

CAMPAIGN TIPS

YCFDW GUIDE TO
RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL
POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

Note: This document is by no means complete . It is constantly being updated with contributions from elected officials, candidates, staff, volunteers and people like you.
If you have a tip to add, please contact: lindro@lindro.com

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Democratic Women



BEFORE you throw in your hat ...

CHECKLIST



- Don't decide to run for office impulsively.** Many successful candidates make the decision to run and lay groundwork years before an election.
- Make sure the decision is YOUR choice.** Don't be pressured into it.
- Do it because you want to serve the community through that office.** Don't do it because you don't like the incumbent or the other candidates or you're mad because the township allowed an industrial park to be built off your backyard.
- Campaigns are expensive — Expect to fund at least the preliminary stage of your campaign.** If you are a good fundraiser and have capable volunteers, you can grow your war chest.
- Campaigns are time-consuming** — It's not fair to supporters if you're going to be a "Weekend Campaigner." Races aren't won by part timers.
- Research:** If you want to win, embrace the issues that concern voters. Don't make the mistake of assuming your issues are theirs. Read the papers — especially letters to the editor. Read opinion polls. Attend civic meetings. Attend a focus group. Check out internet forums on local news sites.
- Know your prospective opponents and the incumbent.** More research. Read everything you can find about them and their records.
- Take a hard look at yourself** — Make sure you and your spouse have an impeccable personal, financial and professional records.
- Develop a thick skin** — You will be the victim of ad hominem attacks and your response can turn on or turn away voters.
- Consult family members** — Living in the public eye will have ramifications for them as well as you.
- Practice public speaking.** Hire a coach if necessary.
- Constantly watch your physical image.** Carry yourself with confidence. Pay attention to your wardrobe and grooming habits. Use mouthwash and deodorant... and go light on the cologne.

YOUR MOST IMPORTANT DECISIONS:

YOUR CAMPAIGN MANAGER and YOUR FUNDRAISING CHAIRMAN

The two people who will win you elections. Many campaigns fail from the get-go because a candidate chooses a friend or a relative rather than experience for these jobs. A political campaign neophyte should NEVER start at managerial levels. These positions are tough, time-consuming, and require specific managerial style, legal savvy and people skills.

An inexperienced fundraiser may manage to some money but an experienced fundraiser knows how to set up lucrative projects and shmooze donors into committing to you for the duration. Your Campaign Manager must be able to field questions, supervise events, direct volunteers, keep peace in the ranks and keep you on schedule and free you up.

These are the two campaign jobs worthy of a campaign paid expense. It may well be the best money you spend .



ESTABLISH Campaign Message & Theme

CHECKLIST

EXAMPLES OF A CAMPAIGN THEME:

- Passage or Repeal of a law
- Reform
- Lower Taxes

- REASONS** why the average voter should support it. Never forget that your base consists of average people who need to connect with you. You have to target and define those connection.
- RESEARCH** the concerns of voters in your district. Don't assume YOUR issues are their issues. Find a Focus Group in your district. Read letters to the editor. If there is any internet forums based in your district, tune in. Newspapers and Local TV often offer forums on their websites.
- THEME** and **MESSAGE** can bolster a campaign **ONLY** if it is powerful enough to sustain the campaign till election day.
- AVOID one-issue messages!** Don't base your campaign on a single issue alone.

MONEY SAVING TIP: FOCUS ON YOUR STATIONERY.

**Listing supporters on your imprinted stationery:
If you list them, always - always ask them to sign a release.**

"Stuff" happens. Political campaigns can fray nerves and sometimes people withdraw support. If a name is listed on your stationery, a disgruntled supporter may demand that it be deleted. S/he can even threaten a law suit if you don't. This can be expensive if you have cases of imprinted stationery destined for the trash.

Omitting supporter names

You can choose to omit supporter names on the printed piece and add them yourself down the right side of the stationery. This method gives you leeway not only to delete names, but also to add anyone as the campaign progresses.



Common and high grade stationery

Order your high grade stationery to correspond with super supporters and important officials, at the same time you order your everyday stationery. Since the printer does not have to do a separate press run, this eliminate separate set-up fees. Also, the more imprints you order, the lower the price per imprint.



