Winning Local Ballot Measures

Building a Strategic Campaign Plan

Association of Washington Cities
March 2004

Prepared by
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1. Fundraising

Strategic Considerations

- Set a goal
- Budget drives Strategic Decisions
- Finance Chair, Committee
- Lead - Large, Medium & Small Contributions
- Campaign Cash flow
- Who Best to Ask

Best Prospects

- Most Likely Orgs. & Individuals based upon Measure
- Traditional Political Givers
- Previous Campaign Contributors
- Donors of local/state Elected Officials
- Compatible Non-profits
- Political Party contributors
- Major Local Fundraising Events
- Constituency Organizations
- Business and Labor
- Vendors

Keep in mind

- Gather Lists, Consolidate
- Low Overhead, In-kind Contributions
- Credit Card option
- Mail with Phone Follow up (Message Reminders)
- Electeds/Opinion leaders Help Make the Ask
- Give Deadlines -- tied to Campaign Needs
- Thanks and Ask Again!
Campaign Work Plan

Fundraising

Most Likely Suspects (Individual/Groups/Orgs.)?
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Who Best to Make the Ask?
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  •

Most credible voice(s) on this issue?
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  •

Lists -- Ideal Membership/Organization or donor lists?
  •
  •
  •
II. Public Opinion Research

Strategic Guide for campaign

- Timing of election – Best Voters for you
- Budget Considerations
- Other issues/candidates on ballot
- Ballot Title – Split sample tests?
- Allies, Opponents, Up for Grabs
- Credible Messengers – Titles
- Geographic and demographic data for targeting – Who, Where, What Message
- Internal Use – Expectations
- Tracker questions

Sample Survey

- Mood of Local Voters – Right Direction/Wrong Track
- If the election were held today…
- Tax sensitivity/thresh hold
- Messages in support
- Messages in opposition
- Key elements of plan – positive and negative
- Now that you know more, if the election were held today…
- Geographic/Demographics

Information on Voters

- Who responds to what message
- Absentee Voters
- Election Day Voters
- Frequent Voters – Vote all or most of the time
- Infrequent Voters – Only vote in major elections
- Party Affiliation
- Geographic/Demographic Information
- Education
- Children in Household
- Labor Household
Campaign Work Plan

Research

Best Reasons to Vote Yes

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Best Reasons to Vote No

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Timing of the election – Options

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III. Strategic Guide

Timing of the Election

- Public Opinion
- Other Issues and Candidates
- Turnout and Likely Make-up of Electorate

Voter Targets

- Votes Needed to Win
- Turning out the base – YES voters
- Persuading Undecided Voters
- Neutralizing No Voters

Reaching the Voters

- Message of the campaign
- Earned Media
- Paid Media
- Direct Voter Contact
- Grassroots / Field Organizing
- Visibility

Greatest Assets – how to Capitalize

- 
- 
- 

Greatest Liabilities – how to Overcome

- 
-
Campaign Work Plan

Strategic Guide

• Greatest Assets – How to capitalize

• Greatest Liabilities – How to overcome

• Timing - When and Why

• Votes Needed to Win

• Who – Which voters are likely yes, no and undecided

• Budget Goal

• Message

• Coalition – Best Messengers

• Voter Contact - Persuasion
  Direct Mail, Phone, Door-to-door, Paid Media, Earned Media, Grassroots

• Turnout of Voters
  Absentee
  Election Day

• Campaign Profile/Visibility/Level of Debate
IV. Message Development

Message is not a Slogan

1st. Research

2nd. Message

3rd. Theme/Slogan

Message will win or lose a campaign

- Message can give meaning and purpose or say nothing
- Message can give focus or add chaos
- Message can inspire and unite or tear down and divide
- Message can motivate or cause complacency
- Message can differentiate or make the same
- Message can help or harm
The Seven C’s of an effective Message

1. **Chosen**
   - Research based
   - Targeted to specific voters/audiences
   - Right message to right audience at the right time

2. **Clear**
   - Simple, makes the point
   - Commonly understood
   - Coherent, logical
   - Passes the “elevator” test

3. **Credible**
   - Believable, makes sense
   - Connects to common understanding
   - No “take my word for it” needed

4. **Compelling**
   - Makes a persuasive argument
   - Connects personally with voters/audience
   - Breaks through the clutter

5. **Contrasts**
   - Why the difference matters
   - Offers voters a choice
   - Clear comparison to the alternative
   - Not “me too”

6. **Controlled**
   - Always makes the main point
   - Returns to message, despite distractions
   - Offense not defense

7. **Consistent**
   - Repetitious
   - Constant, continuous
   - Incorporates into all communications, formats, messengers etc.
## Campaign Work Plan

### Message Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winning</th>
<th>Losing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Us on Us</td>
<td>Them on us</td>
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V. Targeting

Purpose

• Turnout Yes

• Persuade Undecided

• Neutralize Opposition

Resources

• Polling data
  o Geographic
  o Demographic
  o Persuadables

• Previous Elections – Voting Patterns

• Voter File

Every Voter

• Gender

• Age (most)

• Address / Household

• 55-60% with Phone

• Voter Frequency – Turnout History

• Absentee / Election Day Voter
Campaign Work Plan

Targeting

Sample Scenario:

Registered Voters 1000
Turnout Projection 40% 1000 (reg. voters) x .4 = 400
Votes Needed to Win 50%+1 400 x .5 + 1 = 201 Yes Votes
Votes Needed to Win 60% +1 400 x .6 + 1 = 241 Yes Votes

