

A graphic of a staircase with steps in white, orange, and blue, ascending from the bottom left towards the top right. The background is a gradient of orange and blue.

101 STEPS TO VICTORY

Run for Office and WIN

**A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR FIRST-TIME
POLITICAL CANDIDATES**

BY ERIC JAYE AND CLAYTON KOO

Even the greatest was
once a beginner. Don't be
afraid to take the first step.

-MUHAMMAD ALI

Congratulations!

YOU ARE CONSIDERING A RUN FOR POLITICAL OFFICE. We suspect you have many questions about what is ahead – and how you can make sure your first run for office is successful. While there are thousands of steps you must take, we’ve written this guide to outline the 101 most important things a first-time political candidate needs to know to keep your campaign on the path to victory.

We are political consultants who have helped manage hundreds of winning campaigns. Eric Jaye is the founder of Storefront Political Media and co-founder of campaign technology companies SpeakEasyPolitical.com and StorefrontDigital.com. Clayton Koo works as an Account Strategist at Storefront Political Media and is himself a successful candidate for school board in his hometown. We have combined our experience managing campaigns and running for office to create this guide.

Right off you’ll notice a few themes we keep emphasizing. We come back again and again to the basic fundamentals we think almost all winning campaigns combine. In short, they are:



Campaigns are won by candidates – not lawn signs, algorithms, secret plans or Svengali-like consultants. All things being equal (and by things we mean money), the best candidate usually wins. Your candidacy is defined by how prepared you are, how focused you are and how you conduct yourself over the course of your campaign.



Candidates who know why they are running usually win. Believe it or not, many candidates can’t articulate a compelling reason for running. Focus first on why you are running and then turn your attention to how you are going to win.



You will need to raise money. If you can’t bring yourself to ask friends, family and supporters for money, you probably shouldn’t run for office. Let’s put it this way – if you don’t believe what you are doing is important enough to ask others for help, you probably shouldn’t do it.



You can do this. Every question you’ll face in your campaign can be answered with some basic homework and common sense.



And finally: talk to voters, talk to voters, talk to voters. In all likelihood, as a first-time candidate you can win your race with thousands of votes or, at the most, tens of thousands of votes. In other words, if you give yourself time, you could personally meet or call enough voters to win your race. Yes, media is important, social media is important, debates are important. But nothing in a small- to mid-sized race is more important than reaching out directly to voters with a compelling personal message and a sincere, personal ask for help. Ask enough and ask well, and you shall receive.

We hope this guide is helpful. Again, good luck! You can reach us at 101Steps@StorefrontPoliticalLabs.com.

ERIC JAYE

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Pro Tip

Connect your “Why am I running?” statement to an experience that helps voters understand how you can turn your vision into reality. “You know, my own daughter was almost hit by a car right across the street so I want to make sure the city council installs crosswalks at key intersections so we can protect all our children walking home from school.”

1. Have a good reason to run. The single most important factor in the success or failure of a campaign is the campaign’s message. Or, in other words: why are you running? The most important factor in creating a strong message is: do you believe it yourself? Are you passionate about it? If it doesn’t matter to you, it isn’t going to matter to anyone else. If this reason to run is connected to your life, it is stronger. If it is a broadly shared concern in your community, stronger still. If it is a problem people believe you can solve, even stronger.

So for example, “I am running for school board because great schools and teachers made a difference in my own life – and I know they can make a difference for thousands of other children in this community. As an educator I have helped thousands of kids succeed and on the school board I will bring this passion and experience to help tens of thousands more.” That’s a good start.

Something like “I want to serve” (and the many variations of “I just want to serve”), not so much. Honestly, most voters don’t really care about you. We care about our own families and our own kids. We are interested in you if it connects to how you can help us. So tell us how you can make a difference on an issue we care about.

2. Think it through.

“People tell me I should run. But I am not sure. What should I do?”

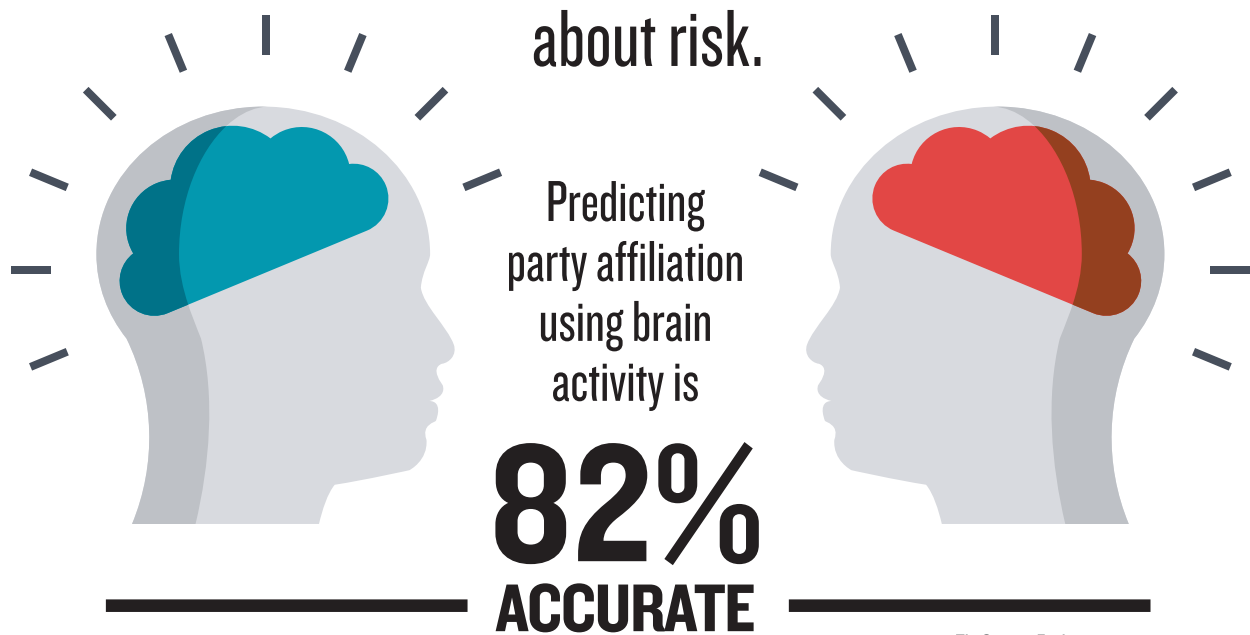
The answer to this question is: if you are not sure, don’t run. There are many good ways to serve your community other than running for office. If you don’t want to speak in public, ask other people for money, give up family and personal time, and ask friends and strangers for help, then you should not run. Just say no. You will be happier.

Campaigns are not for everyone and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. As political consultants, we talk with dozens of potential candidates every year. We always ask them, “Are you sure you want to do this?” If they hesitate at all, we decline to take the race and usually encourage them not to run.

3. Get your elevator pitch down.

If you are going to run, you must be able to explain your reason for running in a few sentences. We’ll get back to this – but you need to be able to explain again and again why you are running, who you are, and why your race

New data shows that Democrats and Republicans use different cognitive processes when they think



matters. Start mastering this important step right now. Write down in 250 words why you are running and what you want to accomplish. (Please keep it for the history books or the scrap book. It will be valuable to you and maybe others someday.)

4. Make sure your family (and your boss) is with you. If your spouse or partner hates the idea, please don't make yourselves miserable. If your kids are really young and you, and only you, can take care of them, it is okay to wait a few years. If your boss isn't going to give you a little leeway and you need your job, get a new job or wait awhile. The point here is running is already hard; don't make it impossible because you can't give it the time it takes to run a successful campaign.

5. Make a list of everyone you know. If you don't know 100 people whom you think might help you, you might want to consider waiting to run until you do. Good campaigns have good lists. You are already "campaigning" when you make this list, so take it very seriously. A legal pad is fine, but better to start with Excel (more on databases later) and include basic fields – First Name, Last

Pro Tip

Not sure about running?

Become a "super volunteer" on a campaign. Work your way up from walking precincts to running phone banks to helping with fundraising. See how it feels from the inside before you leap in yourself.

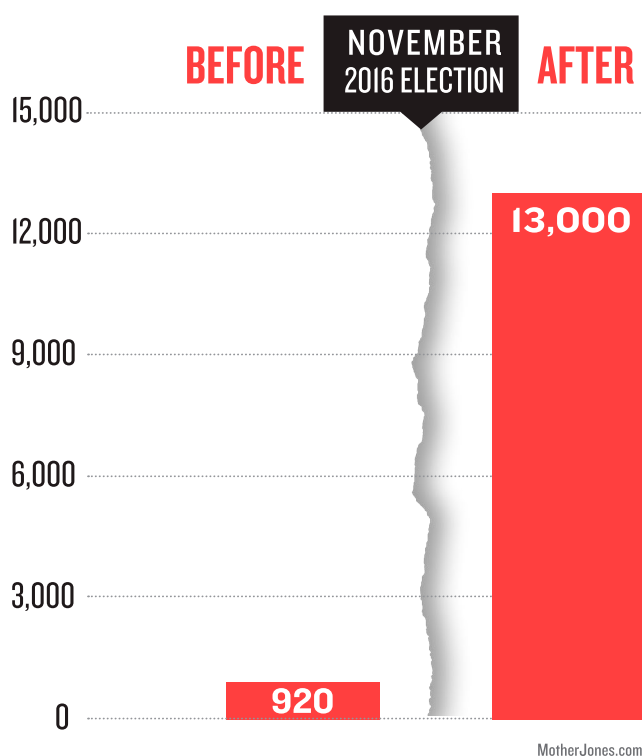
Name, Street Address, City, State, Zip, Cell Phone, Home Phone, Email Address and a Notes field where you can write down how you know them.

