



# THE ART OF POLITICAL WAR

THE CRASH COURSE  
ON WINNING ELECTIONS

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**AMERICAN**  
RESEARCH SURVEYS

# The Art of Political War

For nearly 30 years, our company has been honored to work with some of the greatest political minds in our nation. We have worked with Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. We have conducted surveys at the national, state, and local levels and interviewed hundreds of thousands of voters. We have helped win many elections, and have also been involved with some that did not win. While successful campaigns have proved to reinforce the strategies necessary to win, the unsuccessful campaigns have been equally informative by provided a list of pitfalls that should be avoided. This short informational piece condenses nearly three decades of the most successful strategies used by professional campaign managers all over the country to win elections.

# Chapter 1

## Counting the Costs, Emotional and Financial

Running for public office is often a very humbling, costly, and demeaning experience. It can drain you and your family emotionally and financially. If you are not proud of WHY you are running for public office and passionate about the difference you can make in the lives of people, you need to take a look in the mirror and frankly ask yourself why you are running in the first place. Also, be mentally and emotionally prepared to be over-worked and exhausted during the election. You also need to understand that your competitors will resort to mudslinging and attack your character by accusing you of all sorts of wrongdoing, regardless of the truth. Ask your family if they are prepared to handle this challenge and if your vision of being elected is worth it.

You can't go it alone. You will need to ask, beg, and plead with thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even millions of people for their votes and money in order to win. If you do not believe that you should expect voters to give you their money, time or votes, you've already lost. Outline what you plan to accomplish and why it is so important to voters that they need to help this cause. You must also mentally prepare yourself to ask for help. Let everyone know you need their help.

### Financial Costs

Putting together a budget for a political campaign can be a confusing and inexact process. One method is to look at who won previous *competitive* races for your office and add an amount for inflation. Do not use similar non-competitive races. If you have no competition, the process becomes inexpensive and easy because you really don't need much in the way of budgeting, polling, strategy or advertising.

The following chart will help you get a handle on expected costs. Look at the voter turnout in the past two similar elections and determine how many votes you need in order to get at least 50% plus one – then multiply by the per-vote cost to come up with an estimated budget.

If it is a primary election, vote totals will be lower. If it is a presidential year election, vote totals will be higher and your race will be more expensive. The year after presidential elections means lower turnout and lower costs accordingly. Please note that candidates spending less than the “low budget” amounts are nearly always losers. Estimates do NOT include expenditures made by special interest groups. Statewide office costs may vary based on the population of the state.

## Costs Per Vote for Victorious Campaigns

Office Sought	Low Budget	Average Budget	High Budget
Governor	\$10	\$15	\$50
US Senate	\$10	\$15	\$60
US Representative	\$10	\$15	\$50
State Senate	\$7	\$10	\$60
State House	\$10	\$20	\$75
State Board of Education	\$0.25	\$1	\$2
State Supreme Court	\$0.25	\$0.5	\$1
State Treasurer	\$1	\$3	\$5
County & Local Races	\$2	\$7	\$25

### DO NOT:

- **Finance everything yourself** - even if you can afford it. Even when Jesus talked about money he said that where the money is, there is the heart also. Make no mistake about it; **the hearts, minds, and votes of people will follow their donations to your campaign.**
- **Think that the state or local party will give you money** because you went to a meeting and they all said they would support you. They probably won't and may likely leave you high and dry. It's not that they don't want to help. There is just never enough money to go around.

- **Think that once you are better known, the money will automatically come rolling in.** It won't.
- **Think that anyone will donate even when you don't ask them to.** They won't. Even if you ask, they'll only give as much as you ask them to give.
- **Think that your ideas are so strong that people will give without asking.**
- **Think that your friends will resent you asking for money.** Actually, they will be honored and pleased that you trusted them enough to ask. They will come to feel that they are a part of your campaign.

