

X. Building Coalitions and Outreach to Civic Organizations

Civic organizations can play an important role in an election campaign. While the development of civic organizations may be relatively low, there has been active, positive political participation by civic organizations in various election campaigns. The campaign should make a list of the civic groups in the electoral district that could be supportive; think not only of officially registered groups, but also "informal organizations" such as church groups, youth groups, and university groups that the campaign can use to reach additional voters and supporters.

Cultivation of civic organizations should be done in the early stages of the pre election campaign, when the party leaders have time to meet with the civic leaders to discuss mutual areas of concern and support. The party must allow time for the relationships to grow for the civic support to be effective.

Civic groups may help your campaign in a number of ways.

ENDORSEMENT

Simply by announcing that an organization supports the party's list of candidates can often be a boost to the campaign. The campaign may be able to use the organization's name on its posters or literature. This support is particularly effective if the organization is well known and respected.

MOBILIZE MEMBERSHIP

Once the endorsement is made, ask the group to contact their membership either by phone or through a mailing or newsletter to announce their support and recruit supporters for campaign work such as door to door canvassing, etc.

PRESS EVENTS

There are a number of press activities civic organizations can provide the campaign. For example, they can organize a press conference announcing their support of the party, and at this time they can speak out against the party's opponents. It is often more credible if a group or someone other than the campaign delivers the message. Civic organizations can send out press releases endorsing the party as a result of the party program on specific issues of concern to the civic organization.

RESEARCH

A civic organization can provide information on their area of expertise and help research the impact of legislation on the community, county, region, district or country. In addition, they can draft position papers, provide "talking points" to party candidates, or even help prepare speeches for the party leadership on issues they are concerned about.

PUBLIC EVENTS

When a civic group is holding an event, ask them to circulate a sign-up sheet for people interested in supporting the party's campaign; a group can even hold an event on the campaign's behalf. If the campaign is holding a rally, fundraiser, or press conference, ask the group to invite their membership to the event.

OUTREACH

Civic group leaders can often help introduce the party candidate to other groups and opinion leaders and the civic groups can use their contacts to persuade other groups to support or endorse the campaign.

RULES FOR WORKING WITH CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

In the party's work with civic organizations, bear in mind the following rules:

1. Ask for concrete, quantifiable contributions to the campaign. One thousand petition signatures will help the campaign more than the vague promise of support.
2. Verify that the civic group is really doing what it said it would do. For example the party does not want to rely on the promise of 100,000 signatures on a petition if the result will be only 5,000 signatures.
3. Remember that the party's relationship with civic groups is a two-way street. If the party does not go out of its way to help its supporters, ie., civic groups, then the civic groups may not be there the next time the party needs their help.

XI. GET OUT THE VOTE

It does no good to have spent months persuading voters that the party is the best party if voters do not go to the polls on Election Day and vote. Individual voters often feel that their one single vote does not matter. They need to know that they are part of something bigger and that their support for the party and its candidates is important. Often a simple reminder - either a phone call or piece of literature - can be enough to ensure that they vote.

The "get out the vote" (GOTV) effort is often viewed as a separate phase of the campaign. It is generally the final push of the campaign in the last two or three weeks before election day. In fact, it should be viewed as the final phase toward which everything else in the campaign builds. If you compare a political campaign to a business selling a product, in this case selling the party to the voters, then Election Day is the only day in which you can make the sale. It is important that the voters be motivated enough to "buy your product" on that one day. The deadline for all the campaign and particularly the GOTV part is the close of the polls on Election Day. Either you are prepared to make that final push or you are not. There are no second chances.

The party should only remind those voters who support the party to vote on election day. It is therefore important to have spent time identifying which voters will support you well in advance of the GOTV effort. Once you have developed a database or list of supporters, it is important to communicate with them in the short period of time just before the election. It is therefore important to budget enough time, money and people and have a realistic plan of how you will get in touch with your supporters during the last two to three weeks of the campaign.

This is what the campaign is really about-contacting voters-with the simple objective in mind: To identify those voters who will vote for the party; those who will never vote for the party and those who can be persuaded to vote for the party.

Get Out the Vote: Tools and Techniques

While the tools in voter contact and GOTV are similar, the philosophy that drives their use is quite different. In planning a voter contact program, the goal is to deliver a series of contacts-readily recognizable variations of the campaign message-to persuade voters over a long period of time.

In GOTV operations, the goal is somewhat different. Instead of working to deliver a series of similar messages over an extended period of time, the campaign must develop a plan that enables it to deliver the GOTV message as many times as possible within the last two to three weeks of the campaign to targeted voters. The following is a list of tools and techniques that can get the job done if they are systematically used together.

TELEPHONES

GOTV can perform the following functions:

- Encourage voters to turn out.
- Provide basic voting information such as poll locations and hours.
- Offer rides to voters.
- Ask favourable voters to volunteers to help with the GOTV effort.
- Provide communication link between the parts of your GOTV operation that allow for maximum coordination.

GOTV should begin the week before election day. Because of the volume of calls the campaign must make during this period, it will be necessary to increase the number of telephones available for use. This is something that the campaign must plan for.

Remember, *you have hours - not days* - to complete your calls on Election Day. To complete all the Election Day calls you have to make, you will need many more phones than you have used previously. Too many campaigns come to this realization too late. The campaign has to increase its phone capacity or it must limit its Election Day phone calls. The campaign can expand its telephone capacity by recruiting more sites.