6. Give your campaign enough time to succeed. The story you might have heard about the person who decided to run at the last minute and overcame the “powers that be” is a nice story, but it almost never works out that way. It is a whole lot better to have six months to get your message out than 90 days. It is even better to have a whole year. In other words, within reason, earlier is almost always better. Give yourself time to win by launching your campaign as early as possible, particularly if you are a first-time candidate.

7. Consider joining some appropriate organizations. We are not recommending a resume hustle here – people will see through that. But if you are a female candidate, you probably do want to become a member of EMILY’s List. If you want to get the Sierra Club endorsement, you should be a

member. Don’t go overboard – but selectively joining the right five or six organizations as soon as possible will help.

SINCE THE 2016 ELECTION, MORE WOMEN ARE CONTACTING EMILY’S LIST TO RUN FOR OFFICE



8. If you are still some time away from your own race, volunteer on another campaign of a like-minded candidate. You will get a sense of what to do (and probably what not to do). To the extent you can, walk your own precinct and neighborhood – it is a great way to introduce yourself to your own neighbors and build your own “base.” Notice how we keep coming back to this idea of practice for your campaign? We are doing that for emphasis – the more you practice, the better you will be.

9. Check the list of supporters you made earlier. Did you find everyone? Go get the old high-school yearbooks. Ask mom and dad for their holiday card list (you probably know most of those people also).

Pro Tip

How do I find more supporters? Go through your Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter communities. That should jog your memory. (If you are not part of these networks—drop everything and join them now and spend a week mastering how they work).

Were you in a sorority? Math club? Softball league? Brainstorm here and ask for help – you need to make a list of everyone who might possibly remember your name. If you are a member of an organization, you might not know everyone in that organization but work to get those lists if you can.

10. Invest a few hours in learning a very simple database program. The simpler the better – Excel is fine. We think it is better to use off the shelf technologies instead of trying to create something custom. As long as the program you use will export a CSV file, you are covered. We’ve already discussed the basic fields – now add a few more. You are going to be reaching out to everyone you know on this list and asking them for support, so add a Yes, No and Undecided field too. You will be asking most of them for money, so add fields: Yes, Will Give; No, Can’t Give; Can’t Give Now. Then add a field for the amount pledged. When you follow up on the pledges, add a field for the amount received.

11. Do your homework. To be a good candidate, you need to know what you’re talking about. To be a good office holder, you need to know what you’re talking about. Please don’t skip this step. We’re telling you this twice because we have seen so many candidates who didn’t know the basics about the offices they were seeking.

If you are running for school board, attend four to five meetings. Read the agenda packages for the last ten meetings (which you will almost certainly find on the website of your local school district). Spend a weekend reading the last 25 articles published on the school district. Go to the websites of respected organizations following these issues and read their position papers.

12. Talk to ten people who know what they are talking about. If you are running for school board, talk to current or former school board members. Talk to teachers. Talk to the most active parents. Ask them what they think and what they think needs to be done.

13. Research your district. Most of this can be found online. A little might be in the library. But are there public polls available on what people think? Do local think tanks do research on the district? Local universities? You can always look at past voting history. If your community voted overwhelmingly against gun control in the last election and your platform is gun safety regulation, you probably should know that before you decide to run.

Pro Tip

Want to make a friend in politics? Ask someone what they think! Experts and voters like to be consulted. Becoming a good listener is a great skill to develop.

Pro Tip

Strong candidates know how to organize and delegate. For example, if you have a friend who is willing to help out on your campaign and is a research analyst for their day job — why not ask them to take on research tasks and report back to you with their findings?

14. Identify the top 25 issues you will need to understand and develop your position on these issues. We are sticklers on this. Are you pro-choice? Pro-gun control? Against the proposed wall on the border? What is your position on a certain bill or recently passed law? Make a list of the 25 toughest questions you can imagine someone asking you, and write down your answers. Make sure to do the research it takes to figure out what the tough questions are going to be.

15. Now do some political research. How much has the average candidate spent to win this race? Almost every city, county and town requires candidates to publicly file their donors and spending. This information is probably linked from the website of your local elections department.

16. Do the electoral research. In the past four cycles, how many votes did the average winner get? This is very important — a winning campaign is always focused on that magic number: the votes needed to win. Try to find elections that were similar to yours. For example, if only one person ran unopposed last time, the win number likely won't be similar to a race where five people are on the ballot for the primary. Find an election that serves as a good example for what you're expecting, and use those numbers.

17. Use your research to make the tough decisions. This is where the rubber meets the road for most campaigns. Be very honest with yourself. If you don't think you can raise close to the average in campaign donations and also find the time to personally reach out to voters, it's not time to run yet. It's important to be realistic. If you decide that you can't make it work this cycle, don't worry. Run next cycle and start working up to success right now. And if you decide you can — that's great!

18. Do some self-research. This can be a tough one, but doing it now will make things easier down the road. Are you on probation? Did you forget to pay your taxes? Are you running for school board but you "forgot" to vote in the last three elections where there was a school bond on the ballot? Seriously — think it through. (And spend a few bucks on an online background-check site, except this time — check yourself). If you have something in your background that is going to be a non-starter, don't run. Pay those taxes. Vote in the next three elections. Wait until you have completed your probation. You are better off waiting until these issues are cleared up.

19. Okay, are you ready to run? The next step is to go to your local elections department website and get a list of all the key dates and tasks. This includes the filing deadlines for candidates to express interest, fundraising reporting deadlines, and more.

20. Invest in a simple calendar program and enter all the key dates. Just make sure this calendar syncs with your phone, computer, etc.

21. Now recruit a campaign treasurer. Recruit wisely. This person will keep you out of jail. A lawyer is good. An accountant is good. Your spouse or a friend who once ran for 11th grade vice president is not necessarily so good.

22. Do the hard – but vitally important – work of understanding compliance. Read the laws with your treasurer. Understand them. If you don't understand them, ask your local elections officials to explain them to you. Did we say this is important? It is *really* important.

“Compliance” usually means not taking contributions in excess of the legal limit and not using campaign funds for personal expenses. It always means having the proper “disclaimers” on your campaign materials showing who paid for them (your campaign). It usually means not coordinating with outside groups. And as far as we know, every candidate in America must regularly file disclosure papers with their local elections officials saying how much they raised and spent. This is NOT a complete list. Get the list from your local elections official and memorize it (please) and put all the key dates down. You will thank us later.

23. Do all the things now that might distract you from your campaign later. Okay, this isn't much fun, but it is important. Go see Grandma, break up with your boyfriend (if that's about to happen anyway), clean out your rain gutters, have that minor procedure you have been putting off. Get your teeth cleaned. Seriously, make a list of all the things you have been putting off and get them done. It will make your campaign more focused if there are fewer distractions – and it is very good practice. Procrastinators don't usually win their campaigns.

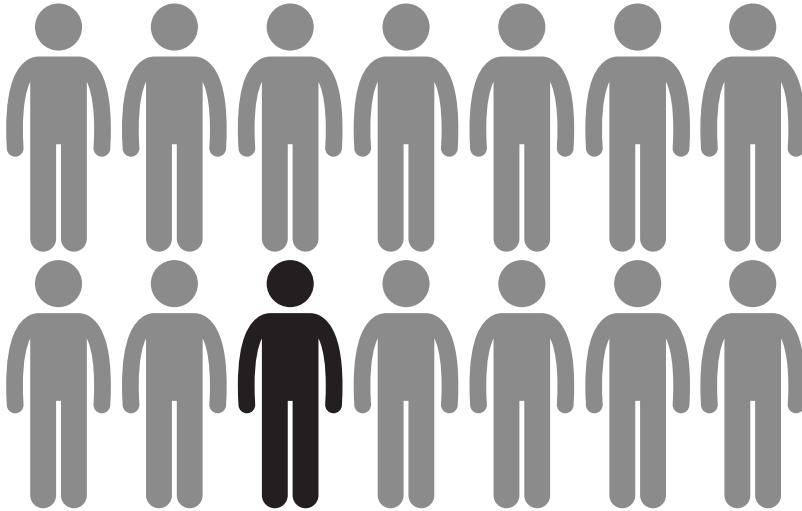
24. Organize ten people who absolutely support you into a Kitchen Cabinet. These should be people you can rely on to help you in the campaign ahead. People can get tripped up here and try to recruit experts.

