidate's message about Medicare. Men with hunting licenses can receive mail about gun control. With the use of the voter file, your campaign can slice and dice the electorate and target specific audiences for specific messages with direct mail.

Mail also “accumulates” on voters- sending 3-5 pieces can solidify you in peoples’ minds. It is possible to send repetitive messages with different mail pieces to the same voters over time. The targets can be interchangeable, and some voters could receive up to a dozen mail pieces during the course of your campaign.

Good direct mail is not cheap, but cheap mail is easy to spot. Do not send out poorly produced mail with sloppy graphics, bad writing, and poor photographs. It really reflects badly on you and your campaign.

## TYPES OF DIRECT MAIL



### BIO OR INTRODUCTORY PIECE

Introduces you to the voters; usually the first piece of direct mail sent.

### ISSUE PIECE

Highlights your positions on a few of the major issues that you have identified.

### COMPARE & CONTRAST PIECE

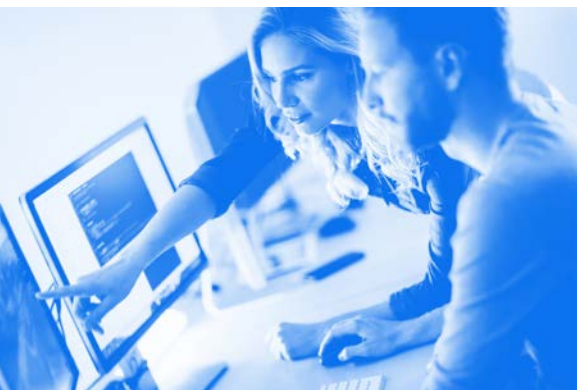
Usually a side-by-side comparison of the issues where you and your opponent stand.

### ATTACK PIECE

Provides facts and information about your opponent.

### GOTV MAIL

The final mail the voters get from you, quite often a postcard reminding people to vote along with your theme and one or two key messages.



## CAMPAIGN WEBSITE

The campaign website is the likely source of information most voters will use to make their decision on whether or not to vote for you. All of your other voter contact- mail, ads, radio, etc., lead the voter to the website. Take time and spend money to make sure it is as appealing as possible.

### SIMPLE HOME PAGE DESIGN

The key to attracting people back to your website is making it simple and easy to use. The best general rule of thumb for this is to "KISS" the voters—keep it short and sweet. While you can include any number of links to detailed information on your website, keep that detailed information off your homepage itself. It should be limited to a nice photo or two and logo, along with links to various activities of your campaign, which are listed in detail in the next section. It should also, if at all possible, fit on one screen. A good sample home page is shown on the next page.

### WEBSITE CONTENT

Your homepage should include simple and easy-to-find links to the following topics:

<a href="#">Biography Page</a>	<a href="#">Contact Information Page</a>
<a href="#">Platform/Issues Page</a>	<a href="#">Endorsements Page</a>
<a href="#">District of Information Page</a>	<a href="#">Press Room Page</a>
<a href="#">Volunteer Page</a>	<a href="#">Photo Album and Video Page</a>
<a href="#">Contribution Page</a>	<a href="#">Poll or Survey Page</a>
<a href="#">Calendar of Events Page</a>	<a href="#">Favorite Links</a>

# 05



## EARNED MEDIA

There's no better type of coverage.

## CHAPTER 05

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### YOUR STRATEGY SHOULD:

- ↳ Utilize all the available tools to obtain coverage.
- ↳ Establish a good relationship with the media.
- ↳ Respond to issues raised and events arising during your campaign.

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### HERE ARE THE GOALS YOU MUST STRIVE FOR TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE AGENDA:

- ↳ Know your message.
- ↳ Drive home your message.
- ↳ Respond rapidly. Know when to respond and when NOT to respond.
- ↳ Play offense as well as defense. Good press efforts seek to make news as well as respond to it.

### HARD WORK EARNS IT

The old phrase for press coverage was “free media”. No such thing. It is now called “earned media”. When the established media reports a story on your message the way you want, you will end up saying, “We couldn’t BUY that coverage.” And you will be right.

The press can make or break you. You need to have a strategy for the press, just as you would for every element of your campaign.

Most voters will view you through a media lens. They will read about you in the newspapers, hear about you on the radio, and watch you on TV. How you will appear in the public eye via the media will be a direct reflection of how you organize your press operation.