## DO:

- **Proudly Ask for Money.** Again, you need to be proud of why you are running and you need to believe that you are the best candidate for the job if you want others to believe that too. You will need support. You can't go it alone. You will need to ask for money boldly, believing that people should give it to your campaign. Outline what you plan to accomplish and why it is so important to everyone that they need to donate to this cause. You must also mentally prepare yourself to ask for money.
- **Let everyone know you need their help.** When a voter donates to your campaign you can also be certain that they will vote for you and talk to others about you. Remember, where the money goes, the heart will follow. So fundraising is important on many levels. It gives you financial resources, is crucial to getting more votes, gets those who donate talking for you and it gives you a resource directory that you can turn to when you need additional help.
- **Keep it Legal.** Remember, no matter what political fundraising ideas you are using, be sure to keep your fundraising legal by knowing and following the relevant laws and regulations in your area! You may be certain that your opposition will review your campaign reports to try to catch you if you do anything illegal.
- **Make the First Donation Yourself.** YOU should make the first donation. If you are not willing to contribute seed money to your own campaign, how can you expect anyone else to donate?
- **Go To Your Family and Close Friends First,** and explain to them *why* you are running for office and ask for their help. Yes, you as a candidate must ask for help

directly and not totally rely on others or professional organizations.

- **Set Up A Campaign Website With Standard Credit Card Donation Levels.** Set up a website that will allow friends, supporters and others to make regular donations with credit cards. Have standard amounts for \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100, \$500 and \$1,000 as well as a field for supporters to select their own amount. Although credit card companies take a small percentage of the fees raised, the convenience outweighs the cost.
  
- **Develop Comprehensive Lists of Possible Donors – and Then More Lists!**
  - ✓ Get a detailed list of all donors to all previous campaigns in your region – of both parties. Target those most likely to donate. Major donors should be contacted with at least a letter AND a follow up phone call. Minor donors should be both called and emailed.
  - ✓ Get a complete voter list with phone numbers and addresses, voter history and income levels. You will need this list anyway to maintain a file of contacts and support. Glean through the voter lists and highlight anyone who knows you well enough to donate, especially high income voters. You will also be able to attach current phone numbers to the list of previous donors from a good voter list.
  - ✓ Get a list of all members to all organizations to which you belong including churches, civic groups, marketing groups, chambers of commerce, business associations and more.
  - ✓ Get a list of all political action groups which may be favorable to you based on your positions both locally and nationally. Caution: accepting money from some organizations may result in an unintended “Kiss of Judas” endorsement once your opposition reviews your financial disclosures. Make sure that you accept donations only from groups that your supporters would approve.
  - ✓ Get a list of your enemies’ enemies. Go to your opponent’s web site and find out their positions and/or past votes. Search through newspaper and internet articles to find lawsuit information, etc. Your enemies’ enemies can be a rich source of campaign funds.
  - ✓ Everybody-Every Day- Update email lists and update your voter list of supporters daily.
  - ✓ Obtain monthly donation commitments, especially from friends and family. You don’t want to ask people for money over and over again during the course of the campaign when you can do it just once! Instead of asking a supporter to make one \$200 donation, ask them to make a \$100 donation for the next 6 or 9 months – or whatever they can afford during the course of

the campaign. You will certainly need more money as the campaign progresses. Get their credit card numbers and bill them monthly. Often, people will give much more because it is spread out. Offer them great recognition for moving up to a higher level of giving.

