

Voter Contact Strategies & Targeting

Voter contact is the heart of the field operation. The 3 goals of voter contact are:

1. Repetitively move the campaign's message to key groups, areas, and individuals in an effort to persuade them to support your candidate.
2. Create programs to identify the key demographic groups, geographic areas, or specific individuals who- are most likely to support your candidate.
3. Set up the program to get those identified supporters out to vote on Election Day.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Before a campaign makes a decision to spend resources on voter registration a few steps must be followed:

1. Set Goals

Number of registered Democrats needed; targeted precincts or areas, explanation of targeted precincts and areas.

2. Know the Rules

Specific state rules, deadlines for voter registration, availability of same day registration, location of local election board and registrar's offices.

3. Determine Methods and Tasks

Coordination with allied registration drives; Cooperation with state coordinated campaign. Coordinating with core constituencies.

4. Organize your Drive

Number of volunteers needed, Number of paid staff needed, volunteer recruitment method, tracking registration progress.

5. Budget the Costs

Source of resources, timeline of expenditures.

6. Establish a Timeline and Measurable Goals

Date and length of your drive. Number of registrants necessary to meet your goals.

7. Legal

System of verification, eligibility of registrant, printing registration forms, voter registration laws.

8. Follow-Up

Following up with newly registered voters to target your GOTV pool.

How Many Democrats need to be Registered?

Florida Democratic Party

Establish a realistic goal (# of base and persuadable voters you need to win), calculate how many new Democratic voters you have got register to get your candidate elected.

Running a Registration Drive?

Develop a plan that has specific start and end dates. Determine the number of volunteers needed, and what they will do. Outline specific resources that will be needed. Create a calendar and work backwards from the last day of registration.

Voter Registration Laws

In most states, the laws concerning voter registration are written at the state level, but the responsibility for executing these laws rests with county government and the county clerk, registrar or commissioners.

TYPES OF VOTER CONTACT

The campaign manager and field director must decide what types of voter contact programs are needed. This is driven by the strategic objectives of the campaign.

The Coordinated Campaign

One change in voter contact over the last few years is the advent of the "Coordinated Campaign." The Coordinated Campaign is a joint effort by all of the campaigns of the party, housed at the state party, to work together on voter contact and GOTV. Rather than each campaign executing separate voter contact programs, the resources are pooled and a joint effort is conducted. Joint GOTV programs are also run.

Voter Contact Techniques

There are two types of voter contact: low intensity and high intensity.

Low-Intensity

Activities are not as individualized and are not high impact. Low-intensity voter contact programs can still impart information about the candidate and can still move voters, but low-intensity programs are not as persuasive as high-intensity programs.

Examples of Low-Intensity Voter Contact

Literature distribution: "Lit drops"—are the most basic form of campaigning. Literature is placed in a secure area on the door of houses in the areas or precincts you want to cover. Leafleting- This is similar to literature distribution, but the literature is distributed at public places like shopping centers or college campuses.

Visibility: Visibility activities are those activities that get the candidate's name out and raise the profile of the campaign.

Lawn signs: Lawn signs are large posters on a stake or wire that are placed on a supporter's lawn.

Billboards: These are a very expensive way to minimally increase name identification and display your campaign slogan.

Human Billboards: This is often referred to as "sign waving." Volunteers and staff go to heavily traveled intersections and wave signs.

High-Intensity

High Intensity programs are more individualized and more persuasive. Modern computer and electronic communication technology low campaigns to communicate with voters in a very personal way. High-intensity voter contact techniques often involve "two-way" communication. They give voters an opportunity to express their opinions about the candidate and the campaign. The actual voter-identification programs - operations that organize staff or volunteers to talk to voters and ask their candidate preference and opinion on specific issues - are high-intensity programs.

High-Intensity Voter Contact

Canvassing: One of the most effective forms of voter contact and campaigning in the United States is door-to-door canvassing.