Pro Tip

How to organize an internal kitchen cabinet. Find ten people who are positive and ready to work — a trusted friend, family member, local community leader. The more that the group represents the diversity of your district, the better the insight it will offer you.



For every 14 voters reached by canvassing, a campaign will gain one vote.



Gerber and Green, *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*

You can consult with experts later. What you want are the kind of people who would help you move or be happy to babysit if your sitter falls through. You want positive doers, not just folks who think they are helping by critiquing the color of your lawn sign.

25. Okay – now some incredibly key points to memorize.

- a. Nobody ever won or lost because of the color of their lawn sign.
- b. Font choice, as long it is not comic sans, is not very important.
- c. No, you don't need hats, refrigerator magnets, or pens to win.

d. No, there is no secret strategy to win. The secret is talking to voters.

26. Understand the difference between what is important and what is a distraction. This problem trips up too many candidates, who want to micromanage things like their lawn sign color (or worse, appoint a committee to do it).

What the winning candidate needs to do is:

1. Believe in what you are saying and “own” your message.
2. Talk to voters.
3. Raise money.
4. Stay up to date on relevant issues so you know what you are talking about.
5. Recruit volunteers and leaders.
6. Thank everyone who helps you personally.
7. Talk directly to the press about the campaign.

If you're spending time on a task that isn't on this list, it is probably a distraction. Get it off your desk as soon as possible.

27. So what should you worry about? Here's what we worry about as consultants:

1. Does the candidate know why he or she is running?
2. Can the candidate answer the 25 basic issue questions?
3. How do we get on the ballot? Do we have the right forms filled out and the correct number of supporter signatures gathered? You can't win if you don't make the ballot.
4. Are we following all local laws?
5. Is he or she making her fundraising calls?
6. Is he or she walking and talking to voters?

28. You are almost ready to start your campaign. But you need to take some other key steps first, starting with a one-page bio that tells voters who you are, why you care and how you will make their lives better. You already have your 250-word statement – so you are half done. Now expand it out a bit. If you are running for judge, where did you go to law school? If you are running for school board, were you ever teacher of the year? Make sure to add some relevant experience. And if you have the support of people who voters will recognize, it's probably a good idea to add in three or four of their names.

29. Invest in good photography. Now you need to do one of the most important things in your campaign – get some good pictures. Lots of good pictures. If you are camera shy, you need to get over it. Ask your friend who is really good with a camera to spend an afternoon or two helping you get a good portrait (head shot) and some shots that show you in action. A few with recognizable community landmarks will be helpful, and get a few family shots while you're at it.

No shots with wine glasses in your hand, red eyes, buttons, funny hats. You need to look friendly, but people have to take you seriously.

30. Build your website. Develop a basic website, and keep it private until you are ready to announce that you're running. The website must have:

1. Your bio
2. A donation form
3. A volunteer form

Pro Tip

Your website does not need to be complicated, and with a little bit of elbow grease, you can probably create one yourself. A couple of good options are Wix and Weebly.

And if you don't feel comfortable with this, ask a tech-savvy member of your kitchen cabinet to help. You will need to pay for web hosting, but this should not be a major campaign expenditure for a down-ballot race.

Pro Tip

Join a local Toastmasters chapter.

The sole focus of the organization is to train folks to be better, more competent public speakers in a constructive environment.

You'll have the chance to not just refine your ability to deliver your stump speech, but you'll get practice speaking on a wide range of topics in varied formats (this can be great prep work for candidate forums, debates and town halls).

4. An endorsement form
5. A disclaimer

You should probably start with a blog function you can use to regularly update your site (more about search engine optimization, or SEO, later). Make sure to link all your social media properties from the home page of your website.

31. Now you need to audit, or create, your social media properties. You are going to need, at a minimum, a presence on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. You are probably going to need a presence on Instagram and Snapchat. All of these communities have functions you can use to invite all of your friends to connect with you. Remember all the time you spent creating that list? Now it's time to use it. Try and connect with everyone you know (but not yet with people you don't know). And before you do, take down all those embarrassing photos, please. Weird late night tweets? Delete them now.

32. Do some political mapping. Who are the people and organizations that matter in your race? Unions, local elected officials at all levels, party leaders, community leaders, church leaders, business leaders and others. This might be a little daunting for a first-time candidate. But do some research. Who did other candidates list as their endorsers in the past? That's a great way to start – go through the websites of local candidates and look at who like-minded candidates list as their endorsers. That should be a pretty good initial guide.

33. Will press and prominent bloggers cover this race? Make a list with their contacts. All of this information will be available online. This will be the press list you will use to send your announcement notice.

34. You are almost ready to announce, but first, some practice. Try out your rap on friends and family. This should be a two- to three-minute explanation of why you are running, what you will do, why this race matters and why you are the right person for the job. After you have practiced this rap or stump speech on friends and family, try it out it again, ten times, on key supporters. Listen to their feedback. Make edits. Write it down.

We've seen a whole lot of campaigns, and there is almost always a trajectory from beginning to end: all that practice speaking in front of an audience makes the candidates much better at the end than the beginning.

Try and jumpstart this process by practicing first with yourself by reading your stump out loud until you have memorized it. Then try it out in front of friends and family. Then in front of key supporters. A whole body of social science now shows that mastery is essentially focused practice. Want to be good at this? Practice, practice, practice.

35. Get ready to open your campaign bank account – properly – and link your website to an e-commerce service. This will take from a day to a week, depending on whom you are dealing with and what could go wrong. Many jurisdictions have a series of steps you must take to do this legally. Get the guides and go over them with your treasurer. You need to prepare now to give yourself time to get it right before you launch.

36. Now let's get back to Tip #5: Good campaigns have good lists. Go through every email you have ever sent, or ever received, and make sure you have a list of updated email addresses. Try to get at least 500 if you can. Most email programs will let you export a file of emails you have sent and even emails you have received. After you have downloaded all of these and deduped (Excel and most database programs will help you remove duplicates), apply some human intelligence. The guy trying to sell you printer toner can probably come off the list.

37. Determine your campaign budget, expected expenses, necessary expenditures, etc. This is helpful when done in conjunction with your campaign plan (more on that later) but it's really important that you are able to see the costs that are coming down the pipeline – this is especially helpful as fundraising motivation.

38. Write a fundraising plan. Here is the basic fundraising plan every successful candidate uses. Say you need to raise \$50,000 to be successful. Make an initial roadmap that looks something like this:

- 100 contributions of \$500 = \$50,000
- 250 contributions of \$250 = \$50,000
- 500 contributions x \$100 = \$50,000
- 1,000 contributions x \$50 = \$50,000
- 2,000 contributions x \$25 = \$50,000

Notice all the categories add up to your goal? That's because there are lots of ways to break down even a big goal. You should take this grid and fill it in

Pro Tip

Sign up for an email sending service.

We have used Mail Chimp, MyEmma, Paramount and others. There are a lot out there; make sure to find and test which one works best for the scale of your campaign depending on whether it's opt-in (see Tip #51), lists you've purchased, one you've acquired through the voter file or another source.

Pro Tip

Do you know people who currently serve in elected office?

If they offer to support your campaign, ask them if they will join you for a session of call-time—with their call lists. This exercise allows you to be personally introduced to a host of known donors who already give to someone who clearly is supporting you and is a great way to get some dollars in the door.

with everyone you know, putting them into one of the categories (Don't take these amounts as fixed. If you know people who can give \$5,000 and that is allowed – have a higher category).

Try and put as many people as possible into the higher categories – that will mean fewer calls you need to make. Don't know how much they can give? Better to ask for too much than too little. If you have time, the giving history of people is usually public record. If they gave \$500 to the last school board race they probably can give at least that to you. But apply some intuition here.

A basic plan will also include a schedule of regular appeals via email. Perhaps you might want to send a snail-mail appeal, but these days that is not always necessary. You will also probably want to schedule a few in-person fundraising events. An initial kick-off – and then maybe a few more around key events (like a campaign finance deadline). But remember, keep costs low.

Try and recruit some help here if possible. Do you know five or six people who can be a finance committee? They can help in a couple of ways – first, they can ask their friends for donations. But they can also provide you lists of people to ask – since you might not know enough people now to get to your goal.

Want to know the secret to success here? It is simple. Ask everyone. Sincerely thank everyone who gives. Ask friends for lists to call. Don't ask for too little. Make regular email appeals focused on specific goals or needs: "Can you give us \$50 now so we can print our next important mailer?" But most of all – don't give up. Keep positive, keep asking and you will get there.

39. Having trouble asking people for money? Okay, simple: don't run unless you are rich. But even then it might be a problem. Self-funders frequently don't do very well. Why? Because when you ask people to give to your cause, you are creating a list of supporters who are invested personally in your success. These donors help recruit other donors, they spread the word about you on social media, they invite you to community events they know about and introduce you to friends and colleagues.

It's also important to keep in mind the people you're asking for money aren't just giving to you as an individual, they are giving to the platform and policies that you are advocating for. A lot of people want their kids to have smaller class sizes, but not a lot of people have the courage to do what you're doing by running for office. You have shared values, and for those values to succeed, it takes teamwork. Some people run, some people donate – now, go ask them for it.