- **Send Out Certified Mailings** to your very top donor prospects and the largest donors from the past asking for a major contribution. Include some breaking news, like recent poll results – and send it out certified mail. This costs more money, but generates tons of excitement and gets through the clutter and straight to the decision maker. Invite them to an event. Tell your top contributors you need immediate donations to act on the breaking news you included in the letter. *\*\*Please note: only send these mailings to office / work addresses. If you send a certified letter to a residential address, and no one is home to sign for it, it will not be delivered to them. They will have to drive to pick it up and may resent it.*
- **Contact Friends of a Friend.** Have your sister explain to everyone that you are running for state representative and ask her friends if they would be willing to help. Your uncle who owns a business can ask his suppliers and other business owners at the next chamber of commerce meeting if they can make a donation as his niece or nephew is running for public office. Your son belongs to a hunting club or your daughter belongs to a church group...you get the picture.
- **Hold Special Events with a Specific Goal.** Walk-a-thons, pray-a-thons, dinners, and events with already-elected public supporters as speakers all work well. Set a doable fundraising goal for a concrete purpose (for example, raising \$3,000 to buy yard signs or \$7,500 to buy research polls or \$25,000 to buy TV ads and bill boards.) Tell people why you want to raise the money. Promote this event for several weeks.
- **Fill in the Gaps.** After raising all that you can, you still may have to fill in some of the necessary gaps in the budget from your personal money. However, you will probably also find that winning is just now coming into view.

## CHAPTER 2

### Developing Your Strategy and Getting out the Vote (GOTV)

Here is the sad, ugly truth about election math: You will probably need less than 15% of the total population in your area to vote for you in order to win.

- 40% of the voting age population does not even bother to register.
- Of the 60% who do register, only about 60% bother to vote, even in presidential elections.
- This means that only about 36% of the population will ever vote (60% of the 60%.)
- This also means that 64% of the voting age population will never vote.
- You only need 18% - or HALF plus one vote of the 36% who ever vote.
- In most non-presidential year elections, less than 15% of the total population is all that is needed.
- As a candidate, you have a legal right to obtain voter lists that contain more individual voter history information and demographic targeting information than is available to any retailer or direct marketer.
- Let's set the target at 15% of the voters for your election, based on the average of the previous two similar competitive elections turnout of 30,000 – or 15,000 votes to get half. At \$10 per vote, you will need to raise about \$150,000 to win (see fundraising section for ways to do this).
- You will need to purchase an accurate list, or, in a general election, use that provided by your party. It is critical to purchase a list, WITH PHONE NUMBERS, of super voters in your area. These voters will be your key for winning the election.
- Conduct a benchmark poll analyzing a wide variety of candidates and issues, plan out a strategy to get your votes, estimate the expected cost of winning, determine how you are going raise the necessary funds and determine how you are going to get your supporters to actually vote. As one example of a shrewd strategy, a library



in a western state failed to have a tax increase passed when they ran the issue during a high turnout election for governor. But their research proved that in the years AFTER the presidential elections, in the primary, the average turnout was only 9% of registered voters. They now plan to place the issue on the ballot in the primary election when they only have to get about 5% of the registered voters – and possibly less than 3% of the total population – to support the tax increase.

### **Targeting Voters**

You must be careful to TARGET your time and resources and polling on those people who will vote and be careful not to waste money and time on people who will not. Almost all local elections are decided by “super voters” and the vast majority of regular people that you meet are worthless to your election effort. You need to know who these people are.

Voter lists should cost 5-to-7 cents per voter, depending on the number of names you order and should be guaranteed to be at least 90% accurate for mailings. If you order a list of all voters with their voting histories, for example, the cost will be lower and you can sort out those most likely to vote by their voter number and peruse the list to see which of your friends and family members are registered and which are not.

If you order a list of super voters only, who vote in every election, the list will be smaller but a little more expensive per name. ARS can provide lists electronically and inexpensively if you do not already have a provider for your primary election. In general elections, detailed voter lists are normally supplied by the party without charge.

In any case, your list should contain phone and cell phone numbers, a ranking of the probability that the voter will vote in the coming election, walking route sequence numbers, home values, ethnicity, income, age, past voting histories and other information available only to political candidates.

Email addresses are also available but are very expensive and, due to people frequently switching addresses, are less accurate. Our experience has been that it is not worthwhile to use commercial email lists. Our candidates generally raise more money with an email to a few hundred supporters than they will with an email to 100,000 from a commercial list.

