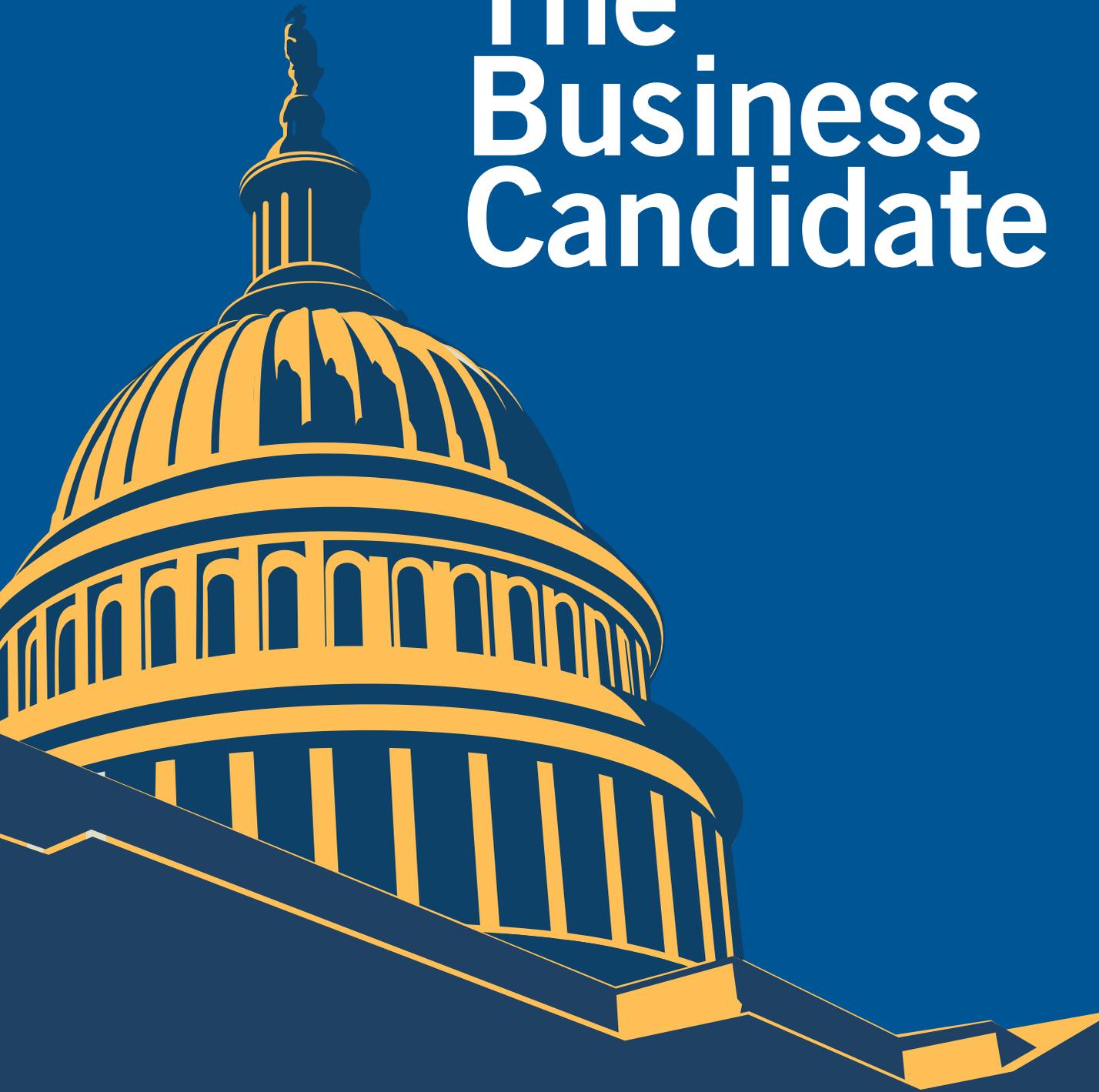


The Business Candidate



NFIB

The Voice of Small Business.®

The Basics on

Business Owners Running for Office



Dan Danner
President & CEO

The National Federation of Independent Business is the nation's leading advocate for small business, relying heavily on its members and business owners like you to be the voice of small business in America. Your commitment to impact government policy and elections is why NFIB is considered the nation's most effective business organization.

NFIB's political operations are focused on electing a government that supports you, America's small business owners. Together, we have achieved a long record of success in electing pro-business candidates across the country and developing policies that help small businesses. More than ever, candidates with a business background are needed to protect the future of free enterprise. In 2010 alone, twenty-five NFIB members were elected to federal office and hundreds more were elected to serve in their state legislatures.

NFIB is actively involved in numerous federal, gubernatorial, and state legislative races where we provide grassroots and financial support to candidates who are strong advocates for the small business agenda. At the local level, NFIB relies entirely on its members. They are often the county commissioners and members of the city council that work to ensure small business is well represented in their communities.

Many business owners have been involved with NFIB's election efforts in their home states and communities. Without their activism, our successes would not have been possible. And now, you are considering the highest possible level of activism, running for elective office. We hope to be a resource for the many small business owners like you who aspire to make your communities better by becoming involved in politics.

I hope you find this guide helpful and wish you good luck in your campaign!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Danner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

The Business Candidate

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Should I Run for Office?

This is the most important decision you will make as a candidate. At face value, answering the question, “Should I run for office?” may seem fairly simple. In reality, this question and the decision to run encompasses a host of factors every potential candidate must consider: time, money and support.

The Business Owner — A Powerful Candidate

As a business owner, you have a unique perspective on the government’s effect on your community. Your hands-on experience with regulation, taxes, healthcare, employment, and many other important issues affords you the opportunity to bring ideas and questions to the table not often grasped by long-time government officials.

Business owners, like you, are well respected in their communities, and are often looked to for leadership by their friends and neighbors. Providing jobs and investing in society raises small business owners to a higher level of trust within their communities. This connection is a strong foundation for your candidacy.

It is essential to the success of government at any level to have business owners involved in the decision-making process. A personal understanding of the interaction between small businesses and local, state, or federal government is a much sought after quality for public officials.

However, just being a business owner is not enough to answer the question, “Should I run for office?”