The key is to use all of the organizational tools available to manage and control press coverage to the greatest extent possible.

### MESSAGE DISCIPLINE:

#### THE FIRST THREE LETTERS OF “NEWS” ARE “N-E-W”

News is an accurate description of a timely event that affects a large number of people. You must be mindful that there is a lot of “clutter” out there—a lot of news about a lot of things (sports, celebrities, politics) and you must compete for attention. Therefore, you must be sure that what you are saying is topical and current. That doesn’t mean everything new you put out will be covered. But if everything you present in a public way ONLY speaks to your message, then chances are greatly enhanced that ONLY your message will punch through.

### STAYING ON MESSAGE—REINFORCE THE THEME

Your campaign is what you say it is. You’ve got to live by the phrase “stay on message”. Remember this—every part of your campaign is open to media coverage, and thereby, opportunity to stay on message. Your ads, voter contact program, media, schedule, even staff changes, could all be covered by the press. Make the most of these opportunities by saying to the voters exactly what you mean to say.

### KEEP THE PRESS ON YOUR SIDE

It is essential to know the “ground rules” of dealing with reporters. Until you have developed a relationship with a reporter, consider EVERYTHING you say to be “on the record”.

## GROUND RULES

### ○ Off the Record (IT ISN'T)

This means that the information you are about to give the reporter is for his or her benefit only, so they may have a better understanding of the situation under discussion. It is not to appear in print or broadcast in any context. A warning: many reporters have been told by their legal advisors that there is no such thing as “off the record”. As long as the person being interviewed knows he or she is talking to a reporter, it is all “on the record”. They can also use what they learn from you to dig up another source that is a little more likely to let them use it. So avoid giving information “off the record” that you do not want to appear in the media.

### ○ ‘On the Record’

This means that anything you say is fair game for print or tape. “On the record” comments should be kept brief and to the point. Reporters often make errors because they have to encapsulate comments, and they miss the gist of what has been said. Try to comment in small “sound bites” of 15 to 30 seconds at a maximum. A short answer is more likely to be reported accurately and brevity increases the chance of being included in a newscast. Plus, the less you say, the more likely your comments won’t be heavily edited.



## QUICK TIPS

Never answer a hypothetical question.

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It's okay to say, "I don't know." You must follow up with the answer.

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Avoid long pauses, especially when on the phone.

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Answer the question and stop.

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Answer the question you want to answer— stay on message.

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# 05

## EARNED MEDIA



### PRESS KIT CONTENTS

- ↳ Candidate biography
- ↳ Photo for website and photo on website that can be downloaded
- ↳ Announcement statement
- ↳ Fact sheet on your campaign
- ↳ Campaign brochure
- ↳ Issue briefs, or white papers
- ↳ Positive news clips
- ↳ Op-eds, written and published

### PITCH, PITCH, PITCH

You are not finished when you send out the release. You need to follow up the release with a “pitch call”. Call the reporter and make sure they received it, and sell the story a little. Don’t overdo it, but tell the reporter why you think it would be good to run the story, or get your candidate’s quote in the story he or she is working on relevant to the release.

## PRESS MATERIALS

Once you have developed a strategy for communicating with the press, you must develop effective press materials designed to be disseminated through diverse media outlets. Regardless of the medium, media type or outlet, you must always be sure to maintain the integrity of your message.

### PRESS RELEASE

#### Format

At the top, write that the piece is a news release (instead of an advisory or schedule). In the upper left-hand corner, write “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” and the date. Opposite, in the upper right-hand corner, write “FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_”, and put the press secretary’s name, work and home telephone numbers, cell phone (if it is used for incoming press calls), and email address.

#### The Story

In writing the release, think of the story it will tell. Write the story the way you want to see it. Start with a brief headline that encapsulates the message you want to convey. Don’t make it too long. Keep enough space in the body so reporters can scribble in the margins. Keep the release short and concise. If you have to use more than one page, write the word “MORE” at the bottom of the page.

Remember the journalism school “reverse-pyramid”. The most useful information is at the top of the story – the “lead”. This first paragraph is the focus of your message; it contains the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of the release.

Use quotes that you want to see in print or read on TV and radio. Look for a sharp “bite” that encapsulates what you want to say in a catchy way. At the same time, don’t try too hard; otherwise you will be too cute. A meat-and-potatoes quote that makes your point is better than something contrived and silly.

