The Big Ballot Initiative Bad Book

A One-Stop Manual for Running Successful Ballot Measure Campaigns

Presented by Ballot Initiative STRATEGY CENTER and Strategy and Research

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INTRODUCTION

The initiative and referenda processes in this country provide a substantial opportunity for progressive groups and the supporters of progressive public policy positions to advance their causes. This is especially important in locales controlled by conservative extremist legislative bodies. Of course, the initiative process can also be a double-edged sword for progressives, since right-wing extremists are also very adept at using the initiative process to advance their agenda.

Under either of these situations, as proactive proponents of progressive policy or as opponents of damaging reactionary measures, it is critical for progressives to educate themselves about how to run effective, winning issue campaigns. To that end, we at Ridder/Braden have prepared this manual.

Ridder/Braden, Inc. was started almost two decades ago. Over that time, we've worked on dozens of initiatives and referenda and we've developed a number of rules for and against engagement in these campaigns. As with all rules, there will be exceptions! But, by and large, the following items provide some good guidelines in operating effectively in the Initiative & Referendum world.

1. Define the amount. Detail the benefits. In promoting an initiative with fiscal implications, such as a school bond or property tax increase for education, define the amount that each taxpayer will have to pay and then detail the benefits. What do people have to pay and what do they get? If there is a precise amount, let them know. Voters will generally decide based upon the economic benefits to themselves, so let them know early. But too much specificity will give grist for the Opposition (see #2 below), and not leave room for people's dreams (What my life could be if...).

2. Don't talk process. Talk repercussions and results. Too often activists waste time talking to the media about the I&R process. This might include ways that they might use the legal system to thwart an initiative or to enhance their own. Remember, Katherine Harris notwithstanding, people don't vote on the process; they vote on how an initiative or referendum might impact their lives.

3. Control the language in drafting an initiative or referendum. In writing an initiative, brevity counts. 2000 word initiatives are a recipe for disaster. If it can't be short and concise, don't do it. The major killer of I&Rs is the phrase, "It is vague, deceptive and has unintended consequences." The more complex an initiative, the greater the opportunity for the opposition to find fault.

4. Control the timing of the election. If there is a way to determine or change the timing of an election, be sure to be involved in that decision-making process. Too often, in large part because of ignorance, ballot initiatives are placed on the ballot with the election to be held at inopportune times. Try to find the time for the election that will maximize your voters.

5. Control how and where people vote. Decide what would be best for your campaign. Should the election be conducted by mail only, or walk-in with an absentee mail component? These decisions change the nature of the electorate. Further if the election is to include a walk-in component, decide where the ballot boxes should be placed. In one recent campaign for a small town school bond, the proponents agreed that the only voting site was to be at a senior center – the heart of the opposition to the tax increase. The bond narrowly lost.

6. In defeating or winning an I&R, there is no such thing as a coalition that is too big. Voters look for guidance from organizations and individuals on I&R's to a greater degree than they do in candidate elections, and they rarely look for guidance from political parties. It is a good idea to make your campaign leadership local. Although the issue may have statewide implications and a broad coalition of endorsers, the support of local community groups makes a significant difference as voters have the most trust in these organizations and people. Further, a more centralized and local decision-making body will be more effective in thwarting any nascent opposition. Remember the easiest way to win is to have no organized opposition.

7. Opinion-makers such as editorial boards, community activists, academics and esteemed former politicians are important validators of a given position. A good I&R campaign is a melding of opinion-makers, business leaders and community activists of all political philosophies.

8. Make sure you have a "Leadership Group" to give direction to the campaign. Some times this smaller decision-making body is referred to as "The Breakfast Group." It meets regularly to give campaign management advice and consent. It also communicates with the larger coalition regarding campaign strategy and tactics.

9. In a "Yes" campaign, the best strategy is not always to publicize and increase awareness. In two recent campaigns, the goal was to minimize publicity, to stay "below the radar." And save resources for the end game. The lack of publicity kept significant Opposition from forming, and campaign resources were saved for the last weeks of the campaign.

10. Out-raise and out-spend the opposition. Few referenda or initiatives pass. Fewer do so when they were out-spent by the opposition.

The Ridder/Braden staff, Faye Diamond in particular, put together this manual to provide you with resources for planning and executing a successful progressive issue campaign. We are grateful and indebted to many professionals who have offered advice and assistance in preparing this version of our campaign manual, especially Tamara Pogue whose efforts were terrific. My personal gratitude goes out to everyone who assisted in the production of this version of the manual as well as its predecessors.

Use the advice in this manual in the ways that best suit your individual campaigns. Thank you in advance for working to further the progressive causes that we all care about so much!

Rick Ridder
Denver, Colorado
June 2006

Chapter 1:
THE CAMPAIGN PLANNING PROCESS

Defining the Strategy & Tactics

THE CAMPAIGN PLANNING PROCESS: DEFINING THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Mapping out the strategic and tactical elements of your campaign is perhaps the most fundamental and instrumental aspect of the campaign process. Without a clearly defined strategy and a tactical agenda to implement that strategy, your campaign will run a rocky course and most likely fail to cross the finish line last on Election Day. Proper campaign planning is the synthesis of a focused strategy. Effective planning allows the campaign to have direction and clarity of mission. Early development of specific goals and objectives, together with identifying the means to accomplish them, provides the winning edge in political races.

Planning your campaign, then, from the basics of hiring the staff to the intricacies of targeting persuadable voters is an invaluable exercise requiring time, patience, and interaction between staff members and consultants. This chapter explains the campaign planning process and outlines the various components of the campaign plan. Most of the components of the plan are explained in more detail throughout this handbook, so the different elements are only briefly explained here.

WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN PLAN?

A campaign plan is a written document outlining the strategic and tactical elements of the campaign. It serves as a guide, a roadmap for the duration of your campaign. Your campaign plan defines your message, how your message will be delivered, to whom it will be delivered, when it will be delivered, and what resources will be necessary to deliver it. The key elements of your campaign plan will likely include the following: office administration, fundraising, budget, field, scheduling, earned media, paid media, research, theme and message, and strategy. An accurate analysis of your needs and potential strategy for each of these areas requires taking two fundamental steps: A) conducting a planning retreat or engaging in in-depth discussions with each key team member and B) issue and electorate research.

Brainstorming

The campaign planning process is ideally suited for collaboration among and between the many voices and viewpoints that make up any political undertaking. While “decision by committee” will undermine many steps in the campaign process, the planning stages actually benefit from the airing of a variety of ideas and theories about the best way to proceed with the campaign.

Brainstorming as a campaign tool necessitates communicating and working closely with the people most intimately involved in the campaign. In campaigns with large staffs, having department heads complete the portion of the campaign plan related to their operation is very valuable. Those expected to shoulder the burden of a specific portion of the overall implementation of the campaign should be intimately involved in planning the operation for that piece of the campaign. Ideally, each such person should write a draft or outline of his or her thoughts and plans before the brainstorming session.

A planning retreat is one of the most effective ways to brainstorm and strategize about your campaign. A retreat serves as time to exchange ideas and get to know one another better. Make sure you bring in primary coalition partners to get their input and to strengthen core leadership. It is essential that this core leadership group is part of the planning process, so that they can communicate key elements of the strategy to other coalition partners. Retreats don't need to be expensive, but you should try to hold your retreat away from the office. Phones can be a major distraction and you should look at the time spent at this point as a way to save time down the road. A good retreat usually lasts one or two days. If you do schedule one, make plans for meals in advance and have the appropriate working tools at the site (e.g. pen, paper, chalkboard, and research materials). This will help ensure your time away is as productive as possible. Whether you choose a planning retreat or lengthy interviews to complete the information/idea stage of the process, you must have the input of all core staff and consultants.

Research

Research forms the foundation of your planning efforts – research on the voters, past voting behavior, and research on you and your opposition. As such, research should be conducted before you actually begin the planning process and actually begin writing the plan.

Ideally, your opposition research should be completed before your survey research. However, time and money may be the determining factors. Sometimes schedules and resources don't allow you to have formal survey research done before your retreat. In such cases, however, it’s important to assemble as much data as is available through all sources (i.e., past voting trends in the state, press clippings about the current political climate, etc.) to provide a basis for the discussions and decisions to be undertaken at the retreat.

Even in the absence of formalized survey research, you can still have a productive and effective planning retreat. You can still map out a good portion of the campaign and develop strong working relationships while you are together. When the formal research is completed, you can then see how it impacts the ideas bounced around at your retreat.

Once you’ve completed the research, it is time to commit your campaign plan to writing. There is no ideal format or length for the planning document itself, so long as it provides a comprehensive look at all of the phases and elements of the campaign and fully discusses how the process will proceed. Look at the plan as a working, flexible document that will no doubt be amended and updated as the campaign progresses and the opposition's strategy begins to unfold. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking that it is not important to reduce your plan to writing – it is very easy to lose direction and momentum during the course of a long campaign and having a written resource to examine is a great way of steering the campaign back on course at such times.

WRITING THE PLAN

While each campaign plan will reflect the political realities of each jurisdiction and race, there are common planning components. As you begin to define your strategy and tactics, you will also recognize which elements apply to your particular situation. The development of your plan is a difficult, but necessary task. There are a few ways to make the project easier.

Segment to Campaign Calendar

As you plan the campaign activities, separate the campaign into three distinct time periods: the kick-off, mid-game, and end-game. Attach specific goals to each period.

1) The kick-off period is your start-up time. Items such as message development, staff recruitment, and database building should all be considered during this time frame.

2) The mid-game is the "build-up" stage. It should include those activities and programs that need to be accomplished to ensure success in the last few weeks of the campaign. These activities might include putting together a large statewide field operation and solidifying relationships with the press. The mid-game allows you to work out any kinks in your operation before the crucial and final eight weeks of the campaign.

3) The end-game generally begins in the final eight weeks as voters begin to pay attention and the paid media efforts are accelerated (see sample campaign timeline below). The bulk of your funds will be spent during this time. Campaign activity will also be most intense in these closing weeks of the campaign.

As you set your goals for each of these time frames, be sure to focus on the political, organizational and financial realities of your effort. Your successes and failures in the early phases of the campaign will better allow you to “tweak” your plan for the later phases of the campaign. You will be able to amend your plan with more realistic objectives and programs. This is particularly true with the fundraising and budgeting elements of the plan, which by their very nature, are in constant flux.

Sample Campaign Timeline:

Date	Department	Activity
15-Jul	Administrative	Identify office space
28-Jul	Administrative	Identify all voting and filing deadlines and schedule appropriate activities such as the absentee ballot timeline
1-Aug	Administrative	Set up office space
1-Aug	Staff and Consultants	Hire manager/community director, scheduler, coalition director, fundraising assistant, and webmaster
7-Aug		**Submit petition signatures**
8-Aug		**Primary Election Day**
15-Aug	Staff and Consultants	Hire field staff
18-Aug	Research	Broad coalition meeting
21-Aug	Research	Hold focus groups
21-Aug	Media	Go live with website
23-Aug	Research	Hold retreat with core leadership
28-Aug	Research	Begin general tracking I
1-Sep	Travel	Circuit rider begins
1-Sep	Mail Program	Produce brochure
6-Sep		**Last day for Sec. of State to determine sufficiency of signatures**
15-Sep	Media	Produce TV advertisement
1-Oct	Staff and Consultants	Hire field staff
1-Oct	Mail Program	Produce palm cards
1-Oct	Mail Program	Coalition partner mailing
10-Oct		**Last day to register for general election**
16-Oct	Media	Begin airing media buy
16-Oct	Research	Begin general tracking II
23-Oct		**Early voting begins**
3-Nov		**Last day for early voting**
7-Nov		**Election Day**

Reverse Timeline

A second helpful technique for your planning process is to begin by working backward from Election Day. In other words, ask the question: "What do I absolutely need to have done on Election Day?"

Then ask the some question for each preceding day and week of the campaign period. This exercise demands that every activity be examined in the light of how it will contribute to victory. In this sense, it is both practical and extremely helpful. One effective way to begin this process is by imagining the article you would like to see written about the campaign the day after an election victory. Such an article will spell out exactly how you built and executed a winning campaign; who voted for you and who voted for your opposition, what messages were employed by both sides, where each side found its base of support, when critical aspects of the campaign developed, why each side pursued the strategy that it did in the campaign and how much the effort of each side cost.

Thinking about the items that would make up such a newspaper article will help you focus on the basics. For example, your article should include the total number of votes you and the opposition received as well as the counties where your campaign won and lost. Before you can address this part of the article, you need to do targeting and have polling data. Once you have thought about this information, it becomes clearer where you need to focus your time and energy. If you have little chance of winning in County X, but a strong chance of winning in County Y, then you should direct your efforts accordingly. (A copy of this type of planning "article," with fill-in-the-blanks, has been included in the appendix of this chapter.)

Drafting

When you do take the plunge and begin the drafting process, it will take a significant amount of time. But, it will also pay great dividends later in the campaign. About the only type of issue campaign that is successful without a written plan is a campaign that is extremely well-funded and won almost exclusively through the use of massive amounts of paid media. Even in such cases, a plan exists: it's just that the whole campaign exists in the media plan. Unfortunately, most initiative campaigns fall into the "tight budget," volunteer-reliant category. So, unless you are fortunate enough to be running a campaign where money is not an issue, take the time to prepare and plan.

THE COMPONENTS

Because most of this handbook is dedicated to explaining and providing suggestions for implementing each aspect of the campaign process, the following is simply a brief overview of the eleven key components of a campaign plan. Again, these are the basic components and you will undoubtedly add and subtract among them to suit your organizational, political, and financial needs.

- Strategy and Tactics
- Theme and Messages
- Targeting
- Coalition Building
- Fundraising
- Budget
- Organizational Structure
- Research
- Scheduling
- Earned Media
- Voter Contact
- The Calendar

Strategy and Tactics

Your campaign strategy is based on two fundamental questions: 1) who will vote for you? and 2) why will they vote for you? Accurately answering these questions requires research - lots of it. Targeting, projections, opposition research, and baseline polling all help determine who will vote for you and why they will vote for you.

Targeting refers to identifying your likely bases of support in winning or defeating a ballot measure. Targeting provides the answer to the question of who will vote for you. It identifies where you will get the 50% + 1 votes needed to win on Election Day. Because it is such a crucial part of developing your strategy, a separate section on targeting should be included in your plan (described in Part C of this section and in more detail in Chapter Seven).

As you begin to determine who will likely vote with you, you will need to look at the reasons why these individuals support your campaign's position. This question necessitates developing a cohesive, consistent message. As described in Chapter Eight on theme and message, both your survey and opposition research provide the basis for defining your message and contrasting your campaign with that of the opposition. Once you have analyzed your research, you can then begin answering the "why" question. As will be made clearer throughout this manual, effective messaging is the single most critical element in the operation of a successful political campaign.

The process of identifying why voters will support your position on the issue requires an assessment of the current political climate, as well as your strengths and weaknesses and also those of your opponent. Again, much of this information will derive from the results of your research. Remember, strategy involves answering the "who" and "why" questions, not the "'how" and "when" questions. These are the tactical elements of the planning process. The tactics are used to implement the strategy rather than to define it.

Once you define your strategy, you will then need to identify the tactics needed to carry out that strategy. That is the purpose of the remainder of the campaign plan. Your tactics will depend largely on your budget. Unfortunately, most initiative campaigns do not have extensive or excessive resources. They have a limited budget and, consequently, every tactical move must be plotted with utmost care. A few tips to remember when waging a battle with limited resources are as follows:

1) Reserve the bulk of your financial resources until the time period when voters are making their voting decisions on your issue. Voter decision-making takes place late in the process. In states that have mail ballots, voter decision-making generally occurs about the time these ballots are first mailed out by the election officer. This is usually about 30 days prior to the election. This provides only a short time to communicate with your target voters.

2) Dominate one medium. Don't spread your resources around numerous forms of voter contact. In other words, don't do a little of this and a little of that. Use your money to dominate at least one message delivery vehicle that efficiently reaches your target audience.

3) Refine your target audience so that it receives frequent communication “hits.” It is better to have a small target group of persuadable voters receive three pieces of mail than to have a large group that includes non-persuadable voters receive only one. Repetition is crucial in conveying your campaign message.

4) Look for activities that effectively create visibility and press. Don’t spend limited resources trying to create press coverage unless you have a legitimate chance of receiving such coverage.

If by some chance your campaign has significantly more resources than your opposition, define the opposition before they are able to define themselves. This is called "Elephant Hunting." In other words, it is easier to kill an elephant when it is standing still than when it is charging.

Theme and Messages

This portion of the plan is perhaps the most critical to your ultimate success on Election Day. It will most likely explain why a particular theme has been chosen, as well as when and how certain messages will be used. Include a list of 10 "hot words” and phrases that best describe why the initiative should be defeated or passed. These should be highly descriptive and often emotional terms that provoke the positive or negative responses that you seek out of voters. All of your subsequent communications to the public should make liberal use of these “hot words” and phrases. Repetition is a key component of effective messaging.

Targeting: Identifying Where to Locate 50% + 1 of the Electorate

Targeting is the process that helps you identify where you will get the 50% + 1 of the votes on Election Day. To effectively isolate your base of support, your opposition's base of support, and the persuadable voters, the campaign must identify the following: 1) how many votes it will likely take to win on Election Day based on accurate forecasting of the overall turnout to be expected in a given election cycle and 2) where those votes are, (geographically and demographically). The targeting process requires patience and time. Hence, a section dedicated to it has been included in Chapter Seven.

Fundraising

Because of the expense involved in paid media efforts necessary to communicate to large numbers of voters, fundraising is in many respects a subject that requires an independent plan and strategy. The success of the fundraising operation will impact all other phases and components of the campaign operation. As such, the fundraising plan must anticipate the budgetary realities of the remainder of the plan. If the funds sufficient to implement the remainder of the plan are not raised, the campaign is in serious peril.

The funding plan must answer two fundamental questions: 1) where will the money come from? and 2) how will be it raised? Obviously, the fundraising goals must be realistic and in-line with the campaign budget. There is no need to include the entire fundraising plan in the general campaign plan. A summary will suffice, along with some discussion of how the fundraising operation will function with respect to other departments. (For more information on developing and implementing your fundraising plan, see Chapter Five).

Budget

The budget is the backbone of the campaign planning process. The budget defines the parameters for all campaign components, such as when and where to place the media buy, how many tracking polls to put in the field, and the number of literature pieces to be produced. These all filter into the general strategy. Consequently, the budget must be produced with care, caution, and accuracy. It demands significant time, attention to detail, and specificity. That's why you should produce three budgets: high, target, and low. This allows you to view the campaign's financial situation from the most ideal to the most frighteningly frugal. (Chapter Six provides more detail on how to develop your budget.)

Organizational Structure

It is important to define the structure of your organization *before* you are six months into the campaign. The lines of authority, then, should clearly be delineated in this section of the plan. Everyone must understand who reports to whom and when. Responsibilities and timelines, where appropriate, should also be included. In addition to outlining the duties of the staff, the expectations for the consultants, steering committee members, and finance chair should also be discussed.

Because a successful campaign organization demands constant communication among the key members of your team, it is important to note how these various factions should interact. Ideally, you should include an organizational chart so the lines of authority are clear. Above all, this part of the planning process should be viewed as a means to facilitate communication and increase productivity. The more defined the lines of communication and responsibilities, the greater chance for individual and, consequently, organizational success. (See Chapter Four for more detail and a sample chart.)

Research

In consultation with your pollster, a research plan and timeline should be developed. This includes timetables for any trend or tracking polls as well as focus groups. A timetable for your opposition research is also an integral part of your research plan. Be sure to include this information and identify who will be responsible for the day-to-day monitoring of the opposition and what that tracking process will entail.

The development and implementation of an opposition tracking operation is not trivial. The campaign must know what the opposition is doing, when they are doing it, and how they are doing it. The campaign plan is a mechanism to force the campaign to assign responsibility for this critical task.

Don’t forget to include research on your own campaign. Too often, the failure to adequately research your team, support, and arguments leads to unintended surprises in the waning weeks of the campaign. As much as possible, anticipate and be prepared to counter any and every attack on your positions. A good rule is to “know you campaign better than you know your opposition.”

Scheduling

Scheduling takes on an entirely different role for an initiative campaign than it does for a candidate-oriented one. An initiative campaign does not have a candidate to schedule and therefore does not have as many immediate pressures on the scheduler. An initiative campaign, however, does need to schedule speakers for campaign forums and important meetings with key members of the community and constituency groups. Depending upon the political climate in your region, this may or may not require a full-time scheduler.

Regardless whether you hire a full-time or part-time scheduler, this section should focus on the process for deciding where speakers should be scheduled. This should be a proactive process. Ideally, the campaign will aggressively seek out opportunities to present its position to targeted voters. Your targeting will help determine which regions of the state and demographic groups need the greatest degree of attention from the campaign. Once you have made targeting determinations, you can make corresponding planning decisions on where and when the campaign needs to have speakers and then find the venues. These should be based on your campaign priorities not simply passively relying upon invitations from groups and organizations.

Scheduling does require clearly defined criteria for responding “yes” or “no” to an event. Often these are made in weekly meetings with the communications director, the field coordinator, and the manager. This part of the plan should also clearly note who is responsible for saying “yes” or “no.” If each member of your campaign team believes s/he has the authority to schedule events, you may find yourself participating in any number of ridiculous and potentially harmful events. Remember, where you are seen correlates with what you want to be saying. For this reason the scheduler generally reports to the communications director. There must be a constant and open line of communication between the scheduler, the press operation, and the manager. This section of your plan should serve as the primary tool for defining, clarifying, and opening those lines.

Earned Media

In campaign parlance, “earned media” refers to communications outreach that your campaign undertakes to spread your message without directly paying for the particular media employed. The most common form of earned media is mention in print or broadcast press. The earned media portion of your campaign plan should include highlights of the more extensive plan developed by your communications director or press liaison. This involves projecting the media to be utilized most often, such as print press, live press conferences, and radio talk shows. More recently, the earned media umbrella has expanded to include internet blogs. However, given the informality and ubiquitous nature of this particular medium, some extra precautions must be taken. The designated campaign blogger should understand the potential harm that too much online disclosure could cause the campaign and resist the temptation to reveal campaign strategy and tactics in the blog. The old adage “loose lips sink ships,” in the blogosphere translates to “improper posts crash the campaign.” Because the earned media operation deals primarily in delivering the campaign message and blunting the message of the opposition, this section should also be connected to the theme and message portion of your plan.

An effective earned media operation also coordinates its activities with the efforts of the paid media operation. Earned media outreach should be designed to reinforce the message and theme used in paid media efforts in order to increase the repetition of such messages and themes. Though your more detailed press plan will outline these kinds of activities, examples should be used in the section of the campaign plan to illustrate the type of communications operation envisioned.

The press portion of your plan should also identify strategies for working with the press, including editorial boards. It must clearly define who has authority to speak on behalf of the campaign. Staff members will often begin to speak freely when approached by a member of the press. Since not all staff members have been trained in message discipline, they are often prone to create problems for the campaign when engaging in such conversations. Setting the rules up front regarding press contact and communication will avoid this type of dangerous error.

Voter Contact

This section of the plan should focus on the various forms of voter contact, including paid media (radio, TV, cable, billboard, print advertising, yardsigns), persuasion mail, internet (web and email programs) and field operations. Your field operations cover a lot of ground (no pun intended), including coalition building, field design, door-to-door and phone canvassing, leafleting, and Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) efforts. How the campaign plans to utilize each of these forms of voter contact should be described in some detail.

Obviously, your media and persuasion mail consultants should have significant input into the portions of the voter contact plan that relate to their specialties. For each form of voter contact, the plan should include the following specifics:

1. The nature of the voter contact activity.
2. The purpose/goal of the activity.
3. When you want the activity to be accomplished.
4. What steps need to be taken to accomplish the activity.
5. The target/audience for the activity.
6. Who is responsible for completing the activity.
7. What resources will be necessary and available to accomplish the activity.
    a. How long will it take? Remember that time is the most valuable commodity in a campaign.
    b. How much money will it cost? What can be done for free?
    c. What paid staff will be necessary?
    d. How many volunteers?

e. Does it require any consultant time?

f. What other organizations will be involved?

g. Can you coordinate or piggyback with other local or statewide campaigns?

Though this appears to be a lot of information, it will save significant time and anxiety later in the campaign. For example, when you look into your persuasion mail program, you should respond to the following:

1) How many pieces will be mailed?

2) To how many households?

3) What is the target for each piece?

4) What type of mail piece will be used?

   a. Size and/or packaging

   b. Number of colors

5) Drop dates, print dates, copy-ready deadline.

6) Name of copywriter/and or designer.

7) Budget.

8) Staff required.

Person responsible for each part of the mail drop.

The Calendar

As a final piece to your campaign plan, develop a master calendar of all the planned campaign activities. This will give you an immediate visual reference. At a glance you will know when there are likely to be resource strains on your campaign and what has to be done on any given day. Being able to look forward in the campaign will allow for you to make appropriate changes to the plan as changing circumstances warrant.

FINAL NOTE

Remember, the campaign plan is a flexible document. It will change throughout the course of the campaign. There is really no way to predict what those changes may be, but simply preparing yourself for the inevitable will make adapting to those changes easier. Create your plan, monitor it closely, and adjust it when and where necessary. Above all, commit to the plan and be disciplined in your commitment. When things hit high speed in the final days of the campaign, it can be tempting to veer away from it. Don't make this mistake.

APPENDIX

THE DAY AFTER THE ELECTION ARTICLE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CAMPAIGN PLANNING

The purpose of this article is to provide you with a practical planning tool. By thinking about how the winning campaign will be described in the press on the morning after the election, it is possible to begin focusing planning efforts in a variety of key campaign areas.

COALITION FOR CHOICE CRUSHES ANTI-ABORTION INITIATIVE

ANYTOWN – In a stunning defeat to the agenda of anti-abortion forces in the state, the foes of a statewide ballot initiative to require women seeking an abortion to wait 48 hours before receiving the procedure and to receive state-mandated counseling materials defeated the measure by a margin of 18 points, 41% Yes to 59% No. The opposition campaign was conducted by the Coalition for Choice, made up of a number of pro-choice groups and supporters.

The Coalition campaign stressed {{Campaign's Messages}}, focused on the key issues of {{Campaign Themes}} throughout the five-month battle. The proponents, a loosely organized group of major churches and their supporters, often seemed off guard and unprepared for the steady flow of attacks on the initiative from their opposition.

The Coalition's victory has local political analysts scratching their heads due to the large disparity in funding between the two sides of the proposal. The proponents outspent their opposition by a margin of nearly 2-to-1. Additionally, the initiative opponents scored major victories in largely conservative areas like Reagan County and Quayle Township.

"The overall margin of victory is pretty amazing, but even more so when you consider that the Coalition managed to win in traditionally conservative areas," noted Paul Pundit, a political consultant from Capitol City. "Early polling showed this measure passing easily, but the proponents were clearly outmaneuvered by their opposition."

The campaign grew bitter in its final days. The Coalition began airing a television commercial featuring the story of a young woman who was beaten to death by a violent spouse while awaiting an abortion in a state that requires waiting periods. The proponents decried the ad as unfair, saying that such an incident was an aberration and the true purpose of the initiative was to allow a cooling down period where a woman could "have conversations with herself and God." The two sides also squabbled over the length and complexity of the initiative, with the Coalition for Choice running a television commercial highlighting specific language buried among the measure's 7,000 words.

Proponents were highly critical of the funding for the Coalition, claiming that out-of-state money was being funneled into the state. The Coalition for Choice financial records show nearly 1,000 individual contributors. The bulk of its $1,000,000 funding, however, came from three national organizations {{Angel Organization 1}}, {{Angel Organization 2}} and {{Angel Organization 3}}. Voters apparently rejected the notion that outside money should be kept out of Ourstate elections.

During the final weeks of the campaign, the Coalition focused its spending primarily on television advertising. The proponents, on the other hand, spent much smaller amounts of money across many different media types including television, radio, print advertising and billboards. Dominating one medium was a key to the Coalition victory, said Pundit. “By too broadly segmenting their outreach, the proponents failed to completely dominate any medium and their message effectiveness was diluted,” he noted.

In declaring victory, Coalition spokesperson Martha Washington said that the victory sends a message to far right political groups. “The voters have stood up and told the extremists tonight that our state will remain a place where women have the right to control their own health decisions,” Washington said. “If they try to chip away at our rights again, we’ll be back even stronger.” She hinted that the Coalition may itself bring an initiative on a future ballot ensuring a right to personal privacy under the state constitution.

Chapter 2:
OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

The administrative aspects of the campaign should be among the first issues addressed. The beginning stages of a campaign are a hectic time because so much of the planning process is just getting underway. For this reason, all too often administrative details are handled on an ad hoc basis without any thought or planning given to structure or function. This haphazard approach allows for mismanaged resources, duplicated efforts and poor decision-making that can be costly in the long-run. To avoid these problems, you should have an administrative plan and a system to implement it.

Since every campaign has distinct goals and budgetary limitations, the administration of each operation naturally differs. However, there are a few basic guidelines that can be applied to almost all campaigns. This chapter provides a practical guide to getting your operation up and running. Administrative details, however, should not be overlooked as the campaign progresses. Administrative discipline can be the difference between a smooth, efficient campaign and one in which time and resources are wasted.

GENERAL COMPONENTS

In order for your campaign to run smoothly, your office must have all the necessary components to ensure that staff members and volunteers can complete their projects and tasks. This section outlines the basic elements needed to create a friendly, productive work environment.

The Administrator

A good administrator can be the backbone of the campaign. If there is one position in a campaign that should be filled with a temperate, patient individual, this is it. This person is usually hired shortly after or at the same time as the consultants and campaign manager and begins as soon as possible. It is not unusual for the administrator to organize the office before the manager, communications director and other staff actually begin working in the office.

There are a number of qualities that make a good administrator:

1. Organizational and planning skills.

2. An ability to work with a host of different personalities.

3. Bookkeeping skills and sensitivity to budgetary constraints.

4. A desire to run the office, *not* the campaign.

5. A willingness to take responsibility for the office, but without the tenacity of a “gatekeeper."

The Office

The office space a campaign chooses is dictated to some degree by the budget. Most campaigns want a quality space for as little money as possible. Of course, sometimes that is easier said than done. But, if you identify your needs before you begin hunting for an office, you will have a better chance of finding a space that will suit you. Here are a few items to keep in mind before you begin your search.

1. Proximity

   The office should be in a central location so that any number of people can get to it with ease. It doesn't need to be on a main street or in a storefront, but it does need to be in a safe location. You will also want to lease a space that has adequate parking for staff and volunteers. Since many people rely on public transportation, you should also rent near a bus and/or subway stop. A few other items to consider, though not as essential, are the office's proximity to a Federal Express office, the campaign bank, a post office, a reasonably priced restaurant, and an office supply store.

2. Cost per square foot/Damage Deposit

It is important to negotiate carefully with prospective landlords for your campaign. Unless they have rented to political campaigns in the past, they may not be willing to undertake the high amount of foot traffic and overall heavy use that the space will undertake as it serves as a campaign headquarters. Additionally, many campaigns need space for a rental period of less than one year. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the final lease accommodates the various contingencies that can arise in a political campaign. For example, if your group is the proponent on an initiative and fails to get the minimum number of signatures to make final placement on the ballot, the lease should provide for early termination.

Because campaigns are notoriously damaging to the spaces they occupy, you will want to carefully consider the physical condition of the spaces you consider. A location with nice, brand-new carpeting, for example is probably a poor choice because of the damage it will likely sustain during the course of the campaign. You will also want to make sure that the landlord is aware that the space will likely sustain other minor damage, like pinholes in the walls from pushpins, stained rugs and walls, and similar minor damage. You should negotiate the terms of the damage deposit carefully in advance with the landlord and make sure that all likely occurrences have been finalized in the written lease agreement.

3. Access

Handicap access is essential - practically, politically, and legally. If the office is managed by a firm not housed in your building, make certain you can enter the building late in the evening and very early in the morning. Remember, volunteers and staff will be leaving and entering the building at odd hours. They need to be able to do so with relative ease and, most importantly, with a sense of security and safety.

4. Ventilation

Make sure your space has adequate heating and air conditioning (ideally included as part of the base lease payment) before you sign the lease. Electric and gas bills can put a serious dent in a campaign budget. Moreover, a smoldering or freezing office can deter volunteers from returning and also make the lives of the campaign staff quite miserable.

5. Outlets

Be sure your space has adequate electrical and phone outlets for phones, faxes, computers, clocks, radios, and lamps. It is always better to overestimate than underestimate in this area. This does not mean you need to insist the management put in three more wall plugs, but it does necessitate noting the number and location of each outlet to ensure you can at least use a surge protector to provide you with more plugs.

6. Square Footage

You need approximately 100 square feet for every staff member. This figure may change as you add more staff and volunteers in the months and weeks closer to the election. However, if you pick the right space initially, the addition of team members will not affect your productivity. As you search for an office with the appropriate square footage, you will most likely want the space to include the following:

a. A private office with a closing door for the campaign manager and communications director.

b. A reception area.

c. An office machine, coffee, and microwave area.

d. An open space where volunteers and field coordinators can work.

Though large, open spaces initially seem like good locations for campaign offices, they rarely provide staff with the privacy needed to complete their work. If you cannot find an office with more than one private space, you might want to consider using dividers. For campaign productivity, it is important that staff and volunteers have a sufficient number of relatively quiet spaces whenever the particular task they are working on requires concentration. Additionally, confidentiality requires privacy for the staff.

7) Cabling

Ideally, you will find a space that is pre-wired for a computer network, so that you won't need to run the wires yourself. In the absence of pre-existing wiring, it is important that the space accommodate a temporary wiring setup so that the campaign can build and maintain a network to share printers and files. At least one of the phone lines into the office space should accommodate DSL service, unless high-speed internet access is available through other means (i.e. as part of a bundle with television cable service).

Office Equipment and Supplies

As with most organizations, there are several essential pieces of equipment and office supplies needed to run a campaign.

1) Phones

There should be one line for every staff member, plus at least two or three extra lines for incoming calls and volunteer phone banks. Many local phone service providers require all political campaigns to deal with a "political desk" when ordering service. These same providers often require very large ($500 or more) deposits *per line* to be paid prior to hooking up the service. Obviously, it benefits the campaign to check with all of the phone service providers in your area and compare rates and plans. Plan to lease one telephone per staff person and at least one or two extra units.

Once you have ordered phone service, you will also need to acquire a physical phone system. Generally, the best option for equipment is to lease a used system, rather than leasing or purchasing a new system. Make sure to inquire about and compare pricing on such items as line capacity, voice-mail inclusion and line roll-over capacity.

2) Computers, Software, and Printers

As a general rule, you will need one complete computer set-up for the manager, the communications department, the fundraising department, the field department and one for "general use." Most of these units can be older models so long as they are capable of running current-generation software and can be networked using basic network software.

One computer should be off network and new (or *very* reliable), for housing the financial data for the campaign. The campaign will be required by law to ensure that it keeps accurate and careful financial records. Thus, it is imperative to ensure that the equipment housing such data is unlikely to fail. Additionally, it is critical that daily backups of legal compliance data be performed.

The campaign will need at least one quality laser printer that should be networked so that multiple computer units can access it. Additionally, the most cost-effective internet connectivity option for the campaign will likely be a high-speed (DSL or cable) internet account with the modem hooked to a network computer so that multiple units can share the access.

At least one person on staff should serve as the "technology troubleshooter." The administrator should also keep a list of technicians for each piece of equipment.

3) Fax Machine

Though you don't necessarily need a "top of the line" plain paper fax, you should try to find one with broadcast capability. This will make both your fundraising and communications directors very happy and, of course, even more productive.

4) Photocopy Machine

Copiers are often the most troublesome single piece of office equipment on a political campaign. Campaigns generally place high demands upon their copiers and very often the machines are not treated with the highest degree of care.

Because new copiers are prohibitively expensive, many campaigns resort to leasing copier equipment. Be certain that your lease agreement includes repair and a significant amount of copies (leased copiers have a maximum amount of "free" copies allowed each month, with a surcharge for each additional copy that is made). Often it is best to rent used copiers with service agreements. They provide the same quality at a lower cost.

5) Television/VCR/DVD Player

These are needed for tracking the national and local news, recording your opposition's commercials, and previewing your own ads. Obviously, brand-new equipment is not necessary, but the equipment should be reliable. Additionally, it may be necessary to have cable hooked-up, particularly if there are a large number of community access stations likely to run programs on your initiative, or if you (or your opposition) are likely to run cable advertising.

6) Tables, Desks, and Chairs

Full time staff members will need a desk or table they can call their own. You will also need a long table to place in the conference or reception area. This will be used for volunteer projects. Your chairs needn't be expensive, but they should be comfortable since the staff will spend a great deal of time sitting in them. Folding chairs are a great idea for the volunteer area.

7) Supplies

Though you will determine your own needs in this area, there are a few basics that can make working twelve to fifteen hour days much easier on your staff and volunteers:

4) Small office supplies - such as paper, letterhead, pens, message pads, tape, scissors, manila folders, letter trays, binders, a three-ring hole punch, calculators, paper clips, staples, staple gun, and stamps.

5) Filing cabinets.

6) A water cooler.

7) A mini fridge, coffee maker, microwave, and/or toaster oven.

8) Cassette and video tape recorders.

9) Supply cabinet.

10) Coat rack, portable closet, or wall hooks.

11) A message box.

12) In-boxes (centrally located) for all staff, the candidate, and full-time volunteers.

Before you purchase these items, ask your supporters if they can donate any of them. Businesses often have extra filing cabinets, chairs, and desks. If any of these materials are donated, be sure to follow the appropriate reporting process for in-kind donations.

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

The personal styles of the campaign manager and administrator will largely determine the way the office is managed. However, the manager and administrator should make a few rules to help ensure the smooth operation of the campaign. Defining the rules and making them known to everyone in the early stages of the campaign will save significant time and hassle down the road. A few areas that need clear ground rules include the following:

Office Hours

These are likely to change (lengthen) as the campaign progresses. Regardless of the hours your staff members may find themselves working, there are two basic rules of thumb to consider when setting this policy:

1) At a minimum, someone should always be at the office from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

2) Volunteers should never be left alone in the office. They aren't trained nor should they be expected to handle a crisis, should one occur.

3) Someone should be designated to open and close the office each day.

Having a policy for minimum “office hours” will help ensure that important calls, such as those from the press, are not answered by a machine or by a volunteer who is unfamiliar with office procedures.

Answering the Phones

You need either a receptionist or a clear system of responsibility as to who will answer the phone, how the calls will be screened, and what the standard greeting will be for the campaign. These matters should be resolved *before* your phones are installed. The office administrator or volunteer coordinator often fills the receptionist role. However, some campaigns simply rely on all staff members to answer the phone. This system can work so long as everyone really does their fair share of this duty. All too often, one person does most of the answering, making it difficult for them to perform their own work.

You should also have a dependable answering machine or voice mail system. It is also a good idea to designate one person to retrieve the messages from the machine or voice mail each morning.

Mail

One person should be assigned to open the mail and distribute it appropriately. This task is usually assigned to the administrator.

Visitors/Deliveries

All visitors, especially unexpected visitors, should be "screened" when they arrive at the front door. Sometimes the opposition will send people over to annoy the campaign or just to pick up your most recent campaign literature. Sometimes a reporter will drop by without calling. And sometimes a supporter will drop by with a large check. Obviously the process for dealing with each of these visitors will be very different.

It will benefit the campaign to set a few ground rules regarding the process of inviting visitors into the office. Regardless of the procedure you actually choose, never leave the front office unattended while a visitor - especially an unknown one or seemingly unfriendly one - is waiting there.

A policy should be set regarding who has the authority to sign for deliveries.

Faxes

Campaigns receive numerous faxes, some that are highly confidential. Don't put the fax machine in a public location. Assign someone to check the machine regularly so faxes can be delivered to the appropriate person as soon as possible. Make it clear to this individual that a fax is to go only to the person to whom it is addressed. This may seem overly basic, but all too often highly confidential documents have been inappropriately photocopied and distributed to campaign workers and volunteers.

Recycling and Clean-Up

Campaigns are a haven for old newspapers, lots of used white paper, and empty soda cans. You should create recycling bins for each of these products and then assign one staff member to the task of taking them to a recycling center (or, if you're lucky the curbside). Because every member of the campaign team always has more work to finish than is humanly possible, the office will often look like a dumpsite. Recycling will help this situation. But you also need to make certain everyone cleans up after him/herself. You may want to do a weekly calendar and assign one person to clean-up duty for the week.

THE REPORTING SYSTEM

This system will undoubtedly be created in cooperation with the fundraising director and the manager. Because the manager deals most directly with the budget, s/he will need to be aware of the daily reports and cash flow. This section of the process is described in more detail in Chapter Three on budgeting. However, its importance cannot be over-stated. A poorly defined reporting system can cost the campaign a great amount of time and money, especially when the press and your election board discover your failure to accurately report your expenditures and contributions.

The administrator (sometimes called comptroller) generally deals with the daily cash flow of the campaign. S/he should become familiar with state financial reporting laws at the start of the campaign and make sure that these are scrupulously followed. In many states, there are consultants who specialize in election reporting. It may benefit your campaign to consider hiring one of these professionals, particularly if you anticipate a high number of contributors or complex reporting for any other reason.

Payroll requirements, including FICA and withholding, should also be met. Campaigns are often tempted to hire staff members as consultants to avoid these taxes.

Do *not* make this mistake. It can be politically damaging - an opposition researcher will almost always look through the financial reports. And, it is usually a violation of IRS regulation.

Remember, the campaign finances often determine the outcome of an election. Don't be sloppy or cheap when it comes to the reporting procedure.

FINAL NOTE

Establishing clear office policies before the campaign is in full swing will save time and energy. If staff members know the proper procedure and who is responsible for each task, your operation will run much smoother. A good administrator can make all the difference in this area. Hire someone with the appropriate skills and definite desire to do the job.

Chapter 3:
PRE-BALLOT CERTIFICATION

Activities & Concerns

PRE-BALLOT CERTIFICATION ACTIVITIES & CONCERNS

As is true for many different types of political campaigns, failure to invest sufficient time, resources and energy into up-front planning can hamper, if not destroy, an initiative or referendum campaign's chances of electoral victory. Too many groups proposing (and to a lesser extent, groups opposing) initiatives view the process leading up to ballot certification as a mere formality and fail to dedicate substantial effort toward ensuring that the first steps taken on the initiative are sound. Just as a house cannot stand if its foundation is defective, a campaign will be negatively impacted if the initial planning phase for pre-ballot certification is shoddy or haphazard.

Effective planning takes time. Groups and organizations seeking to put forth an initiative or seeking a referred measure from a legislative body should begin thinking about the nature, scope and language of the measure months, if not years, before beginning the process. Similarly, progressive groups working on issues that attract extremist measures against them (e.g. choice, immigrant/non-English speaking populations and gay & lesbian groups) should constantly keep their "ear to the ground" to learn of potential initiatives and begin preparing an attack plan as early in the development stage of the proposal as possible.

This chapter focuses on the key issues to consider during the initial planning phase of this process. It is intended to provide a starting point. However, there is a huge disparity between the ways that states regulate and otherwise govern the pre-ballot placement process. Therefore, each group planning an initiative/referendum or opposing such a measure will have to carefully construct a plan in light of the specific legal requirements of the state in question. The appendix to this chapter, which follows Chapter 14, is a detailed paper edited by Dane Waters of the Initiative & Referenda Institute that provides useful information for all of the citizen initiative states.

Any campaign proposing or opposing an initiative should rely on expert advice in crafting strategy for this initial phase. By doing the research to determine the precise requirements and common pitfalls inherent in the pre-ballot certification process in each jurisdiction, the campaign should be able to prevent many of the common mistakes that keep measures off the ballot or negatively impact the chances for success on Election Day, due to defects in the measure.

INITIATIVE OR REFERENDUM

While each jurisdiction may have individualized rules and terminology for citizen lawmaking, there are two basic types of measures that allow voters to create laws themselves.