40. CALL TIME! Learn it, love it, embrace it. If you're not familiar with it, you will be: Call time is the dedicated time on your schedule to call donors and ask for money. Our experience proves that rigid, structured, well prepped call time ensures a candidate's success when it comes to dialing for dollars. For a successful call time session, we recommend the following:

1. Set yourself up in a room alone, or with a staffer or volunteer with fundraising experience to take notes.

2. Set a finite amount of time for your calls and don't let anything that is not a family emergency interrupt you. If your call time is from 6:00 - 8:30 on Thursday night, you need to ignore every text message, email and phone call that is not directly related to the calls that you are making. (The plus side of this is that you can count down the time until it's over.)

3. In order to make that block of time most efficient, prep your calls beforehand. Know who you are calling, what their numbers are and have an idea of how much you should ask for right in front of you, as well as a system for taking notes. Are they able to give \$100 now, and \$100 in a month? Great – you need to write it down and record it in your fundraising database so it doesn't get lost in the shuffle.

4. Reward yourself.

A lot of candidates we work with reward themselves after their call time block. For some this

is a glass of wine, for others it's a bowl of ice-cream or the latest *Game of Thrones* episode. Whatever it is, have something to motivate you through those calls. You deserve it.

In 2016, of Americans who donated to a candidate or a group electing a candidate:



32% donated between \$100–250



55% donated less than \$100

Pew Research Center

41. Write a preliminary campaign plan. This plan is going to evolve every month of your campaign, and maybe more than that. But you need to have a basic roadmap so you know where you are going. A great deal of this plan comes down to setting priorities and schedules – so take this in order of importance.

Pro Tip

Make sure to link your email to your website—and to test the website links before you make it live! And remember to proofread everything a couple of times. We've seen too many announcement emails with typos.

The first priority is going to be fundraising, so put that in the plan. If it is going to take you ten hours per week to raise your budget, then put that first.

Second priority is almost certainly going to be direct voter contact via walking precincts and phoning. So that comes next. Basically, every time the sun is out and there isn't a debate or fundraiser, you should be walking a precinct and talking to voters. Try every Saturday and every Sunday afternoon to start. You can also walk when it's raining or snowing and get even higher direct voter contact.

Then schedule calling – you can usually call up until about 8:30 in the evening – so schedule phone outreach time for as many nights as possible.

Then will come visibility. Are there places where you can go and meet a great number of voters? Transit stops? School pick-up lines?

Then set aside time to study the issues, time to make thank-you calls and write thank-you notes, and time to prep for debates.

A good campaign plan will also include your paid media and targeting of your efforts – we will cover that shortly.

42. Now write an "announcement email" telling your friends, family and contacts why you are running. Don't rush this – if it takes a week to get right, make sure it's right. It should say why you are running, what you want to do once in office, why you are ready to tackle this challenge and how the recipient can help – both by giving money with a link to your donation page and by joining the campaign as a volunteer or endorser. Your press announcement will just be a version of this announcement email – the two major differences will be you want take out the "ask to join" on the press announcement and you want to add a contact line on your press announcement with the best number to reach you.

43. Now book two to three days to call everyone you know. We have already talked about making sure your boss and family are on board. Try to take a Friday off and call three days straight. Better yet, start Thursday right after work or school and call right through to Monday morning. But make sure to book this campaign launch in advance. Before you start calling, push send on that email to your supporters and to the press.

44. Repeat, repeat, repeat. If you have 1,000 people on your list, call them all and ask them for help. Before you start walking precincts, having

house parties or organizing rallies – call everyone you know and ask them to help.

45. Get voter lists to start your walk and phone program.

Okay – this is really important. You need to stop and think about where you can find the best data available to you. Almost every local election office will give or sell to you at a minimal cost a list of every registered voter. If this is the only option, it will have to work.

But if you can invest in only one professional service, we recommend that you get a professional voter data firm to provide you with lists (and many have other tools you can use). If you are a progressive Democrat, the Voter Activation Network (or simply VAN as it is called) is a great choice. Other candidates can use L2 Data, which provides voter registration data tied in with commercial data. If you have decided to use a website-building service like Nation Builder, it has lists as well. Candidates running for office in California frequently use a firm called Political Data Inc. (PDI).

Good data is important for many reasons. These vendors will help you segment who is likely to vote in your election. If you are going into a race with a likely 50% turnout, predicting correctly who those voters will be makes you up to twice as efficient!

46. Target your efforts. Big campaigns spend lots of time on targeting – choosing which voters to communicate with – and you will hear a lot about this if you are talking to consultants. This usually means two things – a way to identify voters who are likely to say yes and a way to eliminate voters who will likely say no. Sadly, our society is now so partisan that Republicans almost never vote for Democrats and vice-versa – so a Democratic campaign is likely to target soft Democratic supporters and Independent voters and essentially eliminate Republican voters from campaign efforts. Targeting also involves identifying voters by issue interest – so, for example, senior voters might hear about Medicare, very young voters about college affordability and 30- to 40-something voters about schools or child care.

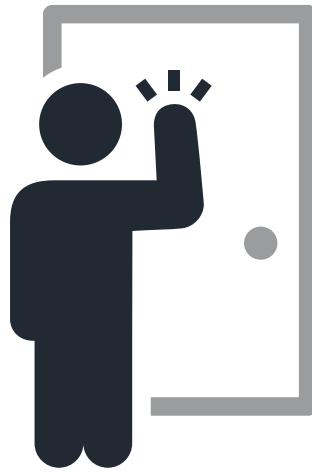
Your race might not be so complicated – but here are some targeting efforts you should think about.

First, target those voters who are going to vote, not those voters who never vote. There is some wiggle room here – but if a voter has skipped the last four elections, leave them out. They are unlikely to vote in the next election (most data vendors have good tools to predict who is and who is not going to vote).

Pro Tip

Many campaign data tracking programs offer tools that will help you keep track of who you talk with during your precinct walks and what they say back to you. These tend to be programs or apps you can have with you on your cell phone or mobile devices. They take some training—but they will make your precinct walking and call times much more efficient.

Knock on a
Democrat's door,
and you increase
turnout by **6%**.



Knock on an
independent's door,
and that number
is more like **8%**.

Gerber and Green, *Does Canvassing Increase Voter turnout? A Field Experiment*

Second, try to target in a way that works from your anticipated base outward. So walk your own precinct first, then areas around it. One of the key reasons for this is that as you walk you want to be identifying supporters as well as recruiting volunteers. You will recruit more volunteers from your base than from the public at large.

If you have a clearly anticipated supporter base—for example you are an Asian-American candidate and Asian-American voters have a local history of supporting Asian-American candidates—contact all these voters early (by phone, precinct walking, etc.). It will help you build up your support list and recruit volunteers.

47. Create your walk piece. In many ways, you have already done this. You have created a 250-word summary of your candidacy and you have taken some great pictures. You need to edit this down to about 125 words now for a typical walk piece. If you have gotten some key endorsements, add the top three.

Typically on one side of your walk piece you will show your head shot and some key and easy to read “bullets” summarizing you and your race. Keep it short “Smith is a teacher supported by parents and teachers!” On the reverse side try to use an action shot of you with people and you can have slightly more text here. Always tell people how to join your campaign, with your website or email address or both. Remember – you have to say who paid for

this piece – that’s what the disclaimer is for – and most jurisdictions even call out how big your disclaimer needs to be. So don’t forget compliance.

48. SEO. It means search engine optimization and it is important in every campaign. Recent studies have shown when voters are considering their choices in an election, the first thing they do is search for information about a political contest online – and good SEO helps make sure they find you rather than one of your opponents.

SEO can get complicated, but there are some basic rules that, if you follow them, will ensure your website has good optimization. First, make sure that everyone you know with an established website relevant at all to your community links back to your website. If the local teacher’s union endorses, for example, ask them to link to your site too.

Second, publish regularly on your blog. How you headline this content and what subheads you use are important. So if you are running for school board, a headline could be “Why the Teachers Union Endorsed Susan Smith for Oakland School Board.” That will help your rank on search pages when people search for “Oakland School Board” closer to Election Day. You can also have subheads in blogs that are another clue to search engines about what content is important. Remember, don’t be spammy. Don’t buy links. Don’t

Pro Tip

Need help designing a walk piece?

One of our sister companies, SpeakEasyPolitical, has already made templates you can use for creating a walk piece.

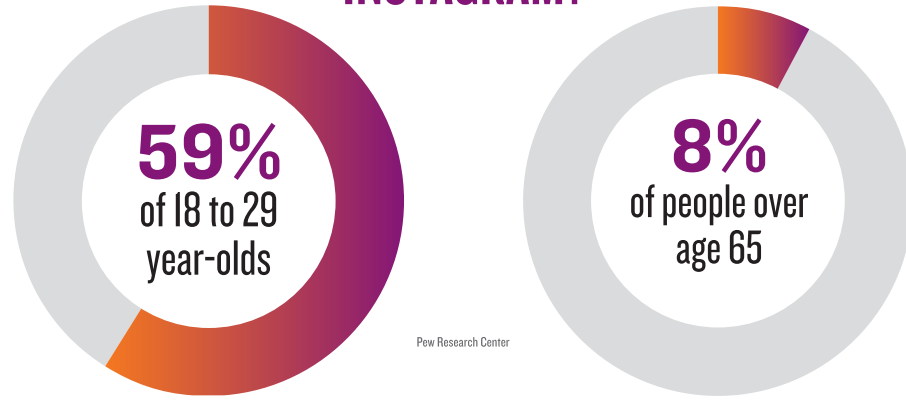


44% of persuadable voters watched election-related video content three times a day or more during the 2016 Presidential election.