### THE NEWS CONFERENCE

News conferences are the heavy artillery in your arsenal. Call one only when you are prepared to look the voters in the eye and explain or appeal in their language for support, understanding, or outrage.

They require intense and thorough preparation. They should be called infrequently; you are not the President and should not expect to pull off a media event more than once during the campaign. Make it count.



Advance screen the site: contingency plan for bad weather etc.

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Try to ensure that the lighting and seating are adequate and the public address system is working.

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Have press kits.

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Do not tap on the microphone to make sure it is working.

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Show up on time. Reporter's schedules are as tight or tighter than your own.

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Be sensitive to the camera. Try to have visuals, either large charts or other people who can be interviewed to support or dramatize your position or contention.

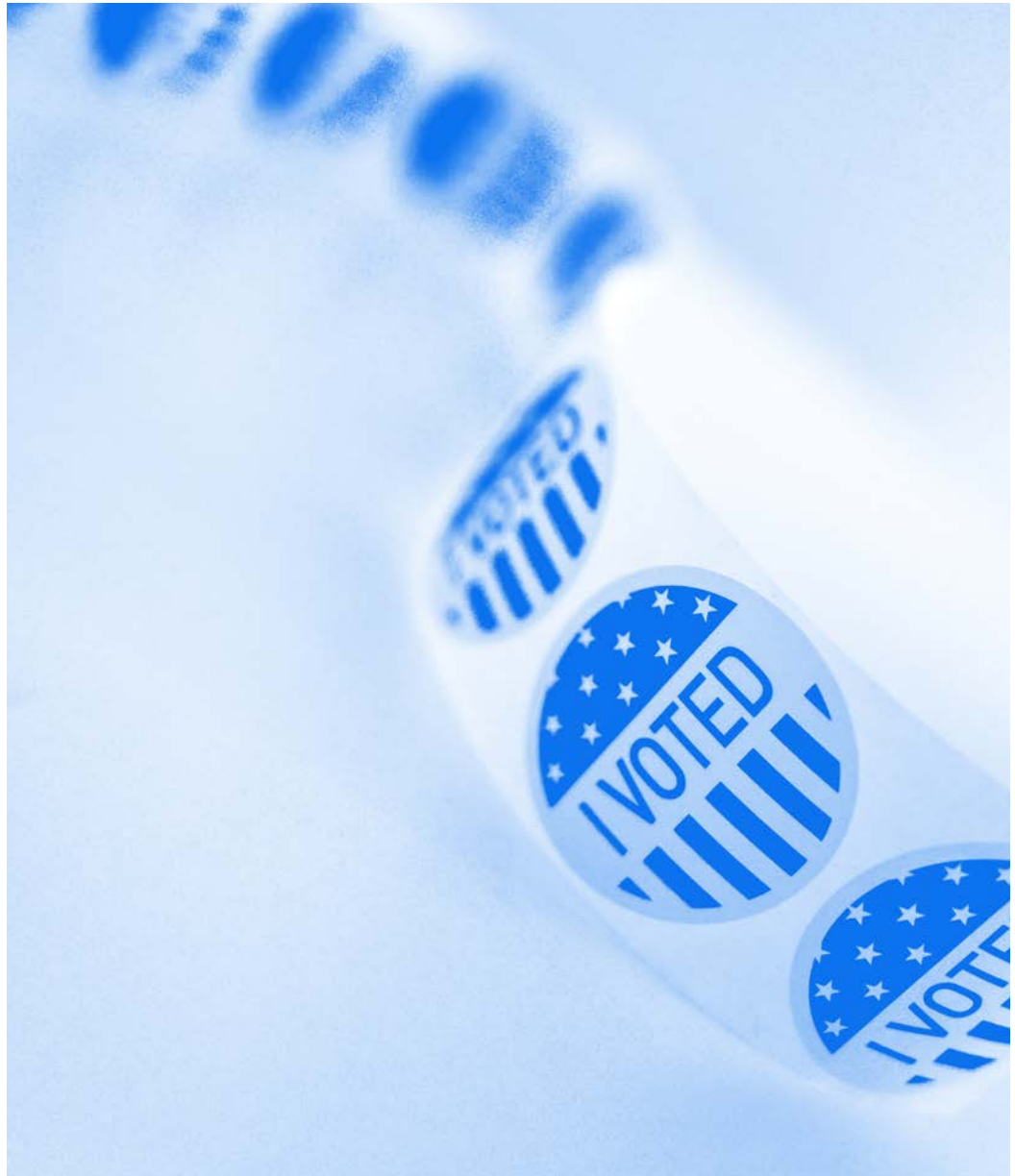
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Have the setting make your point for you. It is best if the background is not too busy visually or aurally. Don't allow the setting to compete for the reporter's and subsequently the voters' attention.

