

• A PUBLICATION OF THE CAMPAIGN WORKSHOP •

Ready, Set, GO!

**JUMP-START YOUR
POLITICAL CAMPAIGN**

**THE CAMPAIGN
WORKSHOP**

SEPTEMBER 2015

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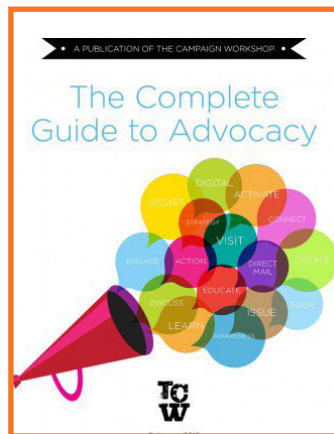
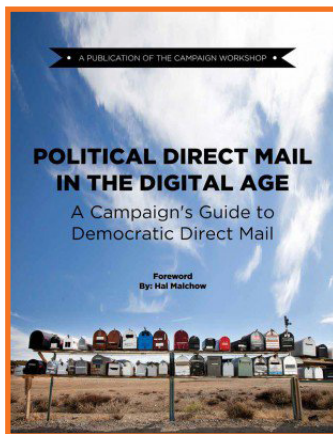
Phone: (202) 223-8884

Email: info@thecampaignworkshop.com

Visit us at:

1660 L Street, NW
Suite 506
Washington, DC 20036

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Part 1:

ORGANIZING YOUR CAMPAIGN

Your Campaign Team

Campaign Staff Structure

A candidate's campaign staff is incredibly important in making a campaign successful, manageable and fun for everyone involved (including the candidate). Obviously, larger campaigns will require a more robust team, but even a small campaign will need a few essential staff members. It's important that you figure out who will make up your team, which positions will be paid, and the responsibilities associated with each staff role.

CAMPAIGN MANAGER

Your campaign manager is the most important role you'll need to fill. This person will take the lead on everything relating to your campaign, so it should be someone you trust and respect. It should not be you, the candidate. It also shouldn't be your spouse, a family member, or a close personal friend. You need someone who can be the intermediary between you, the candidate, and the rest of the staff and any consultants you may be working with. This individual needs to also be willing to stand up to you and tell you when you are wrong, without fear of damaging a personal relationship.

FINANCE DIRECTOR

Any successful campaign will need money, and that means you'll need someone who can help raise it. One aspect of running for office that almost every candidate complains about is asking people for money, but it's absolutely essential to running a successful campaign. If you're not going to force yourself to do it, you need someone who will. A finance director is an organizer who will help you assemble call sheets and customize asks to each individual donor. For many campaigns, they are a critical element to reaching fundraising benchmarks.

FIELD COORDINATOR

Regardless of the size of your campaign, you're likely going to rely heavily on the support and work of volunteers and field staff. Having someone who can manage those people and their workload will help keep things running smoothly. Hopefully this will be someone who can manage a lot of moving parts at once and who the volunteers enjoy working with, so they will keep coming back to help.

CONSULTANTS

Chances are you won't be able to hire people for every job that needs to be done on your campaign, and that's fine. That's where consultants will be an important element of your campaign. You can use consultants for your communications (digital, mail, television), general strategy, field, phones, and more.

Building your campaign team is an important part of the process in running for office. Take your time and make sure you're surrounding yourself with people who are loyal and trustworthy, but who aren't afraid to tell you when you're wrong. And of course, take the time to make sure all paid positions make sense within your larger budget.

HIRING A FULL-TIME CAMPAIGN MANAGER



Running for office, particularly for the first time, is a daunting task. Raising money, especially if you have never done it before, can be overwhelming and uncomfortable. This may lead a candidate to decide against hiring a full-time campaign manager as a way to conserve money. Having a campaign manager, however, can be the key to winning. Here's why:

YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING

There aren't enough hours in the day. You have to delegate tasks to stay on track and organized.

YOU NEED SOMEBODY TO HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE

A campaign manager's job is to ensure that you make all of your fundraising calls and connect with voters every day. Having your time micromanaged isn't fun, but that's what it takes to win.

YOU HAVE A DESIGNATED "BAD GUY"

You need someone who can pull you away from various situations; otherwise you'll get stuck at endless bake sales and community meetings. Your campaign manager can play the role of the "bad guy" who reminds you have to leave.

YOU GAIN AN OBJECTIVE VIEW

It's easy to get lost in the back-and-forth with the opponent or the minutiae of an issue. You may not see the forest for the trees. Your campaign manager has a more objective view and can help you step back and take a rational look at the situation.

YOU NEED A PROFESSIONAL WITH EXPERIENCE GETTING PEOPLE ELECTED

For the most part, your manager shouldn't be your spouse or a friend who does it part-time. You need a professional who knows what it takes to win and will be able to keep your campaign on track.

Hiring a campaign manager is a significant expense. Most campaign managers make between \$2,000-\$4,000 a month, but when you consider the benefits they provide, they are worth every penny.

Harnessing the Power of Volunteers

The Importance of Volunteer Training

Once you have developed a strong network of people ready to phone bank and canvass for you, it's time to focus on training your volunteer staff. A campaign volunteer is only as good as the information and training you provide them. For many voters, these volunteers will be the face of your campaign, so it's important they are prepared and know what to do in every situation.

When scheduling new volunteers, make sure you include time for a 30-minute training before they start canvassing or phone banking. Here are a few things you can do to help them prepare and stay on message while talking to voters:

- Ask all volunteers to read through the script a few times to themselves, and then out loud in pairs. This will familiarize them with the script and address any pronunciation issues they may have with words or names in the script.
- Do a few role-playing scenarios so volunteers get an idea of what they may encounter when speaking with voters. They will learn how to stick to a message when confronted with something that might sidetrack them.
- Have a frequently asked questions (FAQs) sheet (e.g., what is the candidate going to do about crime?) to go with the script, so volunteers can address issue-specific questions they receive.
- Teach volunteers how to mark up walk sheets and phone sheets, or how to use the mobile canvassing system. Let them know which marks and information you need on phone and canvass sheets and which you don't. This will help to ensure your data is clean and recorded accurately.
- Make sure volunteers know it's okay to say, "I don't know," to a voter's question. Have them take down the question and the voter's contact information, and let the person know the campaign will respond. The last thing the campaign needs is a volunteer inadvertently misrepresenting the candidate's positions.