## **GOTV – GET OUT THE VOTE**

The Get out the Vote (GOTV) Planning is one of the most important aspects of your campaign. You must include a plan for absentee voters as well as Election Day in your GOTV strategy. In poorly planned campaigns, the GOTV plan is not developed until the last minute. But for a winning campaign, a GOTV plan must be carefully laid out early in the campaign, and then followed closely all the way. You must make sure that you are

“strong on the street” on Election Day. Unless you plan carefully, keep accurate records EVERY DAY and stay focused, a host of distractions will develop than can and will steal your focus.

You should provide the financing and organization for the polling and GOTV effort before you do anything else. This money should be placed in a vault and be untouched. Often, candidates “go on vacation with the rent money.” They spend money on pens, pencils, balloons, tee shirts, a web site, refrigerator magnets, direct mail, radio, television and a host of other items, and then have nothing left for Election Day to target those who will actually vote and who may need a ride or an absentee ballot.

A successful GOTV plan will include phone calls with a strong, emotionally-charged message (determined from polling), street workers, a precinct worker at every polling station, direct candidate or campaign office calls to known supporters, and a provision for having worked absentee ballots in advance. Phone calls should target the right voters (usually super voters) with the right message at the right time.

Often, different messages are recorded to target different groups of super voters. One message might be delivered to Republicans and another to Democrats, for example. Or different messages may be delivered to different geographic regions.

Recorded calls to super voters on election eve with an endorsement from a popular figure can be extremely effective. As an example, there was a race for mayor in a city where a host of candidates were trying for the position. Under the rules of that particular state, if no candidate achieved 40% of the vote, there would be a runoff election. Since there were so many candidates, our goal was just to survive in the first round. Our candidate had run an extremely negative campaign in the past and he was behind more than 20% when we conducted the first poll. He also had terrible candidate thermometer numbers as a result of his past negative campaign.

We found the target issues with the voters, developed a strong direct mail effort and made sure that he stayed positive with his messages this time. Our initial polling also revealed that a local state senator had extremely high favorability rankings – and this senator was willing to record a message endorsing our candidate. Although several local political professionals were willing to take huge bets that our candidate would not survive just before Election Day, they were shocked and dismayed when the election eve endorsement calls

began. Our candidate surprised the entire field by not just surviving, but winning outright.

Careful consideration should be given to the basic elements in the design of an effective GOTV plan. The entire campaign is geared toward getting votes, but the GOTV plan deals directly with the last weeks before the election in identifying your supporters and getting them to the polls on Election Day.

**Keeping accurate records is critical. The “Everybody – Every day” strategy should be implemented early in the election.**

This means that you should develop a computer record of everybody that you and each of your campaign workers speak with every day. You should record this in a master voter data file while it is fresh.

Those who you know are FOR you will be contacted to see if they need an absentee ballot and, if not, they will be called on election eve or Election Day. Those voters that you know are against you will not be contacted again if you cannot convert them. If they will not vote for you, do not contact them. You will turn out the vote for your opponent.

The basic components of a GOTV plan listed by effectiveness are phone message calls to known supporters, precinct workers, IP electronic direct mail, direct mail, and to a much lesser extent television, radio, newspapers political blogs and social media. There are other lesser components, but these are the GOTV options common to all campaigns. Success of the GOTV plan rests on balancing the implementation of these elements against campaign budget restraints.

You should have a list of known supporters broken down by precinct on loaded on a spreadsheet which is emailed to each precinct worker. Since you have already purchased a comprehensive list with phone numbers, each precinct worker should be given a file of their precinct that they can download onto their smartphone or tablet. If the voter has not voted by 4:00 PM, they must call them and let them know that it is critical for them to show up and vote.