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Deliver an opening statement and then move quickly to questions. Keep the responses short, nice-clipped sound bites.

06



# GET OUT THE VOTE

One Day Sale

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## GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV) IS THE MOST DEMANDING COMPONENT OF YOUR CAMPAIGN.

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### MAKE STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS

#### WHAT VOTERS ARE WE TARGETING?

- *Where do they live?*

#### WHAT ABOUT TURNOUT?

- *How will the top of the ticket influence turnout?*

#### WHAT ARE THE RULES OF ABSENTEE AND EARLY VOTING?

- *What is the political history of these efforts?*
- *What are the likely outcomes of such an effort to get votes “in the bank” early?*

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## THE MOST CRUCIAL TASK ON ELECTION DAY IS GETTING YOUR VOTERS OUT TO THE POLLS.

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## CHAPTER 06

### VOTE IN PERSON, VOTE BY MAIL, JUST VOTE

Your fate resides in the answer to this question: Who will come out and vote on Election Day— your supporters or the opposition’s?

Get Out the Vote (GOTV) is the most demanding component of your campaign in terms of organization, attention to detail, and accountability. Weeks of preparation must be undertaken to ensure that people show up to work, know what to do, when and where to do it, and most importantly, how to remain calm when something unexpected occurs.

Close races are won or lost on Election Day. There are stories every election about candidates who enter Election Day a couple of points behind in the polls, but pull off upset wins by executing their GOTV plan flawlessly.

### STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS

While the following strategic assessments are components of your initial campaign plan, they are critical to creating an effective GOTV program.

### ASSESS WHAT HAS GONE ON BEFORE

Have workers gone door-to-door?

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Did they use phones effectively?

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How good were the lists?

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What groups could be relied upon for bodies on Election Day?

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What groups were worthless?

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Are workers paid for Election Day activity, or is there a strong volunteer tradition?

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What did the other party do last time?

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Were there any voting irregularities?

# 06

## IDENTIFY ORGANIZATIONS

NFIB, SIERRA CLUB, NRA, ETC.

What will they do on Election Day?

Will they work on their own membership or lend support to your effort?

How many people can be counted on?

Are these numbers real or dream numbers?

Can they help with other support such as rides, meals, communications, or phones?

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WHAT WILL OTHER CANDIDATES DO?

Will they target the same vote?

Can you work together and combine your resources?

Is the party conducting a coordinated effort with other candidates on the ticket? Is the party effort viable, and will it enhance your effort?

## ABSENTEE VOTERS

The real Election Day is the day that absentee ballots are mailed by the election office. If you don't have a plan in place to communicate with and track the absentee voters, you will give up those votes to your opponent.

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Find out what day absentee ballots can be requested, what day are they mailed, and what days and locations will in-person early voting take place.

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Make sure you are on the email list or have secured permission to get a daily update from the election office of who has requested an absentee ballot. Once ballots are mailed you can get daily updates and know which voters still need to be contacted.

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Compare your 'Saints' list with the 'Absentee' ballot list and devise a strategy to contact those voters by mail, phone, or email to ensure they vote early.

## THE ABCs OF GOTV

You face two imperatives—talking to those voters who will vote regardless of whether you reach them or not and finding and motivating those voters who would vote for you if they can be persuaded to vote. GOTV efforts focus on the latter group. The most crucial task on Election Day is getting your voters out to the polls. Remember that you are trying to change voter behavior to your benefit. Focus your program on and direct your resources to those voters who would vote for you if they were to vote at all.

## GOTV ACTIVITY IS SELECTIVE

You cannot go to every precinct and affect turnout—nor do you want to. Work high-performance voter areas first. Then, if you have completed voter identification in swing areas (those precincts and wards with ticket-splitters), target areas where you have the most identified supporters. Unless it is a high-performance area, target only identified supporters or groups of voters that you can reasonably assume are with you.



Endorsements from interest groups may yield blocks of voters that you can reach through the mail or on the phone. If you need to, you can add these supportive groups of voters to your GOTV target list and work those areas or audiences on Election Day.