EMPOWERING VOLUNTEER LEADERS



Your campaign's field organizers can't do all of the voter contact on their own. While paid staff is desirable for any campaign, empowering volunteer leaders can increase your campaign's capacity. Utilizing volunteer leaders means you can run multiple phone banks and canvasses at the same time, in different areas. Once empowered, these leaders are also more likely to come back for future campaigns. Thus, it's worthwhile and important to develop volunteer leaders.

Of course, not all volunteers are equally suitable candidates for leadership. Your best bets often present themselves naturally. Look closely at the person who offers to help get a new volunteer set up when a staffer is busy with another task. This individual is likely a good candidate for a leadership position.

SOME HELPFUL TIPS FOR EMPOWERING VOLUNTEER LEADERS:

- Begin leadership training without telling the volunteer they are being vetted. Simply ask your prospect if they could run the phone bank or canvass while you step out. During their trial run you should completely leave the office to give your volunteer a true sense of responsibility.
- After you return and the phone bank or canvass has ended, check in with your leadership recruit to get feedback. Early on, your recruits are likely to be apprehensive about their abilities, so provide feedback using the sandwich method: begin with what they did well, offer a suggestion for improvement, and end with a compliment about the work they did.
- Give your leadership recruit more responsibility each time they come for a shift. The goal is to get them comfortable with their responsibilities before asking them to take on a more formal role.
- Stay engaged. When training volunteer leaders, don't just count on their commitment to the campaign to propel them forward. Retaining volunteer leaders is equal parts training and schmoozing. It's a relationship – make sure you take time to get to know them. Committed volunteers also love inside baseball, so collect a few pieces of non-damaging information passed to you from the campaign leadership and pass it along to them.

Delegate to your volunteer leaders and empower them to lead phone banks, run canvasses, monitor data entry, pull information from your database and map canvass routes. If done properly, by get out the vote (GOTV) time, you will be managing a slate of volunteer leaders.

KEEPING VOLUNTEERS ON TRACK



Direct voter contact, like canvassing and phone banking, is one of the most effective means of persuading voters and getting them to turn out to vote. You need a lot of people to carry out an effective direct voter contact program, and volunteers are a great way to get the job done. The goal is to train your volunteers, set them up with lists, and send them out help to spread the campaign's message to your targeted voter universe.

This, however, is only effective if you are able to keep your volunteers on track and focused. Since canvassing and phone banking is, by its nature, a team activity, there are a number of distractions that can get in the way. That's why it's so important to have a system in place that helps make things enjoyable but ultimately keeps volunteers focused on the task at hand. Below are tips to help keep your volunteers on track:

SETTING SHIFT HOURS

Make sure volunteers know what their shift hours are, and set clear expectations in advance. This will ensure volunteers do not try to leave early.

COMPETITION

Creating friendly competition between volunteers is an effective way to motivate volunteers and increase the number of voter contacts. All you need is a dry erase board to display in your office and a prize for the winner.

LIST SIZE

Volunteers will rarely come back for a second packet once they've completed a list, so it's best to overestimate the number of contacts you expect a volunteer to make when cutting a phone list or canvass packet. That way, you know you're likely to keep people busy for their full shift.

CHATTING

Volunteers will inevitably engage in conversation with one another when they should be working. While some chatting helps to develop a sense of community, it's important to limit it. If you notice excessive chatter, act as though you haven't noticed and politely check in with them about how the voter contact is going, what their responses have been, etc. They will likely feel embarrassed about not doing the work and get back to it quickly.

Strategy Basics for Your Campaign Plan

The Importance of a Campaign Plan

Every campaign comes with a number of unknowns, and you can't account for everything. The more you plan, however, the better prepared the campaign will be to deal with all those unknowns, increasing your chances for a win.

A good campaign plan includes a number of elements, the most important of which is an accurate budget that accounts for both the intake and outflow of your campaign dollars. For a more detailed account of the elements of a good campaign plan, check out our other ebook [*Are You Ready to Run?*](#)

Stretching Minimal Resources

Most campaigns run on minimal budgets and have limited resources. You and your team need to find creative ways to make your dollars go further, helping to conserve resources for when you really need to use them, e.g. during GOTV. Below are a few tips for making the most of what you have:



PRINTER TONER AND PAPER

- If offered printer toner and/or paper as a donation, ask for more than you need. Keep a small stash hidden in case of printing emergencies.
- Enter data directly into the VAN in order to reduce the need for printed copies.
- Reuse paper and print double-sided when possible.
- If you can, set up the printer and computer to reduce toner use.

OFFICE SUPPLIES

- If you run low on office supplies, ask super-volunteers to bring supplies in from home. Many people have surplus items they won't mind contributing.

PHONES

- If you run out of phones during a phone bank, ask volunteers to make calls on personal cell phones.
- Always keep extra canvass packets at phone banks. If all the phones are in use, ask volunteers to canvass instead.
- If you run out of phones, but have computers available, show volunteers how to use Google Call. It's a free service that allows you to make calls on the Internet using a headset. This, however, should be used only as a last resort — the area code on a Google call will be unfamiliar to anyone with caller ID, which can decrease your percentage of voter contact.



CREATE A VOTE GOAL

Your campaign has one goal: to convince enough voters to show up to the polls on Election Day (or for early voting) and vote for you. Your vote goal is the number of votes needed to win your election. Keep this goal in mind and make sure every decision moves the campaign closer to it.

Determining your vote goal depends on the race and the likely percentage of voter turnout. In order to account for a margin of error and ensure a victory in a two-candidate race, we recommend setting your vote goal at 52 percent.

For additional discussion of how to determine your vote goal, take a look at our previous ebook, [Are You Ready to Run?](#)

GOALS AND TARGETING

EXPECTED VOTE

The number of voters you expect to turnout in the upcoming election.

VOTE GOAL

Percent of the vote needed for a comfortable win.