The most common is the initiative process, whereby citizens themselves propose a new law. Some states allow two forms of citizen initiative: constitutional amendments and statutory initiatives. In either case, individuals or groups of citizens draft and propose the law or constitutional amendment directly to the electorate after their proposal has been certified for the ballot.

Less commonly used, but still a vibrant presence in some states, is the referendum process whereby the measure begins its life in the state's legislative body and is referred to the voters who have the ability to validate it as law or reject it. Some states, like Oregon, see a greater number of referrals. In other states, these are less common and will appear on the ballot only in situations where the issue has broad philosophical support but for some reason (usually fiscal), the legislature is reluctant to pass it directly.

For a detailed description of the initiative and referendum process, please see the Appendix to this chapter.

BALLOT LANGUAGE

In many ways, no single factor is more important to the success or failure of the campaign than the language of the initiative itself. The initiative/referendum campaign history in America is full of examples of popular ideas that failed as initiatives due to complex, confusing and/or misleading language. Similarly, campaigns opposing initiatives have a greater difficulty attacking well-drafted, clear and concise measures, especially if the generic issue has broad popular support.

As issue proponents, it is always wise to conduct survey research prior to beginning the drafting process. Testing variations of the broad issue and asking voters their opinions on possible alternate initiative questions will yield valuable data allowing the measure to be drafted in the strongest way possible with an eye toward success at the ballot box.

Budget permitting, hiring an attorney who specializes in the electoral law of the state is another wise idea. Failure to ensure that the ballot language drafter(s) is/are very experienced with the initiative/referendum process in the state can cause serious problems down the line. It may be true that one or more of the organizations in the campaign coalition have staff attorneys. Unless such attorneys are experienced in the art of statutory drafting, it may still be wise to hire an experienced attorney to oversee the drafting process.

The reasoning is simple. Attorneys who are experts in the issue area may or may not also have expertise in the initiative process. If they are not, they may be unaware of the potential pitfalls involved in specific wording choices in the proposal.

Whenever possible, the campaign should use actual ballot language proposals in its pre-ballot polling. Better data will always result from voters having heard language that is exactly or very close to the language that will ultimately appear on the ballot. This may, of course, require extra effort and expense from the campaign since it will result in several sets of proposal language from within the broad issue subject to be drafted.

A basic rule for most ballot measures is that simpler language is better. The longer and more complex the initiative language becomes, the greater the likelihood that opponents will be able to persuade voters that the initiative is hiding unpopular items. Opponent campaigns generally like complex, wordy measures because of the built-in sources of attack and because of broad voter unease with complex proposals.

Sometimes the nature of the issue or the specific legal framework of the measure will necessitate a longer initiative proposal. The proponent campaign in such instances will need to plan for attacks based on the complexity of the question and prepare a strategy for effectively responding to and countering the attacks.

Some states allow proponents the choice between offering a constitutional amendment to the state's constitution or a citizen statute that has the same force and effect as those passed through the legislative process. When deciding which of these to use, proponents must carefully weigh the negative effects associated with amendments (many voters are wary of amending the constitution, a process that they may feel is too rigid), against the potential impermanence of initiative statutes. There are numerous instances of state legislatures voiding or substantially altering citizen initiative-passed statutes. If possible, the pre-ballot poll should test voters' concerns about passing constitutional amendments versus statutory initiatives.

Unfortunately, the campaigns that do a good job of planning and properly executing the drafting process also create an early fundraising burden for themselves as all of the components of a rigorous planning process during the initial planning phase cost money. In some ways, however, it also provides the campaign with an early indicator of possible fundraising challenges down the line; if funders are unwilling to support the issue at its earliest stages, the campaign may have a very difficult time meeting its budgetary goals throughout the campaign.

ADMINISTRATIVE/REGULATORY MATTERS

The administrative and regulatory stage is one of the most common times for proponents to face challenges from initiative opponents. There are large bodies of regulations and administrative rules that govern the pre-ballot certification process. It is thus very important for proponents to plan carefully for this stage of the process and to do everything possible to ensure that all rules are painstakingly followed.

For progressive campaigns fighting extremist proposals, the regulatory stage offers opportunities for derailing the measure prior to it ever attaining ballot placement. It is consequently very important for all campaigns, proponent and opponent alike, to become fully versed in the applicable rules and regulations that govern the pre-ballot process.

Because of the wide variety of these rules between states that afford direct citizen lawmaking, this discussion will stick to basic concepts only. For greater detail concerning the rules in any individual state, refer to the appendix to this chapter. Additionally, it is critical for every campaign to consult with experts in the election laws of the state and to become fully informed about all applicable rules, regulations and statutes.

Either type of campaign should recognize the possible pitfalls and problems that can arise during the pre-ballot certification process and plan accordingly. The overall strategy for responding to challenges during this process (or in the case of an opposition campaign, mounting such challenges) should be part of the campaign plan. While it is never possible to predict all of the potential issues that might arise during this phase of the campaign, forethought can minimize the chances of the campaign finding itself ill-prepared.

While each state will have its own flow through the administrative portion of the process, there are several major categories of challenges that arise. In many states the initiative can be challenged administratively for failing to meet legal requirements related to its content. For example, a number of states have laws requiring initiatives to contain a single subject only, giving rise to possible challenges based upon measures that deal with multiple issues. Other items like formal timing requirements, language summaries for the ballot, the form or format of the petitions themselves and so on, can all form the basis of successful challenges.

Each campaign will need to examine the jurisdiction it is operating within and become aware of the common challenge avenues to be explored. Rarely will a campaign discover a new basis for a challenge. The campaign will be able to rely upon the experience of other progressive campaigns that have been conducted in their states to plan for the specific types of administrative challenges available. Additionally, refer to the materials that follow Chapter 14 as well as other resource materials to determine the best opportunities for challenging an initiative in each state.

SIGNATURE GATHERING

The signature gathering effort will pose one of the toughest tactical and practical challenges to a proponent campaign. Each state has an established minimum number of valid signatures (typically requiring registered voters within the state) and may have numerous other requirements related to geographic distribution of the signatures or ensuring that the information on the petitions is identical to the information in the voter registration file. Because of the various reasons that signatures may be invalidated, it will always be necessary to gather significantly more signatures than the minimum required amount, in order to account for disallowed signatures.

Many legislative bodies are very uncomfortable with the direct citizen lawmaking process and have been creating new laws, rules and regulations designed to make it more difficult for proponent organizations to place measures on the ballot. Signature gathering regulations provide a rich source of such restrictions. Each campaign will need to keep abreast of the changing landscape related to signature gathering restrictions and alter its planning appropriately, if necessary. Two of the most common types of proposals being put forth in this regard are regulations that signature gatherers must be residents of a state for a specified period of time and that signatures must be gathered equally across geographic distributions (typically congressional districts). While the courts may ultimately invalidate many of these types of new restrictions, they could easily remain in force and affect at the time the signature gathering process is taking place.

One of the first tactical considerations that the campaign will undertake is deciding whether to utilize paid and/or volunteer signature gatherers. While many progressive enterprises will immediately assume that they have the people power to conduct an all-volunteer effort, the truth is that such efforts rarely succeed. Because of the number of signatures involved and the time limitations imposed upon gathering in most states, it is very difficult to run a volunteer effort. Ensuring that volunteers check to be certain that only registered voters are signing the petitions and then making certain they properly notarize the petition forms (in states where notarization is required) adds layers of responsibility on top of the commitment that the campaign is already making when it asks volunteers to approach friends and strangers alike for their signatures.

Because of these challenges, campaigns are increasingly turning to professional signature gathering firms to get signatures. Many state legislatures have targeted these types of firms in an effort to restrict or even eliminate their ability to do business. Thus far, these firms have successfully challenged such restrictions in the courts and currently are involved in many, probably most, initiative campaigns. In addition to the public relations challenge, overcoming the notion that using paid signature gatherers makes the campaign somehow less “citizen” driven, campaigns choosing to employ them will also face a major budgetary blow. Depending upon the complexity of the assignment and the proximity of the hiring date to the “turn-in” date mandated for the petitions, signature-gathering firms could charge very high fees (typically the lowest fee currently available is a dollar per signature).

Whether using volunteers, paid gatherers or both, the campaign should review carefully all of the rules related to validity of signatures and ensure that the rules are communicated to the gatherers. Additionally, the campaign should be constantly performing a back-end review of the petition forms to monitor validity and determine the rate of acceptable signatures. Some states even allow procedures for the campaign to strike signatures that it knows to be defective in some respect, thereby assuring that election officials will not count those signatures. Once again, it is very important for the campaign to fully educate itself on all rules related to the validity of the signatures.

The verification and validation procedures vary from state to state. Both proponent and opponent campaigns should become fully versed in these procedures and review the process as it proceeds. Proponents must be prepared to vigorously fight any challenge to the signatures submitted, while opponents can look for ways to derail the initiative by challenging the validity of signatures. Every campaign must know the procedures that will be undertaken by the election authorities and be prepared to quickly pursue appeals through the administrative process or the courts if it appears that errors were made in the counting process.

COURTS

The judicial system offers campaigns the last resort if they feel that mistakes have been made during any of the pre-ballot certification process. Even under the best planning and implementation situations, unexpected occurrences will happen. If the campaign, for example, monitors the signature process carefully and makes an independent determination that a statistical sample procedure that was performed was flawed, it may need to seek relief from the courts to ensure a proper re-count.

Recourse to the courts tends to be very expensive because of legal fees, expert witness fees and other expenses. It should be viewed as a last resort and relied upon only when the campaign can obtain relief in no other way.

BALLOT CERTIFICATION

At the conclusion of the myriad pre-ballot processes, the Secretary of State or other election official designated by law will make a final determination as to the sufficiency of the petitions submitted. Certifying the initiative for the ballot marks a significant turning point for the campaign and in many ways marks the official start of the outreach and messaging portions of the campaign.

FINAL NOTE

Too many campaigns fall victim to the notion that they can save money by skimping on the pre-ballot portion of the campaign process, only to discover too late that such action causes failure to even get onto the ballot. Each campaign should recognize the importance and numerous potential problem areas that exist in the pre-ballot certification processes and plan accordingly.

APPENDIX

For more information about ballot measures qualification and verification processes and procedures, please refer to www.ballot.org or your state's Secretary of State's office. A link of Secretary of State's websites with contact information can be found at www.ballot.org.

<u>AN INITIATIVE'S BALLOT TITLE:</u>
<u>SOMETIMES YOU *CAN* JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER</u>

by
Mark G. Grueskin*

An initiative's ballot title is the first thing a voter sees. As the official synopsis of the measure, it is placed prominently on petitions circulated so the measure can gain a spot on the ballot. It is included in the election notice sent to voters' homes or published in local newspapers. And it is the summary of the issue on the ballot itself and thus is the question voters actually consider when they vote. As such, ballot titles can help to define political debate and direct political outcomes in closely contested elections.

The ballot title is typically the first battleground over a proposed initiative. Long before television ads run or newspapers endorse, proponents and lawyers work to clarify and amplify a measure's ballot title. Most states that authorize initiatives also provide for administrative and judicial review of proposed ballot titles to determine whether the measure contains a single subject and whether the title is accurate and fairly worded. (A few states also permit pre-election consideration of the constitutionality of the measure itself rather than the ballot title, on the theory that the voters should not have to consider something that will not withstand an attack after Election Day.)

Single subject requirements are imposed to ensure that voters consider ballot measures based on their merits. Oftentimes, proposed initiatives are like legislative bills, in that advocates may be tempted to include unrelated "bait" to attract the support of constituency groups and voting blocks. When that happens, votes are cast for or against a measure for reasons that have little to do with its central provisions. Without a single subject requirement, voters could also find after the election that they agreed to stealth provisions they never would have approved, had those provisions been considered on their own merits. Testing a proposal to ensure that it has one essential purpose fosters voter confidence in the initiative process. After all, a ballot measure is not a box of Cracker Jacks; there shouldn't be any surprises hidden inside.

The requirement that a ballot title be accurately worded seems too obvious to require a great deal of explanation. Yet, it too is central to the system of legislating at the ballot box. If voters cannot understand what a measure is about after reading the title, or if the title says that it accomplishes one goal but it actually does no such thing, the election can hardly be said to be fair. For this reason, establishing the accuracy of a ballot title requires solid answers to several questions. Can voters understand the wording in the title? Does that wording present voters with a correct summary of the key provisions the measure contains? Do "yes" and "no" votes accomplish the results that voters think they will? Are there political slogans tucked into the ballot title, phrases that would tilt the views of an unknowing voter one way or the other?

One salutary effect of setting a ballot title is that it gives the initiative proponents a pre-election reality check. The initiative wording may seem crystal clear after an internal drafting process. Yet, the process of summarizing a measure so that voters can understand it often highlights gaps in important provisions or ill-founded presumptions that the drafters overlooked. Explaining what the proposal seeks to accomplish before a neutral official or panel charged with setting a ballot title can provide an impetus for fine-tuning the measure before voters see it on a petition and the ballot.

The ballot title challenge process is also a forum in which proponents explain to the outside world what their measure would do. In one sense, it is an early warning system to provide insight and explanation at a time when many voters may be ignoring politics. Even though the complaint is sometimes voiced that the election season already lasts too long, this initial stage of the initiative process facilitates interest groups' and citizens' understanding of what is at stake if a measure ends up on the ballot.

After an election, the title challenge process can provide the courts with guideposts concerning the drafters' intent. After all, a bill that winds its way through a legislature will have committee hearings and floor debate to reflect the legislative intent behind key statutory provisions. With an initiative, though, there is no such process leading up to enactment. Generally, courts are not inclined to look at the campaign rhetoric of advocates and opponents as a framework for interpreting the measure. They are left, then, with the official representations of the proponents prior to Election Day. If there is a pre-submission review process by a legislative committee or legislative staff, the statements of the measure's authors there can provide some of this background. Likewise, if there is an official pre-election analysis that sets forth the pros and cons of an initiative, that document can fill in some blanks. Lastly, the ballot title itself, as well as the proponents' representations made about the measure during the title setting process, can help guide courts in their attempt to divine the meaning of an initiative's ambiguous provisions, months or even years after the election.

Challenging a ballot title is usually a limited procedure. Before voters actually consider an initiative's relative merits, courts are not typically anxious to interpret a ballot measure in-depth. The timeframe for lodging a ballot title protest is generally only a matter of days. As a result, using this process to ensure the accuracy of a ballot title requires some organization and discipline.

The ballot title setting process, once overlooked and taken for granted, is now the starting line for the initiative campaign season. The stakes are often high, as a foregone opportunity to get a ballot title corrected can put one side or the other at a marked disadvantage. And given the narrow margins in many issue campaigns today, no one wants to begin this race in second place.

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Chapter 4:
THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

An initiative campaign, like most campaigns, is a finite organization. It begins the day you choose it to begin and ends, in most cases, the first Tuesday in November. Despite their finite nature, campaigns, like most businesses, require certain organizational elements to be successful: a goal, office space, equipment, employees, a plan, a purpose, and structure. However, unlike most companies, a campaign does not aim to remain in business for ten, twenty, or thirty years. In fact, some last only four months, others fifteen to twenty months. A campaign by its very nature must achieve its ultimate goal in a limited time frame with limited resources. To do this, an organization must be built to function quickly, efficiently, and effectively.

Defining the structure of your organization and the role of each staff member will help you in this process. To be effective, every member of the campaign team needs to know his/her responsibilities as well as those of the other team members. Failure to clarify roles can lead to numerous problems.

Consider what might happen if your field coordinator decided to schedule fundraisers when s/he travels around the state. This would likely upset the manager, the fundraiser and the scheduler, not to mention the potential event sponsors who receive a phone call telling them another event had already been scheduled for that particular date. Though sometimes these mishaps are unavoidable, devising an organizational chart and listing the responsibilities for each team member can prevent potential problems.

Defining the structure of your organization essentially means identifying the lines of communication and responsibilities for each team member. Who reports to whom? When do they report? What do they report? Why do they report? And how do they report?

These questions are basic, but essential, to a smooth, functional operation. All too often campaign workers lose their jobs because they cross a line of authority they didn't know they weren't suppose to cross or they didn't accept responsibility for a project because they didn't know they were responsible for it. The purpose of this chapter is to help you avoid these situations. What follows is intended to assist you in developing the structure of your initiative campaign and delineating the roles of your staff members and consultants.

A final important consideration is: What do we want to leave behind at the end of the campaign for future campaigns? For example, an unfortunate reality is that the right-wing continues to bring measures to the ballot that necessitate bi-annual response from progressive groups. As the campaign develops, think about what elements of the effort can be used to fight the next battle. The voter file, voter identification logs, polling data, computers, software, robo calling systems, and office equipment are all potential tools to be used in a future campaign.

IDENTIFYING YOUR NEEDS

The staffing needs of an initiative campaign are naturally going to differ from those of a candidate-oriented one. You don't have a candidate or a spouse to schedule. You don't need a driver. And you don't need a fundraising “call-time” assistant to dial the phone for the candidate, except in cases where steering committee members need a push. To build an organization that functions effectively and efficiently as a team, you need to make these types of distinctions.

As you begin to develop your campaign plan, your staffing requirements will become clearer. You need to review the budget, the time frame of your campaign your projected volunteer resources, and your overall strategy. Once you have closely examined each of these areas, you can then begin to decide which staff positions you definitely need filled, which you would like to have filled, when you need them filled, and the qualities you want in the person you hire for the position.

Answering these questions will also help you identify the salary range and responsibilities for each position.

If you decide you need an experienced fundraiser with connections across the state, then you will have to pay for that experience. Similarly, if you decide you simply need a fundraiser willing to make phone calls, send direct mail, and work closely with the finance chair, you can probably hire someone with less experience. The salary would be significantly lower for a person with high energy, commitment and enthusiasm, but not a great deal of experience. Again, these decisions depend on how you define your needs and budgetary constraints.

DEFINING THE POSITIONS

Once you have defined your requirements and decided what you want, for example, an experienced communications director and an eager, but inexperienced fundraiser, you can then begin defining the positions and how they fit into your organization. Initiative campaigns by and large have fewer resources than most statewide candidate campaigns.

Consequently, they also have fewer staff members. Defining the responsibilities of each position becomes even more important because you have fewer resources to waste. Choosing the right consultants for your team can also affect the dynamic of your organization. It is important to understand each consultant's style, expectations, financial requirements, and time constraints.

Your campaign staff should function as a team. You will be working long hours together in a high stress, intense environment. As noted throughout this chapter, your staffing needs will vary depending on your resources, but there are some general guidelines to consider when searching for someone to fill each position. The descriptions that follow are not written in stone, but they have proven effective over the years. Only key staff members have been included here. Should you have the luxury of hiring assistants for some of the departments, the manager and department director can then readily identify the type of individual needed for the position. To help you in this process, the following are brief descriptions of frequently used staff and consultant positions in an initiative campaign.

The Manager

The campaign manager is the person responsible for the development and implementation of the campaign. Though s/he will have assistance from any number of people in developing the plan, s/he will also generally be the one responsible for its on-site implementation. A manager will spend nearly twenty percent of his/her time working on the budget. Sixty percent of his/her time will be spent interacting with staff, supporters, and consultants. The other twenty percent will be spent on miscellaneous paperwork. Occasionally a campaign manager will write a speech or a piece of literature, but generally their time is too limited to undertake such a time consuming task.

In an initiative campaign, the manager plays a very central role. After all, there is no candidate to dominate the agenda, change the schedule, or cancel a press conference at the last minute. The manager, then, must keep the entire organization focused on the issue and motivated to carry out their individual responsibilities within the campaign plan. Because the manager must not only direct the office, but also make smart political judgments, there are a few essential qualities needed in someone filling this position. They include:

1) A strong political instinct. Does this person understand the game of politics? Does this person know how to work with the "players?"

2) An ability to listen to others' opinions and determine the usefulness and practicality of each of them.

3) An understanding of finance and budgeting.

4) Some knowledge of how each specific area of the campaign should operate - or a willingness to listen to those who do. Though it is always wise to hire a manager who has previously managed a campaign, all too often that is not possible. Someone who has worked on a campaign before in another capacity is often a good choice because they at least understand the dynamics of a campaign organization.

5) A willingness to say “no” to consultants, finance committee members, and staffers.

6) A commitment to working long hours seven days per week.

7) Discipline enough to stay and keep everyone else “on message.”

The Fundraising Director

A fundraising director plays a pivotal role in any campaign - if there is no money, there is no campaign. In an initiative campaign, this position becomes even more vital. Since there is no candidate to solicit donations, the fundraising director, the finance chair, and the finance committee members must all ask for contributions. The fundraising director is also responsible for coordinating events, producing and overseeing direct mail solicitations, monitoring the reporting process, and directing the finance committee. Given the vocal and public role of the fundraising director in an initiative campaign, you should look for an individual who not only understands how to raise money, but how to ask for and keep track of it. Here a few tips to keep in mind when filling this position:

1) Attitude makes all the difference. When people are asked to donate, they want to feel important and respected. An arrogant or condescending fundraiser will turn people away from your campaign.

2) Experience is important, but not always feasible (either because of a shortage of experienced fundraisers or because of the high salary level experienced fundraisers command). If you can't find or afford an experienced fundraiser, an eager, smart, inexperienced one can be effective. Under such circumstances, it will likely be necessary to have a fundraising consultant to direct the efforts of the finance operation or a campaign manger with significant fundraising experience.

3) Trust and honesty do matter. A faulty report or illegal contribution can destroy your campaign’s integrity and cost a fortune in legal fees.

4) Initiative and confidence are valuable qualities. The fundraising director must be comfortable directly asking for campaign contributions.

5) Networking skills are also critical. The ideal fundraiser can expertly organize, manipulate, and expand the fundraising database and potentials of the coalition partners.

The Communications Director and/or Press Secretary

Many statewide campaigns will often hire a communications director, a press secretary, one or two deputy press secretaries, and a speechwriter. However, these campaigns are generally in a U.S. Senate or gubernatorial race. Initiative campaigns will rarely have the luxury of a large communications staff. As such, you will need to decide how you want to frame the communications portion of your operation. A communications director generally oversees the press, research, and scheduling departments. S/he may or may not be the spokesperson for the campaign. This person spends his/her time coordinating the activities between the three departments and acting as a drill sergeant on message delivery. Depending on the size of your staff, a communications director may do all of the above and act as the press secretary, writing releases and speeches, arranging press events, and talking with reporters on a daily basis.

Because initiative campaigns generally have a small staff, you will most likely have either a press secretary or a communications director. In some cases, this distinction is simply a question of title. But in most it is also a question of responsibility. The style of your campaign and the person chosen for this position will largely dictate which you choose. However, you may find it more helpful to hire a communications director who can oversee the research and scheduling departments or at least work closely with them. This will help an already overworked manager and also ensure the campaign message gets delivered in the appropriate manner. Whichever route you take, there are a few skills to look for, which include:

1) Strong written and oral communications skills.

2) A solid grasp of the issues and the political climate.

3) Good political instincts. In other words, s/he knows when to talk and when not to talk.

4) A willingness to call a reporter when a bad story is written and the personal style to do so without offending him/her.

5) Honesty. Knows to *never* lie to a reporter. Always know that you can trust your spokesperson to answer appropriately and honestly.

The Field Director

Energy, enthusiasm, and an ability to analyze demographics are the primary considerations when looking for a field director. This individual is one of the most visible people on the campaign. S/he travels the state meeting people and attempting to get their support. Once supporters have been identified, the field coordinator must keep track of them, noting where they reside, what other campaigns they support, what volunteer tasks (if any) they are willing to perform for the campaign, and what contacts they have in their community. S/he must also keep track of those who support the opposition. Knowing your enemy is just as important as knowing your friends.

To be effective, a field director must be in constant contact with people across the state. Because this person will be the “eyes and ears” of the campaign, s/he will also serve as a troubleshooter. S/he can alert the manager or communications director to developing problems. S/he can also offer suggestions for scheduling by knowing where in the state support is strong and where it is weak. As such, s/he becomes a lifeline to the "outside" world. To ensure you hire the right person, look for an individual with the following:

1) Good basic math skills and a basic understanding of demographics.

2) An outgoing personality.

3) Political judgment.

4) A commitment to teamwork.

5) A willingness to do just about anything, from posting signs to designing fliers to coordinating a house party.

6) Ability to build coalitions.

7) A car to drive around the state.

8) An ability to read maps.

The Opposition Researcher

The primary responsibility of the opposition researcher is to uncover everything possible about the opposition *and* about your own campaign. This information is then used to draft polls, refine the message, and develop an earned media strategy. The person filling this position will be searching through statistics, testimonials, financial reports, community lists, and other sources. S/he must then make sense out of the findings and provide the campaign with reports and memos.

The necessity of this type of research cannot be underestimated or ignored. Knowing your enemy is as important, if not more important, than knowing yourself. Many campaigns hire a professional firm to do opposition research because of the political sensitivity of this type of campaign activity. Since your campaign may not have the resources to hire an outside firm to perform opposition research, you may find that simply hiring an individual with good research skills and political judgment can adequately serve your needs. If you choose to hire a staff researcher, look for someone with these qualities:

1) An eye for detail and a penchant for accuracy.

2) Solid writing skills.

3) Excellent internet research skills.

4) Knowledge of libraries and their computer systems.

5) A willingness to listen and take direction.

6) An understanding of the political climate.

7) An ability to work alone for long periods.

8) The tenacity to find the "unfindable."

The Office Manager/Administrator

The administrator is responsible for the smooth operation of the office. S/he is the person staff members will turn to when equipment needs repair, supplies are needed, or snacks and sodas are needed for a volunteer phone bank. A good administrator must have the following:

1) Organizational and planning skills.

2) An ability to work with a host of different personalities.

3) Bookkeeping skills and sensitivity to budgetary constraints.

4) A desire to run the office, not the campaign.

5) A willingness to take responsibility for the office, without acting like a "gate keeper."

The Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteers are vital to the success of any campaign, especially initiative campaigns. A good volunteer coordinator can recruit and maintain a constant flow of efficient volunteers working at headquarters. As such, the volunteer coordinator must have the skills to recruit and keep volunteers, including:

1) A friendly demeanor.

2) Patience.

3) A good sense of humor.

4) Strong organizational skills.

5) Good phone skills.

6) An ability to assess the skills of others.

7) An ability to give clear and precise directions.

8) The ability to “remove” a volunteer from a task with tact, grace, and style.

THE CONSULTANTS

Your campaign will need consultants. You may hire one or five, but you will need the advice of professionals for certain aspects of the election process, such as budgeting, producing advertisements, and polling. Your budget and political climate will help dictate whom you hire and when you hire them.

Most of the discussion in this manual presumes a "typical" campaign structure with a significant "on-the-ground" staff and consultants working in a supportive role. Many modern initiative campaigns are adapting a model that is nearly the reverse. Increasingly, well-funded proponent and opponent organizations are relying exclusively (or nearly exclusively) on consultants to direct all phases of the campaign operations. These campaigns tend to be much more media-heavy and tend to de-emphasize many traditional campaign elements like field operations. While many campaigns utilizing consultants in all capacities have been very successful, it should be noted that this model requires an exceptionally high level of funding.

What follows are general descriptions of the major types of political consultants initiative campaigns typically hire. An estimate of their fees has also been included. However, fees do change based on the state, the nature of the race, and the timing. Be sure to clarify all the terms of your agreement before signing any contract.

The recommended manner of finding and hiring consultants is for the campaign to put out an RFP. The RFP aids in discerning the different approaches, costs and timelines (see "Hiring and Working with Consultants" on page 72).

The General Consultant

A general (or management) consultant serves as an objective, seasoned political voice for the campaign. With years of experience in the political arena, a good general consultant can become one of your greatest resources. S/he usually writes the campaign plan, designs the budget, and helps oversee the implementation of the campaign plan. Though a general consultant usually works closely with the manager, s/he will also spend time working with other staff members. Moreover, a general consultant also serves as a liaison to your other consultants. S/he will argue certain points and work through the strategy with them. This saves the campaign manager a great deal of time and stress .

Over the last decade, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of issue committees that hire a consultant to direct the campaign instead of hiring a campaign manager. Given that consultants typically have a high degree of experience directing all phases of modern campaigns, this model makes sense for many of these groups. Having a management consultant control the campaign works particularly well in situations with a small campaign staff and where the issue will largely be defined through broadcast media. It is less effective when there is a large staff to be coordinated.

In any instance, hiring a general consultant is a good idea for most statewide campaigns, especially those that do not have a veteran campaign manager. Most general consultants work on a retainer, meaning they will charge your campaign a monthly fee that generally falls between $2,500 (for part-time consulting agreements) and $25,000 (for full-time engagement with the consultant directing the daily campaign operations). Most will bill you for travel-related expenses, federal express deliveries, conference calls and long distance charges.

After reviewing each consultant's promotional materials, ask for references and an on-site interview. Personal style is a critical factor in choosing a general consultant, as you will be interacting with him/her on a daily basis. Always ask the consultant, "What do we get for $xxx per month?" and – "Who from the firm will we be dealing with daily?"

Not all campaigns can afford or necessarily need a general consultant. For such circumstances, other campaign consultants are able to provide much of the expertise and capability of a general consultant as long as these expectations are delineated when the consultants are hired. Often, campaign media firms are also actively engaged in the budgeting and communications components of the campaign.

The Pollster

It is extremely difficult to wage a credible campaign without survey research. You need to know the strengths and weaknesses of your issue arguments/positions as well as those of your opponents. Survey research is essential to accurately gauge voter viewpoints and attitudes concerning your issue. Consequently, whom you choose to do your polling is very important for a successful campaign. If, for example, you ever choose to release polling numbers to the press and potential contributors, you need a credible name behind those numbers. This generally means hiring someone with experience and a good reputation. It does not, however, mean that you must hire the most expensive and experienced firm. Rather, you should look for someone who has experience in statewide and initiative polling. Request references and an on-site interview.

Though you will likely spend less time with your pollster than you do with your general consultant, you will be working closely with him/her and need to feel comfortable with the relationship. Don't be afraid to ask lots of questions in your interview and request samples of his/her work. Fees for pollsters, as with most consultants, vary depending on location, size, and experience of the polling firm. Many pollsters charge a retainer in addition to the cost of each poll. This retainer usually runs between $10,000 and $50,000 for the course of the campaign. The cost of each poll you conduct will be based on the length of the average poll "interview" and the size of the "sample." As a general rule, a baseline issue poll will cost $20,000 minimum and tracking polls will cost at least $10,000. Most pollsters will also bill you for travel-related expenses, federal express charges, and long distance charges.

Again, ask what services you will get for your money. For example, ask potential pollsters, "Can we call you for strategic advice?" and "Who will be assigned to our campaign?"

The Paid Media Consultant

Very few modern initiative/referenda campaigns are successful without a significant paid media component. For most issue campaigns, paid media accounts for the majority of the campaign's expenditures. Radio, television, and print advertising allow you to reach large numbers of people with a very controlled message, which is why paid media is so crucial to initiative campaigns. One of the greatest challenges for most issue campaigns is paying for a dominant paid media campaign.

The consultant that you select to produce your advertisements will make a significant difference. All too often the only way voters become familiar with your position is through the commercials they see on the television or hear on the radio. It is wise, then, to hire a media consultant who specializes in political communications. S/he will have an understanding of how to produce effective political messages and to efficiently and wisely buy the time for the ads.

Most political media consultants charge a retainer, which generally ranges from $15,000 to $100,000. They are also paid a commission of twelve to fifteen percent (12-15%) of the media buy (the amount of money you put into paid advertising) and will bill you for production costs, travel related expenses, federal express packages, and long distance charges. The cost for placing broadcast ads (TV, cable or radio) varies dramatically by the media market that an individual campaign is operating within. For example, an identical statewide media campaign in Oregon and California will have huge variation in costs: Oregon, with one medium-sized and two small media markets might cost $700,000 for the entire run; while California, with two of the largest and most expensive media markets and a host of medium and small markets might cost $5,000,000 for the same run.

Make certain you request a "demo" tape and personally interview those consultants whose work seems particularly compelling.

The Direct Mail Consultant

Direct mail can be a very effective tool, especially in campaigns with well-targeted groups of persuadable voters. Many campaigns try to do their own mail, and generally fail to produce compelling, effective messaging. That's why there are seasoned professionals in this area.

Whether or not you hire a direct mail consultant will depend upon your budget. Additionally, you will need to determine whether persuasion mail is a wise use of your resources considering the overall political climate surrounding your issue (i.e., what types of voters do you need to communicate with and what kinds of messages are you directing to those voters).

Some direct mail consultants work on a monthly retainer, which may range from between $1,500 and $3,000, depending on the size of your race and your needs. Others charge a design fee per piece, where costs depend on quantity, length, and style. Additionally, whether on retainer or individual billing, you will be charged for all production (printing) expenses, postage costs (mail house fees and postal service charges), federal express, travel related expenses, and long distance charges. Generally, a single piece of direct mail will cost at least 50 cents per unit for production and mailing (meaning, for example, that a statewide mailing going to 125,000 households will cost $62,500 at minimum).

Ask for samples of past work. Generally, an on-site interview is not necessary, as most of your interaction will be done via fax and phone.

The Fundraising Consultant

Many campaigns are relying upon the services of fundraising consultants to direct their finance efforts. There appear to be two reasons for this trend. With an increasing number of initiative campaigns being primarily funded through a small group of "angels" (individuals or organizations willing to provide very large sums of money to finance the campaign), utilizing professionals with long-standing contacts makes sense. Secondly, the relative dearth of experienced campaign fundraisers makes filling fundraising positions on initiative campaigns difficult.

There are two models of fundraising consultancies. The first is the "full-service" firm that takes over the entire fundraising operation. Typically, these firms have a large pool of in-house staff members, one of whom is sent to the campaign to act as its "finance director." Because these firms handle all aspects of the finance operation, they tend to be more expensive – generally charging $10,000 or more per month. The other model is to hire a consultant to provide direction to a less experienced campaign staff. In these arrangements, the consultant generally devises a plan for raising the campaign budget and then directs less experienced campaign staff in implementing the fundraising plan. Fees for this type of service usually are $3,000 to $5,000 per month, depending upon the day-to-day involvement that the consultant will have with the campaign staff.

When deciding whether to hire a fundraising consultant, carefully consider your campaign's overall budgetary needs and determine whether you will be able to hire an experienced fundraiser to work on your staff. If you discover that you have an extraordinary amount of money to raise, or are unable to hire a seasoned fundraiser to work full-time on your campaign, you may want to hire a consultant to step in and assist you.

As with all consultants, ask for a list of past clients and recommendations. Make sure in your interviews with the consultant that you clearly define the scope and nature of the work that you expect from him/her and provide a realistic estimate of the budget to be raised.

Election Lawyer

An election lawyer is an important asset to a campaign team as s/he provides valuable legal advice and expertise. This individual should have both past experience in the political arena and a nuanced knowledge of state election law. It is also helpful to select an election lawyer that has a good relationship with the secretary of state or the general governing body. The election lawyer need not be available for regular daily office hours, but must be flexible and responsive on a less conventional timetable. For example, campaign legal crises may occur at midnight or on a Sunday and the election lawyer must be available to help with the immediate response effort.

Signature Gathering

As the signature gathering requirements state-by-state become more complex and the minimum number of signatures required increases, many proponent organizations are turning to outside consultants to gather the signatures. This field is not without controversy, and a large portion of the legal wrangling that has taken place concerning the initiative process has revolved around the signature-gathering phase of the process.

If your group decides to attempt to place an initiative on the ballot using volunteer labor, you should realize that the undertaking is enormous. Each state has a myriad of rules that must be followed and you will often need to gather in excess of 100,000 signatures. As a rule of thumb, you will want to gather at least a 30% "buffer" above the minimum number required to account for "bad" signatures that appear on your petitions. Given that many states have a time limitation on the period within which signatures may be gathered, it can be very difficult to coordinate the volunteer resources necessary for successful completion of the project.

As such, many groups turn to professionals who hire squadrons of people to fan out across the state and gather signatures. These individuals are typically paid per-signature gathered, thereby giving them the incentive to aggressively seek out large numbers of voters. However, this also leads to a very high cost to the campaign. Typically the cost will be at least 75 cents to $2.00 per signature under most circumstances. The cost of printing the petitions is not included and depending upon the complexity of the legal requirements for petition format, this can cost the campaign tens of thousands of dollars for production expenses. Additionally, be certain to comply with the legal requirements in your state regarding paid signature gathering.

When interviewing signature consultants, you should ask about guaranteed “hit” rates (the percentage of valid signatures that they guarantee), the screening process for their employees (there have been instances of bad press related to overly aggressive signature gatherers), their process for checking the validity of the signatures they gather prior to submission to state election authorities, and the totality of their costs to you. You typically will contract for a set number of signatures and should realize that if you contract for fewer than you will ultimately need, you will likely pay a steep premium for an additional contract for a block of signatures very late in the process.

In addition to asking for references, inquire about the firm’s familiarity and experience with signature gathering in your state and their knowledge of the state’s legal requirements.

The Opposition Researcher

More and more professionals are entering the field of opposition research. Depending upon the strength of your opposition and the depth of your pockets, you may want to consider hiring a professional to do the initial report. Usual fees run between $4,500 and $30,000, depending on the length of the report requested, the time required, and the follow-up consulting involved. As with the other consultants, most will bill you for travel related expenses, federal express packages, and long distance charges. When hiring, you want to look for someone who knows how to research initiatives, not just candidates. Ask questions and request a work sample.

Web Consultants

While many campaigns utilize volunteers or staff members to design simple web pages and conduct their email outreach programs, other campaigns utilize professional web consultants and email management firms to provide them with internet communications. When deciding which option is best for your campaign, consider the size and scope of your internet needs. If you anticipate using a large, sophisticated webpage and having a complex email outreach program, you may want to consider bringing in professional help.

American politics came late to the internet revolution, but increasingly campaigns are utilizing it as an additional medium for message communication, fundraising and organizing. The key to establishing a successful relationship with web consultants is to clearly identify your needs and budget. Once you have done so, you can interview internet consultants with political experience and find the proper match.

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Once you have determined your staffing and consultant needs, you will need to define the lines of communication and "put the pieces together." Though each individual is a member of the campaign team, each will have individual responsibilities. Each person needs to understand their role and how it fits with the other players. Communication is key to the success of your organization and, ultimately your success at the polls on Election Day.

There are several ways to keep the lines of communication open in your campaign:

1) Hold weekly or daily staff meetings. Whichever you choose, determine a specific, regular time and set a time frame and a clear agenda before the meeting begins.

2) List the responsibilities of each team member in the campaign plan. Make certain each person receives a copy of the list that applies to him or her.

3) Encourage questions and suggestions. The campaign manager must let each team member know that his/her input is important.

4) Create an organizational chart. This will delineate who reports to whom as well as provide a visual aid showing how each member of the campaign team is connected. A sample chart has been included in the appendix.

Each campaign team will adopt its own style of interaction. The most important factor is that interaction does occur. Nothing can destroy an organization more quickly than a lack of communication. Conflict is natural in a stressful, intense environment. Therefore, it will be important to promptly and effectively deal with that conflict. Open lines of communication will help resolve any problems and move onto the most important issue at hand: winning the election.

FINAL NOTE

The organization of your campaign affects your ability to act and react quickly. Team members must feel they are a part of the team. Moreover, they must know what position they play on the team. If you fail to provide them with appropriate direction and support, they too will fail to perform at their best.

Your campaign needs every ounce of energy, strength, and commitment the team members can possibly give. Don't make the mistake of letting your organization float without direction. Maintain open lines of communication and define each member's role in the campaign.

APPENDIX

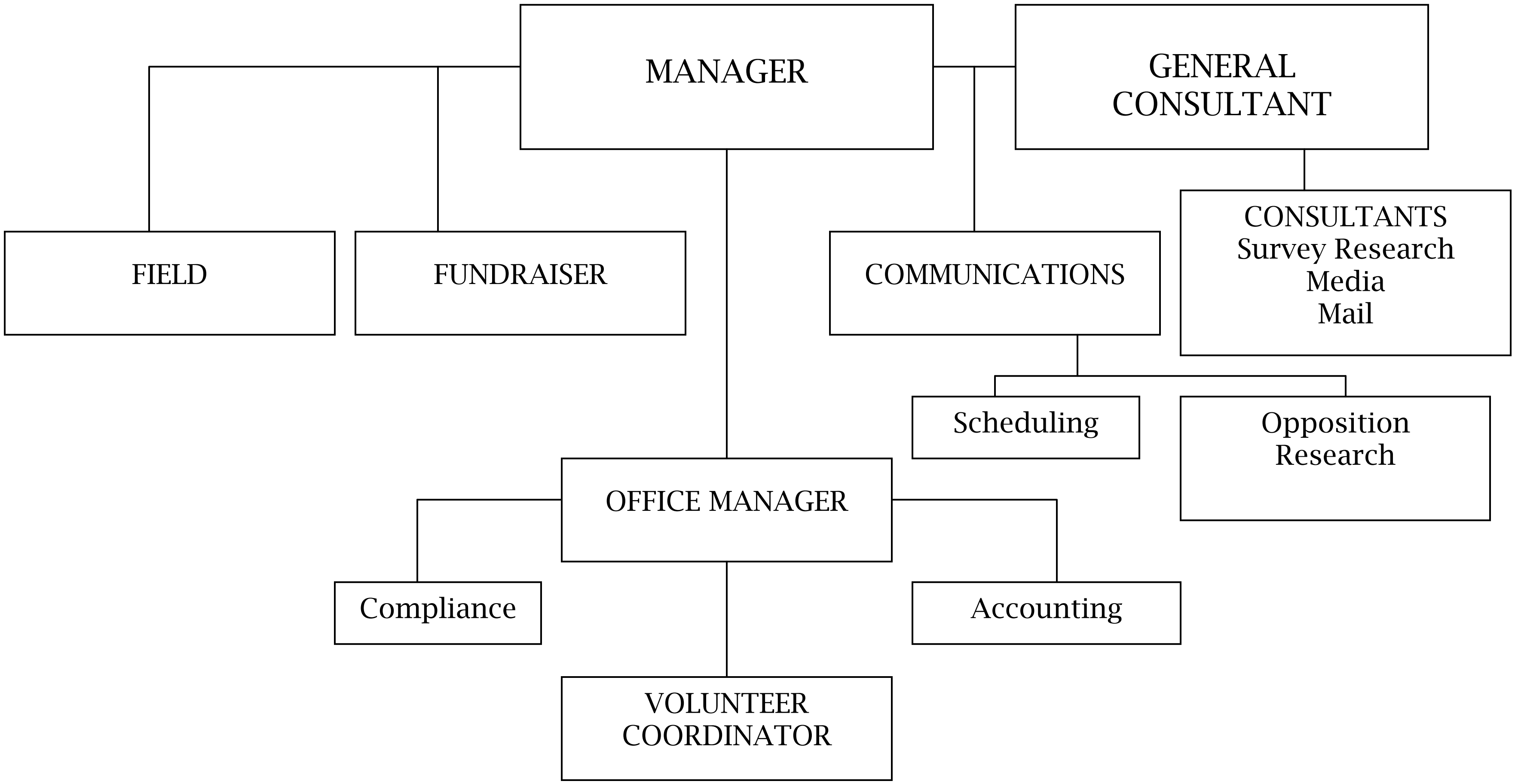
THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

This is a copy of an organizational chart that has been used in an initiative campaign. Its purpose is to clarify the reporting and communication system. As you can see, each member of the campaign team has a line to the other. But, they may report initially to someone else. This type of system helps the campaign monitor its progress in an accurate and timely manner.

In this particular chart, the pollster, media consultant, and persuasion mail consultant report directly to the general consultant (this is common in many campaigns). They will of course interact regularly with the manager, but this line of communication allows the campaign manager to focus more intently on the day-to-day operations of the campaign. This particular campaign used a communication director rather than a press secretary simply because it fit the campaign's needs. Hence, the communications director managed the scheduling and research operations. Since the finance committee naturally falls under the direction of the fundraising director, it has not been included on this chart.