A community probably has a direct stake in electing you. Involve it from the start, thus creating ownership in your campaign from the very beginning. You cannot wait to build a relationship in the closing weeks. An outsider coming in the last few days to get the community to vote tells people that you have taken them for granted.

By the time Election Day rolls around, everyone has received about 10 pounds of mail, 30 or 40 phone calls in the last two weeks, and every time they turn on the radio or television they hear, or see a campaign message.

Re-establishing your relationship with voters in the days prior to Election Day is the way to “punch through” and communicate the urgency of Election Day.

Don’t squander your efforts by having people stand around the polls and hand out stuff willy-nilly to people coming to vote. What is the one thing you know about voters who show up to the polls on Election Day? They’ve already decided to vote.



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↳ Civic organizations

↳ Business groups

↳ Family breakfasts

Do you really think the piece of paper you hand them seconds before they pull the curtain in the polling booth will turn them around? Instead, put people on the streets motivating your supporters to get up and get down to the polling place.

Don’t forget to include absentee voters in your final weekend GOTV plan. Absentee ballots are valid until the polls close on Election Day.

During the course of your campaign you probably have concentrated on persuading open-minded voters and left your base alone. Now go back to that base, and repeatedly contact your voters to motivate them to vote.

### **PHONE BANKS**

Set up your phone banks to call into areas where you cannot walk or where the walk program is falling down, or where turnout is particularly weak and you can boost your efforts.

The phone message is simple and direct, and callers should be encouraged to keep dialing through the list. The same is true for callers as with walkers—any discussion of issues or arguments is burning precious time. They should be talking only to supporters at this stage in your campaign.

The main thing is to plow through the list. So get your callers to make contact, be polite, be urgent, and keep phoning. They should not be afraid to leave a message on an answering machine reminding the voter of their support and to leave information regarding times the polls are open and where to call to find out where they need to go.

# 06

## GET OUT THE VOTE

### **VISIBILITY / SOUND**

Plant gates, shopping centers, public transit sites, government office buildings, main intersections, and office buildings are all good places for visibility. Make sure you are waving signs where your voters are, not just lots of people.

Remember—only deploy workers for these activities after you are confident you have enough people going to the streets and phoning to get your voters out to the polls.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Unfortunately, this seems to be the job everyone wants to do, but you don't need a fleet of drivers. Set up a ride program using people who know the area. Since most shut-ins and seniors need rides, select responsible-looking adults and make sure the cars and the drivers themselves are easily identified as campaign workers for transporting seniors. An effective absentee voting program can drastically reduce the demand for transportation.

### **DOORHANGERS**

The weekend before or the morning of the election, hand door hangers or sample ballots on targeted doors. Take the same routes you will use on Election Day and you will be able to work the bugs out of the route.

## CONCLUSION—

# THE ONE-DAY SALE

ELECTION DAY

## ELECTION DAY

A DAY YOU HAVE DREAMED OF  
AND PRAYED FOR. A DAY YOU  
HAVE HAD NIGHTMARES OF  
AND WISHED AWAY.

### THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PASS THE TIME ON ELECTION DAY:

- L Go stand on a busy streetcorner and wave your sign at passing cars
- L Make thank you phone calls to all of your volunteers
- L Bring fruit to your volunteers
- L Buy your spouse something nice
- L Drink plenty of water and take a walk
- L Make phone calls to likely voters
- L Arrive on time for your election watch party

### THINGS NOT TO DO ON ELECTION DAY BEFORE THE POLLS CLOSE:

- L Drink alcohol or large amounts of coffee—stay calm
- L Get in the way
- L Talk to the press before the polls close

If you can wake up on Election Day and know that you did all that you could- you can almost enjoy Election Day.

Should you win, wait for a call from your opponent and be gracious. Ask them to stay involved and work with you for the betterment of the community. Should you lose, call your opponent and be gracious. Let them know you would like to stay involved and work with you where possible for the betterment of the community.

Use this guide, in parts or as a whole, to be a better candidate or campaign volunteer. Teach others. The change you desire will only occur with enough people working in the same direction.

Going through this process you will have learned a lot about yourself. Take advantage of this and put extra effort into fixing the bad and strengthening the good. Make sure to thank those who helped you and keep track of them, win or lose you will likely run again.

**Enjoy the ride, make a positive impact on your fellow citizens, and remember to vote for yourself!**