BASE VOTE PERCENTAGE

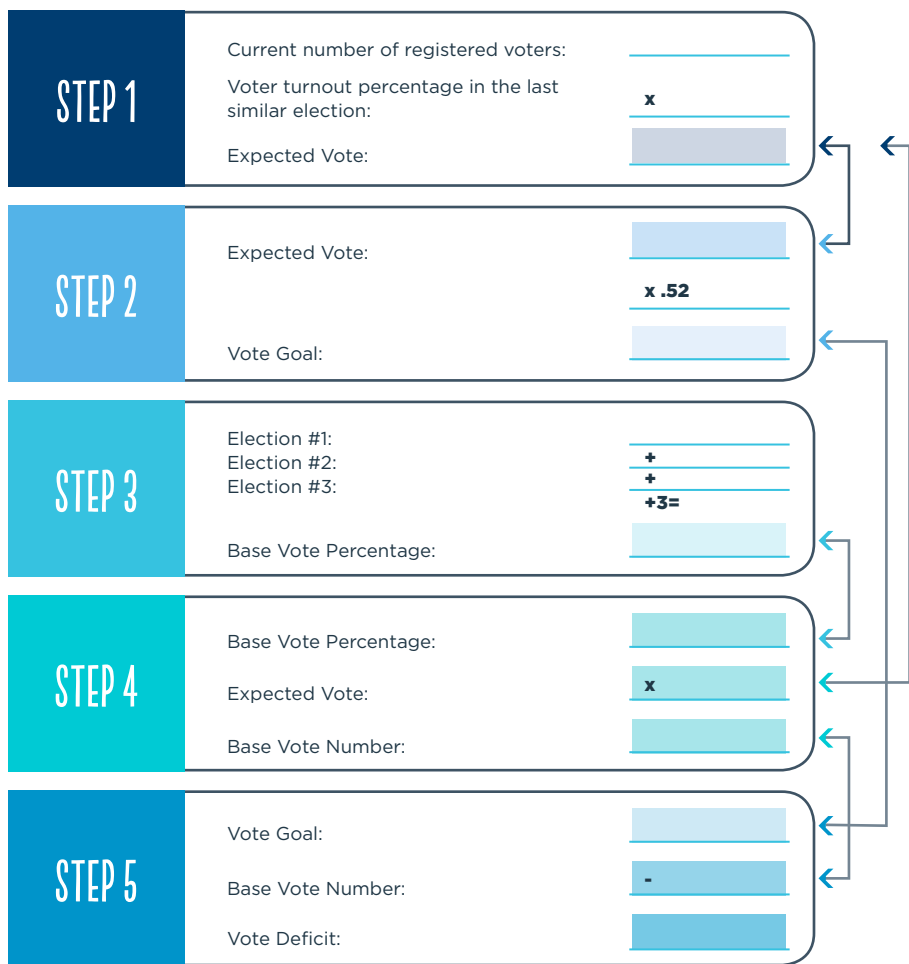
The average lowest percentage of the vote received by a candidate of your party in your district in the last 3 elections.

BASE VOTE NUMBER

The base vote percentage applied to your expected vote.

VOTE DEFICIT

The number of votes still needed after accounting for your base vote.





Part 2:

COMMUNICATION BASICS

Message and Branding

Message Development for Candidate Campaigns

A strong, clear message is a cornerstone for any candidate campaign. If you can't tell voters who you are and why their vote for you will make a difference, you're in trouble. Below are a few suggestions to help develop your campaign message:

1. GET A MESSAGE BOX

The Tully Message Box may seem like a simplistic exercise, but its simplicity is what makes it so useful. The message box is divided into quadrants, each with its own question:



Distilling your candidacy into four little boxes forces you to hone in on what it is you're trying to say, in the plainest terms possible.

2. CREATE CONTRAST

The message box exercise will also help you to figure out how best to emphasize the differences between you and your opponent. This is critical in any candidate campaign — you need to establish why you're the better choice, and part of that is letting voters know how you and your opponent compare.

3. KEEP IT SHORT

Brevity is key to good campaign communications. You need to be able to tell someone in one or two short, concise sentences what your campaign is about and why you're right for the job.

4. REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT

Part of message development for any candidate campaign is about a message and staying on it. There may be different circumstances that require variations on the theme, but your basic message should always be included. Take time to practice your message, including ways to bridge back to it when reporters (or voters, or opponents) try to take you off topic.

Messaging for a candidate campaign is all about telling people who you are and why you're the right pick for the job. Keep it short, sweet and simple.

POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS 101: MAKE YOUR POINT



Campaigns use many different forms of communication: direct mail, digital, print, social media, TV, etc. The options can be overwhelming and can make it challenging for some campaigns to focus their message. Here are some tips for effectively communicating your message, regardless of the communication medium:

USE QUALITY IMAGES

A single image can often convey more information than an entire paragraph.

BE CONCISE

After you have written your copy, ask yourself if you can cut it by 20 or even 30 percent. The shorter it is, the more likely it is to be read in full.

UNDERSTAND YOUR READER

When reviewing your communication materials, ask if each piece resonates with the intended reader. Will they care about the issues you're highlighting?

ACCESSIBILITY IS KEY

Aim to reach the widest possible audience. The average American reads at a middle-school level. Simpler, shorter words are often more powerful.

USE SHORT SENTENCES

Long sentences often obscure your message. Be succinct. Your words are more effective when they are short and to the point.

MAINTAINING CONSISTENCY IN CANDIDATE MESSAGING



Many campaigns make the mistake of writing a campaign slogan without connecting it to the strategy or the message. A campaign slogan is a tool for persuasion and engagement, and it should reflect your campaign's overall message. When writing your campaign's slogan, keep the following in mind:

STRATEGY COMES FIRST

Your campaign slogan must fit within the context of your campaign's overall strategy in a clear and understandable way. Not the other way around.

CAMPAIGNS ARE ABOUT CONTRAST

Politics is a comparative business, so be sure to clearly define the difference between you and your opponent(s). It's not enough to say your opponent is bad. Voters need to know why you're the best person for the position.

WORK WITHIN YOUR MESSAGE

Your campaign slogan must fit within the context of your campaign's overall message. If your slogan is not a part of your campaign's message, you need to rewrite it.

