

TUESDAY ASSOCIATES

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TO: Massachusetts Republican Legislative Candidates
FROM: Holly Robichaud & Ron Vining
RE: Resources for the Campaign Trail, Volume 8: Re-Energizing Your Fundraising Plan
DATE: September 12, 2006

RE-ENERGIZING YOUR FUNDRAISING PLAN

Over the past few months we have received numerous questions from candidates looking for ideas to either increase or re-energize their fundraising efforts. Raising money requires a plan and a commitment to that plan. It is hard work and there are rarely any golden parachutes. You need to roll up your sleeves and buckle down as the General Election fast approaches!

Fundraising takes a daily regiment of calling to Finance Committee members, PACs, and prospects. The first rule of fundraising is that candidates need to call potential high dollar donors every day.

Here are some of the more frequent questions we have received:

My campaign just can't seem to raise money, why is this?

Take a look in the mirror. A campaign's coffers are only as good as the candidate's willingness to make calls to big and small donors, to invest in proper direct mail programs, to establish a finance committee and to hold fundraisers supported by a host committee.

How much time should the candidate spend fundraising?

At this point in the election year, candidates should spend 50% of their campaign time devoted to dialing for dollars. High dollar donors are only going to give in response to a personal solicitation from the candidate. Do not count on direct mail solicitations for generating \$500 donors.

The only candidates, who are exempt from making high dollar donor calls, are self-funded. A Candidates' failure to make calls is the number one reason why campaigns don't raise enough money and lose.

How many calls per day should the candidate make?

The other day one candidate told us that his fundraising calls were not working. He had made 155 calls with little response. However, the problem is that he made the 155 calls over two months. Clearly, he has not spent nearly enough time on the phone.

With prospecting mail, a good rate of return is 2 to 4%. On the phone, candidates usually get a 10% rate of return. That means for every ten people he or she calls, the campaign gets one donation and 9 rejections.

Over a 4 hour period of time, a candidate should be able to make 40 calls and 20 connects. Please keep in mind that you get a lot of voice mail and leaving messages does not count as a connect. 20 connects should result in a minimum of 2 donations.

Many people are making financial commitments to the candidate. However, a large portion are failing to send them to the campaign. What can we do to retrieve the money?

The best way to get the donation is to take a credit card over the phone. If you don't accept credit cards, then have a volunteer go pick up the check immediately.

When the candidate obtains the dollar commitment, it should be recorded into a database and tracked. You will need to do both follow up calls and mail. Always include a reply envelope in your mailings.

Where can we find Finance Committee members?

The best place to find Finance Committee members is your donor list. Either invite your donors of \$100 or more to join you for a conference call or for a breakfast meeting. Some people will want to join. If you don't ask, you will never know.

The next people you should approach are business owners in the community and leaders in groups such as the PTA, Chamber and Sons of Italy. Also look at large party donors. Rich people don't necessarily make the best Finance Committee members. People willing to ASK others for money are the strongest members of the committee.

What should we do if we cannot get a big name to headline our fundraising event?

Dignitaries don't raise money. Ticket sellers or host committee members do. It is more important that you recruit reliable ticket sellers for an event than a notable name. Select a good host committee, list them on the tickets and have each go out and sell a specified number of tickets. Always make sure your event makes, not costs your committee money.

If you are desperate for an excuse for a fundraiser, consider a theme instead of a big name. A candidate's birthday is always a good excuse for an event.

How can we increase donations to our Web site?

It is surprising how many campaigns don't solicit their email list. Just like direct mail you need to resolicit your Web donors. Every time you mail out a fundraising letter, email it to your list. Also make sure all your direct mail, whether it is fundraising or voter contact, pushes people to the Web site.

If you are considering procuring an email list for fundraising make sure you inquire about the usual rate of return. Although you may receive a ton of names to solicit, the rate of return is extremely, extremely small. It is often more expensive than direct mail for generating donations.

My Finance Committee seems burnt out. What can we do to re-energize them?

Finance Committee members should have access to the candidate. Try setting up a regular conference call. Contact with an energized candidate should keep them motivated. Moreover, make sure they get special previews of mailings, radio and cable commercials. They need to see what their efforts are generating for the campaign.

Also remember Finance Committee members need special thank you notes. At every event try to give a small token to the Host Committee people and have it displayed at the sign-in table. The gift usually prompts other people to be on the Host Committee for future events.

Can free events generate money?

It depends on the event. The most important thing to consider is overhead costs. If you are doing a luncheon with business leaders and someone else is picking up the tab, then you can definitely net dollars for the campaign. But if you are organizing a large event at a hotel with a big name, then you will most likely lose money. You have to ask people to donate. If you don't, they will assume you are financially secure and don't need their money.

Properly Identifying and Targeting Voters

You may have recently received a memo from another source directing candidates to save their money for the final two weeks and to be spending the balance of one's time between now and November on identifying voters. Though well intentioned, we feel it is necessary to tweak that message a bit and put you on the right track.

When identifying your voters, never use volunteers unless they have been properly trained and are monitored. The results of voter identification efforts made by volunteers are often totally unreliable. Volunteers are best used for advocacy and GOTV calls.

Your first target in advocacy calls should be to NEW voters who have never voted for the incumbent. You can start with Republican and Unenrolled voters. Democrats in this group are also up for grabs as they have no commitment to the incumbent and will likely vote for the candidate who personally reached out to them.

The next pool you should go after are the Republican and Unenrolled voters who live together that have voted in the past 2, 3 or 4 elections. Next, would be to go after straight Unenrolled and Unenrolled households who voted in 2, 3 or 4 elections. Then go after Unenrolled and Democrats who voted in the past 3 or 4 elections. Finally, don't forget to go after your coalitions. This could also include PTAs, Chamber of Commerce members, Lions Club, etcetera.

Candidates should split their time from now and November between dialing for dollars and knocking on doors. When it comes to campaign spending down the stretch, your money is best spent on a properly targeted, direct mail GOTV program. Unused resources at the end of a race do nothing toward winning the campaign. Wisely spend all of the money you have raised. Get out every piece of literature, letterhead and business cards. Use all signs and even drop your stickers should that be all that is left over.

Tuesday Associates is here to help Republican candidates win! We specialize in direct mail, fundraising and grassroots campaigning. If you have questions about any of the above, please contact us. Visit our Web site at www.TuesdayAssociates.com to view the individual services offered to campaigns such as yours or to simply find Resources for the Campaign Trail, Vols. 1 – 7.