## Chapter 3

### Your Message

The GOTV plan message must be carefully crafted to motivate your supporters to go vote on Election Day. This information is developed through the initial polling and is the base for everything else you do. Poll a wide variety of issues and candidates and look at the emotional thermometer of each. *Motivate* is the key word here. Voters need a reason that motivates them to go vote. You need to use this information and determine the driving reason (or reasons) that motivate your specific electorate to vote. While you can mention all issues that move voters, you will only be able to hammer one or two strong issues.

Our polling has emphatically revealed that voters all share a favorite station: WIIFM (What's In It For Me?) Voters will also respond *emotionally* to a system of needs that they perceive as important. They do not wish to pay higher taxes, for example, but our candidates in one city were able to win after raising taxes dramatically because crime dropped by 50% in two years with a larger police force. The voter was now safe – and feeling safe is higher on a scale of human needs than saving money. Do not underestimate the impact of self-interest on the individual voters. Many politicians make the mistake of giving only "the facts" and miss the emotional element to motivate a sufficient number of voters. This is why all new ARS polls include emotional thermometers with each issue and candidate. You may not be able to take a single pro-life vote in your elected office but, if you voters are strongly pro-life it may still be one of the most effective issues. These emotional triggers are referred to as "hot buttons." Your poll will tell you how "hot" or "cold" each issue surveyed is to your election.

As an extreme example, in a very religious rural county, a candidate for commissioner promised to fight to get prayer back into public schools if elected. His opponent scorned the idea, pointing out that the commissioners do not even vote on prayer in public schools. He attacked this candidate for being incompetent, stupid and not understanding the law. But he made a severe miscalculation. He did not realize that voters respond with emotion based on *their* needs and wants – not logic. He was totally crushed by the "prayer in school" candidate. Certain issues such as monitoring sex offenders, having faith in God or paying child support may have little to do with handling the office for which you are running - but may still be the most effective issues in your campaign.

## Financing

Always budget from Election Day backward to ensure the GOTV effort is fully funded. It is critical that the money is available on schedule. Set this money aside in a separate campaign account. Pay known, trusted vendors in advance. This can help protect these funds from being pilfered for other campaign expenses. It is easy to start pulling money from whatever source is available to fund "crisis" expenditures. Make these funds even more difficult to access by adding a required signature to the GOTV account. If your GOTV fails, you will lose. Make sure GOTV funding stays in place. Please see the ARS guide to fundraising to get an idea of costs and how to raise enough money to win.

## Voter Identification and Absentee Ballots – “Everybody – Every day”

Voter identification (ID) is the process of categorizing voters as supporters (favorable), opposition supporters (unfavorable) or undecided. This ID is done first of all through your review of the voter lists. You will be able to identify voters that you know will support you and some who will support your opponent.

You should keep a list of everyone you and every family or campaign member talks with every day. Download the super voter list onto a smartphone, tablet or iPad and have every campaign worker carry the list with them at all times. They should mark which voters are supporting you and email the changes into your central office each day. Record this support information on the master list while it is fresh in your mind and before the information travels to the land of lost thoughts.

To do this, you will need a short, written report of everyone working for your campaign every day. If the budget permits, a qualified telemarketing firm can ID about 50% of the voters who are left in the final few weeks of the campaign. Potential voters are called and identified through a series of questions. Although sometimes just one question will suffice: "Who do you plan on voting for?"

A solid voter ID effort costs a significant amount of time, effort and money, but the success of GOTV efforts depend on an accurately-identified database. If you are operating on a severely limited budget, ID the voters by household rather than each individual voter.

Also make certain that all of your supporters are actually registered to vote. Have mail-in registration forms handy at all times. About one month prior to elections

(depending on state laws) you should contact all of your supporters and determine if they will need absentee ballots. If they are going to be out of town on Election Day, make SURE that you get absentee ballots into their hands and make SURE they send them. Well organized candidates are sometimes losers on election night and winners the next morning - all because of a very strong absentee ballot effort.