KEEP IT SHORT

Twenty-word campaign slogans are ineffective. You need to capture voters' attention in a clear, defined way using a limited number of words. At the same time, your campaign slogan should not be a random list of words. For instance, "strength, conviction, caring" is not an effective slogan. This list does not create a contrast or tell voters why they should pick you over the other person.

CONNECT WITH THE VOTER

Embracing emotion in your campaign slogan allows your campaign to tap into the emotion of the electorate.

TAKE THIS TEST

To ensure that you are developing a strong and effective slogan, complete the following exercise. Boil down your message by writing a slogan in 10 words or less that contrasts the candidate with the opponent. There is more than one way to build an effective message, but this exercise gives you a chance to condense your message into a slogan that is easily understood.



CREATING A CAMPAIGN LOGO

Many candidates and campaigns obsess over their logo. The colors. The font. The size of the first vs. the last name. These are issues that could be debated endlessly, but ultimately, creating your campaign logo should not be a long, arduous process. Here's what to consider when designing logo:

CLARITY

Clarity is an important element for any effective campaign logo — it should convey who you are and the office you're seeking in a simple, concise manner.

CONNECTION

Demonstrating a link to the community is a secondary, but nonetheless important, goal for a logo. Some campaigns choose to use their high school colors or the colors of the company that they work for. There are endless possibilities, but remember that overall, simple is best.

CONTRAST

Keep in mind how the logo would look against a background. Will it stand out or blend in? Does it stand out compared to your opponent's logo? The clearer your campaign logo is, the more you will be able to use it across all of your communications.

COST

A four-color campaign logo is probably cost-prohibitive if you are going to print color yard signs. Design a logo that uses only two colors that can be used across mediums and won't be a detriment to your campaign's budget.

COMPATIBILITY

Your logo will be seen across a variety of mediums. Include your communications team in the design process. If possible, hire consultants before you design a logo so you have the benefit of their advice.

At the end of the day, your campaign logo must be simple, clean and clear. If your campaign is using valuable time discussing the color and imagery of the logo, you are likely off track.

ORGANIZING A CAMPAIGN PHOTO SHOOT



First impressions matter, and the images associated with your campaign are (whether you like it or not) often going to act as a brand ambassador for you and your campaign. Custom photography is one of the most effective ways to enhance the impact and appeal of your campaign materials, particularly when it comes to direct mail.

Organizing a photo shoot can be a logistical challenge, especially for first-time candidates, but it's a worthwhile investment that requires some advance planning. Below is a beginner's guide to organizing a candidate photo shoot.

HIRE A GOOD PHOTOGRAPHER

Quality photographers are crucial to a good photo shoot for a political campaign. Just because someone has an expensive camera does not mean that they are a professional photographer. Professional campaign photographers are not cheap, but their expertise and professionalism are worth it. Investigate a photographer's website to determine if their portfolio includes work that fits with your objectives.

RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS IN ADVANCE

Like any volunteer event, it's important that you recruit participants in advance of your photo shoot. Expect a 50% flake rate — recruit twice the number of volunteers you need. Without volunteers, all you end up with are lots of candidate headshots. Photographs that illustrate a candidate relating to the public are of paramount importance.

ASK FOR SIMPLE CLOTHING

Ask your volunteers to wear simple clothing — what they would wear on a regular day. Further, suggest that volunteers wear simple, solid colors, so they do not draw attention away from the candidate.

RECRUIT WITH AN EYE TOWARD DIVERSITY

Diversity is an important element in producing campaign materials. A rule of thumb is to try to make the group of volunteers match the demographics of the area the candidate is seeking to represent. Create a scenario that's believable.

SCOUT LOCATIONS

Before your candidate photo shoot, scout locations and find areas that reflect the district. Unless you are producing a very specific shot (e.g. inside a courthouse), outdoor shots generally look more natural and engaging than indoor shots. Save indoor shots for the end of the day, or at noon when outdoor light is less flattering. And don't forget to check the weather forecast as far in advance as possible so you can make other accommodations if you are going to be rained out.



CREATE AN ITINERARY

Before your candidate photo shoot, take the time to put together an itinerary of all the places you will be shooting, how to get there, and how much time each group of shots should take. You want your volunteers where they need to be, when they need to be there.

PRODUCE A SHOT LIST

A shot list ensures that you get what you need and sets expectations for the photographer. You want to get a wide range of shots so you don't have to schedule a second shoot later in the campaign. Think about where you want to use the images, for instance things that work well for direct mail may not work on social media.

CHANGE OF CLOTHES

The candidate should bring a few different outfits to the photo shoot so it won't be obvious the pictures were taken on the same day. Generally, the candidate should change at least three times and have a range of business casual clothes, jeans and business suits available. Use common sense to determine what's appropriate in which circumstances (e.g. a business suit at a park playground is probably overkill) and make sure you get plenty of headshots in each outfit.

GET THE CANDIDATE TO RELAX

Stiffness and discomfort are magnified on camera, so recruit people the candidate knows and likes to participate in the shoot. The goal is for the candidate to look warm and trustworthy. The more you can create that atmosphere within the photo shoot, the more the photos will reflect that.

DON'T FORGET THE RELEASES

Before you photograph anyone, they must sign a model release form. The release is a legally binding document giving the campaign permission to use the signer's image and prevents people from changing their minds afterward.

Communications Tactics

Pros and Cons of Paid Candidate Communication Mediums

Candidate campaigns have a number of decisions to make when it comes to which communications mediums should be employed. What a campaign chooses depends largely on their strategic objectives, targets, and budget. Below is a general overview of the most common candidate campaign communication mediums and their pros and cons.

DIRECT MAIL

Direct mail is a tried and true method of reaching voters. One of the chief advantages of direct mail is that it is scalable to a variety of budgets. With modern data targeting techniques, direct mail is also a very precise medium, in that you can often send mail specifically to the exact type of voters you would like target. Consistent voters tend to skew older, so broadly speaking, mail (which is a medium that tends to be more effective with older voters) is a great option for a variety of campaigns.