Your chart may take on a different shape than this one. However, this style has proven effective in any number of campaigns.

SAMPLE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR INITIATIVE CAMPAIGN



JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Basic campaign job descriptions may serve as a useful guide when thinking about building your core campaign staff. Of course, any real job description must be written within the context of the particular campaign. Geography, political climate, current and historical issues as well as personal skills, style and compatibility all need to be considered when making final decisions about the core campaign team.

Nonetheless, some of the daily responsibilities associated with the core campaign positions can be applied to most campaigns. The special qualities and skills required of the people hired for these positions are discussed in other sections of this manual. Outlined here are some of the basic responsibilities and goals inherent in the core campaign jobs.

Campaign Manager

- Help develop and implement campaign message and plan.
- Oversee campaign budget and make budgetary decisions.
- Make certain the campaign budget reflects the campaign's strategic decisions and make the necessary adjustments when it does not.
- Raise money.
- Hire, fire and direct staff.
- Report to executive committee on a regular basis.
- Establish reporting procedures for staff and finance committee.
- Work with consultants.
- Develop and maintain contact with community and interest group leaders.
- Be a public spokesperson for the campaign.
- Run the daily operations.
- Keep the campaign communications and staff members "'on message.”

Fundraiser

- Develop a fundraising plan.
- Identify potential individual and organizational “angel” donors.
- Recruit members for a finance committee.
- Assign a goal for each member of the committee and establish a system for meeting those goals.
- Organize regular meetings.
- Establish some base of steady income for the campaign.
- Develop and cultivate funding sources.
- Develop and maintain an event and mail/phone solicitation program.
- Report daily to the campaign manager.
- Oversee compliance with all regulations and laws.

Field Director

- Build coalitions.
- Develop a voter contact/voter identification plan in the context of the overall plan.
- Hire or "empower" regional field operatives.
- Count every voter contacted (identified as supporter or non-supporter) (indicate how and

when).

- Develop and maintain contact with other interest groups and/or other coalition groups.
- Report voter contact information to the manager daily.
- Establish a reporting system for key operatives.
- Count resources in terms of volunteers, money and other available contributions, such as computers, office space, event sites.
- Develop and maintain relations with volunteer groups.
- Work closely with volunteer coordinator.
- Develop and oversee Election Day GOTV activity.
- Prepare and implement visibility program including yardsigns, bumper stickers, buttons, etc.

Volunteer Coordinator

- Create a volunteer base.
- Develop, maintain and add to that base.
- Structure and oversee volunteer activity.
- Work closely with field director and fundraiser.
- Develop meaningful activities for volunteers.
- Build and manage volunteer database.
- Implement a system for quick recruitment and training.
- Design a system for thanking volunteers

Office Manager/Administrator

- Establish a working office system for handling daily business including mail, phones and visitors.
- Handle the office budget including salaries.
- Develop reporting forms for all budgetary transactions.
- Oversee volunteer and administrative operations.
- Work with all departments to build a master calendar with dates and times for project accomplishments.
- Using the calendar as a guide, keep a running inventory of the basic materials that will be necessary as well as the office space that will be needed.
- Oversee equipment operations and office contracts.

Opposition and Issue Research

- Research opposition/own campaign, including funding, supporters, allied activities, campaign operation.
- Study the daily newspapers.
- Study and know the history of the issue.
- Report to communications director.
- Work closely with volunteers.
- Maintain accurate, up-to-date files.
- Provide statistics and facts when needed.
- Write a research plan.
- Develop a research book so others can easily locate and use the research.
- Be sensitive to deadlines.

- Uncover those things which "didn't exist' or couldn't be found.
- Prepare issue-briefing books for spokespeople.

Scheduler

- Develop strategic plan for scheduling of campaign spokespeople and events.
- Schedule campaign spokespeople and surrogates.
- Institute follow-up program to invitations and requests for speakers.
- Prepare materials for surrogate speakers.
- Provide logistics and advance for surrogates and events.
- Maintain master schedule of events, activities and potential speaking opportunities.
- Pro-actively seek earned media opportunities in cooperation with communications director.
- Log by type of activity, geographic area and surrogate where the campaign has attended events.

Communications Director

- Research all newspapers; radio and television stations serving your area - know their biases.
- Prepare an accurate press list.
- Oversee website development and upkeep.
- Maintain email outreach list and email communications efforts.
- Arrange meetings with political news reporters and editorial boards.
- Prepare and deliver a press kit for each newspaper, TV and radio station covering your issue.
- Create a system for writing and delivering news releases.
- Build a system for preparing and distributing radio actualities.
- Develop and maintain relations with reporters, editors, and publishers.
- If newspaper advertising is part of overall strategy, be responsible for placement.
- Ensure that all campaign communications are “on message”.
- Oversee the research and scheduling operations.
- Work closely with field to maximize press opportunities.
- Plan press events.
- Write advisories, releases, speeches, and campaign literature.
- Develop a program for “letters-to-the-editor.”

HIRING AND WORKING WITH CONSULTANTS
By Rick Ridder

As your campaign develops, you will begin forming your campaign team – both staff and consultants. Here are some basic rules of the road for hiring and working with campaign consultants:

1. Determine if you need the campaign consultant. Some campaigns are festooned with consultants -- one for mail, one for polling, one as a general consultant, another to do media, and even another to do fundraising. Determine if such expertise fits into the budget and if it is really needed. Too often campaigns hire a consultant and pay a fee but do not have the financial resources to appropriately use their talents or their product. Check that there is not an in-house staff person with a full-time commitment who can adequately perform the duties of a consultant without the cost.

2. Put out an RFP. Many consultants will visit your campaign. They are generally ideologically motivated and will indicate they truly want to work on your initiative or referenda. They will give you amounts for their fees and ancillary costs, but how do you know that what they are charging is more or less than the industry standard, or if they have the resources and time to devote to the campaign? The easiest way to make such an assessment is to develop an RFP and send it to at least three vendors for the services you seek. For instance, you may want to send an RFP to three pollsters, and another to three media consultants. No matter how it is done, the RFP will aid in clarifying a consultant's capabilities, fees and working relationship with your campaign.

The RFP should be broad allowing the consultant to express why they are a good "fit" for your campaign. On the other hand, sufficient specific requests should be included to assure that comparisons of responses are facilitated. Make sure the RFP includes the following:

- *Fees and expected expenses including production for media*. For each consultant, ask how they charge. Do they charge a fee? Do they charge only on a project basis (such as for focus groups or polling) but no on-going fee? If the RFP is for media, ask what percentage of the buy the firm will take. For polling, make sure that there is a request for a survey of a specific length and sample size, such as an 800 sample, 15 minute survey, and question whether the sample costs are included. Otherwise, the potential for comparing apples with oranges is great.
- *Turnaround time for product*. There will be limited differences in this area among vendors. However, the campaign must ascertain that a media consultant is capable of turning-around a response television spot within 24 hours.
- *Availability*. Will the consultant be on conference calls? Available for a campaign strategy retreat? Accessible by phone on a day-to-day basis? Will they be available when your campaign needs them?
- *How many other campaigns is a vendor working on?* Before the campaign hires a consultant, the management should be aware of the "dance card" of its consultants. As in any industry, campaign consultants can get over-loaded. Most consultants will tell the potential client their workload, so that the campaign is able to make a reasonable judgment on their likely availability. Importantly, in considering the workload of a given consultant, weigh the size of the consultant's firm. A large media firm with multiple partners is able to handle more than the small one-person

shop. On the other hand, the campaign may not get the personal attention that a small shop can provide.

- *Familiarity with the jurisdiction corresponding to initiative or referendum on the ballot*. It helps to have “local” knowledge, but sometimes an outside perspective is more important. In either case, the campaign should be aware of a consultant’s familiarity with the politics of the jurisdiction.
- *Familiarity with ballot initiatives*. I&R campaigns are not candidate campaigns! For a whole series of reasons, largely because I&R campaigns are issue-based not political party-based, there are different techniques used in I&R campaigns, particularly in polling and media. Ask specifically if a vendor has experience in I&R campaigns. If so, what were those I&R campaigns, and what insights from those campaigns are able to be brought to your campaign?
- *Familiarity and insights into the issue on the ballot*. This very simple request allows you to determine if the vendor has some background in the issue on the ballot. The vendor may have extensive background or no background. The purpose here is to get a sense of the thinking of the vendor and how the vendor wants to present the issue.
- *Who is the contact person*? Who will be day-to-day on the campaign? Is it the firm’s principal? An associate? How many people will be familiar with your campaign? It is important to be clear on these points from the outset.
- *References.* Ask for a few references. In particular ask for references from those with whom the vendor has worked in I&R campaigns. Check those references. It may not make a difference in your vendor selection, but you may learn something that makes a significant difference in the way the campaign’s expectations intersect with those of the vendor.

Give a deadline for responses and stick to it. It is unfair to all involved if the deadline is extended for one consultant or vendor without informing others.

3. <u>Try to put together “a team.”</u> Many campaigns fail at the outset because the consultants, the management and key advisors are unable to work as a team. Make sure that the consultants selected have no prior history of inter-personal conflict, and are willing to minimize their egos for the good of the campaign. Moreover, be careful of their internal relationships. There is nothing more demoralizing to a campaign team when a consultant circumvents the team to personally decide a major strategic or tactical activity with the lead fundraiser or Campaign Chair without the approval and input of the team. Lone Rangers can cause disharmony and distrust. Bill Belichick built back-to-back Super Bowl champions by getting his players to sign on to a “team-first” concept. You need to do the same with your consultants.

4. <u>Demark lines of authority</u>. Make it clear to consultants who or what entity is the ultimate decision-maker whether it be in the selection process or during the course of the campaign. This will minimize “end runs” and undermining of management’s authority.

5. <u>As much as possible, have the Campaign Manager involved with the hiring</u>. Many a Manager has been dealt a consultant card that does not fit their style or comfort. At the minimum, the team will function best when the Manager has a voice in selecting at least one or two of the campaign’s consultants.

6. Be very clear when hiring a consultant what their role will be. Is it day-to-day, strategic or simply product-based? Make your expectations clear to the consultant. Frequently campaigns have expectations of a consultant's involvement that are not in-line with the consultant's expectations. Any engagement of a consultant should include a detailing of their role and responsibilities. Ideally, a written agreement would include such delineation.

7. Finally, remember the loudest consultant voice may not have the greatest wisdom. As in any industry, campaigns have numerous individuals who believe the frequency and the volume of their advice is tantamount to good advice. Before you make decisions, check with your consultant team and listen for dissension and those who speak quietly. Remember, the meek will inherit the earth.

Chapter 5:
COALITION BUILDING

BUILDING COALITIONS,

The knowledge of how to combine diverse groups of people and build coalitions is still the "mother of all knowledge," especially in political campaigns where success or failure depends upon the campaign's ability to garner a majority of the vote. To achieve this goal and win on Election Day, a campaign must reach out to a broad base of voters. If your campaign is unable to recruit political parties, PACS, organizations, business alliances, community groups, and other associations not typically identified with your issue, its support will be limited only to those who have long supported your cause. In most cases, this limited support will not provide you with the votes needed to win on Election Day.

A commitment to building coalitions and working with a variety of diverse groups is critical to the success of any initiative campaign. Without a candidate to personally reach out and bring new people into the campaign, staff members and your initiative supporters must build the bridges to associate and coalesce with other like-minded groups and individuals. Attempts to broaden your base of support should be a primary objective when staging any campaign event or activity, whether a press conference or a rally. Your contacts with the public should always seek to increase your base of support.

To do this, you *must* always be aware of the political climate and the biases of various organizations and alliances. Your field operation *must* concentrate its efforts on reaching those who can be persuaded and convincing them that joining your campaign will benefit their cause.

The Building Process

One of the field director's first tasks is to identify organizations most likely to affiliate with the campaign. To be successful, s/he should attempt to build diverse and varied associations. Liberal civil rights organizations should be asked to join your campaign, but so too should conservative business service clubs such as Rotary and Lion's Clubs. Business owners and civic leaders are increasingly aware of the economic and public relations impact of supporting or opposing initiatives. As you begin to build your coalitions, you should keep in mind that the purpose of developing and maintaining these relationships is as follows:

1) To demonstrate to the public and the press that your position has a broad base of support.

2) To expand beyond your "natural" political base.

3) To fully develop potential funding sources.

4) To emphasize the potential downside for specific groups if they do not get involved.

5) To convince voters that it is in their best interest to vote for or against the initiative (depending upon your position on the issue).

6) To create an identity around the issue so voters can identify with your position on it.

If your attempts at bringing particular groups to the coalition of supporters do not meet several of these objectives, then perhaps you should reconsider why you are pursuing that organization. Every group/organization you pursue does not necessarily need to meet all these objectives, but having them in your coalition should further your agenda, not deter it. Know whom you are pursuing and why you are pursuing them. There are numerous bridges that can be built. Know which ones will lead you down the road to victory.

As you map out a strategy for approaching various groups, make sure you understand the dynamic and political orientation of each one. Some organizations and groups will be easier to ask than others simply because they understand the issue and want to be involved early. Others will need more convincing, personal attention, and time. You should research each organization and develop a specific, compelling reason why they should support your cause *before* you approach them. Unless you appeal to their specific area of concern, securing their support and/or endorsement will be problematic.

Community leaders and political figures should also be approached to actively support your campaign. They often bring other organizations and fundraising capacity to the campaign. Their support also lends credibility to your effort. When approaching these individuals, you must do your homework. Know their biases, their funding sources, and the compelling reasons why they should join with you. An elected official or community leader puts him/herself at great risk in supporting a particular position, especially if it is going to a vote before the public. Craft a convincing argument and be prepared to spend significant time lobbying these individuals to join with you.

Political parties are also potential supporters. In recent years, both the Republican and Democratic parties have occasionally been willing to openly support or oppose ballot initiatives. Political parties are unlikely to give money, but they may be willing to contact voters on your behalf as well as help in the GOTV efforts. Although political party organizations have waned in their effectiveness during the last decade, they still have many resources your campaign can utilize.

Your plan for building coalitions should also include a program for structuring your coalitions. Many initiative campaigns build their coalitions by beginning with a steering committee. Steering committees are usually comprised of five to twenty influential people, whether community leaders or high dollar donors. These people are generally expected to each bring a minimum of five to ten thousand dollars into the campaign through their contacts, endorsements, or personal contributions. They should be at the top of your coalition pyramid. The second level of your coalition pyramid should be filled with leadership organizations. This level consists of thirty to forty organizations who can provide you with significant volunteer labor. The third tier in your coalition pyramid should be comprised of endorsement organizations and individuals. Those who occupy this level can be counted on to lend their name to your campaign, but they generally offer nothing more. Creating this kind of coalition structure will help your campaign fully utilize the resources of each member of your coalition. (See Appendix for example of this pyramid structure.)

As you develop your strategy and begin approaching individuals and organizations to support your campaign, always remember you need their support. It may be in their best interest to support your campaign, but the burden of proof lies with you. Be prepared, patient, and politically savvy. You cannot afford to lose even one potential coalition member.

Getting the Most From the Coalition

Once an organization has been recruited by you and has endorsed your campaign, you should aggressively seek its direct involvement in the campaign. Participation may range from a small donation to supplying volunteers for a phone bank. Assess the capability of each organization before you ask them to perform any task. A large organization might be willing to do more for the campaign than you initially predicted. Always ask for the maximum and expect the minimum. Here are a few suggestions for commitments and projects you would like every coalition member to fulfill:

1) Mailings and regular email communications to its members endorsing the campaign and providing regular updates on campaign happenings.

2) Providing the campaign with a list of members for fundraising purposes.

3) Asking its members to volunteer for the campaign.

4) Using its name on the campaign's letterhead and in advertising.

5) Allowing its leadership to speak to members of similar organizations and garner their support. For instance, it is much more effective to have a leader of a business organization talk to other business organizations than to have a civil liberties lawyer talk to a business organization.

6) Donating directly or contacting the industry's or organization's PAC to solicit a donation.

7) Initiating a letters-to-the-editor campaign.

8) Mobilizing its forces to vote on Election Day.

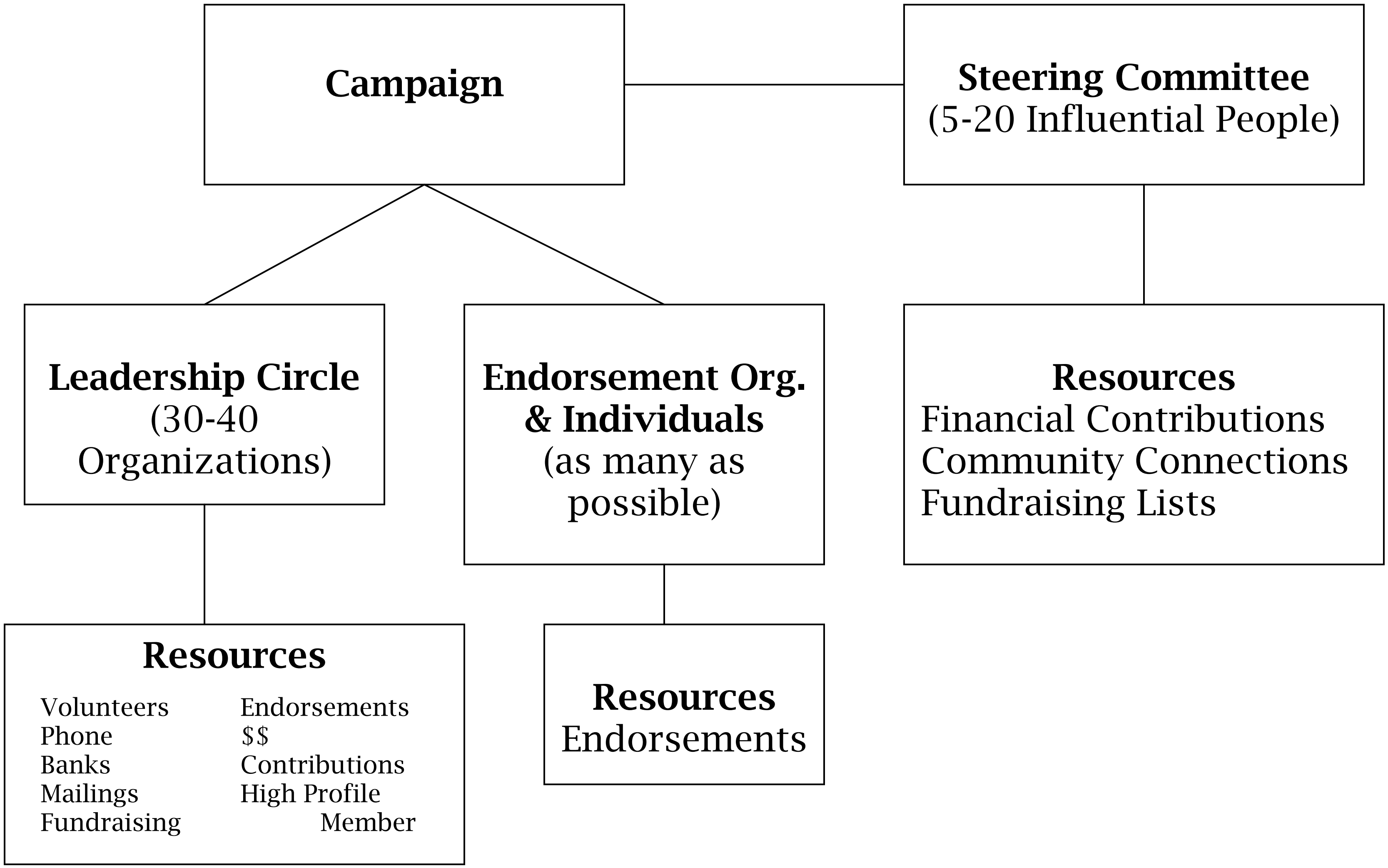
The number of these tasks that each organization will choose to undertake will vary.

Above all, don't forget to thank your coalition members. Campaigns have a tendency to recruit and then neglect supporters. Don't make this mistake. Issue campaigns are often controversial. Recognize that many of your supporters will feel as though they are putting themselves and their organizational integrity at risk by supporting your issue. They need to know their effort is worth the risk.

One way to maintain the support and interest of your coalition members is to update them regularly. Let them know about the progress and activities of the campaign. Newsletters, up-date memos/emails, and personal contact are all great ways to accomplish this. Maintaining regular communication with your coalition partners serves two purposes: 1) it helps supporters feel part of the team and 2) it helps assure they will not forget about the campaign.

If you build a wide and extensive campaign coalition, you will dramatically broaden the base upon which you can rely for political support and funding. Most importantly, a broad based coalition validates the legitimacy and popularity of your cause. It reinforces the fact that your position is more mainstream than that of your opposition. Coalitions are the key to your field operation and, to a large degree, your success or failure on Election Day.

COALITION STRUCTURE



Chapter 6:
FUNDRAISING

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is the engine that drives the campaign. At its core, lies the need to ask as many people and organizations as humanly possible, as many times as possible, for as many dollars as they can or will possibly contribute to the campaign. Perfecting this skill becomes perhaps the most difficult and important challenge of a campaign team. A systematic, organized, and aggressive fundraising operation can mean the difference between success and failure on Election Day.

THE FUNDRAISING PLAN

The cornerstone of any successful fundraising effort is a detailed, written financial plan. The plan outlines the goals and objectives for the fundraising operation during the course of the campaign. As such, it must set reasonable goals and deadlines for achieving those goals.

Because the fundraising plan is one of the first documents developed by a campaign, it cannot be created in isolation. The fundraiser must work closely with the campaign manager and consultants to coordinate the goals of the fundraising operation with the budgetary needs of the campaign. Additionally, the plan must also outline the mechanisms for securing contributions. In other words, it must articulate how the campaign will raise money as well as identify potential sources for those contributions. This includes projecting the number, type, and timeline of income, events, direct mail solicitations, and telemarketing endeavors.

Additionally, the plan should contain a thoughtful estimation of the amount of time each individual, like the finance chair, fundraiser, and finance committee member, will spend directly asking for donations. Your fundraising plan should also include a program for thanking contributors promptly. Any individual who donates to the campaign, whether they give five dollars or five thousands dollars, must receive a formal thank-you. The most appropriate ”thank-you” might be a telephone call, a letter, or better yet, both. Regardless of the method, ensure that it becomes a routine part of the fundraising operation.

The plan should be viewed as a working, flexible document. Campaigns are dynamic organizations that must continually and quickly adapt to any number of unexpected challenges. The fundraising plan, then, must take this environment into account.

A NOTE ON "ANGEL" FUNDERS

Your plan should also reflect the realities of modern fundraising techniques for issue-based campaigns. Increasingly, groups promoting or opposing initiatives and referenda find that they have to rely on one or more "angel" funders to become financially competitive in the race. For purposes of this discussion, "angels" are those individuals or organizations who give the campaign very large amounts of money.

In progressive issue campaigns, these funders have traditionally been labor and teachers' organizations, environmental groups, gay & lesbian organizations and free speech/civil liberties advocates (as well as various other progressively oriented groups and organizations). Recently, however, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of very wealthy individuals who are providing majority funding for issue campaigns (and occasionally for independent expenditure campaigns supporting or opposing initiatives). Individual funders in this category have come not only from "old money," but also from the "new economy."

In the typical issue campaign, requiring significant broadcast media buys, it is almost essential to seek out these angel funders and gain commitments from them before moving forward with the campaign. The practical reality is that very few issues will so inflame the public that they will be able to rely exclusively on traditional funding methods and still succeed at the ballot box. Without one or more major contributors providing the majority of the funding for a campaign (whether wealthy individual(s) and/or organizations), the likelihood of the campaign ever reaching its budgetary goal is very remote. Even in some of the "smaller" states that allow initiatives, the campaigns frequently cost $500,000 or more and the ability of the fundraising team to raise such an amount through small contributions is difficult.

Having donors who pump in massive amounts of money can be a double-edged sword for the fundraising team. First, large donors often expect to be involved in the areas of the campaign influenced by their contribution, so the finance director and campaign manager must be conscious of a sustaining a healthy, working relationship with these individuals. Additionally, there is a certain degree of truth to the maxim that "money follows money," and that smaller donors will be more likely to treat the campaign as a legitimate entity when they know major funders have also put their money into the operation. So too, are some lower dollar donors less likely to give to a campaign that they feel is going to be fully funded by someone else. A major goal of the fundraising operation, then, is to provide a rationale that the effect of the large donors' contributions legitimizes the campaign without making it inaccurately appear that there is no need for additional levels of funding.

One way around this problem is to request that your large donors make their donations in the form of challenges to other donors. It can be a great fundraising tool for your campaign to approach several hundred donors who have giving capacity at the $1,000 level, for example, with a match challenge of $50,000 from a single major donor. It allows the donors at the lower funding levels to feel that their donations are being leveraged by the campaign in a way that truly maximizes the effect of their individual contributions.

You may also want to approach the major funder portion of your plan as a series of campaign segment "adoptions." Under this scenario, you would approach an angel funder and ask that funder to pay for the pre-ballot placement operations of the campaign (legal, drafting, signature gathering and related costs). Then other angel funders should be approached for subsequent phases of the campaign (e.g. funding the cost of administration and salaries or buying a week of television statewide). Angel funders are valuable in that they are often able to connect campaigns to other big donors, and thus aid in this segmented “adoption” model.

In order to effectively build an “angel funder” piece into your fundraising plan, it is advisable to seek assistance from those people who know who has money and where their individual interests lie. For example, ask someone knowledgeable about the members of a city’s “society” circle to help you identify potential supporters and to make appropriate invitations. Additionally, recruit someone who has an extensive rolodex of members of your areas “new economy” wealthy individuals. In the 2000 election cycle, several internet millionaires single-handedly funded initiative campaigns.

ORGANIZING THE FUNDRAISING OPERATION

Though the campaign fundraiser, manager, and finance committee coordinate the principal fundraising activities, every member of the campaign is, in effect, a fundraiser. Whatever their official job responsibilities, they must also always be attuned to opportunities for campaign contributions. Though the field director, press secretary, or other staff may not feel comfortable asking for a contribution, they can certainly hand out donation envelopes, take note of potential fundraising events, and write down names, addresses, and telephone numbers of supporters they meet. The information can then be channeled to the fundraiser to be used at his/her discretion.

The fundraiser should conduct a basic training with the staff regarding their interaction with potential funders and recognizing potential funders. There should also be a determination made in advance regarding whether or not other staff should do any solicitation when appropriate, or pass along the information to the fundraiser.

While all members of the campaign team will play some role in the campaign's fundraising operation, there are select members of the campaign team whose primary responsibility is to raise money. A brief description of these individuals and their responsibilities is listed below.

The Fundraiser

The campaign fundraiser plans, organizes and implements the fundraising program. S/he works closely with other members of the finance team to ensure the goals are being met. The fundraiser is also responsible for daily cash reports, monthly income projections, and ensuring that all applicable laws and reporting requirements are met. In a ballot initiative campaign, the staff fundraiser will be the primary person asking for donations whereas in a candidate campaign, the candidate makes nearly all the solicitations.

The Finance Chair

The finance chair spearheads the activities of the finance committee. The finance chair must be a high-powered, well-respected member of the community. The stature and credibility of the finance chair is especially important for initiative campaigns. Without a candidate, the chair essentially becomes the focal point of the campaign's fundraising efforts. To that end, the finance chair should be capable of making a significant contribution to the campaign. It is much easier for an individual to ask for a contribution from someone else when s/he can point to his/her own financial contribution as an example of the kind of assistance the campaign needs. It is possible to utilize multiple finance chairs if they serve different purposes on the campaign. For example, one finance chair could be more involved in organizational tasks while another has resources and a recognized name.

In selecting a finance chair, do not underestimate the amount of time this person will spend soliciting donations and encouraging others to get involved in the campaign. This individual must understand the intensity and necessity of their commitment *before* they accept the responsibility. Otherwise, both the campaign and the individual will find themselves in a difficult and precarious, unproductive situation.

Additionally, when an organization is the primary funder for an initiative campaign, it might be the case that the organization wishes to have someone from that organization serve as the finance chair.

The Finance Committee

A broad-based finance committee is the core of the fundraising program. Members of the committee should be high profile individuals representing several different constituencies. While a significant number of committee members will be drawn from core organizations with a history on the issue that forms the subject matter of your initiative (i.e. labor, choice, gay & lesbian, environmental), it is critical to have a diverse committee that can reach as broad an audience as possible. To do this, the committee should be comprised of members who represent various business, labor, professional, religious and ethnic groups. Where there is a small steering committee, or a decision-making group within the campaign, there should be strong inter-play and coordination between this group and the finance committee.

Because the finance committee plays such an essential role in the development and implementation of the fundraising plan, its members must be willing to devote the time necessary for the task (two to thirty hours/week). Experience raising money, either for political candidates or other civic and charitable causes is a great asset, but not wholly necessary for members of the committee. An eager, committed, and well-connected individual who has never raised money before may prove the most effective fundraiser of the campaign team. After all, they have the commitment and the contacts without the attached baggage of having previously asked for money.

Whether experienced or inexperienced in the rigors of raising dollars, committee members must be willing to personally contribute to the campaign and also to solicit contributions from their own personal and professional contacts. If they are not willing to do so, then their efforts on the committee will be fruitless and a waste of the fundraiser's valuable time. They must become investors in the cause. In doing so, they develop a strong desire to protect their investment by ensuring the financial success of the campaign. In most cases, there should be a specific dollar commitment required of each member of the finance committee.

Additional Fundraising Staff

In an ideal world, the fundraiser would have several assistants in addition to an event coordinator, bookkeeper, accountant, and data-entry clerk. However, campaigns rarely embody an ideal world. There is never enough money or enough time, especially in an initiative campaign where raising money is even more difficult than in candidate-centered campaigns. The fundraiser on an issue campaign, then, must not only serve as the director of the finance committee, but often also perform a myriad of other tasks, including data entry, list maintenance, contact follow-up, and event organizing. This amount of work will undoubtedly seem overwhelming, but well-trained and highly supervised volunteers can perform some of it. If the budget allows, the fundraiser can hire an assistant and the tasks can be divided. In many campaigns, the compliance staff falls under the administrative oversight of the fundraising department. If so, budget appropriately for compliance and accounting operations.

SOLICITING CONTRIBUTIONS

The essential fundraising activity of the campaign is the solicitation of contributions. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, from telemarketing to black tie dinners to intimate breakfast meetings. Regardless of the method, it is essential to identify the goals and objectives of each solicitation before any move is made. This is the only way to ensure that valuable time is not wasted and critical dollars are not lost.

Whether through writing a letter or planning a large event, creativity in fundraising is key. Tact, persistence, and an appropriate thank-you are also central to your success. To help you evaluate the most appropriate method/s of solicitation for your particular campaign, this section outlines primary methods and offers a few suggestions regarding their implementation.

Personal Solicitation

Direct, face-to-face solicitation is the most effective method for raising significant contributions from large donors. Since an initiative campaign lacks a "candidate," the task of direct solicitation falls on the fundraiser, finance chair, and finance committee members.

The individual most familiar with the prospect is usually the best choice for making the request. Alternatively, if no relationship exists, a professional peer is a good choice. Researching the prospect's background and history of giving is central to the success of a high dollar donor program. Sharing portions of the campaign plan and budget with the high dollar donor prospect can be an effective tool.

You may want to consider developing a version of your campaign fundraising prospectus, discussed more fully below, that is aimed at the interests of individual high-dollar donors. In approaching them in a professional manner and with professional tools, you will increase your likelihood of success. Most of the donors in this category are successful business or professional people used to dealing with the intricacies of business planning documents. Demonstrating to them that you have taken the time to prepare an outline noting how and why the campaign will be successful is a good way to demonstrate the legitimacy of your campaign to them.

<u>However, before you take this step, make certain the potential donor is solidly on your side</u>. If the person is wavering in his/her commitment, discussing the strategic and tactical elements of the campaign can be dangerous. However, if s/he solidly supports the campaign, such a move will demonstrate to the prospect that his/her contribution will be used wisely.

After targeting individuals for specific dollar amounts, you may want to identify a specific purpose for their money, such as buying one thirty-second television spot on the evening news. This provides the prospect with a tangible product - they can actually see what they are buying. (See Appendix for donor prospect worksheet.)

Finance committee members should make personal solicitations throughout the course of the campaign. Once an individual has contributed to the campaign, they should be re-solicited at a later date (as discussed later in this chapter). Once they have made an initial investment, it will seem more in their interest to ensure they get the best possible return for it (in this case, making it ever more likely that the campaign will succeed). High dollar donors should themselves be viewed as sources of contacts for additional contributions. These individuals should be asked to solicit their contacts, thus expanding the pool of potential donors.

Immediate follow-up is critical once a pledge has been given – either in a face-to-face meeting or in a telephone solicitation. At a face-to-face meeting, it is best to leave the meeting with the contribution in hand. If this is not possible, there should be an agreement as to the date when the campaign can expect to receive the donation. Before the close of business on the day the pledge is received, the donor should receive a thank you from the campaign, a personalized thank you from the person(s) who actually conducted the solicitation and means for delivery of the donation (a return envelope, directions how to make the donation by credit card, wiring instructions, etc.) if it was not received at that time. Failure to immediately follow-up will dramatically decrease your ability to convert the pledge into a donation. Additionally, donors tend to like the level of respect that immediate attention shows them, often resulting in donations that exceed the pledge amount.

Remember, personal solicitations require time and knowledge. Know your prospect, the issue, and the dollar amount needed. Above all, be tactful and persuasive. Additionally, personal financial solicitations should be dovetailed with requests for political support. There will be donors that can provide volunteers, equipment, space, etc. Rather than having multiple campaign staff make multiple requests of one donor, there should be coordination between the fundraiser, campaign, manager and field director in this effort.

Organizational Solicitations

Organizations are an important source of financial support for initiative campaigns. Organizational solicitation efforts should be focused on ideologically sympathetic groups that have the resources to support the campaign. Virtually every major component of progressive ideology has numerous organizations devoted to it. These should be the primary targets of your campaign.

Increasingly, organizations with specific issue interests are developing and proposing ballot initiatives and/or opposing initiatives brought by the extreme right. These groups are likely to have developed their own fundraising plans for their own internal lists as well as those of like-minded issue groups. Your fundraising operation can rely on your organizational allies to set up meetings with similar organizations. Meetings should then be scheduled with the political and/or executive directors of the groups that are most likely to donate. Especially at the national level, these organizations receive numerous requests for donations. Be prepared, persuasive, and persistent. It may take several conversations and memos before a meeting is scheduled or a donation is given.

Once a meeting has been scheduled, advance preparation is critical. Know the points to emphasize about the campaign and how most effectively to make them. The organization will be most interested in the campaign's viability and its fundraising capability. Polling numbers play a major role in a group’s decision to get involved in a campaign. Hence, it is wise to have some survey research completed before approaching them. If the budget does not allow for this, give the organization an estimate as to when some research might be completed (exact dates are not necessary).

Prior to the meeting, a fundraising prospectus should be sent to the political director. It should outline the importance of the campaign, its strategy and message. Favorable newspapers clips, a polling memo, and a list of the finance committee should be included. Ideally, the campaign manager, fundraiser and finance chair should attend the meeting. (See Appendix for more detail.)

Follow-up with organizational funders is crucial to actually receiving a donation. They need to be apprised of changes in polling numbers and any significant changes in financial figures (only the positive ones!). Treat these groups as you would any other high dollar donor. They have numerous investment options and need to be persuaded that yours will be worth their time and effort.

Tax-exempt Organizations

An increasingly important source of funding for initiative campaigns are groups that have traditionally shied away from the electoral process. Most prominently, non-profit, tax-exempt organizations are slowly beginning to realize that they can become involved in various ways and at various levels of the funding structure of initiative campaigns without fear of losing their tax-exempt status. For purposes of this discussion, these groups will broadly be called 501(c)(3)s, although organizations organized under other paragraphs of section 501 similarly apply.

Most of the money that comes directly to the campaign from issue groups is “political” money; that is, money raised by groups who have tax-exempt, but *not* tax deductible status (most typically 501(c)(4) organizations), most often called advocacy organizations. This money is raised for the purpose of political participation and these groups face no restrictions on spending their funds politically.

501(c)(3) groups, on the other hand, are tax exempt *and* contributions to such groups are tax deductible. These organizations have a greater number of restrictions upon the political use of their funds. This does *not* mean, however, that their funds cannot be used to support or oppose an initiative. Under the tax laws, groups can make a declaration to the IRS allowing them to spend up to 20% of their annual expenditures on “grassroots lobbying.” (The actual percentages and amounts that the group can spend are determined by their overall annual expenditure level.) Under the law, however, working for or against an initiative is considered “grassroots lobbying.” Thus, 501(c)(3) groups can use a portion of their funds on your behalf or as a direct contribution to you.

NOTE: THIS AREA REQUIRES EXTREME DILIGENCE. CONSULT WITH YOU CAMPAIGN LAWYER. ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION WITH EXPERTS IN TAX STATUS AND TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS IS ADVISABLE.

Additionally, these groups can play an important role in broadly educating the public about the issue that forms the subject matter of your initiative without actually going so far as advocating a position on the initiative. These activities can be extremely helpful in educating the public about your issue and can help set the tone for the debate on the actual initiative. These activities may often be undertaken by tax-exempt organizations with no consequences to their expenditure caps for “grassroots lobbying” under tax laws. As with all matters discussed in this section, consult with experts who can provide proper guidance and direction as to the types of public education approaches that groups may make.

Many of these groups have traditionally avoided getting involved in the political sphere because of concerns that any activity related to initiatives could negatively impact their tax status. It is *imperative* for your campaign to recruit an expert in these matters who understands how 501(c)(3) organizations can participate in elections, who understands election law, and who understands the conjunction of the two and how these organizations can properly participate in elections.

Excellent resources for you as you begin to develop a 501(c)(3) plan are the many publications of the Alliance for Justice (www.afj.org) and the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center (www.ballot.org). These groups have taken on the task of convincing non-profit groups that they can be involved in the issue campaign process and demonstrating to them and their funders the ways to do so and still stay within the law. They can provide you with excellent advice and guidance as you enter this relatively untapped area of issue campaign fundraising.

Events

Events are a common source of campaign contributions. Considerable thought must be given to the objectives of the event because they can be costly in terms of time and resources. No event, whether large or small, should cost more than 15% of its projected income. Preparation of invitation lists, production, mailing, ticket sales, publicity, staff time, follow-up, and the costs of the event itself must be considered in this figure. Events, however, often have objectives beyond raising money. They can also serve to raise the public profile of the campaign or generate enthusiasm among supporters.

The reason for fundraising events is to add spendable money to the campaign's voter contact and media budgets. If this is not the goal *and* outcome of the event, DON'T DO IT!!

Whenever possible, seek to have others underwrite all of the expenses associated with conducting a fundraising event. Since issue campaigns are not restricted to the contribution limits that most often apply to candidate races, many fundraisers neglect to seek out donors to pay all the costs of the event. Campaigns whose fundraisers have worked primarily on candidate campaigns are especially prone to this mistake.

Events generally fall into two broad categories: low dollar and high dollar. Whether a carwash or a champagne and caviar reception, every event must be meticulously planned and executed. Here are some recommendations for creating successful events.

1. Low dollar events

   Creativity is the key to a successful low dollar event. Though house parties, auctions, raffles, cocktail parties and coffees are typical low cost fundraising events, don't be afraid to step into new territory. Carwashes, bake sales, garage sales, and similar opportunities are excellent ways to generate enthusiasm and support. These types of activities are easy to organize and allow campaign supporters to target neighbors, friends, family members and co-workers for contributions in a low-key, fun setting. The low overhead for these events coupled with the ease in which they can be organized makes them a valuable source of campaign funds, provided the amount of paid staff time required is minimal.

   Depending upon the nature of the event and whether an individual or the campaign actually hosts it, the campaign should prepare an information kit for the host. This kit should outline the process for the host and include a sample invitation, a brief description of the campaign and its goals, instructions on how to ask for contributions and the legal requirements (contribution reporting, expenditure and in-kind reporting) that must be followed.

Another excellent low dollar event is the "club night." The campaign fundraiser should approach supportive club owners and request permission to allow volunteers to solicit club-attendees for contributions. The owners will occasionally donate a percentage of an evening's profits to the campaign as well. Large community dances provide another good fundraising opportunity. While ticket prices for such events are usually low, the volume of party attendees compensates for the low cost. Once again, think broadly in terms of opportunities and avenues for these types of events, which not only raise funds for your operation, but also raise awareness of your campaign and your issue.

Always remember that the purpose of low dollar events is different from that of high dollar ones. Low dollar events allow supporters to get very involved with the campaign without spending large sums of money. For many, this is the best way to pique and maintain their interest. (A checklist for house parties is included in the Appendix.)

2. High dollar events

High dollar events are generally much more useful in candidate campaigns rather than initiative campaigns. To be successful in an issue campaign situation, the event would need to have a unique "draw" and a committed likely audience. Few issue campaigns will find themselves in a position where high dollar events are advisable. (This section is included to provide guidance in the rare instances when an issue campaign finds itself in this situation.)

Black-tie dinners and formal dances are the types of events for attracting medium and high level donors. Because of the time and expense involved, it is advisable to set up a special committee to host the event. The committee should consist of a chair, usually a finance committee member, and a working group that is committed to selling and/or purchasing a certain number of tickets. An honorary committee of high profile individuals and elected officials is also frequently utilized to attract participants.

Committee members should each be provided with names to solicit. They should also use their personal lists. Follow-up phone calls to their lists should be made after the invitations have been mailed. An organized follow-up effort will significantly increase the success of the event. (See Appendix for event timeline.)

In order to draw large numbers of people to a high dollar event, it will frequently be necessary to recruit a "headliner" for the event. Often these are well-known figures from the political or entertainment fields. Many times, you will have to pay the costs associated with bringing the headliner to the site of the event (and given that these people often require first-class travel and accommodations, such costs can be very high). You need to perform a cost/benefit analysis to determine whether the costs associated with getting the headliner for the event are going to result in sufficiently high ticket interest and sales.

3. Event Fundraising Guidelines

To assist you in coordinating your events, a few general rules have been listed here.

a. Be creative. People generally attend events to see and be seen. A creative concept, theme, well-known entertainer, or guest speaker will help draw donors to the event.

b. Keep expenses low, INCLUDING ALLOCATION OF EXTREMELY SCARCE STAFF TIME. An event should not cost more than 15% of its projected income.

c. Set realistic goals for the event. If the goal is reasonable it can usually be achieved.

d. Create a detailed timeline for the event far in advance of the actual date.

e. Set the price according to the giving level of the targeted contributors.

f. Do not distribute tickets before they have been purchased. In other words, have that check in your hand before you put the ticket in theirs!

g. Use numbered tickets to track payment.

h. Ask individuals to donate items such as food, liquor and advertising costs. Make sure these donations are properly recorded as in-kind contributions.

i. Don't let anyone in without paying. If you let one person in, you'll end up letting twenty attend without paying. Every dollar counts and every drink costs the campaign. Make sure that all data necessary for legal reporting requirements is obtained for each ticket sold.

j. Have fun!

Direct Mail

Direct mail solicitations can be an effective method of fundraising. The costs associated with direct mail and the potential benefits should be carefully considered before a program is undertaken. The return percentages for mail solicitation can be quite low, however (even with a “hot list” of pre-tested contributors on the issue, the return percentages will rarely rise above 7-10%). Survey research, if available, should also be used to help refine the message and target it appropriately. A more detailed discussion on the various aspects of direct mail fundraising follows.

1) The Mailing List

The single most important factor in a successful direct mail effort is the quality of the mailing lists. The better the list, the greater your likelihood of success. The fundraising list should contain the name, address, phone and fax numbers, and email address of every contributor or prospect the campaign can identify. Assembling accurate, inclusive, and current fundraising lists is a time-consuming and tedious process. The campaign staff and the finance committee members should all participate in the process in addition to providing their personal solicitation lists. A potential universe of available lists for your initiative campaign might include:

a. Proven contributors to candidates supportive of the campaign/initiative issue.

b. Contributors to and membership lists of supportive groups and organizations.

c. Contributors to ideologically compatible groups, i.e. civil rights, women's, pro-choice, and labor organizations.