Congressman Reid Ribble, WI-08

“ NFIB’s The Business Candidate guide was the first resource I used after deciding to run for Congress. The guide gives a thorough explanation of how to **start and run an effective campaign** for public office and, ultimately, be a successful candidate. I carried it with me throughout my campaign. As a long-time small business owner but first time candidate, it was an invaluable resource. ”

10 Questions to Ask Yourself Before You Decide to Run

The decision to run for office should be given extensive thought and consideration. But many potential candidates are uncertain where to start their evaluation. In contemplating the decision to run for office, a prospective candidate should ask themselves a few key questions:

1. Can I afford, both professionally and financially, to take leave from my business to campaign full time if necessary?
2. Does my family want me to run for office; are they willing to be actively involved in my campaign; and are they prepared to handle any possible negative attacks on me and the family?
3. Do I have enough name recognition in the community; what kind of name recognition do I have; and, do I have enough time and money to develop name recognition in order to run a viable campaign?
4. Do I have a strong network in my community, city or district committed to supporting my campaign, and can I mobilize these voters?
5. Are local elected officials, interest groups and community leaders willing to endorse my candidacy?
6. Will I be running for a partisan office? If so, do I have the support of my party?
7. How much money am I willing and able to contribute to my campaign; am I comfortable asking for money to support my candidacy; and am I willing to pull out my “holiday card” list to call friends and family for financial contributions?
8. What real experience do I have that uniquely qualifies me for the specific office I am seeking?
9. Do my stances on issues align with a majority of likely voters in the area where I am running?
10. Am I fully prepared to commit my time, money, family and friends to my campaign? These questions should help you focus on the important aspects surrounding your decision to run. In addition, your answers will help you fully assess your ability to run for office and lead you to answer the more complete question, “Why am I running for office?”

Who are the Voters?

In addition to evaluating your own viability as a candidate, you must also assess the political environment in which you will be campaigning. It is essential to look at the demographics and statistical voting history of the area to know who the voters are. This information can be found at your state's election office or local county auditor.

Ask yourself if, historically, this area has supported small business candidates. Take a realistic look at recent elections, ballot initiatives, registered voters, demographic breakdowns and Election Day turnout to help predict how you might succeed as a candidate in the region. Consider who your opponent's supporters might be and on which issues they may be vulnerable. In addition, look at your likely allies, and where you have strengths and weaknesses.

Note on Redistricting

Every ten years the federal and state legislative maps are redrawn based on census data to reflect current population centers and trends. Often election cycles following redistricting are heavily impacted by this process, potential candidates and incumbents alike may be displaced from their current districts. Fortunately, the redistricting process is transparent and most states have dedicated websites where current, proposed, and finalized plans may be found.

The Right Place at the Right Time

A "good" candidate today may not be viable 10 or even two years from now. A strong candidate in one locality may be weak in a different region or community. The circumstances surrounding an individual's candidacy vary over time and place.

This has little to do with the candidate and more to do with the political landscape in the state or community where they are running. The key to organizing a successful campaign is to combine three key components: a good candidate, the right time, and the right place.

The Big Decision

The decision to run for office is one which will affect many parts of your life. It is the highest level of political activism and the most demanding. In deciding to become a candidate for office, you must be realistic and objective. A campaign relies equally on the candidate and the circumstances surrounding their race. This forces the prospective candidate to pay attention to the political environment and their viability as a candidate.

A good candidate makes the informed decision to run for office because they believe it is the right thing to do for the community in the current political environment.

The Myth

If 10 of my friends think I'd be a great candidate, then I should run for office.

The Reality

Support from friends, colleagues and family is extremely important for a successful campaign. But the decision to run for office should entail a much more comprehensive and objective evaluation of the political environment, your strengths and weaknesses, your ability to commit to the campaign, and the district or region in which you are running.

Setting Up Your Team

A candidate is only as strong as their team. Great candidates have often failed due to an unorganized and inexperienced staff. Regardless of what level of government office you are seeking, a structured, experienced, and well-defined campaign team is essential.

Members of your team will represent you and your campaign in their own individual capacities. Every member of the campaign will ultimately have an effect on your image with those they interact with, whether as a volunteer answering the phone, a communications staff member working with the news media, or a supporter working out in the community. The candidate is never the only person dealing directly with voters, which is why building a professional and well-rounded campaign team is one of the most difficult and important processes while running for office.

The Team

There are four basic segments of a campaign team: the candidate, paid staff, volunteer staff and family. Each section of your “team” should have specific responsibilities and duties assigned to them, including you. With a defined structure, your campaign team will operate more efficiently and effectively, giving you a better chance for victory on Election Day.

You - The Candidate

Before setting up a campaign team a candidate must have a simple, primary understanding of their role: you alone cannot and should not manage every aspect of your campaign. As the candidate, you are part of the team. Good candidates understand the need for a strong staff and the role each staff member will play. Great candidates implement this principle in their campaign structure and allow members of their staff to do their jobs.

Your job as the candidate is to make personal fundraising calls, meet the people in your district, attend public events, compete in debates, participate in forums and be a voice at the table when developing a campaign strategy. Too often, candidates themselves try to fill the positions of campaign manager and candidate. This would be like one person simultaneously trying to fill the jobs of CEO and Chief of Operations of a major corporation, or owner and manager of a professional sports team.

To be a successful candidate, you must listen to objective criticisms and counsel from your staff. Additionally, candidates should seek out political professionals to fill strategic

positions on their campaign teams. Some responsibilities can be taken on by individuals with little or no political experience. However, the inner circle of the campaign staff that establishes the strategy of your campaign should not consist of political neophytes.

Paid Staff

The core of a campaign is its paid staff members. These committed supporters devote their time and efforts to help you succeed as a candidate. A member of the campaign staff does not clock in at 9 and leave by 5. Instead, they dedicate themselves to the campaign, work long hours, and give up their free time to better your campaign.

A key component in choosing your staff is achieving a good balance between experience, personality and enthusiasm. A good campaign staff member is someone who not only has the political experience and expertise to add to your team, but who also has a personality which will work well with you and other staff members. Chemistry is key. As a candidate, you must have a cohesive team to achieve the common goal, your victory.

The most effective way to locate quality staff members is to ask those who are already established in politics. Speak to your party organization about who they would recommend. Look to previous candidates and current elected officials who were successful in the area. Talk to associations and politically active groups who are “plugged in” to the political circle. And, most importantly, use your best judgment in selecting who you believe will be the most committed, professional, and enthusiastic about your race.

The size of a campaign staff varies with the level of office and the size of the district. There are a few standard staff positions in every campaign. In smaller campaigns these positions are often combined, with one person performing multiple tasks. Each campaign should evaluate its individual circumstances and determine how small or large a staff is necessary, or if a paid staff is necessary at all.

Core Staff

Campaign Manager — The campaign manager is the chief strategist. They are responsible for overseeing every aspect of the campaign, establishing a campaign message and making sure all components of the campaign are focused on communicating that message.

Scheduler — One of the most essential members of the campaign team, the scheduler keeps the official schedule of the candidate. They coordinate all aspects of events with various members of the staff, community and supporters. A candidate must be prompt and organized, and a good scheduler will be successful in holding the candidate and staff to the set schedule.