Pro Tip

Many of the website creation services you might use have SEO tool boxes (sometimes called plug-ins) that help you with some finer details. Make sure to access these tools. One very popular one is called Yoast.

WHO USES INSTAGRAM?



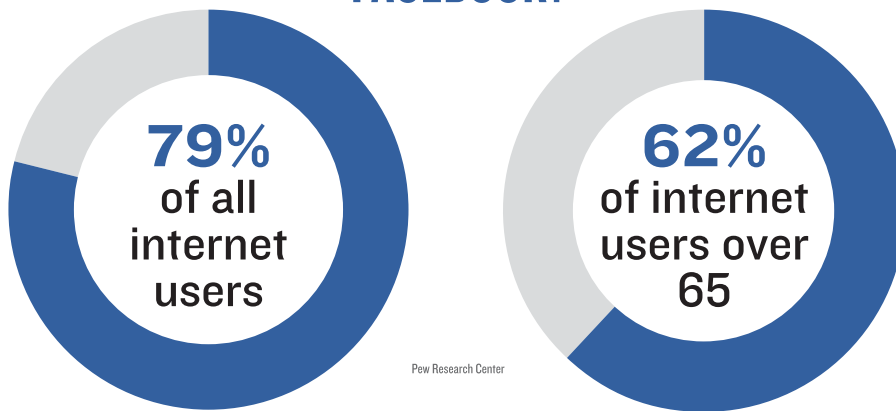
overcrowd keywords into your content. Just publish interesting and relevant content regularly and make sure everyone who can links back to you.

49. Four things to never do. Seriously – never do these things.

1. **Don't drink too much at campaign events.** Try to not drink at campaign events at all. Come on – you're at work. Do you drink at work?
2. **Do not have a romantic relationship with anyone on your campaign.** Do we even have to say it? Yes we do, because it happens all the time. And it frequently ends badly. If you are actually in love, ask him out at the victory party.
3. **Don't ever link anything anyone gives you or does for you to something you will do in office.** That is unethical. That is illegal. Don't try and get cute. Just don't do it.
4. **Don't steal your opponent's lawn signs.** You are laughing now – but remember this on that October night when you really want to. Everyone has a camera on their phone and half the people have a camera on their front door. Please, just don't do it.

50. Create an email marketing schedule. You have the list you have built of supporters. And this list will grow as the campaign goes on – from people who sign up on your website, from emails you gather at the door of voters who agree to support you and from the business cards of anyone you meet who agrees to give you a card. It is a best practice to email this list once per week. Not every email should contain an ask, but many can.

WHO IS ON FACEBOOK?



“Asks” are requests for donations, requests to volunteer or requests to come to an event. During weeks you do not include an ask, send a campaign update with some good news, a fun picture from the campaign trail and maybe a link to an article about you or an article you found particularly interesting or inspiring.

51. Opt in, opt in, opt in. You want to build a list of people who want to hear from you. This is called your opt-in audience, and it is a powerful tool you can use to get out the vote (GOTV), recruit volunteers, raise money, build an audience or a crowd and simply get your message out. Make sure to ask people to join you by giving you their name and email at every opportunity.

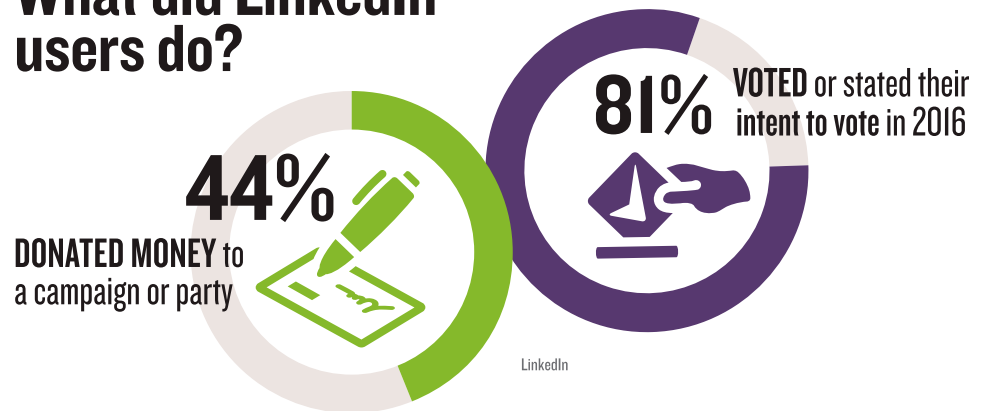
Don’t overuse this tool – but a few online petitions can help. These are forms that are easy to create on your website and should be about a very relevant issue. For example, “Ask the school board to bring back after-school study to keep our kids safe and help them succeed. Make your voice heard.”

52. Facebook and social media protocols. Post regularly about relevant topics. Every now and then, make it personal, like “Thanks to my husband for helping me walk precincts on his birthday.” If you don’t have something interesting to say – don’t say it. But if something interesting, relevant or funny happens, post it. People ask if they should remove negative comments if “trolls” appear on your social sites. We usually recommend removing anything rude, lewd or untrue but leaving any legitimate discussions.

Pro Tip

If you’re at a community event and want to post something to Twitter, you only have 140 characters. It’s helpful to tag other people or organizations involved at the same event to make sure that your tweet is reaching a broader audience. You should post to Facebook too, and make sure to include a picture and tag relevant participants, but use different phrasing—each post should be unique.

What did LinkedIn users do?



53. Building your social media audience. You're in the middle of your campaign and you notice you don't have many people following you on Facebook or Twitter. Make sure that when you connect with people who give you their support, you immediately Friend, Follow and Connect to them – most of them will reciprocate. After that, start posting relevant content on your social media pages – often. Make sure you post and share a newspaper article about a local issue, your interview on a local blog, a picture of you at the Farmer's Market on Saturday morning. This will help drive engagements with users on your social media channels and keep them engaged and wanting to learn more.

If you want to get in front of even more people and grow your audience faster, there are always paid social media ads, like those on Facebook (see Tip #85). From promoting your page to boosting a post so that even more people will see a what great interview you did, paid ads will get you out and in front of your targeted audience on social media.

54. Lawn signs or window signs – do you need them? Yes and no. Signs don't win campaigns. Talking to voters with a compelling message wins campaigns. So, if the sign program fits into your walk and phone program, it can be helpful. Go ahead and add it to your script. If someone says they support you, follow up with: would you like to show your support for (better schools, a better city council, etc.) by displaying a sign on your lawn (or window if you are running in a big city)? That works. What doesn't work is just randomly placing signs here and there. In many places, it isn't allowed. And in all places, your sign program should support your voter contact program, not distract from it.

55. Buttons, tee shirts, and hats – do you really need them?

Probably not. But here’s a challenge – your supporters may really want those buttons or tee shirts. If it’s not in the budget, consider directing them to a website that will allow them to upload a logo and create their own. If they really want one, they can buy one there and it won’t cost you.

56. “My friend can do it for free.” Maybe yes, maybe no. But free is good. Why don’t you give your friend a small project to try out? If it is actually free and the work is good, give him or her another project. But be careful. Many times it isn’t actually free – either because there is a hidden charge, because the work is substandard and has to be redone, or because it takes a lot of your time to manage.

57. Don’t get angry, don’t get angry – never let anyone see you get angry. Campaigns can be incredibly stressful, and many high-achieving people who are now outside of their comfort zone can feel the stress even more. So make a hard and fast rule – don’t let stress turn you into “that candidate” – the one who yells at people. It might make you feel better for a moment, but it doesn’t work to motivate those around you when you are yelling.

58. Should I hire a pollster? Perhaps. If your campaign is planning to spend more than \$150,000 – then yes. Here is how we do the math. The cheapest phone poll is \$15,000 – and we are pretty sure a good poll will make your campaign at least 10 percent better. But if you have a small budget, you probably can’t afford a poll. If you have a very specific question to ask – you can look at “robo” polling – polls taken with automated phone calls. But be careful. The margin of error for these surveys can be higher than with other surveys.

59. The last person who won told me it was because she did lawn signs, newspaper advertisements, ads in movie theaters, skywriting, etc. That is not why she won. The lawn sign lady won because she outraised, outwalked, out-hustled her opponent. Not because she had lawn signs.