Demographically targeted lists can also be rented from companies specializing in fundraising. These can be used for one-time solicitations to build a donor base, but should be used sparingly, if at all, because of the very high cost of obtaining these lists. Return rates from "cold lists" like this rarely exceed 1-2%. Once the list of known contributors and prospects has been developed, they should be categorized according to potential contribution levels - high, medium, and low.

2) The Letter

The second most important factor in any direct mail effort is the letter itself. The letter must contain a strong ideological message, written to appeal to the target audience (and, it does *not* necessarily have to be a *letter* – many campaigns have used other vehicles like newsletters, as fundraising vehicles). While the message in a solicitation to environmental activists will be different than in a mailing targeting the business community, the fundamental principles are the same.

a. The letter should look and sound personal.

b. It must provide a compelling reason for the prospect to support the issue.

c. It must provide a reason for the prospect to donate and specifically, repeatedly ask for a donation.

d. It should be written with the understanding that it will be skimmed by the prospect.

e. It should conclude with a post-script that reiterates the appeal.

f. It must look professional, but needn't be expensively produced in three colors with monogrammed signatures.

g. A response card and reply envelope must be included. A response card is perhaps the most critical element of the letter. It must include the campaign's telephone number, address, contact person, <u>*legal disclaimers*</u>, and check writing instructions/credit card number blanks (or alternate payment methods, like the URL of the campaign's online contribution page). Care should be taken with the design of the response card because it is often all the prospect keeps when deciding whether to contribute.

3) Test Mailings

If a large mailing (5-10,000 or more) is planned, a pre-test should be undertaken to gauge whether the return rate is worth the expense. Such a test would involve an initial mailing to between ten and twenty percent of the list. If a one to three percent return is seen on the test run, it is worthwhile to mail to the entire list. Of course, when deciding whether to do a pre-test, time and money will always be the initial determinants. You can also use a test to send mailings with two different themes or different graphic layouts to a sample of the larger list to determine the most effective delivery vehicle.

4) Re-solicitation

The best source of funds for a campaign is those who have already donated. Donors committed to the issue have an investment to protect. An effective re-solicitation requires maintaining an accurate donor database that contains the name, addresses, phone and fax numbers, and email addresses of all the campaign contributors as well as an accurate record of their giving history.

While an updated list plays a crucial role in the re-solicitation process, knowing exactly when to re-solicit becomes even more important in refining the art of fundraising. As a general rule, contributors should be re-solicited every three months. In the final six to eight weeks of the campaign, it is not uncommon to ask for donations more frequently. This is a general rule, however, and you must continually assess the political climate, timing of the election, and survey research. A significant change in polling numbers merits a phone call or second letter. Similarly, an acknowledgement that the campaign will hit the airwaves in a week or two will also bring in additional dollars. A big sponsor or major endorsement will also affect contributors' willingness to donate. All these factors, then, must be taken into account when re-soliciting your donors.

Telemarketing

Telephone solicitation can be an effective method of fundraising, if and only if well-trained and highly supervised volunteers do it. Telemarketing can be especially useful in reaching small and medium contributors. Hiring a telemarketing firm to do this work for the campaign can be very expensive and all too often the return does not merit the initial expense. If, however, you should choose to use a professional telemarketing firm to conduct fundraising on your behalf, carefully negotiate the contract and have all terms carefully spelled out; especially, those related to the percentage of the gross the telemarketing firm will receive.

To do this kind of solicitation with volunteer labor, the campaign must locate a phone bank site that has enough phones for at least ten volunteers. Real estate and law offices are ideal locations. Finance committee members can be helpful in securing the use of a phone bank. (The use of such facilities is treated as an in-kind contribution to the campaign.) Once the site has been determined, volunteers can be contacted. A script must be prepared for the volunteers. (See Appendix for sample script.) A campaign staff member, usually the volunteer coordinator or fundraiser, should train the volunteers and review the script. This individual should also remain on site with the volunteers to monitor their progress, answer any questions, and watch for any glitches or mishaps.

A phone bank also sends a message to the opposition. It demonstrates you have an organization and a strong base of volunteers. However, a phone bank does require time, patience, an appropriate site, and sensible script. Without these, the effort may prove fruitless. With them, volunteers may become energized and the dollars may start rolling in - at least in small amounts.

Internet Fundraising

Increasingly, campaigns are relying on the internet to play a major role in fundraising efforts. More specific information about constructing a functional online presence for your campaign begins on page 222 of this manual. The overall goals for your campaign in its internet fundraising efforts should be ease and security for the contributor. Given that the contributor must provide a credit card number or bank transfer authorization under this type of fundraising, it is critical that you demonstrate the highest levels of security and privacy.

Virtually all campaign websites have a page dedicated to fundraising. Most campaigns contract with a private vendor to process credit card and electronic transfers, and the campaign donation page has a blind link to the processing company's site. In addition to having a compelling message on your site encouraging individuals to make a contribution, you must also strive to make the process as simple and straightforward as possible. If your donation page is too complicated or time-consuming, it will drive away potential donors.

It is also very important to make people aware that they can contribute online. All of your campaign communications should include the website URL and all fundraising communications should note that contributions can be made online. Online operations are an excellent source of serial contributions. You can make it very simple for donors to give a small amount (or hopefully, a not-so-small amount) every month by providing a check-off box allowing the campaign to pull the same amount from the credit card every month. These programs are often publicized in a special way and the donors given some sort of special recognition by the campaign for agreeing to provide regular financial support.

Email solicitations are similar to direct mail appeals, but allow you many additional options. As more and more people get high-speed connectivity and ever-more sophisticated email programs, it becomes easier to include photographs, sound or streaming video recordings within the body of the solicitation. In this way, you are able to send out "talking" requests for money very inexpensively. It is valuable to explore and become aware of the various technological options available to your campaign in terms of email fundraising.

Finally, recognize that other organizations outside your campaign may be able to use their web and email presence to assist your fundraising operations. Some groups have developed extensive email databases, and send out email updates to their lists asking for donations to a cause or candidate (some of these groups then "bundle" the contributions and forward them to the campaign, while others request a direct donation through the campaign website). Other supportive groups may put a link directly to your fundraising page on their website.

It is very important to keep internet options in mind when developing your overall fundraising plan. Recognize that, as with many aspects of the internet, political fundraising is in many ways in its infancy. This allows you a great degree of flexibility to try new ideas and find ways to increase the functionality of the internet as a fundraising tool. The only way to fail at internet fundraising is to avoid conducting internet fundraising!

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The fundraising operation will be dealing with large sums of money. State and federal laws require extremely detailed records for all campaign contributions and expenditures. The rules and regulations regarding solicitation of funds, cash contributions and reporting requirements vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Additionally, some organization types (e.g. trade associations and trade unions) operate under different sets of laws and rules than do issue-advocacy or political organizations.

It is imperative that the campaign treasurer and/or fundraiser obtain a copy of all applicable laws. These are available from the local or state election authority, which often provides compliance instructions and required forms. (A good resource is the "The Initiative and Referendum Process in America – a Primer," which is included in this binder.)

An accurate record keeping system must be designed and maintained. Customized computer programs, as well as off the shelf financial planning software, are readily available to help manage the campaign finances. The services of a volunteer accountant should be obtained in order to ensure compliance.

Any improprieties involving campaign finances can result in both political and legal disaster. The utmost care must be taken in the management of the fundraising operation. (See Appendix for a list of corporate contribution guidelines for ballot initiatives.)

FINAL NOTE

Fundraising is not simply a priority, it is a necessity. To wage a competitive, articulate, focused campaign, you must have adequate resources. Remember, the success of your campaign depends on raising and wisely spending those resources.

APPENDIX

FUNDRAISING INFORMATION PACKET ("PROSPECTUS")

The audience for your fundraising packet is different from the audience who will receive your press kit. The fundraising packet must be designed to convince/persuade potential donors to contribute to the campaign. Hence it must show that the campaign is professional, that it is worthy and that, given essential funds, it will succeed. The packet should be neat and professional in appearance.

At a minimum, the packet should include:

1. A copy of the initiative.

2. A brief (1 page) history of the initiative. This should describe possible consequences of the initiative, summarize what we know about the opposition's motives, tactics, and strategy and trace the progress of the campaign thus far.

3. A statement of viability. This should include relevant polling information to highlight why the campaign can win. It should stress achievement thus far and reiterate why it is important for this campaign to succeed. Polling results demonstrating campaign viability. Obviously, it will be important to strategically determine whether you should release results, and if so the extent of the data to be released.

4. Newspaper articles. Copies of articles that give a favorable spin to the campaign or criticize the opposition should be included. Newspapers with wide distribution are usually most impressive.

5. Organization Statement. This should simply describe the campaign organization and list staff and consultants. Be sure to include name and phone number of the fundraiser.

6. Finance committee. This should include the name of the finance chair and all of the members of the campaign's finance committee.

HOUSE PARTY: DAY OF EVENT CHECK LIST

Date:

Host:

Location:

Dollar amount of the pledge amount:

Telephone Number:

Staff Coordinator:

Is the campaign providing a speaker:

If this is video drive, does a video need to be sent:

Time event begins:

	TYPE / NUMBER	STAFF/VOLUNTEERS
Number of people expected:	____________________	____________________
Refreshments:	____________________	____________________
Place Settings:	____________________	____________________
Beverages:	____________________	____________________
Signs:	____________________	____________________
Bumper Stickers:	____________________	____________________
Buttons/Badges:	____________________	____________________
Campaign Literature:	____________________	____________________
Tables:	____________________	____________________
Chairs:	____________________	____________________
Volunteer sign-in sheet:	____________________	____________________
Pens/Paper:	____________________	____________________
Photographer:	____________________	____________________

FUNDRAISING EVENT TIMELINE

Any successful fundraising event will require some very careful planning and organization. It is a good idea to begin preparations about eight weeks before the event is to take place. The following timelines may be useful in planning a more formal, large event. Some of the categories will not be applicable and you will have others to add. It is intended only as a preliminary guide to give you an idea of the kinds of things that will need to be considered.

8 WEEKS OUT

1) Decide on the date and format of the event.

2) Appoint an event chair (should not be finance chair).

3) Create an event committee.

4) Recruit and confirm hosts and co-hosts. (As such, each host or co-host should each agree to contribute a specific amount of money.)

5) Confirm location of event.

6) Prepare a database with names, addresses and phone numbers for invitation list.

7) Estimate the number of people you will want to invite (consult with hosts and committee members).

8) Design invitations.

7 WEEKS OUT

1) Appoint several people to be in charge of selling tables.

2) Take this time to motivate your workers and stress the importance of taking accurate counts of sales.

3) If possible have the meeting at the same time each week. Again, realistically estimate the number of people you want to invite.

4) Print invitations and tickets. Be sure to include the required disclosures on all printed items. Use a union printer.

5) Obtain a first class or bulk mailing permit (depending on budget).

6) Select caterer and plan menu. (For low dollar events, there should not be a caterer, rather, someone should be bringing food.)

6 & 5 & 4 WEEKS OUT

1. Develop a list of all prospective attendees and divide it among the committee.

2. Mail invitations.

3. Set up a system for dealing with RSVP and phone calls requesting information.

4. Distribute a memo to committee members listing table and individual ticket purchases.

5. Recruit volunteers for follow-up phonebank.

3 WEEKS OUT

1) Distribute accurate list of table and individual buyers.

2) Distribute accurate list of those who have not responded to invitation.

3) Set up phone bank. (Calls can be made from individual home phones, but be sure volunteers have a script, a list and a systematic way to record and report progress).

4) Reconfirm catering service and location.

2 WEEKS OUT

1) Design and print programs if appropriate.

2) Make final sales pitch.

3) Check and report on phonebank progress.

1 WEEK OUT

1) Track ticket sales daily.

2) Plan seating chart and table placement if appropriate.

3) Be in touch with caterer regarding expected number of attendees.

4) Follow up and confirm all details of room, entertainment, food, drinks, photographer, microphone, podium and emergency situations.

5) Schedule a walk through of the event the day before.

WEEK AFTER EVENT

1) Write and send thank you notes to workers and contributors.

2) Bookkeeping - get net proceeds to the bank and dissolve all dinner accounts.

3) Collection calls for outstanding pledges.

Individual Donor Development Prospects Worksheet

NAME	ORG. AFFILIA-TION	GIVING LEVEL H M L			CONTACT METHOD	CONTAC T DATE	PLEDGE AMOUN T	FOLLOW-UP NEEDED	STAFF

SAMPLE FUNDRAISING PHONE SCRIPT

The campaign should conduct a briefing in advance of starting a fundraising phonebank, particularly concerning a difficult issue, like “paycheck protection v. paycheck deception.”

This is a sample of a phone script with instructions that might be given to your volunteers for a fundraising phone bank. As with any of these sample materials you will need to make adjustments to suit your particular needs.

Go over the script and practice it until you are comfortable. Make a practice call to someone you know or another staff member. Try to sound natural when you're talking to voters.
If you have a problem, or someone has a question you can't answer, you should politely and cheerfully take down the complaint or question (use the Q. SHEET) and explain that you are a volunteer and can't answer the question, but that your supervisor will call back as soon as s/he can.

SCRIPT

Hello. Is this ? My name is ___________ and I'm giving some time to the campaign. Do you have a minute? Let me tell you why I'm calling. As you may have heard, the radical right is spending a great deal of money trying to (INSERT CAMPAIGN MESSAGE HERE.) We're asking you to help us fight back. Will you promise the campaign a donation of $25 tonight?

IF YES: That's GREAT! (FILL IN AMOUNT ON DONATION FORM) Let me double-check your address. Do you still live at (READ ADDRESS FROM LIST)? I'll be sending you a donation form in the mail tonight with a return envelope you can use to send us your check. Thank you very much. Goodbye.

IF NO: Well, I can understand that. Is there some smaller amount that you would feel able to give to the campaign? Say $15 or $10? Every contribution helps.

IF YES: Oh, that's great. (FILL IN AMOUNT ON DONATION FORM) Let me double-check your address. Do you still live at (READ ADDRESS FROM LIST)? I'll be sending you a donation form in the mail tonight with a return envelope you can use to send us your check. Thank you very much. Goodbye.

IF NO, AGAIN: That's all right. I appreciate your taking the time to talk to me. We'll count on your vote on Election Day. Thank you. Goodbye.

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO FILL OUT DONATION FORMS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE PROMISED TO DONATE MONEY BEFORE MAKING YOUR NEXT CALL.

Chapter 7:
THE BUDGET

THE BUDGET

Creating a campaign budget is the first and most important part of the campaign planning process. It is the platform upon which the campaign rests. As such, it should be clearly defined and committed to writing. This is not to suggest, however, that the budget is carved in stone. In fact, the beauty of a well-defined budget is its flexibility. As the dynamics of the race change and cash flow increases or decreases, the budget will shift accordingly. Each adjustment must take into account the campaign's overall strategy. That's why your budget must be drafted with utmost care and referenced daily.

The critical role of financial management in the overall campaign must not be underestimated. A large percentage of losing campaigns can trace their core problems to the same occurrences: not enough money or poorly managed money. Careful handling of the campaign's finances can mean the extra boost that puts it in the winner's column on Election Day.

THE PARTICIPANTS

The budget is a document that should be written by the campaign manager and/or general consultant in consultation with other key members of the campaign team. Consultants, senior campaign staff, and vendors should all submit projected budgets for their departments. While their estimates and recommendations are vital to appropriately allocating resources, the fundraising director is the most important person with whom to consult when drafting the budget. The goals for the fundraising operation must be developed in concert with projected budgetary needs. The ability of the campaign to raise money impacts budgetary decision making at all levels.

There are four primary questions that each participant must answer before coming to the drafting table.

1) What essential resources will you *need* to do your job?

2) How much will they cost?

3) In an ideal situation, what non-essential resources, financial and otherwise, would you *like to have* to do your job?

4) How much will they cost?

When answering these questions, participants should identify costs related to staff, equipment, resources, time, and travel.

As the budget drafting process begins, each component cost of the campaign should be reviewed, from petty cash for coffee to anticipated long distance phone charges to media production costs. The importance of each element should be prioritized and its cost estimated as carefully and accurately as possible. The manager is generally responsible for figuring out where each piece fits in the overall scheme of the campaign, what adjustments must be made, and when they should be made.

Campaigns with a medium-sized staff (6-10) and adequate resources will often hire a comptroller to monitor the daily cash flow and pay the bills. This allows the manager to focus on the strategic element of the budget rather than the accounting aspect. Because the budget changes frequently and rapidly, the campaign should purchase a strong, and multi-functional spreadsheet software application. The manager, fundraising director, and any staff members performing bookkeeping functions should be fully trained in operating the software. As a key strategic document for the campaign, the budget should be password protected and backed-up daily.

The most important component of the drafting process is open and honest communication among members of the campaign team. An erroneous figure placed in the initial budget, like underestimated media production costs, can significantly impact strategic and tactical moves later in the campaign. If the campaign has hired a general consultant, they will most often write the initial budget in consultation with the campaign manager and then assist in monitoring it throughout the campaign. If the campaign does not hire a general consultant, it is important to consult with others experienced in the day-to-day management of issue campaigns in the state. The financial management of the campaign is too critical to leave to chance.

DEVELOPING THE BUDGET

As you begin to develop the campaign budget, it is important to view the campaign from two different perspectives: 1) timeframes and 2) dollar amounts. Analyzing budgetary needs from these two angles will allow the campaign to anticipate cash flow. It will also provide reasons why funds are needed and when they are needed. This analysis fosters creating a more accurate budget and planning document.

Organizing the campaign in terms of time generally involves separating your endeavor into three categories: the kick-off, the mid-game and the end-game. Each segment is dependent upon the completion of certain tasks. In turn, each task will have its own components. The steps leading to the completion of each project need to be considered in terms of their individual and collective fiscal impact so that their opportunity costs can be weighed for prioritization purposes.

Although this is a conceptual rather than a concrete process, it is an important step in analyzing the campaign's priorities. It also provides a greater understanding of all tasks to be accomplished, and highlights the details needed to complete the project. This helps to prevent component costs from being overlooked (e.g. budgeting a large mailing to active voters without accounting for the costs associated with getting a bulk-rate postage permit). The items associated with each timeframe within the campaign can be more effectively analyzed in terms of their ability to move the campaign to its next phase.

The second angle to explore when preparing the budget emphasizes accurately estimating dollar amounts and a cost/benefit analysis. The campaign needs to determine how much every contemplated item will cost in actual expenditures, but also in terms of the lost opportunities to accomplish other tasks/items. This process allows for a financial element to be added to the prioritization process. Some items may be highly desirable for the campaign but still ultimately vetoed because of their even-higher opportunity costs.

In practice, the campaign should assign a range of values to each component of the budget, high, target, and low. In other words, there should be three ranges within the budget. At the low end, the campaign should assess the resources needed for the most minimal operation possible. At the high end, the campaign should account for how it will devote resources if the fundraising operation is maximally successful. The practical, or operating, budget will fall somewhere in the middle for most campaigns.

The High Budget

The high budget is prepared first. This is the ideal scenario. It is based on the premise that the campaign actually raises and spends at the maximum level of productivity for the fundraising department – in other word if *every* fundraising event, mailing, internet solicitation and so forth produces at a maximum level. The high-end budget assumes a heavy media buy, a strong community presence with plenty of voter contact, and an aggressive, professional fundraising operation.

The Target Budget

The target budget should be formulated second. This is the realistic budget. When preparing this budget, assume the campaign raises 50-75% of its maximum fundraising targets. Then plan accordingly. There are no frills in this budget but there are sufficient funds to reach voters through paid media.

The Low Budget

Prepare this budget last. It is the shoestring scenario. Assume only the bare essentials and try to find a way for the campaign to stay alive with minimal funds - and hope for the best.

The ideal budget, the practical budget and the bare-bones budget will provide flexibility in the financial management of the campaign. By preparing high and low estimates, the campaign management will be better able to draft the actual operating budget for the campaign and will also have resources to fall back on if funding comes in at higher or lower than anticipated levels. Always remember the critical role accuracy plays in preparing budgetary projections. Some items to consider when crafting a budget include:

1) Categorize the budget by month during the early stages of the campaign, and by week during the final six weeks.

2) Do not combine multiple items into a single large category. For instance, instead of a line item which reads "Office Equipment," specify, "Fax," "Copier," or "Computer."

3) Greater detail in the budget leads to greater fiscal accountability.

4) As a general guideline the budget should be broadly allocated as follows: 60% to media including production and mail, 15% to fundraising expenses, 7% to administration, 8% to staff salaries, 5% to field operations, and 5% to research.

These guidelines will change depending upon the size of the campaign and the media markets in the state. Sometimes the media percentage will be higher, sometimes staff and administration will be higher. As with other facets of the campaign planning process, it depends on the dynamic of each race and the structure and needs of the organization. (See Appendix for chart of accounts and expenditure worksheet.)

RECORD KEEPING

The importance of accurate record keeping cannot be overemphasized. No intelligent campaign decision can be made without knowing where the campaign finances stand relative to its budget. To that end, every single dime that comes in or goes out should be noted. Accounting for the contributions and expenditures of a campaign does not imply, however, that the campaign be tight-fisted, miserly or unnecessarily stingy. A petty cash pot for sodas, coffee and other miscellaneous expenses, for example, should be included in the accounting system. By keeping track of both sides of the financial equation, though, the campaign will know on a daily basis such crucial information as its cash-on-hand, its budgetary surplus or shortfall in each spending category, and its on-going ability to accomplish the goals it has set out for itself.

<u>Receipts should always be kept</u>. Financial reporting forms are tedious, time consuming, and detail oriented. Generally the campaign will have to provide detailed information concerning the who, what, where, when, and how of your expenditures. Accuracy is essential in the record keeping process, especially when it comes to providing the manager with daily cash flow charts. This is perhaps one of the most important components of the record keeping process. An inaccurate budget may force the manager to make strategic and tactical errors. The campaign cannot afford to waste any of its resources.

To assure that errors in the reporting system do not occur, the campaign must implement a system to ensure the smooth operation of the budgeting process. A system will provide greater ease for everyone dealing with the financial aspects of the campaign. Regardless of title, the individual in charge of the budget should always be able to render an accurate accounting of the cash-on-hand, the accounts payable, and the accounts receivable. The accounts payable and cash flow requirements should be broken into time frames (e.g. payments due in 5 days, 10 days, and 30 days). Accounts receivable should be based upon projected income resulting from frank, open, and ultimately realistic discussions with the fundraising operation. The campaign fundraiser should constantly update the expected revenue figures. A daily cash report should be prepared for the manager and the appropriate consultants.

The campaign’s financial situation is only as good as its system to track its finances. Pay attention to detail. Don't sacrifice accuracy for expediency. Create a sound reporting system and stick with it.

FINAL NOTE

The budget is the backbone of the planning process. It’s the foundation for the entire campaign plan. The budget plays an integral role in defining the strategic and tactical elements of the campaign. It deserves and demands significant energy and commitment.

APPENDIX

A GUIDE TO USING THE CHART OF ACCOUNTS AND EXPENDITURE WORKSHEET

This document is both a chart of accounts and an expenditure worksheet. It should serve as a useful guide when developing and tracking an overall campaign budget. The campaign should use the chart of accounts to develop the three budgets discussed in this chapter: a high budget, low budget, and target budget. When gauging the percentage of the total budget to allocate for each item, refer to specific chapters within this manual.

Each campaign may not need all the categories and some campaigns may need items or services not listed here. For instance, the initiative race may be taking place in a state where the cost of television is prohibitive. In such cases, simply leave out those categories that are inappropriate to your campaign's situation. Conversely, feel free to add categories as needed. The goal should be to ensure inclusion of all items and categories upon which campaign funds will be spent.

CAMPAIGN BUDGET WORKSHOP

	TOTAL	**SPENT TO DATE**	**% OF BUDGET**
Staff			
Manager			
Communications Dir			
Administrative Dir			
Scheduler			
Field Operator			
Volunteer Coordinator			
Health Insurance			
FICA/Unemployment			
General Consultant			
SUB TOTAL			
ADMINISTRATIVE			
Rent & Utilities			
Phone			
Deposit			
Installation			
Equipment			
Service			
Long Distance			
Cellular Service			
DSL			
Answering Service			
Computers			
Printer			
Hardware			
Software			
Modem			
Supplies			
Maintenance			
Paper			
Fax			
Fax Machine			
Fax Paper			
Broadcast Service			
Copier			
Copier			
Toner			
Paper			
General Expenses			
Volunteer Expenses			
Stationery			
Office Supplies			
Printing			
Postage			
Express Mail			
Furniture			
Licenses & Fees			
Penalties			
Parking			
TV/VCR/AUDIO			
Coffee/Water etc.			
SUB-TOTAL			

CAMPAIGN BUDGET WORKSHEET

	TOTAL	SPENT TO DATE	% OF BUDGET
Legal & Accounting			
Attorney			
Accountant/CPA			
Legal Compliance			
Petition Fees			
SUB TOTAL			
TRAVEL			
Fundraising			
Staff			
Spokesperson			
Other			
SUB TOTAL			
MAIL PROGRAM			
Consultant Fee			
Direct Mail			
Design			
Production			
Printing			
List & Labels			
Postage			
Mail House			
Handout/Walk Piece			
SUB TOTAL			
TV & RADIO			
Consultant Fee			
Prod Expense			
TV			
Radio			
TV Buy			
Radio Buy			
Print Ad Production			
Print Placement			
Photographer			
SUB TOTAL			
RESEARCH			
Consultant Fee			
Pre-Ballot Poll			
Post-Cert Baseline Poll			
Trend Poll			
Track Poll			
Focus Group			
Issue Development			
Opposition Consult. Fee			
Opposition Research Expenses			
SUB TOTAL			

SAMPLE DAILY CASH REPORT

DATE: ____________________

Opening Balance: $___________________

Receipts Today:

Name/Amt. $_________
Name/Amt. $_________
Name/Amt. $_________

Disbursements Today:
Itemize ($________)

Closing Balance: $__________________

Accounts Payable:	Vendors	Payroll
Current	________	_______
Payable 14 Days	________	_______
Payable 1 Month	________	_______
Payable > 1 Mo.	________	_______

Total Obligations: $________________

Expected Contributions and Pledges Received:

$_______________

Chapter 8:
RESEARCH

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH AND TARGETING

This chapter focuses on the three primary components of your campaign's research program: survey research, opposition research, and targeting. These three elements are all key to developing a winning strategy. Survey research provides you with information regarding voters' opinions and positions. Opposition research investigates and analyzes your opponent's strengths and weaknesses as well as your own. Targeting helps you determine how many votes are needed to win and where to focus the efforts to receive those votes.

With this information you can create a campaign with a clear, compelling theme that contrasts your position with that of your opponent. Moreover, you will know where to focus your time and energy. Given its instrumental role in the development and direction of your campaign, the research component of your campaign cannot be ignored. What follows in this chapter is an introduction to each of these areas and tips for effectively using them in your campaign planning and strategy.

SURVEY RESEARCH

Survey research is the foundation of any campaign's overall strategy. With it, the campaign can confidently build the case it wants to put before the voters. Without it, the campaign will rely on inklings and feelings about the political climate. Inklings and feelings can be dead wrong. While not a paradigm of truth, a good poll can give the campaign an overall view of what messages work, where they work, with whom they work, and when they work, as well as the reverse – what messages probably won't work.

Survey research requires a trained, experienced professional who understands how to craft a poll, knows the proper methodology for conducting one, and has the political skills to analyze the results and recommend strategies. The purpose of this chapter, then, is not to teach you how to write polls and conduct a survey. Rather, it is intended to serve as a guide for becoming a good "consumer" of survey research.

THE POLLS

A poll is a quantitative method of research. It is comprised of a series of questions designed to provide insight into the views and positions of those targeted for the survey. Polls are generally conducted over the phone, which is the standard for most political polling. Most campaigns, however, use only telephone polls. Questions may range from age and level of education of the respondent to whether they believe their governor is doing an effective job. A pre-determined number of surveys will be completed for each poll. This number depends upon a number of factors: budget, complexity of the issue, nature of your opposition, and so forth.

The information from these surveys is then tabulated and you will receive the results in percentages and numerical breakouts. You can then see how many points you must gain to get the 50% + 1 votes needed to win (or, optimistically, by how many percentage points you lead your opposition). You can also determine which messages work with which constituency groups. This information is invaluable in your campaign planning process.

In political campaigns, three basic types of polls are used: baseline (sometimes called benchmark), trend, and tracking. A description of each of these is provided below.

The Baseline Survey

This survey has a longer average interview length, has the greatest number of respondents, and tends to be the most expensive poll conducted during the campaign. Most campaigns will make just about any budgetary sacrifice to fund a baseline poll near the beginning of the campaign. The baseline requires a large sample size, usually at least four to five hundred completed surveys and sometimes as many as eight hundred. It generally has an average interview length between twenty and thirty minutes and takes a minimum of four days of phoning to complete. Costs generally range from $16,000 to $40,000, depending upon the sample size and the interview length.

This type of poll is used primarily for strategic and tactical planning purposes. It can also be extremely useful as a fundraising tool. It provides concrete numbers demonstrating support for the issue and can be used to show initial strength in the campaign, to validate your issue position, or to emphasize the fact that the campaign needs to raise significant funds to mount an effective communications program.

The Trend Poll

This is a shorter poll than the baseline. It generally has an average interview length of between eight and ten minutes. A trend poll usually goes into the field during the middle of the campaign (one to four months before the election) and often tests information and trends that surface after the baseline poll was taken.

A trend poll's primary objective is to test trends and changes in the political climate as well as checking the effectiveness of certain campaign tactics and messages. It is particularly useful in testing new data about your opposition. A trend poll generally uses a smaller, though not significantly smaller, sample size than the baseline poll *(three to five hundred).* Costs range between $10,000 and $20,000.

The Tracking Poll

This type of poll is conducted in the final stages of the campaign when the campaign's media buys are heaviest. Its purpose is to gauge how the campaign's communications efforts are moving voters. It can also indicate whether specific commercials and field operations are working.

A tracking poll is usually conducted over a two-to-three day period and has an average interview length of about five to seven minutes. A campaign will often conduct a series of tracking polls over the final weeks of the campaign. Tracking polls range in price from $5,000 to $8,000, depending upon the length of the survey. Many campaigns also conduct tracking polling by "piggy backing" or coordinating their tracking polls with those of another campaign. This can cut costs significantly.

The types of polls you conduct and the timing of the polls is part of the overall campaign strategy. These are basic descriptions designed to provide an explanation of the quantitative research that will most likely be proposed. Decisions about polling needs should be made in consultation with the strategic team.

ANALYZING THE POLL

Once you have determined your polling needs, you should then establish a timeline with your pollster for drafting the poll, putting it in the field, releasing the top lines, and analyzing the cross-tabs. Make certain that you review drafts of each poll before it goes into the field. Review the poll with all your consultants and make suggestions and comments where needed. Once the poll has been finalized and the surveys completed, there are a variety of ways to use the data. The purpose of this section is to offer guidelines for analyzing and using your polling numbers.

All too often campaigns will only look at a poll for the “horse race” numbers. The horse race numbers are the data that supposedly answer the question: Are we winning or losing? While a poll certainly provides you with this information, it also tells you much, much more. In fact, the horse race numbers are often the most deceiving of all the results. Remember that a poll is a snap shot. The horse race numbers by themselves only tell you where you stand at a given point in time. They do not tell you where you want to go and how to get there - the remainder of the survey data assists you with these questions.

Your survey research will help you identify three basic elements of your campaign strategy: 1) your general theme; 2) your most effective messages (as well as the most effective messages for your opponents); and 3) your target groups.

Top-Lines

The top-lines (sometimes called “marginals") are the basic numbers for responses to each question in the poll. In other words, top-lines provide you with the actual number of responses and corresponding percentage for every possible response allowed for each question. For example, a given question might show 100 responses or 25% “favorable” opinion of George W. Bush and 300 responses or 75% “unfavorable” opinion of him. They provide you with an overall impression of the opinions of those surveyed. You will most likely receive these numbers immediately after the survey is completed. The more detailed “cross-tabs” often take a week to assemble.

The top-lines should be reviewed for general themes and messages as well as for the political context of the campaign. They will provide you with a broad snapshot of campaign concerns: Which issues dominate? How strongly do people feel about particular issues? Which issues are most important? Which are not? Which messages resonate with the majority of voters? The intensity of specific demographic groups’ positions on these issues cannot be seen in the top-lines, but the total percentages can. Depending upon the strength of the poll numbers, this information can be especially useful in efforts to raise money and persuade the press and opinion makers of the viability of the campaign.

Cross-Tabs

Cross-tabulations of data (“cross-tabs”) provide the internal results necessary for the campaign to make critical decisions. While the top-lines give the campaign a broad overview of the universe surveyed, the cross-tabs provide it with a breakdown of voter perceptions broken down by very targeted demographics, e.g. Hispanic males aged 55 and older with an income of $35,000 to $50,000 annually. This is the "meat" of the poll. The information useful in making strategic and tactical campaign decisions derives from an analysis of these figures.

Given the depth and breadth of the data contained in cross-tabs, you should always review them with an eye toward designing your strategy and tactics. Examine this information with the following four items in mind:

1) Message Development

2) Issue Concerns

3) Demographic Breakdown

4) Geographic Distribution of Voting Groups

When reviewing the cross-tabs, look for groupings of voters. Which critical groups are affected by the various messages? A message that looks very important from the top-lines may turn out to be important only to your own core group of supporters. You do not necessarily need or want to emphasize that message because you would simply be preaching to the choir.

Cross-tabs are also particularly useful in defining the “swing voters” in your particular election. A swing voter is an individual who may oppose you initially, but changes his/her position after hearing specific messages and arguments. It is important to differentiate between those who can be persuaded and the rest of your survey universe. Their responses may be strikingly different. In fact, your “swing voters” may respond to issues and arguments that the broad universe of voters finds irrelevant or unconvincing. This group is critical to your success and requires finely tuned messages.

You should request that your pollster identify swing voters and key constituencies for you. One of the skills that you are paying for is the in-depth analysis of data that an experienced researcher can provide. As with all members of the consulting team, you should make certain your pollster is willing to take the time to help you fully understand the strategic implications from all data collected during survey research efforts.

Tips

Since so much of your campaign strategy and tactics derives from the poll analysis, a few tips to help you get the most out of your poll have been included here.

1) Examine the top-lines as soon as possible after the poll comes out of the field.

2) Have someone knowledgeable show you how to read cross-tabs (ideally, the survey researcher).

3) Read the cross-tabs thoroughly. Use a highlighter to mark areas that stand out or that you don't understand.

4) Request a meeting with the pollster and key staff members to go over strategic and tactical implications of the poll results.

5) Request a written report detailing the main findings of the survey.

6) Do not make more than two copies of the poll results and report. Keep them locked in a safe place. Know where those copies are at all times.

7) You will get the most from your survey research if you work closely with your pollster and if you ask questions regardless of how insignificant or "dumb" the questions may seem. It is important, however, to understand that your survey will not tell you everything. No survey can emphatically tell you whether you will win. But a good survey can *and* should tell you your key messages and among which groups of voters you can wage a credible campaign.

FOCUS GROUPS

Qualitative research deals with small numbers of the voting population and uses the focus group setting to collect data. As such, it is very different from quantitative research, but can also be extremely useful. Unlike polls, qualitative research is interactive. A moderator spends one and a half to two hours discussing a wide range of issues with a small group of people. Though the moderator will not reveal which organization or candidate s/he represents, s/he asks questions and pursues the opinions of the participants.

The session is not as tightly scripted as it is with a telephone survey, but the moderator and members of the campaign's strategic team do prepare a “moderator's guide” beforehand. This helps ensure that the discussion stays on track. Though the information gathered in these discussions cannot be put into a hundred page booklet of cross-tabs, the transcripts can be analyzed to help determine effective language and phrasing as well as argument salience.

Focus groups are usually comprised of eight to twelve people who are randomly selected from a predetermined demographic pool (i.e. gender, common interests, voting patterns, and economic background.) Two focus groups are usually conducted on a particular topic: one comprised of males, the other of females. (Studies show that single gender groups are more fruitful.) Focus groups are generally less expensive than a baseline poll, ranging from $4,000 to $7,000 per group. Occasionally focus groups will be used in lieu of a baseline poll when funds are low and a defined target group exists. Ideally, however, your qualitative research should be conducted as a precursor to the baseline poll. Language and issues that surface during the focus group discussions can be used in drafting the polling questions.

It is important to note that focus group results do not carry the degree of statistical certainty that qualitative research results have. As such, you cannot extrapolate the results of focus groups to the general population the way that you can with polling results. Focus groups are an excellent research tool, but they are best used as a supplement to quantitative research, not a substitute. If you choose to conduct focus groups, consider the following:

1) Assess the intensity of the participants' feelings about the political climate.

2) Determine participants’ knowledge level about issues.

3) Collect responses to specific message possibilities and charges.

4) Determine what issues participants do and don't understand.

5) Gain an understanding of the language voters use to express their views on important issues. Explore which words and phrases illicit positive or negative responses.

6) Test concepts for television commercials, leaflets, or direct mail.

If you keep these objectives in mind and develop a solid moderator's guide, your focus groups can serve as a strong, supportive research tool. After the discussions have been completed and transcribed, request a written report. Analysis of your focus groups can provide you with great insight into the motivations behind voters' positions on issues. Focus groups combined with your polling add an important dimension to your planning process.

HELPFUL HINTS

To be a good consumer of survey research, you need to be aware of the differences between methodology and content. Just as media consultants have their own editing style, pollsters often have their own drafting and targeting styles. These differences can affect the outcome of the poll. This section is designed to help you readily identify and analyze some of these differences. To do this, here are a few helpful hints to keep in mind as you play the numbers game.

Look for the Differences in Polling Methodology and Content

In any campaign, there may be multiple polls conducted on each issue (e.g., your campaign, your opponents, new organizations, interest groups conducting independent expenditures). Learn to be a good consumer of these surveys by knowing how results from two polls seemingly surveying the same issue can be different. Here are three items to note:

1) Is the wording on the surveys the same? Initiative ballot language can be long and cumbersome. Pollsters may not want to read the entire ballot language during their surveys. Sometimes the ballot language is abbreviated or paraphrased/summarized. This can create discrepancies in the language that is actually tested. Make sure you are comparing apples with apples in the survey questions.

2) Is the polling universe surveyed the same? For instance, some surveys will include "all voters" while others include only "likely voters." The results can be strikingly different between these two groups.

3) Is the sample size the same? The larger the sample, the lower the margin of error. The margin of error for a sample of 300 can be as high as +/- 6.5% whereas the margin of error for a sample of 500 can be as low as +/- 4.0%.

The margin of error affects both sides of a yes/no response. In other words, if the "yes" position holds 47% of vote and the "no" position 43%, the difference between the percentages is within the margin of error. This means that the results could be as low as 41 % "yes" (47- 6) and as high as 49% "no" (43 + 6), in a poll with a 6% margin of error. Analyzing the margin of error can account for the differences between polls.

One final note about margin of error: Polling reports often include the phrase, "The margin of error is +/-5% at the 95% confidence level." This means that 95 out of 100 times, a survey of this universe will have a margin of error of +/- 5%. It also means that five percent of the time (5 out of every 100 times), the results will be outside the margin of error.

Voters Will Lie

Voters do occasionally lie to pollsters, but they seem to lie more often on issues of personal morality, like gay and lesbian rights. Every pre-election poll in Colorado in 1992, for example, showed that Amendment 2, the infamous anti-gay rights measure, would be defected. Every poll, unfortunately, was wrong. After a post-election review of the surveys and election results, the consensus was that voters did not want to readily admit their support of Amendment 2. Inaccurate data leads to costly decision-making. Be on the watch for this trend and ask your pollster how s/he intends to deal with it.

Ballot Language Can Cause Confusion

Initiative language can be very confusing. Proponents often structure the language of the initiative to create confusion over the true meaning of a yes or no vote. In such cases, expect confusion. Work closely with your research team to determine whether the language of the initiative will likely confuse a significant number of voters. Note that often, the most effective way to defeat an initiative is to point out its vague and confusing language.

Develop Ballot Language

On the proponent side, one of the best uses of focus groups is to develop pro-active ballot language. Test various forms of the ballot language in a focus group of likely "swing" voters. This will provide insight into what language and ideas voters will accept or reject.

FINAL NOTE ON SURVEY RESEARCH

Survey research and focus groups provide your campaign with the background information necessary to develop your message and persuade voters to join your effort. If you are unsure how to use survey research, consult with someone who does. It can mean the difference between winning and losing.

<u>OPPOSITION RESEARCH</u>

A clear understanding of your opposition's organization is key to planning and executing your campaign. You must know your enemy *and* you must know yourself. This knowledge will enable you to create clear, compelling, and accurate contrasts between your campaign and that of your opponent. All too often campaigns unintentionally disseminate misinformation. They are then forced to spend a significant amount of time and credibility explaining why their facts were inaccurate. A good opposition research program can help you avoid some of these mishaps. Moreover, it can help you develop a winning strategy. If you understand the strengths and weaknesses of both your opponents and yourself, you can then begin to map out how you will emphasize your strengths and their weaknesses.

Opposition research can provide you with some of the tools to act and react quickly - a necessity in any campaign. It also acts as a safeguard against surprises later in the campaign. Because you know your own vulnerabilities, you can take the necessary steps to either prevent an attack or to quickly diminish its impact. Consequently, everyone from the press department to the field operation benefits from well-documented, accurate research.

Building your opposition research files takes a significant amount of time. There is always a great deal of information to be gathered and analyzed. Be certain to start this process early in the campaign. Realize that other groups or organizations may have previously conducted research on individuals or organizations that oppose you. You should always request that these groups share such information with you (assuming they support your position on the initiative.) The following sections serve as a guide for the development of your research department. Use this portion of the research chapter as a practical tool, perhaps even as a "checklist," to ensure that you are building a program and compiling reports that will strengthen and empower your campaign.

THE OPPOSITION RESEARCH PROGRAM

There is no single research plan or model that works for every campaign. Your program will depend on your specific needs and resources. There are, however, several components within a typical program including, a plan, a briefing book, and a research team. The following is a list of five, key written documents that should be produced by your research department. Though each of these elements is discussed in terms of your opposition, remember that if time and resources allow, you should produce similar ones that investigate your own campaign.

Plan and Timeline

Your research plan defines tasks that need to be completed and a timeline for completion. Every major component of your research program should be outlined in terms of content and time. Your research team will often get pulled away from their day-to-day task of preparing reports. Consequently, the more defined the timeline for your detailed, lengthy research reports, the greater the chance of completion by a reasonable and useful date. The needs of each specific department for research materials along with those of the campaign as a whole will largely dictate the scheduling of your opposition research program. As with most plans generated by the campaign, your research plan should be viewed as a flexible, working document. Unexpected moves by the opponent or new polling information can impact what type of information you need and when you need it.

The "Book"

This is an in-depth, written report that thoroughly investigates your opponent's organization, from their contributors to the content of their communications to national groups supporting their position. Its purpose is to provide your campaign with readily accessible documentation, information, and analysis. Thoroughly knowing your opponent will help ensure that every move you make reinforces your theme and contrasts your campaign with that of your opponent. This type of report can also help you quickly and accurately identify your opponent's strengths and weaknesses. You can then develop a strategy that highlights their weaknesses and strips away their strengths.

Because this report is generally quite long, it is often referred to as "The Book." Though each final research report differs from campaign to campaign, they do share common elements. Your "Book" should, at minimum, include the following four chapters:

1) A history of the opposition's previous campaigns, if any. Has the initiative (or one substantially similar) been put to a vote before? This chapter is usually in outline form and has an appendix listing all your sources and back-up documents. These generally include:

    a. News clippings.

    b. Books by authors involved in the prior initiative campaign or about the initiative itself.

    c. Transcripts of radio and TV reports and appearances.

    d. Financial disclosure statements.

e. Interviews with those involved in resisting similar initiatives in other states.

f. Files of other allied organizations (especially those with a national structure).

g. Voting records of public officials.

h. Reports issued by legislative or investigative agencies.

i. Proceedings of public hearings.

j. Annual reports of organizations or corporations (profit or non-profit) that are linked to the initiative.

k. Proceedings of court cases and other materials.