ANNOUNCING Your Campaign

CHECKLIST

HOW TO DO IT:

- ANNOUNCEMENT LETTER** with logo and letterhead going out to Super Voters, Supporters and the Media.
- An Event Announcement**— invitation printed with your logo via mail and email.
- Successive appearances at various events set up by supporters.**
Typically, an appetizer and soft drink affair in a rented hall. Rentals of community buildings such as firehalls, churches and American Legion/VFW rooms are cheap or free to members. Campaign or Party Headquarters may be FREE. Decorate with balloons and streamers and posters of the candidate. Supply refreshments if a caterer is out of the question. Avoid alcoholic beverages.

BARE ESSENTIALS:

- A Logo**— small enough for a business card, big enough for a yard sign
- A Website**— A key communication center for voters to access candidate information, blogs, and learn about scheduled events. It is also a 24/7 tool for accepting donations and volunteers. 90 percent of the public now uses the Internet for political information.
- Printed Matter**— Stationery, Donation Envelopes, Business cards
- Informational Matter**— InfoCard, flyer, brochure with photos

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

- Buttons** with your logo and website address.
- Posters** — Large Display image of Candidate and logo. These sturdy, coated signs are used throughout the duration of the campaign at rallies, house parties, speeches and all other public events. When they aren't been used, they are displayed within Campaign and/or Party Headquarters. The earlier you order these, the more mileage you will get from them.
- Balloons with your logo** —These are also good for Street Fairs, Carnivals and Picnics where children carry your message through the crowds.
- Giveaway items** with name and logo such as : small note pads, pens or pencils, fans, etc. **Fundraiser Items** such as: T-Shirts, Caps, Mugs, etc.

MONEY SAVING TIP:

STARTING OUT ON A SHOESTRING



With little money in the campaign chest, do a limited mailing first — a letter asking for donations from donors who have given in the past and super voters. You can find out this information by contacting someone who has run or worked on a campaign in the past. Supervoter information is available from your local party or County Bureau of Elections.



8 “Cs” of a Superior Campaign Slogan

CHECKLIST



- A Good Slogan is **COMPATIBLE** to the campaign theme.
- A Good Slogan is **CLEAR**— simple to understand and say.
- A Good Slogan is **CONCISE** — just short, sweet soundbyte.
- A Good Slogan is **CONNECTED** to voters, their concerns, emotions and the political environment.
- A Good Slogan is **COMPELLING**.
- A Good Slogan is **CREDIBLE**.
- A Good Slogan is **CONSISTENT** and repeated in all campaign advertising.
- A Good Slogan is **CONSTANT** and must endure throughout the entire campaign. If you decide to base a slogan on a single issue, make sure that issue will be as compelling on election day as it was on announcement day.

Memorable US Presidential Campaign Slogans

- 1844** James K. Polk — “Reannexation of Texas and reoccupation of Oregon” (defining a goal)
- 1856** John C. Fremont — “Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Speech, Free Men, and Fremont” (a play on the candidate’s name)
- 1864** Abraham Lincoln — “Don’t swap horses in the middle of the stream” (plea to consistency and leadership)
- 1884** Grover Cleveland — “Blaine, Blaine, James G. Blaine, The Continental Liar from the State of Maine” (negative to opponent)
- 1884** James Blaine— “Ma, Ma, Where’s my Pa, Gone to the White House, Ha, Ha, Ha” (negative to opponent)
- 1888** Benjamin Harrison — “Rejuvenated Republicanism” (alliterative)
- 1896** William McKinley — “Patriotism, Protection, and Prosperity” (alliterative)
- 1900** William McKinley — “A Full Dinner Pail” (campaign promise)
- 1916** Woodrow Wilson — “He kept us out of war” (reputation)
- 1924** Calvin Coolidge — “Keep cool with Coolidge” (play on name)
- 1928** Herbert Hoover — “A chicken in every pot and a car in every garage” (campaign promise)
- 1952** Dwight Eisenhower — “I Like Ike” (rhyme)
- 2008** Barack Obama — “Yes We Can!” (hope and promise)



FUNDRAISING FUEL to keep the Campaign RUNNING

CHECKLIST

REASONS PEOPLE GIVE

- Number ONE Reason People GIVE: **BECAUSE THEY WERE ASKED!**
- They were **ASKED** a **SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH** or **FIFTH TIME**.
- SPECIFIC PURPOSE**—They were told what their money was to be used for.
- SPECIFIC DEADLINE**—They were told their money was needed by a certain date.
- SPECIFIC AMOUNT**— They were given specific amounts for various goals. “\$20 will pay for printing and mailing of 40 postcards.”
- Ideology and agreement with Issues**
- Connection to the Candidate**, family, supporter or member of the committee
- Ego**
- Hope for reward**
- To join the Bandwagon**