60. Should I hire a campaign manager? Maybe. You should try and keep 70% to 80% of your budget for voter contact – meaning emails, mailers, Facebook ads and walk pieces (okay maybe some signs). Say you have a \$100,000 budget – then yes, you probably should hire a manager to help you for \$3,000 a month for 5 months. But if you have a \$25,000 budget, you can’t

Pro Tip

Although most social media sites (specifically Facebook and Twitter) offer the option to cross-post (e.g., copying a post from Twitter and pasting it into a Facebook post), don’t do it. Take the time, or delegate to a staffer the responsibility of thoughtfully posting to each platform, separately, while using the best practices designated for each respective site.

Pro Tip

Need to launch a digital campaign?

One of our sister companies, StorefrontDigital, has already made templates for banner ads you can launch today.

afford a manager. The reality is most first-time candidates rely on volunteer managers or a committee of friends and family to guide them.

61. Should I hire a consultant? Look, we are political consultants, and even we have to admit in most instances for a first race on a small budget, you probably should not hire a consultant. There are some great consultants out there but not many will take a first-time candidate on a small budget. Is there a local person with a great track record who will work at a low cost? Maybe. But most first-time candidates win without professional advice or with limited professional advice.

One of the key reasons why we created two new tools for candidates, SpeakEasyPolitical.com and StorefrontDigital.com, was to make sure that first-time candidates without consultants had access to high-quality media necessary to win their campaigns.

62. Should I hire a digital consultant? Same rule of thumb here as in the Tip #61 – keep your overhead low. If you have a \$200,000 campaign and you have spent \$15,000 for a manager, then you might be able to spend \$15,000 more for other consultants, like a digital consultant. But the reality is you can probably figure the basics out yourself or find someone in your community of supporters who has a good idea how to proceed.

Remember, almost all the basics of a good digital strategy rest with you anyway. After every appropriate conversation, remember to like or friend them on Facebook, connect on LinkedIn and follow on Twitter the person you are talking with. That means they are very likely to do the same – growing your organic audience. Make sure to share some relevant content nearly every day – and certainly every day in the last few months of your campaign.

Yes, you can advertise your fundraising appeals and precinct walks. But also use tools like Facebook Live to build a greater audience for the big debate or your big speech in front of the Rotary Club. Share articles you think are interesting about your race or your community, and those that reinforce your position on issues. If something personal, touching or funny happens on the campaign trail, share that also. Pictures are better than text and video is best of all.

63. What if I'm attacked? Defend yourself without being defensive and remember to not to let it go to your head. For example – the opponent says, “You are a tax-and-spend liberal who will give away the store to unions.” You say – without sounding angry – “I want to see every dollar raised used

wisely to improve schools for our kids and make sure they have a modern classroom to attend and proven programs to keep them safe after school. I can't understand why my opponent would not support these basics for our kids." Notice the pivot to your message; don't let them trap you into a conversation within their negative frame.

It isn't going to feel good when you get attacked but remember a few things. If the attack seems serious to you, make sure to let all of your supporters know how to respond so they can defend you. "Dear Supporters, my opponent has launched a negative campaign attacking my position on taxes. I want you to know where I stand – I support safe schools, healthy kids and excellent programs that are proven to work. I have never supported tax increases for any purpose other than to support our kids when necessary. I am saddened he will not stand up for our kids the way they need."



A majority of persuadable voters watched video content on YouTube.

Global Strategy Group

One more thing to remember – generally most of the damage of a campaign attack is psychological, meaning it throws you and your supporters off their game. Refuse to be rattled and you blunt most of the power of these attacks.

64. Should you attack your opponent? If attacked, perhaps. If there is some information that is very relevant to a race – say you are running for tax collector and it turns out your opponent has not paid her taxes – then you probably should feel a duty to communicate that in a non-personal way. But the truth is that in most small campaigns there are not a lot of attacks, personal or otherwise. Fortunately, you can stay focused on your positive message.

65. Are there free ways to be heard? They take time, but yes, there are some free ways to be heard. Most importantly, make sure you are listed on all the free services that host candidate material – SmartVoter from the League of Women Voters is a key example. Your local newspaper is likely to provide you with the opportunity to write one or more opinion pieces. Make sure to ask and take advantage of this opportunity. Letters to the editor from supporters should not be overlooked. Take advantage of your social media platforms – use your friends, family, fans and supporters to share your content to get free organic traffic without having to spend money to push it out.

Pro Tip

How do I decide on a texting service?

Some texting service vendors you can use include Trumpia, Hustle and Relay, but we recommend you look into which ones best suit your goals and tactics (require users to opt-in, send a text to one user or multiple users at once, etc.).

66. Should I text people? Absolutely. But you should follow some simple rules. First, we do not recommend any “spam” texts. Only text people you know. Try and make it about a specific ask. For example, the first text should be – “I’m in the race for school board! Hope I can count on your support. Please visit (my website) to join. Thanks!” The next text could be to invite your supporters to a rally, precinct walk or even to donate if there is an important deadline coming up – but don’t overdo it.

67. Should I hire a data scientist or data analytics firm? Again, probably not. Most data analytics help you target voters based on a multitude of characteristics. In your race, you should try to reach every likely voter you can. Which means you should spend more time focusing on how to reach this broader target rather than leaving people out.

Our firm, Storefront Political Media, is a big believer in and practitioner of data science and analytics. But in a small race, stay focused on basic numbers – how many calls did you make today, how many doors did you knock on, how many voters pledged their vote, how many visits did your website get, how many new people joined your social media communities? Staying focused on these numbers and how to improve them is a strong start.

68. I heard there was a secret algorithm. Can I get it? The short answer is no, there is not. There is no magic bullet for winning campaigns, and if someone tries to sell you one, don’t hire them. We do this for a living. There is no secret – just well-known tools that you might have used in your college statistics course. Certainly, there are better and worse ways to use those tools. But there is no secret here.

69. Should I put flyers on people’s car windows? No. You should not. Littering is not campaigning. If you knock on a door and the voter isn’t home, it is fine to leave something behind but you should secure it so it doesn’t blow away. Some campaigns print “door hangers” that have a cut that allows them to hang on doors securely. Some place them right under a door mat while others punch holes in existing flyers and secure them with rubber bands. But whatever you do, make sure they are secure and not all over the streets. Nobody wants to vote for someone who is littering.

70. Should I go to all events? If you have a chance to speak to a decent size audience, you should go to an event, so long as it isn’t going to take you

all day. If you can't speak, but there is time to mingle with a lot of people you need to see, then yes, do that too. But if you start seeing the same people over and over again, you are going to too many events. Better to walk a precinct.

71. House parties. Yes, you probably should think about a house party program. The goal of a house party should be to help grow your team, raise funds for your campaign to win and ensure a fun time for guests to support you. These parties can be as small as inside a supporters' living room, at an office or even your neighborhood coffee shop.

STEP 1: Schedule several hours for your event and have a specific fundraising goal in mind.

STEP 2: Mail or email an invitation to everyone on your targeted list several weeks out. Ask the host to invite all of their friends, and consider including likely voters who live near the event.

STEP 3: Follow up every invitation with a personal call. Ask those who cannot attend the house party to make a donation.

STEP 4: At your house party, provide light refreshments and have a sign-in sheet and donation envelopes for your guests to contribute. Remind them how important their support is on your way to winning.

STEP 5: Remember to say "Thank you!" to everyone who came to your event. Thank them by phone, email or letter.

72. Remember that your campaign is not like a presidential campaign. We've noticed many first-time candidates can repeat dialogues word-for-word from the *The West Wing* and have read numerous books about presidential campaigns. Please put all that pomp and circumstance out of your head. Your campaign is nothing like a presidential campaign. Most political campaigns are nothing like a presidential campaign. Why? Three reasons:

a. First, scale. Presidents can't and don't walk precincts and call voters directly because the scale makes that impossible. You can and must ask voters directly or you probably won't win.

b. Secondly, interest level. Presidential campaigns are one of the few campaigns where voters do pay attention. In nearly every other campaign, voters are generally not very attuned to the race.

c. And finally, your budget. You won't have a staff of hundreds of experts and helpers. You have your trusty walk list, your comfortable shoes, your firm belief in your message and a positive attitude.

Pro Tip

You can build your own House Party kit through our sister company [SpeakEasyPolitical](#).

MAIL vs. EMAIL

79%

of **DIRECT MAIL** is at least skimmed over before being discarded or saved...



While **EMAIL OPEN RATES** in 2016 were only

23%



DMA 2010 Response Rate Trend Report and MailChimp

meet – it will give you a sense of who they are. We suggest you keep these conversations on the record – meaning that the reporter is free to write anything you say and attribute it to you. Just be straight about who you are, why you are running and what you want to do in office. Don't be nervous, but do remember that everything you say could end up in print. So leave the gossip to others – as well as anything else you don't want attributed to you.

74. What if they have a negative question? Answer it clearly in a way that is not defensive. "Thanks for asking that question. I did have a tax lien when I was in college ten years ago and I have cleared it up. Like lots of college kids I had debt and I made a mistake. That's why I am running for Community College Board, to help students today get a good education without having to take on so much debt." Don't be defensive. Answer the questions. Pivot to your message.