All of the above for organizations that ran independent expenditure campaigns related to the prior initiative.

2) The opposition's key supporters.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and provide background information on the key supporters of your opposition's campaign. Since initiative campaigns do not have a candidate, key supporters and high-profile figures often become the most visible “faces” of the campaign. Understanding their biases and involvement in other organizations and activities can assist you in countering the effectiveness of their image. This chapter is generally written in narrative style and contains an appendix of the original sources.

3) Other major extremist activities.

Opponents of progressive causes (hereafter the “Extreme Right”) are often involved in more than one campaign at a time. They have many causes that draw their attention and resources, like choice and education issues. When countering or preempting their attacks, it is important to understand the scope of their agenda. This information can help you derail their credibility by emphasizing the Extreme Right's commitment to taking *away* individual freedoms at all levels. Their primary issue concerns tend to be:

a. Choice / Reproductive rights

b. Women's rights

c. Affirmative Action

d. Discrimination based on language or other characteristics

e. Labor struggles

f. Education (funding issues, bi-lingual education restrictions, etc.)

g. Crime

h. Gun control

i. School Vouchers

j. Right to Die

4) The organization's funding and major contributors.

Sometimes where a campaign gets its funding is very important as a campaign issue. In other words, any issue campaign reflects the biases of its contributors. If your opposition is supported by public figures who carry political baggage, your campaign needs to know this information. It can help build your case regarding the extremist position of your opposition. Additionally, this type of information can help build your credibility with the press and the public while at the same time helping to derail the credibility of your opposition.

Briefing Reports

Briefing reports on your opposition's activities and the current political climate should also be prepared. These will most likely need to be updated on a regular basis. They should also be coordinated with the activities of your opponent tracking system (see below).

Opponent Tracking System

Develop a system that records, reports, and analyzes your opponent’s activities during the campaign. The campaign manager should be apprised daily of the opposition's activities.

Background Booklet

This booklet is comprised of briefing reports about the key issues in the campaign. It should be updated regularly. Primary users of this book include the campaign manager, communications director, and other spokespeople for the campaign. This material should be prepared with debates and public appearances in mind.

PUTTING TOGETHER A RESEARCH TEAM

Compiling research reports requires attention to detail, patience, and a good amount of time. In an ideal world, your research department would have five or six full-time staff members. But campaigns rarely have enough money to hire even one or two researchers. Consequently, building a research team generally necessitates reaching into the volunteer pool and recruiting those who have an interest in digging for items which supposedly don't exist or are very difficult to find. As you begin the process of hiring and recruiting researchers, there are a few things to keep in mind. This section offers some tips for building and maintaining your research team.

Leadership

One person should lead and organize the opposition research effort. This person is generally a paid staff member whose primary responsibility is to compile and analyze the research material (assuming you campaign follows a "full-staff" model). This person should accept responsibility for the deadline of each project. This staff member should not do all the research, but should stay in touch with each member of the team and be aware of the option to coordinate with outside policy or research organizations that are familiar with the campaign issues if necessary and possible. S/he should enforce research deadlines, give research advice, and maintain regular contact with the campaign management, especially the communications director and manager. Your paid researcher generally works under the direction of the communications director. S/he should be prepared to follow their instructions and meet the needs of the communications department. This is an interactive process, but it is important that your paid researcher understand his/her role and how it fits in the overall campaign structure.

Weekly Meetings

The opposition research team should hold regular weekly meetings outside of weekly or daily staff meetings. The purpose of these meeting is to keep team members informed on the progress and needs of the campaign as well as the status of each team member's work.

Team Members

Any number of people who support your campaign can be utilized in your research effort, from your next-door neighbor to your attorney to a college student. Remember, however, that your research is highly confidential and sensitive. A well-meaning supporter can leak information that is best held for a later date in the campaign. Here are a few recruiting suggestions for researchers:

1) Activists *and* activist organizations. They can bring expertise to the team. State and national organizations have skilled research staffs and huge research files. They are often willing to share both.

2) Students. Most high school and college students have some research skills and lots of enthusiasm. They can be a very valuable resource.

3) Elderly or housebound persons. These individuals can become media monitors, taping news broadcasts and "issue oriented" shows. They can also track radio call-in and other talk shows.

4) Supportive elected officials and their staffs. These people are often knowledgeable as to both the issues and research techniques. Moreover, they may already have research on hand they are willing to share.

5) Librarians. This group is a very valuable resource for opposition researchers. These individuals can give expert guidance during the most obscure research projects. Utilize librarians at public and university libraries as well as state, county and municipal libraries associated with legislative bodies.

Hiring a Professional Researcher

The decision to hire a professional opposition researcher is dependent upon your campaign's needs and resources. Most campaigns find it easier to recruit research volunteers than to raise research funds. Your decision to hire a professional opposition researcher will depend on your budget and your overall strategy.

LOCATING THE INFORMATION

Once you have developed a plan and begun building your research team, you need to begin the time-consuming process of gathering the information. There are many, many places where you can search for facts, statistics and background information on your opposition. A few of the prime sources have been included in this section.

People Already Involved in the Campaign

A good place to begin looking for information is among those already involved in the campaign. Many activists have their own files or access to files on the issues. These files are extremely valuable because they have been developed in the course of an actual struggle on the issue. They contain relevant material and can point you toward other important sources of information. They may also act as models for how to organize your research efforts.

National Organizations

National organizations are an extremely valuable resource. They have collected data from many campaigns and recorded the input of activists from across the country. They can often afford full time staff who specialize in collecting and analyzing the information and experiences surrounding their issues

The Internet

Online research has quickly become the primary tool for virtually all forms of information gathering. Your research team should include at least one person who is extremely proficient using the internet (particularly web and newsgroups). You should use the internet as your first source to look for any particular piece of information. The economies that your campaign will gain, both in terms of time and expense, mandate using this incredibly powerful tool as your number one source.

Newspapers and Magazines

Newspapers and magazines are basic source materials. These are available at your local library. Back issues are often on microfilm. Large newspapers may publish annual subject indexes. Many newspapers and magazines are indexed in the Readers Guide to Periodical Literature.

Today, many newspapers and magazines are indexed in computer databases including LEXIS, DIALOG, and others. They are accessible to anyone with a personal computer and a modem. The charges are dependent upon the usage. It is often possible to find supporters with subscriptions to these services who will make a donation of the service. Computerized databases are easy to search and the information is returned either on printouts or on a diskette, which may be edited with most word processing programs.

Local Papers, Church Papers, Organization Newsletters, Labor Papers, and Other Publications

Look for these sources on both the pro and con side of your initiative. They may not be indexed, but the publisher or a subscriber may have complete files that are available for researchers.

State, County, and Municipal Libraries

These libraries have special collections that should include the proceedings of the respective legislative bodies and the voting records of the members. Copies of these records are often available from supportive members of the legislative bodies. Political parties often publish summaries of the work of the legislature as well. These summaries highlight key issues and serve as a guide to the work of the session. Law libraries, especially those at public universities or associated with state Supreme or Appellate courts, are often official repositories of administrative, legislative and regulatory documents.

County Clerks, State Boards of Election and Other Outlets for Public Records

These outlets are sources for things such as petitions for ballot referenda and financial disclosures for candidates, lobbyists, and other political figures. There is often a charge for copying these documents, but most of them can be examined for free in various administrative offices. Supportive elected officials can offer valuable guidance in accessing these records. Every state has some sort of official archival system for official documents, and many have placed large quantities of state documents online.

You will most likely find additional sources. The key in your attempts to locate information is to look in every corner. Even though someone may tell you it doesn't exist, you must have the tenacity to discover or uncover that for yourself.

ANALYZING THE RESEARCH

To be of any value, thick files of raw research require organization and analysis. Your research plan will map out the organizational aspect, but the analysis is something that largely depends on the research itself. Your analysis should contrast your campaign themes with those of your opposition. It should also verify the validity of your issue positions. Knowing whether an issue will hold any relevance to the public at large is an important component of the analytical process. Be sure to keep these considerations in mind as you begin to put the pieces together. Consult with the manager, communications director, and consulting/strategy team to determine the type of analysis required.

One of the most important components of your analytical process is the way in which you compile your material. It is very difficult to analyze material that is not categorized or easy to read. To help you build files that can be quickly and easily analyzed, some recommendations for organizing and formatting your data have been included here.

Issues and Biographies
These should be written in a narrative style with footnotes citing every fact to an original source. This format ensures rapid confirmation of facts for the media and the campaign spokesperson.

Memos
These should be prepared in response to specific requests from other departments of the campaign. Copies of these memos should be retained and filed. These memos can often be used in response to other requests.

Briefing Paper
For every major campaign event and appearance, a briefing paper should be prepared. Some of this information, such as talking points and directions, will be completed in cooperation with the communications director and scheduler. Your briefing paper should include background on all persons involved with the event and suggested talking points and background facts.

Daily Clipping File and Reports from Radio and Television Monitors
This should be made available to all appropriate campaign staff and volunteers. You should mark the portions of files and recordings that are of special importance (either pro or con).

The analysis of your research is a vital component of your research program. Information may or may not be strategically useful to the campaign. Moreover, an in-depth analysis can help the campaign decide whether there is enough information to validate its position. As a campaign, your credibility with the press and public largely depends on your ability to make your case and validate it with extensive, accurate background material. If you are unsure how to use a specific piece of information or do not believe there is enough supporting documentation, ask the professionals involved in your campaign for their recommendation. A faulty piece of information can cost the campaign a great deal of time, resources, and credibility.

SECURITY

Campaigns have open structures that rely on massive volunteer efforts. As a result, they can easily become a target for infiltration by your opposition. Because so much of your research is highly sensitive, you need to take steps to ensure that as little information as possible is leaked. Here are a few guidelines to help safeguard your research:

1) Access to completed research, especially “The Book,” should be restricted to those who “need to know.” Politically sensitive documents should be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a room with a door that locks.

2) Researchers should not discuss their work outside the research team.

3) Copies of research, complete or incomplete, should not be distributed in any form outside the campaign structure, especially to the press.

4) Researchers, no matter how informed, should not speak with the press unless specifically requested to do so by the communications department.

5) Campaign leadership should solve any persistent problems.

As a general rule, your research operation should be one of the more covert aspects of the campaign. However, leaks are common and, unfortunately, unavoidable in most campaigns. The best way to combat this problem is by taking the necessary steps to diminish the risk of infiltration and leaks.

FINAL NOTE ON OPPOSITION RESEARCH

Know your enemy and know yourself. A well-documented, solid report on your opposition's campaign can greatly assist you in furthering your cause and achieving your goal on Election Day. But to be truly effective, you must also know your own strengths and weaknesses. Be meticulous and patient in developing your research program. It can mean the difference between two days of positive news stories and a week of negative press. Time and resources are limited, and accuracy *does* make a difference.

TARGETING

Targeting is an important component of your research plan because its primary purpose is to identify the voters needed to secure your victory on Election Day. Targeting is the process of calculating the number of votes needed to win on Election Day and determining where (geographically and demographically) these votes can be found. Your targeting calculations are based on the assumption that victory depends on your ability to garner 50% + 1 of the votes cast on Election Day. This basic assumption must be kept in mind throughout your campaign. All too often issue campaigns get wrapped up in debating the merits of the issue and forget about the ultimate goal: to win. Although you care a great deal about defending the issue at hand, you must focus the majority of your energy on organizing a campaign and implementing a strategy that will help you garner the votes needed to win on Election Day.

Targeting can also help you formulate a winning strategy. It is, however, a complex process that should be completed by someone who specializes in this area. Because targeting requires a certain level of expertise, this portion of the research chapter is designed to introduce you to the basics of targeting, not to teach you how to complete a targeting report. Use this section for background information rather than as an instructional guide.

THE BASICS

Targeting is usually done after you have completed a baseline poll and a good portion of your opposition research. An effective targeting report takes into account your baseline poll results, opposition research, past election results, and past voter turnout. This information is critical in accurately predicting voter turnout for your election and identifying the voters who will support your issue. The following steps briefly outline the targeting process.

Step One

Determine how many votes are required to win your specific election. This step involves examining the results of past initiative campaigns in your state to help determine how many voters have actually voted in similar elections. The number of votes needed to win can be calculated by taking 50% + 1 of those who have voted in similar elections and factoring in other relevant items like growth in the state, the overall level of political activity for a your election cycle, and long-term turnout trends in the state.

Be careful not to compare apples with oranges when completing this step. To accurately determine the number of votes needed, you need to look at elections with similar characteristics. For example, do not research the turnout from a presidential election and attempt to apply the results to a mid-term or special election. Turnout for these elections can be vastly different. Your targeting report must take this into account.

Step Two

Determine where you will get your 50% + 1 votes. This can be a complicated task because it takes into account any number of factors, including demographic and geographic breakdown. This step requires using your campaign's research on past performance of like elections (if available) to break down the votes into geographic regions. For a citywide initiative, this should be done by precinct. For a statewide campaign, this should be done by county or congressional district. Based on this data, you can project how many votes the campaign will need to win from each area.

To the extent possible, work in smaller geographic areas. This will provide you with a more accurate and manageable idea about where you need to focus your efforts.

You should also become familiar with the demographic make-up of each geographic area during this step. Areas with a high concentration of progressive voters will be places where the campaign should do well. Conversely, campaigning in areas with a high concentration of extreme conservatives may be a waste of your time and resources.

Step Three

Determine who your likely supporters are so that you can target those who will give you your 50% + 1 votes. Think of the voters in your election by using the following analogy:

On one side of the issue are the “Saints.” They are firmly committed to your issue. They need no convincing. They support you 100%. They are known as your base vote of support. On the other side of the issue are the “Sinners.” These people are firmly opposed to your issue. No amount of persuasion or well-reasoned argument will change their minds. They are known as your base vote of opposition. In the middle of these two extremes reside "Those Who Can Be Saved." These people can become "Saints" with a little (or sometimes a lot) of persuasion. This is called your persuadable vote. The persuadable vote is the *most important* segment of voters in almost all elections. (See Appendix for diagram.)

Though this model is seemingly straightforward, it is complicated by the fact that not all of these voters will cast a ballot on Election Day. That's why your campaign must set a strategy to account for less than complete turnout as well as developing an organized, targeted GOTV effort. If your supporters do not go the polls on Election Day, all your months of hard work will be wasted.

This step in the targeting process will help you identify three key groups of voters:

1) Your base supporters who need to be motivated to get out and vote.

2) Those persuadable voters who must be persuaded to vote in support of your issue. Knowing the locations of these specific voters will help your campaign devote the appropriate resources to persuading them to vote and vote with you on Election Day.

3) Your opponent's base supporters. Knowing the locations of these specific voters will keep your campaign from wasting limited resources and inadvertently encouraging increased turnout favoring your opponents.

These are the basic components of targeting. Though the steps may seem straightforward and simple, an in-depth and accurate analysis of this information is critical. When done correctly, targeting can be an invaluable tool. When done incorrectly, targeting can send the campaign on a wild goose chase. Remember, above all, you want to motivate only your base supporters and those who can be persuaded to join with you to vote on Election Day.

FINAL NOTE ON TARGETING

As you can see from this brief introduction targeting is a highly scientific and complicated process. But it is also a critical part of your research plan. Determining who your voters are and where they can be found is vital to your success or failure on Election Day. It can also save the campaign time and resources. Don't ignore this part of your campaign planning process.

APPENDIX

Targeting
By Hal Malchow

Targeting is the process of choosing the voters most likely to be influenced by your voter contact messages. Any campaign planning to use mail, phone calls or door-to-door canvassing will need a targeting strategy. In developing your targeting, your campaign needs to answer four questions.

> **Who Will Vote?** The first issue is whether a voter will vote at all. If you are trying to persuade voters to vote for or against a referendum, you want to focus on voters who have a high probability of getting to the polls. If you plan to spend money on voter turnout efforts, you want to target supporters who have a middle range probability of voting.
>
> **Who Is Persuadable?** Most referendum campaigns focus voter contact on undecided voters or voters whose support or opposition is soft.
>
> **Who Cares About My Issue?** Referendum campaigns are different from candidate campaigns. Without a candidate, there is no pre-existing loyalty or personality assessment. Referendum campaigns are all about the issue and usually involve an education campaign about a proposal that is unfamiliar to the voters. Knowing which voters are most likely to support your issue is critical.
>
> **Who Are My Supporters?** Finally, if you plan to conduct voter turnout efforts, you will need to know which voters are supporters. For many referendum campaigns, get-out-the-vote programs can be a waste of time and money. If statewide or national candidates are on the ballot, turnout efforts are probably a waste of money. If your campaign begins with a lead, turnout efforts will be more productive than if you are behind and need to spend more money on persuasion.

Knowing the targeting questions is the easy part. The hard part is making these assessments in a cost effective way. There are three ways that campaigns categorize voters. They call them on the telephone and ask them where they stand. They read a poll and categorize voters demographically. Or, in larger campaigns with bigger budgets, they actually score each voter through a mathematical process called statistical modeling. Let's discuss each of these techniques.

Telephone ID

What is the best way to know if a voter cares about your issue or has a position on your ballot measure? The best way is to call and ask. Polling and modeling give you an educated guess. Calling gives you an answer.

There are problems, however, with telephone ID. First, it is expensive. A completed ID call can cost between $.70 and $1.50. Second, and more importantly, you can only reach a small portion of the voters. If you have a list of 10,000 voters, you are unlikely to find phone numbers for half of them. Of the half that you find, at least 30% will not be reachable on the telephone. Of the ones you reach, many will not give you an answer. So if you plan on doing ID calls, don't expect to get answers from more than 25% to 30% of your list.

Polling

If the phoning reaches only 30% of the voters, what about the other 70%? A poll can help you make educated guesses about voters but your guesses won't always be accurate. Targeting with a poll presents a number of pitfalls.

First, polls are not really designed for targeting. They are designed to shape messaging, which is more important. Most polls involve a long interview to a small number of voters. Five hundred is the most common figure. Overall, at a 95% confidence level, a poll using a sample of 500 will be accurate plus or minus four percentage points. But when you start breaking up the electorate, the statistical confidence practically disappears.

Let's do an example. If you start with a sample of 500 and you want to know what percentage of women support your initiative, and the women are half the sample, the confidence interval is plus or minus 6 points. If you want to know what percentage of Democratic women support your proposal, and 40% of women are Democrats, your confidence intervals are plus or minus 10 points. In other words, you can be reasonably certain that their support is somewhere in a 20 point range.

Polling is the best targeting information available to most campaigns. But polling offers only a hazy picture of subgroups within the electorate. If you are targeting from a poll, you need to add a good dose of common sense and political judgment in determining your targets.

Modeling

Modeling is new to politics but has been a staple of successful commercial direct marketing for the last three decades. Generally, modeling involves using the tools of modern statistical analysis to examine a large database, create a way to make mathematical predictions and apply those predictions to each voter. Much of the cost of modeling arises from the creation of the database.

For voter turnout modeling, where the database exists in the form of voter records with age and previous voting history, modeling is an inexpensive and highly effective way to assess the likelihood that any voter will show up on election day. Turnout modeling creates voting *probabilities* which are highly accurate. Having actual probabilities is particularly important in turnout efforts allowing you to focus, for example, on supporters who have between a 25% and a 75% probability of voting.

If you task is to decide who is supporting your candidate, who is undecided and who cares about your issues, the process is considerably more expensive. To create a database large enough to produce reliable results, you need to make 5,000 or more ID calls to a random selection of names on your voter list. The survey can be short. Many times, you only need to ask one or two questions so the calls are not expensive. But you need to make a large number of them and you need to pay someone to build the model. Generally, a model to predict voter preference starts at about $15,000 can cost considerably more depending on the methodology and who is doing the billing.

Clearly, a model can deliver better results than targeting from a poll but it is not magic. Some issues lend themselves to good models and can give your voter contact campaign a lot of added efficiency. As to some issues, the modeling produces only marginal improvements. A good rule of thumb is to expect that a model could help you reach your target voters about 15% more efficiently than you could with a poll. Another good rule of thumb is that, if you want to get your money's worth, you should never spend more than about seven or eight percent of your voter contact budget on modeling.

Ultimate Targets

In the end, your targets are fairly simple. For activities designed to persuade the voter, you want to target likely voters who are undecided or soft in their position and who are predisposed to care about your issue. For voter turnout activities, you want to reach voters who have a mid-range vote probability and a high likelihood of support. For a more detailed description of targeting principles and techniques, you can buy my book, The New Political Targeting, on Amazon.com.

TOP 5 REASONS FOR USING RESEARCH IN BALLOT MEASURE CAMPAIGNS©

Heidi von Szeliski, Bob Meadow
Decision Research, 2003

REASON #1: "DECIDE IF YOU SHOULD GO ON THE BALLOT".

Ballot measure campaigns are hard work, and often more complicated than running candidate campaigns. You believe that your issue is a good one, but if you do not have a way to get the electorate to support your issue (or to oppose someone else's issue), you will be wasting a lot of time, money, and energy on a losing proposition!! Using research can help you decide if there is a way to frame the debate, provide a message that is compelling, and pursue a strategy that will win the election. Polling and focus group research help determine if there is a way to do this successfully--and it helps you make those decisions before you make the investment in running the campaign. Just because an issue is interesting to you, or to a small group of people in your community, does not necessarily mean you will win. If there is strong opposition to your issue, you must know in advance whether or not you have a good chance with the voters.

In one example, following state budget cuts, a public employee labor union with whom we were working sought to restore full health care coverage for its members through the initiative process. Polling and focus group research not only showed little support for a potential measure, it also showed that voters felt the benefit of 100% of premiums paid by the state was excessive and that public employees should be expected to pay a portion of the premiums, as is common in the private sector. In fact, a ballot measure would have called attention to the fact that state employees still received health benefits far better than those provided by most private employers, and could have generated a backlash. The union sought other means to restore its benefits.

REASON #2: "DECIDE HOW TO GO ON THE BALLOT".

Many campaigns make the critical mistake of bringing in the pollsters after the ballot language and arguments have already been drafted and sent for certification. This is not the best way to utilize research. Perhaps the wording of the measure meets legal requirements, or is straightforward, but it may not be the most compelling vocabulary or politically strategic way to describe your issue. Even more common, the vocabulary your committee or lawyers have drafted is perhaps confusing to voters. If you are "stuck" with wording, title, arguments, and a summary that are not the most persuasive message for the campaign, then you must spend considerable resources "re-educating" voters about the ballot measure, and you run the very real risk that voter confusion will simply lead voters to "vote the wrong way."

Ballot measure campaigns utilize focus group and survey research (polling). Focus groups are qualitative research that tells you how voters approach an issue and what vocabulary they use, or which tests potential messages for print and electronic communications. Polling is quantitative research that tells you where to target your energy, how to frame the issue, what are the most effective messages and how to counter the opposition's attacks. Focus groups and polling work in a complementary fashion--and one type of research is never a substitute for the other. Determine the right vocabulary, and the right message **from the very first stage of the campaign--not after it is too late to modify the ballot measure itself**.

One of the most common errors in revenue enhancement ballot measures such as increased taxes or bonds for schools or public facilities is that they are put on the ballot based on the need (for school repairs or construction, for example) rather than based on the willingness or ability of the voters to pay. We have often used research to identify the "tax-point" beyond which voters are unwilling to pay for valued improvements, such as school repairs. Our research also showed that including specific features in the ballot such as indicating that there would be audits and a citizens' advisory to oversee spending decisions, the tax would expire and could not be renewed without another vote of the people, or guaranteeing that no expenditures would be on overhead, significantly improved the chances of a measure passing. As another example, our research has also shown that in animal protection measures to outlaw cruel and inhumane methods of hunting, it has been important to include certain exemptions and exceptions for the protection of people or property or to remove language that might be unfamiliar to voters ("spring bear hunt") and replace it with more commonly understood and evocative language ("when mother bears are nursing their cubs").

REASON #3: "DECIDE <u>WHEN</u> TO GO ON THE BALLOT".

As anyone involved in politics is keenly aware, not all voters are alike. Determining the <u>timing</u> for when to go on the ballot is an important element of your campaign planning, which is guided by polling. What else will be on the ballot in particular elections? Will turnout affect the voters who are more supportive of our issue? Will the top-of-the-ticket candidates motivate exactly the voters who are <u>least</u> supportive of our issue? What are the implications in terms of turn out, financing, or visibility of the campaign of pursuing a measure in a special, an off-year, or a Presidential year election? Will the role of GOTV efforts by other campaigns help or hurt us? We need to know what other ballot measures are being considered, which are definitely on various ballots, and what the impact will be on <u>our</u> issue if other measures are on the ballot. Sometimes, if there are too many, voters will simply become fatigued, and not vote for those "down the list" or they may "just say no."

Pollsters examine the <u>types of voters</u> very closely, and can make determinations about when the best time to go on the ballot might be. When we have looked at likely levels of support for projected turnouts for special, off-year or regular elections, our polling has shown that those who are **most** supportive of bond measures for schools, infrastructure, or other finance measures, for example, are the **least likely** to turn out to vote in low-turnout elections. As a result, we have made the appropriate recommendations for ballot timing to enhance our prospects.

REASON #4: "DECIDE <u>WHICH VOTERS</u> TO TARGET".

Realistically, you will not be able to get all voters to support your issue (or oppose an issue if you are trying to defeat a measure). You need to know who you opponents are (so you can decide if you need to invest resources in them), to know who your solid supporters are (so you can focus on GOTV, rather than persuasion efforts possibly), and <u>to know where you can make inroads with "persuadable"</u> voters.

Too many people mistake the role of polling as about the trial heat question. "If the election were held today, would you vote "yes" or "no" on Measure X?" We can wait until election day to find this out. The real strategic purposes of a poll are to find the winning arguments for the measure, its strengths and weaknesses, the strengths and potential vulnerabilities of an anti-measure campaign, to test message carriers, and to identify targets.

Determining which themes, messages, and arguments will work for those who can be persuaded to support the measure (and the most effective way to respond to attacks) is what polling provides, and provides a blueprint for communicating with persuadable voters who may be the key to the success of the campaign.

On gay rights measures we have found it is possible to build unusual coalitions of voters responding to different messages, with libertarians ("government off our backs") who otherwise hold what many would consider to be "conservative" values joining with business Republicans ("if most of the Fortune 100 companies provide domestic partner benefits, so should our city") and social progressives ("equality, fairness and basic rights")to promote non-discrimination human rights and domestic partner measures. These targeted appeals all flow directly from the research.

REASON #5: "STRATEGIC DECISIONS SHOULD BE RESEARCH DRIVEN. YOU CAN'T AFFORD <u>NOT</u> TO POLL".

Deciding which message to use, which voters to target, which media markets to buy, and when to put the measure on the ballot is <u>not</u> the time to use your intuition. Making decisions based on an organized, coherent, and focused strategic plan will help maximize limited resources by avoiding sending out the wrong message to the wrong people.

Most ballot measure campaigns budget about 5% to 10% of the overall campaign budget for research. The costs of a research program are based on the size and length of the questionnaire and the number of people interviewed (sample size). A typical benchmark poll contains about 50 to 75 response items, and usually takes about 15-25 minutes to complete. For a high-quality, professional public opinion survey, you can expect to pay anywhere from $15,000 to $20,000 for a sample size of 400. Shorter, follow-up polls, taken midway through your campaign, are less expensive. Overnight tracking polls taken for fine-tuning the voter contact program near the conclusion of your campaign, cost even less. Focus groups typically cost about $4,000 to $7,000 per group.

The pollster, as a member of your strategy team, should be the keeper of the message and the traffic coordinator for targeting the voters. The pollster should play an ongoing role <u>throughout the campaign cycle</u> to make sure the message is on track and on target at all times. All voter communication should convey a consistent message, so the pollster should be available to review your speeches, direct mail, television and radio advertisements and other campaign messages. Often with ballot measures, you have two constituencies to worry about--the "coalition" or ballot committee (which needs to be managed and controlled so that the message is consistent), and the electorate, which needs to be persuaded. The pollster often can help "keep everyone's eyes on the prize" when the campaign's message begins to stray off course

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND STRATEGIES

This appendix contains potential questions and strategies to help you begin planning and developing your opposition research. This is a snapshot of the questions and strategies you might pursue and is not intended to be an all-inclusive list. Your research needs will be determined by your campaign's needs. Review this list and add and subtract where appropriate.

1. Investigate the process of ballot initiatives in your state or local area. If the process requires the collection of signatures, how many signatures are required and what are the requirements for circulators and signers? Is there a minimum number or share of the signatures required from specific areas (such as counties)?

2. If the process is initiated by legislative action how many votes will be required? How many legislators are on record already? Prepare a list of legislators' positions on the initiative and on the question in general. Who are the major campaign donors to legislators for and against the initiative? Include their phone numbers and addresses. Is there a link between contributions and other issues? Which legislators are best targets for lobbying?

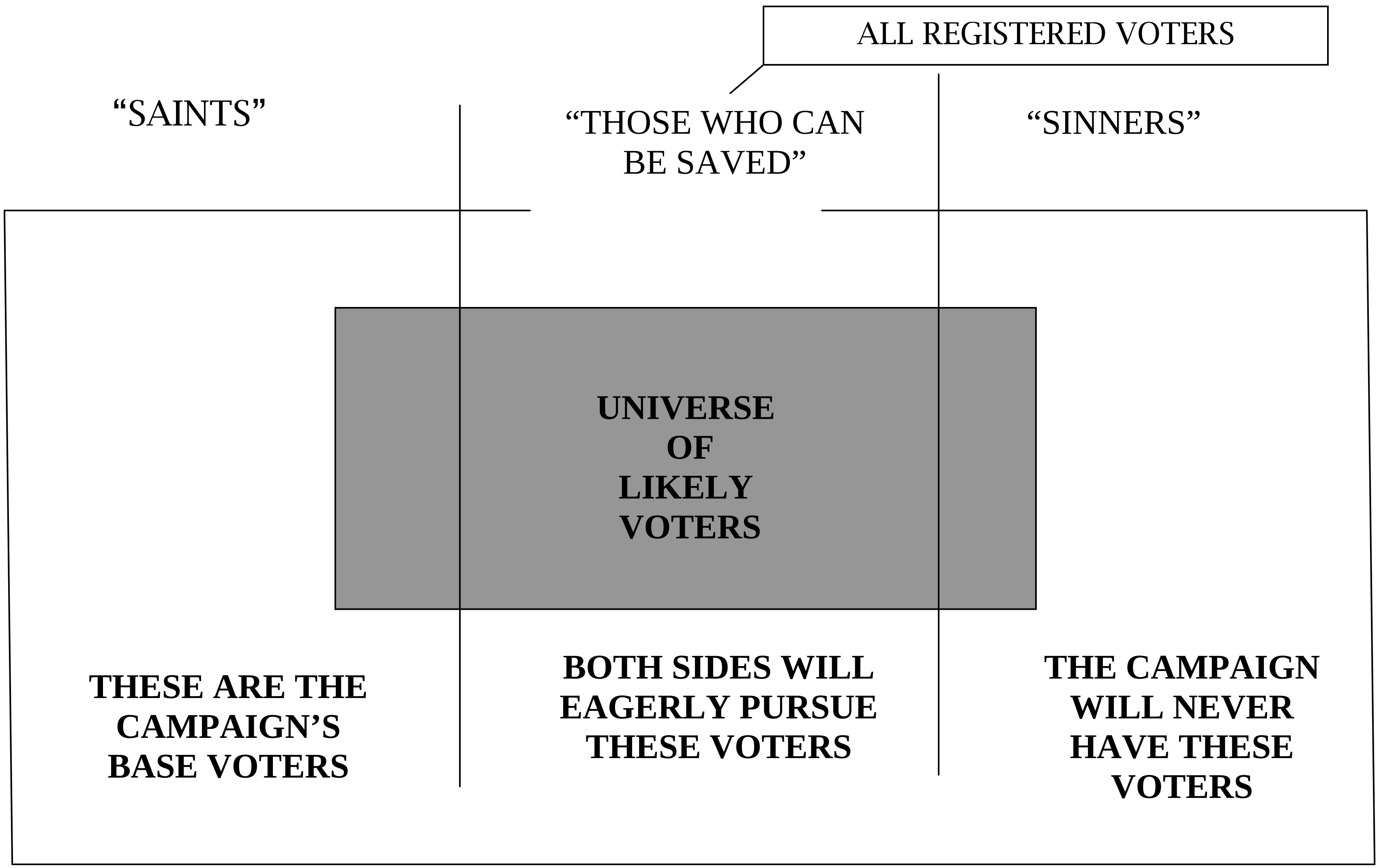
3. What has been the experience of other initiatives in this area? How many have been excluded from the ballot and how? Which initiatives have passed? Prepare a list of the vote area by area. What were the key political forces in carrying or defeating initiatives in the past? What are the positions of those forces or coalitions on this initiative? Prepare a list of key individuals and groups, both pro and con, with phone numbers and addresses. Which areas have the largest voter turnout? Prepare a table and map of voter turnout. Which areas tend to vote in "blocks" on this type of question? Prepare a table and map of the key areas. What are the demographics of these areas? Prepare a table of the demographics.

4. Which groups have been key to passage or defeat of similar initiatives? What were the main messages of each side? What issues did each side highlight? What issues did the press focus on? Which arguments were most successful? Why? Prepare a clipping file on messages and issues in other campaigns. Prepare a list of key persons and organizations that might serve as resource persons for your campaign.

5. What has been the history of your issue in this area? Which groups and individuals have played key roles (pro and con)? Prepare a file on each, including clippings, with address, phone number, information on past activity, links to other individuals and groups and positions and activity level on this referendum. What issues and arguments have been most typical of each group?

6. Prepare a list of all the media in the referendum area. Be sure to include community, religious, labor and organized papers and newsletters. For radio and television be sure to note all shows which might become, or already are, a forum for discussion of the issues. How fair and complete has each been in coverage of the issue in the past? What has been their editorial position? Which reporters have covered the issue in the past? Have they been fair? If not, what has been their bias, and which messages and issues have swayed them?

TARGETING LIKELY AND PERSUADABLE VOTERS



Chapter 9:
THEME AND MESSAGE

THEME AND MESSAGE

Elections are about contrasts, choices, and change. When voters are deciding whether to vote “yes” or “no” on an initiative, they want to know why they should vote a particular way. They need to be provided with a clear choice and a definite contrast. Without these, the motivation to enter a voting booth and vote for or against an initiative becomes greatly diminished. Creating a clear, concise contrast depends on your ability to develop and implement a crisp, compelling, and straightforward theme. Because your theme is the governing force behind all your communication with the public and press, it must be strategically developed and carefully implemented. The development of your theme requires research. Its implementation necessitates discipline. The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines that will assist you in this process.

THEME AND MESSAGE - THE DISTINCTION

The driving force behind any successful campaign is a clear, concise theme. It is the single, central idea underlying every aspect of campaign communication. Though some campaign professionals use the term "message" to refer to all campaign communications including the theme, this manual does not use "theme" and "message" interchangeably. They are, however, closely related and interdependent. Messages are things you talk about with the public and the press. They are ways you frame your position and agenda. To create a consistent, coherent campaign image, all messages must stem from the campaign theme. A brief definition of each follows:

- Theme - The overarching, governing rationale why people should vote for your issue/position on Election Day. It is the focal point of your campaign - a single idea that provides definition and purpose to your campaign.

- Message - A message is an extension of your theme. It is any campaign communication conveyed to the public and the press. You have an agenda you want to present. How you frame that agenda becomes your message. All messages must tie into the theme. If they do not, then they should not be used. The goal of each message is to present a clear, cohesive, and compelling image of your campaign/position to the media and the public.

Initially, the distinction between theme and message may seem a bit confusing, but characterizing their differences in terms of a car will help clarify their relationship. The car is the theme. The campaign staff is the driver. The wheels are the issues that promote and reinforce your position on the initiative. The way the wheels turn become the message/s. The car cannot move if the wheels aren't attached. And, the driver/s have to know how to drive the car. In order for the car to move forward without crashing, the wheels, the driver, and the car must all be working together. Extending the analogy, your organization's ability to move forward depends on this same type of interaction and connection. To succeed, you must have a clearly defined theme and an understanding of how, when, and where to use which messages in dealing with the press and the public.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Since your theme captures the reason/s voters should cast their ballot in your favor on Election Day, you must first have an accurate idea what those reasons are and how you can contrast your rationale with that of your opponent. The development of your campaign theme and the messages that filter out of it, then, should be done after you have completed a baseline poll and a good portion of your opposition research.

Developing and Refining Your Theme

A baseline poll will help define both your strengths and weaknesses and also those of your opponent. It allows you to test possible themes and then determine which one most resonates with voters. Opposition research helps you define your opponent and contrast your position with theirs. You can use both your polling and opposition research to help you clearly define your theme and strategize which messages will work, when they will work, and with whom they will work.

The development of your campaign theme must be done in consultation with your strategic team members. Your pollster knows the depth and breadth of the polling results. Your media consultant has to capture your theme in thirty-second commercials. Your general consultant deals with its day-to-day implementation. Your persuasion mail consultant has to craft it into a slick piece of paper. You need the input of these team members to create the most solid and compelling theme possible.

There are several key reasons why a voter connects with an issue or a candidate. When developing your theme, you need to take the following into consideration:

1) A voter connects with an issue because s/he believes that s/he shares common ground with those supporting the issue. The way the issue is presented (the messages) leads the voter to believe they share in this common ground.

2) A voter connects with an issue because s/he believes that s/he shares the same core values as those supporting the issue. S/he may not agree on every point your campaign makes, but s/he believes that there is enough commonality to imply a sense of shared values and commitment to a similar agenda, such as a desire to end discrimination for all.

3) A voter connects with an issue because s/he likes the spokesperson or high-profile figures associated with the campaign.

4) A voter feels the issue will positively impact his/her life or the life of someone s/he knows. Voters must believe the campaign speaks directly to them and people like them.

As you begin to examine how you can create a theme and series of messages that will attract voters to your issue, you should also concentrate on creating a theme that is:

1. Compelling

2. Contrasting

3. Straightforward

4. Honest

5. Concise

Knowing precisely how to create a theme that includes these elements depends upon your research. It is the only way you will know if your theme contrasts sharply enough with that of your opposition, or if it is compelling enough to move voters to your side of the issue, or if it is clear and straightforward. Since these elements are central to your theme's effectiveness, they cannot be ignored.

Once you begin to formulate your theme, you should refine it to a single paragraph. This paragraph serves as the governing rationale why voters should vote for your issue. A sample is included here.

> Enacting responsible, locally controlled growth planning makes sense for Colorado. Without it, our state will see continued, uncontrolled, unchecked growth throughout the Denver metro area. By contrast, rural communities that seek economic expansion will be developed in a haphazard manner. We are risking losing the unique way of life that we share as Coloradoans. Developers and other moneyed interests have a disproportionate voice in current planning and development processes. This initiative will restore some balance to the process and provide every community a method for ensuring responsible growth in our state.

Remember, a priority for any initiative campaign is to build coalitions. You need a theme that reaches out to people across party lines and organizational affiliations. This is key to the success of your campaign. That's why you need to carefully examine your research results and consult with your strategic team before you commit to any campaign theme. The coalition name should reflect the campaign message. Ultimately, the name is the most widely visible aspect of the project. Good examples are the “Committee against a Really Stupid Idea” and “Protect Families. Protect Choice,” both of which allude to the broader messages of the campaigns and are far more persuasive than simply the “Committee in Support of Initiative 1A.”

Implementing the Theme – Getting Out the Campaign Message

Once you have refined your campaign theme, you must then decide how you will present your case to the public. This is another crucial part of your strategic agenda. Making your case to the public means creating messages that communicate your theme. Again, any message delivered by the campaign must tie directly to the theme. If it does not or cannot, then it should not be used. Additionally, the delivery of your message/s must be both disciplined and repetitious.

Repetition is the key to effectively delivering your message. Voters don't think about politics twelve hours a day, seven days a week. In the final two weeks of a campaign they might think about politics for five minutes a day. Repeating your message is the only way to pound your agenda into their minds.

You are competing with changing world events, soft drink commercials, a host of other elections, and your opposition. Your message must grab the attention of the voter. A clear, compelling, honest, consistent and contrasting message will help you do that. If the messages that voters receive from your campaign are inconsistent, voters will remember the inconsistencies rather than the necessity to vote for your issue. Voters must be persuaded. They want to know why they should vote for your issue. It is up to you to provide them with this information.

All campaign literature, commercials, and letters must reiterate and reinforce your campaign theme. The message must be tailored to your audience. For example, the message you emphasize in a letter to members of the environmental community will differ from the message you put in a piece of literature sent to members of the business community. If you are planning a news conference, your message must have broad-based appeal because of the breadth of the audience. These differences may be subtle or they may be extreme, but they are nonetheless crucial in persuading voters to join your cause.

When you decide how, when, and where to deliver your message/s, you need to keep seven key factors in mind:

1. What you are saying about your own campaign.

2. What you are saying about your opponent.

3. What you are saying about the particular issue at hand.

4. What your opponent says about their campaign.

5. What your opponent says about your campaign.

6. What your opponent says about the particular issue at hand.

7. What the opinion leaders and media will say.

Before you send any message to the press or members of the public, no matter how supportive of your issue they may be, you must always take these factors into account. To create a clear, compelling contrast between your position and that of your opponent, you must know what your opponent says about the issue and how that fits with their agenda and your agenda. (See Appendix for "Message Box.")

Implementing your campaign theme requires discipline. Your message must further your cause and do so in a way that connects voters to your campaign. You cannot win an election with a single statement, but you can definitely lose a lot of ground with one. Because your external communications are so vital to your success or failure, the campaign manager must keep a tight reign on them.

Every campaign communication should be, cleared through the communications director and the campaign manager. Your message is too important to ignore or leave in the hands of a staff member whose primary focus is not in this area. Every time you send a message to the public, or press, whether in a television ad or through a volunteer phone bank, take the necessary steps to ensure that it reinforces the theme and helps strengthen and build your coalition.

FINAL NOTE

Your theme governs your campaign. It is your rationale, your reason for opposing/supporting the initiative. If you cannot define your reason for taking this position, voters will be even less likely to do so. Your theme and the messages that you send to the press and the public, must always work to strengthen your coalition. Analyze your research and consult with your strategic team before you commit to a theme and send your messages out to the press and public. Always remember, the implementation of a consistent, compelling, straightforward honest theme that contrasts your campaign with that of your opponent's requires discipline and repetition. Once is never enough. Say it again and again and again.

APPENDIX

MESSAGE BOX

The Message Box is a simple way to outline and organize the contrasts and parallels that the campaign should consider as it develops strategies for formulating and disseminating messages.

WHAT INITIATIVE PROPONENTS SAY ABOUT THEMSELVES	WHAT INITIATIVE OPPONENTS SAY ABOUT THEMSELVES
WHAT INITIATIVE PROPONENTS SAY ABOUT OPPONENTS	WHAT INITIATIVE OPPONENTS SAY ABOUT PROPONENTS

Chapter 10:
EARNED MEDIA

EARNED MEDIA

Campaigns live and die by their ability to communicate, both internally and externally. From press conferences to direct mail fundraising to volunteer phone banks, communication moves the campaign from one place to the next, from one set of polling numbers to another, from one constituency group to another. What to communicate, when to communicate, where to communicate, how to communicate, and with whom to communicate become key strategic and tactical questions. Correctly or incorrectly making these determinations can significantly impact Election Day results.

Central to any campaign's overall strategy and ultimate success or failure on Election Day is their earned media or free press operation. Earned media is any media coverage (no matter what the medium) your campaign receives that has not been purchased. Most campaigners prefer to use the term “earned media” because nothing in a campaign is truly free and any mention in the press is usually the result of hours of hard work, whether yours or your opponent's. A successful attempt at earned media is any proactive move on your part that increases your credibility because your agenda receives coverage in the press. This may be done through a radio show, a press conference, or a one-on-one interview with a print reporter.