REASONS PEOPLE DON'T GIVE

- Number ONE Reason People **DON'T GIVE: BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT ASKED!**
- Number TWO: They were not asked a **SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH** or **FIFTH TIME**.
- They are not asked for a **SPECIFIC AMOUNT**. The amount is not quantified in easily understood terms: “\$1000 will pay for a mailing to 5,000 people.” “\$100 will pay for the hot dogs at the campaign picnic.”
- An **URGENT DEADLINE** is not provided: “We need to get the word before filing date.”
- They feel **IGNORED** — A personal call from the Candidate saying their support is greatly appreciated.
- They were **NOT THANKED** Personal thank you notes are imperative no matter how small the donation.

CHECKLIST FOR SOLICITATIONS

- Donor Information:** Verification of name, address, work and home phone, occupation and donating history . **KEEP AN UP-DATED LIST.**
- Amount to be requested.**
- Identify issues of concern and connection to the Candidate.**
- Compose a brief statement** regarding the mission of the Candidate.
- Talking points** which identify current events and Candidate's favorable stand/solution.
- Follow up** with unanswered questions by the donor and/or a Thank You note or call from the Candidate for the donation.
- In-Kind Donations**— Can you use donors' product or services in addition to — or in lieu of — a cash donation? **Ask for it.**



Writing the FUNDRAISING LETTER

CHECKLIST



- GREETING** — if possible, address letters to individual names. If you don't have the software to do this, address to "Friends of _____" or "Supporters of _____" and use the Candidates first and last name. Not everyone will know who the "Joe" in "friends of Joe" is and there may be several "Joes" running in the election. Doing this helps imprint your candidate branding.
- Opening paragraph** — Uplifting! Good news or a series of good news bullets.
- Describe what's coming up next—**
 - What it is.
 - Why and How you're going to do it.
 - Results you expect.
 - If it's an event: location.
 - If it's a broadcast, include dates/times and stations/channels.
- Ask for money—**
- Ask for a **SPECIFIC AMOUNT.**
- QUANTIFY** what that amount will buy in easily understood terms: "\$1000 will pay for a mailing to 5,000 people." "\$100 will pay for the hot dogs at the campaign picnic."
- Provide an **URGENT DEADLINE**
- Tone — ASK** with the emphasis on donors and others in the district benefitting by this support. Remember that you are the hope for the district's future. Don't sound desperate or apologetic. Don't beg. Donors — and voters — will pick up on the tone and people don't respond well to desperate candidates. It rings of "loser."
- Remind supporters that your past success is due to their contributions.** If you don't accept PAC contributions, let them know that their donations make up your entire budget.
- Thank them in advance at the end of the letter.** —don't forget to send follow-up thank you notes to donors— your best tool for follow-up donations.
- P.S. add-on—**
 - Create an enticing, short message to encourage reading the entire message.
 - Reinforce the main message.
 - Re-emphasize the urgency.
- Make the reader turn the page** if it's more than one page long— Don't finish your thought on page one. Break it off and continue on page 2.
- Teasers for mailing envelopes or e-mail subject lines—** "Wouldn't you like a cleaner community?" or a call to action, "Help us bring accountability to (local, county, state) government!" If you aren't printing out a new batch of envelopes with the teaser printed on it, you can have stickers printed up.



FUNDRAISING TOOLS

CHECKLIST

ALWAYS REMEMBER:

- All Politics are LOCAL:** Raise Money on Main Street and **SPEND money on Main Street.** Don't go across the state or the country to find a cheaper printer.
- Regarding costs: **FREE is better than cheap.**
- What you **NET** is significantly more important than what you **RAISE.**
- Target your donors**