Candidate Activity: The most effective form of voter contact is the candidate asking someone face to face for a vote.

Coffees: A volunteer in a targeted precinct invites neighbors over to his or her house for coffee with the candidate.

Town Meetings: Similar to a coffee but held in a larger, more public place with more people, town meetings have a more formal presentation format.

Shopping Centers: In down-ballot races this may be a good way to meet a larger number of people.

Town/Main Street Tours: Candidate walks down the street meeting people, shaking hands and visiting businesses.

Preset Events: It is often worthwhile to attend events (dinners, fairs, meetings, etc.) where the candidate has been asked to speak at a pre-scheduled event.

Created Events: The most effective way to create the background for the message is for the campaign to set-up its own event.

Rallies: These are campaign gatherings where the candidate or surrogates speak on behalf of the candidate, especially in the closing days of the campaign.

Precinct Captains: The second most effective voter contact after the direct candidate communication is his/her family members, friends or neighbors telling voters favorable things about the candidate.

Direct Mail: Over the last decade, direct mail has become a very powerful campaign tool. As television and radio costs have skyrocketed, direct mail has become more cost effective. Direct mail can be used to send specific messages directly to target voters. It

can be used as a follow up to other voter contact activities.

High Intensity vs. Low Intensity Voter Contact

Type of Activity	Impact	Ability to Target	Cost	Resources Needed
Low Intensity Voter Contact				
Literature Drop	Low	Little	Low	People, Time
Leafleting	Low	Little	Low	People
Visibility	Low	None	Low	People
Shopping Centers	Low	Some	Low	People, Time
Street Tours	Low	Some	Low	People, Time
Existing Events	Low	Some	Low	People, Time
Signs	Low	Some	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Lawn Signs	Low	Some	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Billboards	Low	Little	High	Money
High Intensity Voter Contact				
Door to Door	High	Great	Low	People, Time
Candidate	High	Great	Low	Time, Money
Coffee	High	Great	Low	Time, Money
Precinct Capts.	High	Great	Low	People, Time
Town Meeting	High	Some	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Phones	High	Great	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Created Events	High	Great	High	People, Time, Money
Rallies	High	Some	High	People, Time, Money
TV	High	Some	High	Money
Radio	High	Some	High	Money
Direct Mail	High	Great	High	Time, Money

Targeting

What is targeting?

Targeting is the process of focusing resources. In politics this can mean decisions about which races are worth contesting or it can mean decisions about where to focus resources within a given race. These two types of targeting are both ways of allocating limited resources so as to get the biggest "bang for the buck".

Why target?

The primary reason to target is that every campaign's resources are limited. Another reason to target is message appropriateness.

Who do you target?

There is no one answer to this question because who to target depends on what the campaign is trying to accomplish. Different phases of a campaign will focus on different subgroups of voters.

There are two types of behavior that a campaign can influence: whether someone votes, and who they vote for. A campaign will focus on different subgroups with different messages to affect each of these behaviors.

- A campaign's persuasion program seeks to affect **who** a person votes for.

- A campaign's Get Out The Vote program seeks to affect **whether** a person votes.

So how do you find these target groups?

Targeting can be thought of as any kind of analysis that helps you identify voters in these key subgroups.

Three kinds of Targeting

1. **Individual:** This information is gathered about individual voters - usually from phone ID programs. This is the most useful information, but also the most expensive.
2. **Geographic:** Geographic targeting focuses on where potential supporters live. This allows campaigns to make intelligent strategic decisions in areas where individual targeting information isn't available.
3. **Demographic:** Race, gender, age, income, education and other demographic characteristics can be good predictors of voting behavior.

Targeting Guide

Partisanship

		Always Vote Democratic	Swing Voters	Always Vote Republican
Turnout	Always Vote	C	D Persuasion	B
	Sometimes Vote	E	F GOTV Persuasion # 2	B
	Never Vote	A	A	A/B