## Stay On Course

Stay with your issues and your campaign strategy. As a result of your benchmark polling, you should know the issues that move votes and stay with those issues. A candidate should never make decisions alone. A successful campaign requires a steady hand and nerves of steel. Often, the last-minute "brilliant" idea that comes to a candidate is from a combination of inadequate sleep and the temporary insanity that so many candidates face in the final hours of the campaign.

Always get at least two close, trusted advisors to collaborate on any last minute ideas. As an example, we will look at a campaign for an East Coast city that was very close with several incumbents running as a team. Our slate of candidates was getting attacked for raising taxes. A team of challengers hit the tax message relentlessly. However, since the crime rate had been reduced by more than 50% through the use of this tax money, we hammered the safety issue. Thermometers indicated that voters were more interested in their safety as an issue than in higher taxes. The crime rate under the previous administration was very high. Voters were reminded that they could sleep in a much safer city at night as a result of expanding the police force brought in with our candidates.

Ten days out from the election, our tracking polls showed that all of our candidates had leads of between approximately three and eight percent. This lead had held consistent for several weeks despite the tax attacks. The campaign manager was under enormous stress. It was close. One of the candidates wanted to "go negative." Since all of the candidates were in the lead, however, he decided to stay the course. It was the ninth inning, he had the lead and he planned to close out the election with a small margin of victory. Under the enormous stress and pressure of the campaign, one of our candidates went out on her own directly against the advice of the campaign manager. She went negative and filed a slander law suit against a challenger right before the election.

The news of the law suit hit the front page of the local papers on election eve – and the negative strategy backfired. While all of the rest of the candidates on the slate went on to victories by an average of about 5%, the candidate who filed the lawsuit was the only one to be defeated. She unwittingly gave sympathy votes and free name ID to a relatively unknown challenger who was then able to beat her by about 8%. The campaign manager, after winning the majority of the City Council and the Mayor's seat, wrote us a letter thanking us for our solid advice and lamenting the fact that one candidate did not stay the course.

### **Schedule In Advance**

It is important that a plan is created far in advance before the crisis management mentality takes hold. Databases should be maintained with the GOTV plan in mind. These databases will be merged with commercial broker lists to add and remove names from the final GOTV file. Use the master campaign calendar to schedule each component of the GOTV plan. Assign one trusted campaign staff member to manage the GOTV effort. In the weekly campaign meetings with key advisors, review the progress of the implementation plan. This should include timetables, vendor contracts, financing, GOTV messages and ongoing voter ID progress.

Scheduling is critical to a GOTV plan. To implement the GOTV plan you must have a vendor schedule in place far in advance of implementation. The phone messaging and electronic direct mail and standard direct mail companies need to be reserved. Often there are deposits required to reserve services from these vendors. Many vendors, because of the very nature of politics, require payment in full prior to beginning or even placing a client in their scheduling queue.

The capacity of these vendors can be strained, especially in November fall election cycles where many elections in several states take place at the same time. Prices rise accordingly as the vendors' capacity is bought up. The longer you wait to schedule vendors, the more the laws of supply and demand will cause the costs to rise – if you can purchase the services at all. Phone messaging bandwidth is often completely reserved in November.

## Precinct, Local and County Workers

Some people have the ability to deliver votes in certain precincts or counties. Talk with previous candidates. Find out who delivered the vote and who didn't in the past. Look at the percentage of turnout in key precincts in your race. Get in contact with those who can deliver votes and get them on your GOTV team.

Budget according to past performance. One campaign manager had 2 precinct workers who said that they drove people to the polls, made election eve phone calls and provided absentee ballots. They were given money for expenses. However, the election results showed that not even one single vote for his candidate came out of their precinct!