Volunteer Coordinator — A volunteer coordinator is responsible for recruiting and organizing your army of volunteers for voter turnout programs. They work with other members of the campaign staff to assure volunteers are available to send out mailings, wave signs, work in the campaign office, staff phone banks, walk precincts, hand out campaign literature, attend rallies, and make many other grassroots efforts successful.

Communications and Media

Communications Director/Press Secretary – The communications director or press secretary is in charge of the campaign’s communication strategy including the candidate’s media training, interacting with members of the press, writing op-eds, and overseeing social media channels.

Social Media Coordinator – Since the explosion in the use of social media during the 2008 campaign cycle, many campaigns have started to have a dedicated social media staffer to coordinate across the various social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc. Social media is another channel of communication and these staffers are often highly specialized in the technological aspects of these platforms.

Media Consultant — A media consultant provides media training to the candidate, prepares them for press events, and assists in campaign advertising strategies. These consultants are not usually full-time staffers, and their responsibilities are at times dispersed between various staff members. Most importantly, whoever fills this role should have professional media experience.

Finance and Compliance

Finance Director — Without money a campaign plan will remain just that, a plan. The finance director is tasked with developing and implementing a fundraising strategy that will raise the money necessary to fund your campaign plan. In addition, they are responsible for record keeping and filing various reports on time.

Treasurer — Reporting money is as important as raising money. Campaign treasurers review reports produced by the finance chair to confirm they are accurate and compliant. This position is often a volunteer who has accounting experience.

Compliance Director — The last thing a campaign wants to face is non-compliance with various election laws and regulations. A compliance director may not be a full-time staff member. However, every campaign should have legal counsel on retainer to advise on questions regarding compliance issues. This position can be combined with the position of treasurer in smaller races.

Volunteer Staff

Your volunteers are what make your campaign strategy happen. Volunteers are some of the most valuable members of your campaign team. They take time out of their days to volunteer for your campaign because they believe in you.

Recruiting volunteers is extremely important to the success of your campaign. Without volunteers there would be nobody to walk precincts and call from phone banks. Mailings would take days instead of hours. Volunteers are essential to building the base of your campaign. With the advent of social media, volunteers have become key in spreading viral content and campaign messaging quickly. Social media is an invaluable resource for spreading name awareness and campaign messages.

Look to groups who are supporting your campaign as sources of volunteers. If issue groups have endorsed your campaign, their members may also be interested in getting involved in the race. Ask your friends, family, and neighbors to volunteer and bring others with them to help out in the campaign. Approach fellow members of groups you are involved with to help with your campaign. Ask local students interested in getting their first experience in politics to join your volunteer team.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of your campaign and should be treated as such. These are your strongest supporters. Be sure to thank them and cultivate those relationships. If you run for office in the future and these volunteers have a good experience in your campaign, they will likely be supportive in your future races.

Family

A candidate's family is the internal support structure. No matter what happens in the campaign, your family will still be with you. However, they are not paid staff. Many first-time candidates make the mistake of enlisting a family member to serve as campaign manager. Family members should be part of the campaign team but should not be sitting at the table developing campaign strategy. Your family is much better enlisted to interact with campaign volunteers, local supporters and people in the community.

The Myth

You must have previous political experience to run for office.

The Reality

Although experience in politics and government is a plus for a candidate, real life experience can be an even greater asset to a campaign and, eventually, an elected official. The key is to know when you need to consult someone with political expertise. Find and listen to individuals with political expertise to build a successful campaign strategy.

Making it Official

Your team is assembled and it is time to kick off your campaign. Moving from considering a run for office to making it official is a big step. You must take into account the many qualifications candidates are required to fulfill. A time line of future filings should be readily available and followed carefully. A staff member should be made responsible for keeping your campaign on track, on time and in compliance with regard to any filing or reporting requirements.

Candidate Qualifications

Qualifications for candidates on the federal, state and local levels vary. Although many requirements are similar, it is best to check with your local elections office to clarify qualifications specific to your race.

Federal Office Requirements

U.S. Senate:

- U.S. citizen for nine years
- At least 30 years of age
- Resident of the state

U.S. House of Representatives:

- U.S. citizen for seven years
- At least 25 years of age
- Resident of the state

State & Local Office Requirements

Below are examples from a few states.

Governor (Specific state requirements may vary):

- U.S. citizen for 10 years
- At least 25 years of age
- Resident of the state for at least five years

Arizona:

State Senator/State Representative

- U.S. citizen
- At least 25 years of age
- Arizona resident three years prior to election
- County resident one year prior to election

Kansas:

State Senator/State Representative

- Registered voter
- Reside in respective district prior to election and during term

Pennsylvania:

State Senator/State Representative

- Senator - at least 25 years of age
- Representative - at least 21 years of age
- U.S. resident four years prior to election
- State resident four years prior to election
- Citizen and inhabitant of district for one year prior to election
- Must reside in district throughout term

Additional Local Offices

Like state legislative and mayoral offices, specific requirements for other local offices vary. The standard requirements are listed below. However, these specifications will vary from location to location. Check with your local elections office to confirm requirements for your race.

County Commissioner (also known as a Freeholder or Alderman)

- U.S. citizen
- Registered voter
- State resident for one year prior to election
- District resident for six months prior to election
- May not hold any other office in the city, county or state government

City Council Member

- Registered voter
- Shall hold no other elected public office nor any incompatible appointed public office during term
- City resident for one year prior to election
- Signature requirement

School Board

- Not an employee or a spouse of an employee of the school district
- Must not have done business with the school district for one year prior to election and during term

- Registered voter
- Resident of the school district for one year prior to election
- Signature requirement

In addition to candidate qualifications, filing fees and signatures, detailed campaign finance reports must also be filed. Please visit www.NFIB.com/politics for contact information for your state elections office.

Important steps to take in filing for candidacy:

1. Make sure you meet specific candidate qualifications in your area.
2. Pick up a time line of important dates regarding filing for candidacy and future filing deadlines.
3. Obtain appropriate paperwork from your elections office.
4. Gather information and forms regarding campaign finances and obtain a time line of campaign finance report due dates.
5. Complete paperwork or have a member of your staff complete it.
6. Have your compliance director check paperwork.
7. If needed, collect signatures.
8. Complete the application process by turning in your paperwork to the elections office with any filing fees.
9. Assure you have all information necessary for future filings.
10. Make filing timely and compliant reports a priority of your campaign.

The Myth

In local governmental races, candidates can easily manage campaign finances on their own.

The Reality

It is imperative to have a competent staff member in charge of compliance for any political campaign. In addition to bad press for not adhering to campaign finance laws, the fines for violations vary from hundreds to thousands of dollars depending on the jurisdiction and type of violation.