The press will almost never cover the issue in the exact manner you present it, so a successful attempt means your story gets written or produced in a way that substantially presents the message you sought to communicate.

Campaigns never have enough money or enough time. Consequently, the earned media operation is expected to compliment and even supplement the paid media as well as to act and react quickly as circumstances demand. How to most effectively and efficiently accomplish this is a question that campaigns struggle with on a daily basis.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to provide guidelines for building the campaign press operation and effectively sell the campaign message to the press.

ORGANIZING THE PRESS OPERATION

The campaign press operation is responsible for one of the most difficult and important tasks of the campaign: sending a clear, concise, and consistent message to the press and, subsequently, the public. To be effective in delivering the campaign message, the operation must be organized and ready to act and react quickly. This section focuses on setting-up the press office and preparing the operation for “making a name” and “playing the game.”

Equipment

The press office is responsible for making the news *and* monitoring the news. To do both effectively and efficiently, there are some basic tools needed.

1) Tape Recorder, video recorder, and microphone. These will be used to record your news conferences, those of the opposition, and radio actualities. In selecting a tape recorder, quality is important. Some radio stations do accept actualities (taped feeds), but if the recording is fuzzy or low in volume, they will be less likely to use it. Your tape recorder

also needs to have an outlet for a telephone plug.

Television and VCR. This equipment is vital to the campaign's ability to act and react quickly. Many campaigns make the mistake of not having a television and VCR. Consequently, they have no system to track the news or the moves of their opposition. Hence, they are unable to respond in a timely and accurate manner.

Initiative campaigns, like most campaigns, must be aware of the “hot” news of the day. Failure to be on top of breaking news that affects your campaign can result in your campaign being thrown off its message and appearing disorganized to the public.

2) Actuality phone and alligator clips. An actuality (sometimes called a “feed”) is a ten to thirty second statement that is pre-recorded and then sent through a telephone line to radio stations. Each station must be individually called. (Your tape recorder must have a telephone plug in it in order for your actuality system to work.) Ask the news director if they accept actualities. If the answer is yes, send the recording over the line. When the recording ends, be sure to ask the person on the line if they received the “feed.”

   Actualities are an excellent way to get coverage statewide no matter the specific locale of the press event. Radio stations are receptive to them so long as they are newsworthy and timely. Your actuality should be sent in the same news cycle as your initial story. That is, if you hold a news conference in the morning you should send your actualities out that afternoon (unless the p.m. crews don't accept them.) If you hold an event in the afternoon, you should send the actuality out the next morning. To be effective in the a.m. drive time, you need to begin sending them between 5:30 and 6:30 a.m.

3) Fax broadcast capability. Sending faxes is tedious, time consuming, and often a daily task of the press office. Most campaigns utilize sophisticated fax software to send releases to dozens of news outlets quickly. A manual backup system using a fax machine should be developed in case your computer or modem fails. Additionally, you will want to send all releases via email, whether or not you have also faxed the release to a given news outlet.

4) Computer and modem. Each member of the communications department should have access to a reliable desktop or laptop computer and the department should have its own printer. Additionally, computers in the communications department should all be equipped with the fastest modems that the campaign can afford. Ideally, a DSL or faster hookup will be shared by various members of the campaign staff.

5) News Monitors. Though you cannot purchase your news monitors, they are a vital piece of “equipment.” Your news monitors are volunteers or supporters assigned to watch the broadcasts and listen to the radio in their area. They are responsible for videotaping and/or recording stories that run in their region. You can devise your own reporting system, but it is generally a good idea to have them call immediately after a story runs.

6) Digital Camera. The campaign should purchase the highest quality digital camera that its budget will allow. This device will allow the press department to instantly forward photos of press events to media and also allow the field department to inexpensively

chronicle the popular reach of the campaign.

7) Internet Tools. Ideally, the campaign will establish a relationship with an internet service provider or media production facility that provides access to streaming audio and video capabilities so that video and audio feeds of press events and other message vehicles can be widely distributed via the internet.

Media Lists

A well-developed media list is perhaps the most vital document in the press operation. Each press liaison will have her own method for organizing this list. However, there are some general guidelines to follow. The list should be organized by county and include all radio, print, and television outlets for that area. A list of national media should also be created. Specific items to include in your media database are:

1) Name of organization and call letters for radio and TV stations.

2) Name of assignment desk editors for television; editors for print (city/editorial/political); and news directors for radio.

3) Political reporters for each outlet (if any).

4) Telephone number (switchboard, direct, cell, pager, etc.).

5) Fax number.

6) Deadlines/news times/news drive times.

7) For radio, a column noting how each station prefers to receive feeds.

8) For print, a column noting whether they are a weekly, monthly, daily, or specialty publication.

9) Talk shows/political columns/call-in programs. Be sure to include the name of the host and producer for each talk show and call-in program. Note the names of the political/issue columnists and day/s their columns run.

10) Endorsements. Do they endorse and, if so, when? Also include a contact person for the editorial boards and/or endorsement sessions.

Press Kits

The purpose of the press kit is two-fold: 1) to provide the press with background information on the campaign and 2) to emphasize the visibility, message, and organization of the campaign. A press kit should be compiled as soon as possible after the campaign organization is functioning. Additions can be made to it as the campaign progresses.

An initiative campaign press kit might include the following:

1) A copy of the proposed initiative.

2) A statement of purpose from the campaign. This might be one or two paragraphs explaining the rationale for the campaign's support or opposition to the initiative.

3) A list of key campaign personnel. This might include paid staff as well as high-profile members of the finance committee. Before publicly disclosing the members' names, be sure to secure their permission. Also be sure to note the press contact in bold letters and a put a phone number by their name only. Failure to clearly note the press contact may leave reporters feeling they can contact anyone on your personnel list for comment and information.

4) Pertinent news clips. As a general rule, include those that support your position and reinforce the message of the campaign.

5) A list of prominent citizens and organizations in the community who publicly support the campaign. This might include constituency groups, elected officials, and celebrities. If there is a coalition of organizations supporting the campaign, be certain they are included. Again, be sure to secure everyone's permission before using their names.

6) The current press release (for kits to be handed out at press events) as well as any major releases distributed previously.

7) Any pertinent brochures that the campaign has developed.

8) If your opponent has distributed an "untruth" piece about your campaign, include it along with a fact sheet that disputes the allegations made in the piece.

Press Staff

The number of staff in a press operation can range from one to ten, depending on the nature, size, and funding of a campaign. Large operations may have a communications director, a press secretary, a deputy press secretary, and a speechwriter. An initiative campaign, however, generally will only have the resources and the need for a press secretary or communications director and, if money permits, a deputy. A communications director generally oversees the press, issues and scheduling departments.

The press liaison (whether the communications director or press secretary) is perhaps the most visible member of the campaign team. S/he is often quoted in newspapers, heard on the radio, or seen on television. Given the high profile of the position, it is important to hire a press liaison with strong oral and written communication skills. Experience with the media is always helpful, but not necessarily a requirement. Campaigns cannot always afford to hire experienced personnel and instead must opt for someone with talent, skills, and enthusiasm who does not have an extensive background in the field. That's why it is critical to request a lengthy interview and writing sample from applicants *before* hiring anyone.

The same care should be taken when and if you hire a deputy for the press operation. A deputy serves as back up for the communications director or press secretary. S/he will often write the advisories and releases and also needs strong writing skills. Similarly s/he often makes follow-up calls to the press on the day of an event. Persistence and persuasion are necessary, but arrogance and abrasiveness are not.

Because a candidate is not the “product” in an initiative campaign, people outside the paid campaign staff are often used to help deliver the campaign messages. These individuals might include your finance chair, an elected official, or a high-profile private citizen with strong name recognition in the community. When using a third party to deliver your message, be sure their profile fits the topic you are addressing. They also need to be fully briefed before they step in front of the press. Remember, they are serving as a spokesperson to further your agenda, not their own. Be sure that this individual is willing to employ your message and follow your guidelines.

The press operation, as you can see, is an integral and essential part of the campaign. The press liaison cannot assume s/he is a lone operative simply because s/he is the only member of the staff authorized to talk with the press. This must be stressed *before* hiring the press staff. The manager must have a strong, open, comfortable working relationship with the press liaison.

A press operation takes time to organize properly. The most competent individual will need time to organize lists, develop a reliable delivery system, and develop a relationship with members of the press. Don't wait until the last minute to hire a press secretary or communications director. Earned media is too vital to the campaign.

MAKING A NAME FOR THE CAMPAIGN

Success of the campaign press operation depends largely on your ability to effectively manage the inevitable clash of ideas, styles, and circumstances between your campaign, your supporters, and the press corps.

Credibility and persistence are the two fundamental elements of any earned media operation. Though seemingly different, credibility and persistence are inextricably linked; you cannot effectively have one without the other nor can you “make a name” (at least the kind of name you want) for your campaign without them. If the press does not view a campaign as credible, then coverage of that campaign will most likely be both limited and disappointing. If a campaign is not persistent in dealing with the press, then they will all too often be ignored or contacted only when the opposition initiates a story. The more credible a campaign, the more likely they will be able to control the story. That is why it is crucial for a campaign's earned media operation to take careful steps to establish its credibility with the press and to be persistent, but not overly pesky in working with the media.

Establishing credibility with the press begins the day the campaign begins and ends the day the campaign ends. Though certain members of the press may find your campaign credible in its first three months, you can be sure the opposition's research department is digging hard to find a way to derail that credibility. Never let down your guard and never assume that a reporter who writes a positive story one day will write one the next. Members of the press are generally more concerned with the status of their career than with the outcome of your particular race. Even the friendliest reporter is focused on his/her job, which is to present both sides of a story and concentrate on what makes it “news.”

There is no single blueprint for building credibility, but there are some general guidelines. Many of these guidelines are listed in the following section, but this section briefly addresses the necessity of cultivating relationships with the press corps and the crucial aspect of being knowledgeable, in building those relationships and establishing credibility.

To begin, the press liaison should cultivate relationships throughout the press corps, from assignment desk editors to political reporters to editorial board members. How to go about cultivating these relationships depends on the liaison's personal style as well as that of each press person. However, the process might involve lunch meetings, a quick cup of coffee, phone calls, up-date memos, or providing detailed and accurate information on a story about the issue. Whether that relationship begins by meeting for a cup of coffee or simply picking up the phone and talking about a story, an air of professionalism and loyalty to the campaign should always be maintained. The purpose of cultivating these relationships is to help establish credibility for the campaign so that when a press conference is held or the opposition launches its attack, members of the media treat your campaign with respect and fairness.

As press relationships begin to develop, the press liaison’s knowledge and ability to provide accurate, verifiable information will play key roles. Knowing the issue you are presenting from all angles is absolutely essential. If you give a reporter faulty information, whether an out-of-date statistic or a fabricated set of documents, it will come back to haunt you. Reporters’ reputations are on the line every time their story appears in print. If you endanger that reputation with misinformation, you will pay the price. Moreover, demonstrating to the press that your campaign is prepared, knows its issues, and has representatives who can talk about them with fluency will build and strengthen your credibility.

Knowledge *is* power, but only when you understand how, when, and where to use it. This is always a question of persistence, judgment, and instinct. Of course, the decisions made in that process will affect your credibility with -- and consequently your ability to control -- the press. The only way to get a story written the way you hope to have it written is by working closely with the reporter. Whether you choose to present the issue through a press conference, a press release, a phone call, or over lunch, you will need to push the media to cover the story - and to cover it in the way you want it covered.

Campaigns always walk a fine line between being obnoxiously pesky and credibly persistent. However, a successful earned media operation must find that balance. The guidelines in the next section cover some of the basic rules that may assist in this process. But, again, how to walk that line most effectively depends on the personal styles of the liaison and also the members of the press corps. For example, you may find that many of the regional radio stations will not accept faxes. If you continue to fax advisories and releases to them, they may completely turn away from any stories pertaining to your race. However, if you provide them with information in a manner that they can easily utilize (internet feeds, actualities, etc.), you may find they are quite receptive. There are no guarantees to achieving wide coverage, but your chances of good coverage increase as you demonstrate a willingness to meet the needs and requests of each media outlet.

Though each campaign will undoubtedly differ, there are a few things to keep in mind:

1) Message consistency is absolutely critical in all phases of the campaign, but never more so than in the press operation. Sticking to the campaign’s message throughout every communication with members of the media will make a significant difference in ensuring that your earned media efforts complement, rather than conflict with, your paid media outreach.

2) Persistence will also take on a new twist. You will not only have to be persistent in getting reporters to cover the campaign, but also in persuading them to report accurately on your issue position. Remember, just because the press asks you a question does not mean you need to answer it - at least not directly. If you stick to your issue positions and refuse to allow yourself to be drawn off track into secondary issues, the end result will likely be coverage that better meets your campaign’s needs.

Rather than allowing the press to control the agenda, it’s often possible to respond to some inquiries by spinning your answer into your message. For example, in a gay rights issue campaign, if a member of the press asks any member of the campaign team a question about his/her sexual orientation, the press person might respond: “The issue in this election is not my sexual orientation or anyone's sexual orientation. The issue is the fact that this initiative unfairly judges individuals and thereby limits their individual freedom and rights. That's wrong. A vote against initiative X will send a clear message to those who believe that equal rights are guaranteed for all Americans in our Constitution.” By making this kind of move and spinning your answer back into your message, you are not only taking control of the dialogue, but also setting the agenda for the press, the opposition, and the public.

Credibility and persistence are key to the success of any campaign's earned media operation and “making a name” for your campaign. Without them, your presence in the media becomes only what members of the press and your opposition wants it to be. With them, you have the tools to better control your message in the press (at least to some degree) and get your message out to the public. Always strive to build your own image and theme in the press, thereby defining your own campaign rather than falling victim to having others outside the campaign control the issue dialogue.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

Working with the press can be both exciting and frustrating. A great story makes for a great day at campaign headquarters. But a terrible story or an off-message quote can put the manager in a bad mood, as well as all of your supporters. All too often campaigns and reporters don't see eye to eye on the issues. You have a story that you want written and the press may have an entirely different story they want to write. In order to minimize “bad press” days and create solid, credible working relationships with the press, your earned media operation should follow some simple, basic rules.

While the suggestions offered here have been applied both in a variety of campaigns, from controversial ballot initiatives to U.S. Senate races to elections abroad, they are not set in stone, nor are they all-inclusive. Every campaign has its own style and its own unique dynamic just as every news outlet has theirs. Part of “playing the game” means knowing when to bend, break, or recreate the rules to fit those styles. What follows, then, are some basic suggestions to help you work more effectively and efficiently with the press and, hopefully, in the process, establish credibility for your campaign, your issue, and your press liaison.

Notifying the media about a press event

1) Know the reason for your press conference and why it is “NEWS.”

2) Know the campaign message. Make sure your news conference reinforces that message.

3) Target the message and the news conference to your audience. If you are trying to appeal to voters aged 18-30, chose a setting that will pique their interest.

4) The site of your press conference should reflect the message to some degree.

5) Pick up on the national angle when appropriate. Frame your story within the larger story.

6) Send the press advisory out 1 to 2 days before the event, depending upon the nature of the press you are dealing with and the sensitivity of the issue.

7) Be careful not to give away too much of the subject matter of the press conference in the press advisory. The advisory should include the date, time, and location of the event as well as one or two sentences on the basic topic to be addressed. Remember, more often than not, your opponent will receive a copy of this.

8) Call the press outlets after you send the advisory to make certain the proper person received it and made a note of it. During busy election cycles, it is easy for political press advisories to get lost in a heap. Don't forget to ask the reporters and/or assignment editors if they will be attending or sending a reporter. They probably won't give you a definitive answer, but this allows you to make an initial plug for the event.

9) Call the press outlets, especially TV stations, the morning of the event. This will allow you to push for coverage and give them more of a “hint” - if needed - about the topic for the conference.

The Press Conference

1) Make certain both the press liaison and the spokesperson/people are fully briefed on the topic *and* any "hot" news of the day. Reporters often use press conferences as a way to ask the campaign about other topics.

2) Make certain the press conference concerns a legitimate topic related to your issue. Gimmicks rarely work and they often make the campaign look foolish. Those pictures may also come back to haunt you.

3) Visual aids, such as graphs and charts, can add both emphasis and credibility. Be certain to choose visuals that are easy to read and easy to comprehend in a 30 second TV report or a small picture in the newspaper. Providing reporters with photocopies of the visual aid can also help ensure that your point is made.

4) Use rhetoric that broadens your coalition. Although you may be targeting a specific group, be certain you are not alienating other key constituencies.

5) Know the key words and phrases related to your campaign message. Create a statement that repeats and reinforces the campaign message. Be sure to include a few crucial sound bites. What do you want to see most in the headline or news lead? What do you want to see most in the article/news report? What don't you want in the story?

6) Make it easy for the press to write the kind of story you want written. Be prepared and assume the reporters will be unprepared. Know the topic. Have sufficient copies of press releases, background information, and photographs.

7) Allow time for questions, but know that you can limit that time.

8) If you do not have an answer to a question, don't fabricate one. Depending upon the question, either indicate that you don't know the answer or spin your answer in a way that taps back into your message.

9) Do not allow your spokesperson/people to "hang out" with the press. After questions have been fielded, the spokesperson should be accompanied out and any further dialogue should be directed to the press liaison.

10) Take and distribute digital photos of the event.

After The Press Conference

1) Send press releases and pictures as soon as possible to all news outlets that did not attend the press conference.

2) If you have established the capability to record digital or streaming video, place the press conference on your website and notify all reporters who were unable to attend as soon as the conference is "live" on your site.

3) Follow-up with reporters who seemed interested when you sent the advisory, but did not

to attend the conference.

4) Follow-up immediately with reporters who attended the conference and requested additional information.

5) Send feed (digital audio or actualities) to radio news departments in the drive time closest to the press event or the drive time that will give you the most airtime without throwing it into the category of "old news."

Editorial Boards

1) Request a list of the Editorial Board meeting attendees in advance of your meeting.

2) Research the bias of each of the Ed-Board members. In other words, know your audience and the arguments that will persuade or dissuade them. Recognize that certain newspapers will likely never editorially support progressive issues. Your goal in these situations should be to minimize the vehemence of the paper's opposition.

3) Prepare a packet for each member of the Ed-Board. This will most likely be a combination of the press kit described earlier and the campaign prospectus described in the chapter on fundraising.

4) Ask when a decision will be made and when or if an endorsement will be made public.

5) The campaign manager, press liaison, and possibly a community leader should attend Ed-Board meetings. If the finance chair is a person with influence in the community, s/he should also consider attending.

Op-Eds

1) Timing of op-eds is crucial. If a publication accepts your op-ed, it will only run once and, most likely, you will not have a chance to publish another. An op-ed published eight months before the election is not as helpful as one written and published eight weeks before the election.

2) Before submitting an op-ed, double-check and triple-check it for accuracy. Ask several key supporters familiar with the legal and political ramifications of the issue to review it. Have the facts on hand to use as back-up.

3) Once you publish an op-ed, be prepared for your opposition to do the same. By the same token, if the opposition has an op-ed published, you can make a case to that publication to print yours on the principle of "fairness."

4) Be selective in the signer you choose for the op-ed. It should be a high-profile individual who is well respected in the community. Moreover, it should be someone who is viewed as a "moderate" rather than a "liberal."

5) Once an op-ed is published, it should be used in the press kits and fundraising prospectus.

Letters-to-the-Editor

1) Letters-to-the-Editor provide the campaign with an excellent forum to convey its message and respond to unfair or inaccurate press stories, as well as reinforcing positive press stories. The campaign should prepare talking points for volunteers and supporters who are willing to write letters.

2) The letters should be short, to the point, and must include the name, address, and telephone number of the individual.

3) The press department should write the talking points for each letter. The volunteer coordinator and field operation should recruit the writers.

4) Letters should be sent to print publications throughout the state.

5) Coordinate letter-writing campaigns with other communications activities of the campaign, like press events or printing of an op-ed.

6) Do not allow paid staff to send in letters under their signature, unless it is cleared through the manager and noted in the letter that the individual works for the campaign. Chances of it being published are then slimmer, so it is wise to have a volunteer or supporter send it in under their signature.

Day-to-Day Press Relations

1) <u>*Never lie to a member of the press.*</u>

2) Always be prepared. You do not always have to respond within five minutes. Call and find out the deadline. You may want to have someone else respond.

3) An initiative campaign will need to recruit spokespeople for certain press events. Make sure you know exactly what the spokesperson is going to say before s/he steps in front of the press. Remember that no staff person should speak to the press under any circumstances without specific authority from the campaign manager and/or communications director. Only the campaign manager and the press secretary are authorized to speak to the press.

4) When talking to reporters, know your agenda. Be clear on your purpose and your plan before talking with reporters.

5) Never discuss any issue with a reporter without being fully briefed.

6) Know the deadlines of every major news outlet. Respect reporters' time limitations.

7) Don't be afraid to let a reporter know s/he was wrong. But before you do, make sure you are right. Have the documented proof at your fingertips and compiled in a way that allows you to quickly fax or mail it to the reporter.

8) Don't allow any member of the campaign team to field questions and/or calls from the press except the press liaison. This will allow the campaign better control of the message and the media. Reporters, however, will occasionally try to take comment from someone other than the official press spokesperson. Don't let this happen. If the press liaison is unavailable, s/he should have an alternate contact person standing by to respond to press inquiries.

9) Remember campaigns are not won with a single statement to the press, but you can definitely lose ground with one. Never step in front of the press unprepared.

10) Above all, work to ensure that any interactions with the press help your campaign, your issue, and your credibility. Always seek ways to increase your ability to control the message even though it's being translated and transported by the press.

11) Always be courteous and respectful, even when the story does not go your way. However, hold the press accountable for fairness and equal time.

FINAL NOTE

Sometimes, when all else fails, you've got to follow your best instincts when dealing with the press. Because of the human dynamic involved, there are very few predictable interactions with the media.

APPENDIX

<u>SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE</u>

CAMAPIGN LOGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT <u>SPOKESPERSON NAME</u>
12/19/07 1:14 PM <u>PHONE NUMBER</u>

<u>SUBJECT MATTER OF YOUR ISSUE</u> INITIATIVE SIGNATURES SUBMITTED TO SECRETARY OF STATE

YOUR CITY – {{Your Campaign}}, sponsors of the proposed <u>issue subject</u> initiative in <u>your state</u>, today turned in <u># of signatures</u> petition signatures to Secretary of State <u>insert SOS name</u> to have the measure placed on the November ballot. The minimum number of valid signatures required for approval is <u>minimum required #</u>.

"The fact that we were able to gather so many signatures in excess of the minimum number required strongly indicates the broad-based support across the State of <u>your state</u> for allowing <u>briefly describe what the initiative will accomplish</u>," said <u>Spokesperson Name</u>, proponent of the initiative. "This initiative will allow <u>insert one of the strong arguments for passage of the amendment as revealed in any preliminary polling</u>."

After the petition signatures are validated, the initiative will go before the voters statewide in the November general election. The initiative will <u>describe briefly what the initiative will accomplish if passed</u>. The initiative *does not* <u>anticipate the major arguments your opponents will start leveling against your campaign.</u>

The Secretary of State has thirty days in which to rule upon the validity of the petitions submitted by the group.

<u>Campaign name</u> is a <u>your city</u>-based issue committee. The group, made up <u>demonstrate that you have a broad-based coalition</u> interested in passing a <u>repeat subject matter</u> initiative will conduct the campaign to pass the initiative statewide.

###

SAMPLE PRESS ADVISORY

CAMAPIGN LOGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — CONTACT SPOKESPERSON NAME
12/19/07 1:14 PM — PHONE NUMBER

PRESS ADVISORY

YOUR ISSUE CAMPAIGN TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE PRIOR TO FILING SIGNATURES

CAMPAIGN NAME TO FILE SIGNATURES WITH SECRETARY OF STATE

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION:

Include a brief discussion of the nature of the event – give the press enough info to determine newsworthiness, but not nearly as detailed as the information in the press release.

###

Chapter 11:
VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the heart and soul of any initiative campaign. People that care passionately about an issue and are willing to sacrifice their time for the cause perform some of the most valuable work of the campaign. Volunteers lend credibility to the campaign in the eyes of the media and the voters. Nothing is more convincing than people stuffing envelopes, gathering petition signatures, handing out flyers, or getting out the vote because they believe in the issue. No one is more persuasive than an individual trying to convince you to support an issue because s/he truly believes it is the right thing to do. A good volunteer organization is well worth the time and effort it takes to build and maintain. In fact, it is a necessity for the success of your campaign.

BUILDING A VOLUNTEER BASE

Initiative campaigns succeed or fail in large part in direct relation to the success of their volunteer efforts. It is essential to recruit and maintain a strong volunteer organization. Individuals who have already expressed an interest in the issue through their support of related causes, campaigns, and organizations can serve as the foundation of your volunteer resources. While you should certainly seek to recruit volunteers who have no prior campaign experience, people with a history of political activism provide an added level of utility to your campaign.

Every person involved with the campaign should reach out to their friends, family, and other people to recruit volunteers. Traditional progressive organizations, like gay and lesbian groups, women's, civil rights, religious, labor, and professional organizations are likely sources for campaign volunteers. Community leaders and supportive elected officials may also provide additional names and contacts.

Your website should have a prominent section devoted to recruiting volunteers. Campaign literature and direct mail pieces should contain a request for volunteer support whenever possible. Community events, where a table or booth can be set up, offer another place to recruit volunteers. Advertisements in the local press or in newsletters, especially within tightly defined communities or interest groups, can be an effective recruitment tool.

Supportive organizations or individuals with large email databases may be willing to send out an appeal for volunteers on your behalf. Publications who are supportive of your issue may donate the space. Otherwise, as with any campaign expenditure, the cost-effectiveness of a recruitment advertisement must be evaluated before spending any significant amount of money. Volunteer sign up sheets or cards must be available at every campaign event. Recruitment and retention are never-ending processes.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

A good volunteer coordinator is a great asset to an issue campaign. S/he has full responsibility for the volunteer program, including the recruitment and management of the volunteers. While the coordinator is not responsible for the development of the volunteer activities, s/he should have input into their design and implementation. Other campaign staff must work with the volunteer coordinator regarding their specific needs for volunteers. The coordinator must ensure that there are enough volunteers to enable the campaign to run smoothly.

Additional responsibilities for the volunteer coordinator include:

1) Ensuring that a volunteer sign-up sheet or volunteer cards are available at every campaign event.

2) Promptly following up with any person who indicates a willingness to volunteer on the campaign.

3) Making sure that there is work for the volunteers to do. A volunteer who takes time out of his/her day to work in a campaign wants to feel needed and useful.

4) Providing a comfortable and fun working environment.

5) Giving each volunteer manageable and clear assignments that fit their capabilities.

6) Creating and maintaining a database or card file of volunteers, including names, addresses, emails, phone numbers, legislative and congressional district information, availability and any special skills or experience.

7) Providing regular progress reports to the campaign manager.

8) Training volunteers to the assigned tasks.

9) Scheduling volunteers.

10) Distributing materials to volunteers.

11) Providing light refreshments, such as drinks, pretzels, and pizza, for the volunteers. (The campaign should include this as a separate budget item.)

12) Encouraging campaign staff to acknowledge and interact with volunteers.

13) Recognizing and thanking volunteers verbally and in writing.

The volunteer coordinator must work to keep the morale of the volunteers high. S/he must be acutely aware of times when volunteer activity drops-off and move quickly to remedy the situation. There are any number of reasons a volunteer does not return to the campaign. Most can be prevented, if the volunteer coordinator follows the general guidelines listed above. The campaign has little or no control when a volunteer disappears due to outside conflicts, such as work and family. However, if a volunteer is bored with a project or feels excluded from the campaign, an interactive volunteer coordinator can sense their frustration and reassign them to another project or ask the manager to briefly talk with them about the campaign's progress. Volunteers are sacrificing their valuable time. They need to feel their investment is worth the effort.

<u>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES</u>

Door-to-door canvassing, telephone banks, envelope stuffing, literature drops, event staffing, filing and other office work are examples of jobs that can be performed well by volunteers. There are many other jobs that *could* be done by volunteers but probably should *not*, e.g. campaign bookkeeping.

Well-planned and organized volunteer activities are important to the overall success of the campaign effort. They attract more volunteers and, of course, achieve better results. Goals and guidelines for a project should be determined well in advance. This enables the campaign to recruit the number and type of volunteers needed. The volunteers needed for a press event are very different than those for a "mailing party" or telephone canvassing. The volunteer coordinator must also determine the hours during the day when volunteers will be needed. Retired persons and senior citizens are more often available during the day whereas volunteers with full-time or part-time jobs are generally available evenings and weekends.

For practical as well as political reasons, it is important to recruit a diverse group of volunteers. It is also important to vary the tasks assigned to volunteers who donate their time on a regular basis. A variety of activities will keep volunteers interested and active.

Scheduling volunteers

Designing and implementing an organized system of volunteer scheduling enables the campaign to efficiently utilize this important resource. In order to determine the scheduling needs, estimate the number of volunteer hours needed to complete a given task. Review the volunteer list to match individuals' skills with the campaign's needs. Once the date of a volunteer project has been determined, contact the volunteers. Make reminder calls to the volunteers the day before they are expected to arrive for a project.

To help you determine the number of volunteers hours needed to complete a given task, the following example of a project worksheet has been included.

VOLUNTEER PROJECT WORKSHEET

1. <u>PROJECT</u>: Voter I.D. phone calls. 100 contacts.

2. <u>DATE/TIME FRAME</u>: Must be completed within four days. September 10-14.

3. <u>LOCATION</u>: Berkley, Morgan, & Days law office. 425 S. 29th Street.

4. <u>PHONES/WORKSTATIONS AVAILABLE</u>: 10 phones.

5. <u>SHIFT LENGTH</u>: Three hours. (Any more than three hours is too much for most people.)

6. <u>HOURLY COMPLETION RATE</u>: The average volunteer can complete 14 Voter I.D. calls per hour.

7. ACTUAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: 6 callers. This figure was derived in the following manner: 14 attempts/hour X 3 hours/night = 42 calls/phone/ night. Four nights X 42 calls/phone/night = 168 calls/phone. To then determine the number of callers needed, divide the total number of Voter I.D. calls by the calls per phone. 1000 calls divided by 168 calls/phone = 6 callers. It will take 6 callers working each night to call the 3026 supporters over the four-day period.

Note: Not every voter will be reached on the first attempt. If you want to re-call even some of the people, you should double the amount actually needed.

8. NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS TO BE RECRUITED: 12 callers. It is generally safe to assume that one-half of the volunteers will not finish the project or not show up at all. Therefore, you should schedule approximately fifty percent more volunteers than you anticipate needing.

Once you determine the number of volunteers necessary to complete each project, you will then be able to prepare your weekly volunteer plan/calendar.

Volunteer Supervision

Once volunteers are recruited, they should be quickly given an assignment. The surest way to lose an enthusiastic volunteer is by failing to follow-up. The volunteer coordinator should call the recruit as soon as possible to introduce him/herself and schedule the first volunteer session. As noted, reminder calls are also useful.

When working with a new volunteer, as much consideration as possible should be given to what activities s/he expressed interest in. Immediately giving a new volunteer six hours of work on a poorly organized job they don't enjoy will ensure you probably won't see them again.

Though effectively working with volunteers becomes as much a question of style, both yours and theirs, there are some general guidelines for efficiently supervising volunteers. These include the following:

1) Thank your volunteers before they begin the project.

2) Assign volunteers specific tasks.

3) Give volunteers a time estimate for the project.

4) Make sure they have the tools to do the job.

5) Review all campaign literature with them.

6) Ask if they have any questions before they begin.

7) If transportation is needed from headquarters to a site, arrange carpools. Do your best to provide free parking for volunteers.

8) Request that all unused materials, whether literature, buttons, or pens, be returned to headquarters as soon as possible after the project has been completed. These materials are expensive and the campaign needs to get value out of every dollar spent.

9) Assure volunteers that it is not a disaster if the project was not completed. Do reinforce, however, the need to be informed of the project's status so it can then be assigned to another volunteer.

10) Thank them for all their effort and ask when they can help again.

These guidelines can help you create a system where organization and accomplishment are emphasized. Remember, volunteers should receive training for every task they undertake, unless you are certain the volunteer has no questions about the task you are assigning to him/her.

Volunteer coordinators walk a fine line between making sure the job gets done and over-supervising. It is important that people not feel micro-managed or guilty if they are unable to complete a project. At the same time, the campaign needs to manage its workflow. The volunteer coordinator should develop a standard reporting procedure for every job. Track the hours worked and jobs completed by each volunteer so their efforts can be acknowledged. This will also allow the campaign to more effectively meet its goals.

Common problems

Sometimes people are just not suited to the activities they have been assigned. However, "firing"' a volunteer should be the last resort. Assigning them a different task more appropriate to their skills is usually the best way to handle the situation.

If tasks are not being completed in a timely manner or large numbers of volunteers do not return, the volunteer program needs to be reassessed. It is often just a matter of being more appreciative of the volunteers and making them feel they are an important part of the campaign. If volunteers are dropping-off or lacking enthusiasm, remedying the problem may be as simple as asking their opinion on a project or idea, "previewing" a new television commercial before it is aired, or throwing a volunteer party. Whatever the solution, the imperative is that there must be a solution. The campaign cannot afford to lose even one volunteer.

FINAL NOTE

The campaign volunteer program is a vital element of the campaign team. All too often, it is taken for granted. Don't make this mistake. Initiative campaigns are especially dependent on others to help get the message out to voters. An enthusiastic, organized volunteer coordinator is well worth the investment. Remember, a friendly smile, an organized project, and a simple thank you can determine the success or failure of a volunteer program.

APPENDIX

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER THANK-YOU LETTER

When individuals offer to volunteer for the campaign, the volunteer coordinator should quickly respond with a short thank-you letter or email. As projects are finished, volunteers should also periodically receive a letter thanking them for their achievements. The note should be written on campaign stationery and signed by the volunteer coordinator and the campaign manager. A formal thank-you is very important to volunteers.

(date)

Dear

Thank you for your generous offer to/your valuable help on ________________________.

Victory depends on communicating our message to voters. Your dedication and energy in this effort make all the difference.

Thank you again for your help. We are looking forward to seeing you (day) at ______ AM/PM and to working with you again.

Sincerely

_________________________________ (name of volunteer coordinator)

_________________________________ (name of campaign manager)

VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP FORM

Name ____

Address ____

Cong. Dist __________________ Precinct # ______________

Daytime phone ___________________ Other Phone _________________
Fax number __________________

I WOULD LIKE TO HELP THE ___________________________ CAMPAIGN BY:

_____ Door-to-door canvassing _____ Distributing campaign literature

_____ Putting up signs ______Telephoning _____ General office work

_____ Being a driver ______Putting up yard signs _____Writing letters

_____ Word processing ______ Computer work _____ *Doing anything!!*

SKILLS: ______ Type _____ Photography

I am proficient in _____________________________________ software

Other skills or experience
____

I can work: Mondays Tuesdays Wednesdays Thursdays Fridays Saturdays Sundays between the hours of: 9AM to 1 PM
1 PM to 5PM
5PM to 9PM (circle all that apply)

ON ELECTION DAY, I CAN:

_____ Work a precinct _____ Telephone _____ Provide transportation

_____ Watch the polls _____ Baby-sit

_____ Help out wherever I am needed most

THANK YOU!

Chapter 12:
THE FIELD OPERATION

THE FIELD OPERATION

Although many of today's campaigns are media driven and rely heavily on modern technologies, like internet organizing and broadcast television, nothing can completely replace the energy and commitment produced by person-to-person campaigning. In fact surveys conducted after the ’04 presidential campaign show that the impact of paid media is significantly enhanced by personal voter contact. The primary purpose of your field operation is two-fold: 1) to build coalitions and 2) to deliver your campaign message through person-to-person communication, whether through hand-delivering a piece of literature, talking on the telephone, or knocking on a door and chatting with a voter. That's why your field operation can play such a vital role in the success or failure of your campaign.

Your field operation is the only department in the campaign whose primary focus is to talk directly to voters and build coalitions. The earned and paid media operation communicates with the public "on the air" or "in the press." The fundraising team generally deals with the "convinced" faction of voters. And the survey researchers contact a group of randomly selected voters and cannot deliver your message without skewing the survey results. But the primary activities of your field operation all necessitate frequent and personal contact with voters. Your field operation provides the human element connecting your campaign to the voters.

An aggressive field effort becomes especially important in an initiative campaign precisely because there is not a candidate whom voters repeatedly see on television, in the newspaper, or participating in a series of debates. An initiative campaign cannot hold a rally where people gather to meet-n-greet the candidate, but it can create an event where high profile public figures speak or a group of enthusiastic supporters offer their talents to promote the issue. In an initiative campaign, voters don't tell a candidate what is on their mind, they tell those they view as "in charge" of the campaign, meaning anyone from the field director to a volunteer who has been on the job for one day. Consequently, those who participate in the field operation become the campaign's eyes and ears.

Because your field operation depends on mobilizing and motivating many people to persuade and enlist even greater numbers of people to vote for your issue, it is perhaps the most labor intensive and organizationally demanding function of the campaign. Building coalitions and contacting voters one-on-one requires time, patience, and strong leadership.

THE FIELD PLAN

As with any component of the campaign, you need a plan to carry out the activities of your field operation. Your field agenda should take the overall campaign plan into consideration and attempt to further the campaign plan’s overarching strategy and goals. Since the field operation essentially employs three primary methods for direct communication with voters, each should be outlined with specific details and information. A section should also be included regarding the field operation's proposed agenda for event turnout, such as parades, local fairs, and political party activities. And, it must also propose an agenda and strategy for building coalitions. Committing the field plan to writing will help ensure that you maximize the campaign's human resources to reinforce the campaign theme and deliver your messages.

Since your field director will supervise the field operation activities, s/he should design and write the field plan in cooperation with the campaign management and communication teams. When devising the plan, your field director (who ideally has the temperament of Ghandi and the tactical capabilities of General George Patton) should answer the following questions:

1) Targets - Who will be contacted?

2) Programs - What will be done?

3) People - Who will carry out the operations?

4) Organizational Strategy - How will the program/s and participants be coordinated?

5) Budgets - What human and financial resources are available and how will they be allocated?

6) Coalitions – Who will the campaign recruit and how will they be utilized?

The field plan, like the campaign plan, must be viewed as a flexible, working document. There is no way to predict exactly what your position in the polls will be three months from the date the plan is written. Changes in the political climate will inevitably impact your activities in the field. And the very nature of field operations as a person-to-person activity leaves plenty of room for error and controversy. Your plan must take these factors into account. To help you prepare for these mitigating circumstances, your plan should do the following.

Set Realistic Goals

Set achievable goals. It is better to do two or three things well than ten things poorly. Try to set small goals instead of attempting to meet impossible ones. If the campaign has hundreds of volunteers willing to leaflet, but few willing to make telephone calls, focus the volunteers' energy on leafleting. Though you believe the most important component is a telephone bank, your campaign cannot afford to spend time and resources trying to convince volunteers to do things they do not want to do. A poor attitude generally results in a poor performance.

Set a Strategy for Building Coalitions

Develop a strategy for building coalitions. This should outline who you intend to approach and how you will convince them to join the campaign team. It might also include who will serve as the campaign representative to approach an organization or its leader.

Quantify Results

If you can't count it, it didn't happen. The campaign must design each activity in a way that facilitates quantifying the achievements. By doing this, the progress of the campaign's field operation can be assessed based on the achievement of those goals. The figures from the field operation activities will also help you target voters who support your campaign and need to be reminded to go to the polls on Election Day.

Build Timelines

Develop realistic timelines that efficiently map out the programs you want to accomplish. Most campaign projects, especially those dependent on volunteers, will take longer than anticipated.

Given your need to fully utilize every minute and every volunteer, your plan should attempt to set the most realistic timelines possible. Once you have estimated the amount of time needed to complete a given task, add an additional 20% to that figure.

For instance, if the campaign expects a door-to-door canvas in a precinct to use 3 people for 4 hours each, then you should add 20% to that figure. To determine this number, you need to first figure the number of actual staff hours required for the project. Every volunteer project requires preliminary work by campaign staff members. To calculate staff hours, you need to multiply the number of workers assigned to the task by the number of hours they will be working. This will then give you the actual number of staff hours. In this particular scenario, that means multiplying 3 people times (x) 4 hours. This gives you 12 staff hours. Now add 20% to this figure: 12 staff hours + 20% of 12 (2.4) = 14.4. This means you will actually need three (3) people for nearly 5 hours instead of the four hours initially estimated. This kind of planning ahead can save you a good deal of time and energy down the road. It is always better to have extra volunteers than too few.

Train Volunteers

Allocate adequate time and resources for training your volunteers. An untrained volunteer can cost you much more in mistakes and lost productivity than the time it takes to train him/her.

Assess the Political Barriers

Determine what internal and external battles might have to be fought to ensure the operation's success. Internal battles may be conflicts with other campaign activities and the campaign’s field program. External barriers may be conflicts with local community activities such as fairs or parades, or even a conflict among the "political players" in a specific region. (A table for identifying problem areas is included in the Appendix.)

Research the Political Traditions

Research the campaign traditions and practices within a given community. Ask the question: "How are campaigns conducted here?" Get this input before writing the plan so your agenda reflects the practices of the local community. Do not be afraid to try new methods, but be sensitive to the existing traditions.

Analyze the Demographics

Know your jurisdiction's demographic makeup. This information will help you effectively allocate campaign resources and quickly assess political situations.

Evaluate Weather Patterns

Take into account the weather when planning your activities. Extreme hot or cold temperatures can dramatically affect the success of a door-to-door operation.

Review the Geography

Look at every map available. Mountain ranges, deserts, subway lines, bus routes, highways, and rivers all impact field operations. Do not assume that geographic barriers and transportation routes do not affect political attitudes and ease of operations. A door-to-door effort in the "hilltop" portion of a city may take a great deal longer than one conducted "on the flats." It may also deter much needed volunteers from donating their time.

Create A Back-Up System

Expect the best from your volunteers, but plan for the worst. Unfortunately people make mistakes and sometimes even lie. Build a solid back-up plan for your field operation program. A few strategies to employ include:

1) Overlap responsibilities. It is fine to ask two people to do the same thing if that task is important to the campaign.

2) Do not give new volunteers more people to contact than you can afford to lose as voters. Give them a small number, somewhere between 20 and 30 names in a precinct. If they fail, your campaign did not lose too much support. If they succeed, give them more names.

3) Develop check systems and responsibility structures. Make sure every project has a built-in reporting system and a person who will accept responsibility for it.

Each person involved in your campaign can help contact voters, deliver the campaign message, and build coalitions. This makes field operations unique from other campaign programs. To be effective, however, your campaign needs to decide which method or combination of methods will maximize your resources and accomplish your goals.

TELEPHONE BANKS

Using telephones in field operations is a fast, efficient way to reach large numbers of voters in a short amount of time. The message is easily controlled and the campaign receives immediate, direct feedback. Though most members of the campaign staff spend a good portion of their time on the telephone, they are not participating in a phone bank. A phone bank is a planned activity that relies on volunteers or paid professionals for its completion, uses a variety of lists, generally last two to eight nights, and uses a written script to deliver a message to voters. Anywhere from three to fifty people might participate in a phone bank, depending upon your resources and needs. Phone banks are also flexible -- changes in targets and messages can be made quickly and easily.

Though laden with the potential for great success, phone banks do have a few drawbacks. Some voters find phone calls to be a nuisance. Volunteers are often unwilling to make phone calls. Extensive supervisory management is needed to effectively run the operation. It can be expensive if a great deal of long distance calls are made. Despite these potential negatives, phone banks are by and large an excellent way to reach voters. Telephone calls are an ideal medium for field operations for two reasons: 1) they give the campaign 10 - 15 seconds to deliver a message before the voter can respond or decide to hang up and 2) they are easily quantified. If you understand the drawbacks and work to minimize them, you can run a productive telephone operation.