When the campaign decided to recruit additional volunteer phones, it should avoid home callers unless there is no other way to meet your goals. If you have to use home callers, keep a copy of the list you gave them to call. If you suspect they are not making the calls, have the list called from the central phone location.

HOW MANY PHONES DO YOU NEED?

The following formula can be used to calculate the number of volunteer phones a campaign will need based on the number of completed calls to be made.

Telephone Allocation

1. Number of GOTV households with phones $\times .75$ = Number of completed calls
☛ [10,000 HH \times 75% = 7,500 completed calls]
2. Number of completed calls / 25 completed calls per hour = Number of hours necessary to complete calls with one phone
☛ [7,500 completed calls divided by 25 calls per hour = 300 hours]

3. Number of hours necessary to complete calls with one phone / Number of Election Day calling hours =

≈ [300 hours divided by 10 Election Day calling hours (9AM to 7PM) =]

4. Number of phones necessary to call GOTV voter list once on Election Day.

≈ 30 phones necessary to complete 7,500 calls in 10 hours

The number of GOTV households with a phone is multiplied by .75 because it is assumed that on any list with 100% good numbers, only 75% of the people could be reached with three phone calls. Note: These numbers are only good for the GOTV target calls because they have already been identified during the voter contact phase of the campaign,

Checkers

A checker system is a tried and true campaign technique. The system works as follows: The campaign provides each checker with a list of targeted favourable voters. Checkers simply visit the polls at designated times on election day and check with the party's observers to identify the favourable voters who have voted. The checkers information is given to phone banks, who use it constantly to narrow the remaining list of favourable voters who have not voted.

The advantages of a checker system are obvious. During Election Day it enables the campaign to constantly limit and redefine the universe of favourable voters you must encourage to vote. A checker system is the ultimate in GOTV targetting. Unless you have the resources to utilize the information generated by your checkers, it can be an useless exercise.

The campaign must determine whether or not to organize a checker system. It must determine whether the information gathered will be useful. The question is does the campaign have the ability to update phone lists quickly with checker information? Does the campaign have enough volunteers for this? Will the information gathered by checkers make your entire GOTV operation so much more efficient that it is worth the time?

Transportation

Providing transportation to the polls is an excellent technique to make sure your voters -especially the elderly and women with children vote on election day. This program should be integrated into the general GOTV plan. The scope of the program depends upon the number of donated or rented car, vans, and buses at the campaign's disposal.

Telephone banks, door to door canvassers and mail should publicize the transportation program. GOTV targets should be asked if they need a ride to the polls during the GOTV calls that are made in the final week before the election. On election day, the campaign should have a transportation coordination site that is separate from the main headquarters and phone banks. The transportation headquarters must have sufficient parking spaces and be centrally located to the areas in which the campaign expects to receive most of its transportation requests.

Calls that come into the campaign for rides should be verified by a call back to ensure that the calls are genuine and the riders will be ready to go to the polls when the ride arrives.

Mail

GOTV mail delivers the campaign "turnout" message directly to your identified voters in a direct and personal manner. GOTV mail motivates the voters into action.

GOTV mail can serve four basic purposes:

- ✓ Remind voters of where they vote and the times they can vote;
- ✓ Deliver a brief positive message encouraging the identified voters to vote;
- ✓ Emphasize the importance of the election;
- ✓ Publicize the a phone number for transportation and invite people to volunteer for GOTV.

Like GOTV phone calls, GOTV mail has a very simple message: Vote! Good GOTV mail stresses the importance of the election, gives a phone number for anyone who needs a ride on election day and provides the address (if possible) of the voter's respective polling place.

The timing of the GOTV mail is important. Ideally, the mail would arrive three or four days before election day.

Visibility

Distribution of literature at factory gates, at busy intersections and at market places and tram/bus stops are all ways to increase the visibility of your party and heighten voters' awareness of the coming election.

Be very careful where you schedule visibility programs. Remember, there are many voters we do not want to remind about Election Day. Plan visibility programs only in areas or with groups where your party enjoys overwhelming popularity. Do not shoot yourself in the foot.

Data Retrieval Teams [DARTs]

The ability to create a turnout model depends on being able to get turnout numbers from key polling stations at specific times. These numbers are best collected by teams of volunteers who have a limited number of polling stations (usually four to eight) to check at assigned times during the voting. The data retrieval teams will need help to check with the party's voter observer at each polling station to obtain information, maps and knowledge of the specific area. In addition to collecting turnout numbers, the data retrieval teams are the campaign's eyes and ears on the street. If there is a problem at any polling place, the team should report the problem to the campaign headquarters.

Election Day Problems

Unfortunately, voter intimidation does occur. Methods include, signs at voting places threatening arrest, presence of police or simply allowing the election administration to break down, thereby creating chaos. All election day instruction sheets should include a report section for volunteers in event they see a problem at a polling place. A review of the election rules must be a part of the election day training.

Poll closing

Getting the voters to the polls will be useless unless they can actually vote. The law provided that anyone in line at 7PM when the poll closes may vote as long as they remain in line. It is the campaign's job to keep them in line. Do what it takes. Feed them. Entertain them. Encourage them. Keep them in line no matter how long the line. Once the polling station closes, the votes will be counted.

Care and feeding of election day volunteers

Election day volunteers need to remain focused on their tasks for the entire day. To help them do this the campaign must provide for their personal needs, starting with ensuring that all election day volunteers have voted before they report they start. Food and drinks should be prepared for all volunteers. Contact numbers and phone cards should be provided to volunteers who are in the field so they can easily communicate back to headquarters.