Knowing Your Constituency and Your Potential Opponent

After making the decision to run for office, the first step in developing a campaign strategy is identifying your target voters. It is essential to recognize who your strong supporters are and who are supporters of your opponent. In doing so, you will identify which voters are somewhere in the middle: undecided or swing votes. These are the voters you should pursue and who will ultimately be the deciding factor in your election, both primary and general.

Targeting your prospective supporters will help you in allocating resources in the most efficient and effective manner. Your target audience should consist of your base and those voters who are undecided. Resources should be allocated to persuade undecided or swing voters and turn out your strong supporters on Election Day.

Three specific areas should be considered in thoroughly evaluating the area where you are running:

- Voting history of the area
- Voter demographics
- Polling information

Individually these statistics will not give you a complete representation of the area. However, together they can draw a picture of the district, which will help you begin to focus your campaign strategy.

Voting History

One of the most effective ways to predict voter turnout in an election is to research previous elections in the area. Without significant electoral line changes in the region, turnout will follow trends from previous elections. Most states provide voter and election information by precinct, so even if the redistricting process has not been completed in your state, there is good data that can give you an understanding of what is going on politically in your region.

Consider previous elections at all levels in your region. Compare voter performance with various candidates at the top of the ticket. Ask yourself what happened in your state and

nationally in that election year. Relate these election results with the circumstances surrounding your race. Consider who is at the top of the ticket this year and how that might impact your race. Also, take into account what percentage of the electorate historically votes at the polls or via absentee ballot.

In most cases you can predict which precincts will produce the highest and lowest turn-outs on Election Day. This will help direct your grassroots efforts and identify where you should focus paid media, direct mail, phones, and online resources.

Incorporating this information into your overall strategy will assist in targeting your efforts. You can gather this information from a combination of sources: state, local or national party organization, secretary of elections office, county auditor, paid vendors and various online resources (see Section 10, Resources).

Voter Demographics

Now that you know where the votes are coming from in your district, you need to know who is voting. Researching the demographic breakdown of your district is another way to target your resources.

It is essential to know with whom you are speaking and who you will ultimately represent. Look at the various ethnic groups, party registration, age range, family make-up, employment rate, percentage of homeowners, and any other demographic information in your district that may help define the voters.

By combining the demographic breakdown of the district and the voting history, you see who the voters are, where the votes are being cast, and which voters are likely to show up at the polls.

Polling Information

Predictions made without accurate and current information can be wrong. Polls are scientific surveys, which give a picture of what people think, whom they support, and why at a given point in time. Through polling, you can identify issues and opinions voiced directly by the voters.

Polls give campaigns an indication of their support in various demographic groups as well as geographic segments of the district. Polls also report which issues are top in the minds of the voters. The key is to ask the right questions, which will give you an accurate view of the situation and not just give you good news.

Many campaigns hire polling firms. However, larger campaigns, political parties, news outlets and national polling firms routinely conduct polls on general issues. A smaller campaign can use this issue-based polling information to appraise the political climate and test issues in the area. Be sure to consider how accurate the polls are, and take into account who is conducting the polls. In light of the prohibitive cost of polling, local or small campaigns might put together focus groups in lieu of conducting a formal poll in an effort to get a better read on important issues in the district.

Issues of Interest

You should now have a fairly confident appraisal of which issues are top on the minds of voters through polling and general research on your area. In developing a campaign strategy, your campaign must evaluate which issues can be considered strengths or weaknesses. Look at which issues you can use to bolster your campaign in specific areas of the district and which can be employed as overall campaign messages.

Establish key issues you will repeatedly come back to in your campaign. These issues will be highlighted in your press releases, brochures, Web site, speeches and other communications. These issues will help focus your campaign and keep it on message. Additionally, establishing the key issues that are your strengths will make you aware of the campaign's weaknesses. This information should be incorporated into your campaign strategy to target your efforts and prepare for attacks from your opponent. Your key issues should not be too numerous (a maximum of two or three). Most voters do not remember every issue position of a candidate. Ask yourself, "What two or three things do I want voters to remember about me as a candidate?"

Opposition Research

The final piece of the campaign puzzle is knowing who your opponents are. Who are you running against? In the end, you will be asking voters to choose you over the other candidates. You must know where your opposition stands on issues, their personal and professional histories, and who is supporting their candidacy.

Every campaign should thoroughly research its opponents. Know where they are vulnerable and use those handicaps to focus your plan. This is not to say you should campaign negatively. But you must be able to show a contrast between you and the other candidates on relevant matters in order to convince the voters to choose you on Election Day.

The Myth

I have all the qualities of a great candidate, so I will be successful this election year.

The Reality

Great candidates are successful due to a combination of their strengths, their district and the political environment surrounding their race. Great candidates must not only pay attention to which office they are running for, but also to what circumstances they are running in, from the voters in their region, to who else will be on the ticket vying for other offices and how this will affect who turns out to the polls.

Defining Your Message

Much is made of campaign messages. Which ones worked? Which ones didn't? Your campaign "message" is more accurately described as the theme of your campaign. Every communication from your campaign incorporates your theme and communicates your message. In truth, you may have many messages all rooted in the same fundamental theme.

In developing your message, first define your target constituency of voters, and then craft your message. Incorporate this message into your overall campaign plan and strategy.

Your Target Constituency

Developing a good campaign message is dependent on good research. An extensive review of the district, voters, opponent and issues is the first step toward an effective message. Use the information you have already compiled to look at who your target voters will be.

What target constituency will help you win on Election Day? Will it be businessmen over 50, young professionals under 30, or stay-at-home moms? Your target constituency will be a combination of groups like these who align with you on a few key issues.

The best communicators know their audience. A good campaign message speaks directly to the target voters of a campaign. Defining who you are speaking to will focus your message, making it more direct and less vague. Your message should define your candidacy, and draw distinctions between you and your opponent on the issues important to your target voters.

Writing Your Message

An easy way to begin this process is to list your strengths and weaknesses alongside those of your opponent. In doing this, you identify opportunities to distinguish yourself from your competitor. Key distinctions can be personal, professional or issue related.

For example, as a business owner, one of your strengths is that you create jobs and contribute to your community's economy. Your opponent may be a veteran. If you have not served in the military, this could be viewed as a strength for your opponent and a weakness for you.

Every candidate’s strengths and weaknesses will be relative to the district and the current prevailing issues of the campaign. Consider the circumstances surrounding your race when deciding which points may be benefits or detriments to your campaign. A strength in one area or election year may be a weakness in another.

Be Objective

A strong candidate will take an objective look at the situation and know what his opponent is likely to say about him before his opponent does. The key is to plan for attacks or strategies your opponent may use. Anticipating what your opponent’s likely message will be better prepares you to counter it.

The Message Box

A message box is a good tool to assist candidates in developing effective messages. This exercise forces you to see all sides of the race from varying perspectives.