Types of Telephone Calls

There are three commonly used types of telephone calls in a field operation: voter identification (I.D.), persuasion, and GOTV. Each type of call has a different objective, a separate script, and a distinct time frame. Your field operation phone banks can do fundraising phone banks, but this is generally less effective than having a professional phone bank or your finance committee completes these calls. (For more information on fundraising telephone calls, see Chapter Five.) When to use which type of call is a strategic question that often depends on your volunteer pool, access to telephones, and number of weeks or days before the election.

When you are developing your telephone canvassing operation, remember to consider follow-up procedures and the time needed to prepare them. A follow-up is a good opportunity to reinforce your campaign's theme and provide the voter with more information about your issue. The quicker the follow-up, the more effective the initial contact. Voters perceive the follow-up to a phone call as a measure of a campaign's efficiency. It gives your campaign a personal touch and an air of professionalism.

1) Voter Identification (I. D.)

There are two categories of identification calls: simple and extended.

a. Simple Calls

Simple calls are 30-second phone calls (definitely no longer than one minute). The purpose of a simple call is to gather information for follow-up mail and Election Day (GOTV) activities. The caller delivers the message and asks for voter preference on the initiative or referendum (favorable, undecided, and unfavorable). The call ends with a brief reiteration of the message.

Follow-up for simple calls usually involves sending a brochure, a personal note from the caller, or a simple thank you post card to all "undecided" and "favorable" voters. (See Appendix for sample script.)

b. Extended Calls

Extended calls have the same basic format as simple calls, but last a bit longer (between 1 to 2 minutes). The purpose of an extended call is to gather information that will be useful to a campaign's strategy. The caller begins by delivering the message and determining the voter's preference. The voter is then asked a few questions (no more than four or five) that will be useful to the campaign. The caller should end the conversation with a reiteration of the message.

The types of questions asked during this call vary considerably. However, no question should be asked that does not provide the campaign with quantified, pertinent information. Among those that can be asked are: What is your party affiliation? Do you own the home you live in? Does anyone in your household belong to a labor union? Beware of questions with answers that may change frequently, such as "Does an ill person reside in your home?" In two days, the answer may be different and will be of no use to your campaign.

Remember, an extended call is not a poll. It is a canvas to collect some basic, useful data which will help the campaign target the voter more effectively. Do not examine the results as if they were from a poll. The names were not randomly selected and the campaign is delivering its message in the process. These two factors will tend to skew any results, both positively and negatively.

Follow-up for an extended call usually includes sending a brochure, a personal note from the caller, or a simple thank you post card to all "undecided" and "favorable" voters.

2) Persuasion Calls

The purpose of a persuasion call is to persuade the voter to support a particular issue position by providing in-depth information and answering questions. These calls generally last between one to three minutes. The caller must remember to get the message across in the first fifteen seconds. It is often wise to use this type of calling in conjunction with a new media blitz, a direct mail drop, or a door-to-door canvas program. The mail drop or canvas should precede the call and provide the voter with general information about the issue.

The message is far more detailed and expansive in a persuasion call than in an I.D. call. The caller begins by delivering the designated message. The reasons for supporting your campaign's position are often outlined after this. The voter is then given an opportunity to ask questions and voice an opinion regarding the issue. The caller ends the conversation by reiterating a shortened version of the message.

Persuasion callers must be familiar with the issue. A list of responses to frequently asked questions is often prepared in advance and given to each caller for easy reference. If the caller does not know the answer to a voter's question, s/he should not attempt an answer. The question should be written down on a “Q-Sheet” (See Appendix for sample). Follow-up for persuasion calls is generally the same as the procedure for I.D. calls. However, if a question is asked, the supervisor should call the voter back and discuss it or send the voter a post card with the answers on it. Another option is to send the voter a campaign brochure or issue sheet with the pertinent information highlighted and a short note from the caller attached. Whichever method you chooses just be certain proper follow-up is conducted with all voters who ask questions during the calls.

3) GOTV Calls

The purpose of this type of call is to deliver your last minute message as frequently as possible on Election Day and to urge your supporters to vote. Ideally, these calls should be made on, or immediately before, Election Day. They should not begin any earlier than two days before the election. GOTV calls are short and generally last between thirty seconds and one minute. (See Appendix for example.)

These calls usually begin with the caller delivering the campaign's message. Then, depending upon the audience, the caller should ask if the voter has had an opportunity to vote. If the voter has not yet voted the caller may then offer baby-sitting services and/or rides to the polls. The caller should end the conversation by reiterating the message and stressing the importance of voting. Follow-up from GOTV calls is very important because the campaign may lose a vote for every instance of failed follow-up, especially if the voter requested a ride to the polls. (A volunteer telephone instruction sheet can be found in the Appendix.)

The Phone Bank Plan

A phone bank requires time, resources, and volunteers. To ensure that none of these are wasted, you should develop a phone bank plan. To initiate this process, begin by working backwards, step by step. Imagine that the phone bank has been completed. You have met your goal by completing the projected number of phone calls within the allotted time frame. Then ask yourself the question: "How did we do it?

Your plan should answer the following questions:

1) How many and what type of calls will be made?

2) How many phones do we need?

3) How many hours per phone will be available per day?

4) How many callers will be required?

5) How long will each caller be required to work each day?

6) How many wrong numbers and disconnects will there be? You may want to pre-test a list to help you estimate this number. A "pre-test" means calling a list before your phone bank begins to see how many numbers are accurate.

7) What is the anticipated length of each call?

8) How many calls per hour will need to be completed? This does not include calls with the response, "contact not at home."

Working through these questions in detail will greatly increase your productivity. A positive, productive experience will also make volunteers more likely to return. To further assist you in this process, a guideline for answering these questions has been included in the Appendix.

Telephone Bank Management

A well-managed phone bank gives a campaign quick and efficient results which can be used to assess progress and productivity. A mismanaged telephone canvassing effort can produce tainted results and even anger some voters. To help ensure you get the most out of your phone bank you should appoint a supervisor. Given the limitations of your resources, this individual will most likely be a volunteer. S/he will work closely with the volunteer coordinator or field director and be responsible for the management of the phone bank operation, acting as its personnel and administrative director.

The phone bank supervisor is *not* responsible for the phone bank program, goal setting, script writing and revision, or the overall campaign decisions based on phone bank information. S/he does have several other responsibilities, which include training volunteers, motivating and maintaining volunteers, keeping accurate records, creating manageable work assignments, and maintaining a hospitable work environment. A description of each of these follows.

1) Training.

   Volunteers must be trained before they begin calling voters on behalf of the campaign. A one-hour training and screening seminar for potential volunteers should be scheduled before the phone bank begins. If there is no time for a separate training seminar, the supervisor will have to train new volunteers as they arrive for the calling session. Have all new volunteers report one half hour before the session starts.

   All training sessions should be upbeat, organized, and include information about the campaign as a whole. Remember, your volunteers are donating their time to your campaign. They need to understand why each activity is important and how it affects the campaign's progress. Perhaps even more importantly, volunteers need to feel welcome and respected. (A list of recommendations for a phone bank training session has been included in the Appendix.)

2) Accurate Records.

   The supervisor must maintain accurate records of the performance of each individual caller and the phone bank as a whole. Every aspect of the phone bank should be tallied, beginning with voter preference (favorable, undecided, unfavorable). Every caller should report their results to the supervisor at the end of each session. The number of hours called, number of attempted calls, and the results of attempted calls for each phoner, for each session should then be tallied.

   These records are important and should be given to the campaign manager and field director at the end of each phone bank session. At the end of a campaign, if you do not know what happened, when it happened, and how much happened, then nothing happened. Remember, if you can't count it, it didn't happen. (You will find sample tally sheets for supervisors and volunteers in the Appendix.)

3) Work Environment.

   Volunteers need a pleasant, clean work environment. The supervisor should make sure all the necessary materials are readily available(e.g. pencils, scripts, and tally sheets). Refreshments, especially beverages, should also be on hand. The supervisor should establish clear guidelines as to where and when breaks should be taken during the calling period. This is not boot camp, but calling time is limited and you need to produce results as quickly and efficiently as possible.

4) Work Assignments.

The supervisor needs to make certain each caller has a clear and manageable assignment. The assignment should be tailored to each individual caller and take into account the number and type of calls to be made. Calling from home is generally less effective and efficient. However, for some volunteers it is the only way they can participate. A separate copy of the phone lists given to home callers should be kept in case they are misplaced or thrown away.

5) Volunteer Maintenance.

The phone bank supervisor should work with the volunteer coordinator to make certain volunteers are scheduled and show up for their work shifts. They also help motivate and maintain the morale of volunteers.

Volunteers can do a great deal of work, but only if they receive the proper guidance, training, and support. Consequently, both your phone bank supervisor and your volunteer calling crew must receive the appropriate attention and information before beginning the project. (For more suggestions on working with volunteers, see Chapter Ten.)

DOOR-TO-DOOR CANVASSING

Door-to-door canvassing is perhaps the most intimate form of communication on the campaign because it requires volunteers to talk face-to-face with voters. Those who participate in the canvass are frequently referred to as "walkers" because they spend their time walking from house to house, knocking on doors, and delivering the campaign message in a targeted precinct. As they stand on a voter's doorstep, a walker listens and responds to the questions and concerns of that individual. This type of operation personalizes the issue and gives voters the impression that there are "real people" behind each side of the initiative. A door-to-door canvass, however, is the most time consuming and labor intensive of all campaign operations. You cannot walk as quickly as you can dial a telephone number nor can you end a conversation as abruptly in person as you can over a telephone. But, if done properly, the rewards are well worth the effort.

A good door-to-door canvassing operation promotes a positive image of the campaign and also serves as a morale booster for supporters who often do not get to see the tangible results of their work. A poorly managed operation, on the other hand, can create chaos in the targeted areas and at headquarters. Volunteers often don't understand the importance of sticking with the campaign message and will often deviate from the script. That's why it is important to train your volunteers and review the material with them before they leave headquarters.

A canvassing operation uses the same basic format as a phone bank: find volunteers, define your targeted area, deliver your campaign's message, and quantify your results. However, a canvass is a much slower operation that takes a great deal of time and many volunteers. Keep this in mind when organizing a door-to-door operation. Here are several basic steps to help you plan and carry out your canvass.

Plan the Walk

Map out the targeted area. Determine the best walking routes and outline these for the volunteers on precinct maps. Mapping software may be helpful in this planning process. Remember to keep in mind the geography of the area, to be conscious of the predicted weather when scheduling, and to check the concentration of targeted voters. The canvassed area must be physically manageable and worthwhile for the volunteer team.

Allocate Time and Volunteers

Canvassing sessions should last no more than four hours. Each walker should contact an average of 15 homes/hour depending on the density of population in the area. This ratio can be expanded by a factor of two if the walker is only leafleting the house. When leafleting, the campaign message is only delivered once, but a larger number of homes can be reached with less personnel.

Prepare the Materials

Make sure you have all the materials needed before the day of your canvass. Here is a list of the basics:

1) Script
2) Voter List (in walking order)
3) Pens/Pencils/Notebook
4) Q Sheet (to record questions from voters and other follow-up items)
5) Follow-up Materials
6) Precinct Map
7) Campaign Brochures or Leaflets

Train the Volunteers

You should plan a one hour training session before your canvass begins. The goals of this session will parallel those for a phone bank training session. This training is crucial because it gives your volunteers time to familiarize themselves with the material and voice questions or concerns before they begin interacting with voters.

Assign Walkers

Assign walkers to targeted areas. It's always valuable to have walkers drawn from the neighborhood to be walked so that they can establish themselves as neighbors of the voters to be contacted. Let two walkers canvas a street, each taking one side. The two walkers should always be able to see one another. As a general rule, a walker should not enter into a stranger's house. This can significantly slow down the canvass and more importantly, it can endanger the volunteer.

Establish a Format for the "House Call"

The walker should knock on the door and ask for the person on the voter list. S/he should then deliver the campaign message, gather information, and ask for the voter's support. The walker should end by handing the voter a written campaign brochure or leaflet. S/he should then move on. The walker should only mark the voter list after s/he has left the door. (It is generally considered rude to mark voter lists while at someone's door.) The walker should not argue with the voter or engage in long discussions with them. It is too time-consuming.

Identify a Follow-up Procedure

Provide refreshments for your walkers at the end of a session. They can use this period to share experiences, tally results, and write follow-up notes. After a canvass, the walker should write the voter a follow-up note and thank them for their time. You can speed this process by preparing thank you cards and address labels ahead of time that can be personalized by the canvassers. This will help promote a positive image for the campaign. Above all, make sure your walkers are comfortable with the material and feel safe in the neighborhood they are entering. Knocking on a stranger's door can be intimidating and even frightening. Preparation will help ease some of the tension and also assist you in controlling the messages that circulate during the day.

GOTV ACTIVITIES

GOTV (Get-Out-The-Vote) is a program that focuses on getting your voters to the polls. It is generally devised early in a campaign and carried out in its most visible form on Election Day. As such, it is an essential part of a successful campaign and should not be pieced together in the frenzied last two weeks of a campaign.

Even though the discussions here focus on “Election Day” activities, you should be aware that increasing trends toward vote-by-mail are changing the time frame applicable to GOTV activities. Oregon, for example, now conducts all of its statewide elections exclusively through the mail with ballots “dropping” approximately three weeks prior to Election Day. Keep vote-by-mail and early vote situations in mind when tailoring a GOTV program for your specific campaign.

Before you map out the strategy for your GOTV effort, check with your state election board or someone familiar with your state's election laws. Many states and cities have different laws and restrictions concerning GOTV operations. You need to know the legal limitations before you set an agenda. Once you know the rules, you can move forward with your planning process.

The Fundamentals

A successful GOTV operation is based on three fundamental elements: theme, organization, and coalitions. A brief description of the role of each follows.

1) Theme

   From the first day of your campaign, you must develop and refine a clear, concise theme that will motivate your voters to go to the polls on Election Day. If your theme does not fulfill this goal, all the phone banking, walking, sound trucks, websites and paraphernalia will be worthless. Voters must be given a reason to vote or they will not vote. It is necessary, to have all of your communications devices from your yard signs, to your bumper stickers, to your website reinforce the same message as the tag-line used in your paid media.

2) Organization

GOTV operational and organizational structures are based on a pyramid. The purpose is to contact supporters on Election Day in the precincts where they live. The ideal goal is to have four campaign workers for every one thousand voters on Election Day.

Depending upon your campaign resources and size, decide whether it is feasible or necessary to hire a separate GOTV coordinator. At the beginning of the campaign, you need to identify your political jurisdiction coordinators in each county, city, ward, township, or legislative district. As the campaign develops, you need to identify individuals who will coordinate smaller geographic units in each political jurisdiction. Finally, near the end of your campaign, you need to identify individuals who will coordinate the smallest breakdown of geographic areas: the voting district or precinct. A strong organization at this level will give you greater ability to carry out effective GOTV activities.

The effectiveness of GOTV operations is directly related to the number of people who report to a coordinator. Overloading your coordinators will result in a lack of responsibility and little, if any, control. Your campaign should have no more than ten people report to a GOTV coordinator, especially if that coordinator is a volunteer.

3) Constituency

Coalitions are based on the ideological affinity of voters. This is a peer-to-peer network operation. Progressive organizations in the coalition must at all levels aggressively motivate their members to turnout and vote. Sympathetic interest groups, not directly part of the coalition effort, must also be encouraged to get their members to the polls.

Each individual organizational coordinator should be in charge of organizing no more than ten groups to motivate their members. Again, an overloaded coordinator will not be able to monitor the organizations' efforts effectively.

Occasionally the work of your geographic organization will overlap with the work of your coalition members and organizers. This overlapping is healthy because it generally means that both parts of the organization are doing their jobs. Under this scenario, voters can receive as many as four phone calls on Election Day all supporting the same GOTV message. Since repetition and urgency are keys to a successful GOTV operation, this is a valuable outcome. The four possibilities arise if the following exist:

1) They live in the target geographic area.

2) They belong to a coalition member organization or affiliate.

3) They are a member of a sympathetic organization.

4) They gave money to the campaign.

You should never worry about calling a voter too many times on Election Day. There has never been a documented case of a potential voter staying home from the polls because s/he received too many GOTV phone calls. If anything, you will most likely be worrying about not making enough phone calls.

The success of your GOTV effort does depend on the existence of a consistent, compelling theme that can be delivered by a strong geographic organization and broad based coalitions. Without a theme, voters have no reason to vote with you. Without an organization, you have no way to mobilize voters. Without coalitions, you have no way to appeal to a wide range of voters. Together, these elements can and do make a difference in your Election Day activities.

Targeting and Identifying "Your" Voters

This part of your GOTV operation and targeting efforts answers the question: "Who are we turning out to vote?" No matter how civic-minded you may be, your goal is not to get *everybody* to go to the polls. Your goal is to get your supporters to the polls. To do this, you must accurately identify your voters. The targeting that you do throughout the campaign will help you in this process, but there are three basic forms of voter identification used in GOTV operations. (For more information on targeting, see Chapter Seven.)

2) Individual identification

The results of your phone bank and door-to-door canvassing can be used to identify specific voters who support "your" side. These voters are known as "identified supporters." They should receive a call reminding them to vote.

3) Geographic/Demographic Identification

There will be some geographic areas where volunteers should call everyone and remind them to vote, such as a precinct with a large gay and lesbian population in a state facing a gay rights initiative. Any place you believe you will receive a two-to-one favorable/unfavorable response, should be targeted for identification calls. (A two-to-one favorable/unfavorable ratio means that for every two votes you get, your opposition gets only one.) In campaign lingo, this type of voter identification is known as a "Blanket Pull." Your volunteers should contact the entire group as part of your GOTV operations.

There may also be a specific demographic group that your campaign's polling has shown as being especially supportive of your issue (e.g. 18-30 year-old females). Volunteers should then call all voters within the targeted demographic groups in your political jurisdiction and remind them to vote. Whatever the geographic and demographic breakout of your support, you need to work these areas into your GOTV program.

4) Constituency Identification

Your GOTV coordinators need to make certain that the constituency groups supporting your issue are calling their members and urging them to vote. This can be a powerful force behind getting large numbers of voters to the polls. It is more effective to have members call other members than to have volunteers unaffiliated with the constituency groups call their members.

Election Day

GOTV efforts are most visible on Election Day, unless the election is conducted solely with mail ballots. There are two primary goals for your Election Day GOTV activities: 1) to create visibility and 2) to turn out *your* voters.

5) Creating visibility

Election Day is the most important time to remind your voters both orally and visually about the election. You can use yard signs, street corner sign-waves, leafleting crews, sound trucks and newspaper advertising to achieve this goal. Remember to use your targeting research. You do not want to place a sound truck in a location where support for the opposition is strong. Leafleting at polling places can be very effective (make certain that you are complying with all laws and regulations concerning electioneering at or near polling places). In one post-election survey for an initiative campaign, five percent of all voters claimed they made their decisions at the polling site. Last minute information and visibility can make a big difference.

6) Turning out your voters

This refers to the process of making sure the voters who support your campaign go to the polls and vote. There are a number of ways to assure that this goal is met.

a. Obtain a list of supporters for every precinct in the political jurisdiction. This can be a list of "identified supporters” or an entire list of registered voters in a given area for a "Blanket Pull." Ideally, these lists will be alphabetical and have phone numbers.

b. In many states, you can go to the polls in each precinct and obtain a list of every voter in the precinct who has already voted. You can check to see if your supporters have already voted. Volunteers can call the ones that have not voted and remind them to vote. The key to this strategy is to determine who has already voted so all campaign resources can be devoted to those supporters who have not yet gone to the polls.

c. Voter lists can also help you target geographic areas that have light turnout and those that have heavy turnout so you can send your resources where they are needed the most.

d. Before Election Day, you should have a count of the number of registered and active voters in every precinct in your jurisdiction. At noon on Election Day, you should obtain a count of the number of voters who have actually voted. This strategy will also help you allocate your resources effectively.

e. You have a number of resources available to help you motivate your supporters to go to the polls and vote. These include calls from phone banks, offers of rides to the polling places, babysitting services, and door-to-door “flying” squads (not every voter has a listed phone number and these "flying squads" will get people out to the polls).

f. Have an election lawyer at your headquarters throughout the day on Election Day. Legal problems often arise. Having an election lawyer on hand will help you respond quickly and accurately to any problems concerning election laws.

Your Election Day effort must be highly targeted and well staffed. Volunteers are the key to any campaign's GOTV effort. Remember, you need four workers for every one thousand voters. You will always be able to utilize phone bankers, poll checkers, poll leafleters, drivers, and flying squads. Make recruiting efforts a priority throughout the election to ensure success on Election Day.

PRE-ELECTION DAY FIELD ACTIVITIES

There are a few campaign activities that directly affect your GOTV effort, but must be done before Election Day. These activities do not necessarily fall into the four primary categories of field operations discussed throughout this chapter, but they do play an important role in your grassroots effort. A brief description of each has been included here.

1) Voter Registration

    Many progressive causes have benefited at the ballot box through strong voter registration efforts. To use a sports analogy, it is difficult to win even when all your players are healthy. But when half the team cannot play, winning becomes even more difficult. Learn the voter registration laws in your state and move quickly to develop and implement a plan to register your voters. Make sure that you keep records of each voter you register (unless prohibited by law) and attempt to get contact information beyond the basic information contained on the registration form – especially phone numbers and email addresses.

2) Earned Media Through Field Operations

    More and more campaigns are relying on their field operations to create press opportunities by holding local press conferences, obtaining endorsements, and bringing issues to the local community's attention. Competition for coverage in the free press is fierce. Your field operation should look for ways to attract community and local press and then coordinate that effort with your communications team. This will help increase the visibility of your issue and also demonstrate to voters that your campaign is responsive to local needs.

3) Yard Signs

    Yard signs may not win a significant number of votes, but they can increase your visibility and pique the interest of those in the community. Make sure the campaign slogan is included on your signs as well as whether people should vote "yes" or "no" on Initiative X. Yard signs should be easily read in a second or less – most people will see them while driving in cars. Signs cluttered with too much information are a waste of campaign resources. Include your URL on the signs so voters know where to turn for more information. The use of devices like yard signs is decreasing rapidly in the internet age and with the advent of entirely paid media-driven initiative campaigns. As with all campaign tools, perform a cost/benefit analysis to determine whether to employ any campaign device and if so, the amount to expend on that budget item.

4) Internet Organizing. Please see chapter 13.

These activities can make a difference on Election Day. Your campaign needs to build coalitions and encourage your supporters to get involved *and* vote on Election Day. These steps can help you in this process.

FINAL NOTE

A campaign's field operation is an enormous source of activity and tension. It is the grassroots arm of the campaign and must respond quickly and effectively to changing events, issues, opposition charges, and even controversies within factions of the campaign. If you develop a detailed, goal-oriented plan and carefully implement it, your grassroots team will succeed. Above all, remember that a successful field operation requires a strong organization, a solid base of volunteers, and numerous coalitions.

APPENDIX

What really works in campaigns?

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The basic goal of a campaign is to get more people to vote for your side than for the other side. Each campaign goes about reaching this goal in a variety of ways, but which ones really work? Although everyone asks this question, the answers are not very clear. Everything on a winning campaign can be seen as the key to success, while everything on a losing campaign may have been the wrong move. Experience is a valuable guide, but a discussion with any two campaign veterans will quickly reveal as much disagreement as consensus about what works. In order to figure out what really works – and how well – we need more rigorous evaluation. In order to get more rigorous evaluation, we turn to experiments.

In 1999, Professors Donald Green and Alan Gerber of the Political Science Department at Yale University published the first experiment on voter mobilization techniques in decades. This experiment was conducted in the real world in the context of a real campaign (the New Haven, CT mayor's race). In the subsequent years, Green and Gerber and a cadre of Yale graduate students (most of whom are now Professors elsewhere) continue to conduct an array of experiments evaluating voter mobilization. (Disclosure: I am among those former graduate students, although I returned to being a campaign consultant rather than becoming a professor). At the risk of depriving my friends and colleagues of the credit they deserve for each of these experiments, I will only present a summary of the collective findings. There are some limitations to the experiments conducted by academics, but these experiments provide the most robust answers available to practioners about what really works in campaigns.

What Experiments Say About What Works

The best known finding from these campaign experiments is that canvassing is the most effective means of mobilizing voters. Some observers give the experiments at least part of the credit for the resurgence of grassroots campaigning in the last several election cycles. Over a number of experiments on canvassing, conducted in different locations and different elections, door-to-door knock-and-talk canvassing produces an average increase in voter turnout of about 7 percentage points. In their book, Green and Gerber (<u>Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout</u>, 2004) estimate this means each additional vote turned out costs $18.67.

A recent experiment in the 2005 statewide election to "reform" Colorado's Taxpayer Bill of Rights discovered a close contender to canvassing. A single mail piece with a tear-off absentee ballot request postcard increased voter turnout by 4.8 percentage points among members of environmental groups. The cost of each additional vote was only $15.65. Although this is only a single experiment, it suggests great promise for mobilizing voters in states with no-excuse absentee voting. (Disclosure: I directed this experiment as the Executive Director of Colorado Conservation Voters Education Fund).

Phone banks are the second major tool used for mobilizing voters. Experiments using both non-partisan and partisan appeals have found that volunteer phone banks increase voter turnout by around 3 percentage points. The important word here is “volunteer.” Commercial phone banks which seek to make calls as quickly as possible have shown no effect in several experiments. Robo calls also have shown zero effect in voter mobilization experiments. The good news is that when a commercial phone bank is asked to behave like a volunteer phone bank – looser, longer script, allowing chattiness with the respondents, etc. – it can have effects on par with volunteer phone banks. Conversely, volunteer phone banks may lose their effectiveness when they take a boiler room approach. Apparently the personal touch in phone contact is critical to successful mobilization.

Although it is cheap and easy, mass emails (even with permission to contact the recipients) have not shown any ability to mobilize voters in several experiments. There may be hope for more sophisticated forms of email communication, but they have not been evaluated. One intriguing possibility is using email to send absentee ballot request forms. For the moment, the best advice on emails is caution. Like robo calls, the use of technology allows sending emails at a very low cost, but if it has no effect then it is money wasted even if its cheap!

The academic research on persuasion effects is much more limited because of the difficulty of measuring persuasion and the difficulty of getting campaigns to allow academic researchers to interfere in their persuasion efforts. (The mobilization experiments can be conducted independently of a campaign, but persuasion experiments require cooperation of a campaign). The limited evidence is not sufficient to draw conclusions with the confidence we have for voter mobilization. One experiment on a local race shows that volunteer phone banks and canvassing by the candidate have some effect on vote choice and recalling information about the candidate. Another experiment in a gubernatorial primary found that commercial phone banks had no statistically significant effect. While these findings fit with the more extensive research on voter mobilization, more experiments are certainly needed to determine how to best persuade voters. For those concerned with the increasingly bitter partisan atmosphere, a noteworthy experiment in the 2004 presidential election found no difference in persuasiveness between positive and negative messages delivered by volunteer phone banks for voters between 18 and 35. Nor was there any difference in turnout between those receiving positive and negative messages.

Television is a very difficult media to study experimentally because it is difficult to assign voters to treatment and control groups. An experiment that randomly assigned cable television markets found that non-partisan GOTV public service announcements increased turnout by 0.7 percentage points. Despite the small effect, the magnitude of the audience reached makes this a cost effective voter mobilization strategy.

Radio is a similarly difficult media to study experimentally, but one experiment has been done by randomly assigning radio public service announcements to cities with mayoral races. The PSAs encouraged people to vote and included the names of the major candidates. The experiment found increased turnout and increased vote share for the non-incumbent candidate. The increased vote share of non-incumbents may come from more of their voters turning out or from some persuasive effect of name recognition.

Answering Critics & Admitting Limitations

Some campaign practioners have criticized these experiments (usually those displeased with the outcome), so a brief description of the methodology is important. The key element of these experiments is that within the universe targeted for mobilization, each individual or household is randomly assigned to either the treatment group or the control group. The control group does not receive any of the mail, phone calls, canvassing, or emails that are being evaluated. Since the assignment is random, the composition of the treatment and control groups should be statistically identical in every other way. This equivalency between the treatment and control groups includes receiving other campaign communications not under the control of the researcher. The experiments measure only the marginal effect of the treatment, given everything else that is going on. Therefore the validity of the experiments is not undermined by anything (or everything) else going on in the campaign.

More relevant critiques can be found in whether these experiments can be extrapolated to other settings. Almost all of these experiments took place in the context of relatively low turnout elections, so the effect of voter mobilization efforts may be stronger in these elections than in higher turnout elections (presidential years, contested congressional or statewide elections, etc). Despite the possibility that effects could be lower in high turnout elections, the relative effectiveness is unlikely to change: canvassing and absentee recruitment should remain the most effective, volunteer (or volunteer-like) phone banks next, while techniques like email or robo calls are less likely to have any effect.

Perhaps the largest problem for practioners in relying on academic experiments is the lack of messaging and targeting. Almost all of these experiments are paid for with funding that precludes any promotion of ballot measures or candidates or targeting on any “partisan” basis. Thus the message in the voter mobilization appeals have generally emphasized the civic duty to vote rather than appealing to voters’ interest in a ballot measure or candidate. Most practioners believe that proper messaging would increase the effectiveness of all voter mobilization techniques. Similarly, the results are based on talking to all voters[1] so it seems likely that greater effects would be found if the right voters were targeted with the right message. It is possible that a good message and proper targeting could help some of the weaker techniques (e.g. phone banks) catch up to canvassing, but it seems more likely that message and targeting would lift all boats to a similar degree.

Given these limitations, there is a strong need for the progressive community to engage in its own experimental evaluations. We need to know what works (and what doesn’t) so we can deploy our resources in the most effective manner. This is especially important for ballot measures where we have the same issues in state after state, election after election. Lessons learned through rigorous evaluation – more than just anecdotal experience – can help make progressive ballot measures a more effective national movement.

Note: For more details on campaign experiments, see Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber, Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout, 2004 and Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber, editors, *The Science of Voter Mobilization: a special edition of The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 2005.

[1] In most cases, “all voters” refers to everyone registered. Sometimes this is narrowed by demographic characteristics: most commonly voters under 30, but also by gender and ethnicity. A few experiments include all voters who are members of an organization (e.g. environmental group members).

SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT - SIMPLE I.D. CALL

This phone script serves as an example of the type of dialogue you might consider using in a simple I.D. telephone call. You may find the words change slightly, but the length should not increase significantly.

Hello, is (name of voter) ______________ at home? This is __________________. I'm calling on behalf of the ______________________ campaign. Do you have a minute? I'd like to talk to you about our campaign.

We think it is important for every individual to have the same freedom and equal rights. That's why we are working hard to defeat/pass ____________________.

Can we count on your support on Election Day?

- IF YES: That's great! Thank you very much for your support, and for taking the time to talk to me. Would you like a sign for your window? (MARK LIST AND TALLY SHEET “FAV” -- IF YES TO SIGN, MARK “SIGN”.)

  Would you like to volunteer or make a contribution?

  (IF YES TO EITHER, MARK LIST AND TALLY SHEET “VOLUNTEER,” “CONTRIBUTE.” TELL THEM THE CAMPAIGN WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH THEM IN A FEW DAYS.)

- IF UNDECIDED: Well, it's an important issue, and I hope you will consider ____________________. (INSERT SHORT PLUG FOR CAUSE HERE). Thank you for talking to me. Goodbye.

  (MARK LIST AND TALLY SHEET “UNDECIDED”)

- IF NO: Well, thank you for taking the time to talk to me.

  (MARK LIST AND TALLY SHEET “UNFAV”)

SAMPLE INSTRUCTION FOR GOTV PHONING

The following is a sample of an instruction sheet that could be given to volunteers making GOTV phone calls.

The sole purpose of the GOTV operation is to encourage your voters to get to the polls. You will remind them to vote, know where their voting place is should they not know, and offer to help them with driving, baby sitting or whatever they may need in order to get to the polls.

These are the materials you will need before you begin:

1. A pen or pencil.

2. A script that you have read a couple of times.

3. A phone list of supporters from which to call and on which you will record responses.

4. A list of polling places, a precinct map, and a street map so that if voters do not know where to vote you can give them correct information.

5. An Assistance Sheet to write down name, address, number and type of assistance this voter will need in order to get to the polls. Give these names immediately to the field director or your supervisor. If you are calling from your home, be sure to call headquarters with this information.

6. A question sheet to jot down a note if someone asks a question you don't feel comfortable answering. Give these to the field director or supervisor.

Here's What To Do:

1. Call only those voters on the list. They should all be supporters. At this point it is too late to try to persuade voters to our side.

2. Ask to speak to the individual listed. If he or she is not there, simply say thank you and make a note of it beside the number.

3. If the line is busy, make a notation so you can call back later and move on to the next number.

4. If you get an answering machine, say: "Hi this is (your name) and I am calling for the (name of campaign organization). The election is going to be close today, and we need your vote to win. Please remember to cast your ballot before (time) at (polling place). Thank you."

5. Make your callbacks. If you have time, also call back numbers that were answered by machine or were busy.

6. Avoid long conversations. You need to reach as many of your supporters as possible.

7. If the voter mentions s/he will go to the polls, ask when and mark down the time. If it is possible you can call these supporters back to be sure they really did get to the polls.

8. If a voter needs a ride or a baby sitter, or some other type of assistance getting to the polls, be sure you make a note of it and give the name, number and address to your immediate supervisor as soon as possible so arrangements can be made.

9. Keep legible and accurate records of your work! The campaign needs to know how many voters were called, how many contacts (actual voters) were completed, how many were not at home, how many call backs were completed, how many reminders were completed, how much assistance was needed, etc.!

THANK YOU

<u>SAMPLE GOTV PHONE SCRIPT</u>

Hello, is (<u>Read name on list</u>) at home today? Hello (<u>Name on list</u>), this is (<u>Your name</u>) and I am calling from (<u>Name of campaign organization</u>). The election today is going to be very close and we are really counting on your vote to win. Have you been to the polls today?

If Yes: Great! Thanks for your time and your vote! And, if you can, remind other supporters you see today to get to the polls!

If No: Well, it will be close and we really need you to vote. Are you planning on voting today? What time? Ok. Thank You for your time. Now don't forget to vote!

Do you need any kind of assistance? (driving, watching the kids for a moment, etc.). Thank you for your time. Now don't forget to vote! (Fill out assistance slip and give to supervisor or call the headquarters with the information.)

<u>SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS TO CALLERS</u>

One of the biggest reasons volunteer phone banks do not succeed is because the volunteers do not receive enough instruction. It is important to provide them with instructions during their training session and in writing. A written set of instructions can be placed at their side while they are making calls. This will save the supervisor time as well as the caller. The following is a sample instruction sheet for phone bank volunteers.

Welcome to the (<u>Title of Campaign</u>). The purpose of the calls you will be making is to identify our supporters and urge them to vote for or against (<u>campaign initiative</u>) on (<u>election date</u>). We greatly appreciate you lending your time and want to make you feel as comfortable as possible. Please do not hesitate to ask your supervisor any questions you may have.

YOU should have at your station:

- the script you will be using
- the list of voters you will attempt to contact
- a tally sheet to record your calls
- a question sheet to note questions you can't answer
- pen or pencil

Calling Instructions:

1) Follow the prepared message exactly; it is prepared especially for our purposes. Nevertheless, the call should be a conversation, not a recording. Please practice the message until it sounds natural to you. Remember you are a personal representative of (<u>campaign name</u>) and we want to be as polite and convincing as possible.

   You may be the only direct contact the voter you call has with the campaign. Always be friendly, pleasant and courteous. Our aim is to present the campaign in a positive light and win votes.

2) When you make a contact, always be sure to give your name and to address the voter you have called by name: "Hello, Mr./Mrs./Ms.?

3) Familiarize yourself with the list of voters you will be calling. It may be helpful to use a ruler or piece of paper to read straight across the list.

4) When you dial a number, one of several things will occur. You need to mark the occurrence (contact, disconnect, busy, not at home, etc.) on the list you are calling from and on the tally sheet. Be sure you know how to do this before you start your call and remember to record responses during or after each call.

5) The following responses are possible:

   a. Disconnected - A recorded message will tell you the number you have called is not in service or that the number has been changed. Draw a line through the number on the calling list and mark the tally sheet under "DISCONNECT."

b. Busy or No Answer or Answering Machine - Always allow 5 rings. If nobody answers, if the line is busy or if a machine answers, circle the number on the call list and put a small 1 (for first attempt) beside the number. Your supervisor will give you precise directions for callbacks but usually you will try these numbers at least once more during the calling session. Mark the tally sheet under “BUSY/NO ANSWER.”

c. Favorable - the voter indicates s/he is voting with us. Put a check mark on the calling list to show the contact was made. Mark the tally sheet under “FAV.”

d. Unfavorable - The voter indicates that s/he is unfavorable to the campaign. Put a check beside the name on the calling list, again to show the contact was made. Mark the tally sheet under "UNFAV."

e. Undecided - the voter indicates s/he is undecided. Again, check the calling list to show the contact was made and mark the tally sheet under "UNDECIDED."

At the end of each session tally the responses.

SAMPLE QUESTION SHEET

The purpose of this sheet is to provide your callers with a method of recording voter questions. All too often campaigns do not respond to inquiries made during phone banks. Consequently, they lose votes. You can help avoid this problem by providing each volunteer with a Q-sheet and showing them how to use it.

If anyone has a question that you can't answer or has a specific request, fill out this form and return it to your supervisor.

LAST NAME: ___________________________________

FIRST NAME: ___________________________________

ADDRESS: ______________________________________

PHONE NUMBER: _______________________________

QUESTION: (brief summation of what the question is about)
____
____

For Office Use:

Call returned by: _____________________________
Date: _______________________________________

COMMENTS: ____

PHONE BANK TRAINING SESSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Phone bank participants talk directly with the voters. Because their activities leave a lasting impression on a potential supporter, it is important that they fully understand the assignment and the responsibilities it entails. This list offers suggestions for your phone bank training session.

1) Listen to each caller read from the script.

2) Make sure the caller's telephone voice is pleasant and can engage people.

3) Make sure the caller's tone is friendly and assertive, but not aggressive or combative.

4) Make sure the caller is able to read the script accurately.

5) Make sure the caller is able to follow the recording procedure and can fill out each form correctly and efficiently.

Written and verbal instructions should be provided regarding the following:

1) Coding % of various types of calls on tally sheets and phone lists. Types of calls include a busy signal, no answer, contact not at home, wrong number, answering machine, and completed call.

2) Responding to questions from voters.

3) Sending donation cards or follow up leaflets (if applicable).

4) Recording and tabulating hourly and nightly progress.

5) Dealing with hostile voters including individuals on "Do Not Call" lists.

6) Focusing talkative voters attention on the questionnaire.

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING A PHONE BANK PLAN

The following are some helpful hints to keep in mind when devising your phone bank plan.

1) Ideally, there should be a minimum of three phones available at any time during the phone bank. The maximum number of phones depends on cost, space, and available supervisors. If you have supporters who own realty office, legal firms or brokerages, you may want to ask them to volunteer their location for evening phone banks as these types of enterprises tend to have multiple phone units and multiple phone lines in pleasant offices. Make sure that you accurately report the in-kind donation of the space if required to do so by election reporting laws.

2) Each supervisor should be responsible for eight to ten callers. No supervisor should ever be responsible for more than 20 callers at one time.

3) Nighttime calling is generally more organizationally efficient than daytime phone banking. However, daytime calling can be an efficient use of volunteers who cannot call at night. When totaling the results, add the number of daytime hours to the nighttime hours to get the total phone/hours.

4) Some evenings will yield better results than others for your phone operation. Friday nights should be avoided because people are generally not home. Saturday nights and Sunday mornings, however, work well. Be aware of local customs when scheduling phone bank operations – NEVER call in Denver during a Denver Broncos football game, for example.

5) The number of callers needed depends on the required number of calls, the length of each call, and the time frame for your phone bank.

6) Try to have at least two callers working per session. The companionship will make your operation more efficient and effective.

7) A volunteer session should last no longer than four hours. Three hours is perhaps the most manageable time frame for volunteers. The session should include two ten-minute breaks.

8) Callers that only participate for one hour can be counterproductive. It takes too much time to recruit, train, and support a caller who cannot participate for more than sixty minutes.

9) Keep track of wrong numbers and disconnects. In rural areas, this rate should be approximately 10%. In urban areas, it will be closer to 20%.

10) Keep track of all completed calls, including those who refuse to answer the questions. The required number of calls per hour will differ based on script length. Here are some guidelines to help you determine your goals for completed calls.

    Simple call -- 15-18 completed calls per hour

Persuasion call -- 12-14 completed calls per hour

GOTV call -- 20-24 completed calls per hour

Chapter 13:
PAID MEDIA

PAID MEDIA

The process of communicating with large numbers of voters has changed significantly over the years. Multi-million dollar media buys airing multiple ads have replaced whistle stops and meet-n-greets. Though earned media efforts and field operations still perform vital functions in today's campaigns, most modern initiative campaigns depend on advertising to get their message out to the voters. Producing ads is costly and airing them even more so. As described in more detail in the chapter on budgeting, a campaign will generally spend between sixty and seventy percent (60 - 70%) of its resources on advertising, primarily television, radio, or persuasion mail (and, to a lesser extent, print advertising). The campaign needs to make every dollar count. All too often campaigns air commercials or run print ads that are visually appealing, but fail the "message test" of reinforcing the theme or persuading voters.

To be effective, your paid media campaign must be coordinated with your overall strategy and theme. Your message must be repeated numerous times to be internalized by voters. Paid media must also strengthen and build your coalition, not divide it from within. Every move the campaign makes, whether on the air or in print, should be designed with these objectives in mind. Otherwise, it will spend tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars and persuade very few voters. Given this significant financial investment, it is important to learn how to effectively and efficiently use paid media, whether utilizing cable television, persuasion mail, network television, radio, or in some rare cases.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Deciding which type(s) of advertising to use, when to use it/them, and how to use it/them depends upon the budget and the overall dynamic of the race. Some races use only persuasion mail and radio while others dominate the television airwaves. Depending upon the campaign's resources and the political climate, it may opt for persuasion mail over radio or it may choose television over print. Before making these decisions, however , there should first exist a concrete, written campaign plan. Once that plan has been formulated and a theme has been selected, the campaign can then begin mapping out the strategy for its paid media campaign.

The Written Plan

As with the written plans for other components of the campaign, like fundraising and communications, your paid media strategy should be a collaborative process. Its drafting should include significant input from the following:

1) The Management Team (Campaign Manager, Deputy Campaign Manager, General Consultant);

2) The Media Consultant;

3) The Pollster;

4) The Persuasion Mail Consultant;

5) The Communications Director; and,

6) The Fundraising Director.

The media consultant should take responsibility for writing the document, but the pollster, campaign manager, persuasion mail consultant, and general consultant should all play major roles in the process. Essentially, all of the strategic consultants should be involved.

It will also be valuable to consult with the fundraising director on budgetary questions, although not necessarily on strategic ones. Additionally, if the campaign's field director is involved in calculating vote totals, turnout, and targeting, s/he could make a significant contribution to mapping the media strategy. Because the communications director will be coordinating the paid and earned media campaigns as well as directing the research efforts, s/he should be included in discussions on timelines and research.

It is always possible to solicit the input of others in this process (e.g. the fiancé chair), but always bear in mind that paid media campaign decisions are highly strategic. The fewer people who know about details of the plan, the less chance the opposition will discover them.

The written plan should include timelines and costs for every type of media you are planning to use: production expenses, media buys, print ad placement, and persuasion mail expenses. It should also outline the strategy for each advertisement. How many 60-second radio commercials will be produced? How many 30-second television ads will be produced? How many pieces of persuasion mail will be sent? These types of questions need to be answered in this type of planning document.

As with all pieces of the larger campaign plan, the media plan should be looked on as a flexible document. The political and financial dynamic of the campaign changes, so too will its paid media program. Be sure that the media team understands and can adapt to the volatile nature of campaigns. As a practical matter, the persuasion mail consultant should produce a separate plan for the direct mail program that is coordinated with the earned and broadcast media programs.