75. Did you remember to exercise or meditate or go for a walk in the woods or go to church/temple/mosque today? We're serious. Really great candidates are serious about "centering" themselves every day so they have the energy and focus they need to succeed. Sorry we used the word "centering," but we're from California, so we have a good excuse. But whatever you want to call it – do something every day that clears your mind and gets you ready to campaign hard and well.

76. Did you read your kids a bedtime story? This is going to be a sacrifice for you and your whole family. But don't forget to do one thing a

Pro Tip

Mailers can also be used as walk cards — so if you are planning to do a piece, make sure you ask for overruns that can be used when you're knocking on doors.

73. How do I talk to reporters? You should talk with them in the same way you talk with voters – in a straightforward and clear way. We suggest that after you have been out on the trail for a month or so, have practiced your rap and done your issue homework, that you reach out to any reporter who might cover the race and ask if they would like to have a cup of coffee to chat.

Please make sure to read their last five articles before you

day that keeps you connected to them – and keeps them connected to you.

77. Why are we spending so much time talking about you – not the campaign?

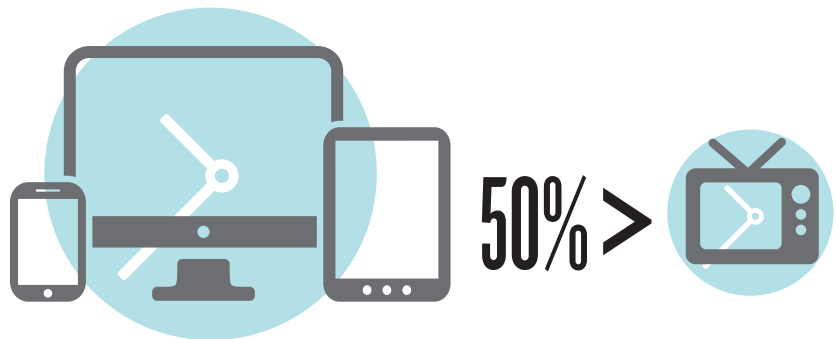
Because we know from experience the secret to winning campaigns is focused, dedicated, hardworking candidates. It’s funny in a way – candidates frequently think political consultants can be the key to success or failure. They think there is a secret to winning. Here is the secret – you read it here first – the secret is you. If you want this, you can do it. But you need to do your homework, walk those precincts, make those fundraising calls, get up early, stay up late, stay positive and always stay focused. You are the difference between winning and losing.

78. Should I attend debates? Yes, you should. It is a great way to get your message out, particularly for a first-time candidate. You probably should be proactive and ask community organizations like the League of Women Voters or your local newspaper to host debates. Make sure to practice. Most debates have a few minutes of opening remarks and a few minutes of closing remarks. Write these down and practice just like you practiced your rap. In most cases, this will be a modified version of your basic campaign message. Go through a detailed list of possible questions or key issues affecting your community, and make sure that you have clear answers for when those questions are asked. But make sure to practice!

79. Leveraging earned media. This is what consultants like us call “the press” or “earned media” (as opposed to paid media discussed in Tip #80) – the coverage you get in the local newspapers. Not every small campaign has an earned media plan – but there are frequent opportunities to earn this kind of coverage. Do you have an incredible idea to make the schools better? Write it up as a position paper and pitch it to your local reporter. Don’t forget to submit op-eds – opinion editorials submitted by

TV vs. DIGITAL

Americans spend **50% MORE TIME** browsing on their digital devices than watching TV.



This is a **53% INCREASE** in digital use from 2011.

readers that are longer than letters to the editor – on your position or your candidacy if your paper will take them. Are there local radio stations, even college or high school stations that want you to appear and talk about your campaign? Pitch them.

80. What will my paid media look like? Unlike earned media, paid media requires you to pay to get your message out. For most first-time candidates, your paid media mix – the variety and distribution of paid communications – will probably be a combination of direct mail and digital advertising. These two tools are usually used because they are affordable and addressable, meaning you can target them just to the voters in your district. Television and traditional radio advertisements are not usually used

by first-time candidates because they are so expensive and they usually reach voters far outside your district.

Direct mail is still the most commonly used medium for smaller campaigns, for a good reason: you can laser-target the voters you want to communicate with. It can be great for introducing yourself to your community, and studies show that most people actually do read direct mail.

The challenge is that it's a multi-step process (writing, designing, printing, mailing) and it can be expensive. For candidates with a budget of less than \$100,000, we recommend

considering our own self-serve platform SpeakEasyPolitical.com – it is cost-effective and eliminates many of the pain points.

If you can afford to do just one piece of mail, generally you would want to do a bio piece that introduces yourself, communicates why you're running and has great photography of you in your community.

If you can afford to do a full mail program, you would start with a bio piece, add in a couple of issue pieces on relevant topics like education or safety, and then move to a contrast piece that explains the differences between your opponent and yourself. Finally, you would want to end with a piece reminding your supporters to vote.

Digital advertising is a fast-growing part of nearly every campaign.

Remember, most digital advertising is now addressable, meaning you can

A single ten minute conversation when canvassing...

Science Magazine

...vastly reduced voters' prejudice against transgender people.

target just the voters you want to reach online. So if you need to reach Democratic women – you can target just that cohort.

Direct mail and digital media are frequently used together because they complement each other – and because digital media doesn't reach every voter, most campaigns use both digital and direct mail (the rule of thumb is that even a strong digital campaign will only reach about half your target audience).

For candidates with a budget of less than \$100,000, we recommend considering a self-serve platform like our own StorefrontDigital.com for digital advertising that is cost-effective and eliminates many of the pain points.

81. What does a good campaign schedule look like? A good schedule reflects the priorities of your campaign and accounts for all important events that can be foreseen (and is just flexible enough to accommodate the events you can't foresee). So what does that look like on a day you can campaign all day?

- 6:00 am – Read local papers and study for upcoming debate
- 6:45 am – Exercise
- 7:30 am – Hit bus stops or the local subway station while people go to work
- 8:30 am – Breakfast
- 9:00 am – Fundraising calls
- 12:00 pm – Lunch with key donors
- 1:30 pm – Answer emails
- 2:00 - 5:00 pm – Call senior citizen voters who are likely to be home
- 5:00 pm – Early dinner
- 6:00 - 8:30 pm – Walk a precinct
- 9:00 pm – Family time!

Don't have all day to campaign, every day? Here's what a campaign schedule should look like if you're still heading into the office Monday - Friday:

- 6:00 am – Read local papers and study for upcoming debate
- 6:45 am – Exercise
- 7:30 am – Hit bus stops while people go to work
- 8:30 am – Breakfast
- 9:00 am – Office time



Take copious notes. If Thelma on Elm Street mentions that her granddaughter was just accepted to UCLA, write it down. If she's concerned with cuts to Medicare, take notes. In four months when you're back at Thelma's door during the GOTV phase of your campaign, you'll be grateful you have a few extra reference points. And if you don't write it down, TRUST US—you will not remember.

1:00 pm – Call Time to donors during lunch

2:00 - 5:30 pm – Office time

5:30 pm – Dinner

6:00 - 8:30 pm – Walk a precinct

9:00 pm – Family time!

We understand that this is a lot of time away from your family. If you can, try to incorporate family members along the campaign trail, as long as it doesn't slow you down. Have a night or two a week where your spouse and kids walk with you, let them see what you're fighting so hard for—and let voters see that you are a real person, just like them, concerned about the community.

82. What does a good “walk” program look like? First, make sure you have good lists. It almost always makes sense to target “likely voters,” not “all voters.” Almost every data vendor (like NGP/VAN, for example) has a program you can use to tabulate responses on your phone. You should take advantage of these services. The data will be “walk-sorted,” meaning it lets you hit all the likely voters on one side of the street before you go to the other side.

Most candidates do best when they walk with a partner. The partner, if she or he finds a voter who wants to meet you, would then text you – “Head over to 122 Cherry Lane – the voter wants to talk with you.” Try and start with

Social pressure works. Individuals were much more motivated to vote when they believed lots of other people were voting compared with when they thought relatively few others were voting.



Scientific American

friendlier territory, like your own precinct, when you get going. Carry literature you can leave behind if a voter is not home – or if they want to learn more about you.

If a voter says he or she supports you, ask for an email address so you can stay in touch. If the voter says he or she is undecided, ask for an email address so you can email more information. Don't forget to say thank you via email to everyone who says yes and email the information to everyone who asks for it. Stay positive – you might have some doors slammed in your face. But that's normal.

When canvassing, giving potential voters a plan for heading to the polls is **twice as effective** as standard scripts.

Stanford Graduate School of Business



83. What does a good phone program look like? Start with clean lists. Phone numbers obtained from voter files are sometimes out-of-date or inaccurate. Time spent calling the wrong number is time not spent talking to actual voters. There are commercial products that can help you clean your list to sort out and mark bad numbers – for example, an automated robocall service can both allow you to send a short message to introduce yourself to voters and provide feedback on which numbers didn't work.