<p>YOU ON YOU WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT YOURSELF.</p>	<p>YOU ON YOUR OPPONENT WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT YOUR OPPONENT.</p>
<p>YOUR OPPONENT ON YOUR OPPONENT WHAT YOUR OPPONENT SAYS ABOUT HIMSELF.</p>	<p>YOUR OPPONENT ON YOU WHAT YOUR OPPONENT SAYS ABOUT YOU.</p>

After completing the message box you will have a better understanding of where you should position yourself in the race. The key is to give voters a choice in the race. Too often candidates go for what they think the voters want to hear instead of focusing on their strengths as they apply to the district and distinguish them from their opponent.

Once you have defined your message, test it out on friends, family and trusted colleagues. Make sure it communicates the impression you intend it to. Your message defines your

campaign and should be a repetitive theme communicated in every medium. Most voters will not grasp a campaign's message from one interaction. However, continuous exposure to your message will solidify the campaign's theme with your target coalition. A strong, well-structured message can drive a campaign, whereas a poorly crafted message can stall it.

The Myth

A campaign's message can change throughout the campaign.

The Reality

Although adaptability is essential in any campaign, a campaign's message is the core foundation of who the candidate is and should remain consistent. A consistent message throughout a race establishes the candidate in the minds of voters and gives direction to the campaign.

Campaign Plan

As a business owner, you understand what goes into planning the successful launch of a new enterprise. A campaign plan is very similar to a business plan. Think of Election Day as your Grand Opening. Your campaign plan is the marketing plan designed to promote you! Ask yourself, “What advance planning will make your business a success?”

A campaign plan should be based on an integrated strategy. Much like a puzzle, each function of the campaign makes up a piece of the overall picture, fulfilling some section of the strategy. The campaign strategy, communications program and budget are a coordinated plan to win on Election Day.

Strategy

Your campaign’s strategy is a plan to achieve one specific goal, your election. A strategy should take into account: who, what, when, where and how.

WHO — Who makes up your target constituency of voters needed to win on Election Day? Consider not only your target groups, but what you will need to do during the course of the campaign to gain their support.

WHAT — What office are you running for, and how does that affect your overall strategy? Someone running for school board will have a different strategy than a candidate for governor. Focus your strategy on the job you are seeking.

WHEN — When are you running for office? This question can be interpreted in two ways: when, relative to how long you have to run your campaign, and when, relative to what is going on in society. Each should be taken into account when planning your strategy and establishing a time line.

WHERE — Where are you running for office? Consider how the geographic location of your district or region should factor into your plan. The region of the country in which you are running will ultimately affect your strategy.

HOW — How will you win? And how will all of these components factor in to your overall strategy? Take an extensive look at all elements of your campaign and integrate them into a comprehensive strategy.

Communications

Your communications program is an integrated part of your campaign. Every communication should incorporate your message.

The communications director is an integral part of the campaign and should be included in every aspect of planning. From overseeing the earned-media operation of the campaign to responding to negative attacks, the communications director establishes the voice of the campaign and maintains a consistent message.

Your campaign can communicate its message to voters via numerous methods: direct mail, social media, e-mail, Internet, radio, television, phone banks, press releases, editorials, print advertising and personal appearances. Not all campaigns will use every form of communication in their strategy. An effective communications plan will remain within budget and effectively communicate your message to targeted voters.

Budget

Setting up your budget is the final element of your campaign plan. By developing your strategy and communications plan you will get a better idea of what the overall cost will be. Establishing a campaign budget plans out what you will spend, when you will spend it, and the amount you will need to raise to fund your efforts.

Every campaign should have a range for their budget. The low-end budget should be the minimal amount necessary to communicate your basic message and conduct a skeleton of your campaign plan, whereas, the high-end budget will encompass all the “bells and whistles” of your ideal campaign plan. Most campaigns fall between the two extremes, eliminating some of the extras and taking advantage of opportunities that come along.

Another factor to consider when constructing your budget is, how much can you plausibly raise? Every candidate believes they can raise whatever amount they need. In reality, fundraising can be a difficult task if not approached with a strategy, an objective, and an open mind. Factor in limits to what you might raise from specific events, mailings, and donors. If these numbers do not result in the amount you would like to budget, get creative in finding new avenues to raise money, and look at what portions of your budget can be cut or consolidated (see Section 10, Resources).

The Myth

A campaign plan can be set up as the race progresses.

The Reality

Once a campaign begins, it is exceedingly difficult to establish a plan. Campaigns must have a course of action leading them to Election Day long before they are launched.

Fundraising Plan

The budget is established and you know your target fundraising number. Now your campaign must raise a specific amount of money in order to fund your campaign plan. Plan to raise the high-end of your budget range. Often in a campaign, an unexpected development will need last minute funding and could ultimately make the difference in your race.

Sources for Support

Depending on which office you are seeking, there are numerous avenues you can pursue to raise money. For federal, statewide and state legislative races, political action committees (PACs) are a good source for acquiring funds. Various organizations, companies and associations can contribute directly to your campaign through their PACs. Look to like-minded groups to support your campaign either monetarily or with volunteer recruitment.

For races on the local level, PACs may not get involved. However, members of your community, colleagues, friends and family can be good sources for support. In addition, direct mail, high-and low-dollar events, online, and telephone fundraising are lucrative methods to raise a portion of the money needed to fund your campaign. Remember to keep in mind that there is often a cost associated with raising money through these types of activity.

Every race, regardless of level, relies heavily on the candidate asking for financial support directly. You must be comfortable asking for support from PACs, organizations, friends, colleagues, and strangers, and be willing to contribute personally to your campaign.

Combined, all of these sources will come together to give you an overall finance or fundraising plan (see Section 10, Resources).

Event Options

There are numerous events that can be used as campaign fundraisers. In addition, fundraising events can achieve other goals of the campaign. These coffees, BBQs and VIP events not only raise money for the campaign, but bring the candidate closer to voters, increase the candidate's name recognition, and associate the candidate with high-ranking officials.

Campaign events range from high-dollar, small receptions or dinners to low-dollar BBQ barbecues or coffees. Each occasion should be targeted to a specific segment of the

candidate's coalition of voters. The events will vary as much as the voters do, but the goal is to effectively raise money from all sections of the community and allow each voter the opportunity to contribute to your campaign.

Direct Mail

Direct mail efforts should be integrated and coordinated. Issue and fundraising mail should be planned together. A campaign might precede a fundraising letter with a direct mail piece regarding an issue important to those specific voters. For example, you may send a direct mail piece on reducing the regulations on small businesses and follow up this piece with a fundraising letter asking for financial support.