Getting a voter's attention at the mailbox isn't easy, and when you do get it, you've only got a few seconds to make your point. This means that direct mail isn't a good medium for nuanced arguments or detailed issue exploration. Further, while there are ways to track engagement (BRM cards, phone call follow-ups, etc.), direct mail does not offer the metrics and reporting that other mediums (like digital advertising) provide.

RADIO

Standard terrestrial radio is another fairly traditional method of candidate communication. A few of the pros of radio are that fact that it can play to a captive audience (those at work, in their car, etc.) and it is (comparatively) reasonably priced, both in terms of production and the cost of airtime.

One notable con of traditional radio is the fact that while you can get information about the basic demographics of listeners, there is no real ability to target your ads, as they are distributed as far as the signal will travel. There is also no means of tracking conversions, so you have little way to accurately determine whether your radio campaign was effective. Make sure when you purchase airtime that you target specific stations or programs that you think will most effectively reach your targeted voters.



TELEVISION

Television is a common communication medium for candidate campaigns. There are a few pretty obvious pros, in that TV offers a captive audience (although DVR options have changed that a bit), the opportunity to engage people on an emotional level, and can play to a large audience.

Although an effective medium, there are also a few cons. TV media markets (DMAs) are often quite large, and it's likely that some people who see your ad will live outside of your district, which is a waste of campaign dollars. For example, the Erie DMA in Pennsylvania stretches into Cleveland, OH. Further, television currently offers only limited targeting technology and viewership is declining as alternate ways to watch are becoming more widespread. Broadcast television also tends to be the most expensive of all the major candidate communication mediums, and won't be affordable for a number of campaigns. Cable is generally a cheaper alternative, but you will still bump into DMA and targeting limitations.



DIGITAL ADS

Digital advertising is perhaps the most scalable medium in terms of budget. It also offers very precise targeting and detailed reporting and metrics to demonstrate effectiveness, often in real-time. Digital advertising is comparatively cheap (though still requires an investment in order to be effective) and offers campaigns a great way to achieve significant message density with their targeted voters. What's more, it provides additional video delivery opportunities that don't come with the hefty price tag attached to TV.

Still, most digital ads don't give you the copy space and message nuance you get from video. It's also easy to ignore digital ads, making it all the more important that your ads are eye-catching and stand out. Digital advertising for campaigns is also evolving rapidly — there's something new with every campaign cycle. This means that there are significant advances being made, especially when it comes to targeting voters in the digital arena. It also means, however, that campaigns need to be careful consumers. There are a lot of great tools out there, but not every new tool is a good fit for a particular campaign. Ask questions and investigate your options thoroughly.

Creating a Digital Presence

Creating a Candidate Website

Building a campaign website should be one of the first steps a candidate makes when launching his or her campaign. Campaign websites are fairly easy to create and are often the first major interaction people will have with a candidate. Before you delve into the content of your site, you should make sure that your site works well. There are a few basic things your website should be able to do:

1. DONATIONS

Your campaign is going to need to fundraise and if your website can't accept donations in an easy, seamless format, people won't want to give. Make sure you use a backend that makes the donation process easy for donors. Make sure your site contains links to your donation page that are clear and easy to find — if people have to go searching for the page, you'll miss out on donations.

2. SIGNUPS

Make sure people who are eager to help out and volunteer can easily “sign up to do so”. Your website should be well equipped to handle people signing up for both volunteer opportunities and for your email list. Your backend should be set up to easily incorporate new sign ups into your list and segment them so that you can communicate with people based on their interests. You should also make sure it's easy for people to unsubscribe from your list, should they want to.

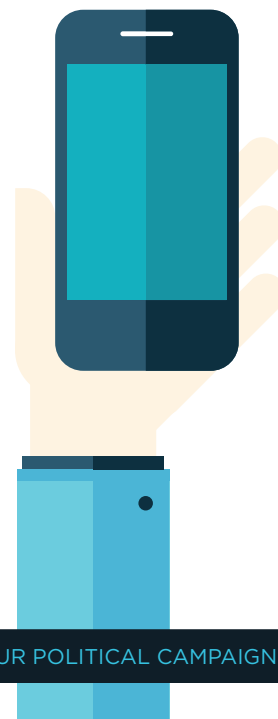
3. SOCIAL MEDIA

It's important to develop a strong social media presence, and your website should reflect that. Your site should have icons that direct people to your various social media site and allow users to easily share your content on their social media pages. If you are hosting a breakfast or rally and you want to get the word out, make sure your supporters can share the event to their friends and family. It's one of the best ways to get people to come out and support you and your cause.

Once you have all the essential elements in place for your site, you can focus on website content. Your opposition is going to visit your site often, so make sure you include photos that won't lend themselves easily to attack ads. Other frequent visitors to your site will be journalists, so keep your content up to date with recent news. Make sure your stances on policies that are relevant to your race are included and are easy to find.

A FINAL THOUGHT ON WEBSITES FOR CAMPAIGNS THESE DAYS: → → → →

make sure it's mobile-friendly. People are going to be looking at your site on the go, and you want to be sure it looks great both on a desktop and a cell phone.



LEVERAGING YOUR FACEBOOK AUDIENCE



Facebook offers you the opportunity to turn followers into voters, volunteers and even donors. It's important to think about ways to convert Facebook "likes" into supporters who subscribe to your email list and take action outside of Facebook, and to incorporate those strategies into your social media plan.

1. ONLINE PETITIONS

Online petitions can help to engage your Facebook audience and highlight important campaign issues. They also allow Facebook followers to opt-in to your email list and become a part of your campaign.

2. CARDS

Using cards is a fun way to get people to provide their email address. By asking followers to do something like "Sign [insert candidate's name] Birthday Card," you have a chance to leverage everyday occurrences and convert your Facebook audience to your email list.

3. SPLASH PAGES AND STANDARD SIGN-UPS

Adding a splash page or a sign-up field to your Facebook page is a simple, free way to give followers the option to sign up for your email list. These people are already taking the initiative to get information about you, so it should be no surprise that they are also likely to sign up for your email list, if prompted.

4. INCENTIVE SIGN-UPS

Many people are happy to provide you their email for a free sticker, yard sign or chance for a photo opportunity with a candidate or a well-known person at your next event.