In another case, our polling revealed that only one Democratic candidate out of seven who were running for seven county row offices was going to lose. The Democratic campaign chairman, who had an extremely strong street organization and had been winning elections for more than 20 years, made the comment that "Harry is cheap and doesn't want to put out any street money for the workers." Then he added, "Harry will start putting out some money and he's going to start right now..." He then picked up the phone and changed the mind of the row office holder, and as a result all seven of the candidates won. This example shows the power of a strong organization and well-organized precinct workers can turn out a vote.

Since you have been tracking a list of known supporters on a software file or spreadsheet with the "Everybody – Every day" strategy, you will now be able to sort out who you can count on to vote for you by precinct on Election Day. Keep records on anyone who will need a ride to vote and who you have provided absentee ballots to. Provide absentee ballots only to your supporters. Suggest that supporters of other candidates contact *them*.

On Election Day, each precinct worker should be given an electronic list, with phone numbers, of your known supporters in that precinct. This should be downloaded onto tablet, smartphone or iPad. They will then check off those who are voting for you as they arrive at the polling place. A simple printed list will typically be sufficient at the precinct level on an Excel file. If the voters haven't shown up by 4 PM, they then need to be called by your precinct workers to get them out to vote.

This type of strategy may seem over the top, but remember, politics is a winner-take-all affair. We have won many, many elections, especially recently, by less than one hundred



votes and we have won a few times by less than 50 votes. Better to do all you can and “leave it all on the field” than have all of your efforts go for nothing.

## Phone calls and messaging

Phones are the cornerstone of the GOTV effort. With today's technology, it is virtually impossible to run a successful GOTV effort without a telemarketing component. It is used to ID the voters, persuade them, defend your candidate, and deliver the final call to vote on Election Day. Automated equipment can easily call a million voters in a single day at an extremely low cost.

The ID process has already been identified earlier as the process of categorizing voters. Your list should be developed as the campaign progresses and be ready before you begin the actual GOTV. This will determine which voters or households receive specific phone messages and electronic direct mail or physical direct mail. The favorable voters are called on Election Day with the motivational message designed to get them to the polls.

Cell phone numbers are often now provided on the standard lists. **However, you CANNOT call cell phone numbers with a recorded message. The FCC will impose a \$16,000 per call fine if you do.** Before sending a robo-call, you must pass your numbers through screening software. American Research Surveys, and most of the other companies that deliver these types of messages, will pass your list through the necessary software for a small fee. You can send a personal, recorded message to VOIP and standard telephones. The rest will have to be contacted by live operators to remind them to vote.

## Direct Mail – Electronic or Physical

Electronic direct mail, which matches up the computer IP addresses of super voters, can deliver your message TEN TIMES in the final week for less than the cost of ONE direct mail piece to the same household. In the 2014 primary election cycle, 75% of our candidates using electronic direct mail won their races. The average primary race had our candidates competing with 5 other contestants (they typically do not call ARS for the “easy” races).

Electronic and regular direct mail can be used effectively to increase voter turnout.

There should be two to three direct mail GOTV physical pieces in the final six weeks of the campaign to those you cannot reach with electronic mail. The third piece should arrive within the last three days of the election and should hit everyone, whether they can be targeted with IP electronic lists or not. Be careful; if your timing is off the piece could arrive after the election. It is better to be a little early than late. Make this piece something that the voter will hold on to. Make it a "refrigerator reminder" that attaches to the refrigerator or a football schedule. Be creative. Creativity in direct mail is essential. Use the emotional appeal. Pictures are worth a thousand words; make sure they convey an emotional story that motivates. Hit the "hot buttons" from your benchmark polling hard.

## **Networking**

Networks can be an important tool in a GOTV plan. Compile a list of affiliated networks that are supporters of the campaign. They can be neighborhood groups, church groups, civic organizations, business groups, and even friends and family. Particularly target groups that may have a vested interest in your success. Make sure these groups are properly motivated and activated on Election Day. They can do independent telephone calls, mailers, and neighborhood canvassing on Election Day. These networks can be the margin of victory in close elections or under-funded campaigns.