The key to direct mail fundraising is targeting. Know which demographic you are writing to, and form your letter around issues important to them. Just mailing out letters with no regard to the audience will be inefficient, ineffective, and expensive. However, a targeted mail program will decrease cost and increase the rate of return. Additionally, take into account how much you can expect to raise from each segment of supporters and factor this approximation into your fundraising plan (see Section 10, Resources).

Telephone

Fundraising via telephone is conducted in several ways: calls made by the candidate, calls made by supporters (phone bank), and for larger campaigns, paid telephone vendors.

The candidate is the most successful and important fundraiser for the campaign. Voters are more likely to contribute directly to an "ask" from the candidate than one from a volunteer or staff member. A significant portion of your time as the candidate will be spent on the phone asking for financial support from organizations, voters, community leaders and anyone else who might be inclined to support your candidacy.

Phone banking is a method used not only to identify voters and turn them out on Election Day, but also to raise financial support for your race. Larger campaigns will typically use a paid vendor. However, smaller campaigns can have successful internal phone fundraising programs. Often, a campaign will use phoning to follow up on a fundraising letter. In addition, phone fundraising can be successful in calling those voters who recently received an issue mailing. Timing the calls to follow an issue mailing may allow you to hit the voter at the right time to gain both their vote and a contribution.

Online Fundraising

Internet fundraising is the newest and understandably fastest growing political fundraising method. This method has grown hand-in-hand with the emerging prominence of social media in political campaigns. Internet fundraising is a relatively inexpensive way to solicit campaign donations. Much like a direct mail campaign, candidates should make sure their online giving plans are integrated and coordinated with their other fundraising methods and issue correspondence.

In some cases, candidates simply put a “Donate Now” button on their campaign site. However, larger campaigns create email solicitation plans which integrate with their website. Internet fundraising allows more avenues for making a pitch, such as using web video to make your case directly to donors.

The Ask

The most essential aspect of fundraising is the “ask.” Whether you are the candidate speaking to voters or businesses, the host of a campaign event pursuing attendees, or a member of the campaign writing a fundraising letter, you must ASK for financial support. The “ask” should be early in the letter or conversation. The individual should know why you are speaking to them: you are running for office and need their financial support.

Legal Compliance

Election laws governing federal, state and local elections, especially in reference to fundraising, are incredibly strict. As with every other aspect of the campaign, be sure to follow all legal guidelines that apply to your race when raising money.

The Myth

A candidate will not have to spend much time fundraising.

The Reality

The candidate is the most effective fundraiser. Voters and supporters want to hear directly from the candidate why they should support a campaign. If a candidate can convince an individual to contribute to the campaign, they are almost assured to get their vote on Election Day.

Using Your Assets

A major advantage any business owner has as a candidate is their personal and business relationships in the community. The key is to use these contacts carefully. Just because you are in business with someone or happen to be their neighbor you will not necessarily win their vote. However, it could help.

Your contacts and relationships are a form of access to these voters and possible supporters. Approach them in a professional manner and make the case for support just as you would an average voter. Speak to them about issues and problems of interest to them. Explain to them why you are running for office and why you need their support. Once you have their support, appeal to your relationship with them and encourage them to become more involved with the campaign.

By approaching personal and business contacts in this manner you will reinforce your professionalism and validity as a candidate. Establishing this relationship as candidate and supporter will encourage them to do more to help. At this point, asking these friends and business associates to host an event, volunteer their services, or play a role on your campaign team will be much better received.

When you are running for office, it is easy to abuse relationships without realizing it. In the end, your integrity and the respect of your friends and colleagues is worth the additional time spent winning their support for you as a candidate, not just as their friend or business acquaintance.

The Myth

Your friends and business contacts will automatically support your campaign.

The Reality

Where personal and business relationships offer a reason to call on these individuals for support, you still must make the case for why you are running for office and why they should support your candidacy.

Election Day GOTV Plan

Your Election Day plan should be well underway long before the day voters go to the polls. Organizing volunteers, scheduling media opportunities and getting out the vote takes months of planning. A successful Election Day is an extension of a successful, well-run campaign. Planning is everything.

Your campaign is a build-up to Election Day. Putting together your Get Out the Vote (GOTV) team should be a priority throughout the race. A staff member, usually the volunteer coordinator, is tasked with the responsibility of organizing your Election Day team. Getting early commitments from various volunteers and supporters to help on Election Day will make the day itself run more smoothly.

There are numerous components in a successful plan leading up to Election Day:

Early Vote & Absentee Ballots

Many voters do not have the time to go to the polls on Election Day. More people are taking advantage of early voting and absentee ballots. Ten years prior, Oregon became the first state in the nation to conduct all of its elections by mail and in Washington, all but one county is vote-by-mail. The recent changes in preference for early vote and vote-by-mail are changing the dynamics of elections. Your campaign should make a concerted effort not only to encourage people to vote early or absentee, but also track who has voted, so as to not waste time and resources contacting those voters on Election Day.

Poll Workers

Tracking the vote as Election Day unfolds can greatly help in targeting those individuals who have yet to vote later in the day. Volunteers should be recruited to sit in on as many polling stations as possible to track who votes and who doesn't. Other volunteers should be stationed outside the polling location to hand out information on your campaign, reminding them who to support when they cast their ballots. All electioneering activities should be conducted in compliance with all local laws and regulations.

Phone Banks

Phone banking is a traditional campaign method used to turn out the vote. Volunteers, family, friends and staff should be calling voters throughout the day to remind them to vote. If someone needs a ride to the polls, the phone bank staff will coordinate pick-up with the volunteer drivers. The information collected by the poll workers will be relayed to the phone banks in order to better target which voters to call. Many campaigns are using new technology which allows volunteers to make campaign phone calls from their homes. This allows volunteers to donate their time much easier.

Drivers

Some voters want to vote but have no way to get to the polls. Rides to the polls should be scheduled in the weeks before Election Day, and additional drivers should be on hand to provide rides to people who call requesting one or who are contacted through phone banks

Sign Wavers

Throughout your district, city or community, you should have supporters waving signs at high traffic intersections. In the rush of a workday, some people might forget to vote. Seeing a sign on the way to or from work might be just the reminder to get them to the polls. In addition, a surprising number of voters go to the polls without knowing which candidate they will support. A reminder of your name could get that deciding vote.

Target Lists

Target lists will be used throughout the campaign. In precinct walks during the weeks leading up to Election Day, lists with party registration and voting history should designate voters as supporters or non-supporters. Target lists can then weed out some voters who are not supporting you. These voters should not be reminded to vote on Election Day.

Door to Door

Phone calls work, but personal contact works even better. Volunteers should be recruited to knock on those doors your campaign hasn't already visited. Following visits to these homes, volunteers should go back to the houses visited during the campaign to remind them again how important their vote is. Leave behind campaign literature and a reminder to vote.