5. EVENT SIGN-UPS

Ask your Facebook friends to commit to attending an in-person event like a phone bank, lobby day or coffee with the candidate session. If you get them to show up, you're building a relationship you can enhance offline.

BUILDING A DIGITAL PRESENCE: 5 KEY FOCUS AREAS

Every campaign today needs to have a digital presence. When you are start to build your digital presence, focus on these five areas:



1. WEBSITE

A website is a must for every campaign. Fortunately, they no longer cost thousands of dollars to build out. Cost-effective platforms, like Wordpress, allow you to host, design, and manage your site with little difficulty in-house.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA

Many of the most popular social media sites are free – take advantage of them. Sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Tumblr provide an interactive way to communicate with your supporters.

3. ONLINE FUNDRAISING

While it's not a substitute for call time, online fundraising is significantly cheaper than other forms of fundraising, and it provides a convenient way for donors to contribute. Make sure that a link to your donation page is visible and easy to find on your site. Try using your social media pages to drive supporters to your fundraising page.

4. ONLINE SUPPORTERS

Since the majority of your prospective voters are online, you need to build a base of support online. Use social media sites to attract new followers. Take advantage of online petition tools like Change.org and the Action Network to promote campaign issues and find supporters who identify with your position. Schedule regular email communications to keep supporters engaged.

5. DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Digital advertising is cost-effective and easy to use. From Facebook to Google search, you can start out simple and expand the scope of your ad buy as you grow. You can also use digital ads to acquire supporters and/or to raise money.

Direct Mail

A Guide to Producing Democratic Direct Mail

For many campaigns, direct mail is a useful method of communicating a message and targeting specific voters. There are a variety of things to consider as you're planning your direct mail program and designing the mail itself:



1. INCLUDE DIRECT MAIL IN YOUR A CAMPAIGN PLAN AND OVERALL BUDGET

A campaign plan gives you a complete picture of all the components of a winning campaign strategy. If you plan to use direct mail, it should be included in your plan and you should have a realistic sense of the costs.

2. KNOW WHERE DIRECT MAIL FITS INTO YOUR STRATEGY

Will direct mail reinforce another medium, or is it the primary means of communication with your target audience? Once you understand the role direct mail will play, you can figure out a realistic budget for your program.

3. RESEARCH HELPS YOU STAY FOCUSED

Ideally, your campaign will allocate resources to opposition research and polling, the results of which should be woven into your direct mail program. A strong mail program starts with solid research and the finished product should communicate your strongest arguments to your targeted voters.

4. DESIGN DIRECT MAIL WITH YOUR VOTER IN MIND

Direct mail targets tend to skew older. Recognize that there's a difference between what the eyes can read in your twenties versus your sixties. Use an appropriate font size with plenty of white space. It will make your direct mail appealing and readable for a wide audience.

5. USE ORIGINAL PHOTOS

There's a time and place for stock photography, but custom photos are really important for candidate campaigns. Strong, engaging photography will create political direct mail that will illustrate a connection within the community.

6. HAVE A THEME

Democratic direct mail needs to be held together by a common theme. Your targets are unlikely to read every piece of your mail, so it's important that your theme is communicated at a glance and it's repeated over and over again throughout the program.

7. CREATE A CLEAR CONTRAST

Politics is a comparative business. Campaigns often fail to clearly define the differences between candidates. Make sure voters understand they have a choice.

8. LESS IS MORE

Clear, concise copy is the key to persuading voters. Too much copy makes mail difficult to read and obscures your message. Trim down your copy, and use as few words as possible.

9. ENGAGE YOUR VOTERS

Do your research and find out what voters care about. Talking to voters about issues they feel connected to will help your mail appeal to them on an emotional level.

10. IT'S ABOUT THE VOTER

Campaigns are about delivering for voters. Your direct mail should tell voters why you're right for the job and how you'll get things done for them. It should also show them the ways that you will deliver for them.

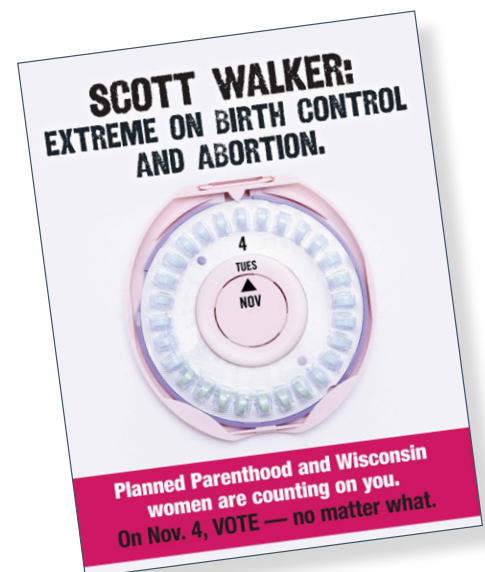
11. TARGET THE RIGHT VOTERS

Good targeting is key to any strong direct mail program. Develop a strong strategy for reaching the voters you want to target, and be sure you connect that strategy to a your vote goal. Examine past turnout, and work with your team to determine who is most likely to vote. Then target those likely voters for your direct mail.

12. MAKE YOUR MAIL STAND OUT

Use short copy and eye-catching, creative ideas that are relevant to the needs of voters.

Your goal should be direct mail that jumps out and makes an impression on the voter.