Votes Needed to Win

Registered Voters ______
Turnout Projection 40% ______(Reg. voters) x .4 = ______
( substitute projection from County Auditor)
Votes Needed to Win 50%+1 ______ x .5 + 1 = _____ Yes Votes
Votes Needed to Win 60% +1 ______ x .6 + 1 = _____ Yes Votes

City of Woodland

Registered Voters ______ ______ HH
Absentee Voters ______ ______ HH
Voters with Phone Numbers ______ ______ HH

0/4 Voters – Total ______
Female Voters 35-44 ______
4 / 4, 3 / 4, and 2 / 4 voter with phones ______
VI. Direct Voter Contact

Purpose - Targeted Group of Voters

- Voter ID – Yes, No, Undecided
- Solidify Yes Votes
- Persuade Undecided
- Neutralize No Votes
- Turn out

Voter ID - Identification (Early in the campaign)

- Request voter by name
- Identify yourself by name, volunteer with the campaign
- As you may know there’s an upcoming election for X
- If the election were held today, Yes/No.
- If undecided, do you lean Yes/No.
- Short statement on message
- Thank you, appreciate your time and consideration

Voter Persuasion – UNDECIDEDS

- 3 Pieces of Direct Mail
- Call Absentee Households first
- Then call election day Voter Households
- Volunteer with the campaign
- Key messages in favor
- Re-identify – Yes, No, Still Undecided
- Possible GOTV or continued persuasion

Get-out-the-Vote – YES Voters (3 weeks out – thru election day)

- 1-2 Pieces of Direct Mail
- Absentee voters 2-3 three weeks before election.
- Election Day voters – Weekend before Election & Election Day
- Volunteer with the campaign
- Calling to remind you about election on Tuesday.
- Have you mailed absentee ballot yet?
- If yes, thank you. Is anyone else in household is voter – have they voted?
VII. Staffing & Structure

Campaign Committee

- Chair/Co-Chairs (1-2)
- Executive Committee (4-6), Kitchen Cabinet
- Steering Committee (10-50+) / Finance Committee
- Endorsers – Citizens for X (100s+)

Staff

- Campaign Manager/Director
- Field/Speaker’s Bureau
- Press/Communications
- Administration/Volunteer Coordination
- Others, depending on strategy & Volunteer Capabilities

Primary Responsibility

- Day to Day Management – Campaign Manager, Chair/Co-chair as appropriate
- Key Decisions, Strategy – Campaign Manager, Executive Committee
- Fundraising, Strategic Updates – Steering Committee
- Coalition Building – Endorsers
VIII. Timeline

Operations

- Key Election Dates
  - Measure referred to the ballot
  - Campaign Committee Filing with PDC
  - Voters Statement Due
  - Rebuttal Statement Due
  - Voters Guides Arrive
  - Absentee Ballots Arrive
  - Primary Election?
  - Other Major Community Events?

- Headquarters Operations
- Staffing Plans
- Fundraisers, if planned
- Public Disclosure Reports Due dates
- Steering Committee Meetings / Updates

Strategy & Research

- Campaign Plan
- Staffing
- Public Opinion
- Voter Targeting

Field Activities

- Kick off
- Campaign Events
- Major Community Events
- Speaker's Bureau Opportunities
- Visibility

Communications

- Press Events & Opportunities
- Debates, Voter Forums
- Editorial Boards
• Opinion-editorials
• Letters to the editor
• Paid Media? (radio/tv)

Voter Contact

• List Orders
• Volunteer Recruitments/Sign-up
• Paid Calls

Identification

• Script Draft/Approval
• Phone Capacity – Paid or Volunteer
• Volunteer Recruitment
• Data Collection

Voter Identification Absentee (6-8 weeks before election, depending on #’s)
Voter Identification Poll Voter (4-6 weeks before election, depending on #’s)

Absentee Voters - Persuasion

• List Order
• Design/Approval
• Mail House – Postal Drop

Direct Mail Absentee 1 (3 weeks before election)
Direct Mail Absentee 2 (2 weeks before election)
Direct Mail Absentee 3? (end of week before Tuesday election)
Phone Follow up Absentee (following Mail 2 or 3)

Poll Voters - Persuasion

• List Order
• Design/Approval
• Mail House – Postal Drop

Direct Mail Poll Voter 1 (2 weeks before)
Direct Mail Poll Voter 2 (1 week before)
Direct Mail Poll Voter 3? (end of week before Tuesday election)
Phone Follow up Poll Voter (following Mail 2)
**Get Out the Vote**

- Phone/Mail Combination
- List Order
- Design/Approval
- Mail House – Postal Drop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Get-out-the-vote Absentee 1</th>
<th>(2-3 weeks before election)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get-out-the-vote Absentee 2</td>
<td>(1 week before election)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get-out-the-vote Poll Voter 1</td>
<td>(weekend before election)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get-out-the-vote Poll Voter 2</td>
<td>(election day)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In-kind Contributions

- Office Space (safe with parking visible familiar)
- Stationery/Envelopes/Remit Envelopes
- Banners/ Yardsigns
- Computers / Software
- Copy Paper
- Fax Machine
- Copy Machine
- General Office Supplies
- Work Tables / Desk / Chairs / Furniture
- Refrigerator/Microwave
- Telephones for headquarters
- Phonebanks
- Volunteer Food/Coffee/Softdrinks/Munchies/Pizza
- Design layout
- Printing
- Website Design/Management
- Other