## **Radio/Newspapers/TV/Social Media**

Radio, newspapers and television are not effective GOTV tools – not at all. Only about 60% of the population registers to vote. Only about 50% of those registered actually do vote. In off presidential year elections, turnout is often just 30% of registered voters or less. This means that only about 15% of the total population – sometimes less – will vote in most elections. Mass media can reach a large amount of people at one time, but 85% or 90% of your money is wasted. You will also turn out your opponent's supporters. You simply cannot target the audience that needs to be reached. Use mass media carefully.

In our experience, television tends to very effectively deliver an emotional message and sway voters more than any other medium – if the right stations are chosen with effective coverage. However, over 70% of the TV commercials on standard channels are now passed

over due to pre-recordings, Netflix, Hulu, tablets and a host of other reasons. These commercials are never seen but the recorded audience is still counted by the ratings services. Our recent surveys reveal that a full 30% of the population has not watched any live television in the past week.

You are best to buy local sportscasts and newscasts early as well as target CNN, Fox News and other news and sports channels if you are using cable as these are far less likely to be pre-recorded.

## CHAPTER 4

### Deciding To Go Negative

Voters are more likely to vote against a candidate than vote for them. Carefully planned negative attacks based on oppositional research can be very, very effective. But remember to use negative attacks carefully. Here are some items you should carefully consider:

If there are three or more candidates, especially in a primary election, you CANNOT go negative. A third party candidate other than you or your opponent may well end up winning by staying totally positive - even if no one thought that they could. We have had several candidates come “from nowhere” to win when the top two went negative and ignored us...while we hit positive issues with high thermometers based on our polling research. We not only won, but our candidates were in much better condition with higher thermometers for their next elections. The negative candidates now had much lower thermometers and a bleak political future.

Remember, when you go negative, you will undoubtedly “get some mud on yourself.” Your thermometers will also drop along with those of your opponent. The negative perceptions that people develop, especially locally, may last a lifetime. You will even notice that people on the street treat you with less respect. If it is a one-on-one election and you are far behind and it is a must-win situation, go negative. You can rise as many as 25 points in a ten day period with a strong ad campaign. If your opponent hits you with negative ads, you must respond and fight back.

If your opposition research uncovers a strong negative issue, keep it a secret and save it for the last ten days. You do not need to be ahead several weeks before the election or the month after the election. You need to be ahead only on the days when the voters cast their ballots. If you come out with a very damaging issue too early, the other candidate will almost certainly think of a way to respond to the issue and spin it. They will also have the time to neutralize it. If you wait until the final ten days, it may take several days for them to decide what to do, to get the ideas into production, and to get the material into the media. They will have no time to poll it to see if their response will actually work effectively. The damage will have been done with too little time for them to respond.

If you are polling ahead in many areas, but are losing badly on one certain area, go negative only in that area in the final ten days. It will depress turnout for both you and your opponent in that area, while your vote totals remain high everywhere else.

## CHAPTER 5

### Final Thoughts and Summary

**ALWAYS work as if your election is so close that one vote will make the difference.**

We recently won a county-wide race and unseated an incumbent office holder by just 41 votes out of more than 20,000 that were cast that day. We also won the race for the mayor in a major city on the East Coast by just 231 votes. Politics is a “winner takes all” game. There are no partial credits or ties. You will never forgive yourself if, after having spent thousands of hours and a great deal of effort and money, you lose by a handful of votes because you didn’t give it everything you had.

#### **Leave it all on the field**

Don’t leave anything to the possibility of regret for not having done some little thing that could have made all of the difference in your election. Remember, the winner takes all. It doesn’t help if you lose by 20 or 30 votes – you lose everything.

Use this one key thought before spending any campaign money. Use it when considering how to spend precious campaign time. Use it before spending campaign resources. Use it before making any campaign decisions:

**You must identify your targeted supporters AND get them out to vote for you!**

If you spend your time, money or campaign resources on anything else, you will not win.

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