PRODUCING COST-EFFECTIVE DIRECT MAIL

Direct mail can cost anywhere from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars, depending on the format, quantity, density of the targets' delivery area and postage. More often than not, however, your mail program will be scaled to fit your budget. That's why you should consider the following when trying to maximize your value in direct mail:

GANG PRINTING

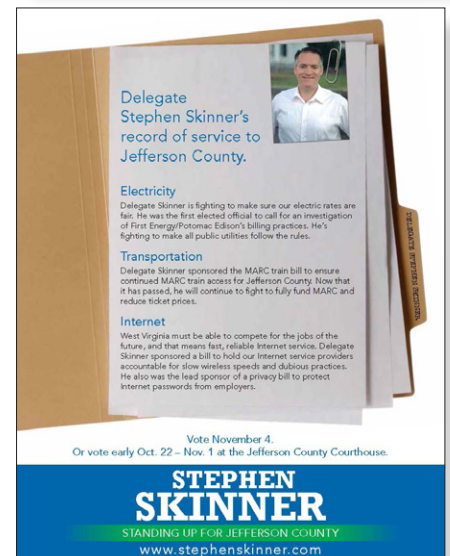
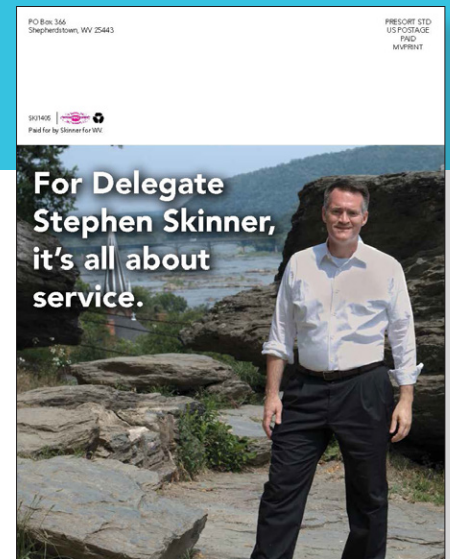
Gang printing is a way to create economies of scale, meaning that if you're printing multiple pieces of political direct mail in the same format and at similar quantities, you should print your pieces together. For instance, if you're printing two 8.5 x 11 mailers, each at a quantity of 20,000, you should print them at the same time. Because you're essentially printing 40,000 pieces, you'll get a price break. Gang printing allows the printer to keep their presses running for longer without having to switch out their plate. The printer then passes the cost savings on to you. This requires planning, as you have to approve multiple pieces to go to print at the same time, but the cost savings make it well worth it.

SIZE, FORMAT AND STOCK

Determining size, format, and paper stock for a mail piece is a balancing act. Go too small and your mail may be overlooked, but increasing the size will increase the cost. An 11 x 17 mailer will get noticed, but it can be up to \$0.10 or more per piece than an 8.5 x 11 mailer. You can also save money on the paper stock. Thickness and quality vary by brand and affect cost. While you don't want flimsy paper, you probably don't need the Cadillac of paper stocks either.

PRINT LOCALLY

Working with a local printer can save money. While there may be a printer out of town who can come in a penny (or so) cheaper per piece, shipping costs may ultimately negate those savings. Using a printer and mail house located hundreds of miles away could also impact your overall delivery schedule and create timeline issues.



NATIONAL CHANGE OF ADDRESS (NCOA)

Regardless of where you obtain your list, it should be run through a national change of address (NCOA) database to ensure you aren't mailing to people who have moved. This is a fairly simple process your mail house can manage. There's no greater waste of money than mailing to the wrong households.

HOUSEHOLDING

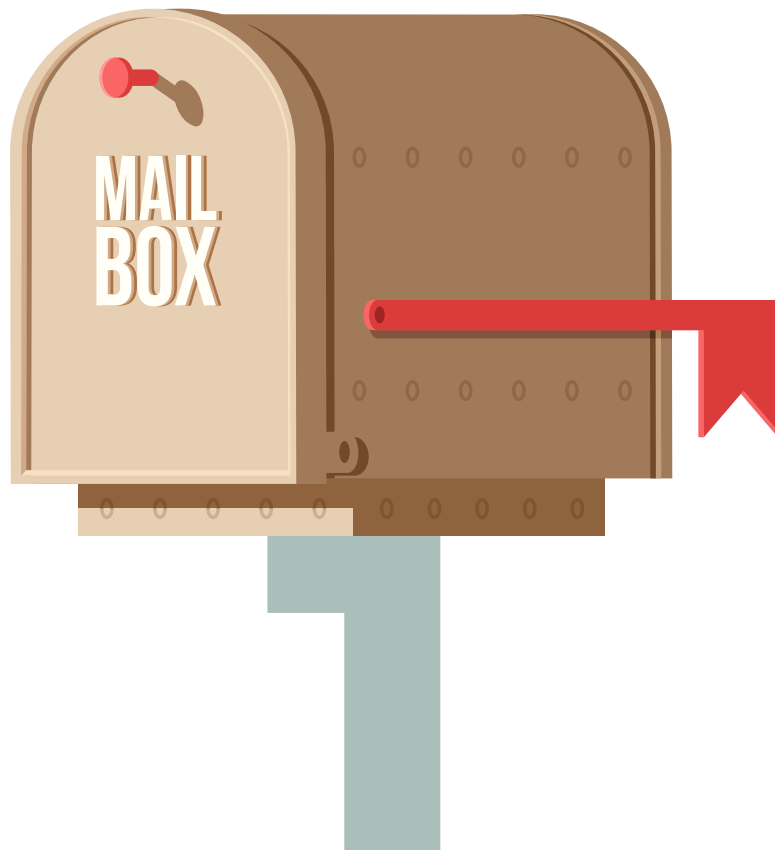
In addition to checking your list against the NCOA list, make sure you're pulling your lists for direct mail by household. This will ensure that every household receives only one piece of mail - there's little point in sending two identical mail pieces to one household.

ENHANCED CARRIER ROUTE SORTING

If you are mailing enough pieces of political direct mail into a dense enough area, you may be able to sort the mail by carrier route so the United States Postal Service (USPS) doesn't have to. In return, the USPS will reduce the cost of postage. Ask your mail house about enhanced carrier sorting (especially if you think the postage is looking high), as this is a task that they can typically perform for you.

TARGET YOUR UNIVERSES

In this era of vast individual data, it is not useful or cost effective to simply blanket a district with direct mail. Use a commercial data vendor, or your subscription voter file, to ensure your mail reaches the right voters. Precise targeting is more efficient and saves money.



FIVE WAYS TO HELP YOUR DIRECT MAIL STAND OUT

It's difficult to get direct mail to stand out in a mailbox. Even if it gets noticed, you've likely got three to five seconds before it finds its way into the recycling bin. To make sure your message resonates with your targets, it's important to create something that stands out. Here are a few tips to ensure your direct mail makes an impression:

HAVE SOME FUN

While you need to have some straightforward direct mail in your program, it's also important to have fun with your direct mail too. Mail that's filled with facts and statistics can easily lose a viewer's attention. By communicating your message in a humorous or fun way, you're more likely to make a lasting impression.