Types of Media

There are four primary types of paid advertising: television, radio, print, and persuasion mail (online advertising, like banner ads, are to date rarely used in campaigns and their efficiency in untested - as such, discussion of this type of advertising is omitted). As noted above, which type or types you choose to employ in your campaign will largely depend on the political climate and your financial resources. The general consultant, pollster, and media consultant can help determine the best media mix. Again, always be sure that all paid media reinforces and repeats the campaign theme.

1) Television and radio commercials are the most common form of paid media. They enable the campaign to reach a large number of voters with a consistent, controlled message. Television and radio, though costly, are generally viewed as more cost-effective than print advertising precisely because they do reach more voters. Cable-TV has become an effective tool for some campaigns because it reaches a broad audience and does not cost as much as network television.

   People can watch or listen to an ad on television or radio without really thinking about it. They may hear the message, take it in to some degree, but rarely focus their complete attention upon it. Repetition of these ads is therefore crucial to convey the message to voters. A one-time run of a television spot does little, or nothing, to promote the campaign. Generally speaking, broadcast ads must be repeated a sufficient number of times to yield 10 – 12 repetitions per viewer per ad.

2) Print advertisements are generally less effective because they reach a smaller audience. However, they can be a valuable tool for campaigns that have an isolated audience that must be reached, such as active members of the gay and lesbian community. In such an instance, advertising in gay and lesbian newspapers allows the campaign to present a highly targeted message to a select audience. Note: There is increasing evidence that newspaper advertisements are viewed with greater credibility than direct mail pieces. This is particularly true in rural areas.

3) Depending upon the particular media market(s) involved, radio advertisements can be one of the most cost-effective and efficient types of paid media. Production costs are lower for radio than for television and purchasing airtime is often significantly cheaper. The media consultant will be able to provide guidance as to whether specific targets can be effectively reached via radio in your state.

4) Direct mail should be visually attractive, persuasive and sparse on words. A direct mail piece is not an Op-Ed. Very few people read an entire piece of political mail (except political junkies who already know which way they are going to vote). The visual images, then, should reflect the message of the piece. This will allow the recipients to

get a sense of the campaign's position without reading the entire piece. Remember always, the average "life" of a piece of political mail is the time it takes the recipient to walk from their mailbox to the nearest trash bin. Make sure that the message in each mail piece can be impressed upon your audience in such a brief time period.

5) Direct mail is only effective if appropriately and carefully targeted to a specific audience. There is no point in spending thousands of dollars to send literature to individuals who have been identified as solidly supporting the opposition. The campaign needs to appeal to the undecided voters - they should be the target of any direct mail campaign. Direct mail may be a crucial component of campaigns in areas with expensive media markets where costs of other media outweigh the potential to reach a slightly broader audience.

6) Paid media, whether television commercials or a direct mail piece, can help with fundraising efforts. The campaign can ask people for donations and indicate that funds raised will be used to help buy airtime or pay production and mailing costs for persuasion mail. Contributors like to know their dollars are being used on something tangible. Ask contributors to "adopt" an ad; tell them how much a single prime-time news airing of the spot will cost and ask them to contribute the cost of doing so. Show tapes of campaign commercials to potential donors to pique their interest. If the campaign is trying to get a donation from an organization, it may want to federal express a copy of the most recent ad to the organization along with a request for a donation. Once the paid media campaign begins, the fundraising operation should prepare to re-solicit donors and contact those who indicated they would sit on the sidelines until Election Day was closer.

7) If resources are limited, which is likely, choose one type of paid media and dominate it. Media messages should never be sent out to air before they are viewed by test audiences and the effect of the piece is gauged. To be effective, paid media messages must be repeated numerous times. A television commercial must air more than once - in fact, it probably should run dozens of times to reach the number of repetitions per viewer necessary for the message to be fully appreciated by the audience. A print ad will not reach a broad audience if it appears only once in one or two publications. And one piece of direct mail may pique a voter's interest, but it generally will not hold their interest until Election Day. Decide which medium suits the campaign's purposes and stick with it.

Determining the Media Approach

As the campaign develops your paid media strategy, it will also need to examine how it plans to use message advertising to persuade voters to vote on the correct side of the issue on Election Day. Do voters understand the issue? Is it necessary to first explain the proposed initiative? Does the campaign need to attack its opposition? Does it need to highlight one part of the issue more than the other? Should there be a high-profile spokesperson talking about the issue? Who are the best messengers? If opposing the initiative, what are the most compelling reasons to vote against it? Answering these types of questions will help determine the style of the ads to create as well as when and how to place them in front of the public. Polling data will play a central role in this process. A good baseline poll should provide sophisticated targeting data so the media team can determine the best avenues to reach persuadable voters. The general consultant, pollster, and media team can then assist the campaign management in analyzing the data and deciding the style(s) and type(s) of advertisements that will be the most effective.

Advertisements for initiative campaigns differ slightly from those in candidate-oriented ones precisely because they lack a candidate. There is no need to worry about building the name identification of a candidate, but the campaign does need to focus on familiarizing voters with the initiative itself. Each message should be crafted to educate and persuade the target audience, not to satisfy the desires of members of the "base" community. There are four basic ways to go about building a strong case in a paid media campaign:

1) Defining the Position - Explain the initiative and provide several concrete reasons why it should be passed or defeated. Supporters can also help define the issue. If the campaign demonstrates that it has a broad-based coalition of support that includes influential advocacy groups, it can add credibility to the campaign and also define the campaign as something other than traditionally liberal, left-leaning politics. Remember, it is necessary to build coalitions and reach as many people as possible. Use earned media to help accomplish this by defining both sides of the issue in the way that appeals to persuadable voters.

2) Defining the Opposition - Allows the campaign to define (although not necessarily attack) its opposition and its supporters. The structure of this type of ad will depend upon whether the campaign has already run a commercial defining its position. If it has, then it may not need to offer as much explanation on the initiative itself. If not, then it will most likely need to define both the campaign's position on the issue as well as the opponents' position. By defining opponents before they have the opportunity to define themselves, your campaign can place them in a reactive position, thereby minimizing their opportunities for effective, proactive messaging. Realize that this can become a problem for your campaign, as well, if you allow the opponents to raise significantly more money thereby allowing them to hit the airwaves or mailboxes before your campaign's budget allows a paid media program to begin. Whenever possible, set the agenda in the race.

3) Responding to a Negative Attack - Answering an untruthful or damaging advertisement. When you respond to an attack, you are essentially on the defensive. However, in a well-crafted ad, you can also hit back. Sometimes it works to combine the two, but it is a tricky combination. You may need to respond to the attack in one spot and then attack your opposition in another. You don't always need to respond to a negative attack, especially in an initiative campaign. Some negative messages are short-lived. Go fast and hard with a consistent message that demonstrates the breadth and strength of your coalition. Sometimes you will need to coordinate your response with an earned media effort. This becomes a question of assessing the political climate and whether the attack ad has damaged your campaign's credibility and validity with your target audiences.

4) Attacking the Opposition - Hit the opposition where it hurts. It is generally advisable to define each campaign's position on the initiative before beginning a hard-hitting campaign. Voters are willing to listen to both sides of the issues, but negative campaigns can turn them off. Negative advertisements must be factual, verifiable and truthful. It is usually important to avoid appearing to attack individuals in an issue race – stick to attacking the opponents' issue positions.

There are many variations of political advertisements. It may, for instance, be extremely effective to have a high-profile figure respond to a negative attack. Or, the campaign may find it necessary to expose the funding sources for the opposition. Whatever style is used, make sure it is consistent with the campaign theme and conveys a strong and compelling message in favor of the campaign. Paid media provides an opportunity to control the agenda.

CHOOSING THE PAID MEDIA TEAM

Just as good survey research requires a trained, skilled professional, so too does effective advertising. Since commercials and persuasion mail will often be the campaign's only contact with a voter, they must reinforce campaign themes and provide voters with a reason to support its position. While there will be campaign friends or supporters who have dabbled in videography and are willing to donate their time, they likely lack the experience, the professional touch, and the political expertise to produce compelling and impactful political ads. Professional help is necessary to craft your message into an effective advertising campaign.

Political media professionals can be found at both the national and local level. Regardless of whether you choose a firm based in-state or in the nation's capitol, it is almost always advisable to hire someone who has experience in political advertising. Though many mainstream advertising agencies produce great commercials for sporting goods and soft drink companies, they may not have an understanding of or interest in politics. A good paid media producer knows the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent as well as the political leanings of those you are trying to reach.

An effective media campaign is also time sensitive. Each political media campaign has a firm deadline: Election Day. Most corporate advertising does not. A corporation can take months, even years to define its image and promote its product. An initiative campaign, on the other hand, may have only two or three weeks to "sell its product" to the public. If a commercial isn't getting the type of response the campaign anticipated, it must respond quickly. The ad must be taken out of rotation and replaced with a new one. If the opposition strikes out with a negative attack, your campaign must be prepared to respond within twenty-four hours. This requires the complete attention of the media team. They must be able to dedicate the time to the race when the situation demands it.

Political advertisements will be competing with those of corporate advertisers like Nike and Pepsi for viewers'/voters' attention. However, a campaign budget for production costs will be significantly lower than those of corporate advertisers. Hire a firm that wants to be part of the campaign team and understands both its time and financial constraints. This is not to suggest that a "non-political" firm could not produce quality ads for the campaign. Rather, the campaign team must carefully screen those vying to produce its commercials. Ask questions, watch demo-tapes, and review client lists. Discuss time constraints, fees, and production costs before signing a contract. Ensure that the campaign's limited resources will be used to produce a quality product.

Unlike candidate ads, which broadcast television stations must air at a low "political" rate, issue ads are typically charged the highest advertising rates, known as "top-of-the-card" rates. In many media markets, this means that a single prime-time airing of one of an issue campaign ad can cost tens of thousands of dollars. Because of the high expense in airing the ads, it's very important to ask potential media consultants how they handle buying (whether in-house using staff buyers, or through sub-contractors) and how they intend to maximize the reach of your overall media buy.

Fees for media and persuasion mail consultants vary from firm to firm, depending upon the firm's size, experience and location. Most political media consultants with experience in major races charge a retainer fee of $25,000 to $75,000 for the course of the campaign. This fee is usually paid in installments and covers consulting services, such as preparing the media plan, script production, on-site time, and daily phone conversations. It generally does not include travel, long distance phone charges, and federal express bills. Media consultants will also request a 12-15% commission on the media buy and coverage of their production costs. Production costs generally include travel for the consultants and camera crew, film, editing, duplicate tapes, music, and announcer fees.

Some persuasion mail consultants will also request a retainer. Others prefer to work on a piece-by-piece budget. If a retainer is requested, it usually ranges between $7,500 and $25,000 for the campaign. This fee usually includes consulting services as well as creative advice, but it does not include production costs, travel expenses, long distance and federal express charges, or mailing fees. Clarify how much each piece of persuasion mail will cost the campaign on top of other consulting fees charged by the persuasion mail consultant. Also, don't forget to check on mailing costs and timelines for dropping the mail piece at the post office. Make sure the campaign accounts for this in your persuasion mail budget.

Whether hiring a media and/or persuasion mail consultant, be sure to clarify the terms of the contract before signing. Failing to clarify all fees and expenses to be paid by the campaign prior to beginning the contract can result in serious budgetary problems in the critical final weeks of the campaign. Terms not negotiated fully prior to signing a contract can lead to major budgetary problems and conflicts later in the race.

FINAL NOTE

Paid media can mean the difference between success and failure on Election Day. All too often the only opportunity voters have to connect with a campaign's position is through 30-second television spots. Don't leave this crucial contact in inexperienced hands. Hire a media team with experience and a commitment to your campaign and its needs.

Chapter 14:
THE INTERNET AND INITIATIVE CAMPAIGNS

Overview

On Valentine's Day in February 2005, Rafiq Hariri, the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, was assassinated by a car-bomb, along with scores of his aides and bystanders who were close by. There was rampant speculation that the attack was at least partially started by the government of Syria. Hariri's death became the catalyst of a popular uprising in Lebanon that Westerners now generally refer to as the "Cedar Revolution" (with Lebanese often referring to it as Independence '05). In a nutshell, a popular uprising against Syrian interference (some might say total control) of Lebanon began after his death. This culminated a few months later in generally free elections where many, although not all elements of Syrian occupation of Lebanon, dating to their civil war in the late 1980s, were excised.

In late March 2005, during the mass protests, EchoDitto was asked to help bring an online presence to the protestors against Syrian interference and for more democracy. Through an American charitable non-profit with ties to some of the student leaders organizing the revolt, EchoDitto provided assistance to the students involved in the protests, setting up a website (http://www.pulseoffreedom05.org) and helping provide these students with an online voice. The project was successful—we were able to set up computers with an internet connection in the student camp in downtown Beirut (Martyr's Square, to be precise), cobbling together old generators, a jury-rigged internet connection, and rented desktop machines. We helped the students set up their website, providing them training on the web publishing software, and provided them with digital still and video cameras to document some of the violence that ensued. The website and the movement gained a bit of media attention, being highlighted on CNN's "Inside the Blog" and other traditional media publications, and was a success. We also explored using mobile technology (i.e., cellular phones) to help organize demonstrations and to help raise money.

In the following pages, we will discuss some of the basics to building an online community of interested, involved, vibrant individuals who are ready and able to volunteer, give money to your cause, and to spread the word. What we took away from our experience in Beirut is that the internet and internet-based technologies have an important role to play in any grassroots initiative to achieve positive progressive social change. This document summarizes EchoDitto's recommendations for using the internet to build and maintain support for your initiative, relying on your knowledge on the ground to take our general guidance and provide specific tactics and techniques. You will find a step-by-step process to obtaining online success. You should use it as a reference for growing an online community and leveraging it to achieve initiative goals.

Some broad keys to a successful online presence are:

- Ensure that you have a technical infrastructure that's easy for people in your organization to publish to the website regularly
- Make the message clear and repeat it
- Set concrete goals
- Empower your supporters by making them part of the initiative
- Keep your site current, fresh and attention-grabbing
- Use each action as a stepping stone to the next action

By working now to establish a strong online presence, you will be able to capitalize on increasing media coverage in order to build, engage, and organize activists online and on the ground as well as to build a successful online fundraising effort.

Checklist for an Online Initiative:

- ❑ Staffing on your initiative (preferably at least 20 hours committed per week) with web management experience (e.g., a webmaster or web producer).

- ❑ Technical infrastructure in place (e.g., web publishing software, website design, bulk email capability, etc.).

- ❑ Research initiative/event and develop creative action with accessible language and clear goal.

- ❑ Define the goals of the online initiative (involvement, monetary, etc.).

- ❑ Research other partnership and advertising opportunities.

- ❑ Research online organizing opportunities, such as bloggers and interest groups.

- ❑ Create email for the list asking them to participate in the initiative.

- ❑ Develop any accompanying web and blog content.

- ❑ Create action on initiative website.

- ❑ Launch initiative and send email to list.

- ❑ Continue promoting action via paid/earned media, online organizing, etc.

Technical Infrastructure

The technical infrastructure is among the most important tools at your disposal because, in addition to enabling you to update your website and capture information, the database or CRM (Constituent/client/customer Relationship Management system) tracks your supporters' engagement with the initiative in terms of fundraising or volunteer activity.

Goals

Overall, you should encourage first-time website visitors to leave their email address and provide return visitors and supporters with the opportunity to take more significant and timely actions (online or locally) that support the initiative's objectives at the moment.

As you consider updates to the website during the course of the initiative, think about the potential audiences for the initiative website: how they got there, what information they will be looking for, and what actions you want to drive them to. The internet's advantage over most traditional mediums is that the internet allows you to capture information from potential supporters immediately. Take advantage of this by providing many clear opportunities for visitors to take action, sign up, or otherwise join the initiative community.

Available tools

At a minimum, the tools you obtain for managing your website should do all of the following core functions:

- Be able to update website content quickly without advanced technical expertise via a Content Management System (CMS)
- Capture email addresses from visitors and manage their contact information
- Send emails to your supporters (including subsets thereof) and track responses
- Raise money online
- Launch online initiatives and engagement activities (petitions, events, etc.)
- Foster the growth of a self-organized event program

The following chart distinguishes some of the currently available tools by their key factors. Tool sets and available technology are constantly evolving, so this list is not all-inclusive. Use this chart as a guide, and take time to fully evaluate any web-tool in which you invest.

Tool	Summary	+ PROS +	– CONS –
Essembly.com Evite.com Meetup.com Upcoming.org	These are “hosted” organizing tools, which means your members will visit a separate website from yours to organize and sign up for their events. Some are not necessarily designed for membership-based event organizing, but they can easily be used for that purpose.	These tools are free and easy for first-time organizers to use. They require no technical expertise to set up, and anyone can start an event. (Note: There is a small fee to start a Meetup group, but you can provide leaders with coupons to waive this fee.)	With these third-party tools, you relinquish some level of control over your events. It can be difficult or impossible for a central administrator to collect or view RSVP data. It’s also challenging to visually modify these tools to “brand” them with your organization.
EchoDitto Democracy in Action Drupal.org Party2Win	These systems allow you to create and customize your own event-management tool and integrate the event tool with your website and database. (Party2Win offers similar customization options but remains separate from your website.)	These tools give administrators a great deal of control over how events are set up, what information is collected, and how the tool is branded. You control the data, except with Party2Win.	Drupal is free, but requires some technical expertise to set up and maintain. Democracy in Action is less technically challenging, but it is a paid service.
Blue State Digital Convio Kintera	These technology firms sell higher-priced suites of tools. You pay these companies to work with you to install the system on your organization’s website.	These advanced toolsets give event administrators a full menu of options that can be administered by non-technical staff. These tools are generally integrated into your website and a CRM system allowing you to track participation.	Many of these tools can only be purchased when “bundled” with an entire website package. All tend to be fairly expensive. If the tool is not precisely what you want, making changes can also be prohibitively expensive.

In addition, depending on the extent of your initiative, you should consider tools that enable you to integrate voter contact activities into your online supporter engagement program. There are several tools currently that will enable you to manage a decentralized group of volunteers interaction with your voterfile.

Supplementary tools

In addition to the tools that enable you and your grassroots leaders to organize and manage events, you may want to take advantage of additional tools that can help you and your leaders stay connected and informed.

- FreeConferenceCall.com :: Easily setup conference calls for your grassroots leaders, useful for providing last minute updates prior to the event day, reinforcing key items related to the day of action, enabling collaboration between leaders in different locations, and for training new leaders

- Yahoo, Google Groups :: Set-up an email listserv for your grassroots leaders to enable self-organized collaboration, and so that you can listen and respond to feedback and ideas being discussed.

- SurveyMonkey.com (inexpensive), PHPsurveyor (requires technical skill) :: If your event tool does not already have a built-in feedback or polling system, use these tools to collect feedback from both your grassroots leaders and also from any known participants. If you request feedback from both your leaders and the participants, ensure that your participant survey is shorter and easier to complete than the leader survey.

Engagement Strategies

Engaging your supporters online should never mean giving them "busywork." Every action you ask your supporters to take should contribute towards a concrete initiative goal. The more closely the internet strategy team is integrated with other aspects of the initiative team, the easier it will be to plan effective and engaging actions.

Goals

The best way to build a sustained online supporter base is to engage supporters through community action and discussion until they feel invested enough to contribute monetarily.
Set clear and achievable benchmark goals to gain and sustain supporter interest in the initiative. Supporters—including volunteers and donors—are more likely to take action when they feel invested in a well-defined movement and can see their work or contributions translate into measurable successes (follow-up feedback emails are critical).

Recommended strategies

There are four primary ways to drive traffic to your website and recruit new supporters online. *Each of these strategies will work best when used to support a specific action or activity*, like the engagement activities outlined in the next section.

Earned media

Earned media is among the top drivers of web traffic. Conversely, successful online efforts can also generate media attention, which further drives web traffic. Your communications and internet staffs should work together to create an online component for existing media events (speeches, appearances, etc.), as well as look for opportunities to bring media attention to noteworthy online initiatives.

- ❑ Ensure that your initiative spokespeople, staff, and surrogates mention your website domain name (e.g., www.yourgrassrootsinitiative.info) during all public appearances and especially on television.
- ❑ Every press release should include the URL of the initiative website.
- ❑ Online actions can be used to generate earned media, especially when they culminate in offline action (such as a petition delivery stunt). See "Engagement Strategies" for more on this tactic.
- ❑ Consider potential earned media opportunities for especially successful or creative online actions.

Partnerships

"Partnerships" usually consist of an allied organization agreeing to send an email about a initiative action to its own membership list. Unlike "list-swapping," which involves selling or trading email lists, partner emails ensure that individuals hear about you from a trusted source. In any partnership arrangement, only the people who opt into the initiative email list by taking an action or signing up will receive further emails. Partnerships can be one of the fastest, most effective ways to grow your list.

- National organizations like Democracy for America, MoveOn.org, children's health organizations, and women's rights organizations will often be willing to send an email to members of their list who live in their state. Partners will rarely send a fundraising email, but will often agree to ask their members to take a particularly urgent action on a shared issue.

Always take time to think of potential partners when creating an action and reach out to them early.

- Local organizations in your area often have smaller lists, but their members are often active, committed, and can become some of your most dependable volunteers.

Online Outreach and Organizing

At a basic level, online organizing is no different than offline organizing. Successful online organizing means reaching out to potential supporters (especially influential ones) and engaging in conversation with them about why they should support you initiative.

- Bloggers: There are dozens of active bloggers in every region covering everything from sports to national news to local issues. As we discussed, these bloggers can provide a rich resource for the initiative. By actively engaging these bloggers on an individual and personal level, you will cement relationships and demonstrate an active sense of participation in the blogosphere. These online influentials can play a key role in driving traffic to your website during critical moments.
- Local grassroots organizations: By identifying these groups and reaching out to them early on, the initiative will lay the groundwork needed to build grassroots volunteer support as the election nears.

Paid Media

Paid online advertising is dramatically less expensive than traditional TV or print advertising. Most importantly, online advertising gives you a concrete return on your investment: when done right, online advertisement can spur list growth and attract new supporters. When making decisions about types of online ads, you'll want to consider their "click-through" rate, which is the percentage of people who view the ad that actually click on the ad.

- Google AdWords: With Google AdWords, you can purchase keywords or phrases associated with the initiative. You can set the maximum amount of money you want to pay per click and per day, and then Google will display your ad only as many times as it takes to get to the limit you've set. You can plan to run a successful Google AdWords initiative for approximately $50 to $150 per month.

  The major advantages to Google AdWords: (1) Cost efficiency – you only pay per click instead of by the total number of impressions; (2) Regionalization — Google AdWords can also be targeted by state or even zip code.
- "Top-shelf" online ads: The most expensive ads are those which appear on high-traffic sites like Yahoo!, NYTimes.com, or other portals. In our experience, these ad buys are simply not worth the money for most initiatives. They can be prohibitively expensive, and the click-through rates are generally too low to justify the high cost—especially for statewide races. Local and regional online advertising, however, on major ad networks is rapidly becoming a promising option that you should consider for the next major ad buy.
- Blogads: Blogads are a cost-effective way of distributing the initiative's message to an audience that is both influential and familiar with taking online action. Here are some tips for successful blogads:
  - Blogads with the highest click-through rate are focused on a specific action rather than on "increasing awareness." More people will click if they know exactly the action they are expected to take, as opposed to a general "find out more" link.

- o By using a blogad distribution ad service such as Blogads.com, you can save time by buying ads on many blogs at once—or even entire categories of blogs.

- Co-registration: Co-registration is an arrangement through which you pay a group or service to send your action on to their members. Care2 (http://www.care2.com) here in the United States is among the most popular, successful, and cost-efficient service of this kind. It can be a guaranteed way of growing your list, but it's important to carefully integrate those new activists into the online initiative through a series of planned "welcome" emails that are separate from the master email calendar.

Offline Data Capture

The single most effective offline data capture strategy is to ensure that every single person who attends any initiative event is given the opportunity to sign-up for the email list. Other offline email growth strategies like tabling and clip-boarding are great volunteer activities which can supplement your online recruitment strategies, but they are often very time and energy intensive.

Timeline

You should develop a timeline, intended to provide you with a sense of how to integrate the internet with broader initiative milestones and objectives. An example timeline is provided below that you can use as your model. You should also plan to adjust and tweak this plan weekly in order to keep it in sync with your evolving initiative priorities, the changing political landscape, and the fast-moving nature of the internet.

Online Operations Plan for April, May, and June 2006

Date	Milestone/Goal	Message	Implementation Plan
MONTH DAY	Q1 DEADLINE *Action = Fundraising initiative*	Republicans have noticed how strong we are; we must build Rapid Response Fund by April 20 deadline	❑ Date: First of 3 fundraising emails ❑ Date: Thanks to you, we did it! (include photo of fundraising report, celebration, something concrete if possible)
	REPORTING DEADLINE *Action = Recruitment and list-building*	If we all invite 5 others to join us, we'll double our supporter list in order to secure the primary	❑ Tech: SETUP tell-a-friend page ❑ April 25: Email to list – Ten for Ted to win ❑ May 1: Air America Email (meet Ted / join us) ❑ Blog – daily countdown to the primary
	VICTORY *Action = Celebration online*	Thanks to your hard work, we won	❑ Blog post ❑ Email to entire list ❑ Homepage headline and buttons

Note: Copy for each of the emails listed above should, ideally, be finalized by COB on the previous night so that they can be launched before noon on the scheduled day.

The remaining pages in this section outline some of the tools at your disposal and the ways in which they can be useful to you as you integrate them into a initiative plan. These include petitions, tell-a-friend initiatives, user-generated initiatives, and real-world actions organized online.

Petitions

Petitions are the lifeblood of many online organizations, and we believe that they can serve as great list-building activities for the initiative when used appropriately. Simple online actions that require little commitment from the visitor, they can also be stepping-stones to further action or even earned media. Some questions to consider when starting a petition:

- To whom is the petition addressed? While most are aimed at elected officials, sometimes “non-traditional” targets like organization leaders or business leaders can also be effective.
- How will the petition make a difference? If your target is relatively small/local/unusual, the simple act of sending the petition might cause the target to react. If the target is larger (federal elected official, multi-national corporation) it will likely not be noticed. In that case, consider making the petition an opportunity for earned media by staging a delivery (see below) or otherwise publicizing it.
- How will you deliver the petition? While it may seem obvious, it’s important to actually deliver the petition to the intended target. Often the delivery can be an opportunity for earned media.
- How can people personalize their signatures? Consider asking singers to contribute comments or messages along with their signatures. These quotes can provide great content for future emails, as well as increasing the engagement level of sinners.
- How will you communicate success, failure and process to sinners? By following up with your sinners and communicating the successes of the petition to them, you’ll keep your supporters engaged and show them that you’re serious about taking real action.

EXAMPLES

These petitions clearly outline why you should sign, how they will make a difference, and how they will be delivered.

- Open Letter to AOL: http://DearAOL.com
- Stop Political Corruption: http://political.moveon.org/stopcorruption/

This does not:

- Democratic Declaration of Honest Leadership: http://www.dccc.org/ho

Tell-a-friend initiatives

The list of supporters you already have is perhaps your greatest resource for list building. Give your supporters incentives and reasons to spread the word about your initiative, and you’ll grow your list through the most effective way possible: person-to-person networking.

Some ideas:

- Ask supporters to forward relevant news articles, editorials, or videos on to at least 5 others.
- Ask supporters to reach out to particular groups: parents, teachers, under-25 voters, etc. in conjunction with a related initiative effort, news item, or action.

Creative/user-generated initiatives

Creative initiatives offer online visitors the opportunity to participate in the initiative by submitting their own content—photos, videos, or writing. They can be contests or part of a larger initiative that will end in a media event or paid advertising. Be creative!

These initiatives are good for growing the list, for earned media, and for further engaging your existing supporters in meaningful activities. Some examples:

- Ask supporters to submit photos of themselves or of something they see.

    - Planned Parenthood asked supporters to submit a photo of themselves with a message to Target asking them to fill birth control prescriptions: http://www.saveroe.com/targetphotosubmit
    - Thousands of people have submitted photos of themselves giving the finger to Hummer SUV's at: http://www.fuh2.com/

- Ask supporters to submit text for a newspaper ad, radio ad, etc.
    - MoveOn.org pioneered this strategy when it asked members to create a "Bush in 30 seconds" TV ad, which it then aired during the 2004 presidential election cycle.
    - The Firefox open-source web browser asked people to donate to the project's development and in return, donors would have their names published in a two-page *New York Times* spread. Read more at: http://www.mozilla.org/press/mozilla-2004-12-15.html

Recruiting Online Supporters

Apply the tactics

Your implementation plan and organizing skills are equally as important as your technology to the success of your program. Your volunteer organizers and grassroots leaders are the heart and soul of your program, and so the tactics you employ to grow, sustain, and lead these supporters are critical to your success. After all, you and your staff cannot possibly attend each and every event yourself to ensure their effectiveness.

Grow and recruit your base of grassroots leaders

In most cases, you will constantly be working to recruit additional leaders to grow the size of your program or to simply meet your goals. The best place to start looking for potential organizers is from within your known universe of supporters:

1. Build a list of your initiative most active supporters. You can define "most active" by whatever variables or data points are available to you, but you are looking for people who have consistently gone the "extra mile". Depending on the size and experience of your initiative, "most active" can be defined by a wide range of variables, from a group of people who responded to an email to those people who attended an event or contributed money.

   Don't forget to include friends and family and personal contacts of fellow staffers or the initiative's leadership.

2. Sort this list by geography (state, county, district, etc.) or by whatever criteria you are using to recruit more hosts. This will help you prioritize your outreach efforts by focusing on the areas where you most need volunteer organizers.

3. Send casual, individual, and compelling email messages to the members of each geographic group, explaining the importance of establishing a presence in that area to meet the goals that your members share with the initiative. The purpose of this message is to simply gauge interest and solicit a reply, so be careful not to overwhelm your recipients with too much information. Convey energy and enthusiasm! If you do not receive enough responses to your email, consider calling through the list of supporters.

4. Follow up by phone with those who replied to your initial recruiting email. Remind them of how much support and guidance you will be providing them along the way and how they will part of a regional/state-wide/national/international network of local, volunteer organizers at the forefront of this program.

5. Encourage local groups to incorporate recruiting into their agendas. At the end of each house party, meetup, or event, encourage your hosts to identify others who would be willing to host events in their area.

Cultivate your volunteer organizers and leadership base through…

Regular communication

Communicate regularly with your grassroots leaders and organizers in order to support their work. You should assume that the personal investment of time and energy that these organizers are making is equivalent to the financial contributions of a high-dollar donor—acknowledge this investment through regular "insider" updates and frequent expressions of appreciation.

Respect local autonomy while providing leadership and direction
Remember that your grassroots leaders signed-up to organize an event because they support your cause or initiative. So provide them with the clear goals and direction that they need to make the program a success, while respecting the autonomy of the local organizer. Publicly acknowledge that your role is simply to provide the volunteer organizers with the support and resources they need to make the local events a success.

Most importantly, provide step-by-step organizing and planning guides that (1) outline the specific program goals and (2) simplify the steps required for organizing a local event, meeting, or party. Think through every detail of the event as if you are a grassroots organizer:

- Is there an action that you are asking everyone to take?
- Fundraising goals?
- Talking points, special announcements, or facts to communicate to the group?
- Dial-in numbers for a conference call?

Be concise, and include hard copies of these planning guides along with any additional materials that you may be sending to leaders (i.e. DVDs, contribution forms, stickers, etc.). Keep in mind that many of your leaders, especially the newer leaders, will follow your guide closely through every step of the planning process and even during the actual event.

SAMPLE ORGANIZING GUIDES, AGENDAS

To receive copies of sample event planning guides and agendas that you can customize for your program, contact Michael Silberman or Harish Rao at EchoDitto:

Ongoing support
This will be the first time that many of your leaders will have organized such an event, so they are likely to have questions throughout the planning and preparation process. It's important to reinforce for these organizers that they're not alone in the field – that you or someone else on the other end is willing and able to support them. Find ways to be available to these organizers and ensure that everyone receives a timely response.

Keep in mind that hearing from your volunteer organizers is a good sign that they are active and engaged. Also keep a tally of the questions you receive or problems encountered. Communicate the answers to frequently asked questions or concerns to the entire group as soon as possible to both assist others and also to demonstrate your responsiveness and attentiveness to organizers' needs.

If you are launching new web-tools or asking your leaders or participants to use new technology, setup a helpdesk or special email address where people can send questions and get help from a real person. The questions and inquiries you receive will help you to monitor for technical issues and allow you to discover trouble areas or points of confusion.

A dynamic, two-way communication system

Once you have a growing network of leaders in place, keep these leaders engaged and interested by communicating regularly with them, not at them. Find ways to foster dialogue between and among leaders so that you're not doing all of the talking. Your role is to listen for trends and then re-communicate the best practices back out to the larger group along with your specific initiative objectives. Here are some other tips for maintaining good lines of communication:

- Watch your tone, and avoid speaking to "the masses." Regardless of how large your leader network grows, it will always be smaller than the full membership list, and your tone should reflect the intimate, special nature of this leadership core.
- Vary your communication mediums to maintain interest, and over-communicate to ensure that your message points are conveyed effectively. Repeat your messages in different ways through emails, conference calls, and posts to your message board, listserv, or blog.
- Assume that your leaders are only paying half as much attention as you'd like, and publicly acknowledge that they have busy lives outside of their volunteer work.
- Remind yourself of the difference between leaders and participants. Many of your messages ultimately need to ripple beyond the leaders to a second universe of participants and beyond. Your volunteer organizers and grassroots leaders will be responsible for conveying this information, so be sure that your communications are clear and simple enough to be repeated!
- Encourage collaboration: Help the community of leaders grow stronger by developing mechanisms for good cross-channel communication (e.g., Yahoo! email discussion groups, conference calls, etc.) that can take place independent of you or your organization.
- Solicit feedback and let your leaders know how you've incorporated their ideas.

Listen, and Create a Feedback loop

Your grassroots leaders on the ground gain incredible insight every time that they organize an event. Survey your leaders—and your participants, if possible—to find out what worked and what didn't work both during the event preparation and at the actual event. You're likely to be surprised at what you discover.

Setup a communication loop that allows you to receive feedback and input through a variety of methods, as your grassroots leaders will naturally communicate in a variety of different ways, not just the way that is easiest for you.

Plan to survey your leaders and participants within 24 hours after the events take place, while people are still buzzing about what happened and still eager to share information and stories. See the sample survey questions in the Appendix, and minimize the questions you ask of event participants, as participants will generally be less engaged and invested than your event leaders.

Thank people immediately for taking action. Later, tell the whole story about what happened —data (how many actions), anecdotes, and results. Remind them how this event or action fits in with your shared long-term objectives. And preview what's coming next—encouraging their continued involvement.

If you have a blog, start an open thread for people to share comments and stories from each of the different events that took place. When you communicate to the media and broader membership about what happened at the events, you will be encouraging those who didn't attend to consider participating next time.

Email and Web Messaging

The goal of your email and web messaging is to reinforce the initiative narrative by being on-message and engaging. The internet, unlike one-way communication such as television or newspapers, is a highly interactive experience more similar to a conversation than to a broadcast. The more that the initiative can develop a personal, engaging voice or voices for its messages, the more successful it will be at retaining supporters and ensuring that they become active donors, volunteers, and voters.

Email

Email is arguably one of the most important tools available to you. The goal is to make your email communications personal and engaging (media advisories and press releases are neither) while building trust and interest in the initiative as a whole.

The initiative should use an online timeline to develop a more detailed email schedule that lists content ideas, actions, and a sender for each email. Even though this schedule will likely change, it will help to keep the initiative focused on sending out quality, effective emails for every major initiative milestone. You can use the same schedule to compare their relative success by adding open and click-through rates to the schedule after emails have been sent.

Your email strategy should push readers to become invested in the initiative and drive fundraising and action. Adding tell-a-friend functionality to every outgoing email will ensure that readers always have the opportunity to include their friends in the initiative, which can be crucial for list-building.

A link to email best practices is included at the end of this report, but it is worthwhile to emphasize one key point about emails: Each email should contain only one action. Including multiple actions in a single email muddies the message and will result in lower-click-through rates.

Weblog or blog

A blog—which is simply a website with an easily updated content whose author is identifiable, is an increasingly important section of any initiative website where supporters gather to discuss current issues around the initiative, as well as read the latest initiative news and information. The primacy of a blog is because of the inherent two-way, interactive communication that engages your website visitors personally (versus a standard website, where information is only disseminated in broadcast form). Here are four simple ways that a blog would help increase readership and activity on the blog:

1. Add a new human dimension to the initiative: The weblog is your opportunity to offer supporters an insider's view of the initiative, the campaign, initiative staff and volunteers. This type of raw content can be highly personal and exclusive to the website, which makes it that much more valuable and attractive.

2. Directly encourage participation: In order to generate more comments on the site, end more blog posts with questions posed to the community, respond to and feature comments in a main post, and experiment with some discussion threads. Also consider crafting posts that comment on blogs posted to other sites to help spark an inter-blog dialogue in which readers from both sites can participate. Featuring more guest writers and guest posts will also help encourage more participation.

3. Break more news via the blog: As you begin sharing more “inside” information on the blog before it’s announced in more formal venues, you can expect to build an even wider audience and may begin seeing blog content quoted directly in news articles. There are several examples of initiative blogs becoming primary information sources for the media.

4. Add new voices: We also recommend cultivating and developing *additional* voices other than the initiative’s campaign manager.

Staffing

Depending on the size of your operation we strongly urge you to hire anywhere from one to three internet/online staff, including a Webmaster, an online communications director (Internet Director), and a Blogger. These are all very specific, different roles that are explained below. At a minimum, we recommend that you hire a Webmaster to be responsible for the daily maintenance of the website, including tracking metrics and sending emails. We believe an internal hire is not only cost-effective but, in fact, critical to the success of this endeavor.

An Online Communications Director or **Internet Director** is the primary person responsible for develop an online organizing strategy, content calendars and email content, and the liaison for working with the Communications Director on the campaign, this staff person manages the team's day-to-day online communication and is generally someone with several years of online experience.

The initiative **Blogger** is someone who should have experience with the intimate nature of blogging, preferably having worked in this relatively new medium for one or two years. Fortunately, the ability to blog well is closely linked in our estimate to write well and act as one's own editor. Finding a blogger with an established personal blog website and with relationships with the larger blogosphere, or blog community, would be a definite asset for your initiative.

The **Webmaster** should work closely with your online communications director, who remains responsible for the email communications, blog content (posting regularly and helping to collect and post guest entries), and online organizing, as well as managing the initiative's political relationship with other online influentials. The webmaster should monitor other online activity surrounding the initiative and its public reception and make sure that the your official blog is the only blog dedicated to discussion of the campaign.

The webmaster and blogger will work together to maintain and implement the online initiative plan. As the initiative builds momentum closer to the election, this may be the time it becomes necessary to hire an Internet Director who is responsible for this team and the ongoing development and day-to-day execution of the online plan — from rapid response emails and petitions to implementing self-organized event programs or using the 'net to turn supporters out for an event.

Best Practices

EchoDitto maintains a number of best practices documents that can guide you in creating effective blog entries, emails, and self-organized event programs.
You can aceess the following via http://www.echoditto.com/insights:

- Converting Online Activity to Real-World Action (meetups, houseparties, etc.)
- Blogging
- Email and Fundraising
- Online Organizing

APPENDIX

Internet Fundraising
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Getting started

It is increasingly simple and inexpensive for any campaign to add an online fundraising component to its web presence, so much so that you can scarcely find a campaign that doesn't include a form for taking online donations linked from its homepage.

The following is the quickest and easiest path to begin taking donations online:

1. Choose a hosted service provider to process your donations.

In order to take donations online, you must be able to submit a donation to an electronic payment network. The electronic payment network is the path through which the bank that issued the donor's credit card can transmit the donation to your bank.

To access an electronic payment network you need special "gateway" software. It's possible for the campaign to license and host its own gateway software, such as VeriSign PayFlo Pro. But that isn't recommended.

There are a number of service providers who will host gateway software for you. Some of those providers include:

- VeriSign Pay-Flo Link
- Convio.com
- DemocracyInAction.com
- Kintera.com
- GetActive.com

2. Select a "Merchant Account" provider.

In the online payment processing world, you must have a Merchant Account in order to receive donations online via credit card. A Merchant Account effectively is an online destination for funds to be transmitted.

Do not confuse a Merchant Account with a depositary (i.e. checking) account. A Merchant Account is only a pass-through account. After funds are transmitted to your Merchant Account, they are forwarded almost immediately to the checking account you designated in your Merchant Agreement.

You can obtain a Merchant Account from most major banks, as well as providers such as Cybersource and Merchant eSolutions. After you have entered into a Merchant Agreement to obtain your Merchant Account, you'll be provided a "terminal ID" (or "TID") for both Visa and MasterCard. To get started accepting donations, you'll simply need to provide your TIDs and your Merchant Account number to the hosted service provider you choose for processing your donations.

Please note that if you wish to accept credit cards other than Visa or MasterCard, such as American Express or Discover, you'll need to enter into separate agreements. Because of the additional hassle, significantly higher expense, and the fact that Visa and MasterCard are by far the most popular cards, most organizations choose not to accept them.

Note also that you can avoid the step of obtaining a Merchant Account if you use a service such as PayPal. But you will only be able to accept payments from PayPal members which is a barrier to receiving donations that you may not wish to create.

Lessons learned – tactics that will help you succeed.

Adding the ability to accept online donations to a campaign web presence is relatively simple. The more difficult part of raising money online is using effective tactics.

Some campaigns mistakenly believe that simply adding a prominent "donate" link to the homepage is sufficient. The problem with that strategy is that the web is a passive medium. Even the most well-designed website can be a little like having a billboard along a lonely highway. You can't depend on visitors to come to you – you have to find ways to reach out, engage people, and get them to your site to donate.

1. Use email effectively

The most important resource any campaign has to reach out and engage people is its own email list. And the starting point for effectively fundraising from that list is to avoid the temptation to use your campaign emails as a newsletter.

The objective of your campaign emails shouldn't be to push as much information as possible through a newsletter format. Rather, the object of your campaign emails should be to create a dialogue, develop a relationship with your supporters, and engage your supporters in the campaign. Donations are just another way for your supporters to engage in the campaign.

2. Use direct response tactics

Think of online fundraising largely as an extension of your overall direct response fundraising program. The language and tactics you use for direct mail will also work effectively with email solicitations:

- Grab attention. It has been said that the only limited resource on the Internet is attention span. Remember that when you're asking for donations online you're competing with all the other possible things someone could be doing online. And you're competing with every other email that your supporters are receiving in their inboxes. You cannot ask for a donation if no one is opening your email. Make your email subject lines short and compelling.

- Create an emotional response. The key to direct response fundraising, especially online, is to use emotion rather than logic to provoke donations. Draft your solicitation emails is such a way that you create an emotional reaction.

- Present donations as an opportunity for expression by your supporters. People generally do not engage with a campaign as an abstract proposition. As with any other form of engagement, people are much more likely to support the campaign with a donation if that act is an expression of something. Some possible examples:
  - "Demonstrate momentum for the campaign by making a donation online now . . . "
  - "Respond to our opponent's attack with your donation"

- Create a sense of urgency. Online giving is like an impulse purchase. If your supporters do not respond immediately to your request for money, they probably will not respond later. If you create a sense of urgency and provide a specific time by which you need to receive the donation, your response rate will increase.

- Coordinate with other direct response fundraising. Remember that online solicitations are another part of your overall direct response fundraising and coordinate with your direct mail and telemarketing efforts wherever possible. In your direct mail pieces and your phone scripts, remember to provide your prospective donors an immediate opportunity to give online by providing a link to a donation form. Coordinate your messaging wherever possible. You will increase your overall response rates if your prospective donors receive the same message by both email and direct mail at approximately the same time.