Media Contacts

Your communications team should be included in preparations for Election Day. This is the final day in the campaign that voters will see the candidate on TV and in the press. Take advantage of every media opportunity to get the candidate in the news for one final appearance.

Campaign HQ Staff

Last minute details, final questions, putting out fires and attending to anything that might come up on Election Day is the responsibility of the staff at campaign headquarters.

Party Planner

The final hurrah of a campaign is the election. This party is mainly a thank you to volunteers and campaign supporters for their commitment to your candidacy. The campaign election party should be planned in advance by a member of the staff with the help of volunteers.

The Candidate on Election Day

The candidate has very different responsibilities from their staff. In most cases, the candidate and their family go to the polls early in the morning to vote. After they cast their ballots, they visit various polling stations to greet voters as they go to vote.

This is the last day to interact with potential supporters. The candidate should schedule Election Day stops around those areas where the campaign is lacking support. To maximize their vote, the candidate should also visit some areas where there is strong support for the campaign. Make an effort to stop at local businesses where there may be voters

who have not yet voted. Personal appearances are very convincing to voters as they decide whether to take the time to vote and who to support.

Finally, the candidate will make their way to the election party. Here they will watch the returns come in and thank all those supporters who have taken their time to help the campaign.

The Myth

An Election Day plan is separate from the general campaign plan.

The Reality

Election Day is the culmination of a campaign. The Election Day plan is part of the campaign's integrated strategy. It uses the contacts, relationships and information established during the campaign to turn out the candidate's supporters on Election Day.

NFIB

In order to support the organization's mission and public policy objectives, NFIB supports candidates in both federal and state elections. Candidate endorsements are overseen by our political action committee, the Save America's Free Enterprise (SAFE) Trust. Endorsements are based exclusively on each candidate's positions and record on small business issues, regardless of party affiliation.

All congressional and gubernatorial endorsements are governed by NFIB's federal PAC Board, which is comprised of NFIB members who serve on the NFIB national board of directors. The PAC Board regularly meets to review staff recommendations to support various candidates. Unlike many other national organizations, NFIB also operates individual PACs in most states to help elect pro-small business candidates at the state level.

Although NFIB is not formally involved in elections at every level of government, the NFIB staff is always available to answer questions and provide input for its members. Please contact your respective state NFIB office (contact information can be found at NFIB.com by selecting your state under the State Issues section) or NFIB's federal political staff (1-800-552-6342) for assistance.

Political Websites

NFIB — For links to state elections offices, issue information and much more.	www.nfib.com
Politics 1 — Links to state parties, third party organizations, and state election offices.	www.politics1.com
Federal Elections Commission (FEC)	www.fec.gov
Republican National Committee (RNC)	www.rnc.org
Democratic National Committee (DNC)	www.dnc.org
National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC)	www.nrsc.org
Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC)	www.dscc.org
National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC)	www.nrcc.org
Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC)	www.dccc.org
National Governors Association (NGA)	www.nga.org
Republican Governors Association (RGA)	www.rga.org
Democratic Governors Association (DGA)	www.democraticgovernors.org
National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL)	www.ncsl.org

General Public Opinion Websites

The Gallup Organization
 Zogby International
 Real Clear Politics
 Rasmussen

www.gallup.com
www.zogby.com
www.realclearpolitics.com
www.rasmussenreports.com

Samples

SAMPLE ELECTION DAY CHECKLIST:

Checkboxes Here:

- () Election Day Phone Bank — Phone calls essential to ensuring that your supporters make it to the polls on Election Day; part of your GOTV effort.
- () Door-to-Door Walks — Knocking on doors in neighborhoods with a high number of your supporters or potential supporters; an effective method to turn out your vote.
- () Poll Watchers — Volunteers willing to be at the polls on Election Day to track turnout inside the polling station and promote your candidacy outside the polling station.
- () Drivers — Volunteer drivers available to transport your supporters to the polls. Publicize this service through your phone bank, door-to-door efforts and direct mail. Be sure that your target voters know the number to call to get a ride to the polls.
- () Coordinated Volunteer Team — Volunteers organized to tie all of your Election Day efforts together. Volunteers are dispatched to polling stations to retrieve lists of voters who have voted from the poll watchers and relay the results back to campaign headquarters. Phone bank and door-to-door volunteers receive the information on those who have voted and no longer need to be contacted.
- () Election Day Press Team — Campaign press staff executing an Election Day plan to promote your activities, provide comments on progress throughout the day, and be a source for media.
- () Election Night Party — Celebration for your family, supporters, staff and volunteers. Victory celebration should be held on a different site from Headquarters so as to not disturb any last minute work the campaign needs to get done.

SAMPLE CAMPAIGN TIMELINES: MONTHLY

Month	Fundraising Goal	Fundraising Events	Campaign Ads Print/Radio/TV	Direct Voter Contact Mail/Phone/D-to-D	Volunteer Recruitment	Media Events
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						
January						
February						
March						
April						
May						
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						

SAMPLE CAMPAIGN TIMELINES: DAILY 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>14 Advocacy Calls Advocacy Mail Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>15 Advocacy Calls Contrast Mail Drop Debate #2 NFIB TV and Radio Door-to-Door</p>	<p>16 Advocacy Calls Advocacy Mail Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>17 Advocacy Calls Door-to-Door Business Breakfast TV and Radio</p>	<p>18 Advocacy Calls Advocacy Mail Door-to-Door TV and Radio Fundraiser Reception</p>	<p>19 Advocacy Calls Yard Signs Contrast Mail Mail Blitz Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>20 Advocacy Calls Yard Signs Football Game Blitz Door-to-Door Polling TV and Radio</p>
<p>21 Endorsement Press Advocacy Calls Door-to-Door Polling TV and Radio</p>	<p>22 Advocacy Calls Endorsement Mail Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>23 Advocacy Calls Advocacy Mail Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>24 GOTV Calls Advocacy Mail Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>25 GOTV Calls Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>26 GOTV Calls Yard Signs GOTV Meeting Mail Blitz Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>27 GOTV Calls Yard Signs Picnic/Rally Door-to-Door Tracking Poll TV and Radio</p>
<p>28 Endorsement Press Conference GOTV Calls Advocacy Mail Door-to-Door Tracking Poll TV and Radio</p>	<p>29 GOTV Calls Debate #3 AARP Advocacy Mail Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>30 GOTV Calls Contrast Mail Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>31 GOTV Calls GOTV Mail Advocacy Mail Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>1 GOTV Calls Door-to-Door TV and Radio</p>	<p>2 Rally Yard Signs GOTV D-to-D Sign Waves GOTV Call TV and Radio</p>	<p>3 Rally Sign Waves Yard Signs GOTV Phone Tracking Poll TV and Radio</p>
<p>4 Yard Signs TV and Radio Sign Waves GOTV D-to-D Tracking Poll</p>	<p>5 GOTV Calls TV and Radio Sign Waves GOTV D-to-D Tracking Poll</p>	<p>6 Election Day Phone, TV and Radio End@ 6:45PM Set Up Polls Sign Waves GOTV D-to-D Poll/Media Visits Victory Party</p>				