GET TO THE POINT

Generally, you only have a few seconds to catch someone's attention, and just a few more seconds if they decide to peruse the piece further. So get to the point quickly. Keep your copy as short as possible.

CONSIDER HOW IT LOOKS

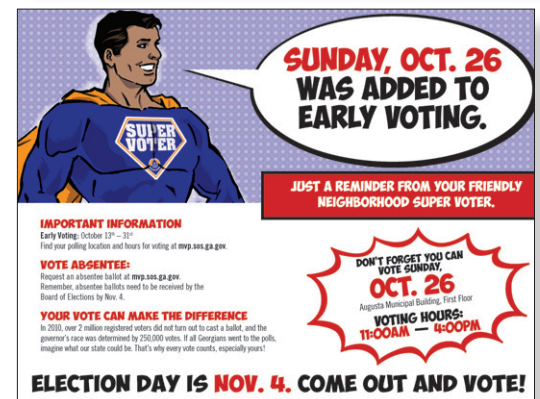
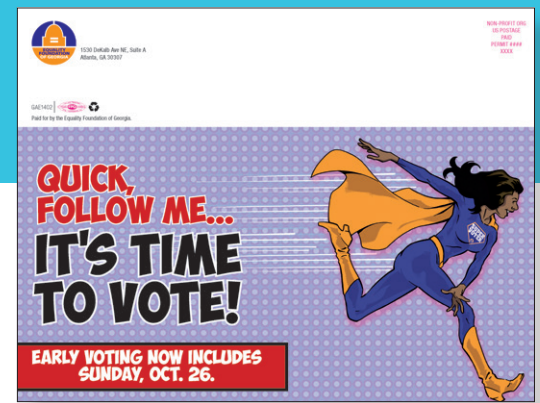
Your mail should look professional and inviting, even if it's a negative piece about your opponent. Graphics and images are really important, as is an aesthetically pleasing layout.

USE REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

Get specific when creating contrast. Saying that your opponent has a record of waste and mismanagement is abstract won't connect with voters. Connect the negatives to solid examples. Find a voter who is willing to go on the record with a real world example of your opponent's poor job performance. Find news articles that highlight specific instances of waste and quantify the impact on taxpayers. Specific, credible examples are more likely to resonate with the electorate.

BE CREATIVE

Think outside the box when choosing photos, images and concepts. Avoid using standard, stock images and think about how you can approach your message from a different angle.



The Role of Endorsements

Utilizing Campaign Endorsements

Endorsements provide a great shorthand for informed voters about what you stand for and who stands with you. They also signify that reputable sources think you're a viable candidate. Whether it's an endorsement from the largest union in the state, your hometown mayor, or your district's congressperson, endorsements can be very helpful in any campaign.

As a candidate, you'll likely need to do a fair amount of reaching out to people in order to secure endorsements. It's also important to be realistic and strategic as you're seeking endorsements. If you're reaching across the aisle, that's probably a tough sell. If someone has supported your opponent in the past, chances are you'll have to work pretty hard to move them in your direction. Put together a list, make a schedule for reaching out to people and organizations so that you have a complete plan, and know that you're not going to get every single endorsement (and that's OK).

With each endorsement you do earn, you should ask a series of basic questions in order to ensure that you make the most of each opportunity:



CAN THEY HELP WITH FUNDRAISING?

This is the most critical component of utilizing endorsements. When you receive an endorsement, be sure to ask the union or organization how they can help the campaign financially. The same goes for politicians. Can they hit the phones for you, raise money, or host a fundraiser? Never be afraid to make the money ask – it's mandatory for any winning campaign.

HOW DO I LEVERAGE THIS ENDORSEMENT FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES?

When you get an endorsement, sit down with that individual or group and ask if they know people or organizations who may be worth reaching out to for donations or support. Then, ask them to make an introduction – that way you avoid a cold call, which is less likely to be successful.

HOW CAN THIS ENDORSEMENT HELP WITH MY GOTV EFFORTS?

During the last few days of the campaign, talking to as many voters as possible is critical. Ask endorsers to bring people to your canvass and/or phone bank events. Many unions and politicians have the ability to provide volunteers for political efforts, so be sure you utilize these potential resources.

HOW CAN I UTILIZE ENDORSEMENTS IN MY COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS?

Every organization, union, or a politician has an email list (or rather, should have one). Ask endorsers to send an email to their subscribers asking for their support as well.

If you ask these four simple questions, you can be sure you will be utilizing your endorsements properly and take your campaign to the next level.

While endorsements are certainly an asset to your campaign, they are not the sum total of your campaign and generally they won't be what makes or breaks the election. While it's easy to get caught up in trying to secure notable supporters, your campaign plan should devote at least 70% of your resources to direct voter contact. As a candidate, your focus should be on raising the resources required to make that plan a reality, not on endorsements.



For more information on campaign tactics, strategy, digital campaigns and direct mail, [sign up for our blog](#).

If you're interested in working with us and would like more information on strategy, digital or direct mail [contact us](#) at:

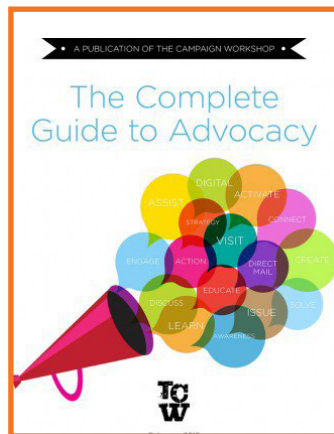
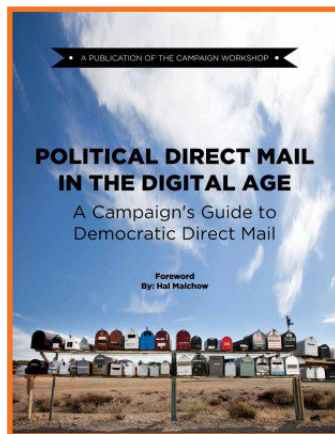
Phone: (202) 223-8884

Email: info@thecampaignworkshop.com

Visit us at:

1660 L Street, NW
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