- The CANDIDATE is ALWAYS the PRIME FUND RAISER** and should devote significant time (party manuals suggest up to 20 hours per week) to personal solicitation of campaign funds from donors. **NO ONE ELSE** can raise money as effectively as the Candidate, especially those donors with big pockets. The candidate should always be the main solicitor from important donors, enlisting support people at face-to-face meetings.
- The Donor Envelope is your second best fundraising tool.** This self addressed envelope should go into every single mailing and be included in every door-to-door packet and present at every single event.
- Fundraising Letters via:**
 - US Mail Marketing Campaigns— Include brochures or Candidate Info cards, donor envelopes and other campaign literature and give-aways.
 - You can fit more weight into a bulk mail envelope for a minimum cost — as much as 3.3 oz for less than half the price of first class stamp. Bulk mail can be disguised as first class mail by using special stamps or franking.
 - We do suggest that you separate key donors who give over a certain amount, use your good stationery and mail first class.
- Email Marketing Campaigns** — These are those “professional” emails that look like web pages. They come into your email box as newsletters, announcements, coupons and ads. Extremely cost effective, they can be sent to your database for as low as 50 for a penny. They contain click-on links to web pages and on-line donation links.
- PHONE BANK** Volunteers to call donors, answer questions and ask for support.
- Your WEB SITE**— Your web site should have the capability of taking credit cards and checks. Political contribution handlers such as ACT BLUE and money exchange sites like PayPal are low cost methods of taking contributions. Be sure your donors fill out contribution disclaimer forms.
- PLEDGES**— Try to sign donors up for monthly, weekly or bi-monthly contributions. A weekly contribution of \$10 over an election period 6 months is better than a single \$100 donation.
- EVENTS**— **Bake Sales and picnics to House Parties and \$1000 a plate dinners.** ALL prime collecting ground for contributions and opportune occasions to speak, answer questions and collect donations.



BRANDING

It's not just for cattle

Branding creates a response from targeted voters based on impressions and positive reinforcement. It uses identifying symbols and words to distinguish a candidate from the opposition.

- 1. BRAND EARLY and DEEP:** Some candidates, in an effort to save money during unopposed Primary Elections, do not start building their image till after the Primary. While these wannabes are saving money, they are losing critical votes. If the opposition has several candidates vying for one slot, they have been branding themselves months before the pennypincher steps in.
- 2. THE CANDIDATE WHO STEPS IN LATE FINDS NO ONE KNOWS HIS/HER NAME** while November opponent is well on the way to a win through the branding done during the primary competition.
- 3. ART OF THE SIMPLE MESSAGE:** Create and communicate one branding message as an umbrella for all issues. Candidates sometimes make the mistake of trying to be all things in different ways. This complicates your image and at least one of your messages is guaranteed to alienate votes. Simple messages that can encompass an entire campaign.
- 4. KNOW YOUR CONSTITUENCY:** You take your best shot but ultimately voters determine what your branding means. Your branding can go negative naturally or the opposition will take your brand and twists it in an unfavorable way. Barry Goldwater's '64 bid for the presidency was a prime example of this.
- 5. POSITIVENESS:** Establish your branding on an uplifting message such as the good of your constituency, state or country— a vision for something better, a positive overall message.
- 6. JARGON:** If your positioning statements and campaign speeches use acronyms or slang, many won't understand. A good test of effectiveness is to run things by people over 60 and people under 25.
- 7. CONSISTENCY:** in everything that comes out of Campaign Headquarters, every speech, every debate, every appearance, every piece of campaign literature. Make sure every single member of your campaign understands your branding. from campaign directors and to phone bank to and door-to-door volunteers. They are the ones who go face-to-face with voters.
- 8. CONNECTEDNESS:** Great campaigning achieves a high level of human connectivity. This is when voters can speak of you as an individual, not as part of a party or an election. "He thinks like me." "She holds ideals similar to my own." "His are the kind of ethics I have."



MONEY SAVING TIP: FOCUS on PR.

PR is free. Advertising is not.

Brands are built on what people say about you— NOT what you're saying about yourself. People say good things about you when you have a great message that connects. Then they spread the word about you.