When you are ready to make live calls, make sure you and your volunteers have a script at the ready and a clear idea of what your goals are for these calls. As a new candidate, you'll want to spend more time in the beginning introducing yourself and your background – but know that if you talk for more than about 20 seconds without pause, people will not want to stay on the line. Give the voter a chance to ask questions and prepare your volunteers with a list of suggested answers to the likeliest questions. These are known as "persuasion" calls. But make sure to ID anyone who responds Yes, No or Undecided. You can take the No's off your mailing lists. You can call back the Undecideds later. And the Yes voters will be the start of your GOTV lists. So make sure to have a system to code your calls.

Finally, have a system to get this data back into your master voter file. The data you are gathering on your calls, walks, emails is perhaps the most important asset in your campaign – so keep good track of it.



VOTERS WHO LIVE ALONE
are less likely to have a plan to vote,
compared to those with families.

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84. How do I use email marketing? Email marketing can be effective and give a great return on investment, if you do it right. The most important thing is sending good content to people who actually want to receive it. It seems obvious, but so many campaigns send boring emails and burn out their lists fast. You should be sending emails to people who opt in (see Tip #51). These people are those who give you money, come to events, sign

up on your website, sign a petition of yours – you get the picture. You should upload these email addresses into an opt-in email service (there are tons out there, find one that fits your needs and budget) and keep updating them. Did you have an event last night with a sign-up sheet? (Ahem – every event should have a sign-up sheet). Make sure you or a trusty intern is inputting those new contacts into your email list and keeping your lists fresh.

Now for content. You need a good subject line. Don't make it spammy, but make it relevant and interesting. People won't see your email unless they actually open it. Make sure your content is engaging and interesting. Let people know about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities; tell them about a new (exciting!) policy proposal you've come up with; ask for money but tell them how it will help you (e.g., "\$50 can help our campaign buy 250 doorhangers!").

If you want to get fancy, start segmenting your email lists. See a group of people who almost always open your emails? Send them an ask to volunteer or donate to your campaign. Need \$1,000 to reach your fundraising goal? Shoot an email to your donors.

Lastly, make sure your emails look good on mobile. Nearly half of all emails are opened on mobile devices these days!

85. How do I use Facebook advertising?

If you have your Facebook page up and you want to amplify your presence there, you can use Facebook's advertising to do just that and grow your social media presence.

One thing to consider upfront is which people you want to target – people in a particular city, those over 50 years old, those interested in education or

health care, etc.? Facebook allows you to target those categories and also custom audiences so it's important to consider this before you launch your campaign. You wouldn't want to serve your Facebook ad to someone who isn't going to vote for you or can't vote for you.

Next is what you want your audience/campaign to do – get more people to like your page, read an article you shared or watch a video of you at a debate? Facebook will optimize your ad to target for these end goals, so make sure your content is created to do just that. Don't promote an article about your issues to someone who is staunchly opposed to them.

Lastly, how long do you want to serve your ad and how much do you want to spend? You can spend as little as \$10 up to a nearly infinite amount and for as short as a couple hours to many months. Make sure to consider that when you spend too little, you may reach too few people; if you spend too much, your ad may display too frequently and turn people off. Similarly, if you run a campaign for too short a period of time, you may not catch enough of your targets while they are on Facebook. And if you run it for too long, your ad may not display frequently enough to capture attention.

86. Should I work to register new voters? Probably. If you have a “base” of likely support – say for example you are the only candidate of a certain ethnicity, or the only candidate from a certain town – then spend some time making sure to register voters from this group.

87. What if you make a mistake? If you are running a strong campaign, you are going to make a mistake. Because if you are running a strong campaign, you will be in front of voters so frequently that at least one mistake will happen. Correct it and move on. Don't let it stay in the back of your mind and prevent you from campaigning.

88. Remember – you are the leader of your campaign. Lead. Listen to advice. Be fair. Make clear decisions. If someone is failing, help them succeed with clear directives and constructive advice. Don't shy away from tough decisions. Be grateful.

All the things that make you a strong leader make you a good candidate and will make you a good elected official.

89. Know how to say “No.” There are going to be times when it is required. Don't be afraid of it. When the big donor comes to you and says, “I will

Pro Tip

Maximize your advertising dollars on Facebook by creating different image and text versions of your ads. It's always better to test out different ads and find out how they do against each other, than just create one type of ad and get back limited insights.

Pro Tip

According to a study published in *The Public Understanding of Science*, readers are much more likely to believe a statement that includes a chart or data visualization. So when possible, make sure to use a chart on your mail pieces and website that clearly prove your point.

support you but only if you promise to support _____ (insert some special ask here)," you have to be able to say "I am sorry, but no – I can only promise to do my best every day." When your friend's kid needs a job, and he wants one on your campaign, if you don't need him or he can't do the job – just say "No." Better to be clear and up front right away. People don't thank you for "Maybe." Only for the satisfaction of "Yes" or the clarity of "No, sorry."

90. Sarcasm needs to take a holiday. No candidate really gets it right. If your humor tends to come off that way, work on some new jokes.

91. On the subject of humor, all jokes now need to be at your own expense. Seriously, don't make fun of people. They will remember and they will get even. This is a good time to remember that some people are starting to say to themselves "Who does he think he is?" You are not one of the guys anymore. Work hard to make friends, and consider the feelings of people around you.

92. People around you are only going to work as hard as you do. Sounds like common sense, right? As we said up top, running a successful campaign is mostly logical and obvious. One of the near absolutes when it comes to winners – they have a good work ethic.

93. Don't ever, ever, ever contradict yourself or parse so much that an average person thinks you are contradicting yourself. If you are pro-choice, say so in plain language and a respectful way – even if your audience opposes your view. Humans are hard-wired to agree with each other face-to-face. So it is very easy to slip into changing what you say situationally. It might work at family reunions. It does not work in campaigns.

94. Don't let negative feedback get you down – but do listen to it. Write it down and think about it the next day. It will feel less personal.

95. Don't let this go to your head. There is a reason that many politicians start to act like rock stars. It is because praise can be toxic. We even saw one study that indicated praise is more addictive than cocaine, and that it changes your brain chemistry in some not-so-nice ways. Take it all with a grain of salt please; we don't want to see your brain chemistry change.

96. What is GOTV? GOTV stands for Get Out The Vote and it is one of the most important things you will do in your campaign. Here is a plan in a nutshell.

In many respects, all voter outreach is about GOTV, since the act of identifying your supporters will make your GOTV successful.

If there is early voting, start this process around the early vote deadlines. The basic process starts with analyzing your supporter list. Many of your supporters will have voted in four of the last four elections, including an election that has a similar turnout to the race you are in. You probably don't need to nag these voters – they are going to vote.

But you will have a list of less-than-perfect voters – and these voters need to be reminded to vote. If you have the budget, mail all these voters with a reminder that the election is coming up. Make sure to call all your target voters the weekend before Election Day, “GOTV weekend,” and make sure they remember the election. If you can, get a list of polling places and let them know where they vote. Make sure to get that right!

It is also a good idea to email all these target voters with a link they can use to find their polling place. Almost every local jurisdiction will provide such a service. Then try and call as many of these voters as you can on Election Day – and also visit as many as you can. Finally, you can text these voters on Election Day with a positive reminder.

97. What if you win? Now comes the hard part – you have to serve.

- a. First, make sure to be gracious to your opponent and his or her supporters. You now represent the entire community.
- b. Second, thank everyone.
- c. Third, write down everything you promised to do and start working on a plan to get it done.
- d. Finally – remember to follow your own conscience. You were elected to make tough decisions. Please make them wisely.

Voters who have clear logistical details of their plans for voting were



Source: Psychological Science

98. What if you lose? Losing is learning. In fact, candidates tend to learn more from losing than winning. If you lose, make sure to congratulate your opponent. And then start planning for the rematch!

99. What you need to do in the weeks after a campaign, win or lose. First, you need to thank everyone who helped you. Win or lose, these people worked hard, gave money and believed in your cause. Thank each one of them personally with a phone call and a personal note. Then, make sure to archive everything you learned or found, starting with your list of donors, your lists of volunteers and every voter who pledged their support.

100. Have fun. Seriously – have fun. Think about candidates like President Bill Clinton – love him or hate him – who, on the campaign trail, clearly enjoyed meeting with voters from all walks of life. Try to find the joy in what you do. It will make it all much easier.

Public service is hard work, and campaigning can be brutal. But now, more than ever, it's critical that more of us become involved in our political system. So thank you for putting yourself out there to fight for causes and policies that matter to our communities.

101. Never quit.

If there is one thing we have seen in all the campaigns we have been a part of, it's that the winners have grit. They might get knocked down by circumstances – but they always get up and go back to work. It is hard to lose if you refuse to lose. Never quit.

It always seems
impossible
until it's done.

-NELSON MANDELA



101 STEPS TO VICTORY

WE'RE EXCITED YOU'RE INTERESTED
IN RUNNING FOR OFFICE!

But we know the process can be intimidating. That's why we've written this guide to outline the **101 most important things a first-time political candidate needs to know** to keep your campaign on the path to victory.

We are political consultants who have helped manage hundreds of winning campaigns. We've combined our experience managing campaigns and running for office to create this guide to give first-time candidates the tools to run for, and win public office.

The path to victory starts with the first step.

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