SAMPLE BUDGET

Expenses	Units	Unit Cost	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	TOTAL
Mailings								
<i>(includes production & postage)</i>								
Primary GOTV mailing								
Palm card								
Pledge card								
Issue mailing								
Contrast mailing								
Absentee mailing								
GOTV mailing								
Other Printing								
Flyers								
Yard signs								
Stickers								
Billboards								
Photographs								
Media kits								
Radio								
<i>(includes production & spot costs)</i>								
Bio radio spot								
Issue radio spot								
Contrast radio spot								
Television								
<i>(includes production & spot costs)</i>								
Bio TV spot								
Issue TV spot								
Contrast TV spot								
Newspaper Ads								
Social Media								
Online Branding								
Facebook Ads								
Operating Costs								
Rent/utilities								
Salaries/consultants								
Phone/Internet/								
Newspaper/cable								
Supplies								
Computer/fax/printer/								
Copier/cell phones								
Fundraising								
Travel and meals								
TOTAL EXPENSES								

SAMPLE FUNDRAISING PLAN:

Revenue Source	June	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	TOTAL
Candidate Contribution							
Candidate Solicitation							
Finance Committee							
PAC Contributions							
PAC Events							
Party Committees							
Large \$ Reception w/VIP #1							
Large \$ Reception w/VIP #2							
Labor Day Reception							
Party Convention Reception							
Breakfast Fundraiser (#1, #2, #3)							
Direct Mail (#1, #2, #3)							
Small Donor Barbecue							
Small Donor Picnic							
Small Donor Reception							
TOTAL INCOME							
BEGINNING CASH BALANCE							
ENDING CASH BALANCE							

SAMPLE VOTER ID PHONE SCRIPT:

Hello, (Mr./Mrs.)_____. My name is _____, and I am a volunteer conducting an election survey. Could I please have a minute of your time? In the election being held on _____, are you planning to support _____ or _____?

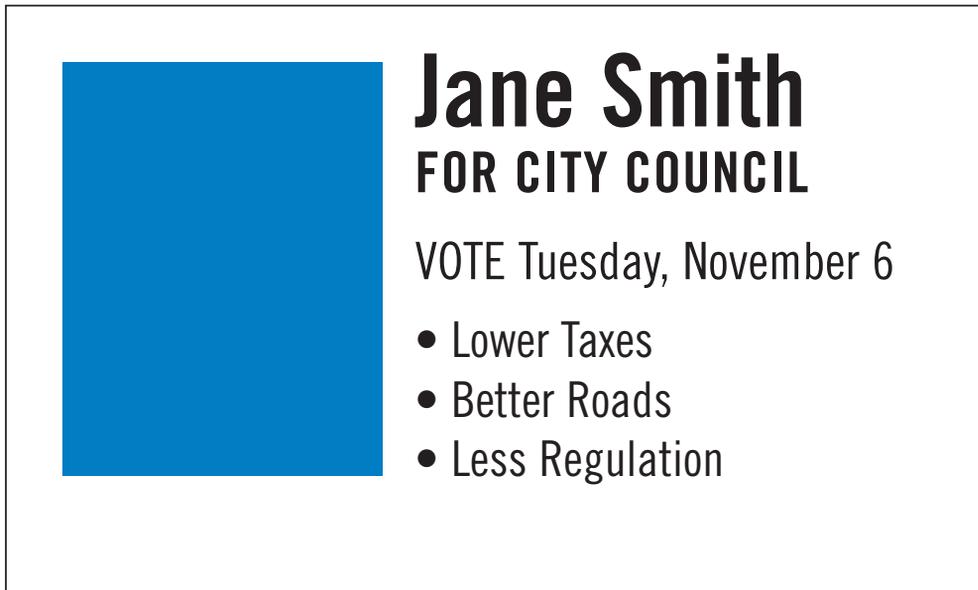
* Document registered voter responses as “For”, “Against”, “Undecided” and “Won’t Say”. Be sure to rotate the sequence of order of the candidates’ names with each call. In addition, you may or may not want to include the candidates’ party affiliation during the identification call.

SAMPLE GOTV PHONE SCRIPT:

Hello, (Mr./Mrs.)_____. My name is _____, and I am a volunteer calling from (Candidate’s name) campaign. Have you had an opportunity to vote yet today?

- *If the voter responds “YES” -- thank them for voting.
- *If the voter responds “NO” -- emphasize how important their vote is, remind them when the polls close and where they need to vote, and ask them if they need a ride to their polling station.

SAMPLE DIRECT MAIL PIECE:



Jane Smith
FOR CITY COUNCIL

VOTE Tuesday, November 6

- Lower Taxes
- Better Roads
- Less Regulation

SAMPLE POSTCARD INVITATION:

You are cordially invited to a
Breakfast Reception and Round Table Discussion

Featuring

Beau Smith
Candidate for Arizona State House District 7

Tuesday, September 18, 2012
7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Hosted by John and Jane Jones
Jones & Jones, Inc.
1000 Main Street
Phoenix, AZ 22222

*Please take this opportunity to meet Joe Smith and discuss the issues
facing Arizona's small businesses.*

Paid for by Smith for State Senate.

SAMPLE EVENT INVITATION:

**** IN ADDITION TO THE INVITATION AND A REPLY CARD, YOU SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE A PRE-ADDRESSED, STAMPED REPLY ENVELOPE.**

You are cordially invited
to a dinner reception with guest of honor

Tampa Mayoral Candidate

Joe Smith

Thursday, October 11, 2012

At the home of
Roger and Sharon Nolan
16013 Bayshore Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33621

6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Business Attire

Please respond by returning the enclosed card to
Sharon Nolan or by contacting Joe Smith for Tampa
at (813) 555-5555.

Paid for by Joe Smith for Tampa Committee

INVITE

Yes! I/We will join you on October 11 at the
home of Roger and Sharon Nolan.

I would like ___ tickets at \$250 per ticket.

No, I am unable to attend on October 14 but
please find an enclosed contribution of
\$_____ to your campaign.

**** Please make contributions payable to Joe
Smith for Tampa. Personal checks graciously
accepted.***

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, _____

State, and Zip: _____

Telephone (h) _____

(w) _____

(fax) _____

(e-mail) _____

REPLY CARD

References

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- Jerold Panas; Emerson & Church, Publishers; 2002

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- Edited by David D. Perlmutter; Louisiana State University Press; 1999

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