9 ALLIANCES

\$\$\$ave Money

CHECKLIST



- Two candidates in the same party** running for the same office in adjoining districts can pool their money into one brochure or one postcard. Same is true for elections with more than one open seat to fill. Other “marriages” are two candidates running for different offices in the same municipal election like: Mayor and City Councilperson
- DOUBLE THE POWER:** Not only do alliances save money, a joint message can pack a **Double Wallop!** Two or more voices championing the same issue are more powerful than one.
- Buddy-Up on a Single Piece... or an entire package.**
- When you “buddy-up” with another candidate — especially when you share a similar message — **you cut your ad costs in half.**
- When you buddy-up, **you cut your printing costs**, too. 20,000 copies of one brochure are much cheaper than 10,000 copies each of two different brochures.
- You don’t have to be “married” to the other candidate for life.** You may choose to do a single piece together... or most of your campaign.
- Buddy-Up with More Than One Other Candidate**
- Another option, especially for a **Powerful End-of-Campaign PUSH** is to enlist several party candidates in a **“Go To Vote” Postcard or brochure.** After it’s mailed out to voters, the remaining pieces can be distributed at the polls by a combined team of poll workers from all the candidates involved, thus covering more ground than one lone candidate.
- Alliances Save Time, Manpower and Lend Support**
- Stage rallies together** — splitting costs of hall rentals, catering costs decorations, signage and many other expenses. Whether it’s sharing a booth at the Country Fair or the cost of \$1,000 a plate dinner, you’re doubling your savings and your contacts.
- Candidates also use **alliances to support each other in public forums.**
- POOL YOUR VOLUNTEERS:** Some smart candidates pool volunteers to help each other, especially in a crunch such as getting a mailing out the door.
- KNOCK ON MORE DOORS—** Candidates running for State Office can **cover more ground** when they team up with local candidate volunteers going door-to-door. And that door opens both ways.



YARD SIGNS

The Art of Simple Design



- 1. LOGO AS SIGNAGE.** If you started with a simply designed, very clean logo, you've done well. You can keep your branding using your logo as basis for your signage.
- 2. DRIVE-BY TIME IS 3-6 SECONDS!**
- 3. MOST VIEWING IS DONE FROM A CAR.** Campaign signs are usually placed in a yard or a window. Most viewing is done from vehicles traveling **five to 45 MPH**.
- 4. In that 3-8 seconds, you must accomplish two things:**
 - **Grab the viewers' attention**
 - **Communicate your message**
- 5. Viewers only need to remember your name and political office** for which you're running.
- 6. The fewer the letters a sign contains, the more visible the words will be and the quicker the sign will be read.**
- 7. Choose smooth, readable type fonts.**
- 8. There is limited space on a lawn sign. Crowding with unnecessary text and graphics blurs the visibility of the name.**
- 9. If you have a logo that was designed to be visible, use it. It is part of your branding.**
- 10. If you have a logo with distracting graphic elements, a long slogan, consider using just the candidate name and office.**
- 11. Use last name only—BUT ONLY** if no one with the same last name is running in the same election. That does not mean same office. It means anyplace on the ballot.



How to build a BETTER WEBSITE



- 1. Create a graphic design that revolves around the candidate.** Most candidate websites are cookie cutter in terms of design. Stand out by a graphic identity that actually speaks to who the candidate is.
- 2. Give visitors stuff to do besides just give you money.** Ask them to knock on doors for you. Ask them to plan a campaign event. Ask them to write letters to the editors at local papers. Ask them to hold their own voter registration drives. Use your site to invite people to participate and give them tools they can use to do it.
- 3. Make fundraising pitches specific and tie them to events in the news.** Ask volunteers to give money to run an ad in a local newspaper in response to specific opponent attack. People are more likely to give online if the pitch is specific and timely.
- 4. Cut down on the number of emails, particularly the ones begging for money.** The more emails you send out the less of an impact they will have. Don't turn off your volunteers by sending them too many emails. I'd aim for two a week at most - one providing an update on what's new with the campaign and another fundraising pitch.
- 5. Don't blog unless you are going to embrace the spirit of blogging.** Write like you are sending an email to five close friends and not like a lawyer. Read other blogs. Link to other bloggers. Allow comments.
- 6. Blog once and have it automatically go out to your social forums,** especially those that offer "fans": like Facebook, MySpace and others.
- 7. Publish as much content as possible via RSS feeds.** News. Video. Audio. Help spread your content by making it easy for people to subscribe to, download and publish to their own site.
- 8. If you go negative, try to be clever about it.** Funny spreads a lot better online than heavy-handed and mean. Use humor to make distinctions between you and your opponent.
- 9. Provide users with a behind the scenes look at your campaign.** Produce videos that show the candidate in private moments. Have campaign staffers blog about the day-to-day campaign grind. Share some tidbits about your strategy and invite feedback. Pictures, pictures, pictures.
- 10. Create a community around your site.** Ultimately, by creating engaging content and giving users ways to participate in your campaign online you will end up creating an online community in support of the candidate. That is what you should strive for.