

The Cepia Club Paper Series #6

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The Cepia Club Campaign Manual Series

Part I: Considerations to Beginning a Campaign for Public Office or for Promoting and Advocating a Political Cause (2nd Ed.)

- I. Thing to Keep in Mind for a Political No Reason to run if some one just expects to lose and accept that result before hand. Campaigns at any level require money. The amount can be determined by the level, type, and opposition in an election or referendum. If a campaign cannot raise enough for a respectable and competitive run with the opposing candidates, under the present political circumstances, the odds decrease markedly without some sort of hard fund raising work and success.
- II. More Things to Consider– Some keys to winning the nomination, primary, referendum or general election depends on convincing the “Mr. and Mrs. Tom G.. and Bette Jean Normal” voter that the campaign presents distinct advantages to over the opponent(s). It helps if the candidate uses a “grass roots” approach in developing the activities: They must actually listen more than talk in most cases to hear voter concerns. It does no good to argue about anything with anyone. No matter how people try to assertively and aggressively prove they are right and the other people are wrong. In fact, everyone, including the candidate may be wrong. At the very least, a candidate of any party would do well to acknowledge that they “suffer the poison of their own point of view.” Stating that is not false humility. It is a sort of intellectual honesty from which people can ultimately gather spiritual strength and courage to go forward, even if to be entirely, absolutely, and completely wrong in the end.
- III. Getting Started– Like a great football team, a great “coach” needs 5 great player. It is proper to ask this question when getting started:

“Who is in charge?” Answer: The candidate is always the boss. But her/his success or failure depends on the team around him. Their election and term in office depend on credibility, reputation, and convictions. Candidates must never be forced to do something with which they feel uncomfortable or which violates either the public trust or public law. Final decisions belong to the candidate. The candidate delegates some authority on either day-to-day matters of detail which are a burden to them, or in emergency decisions when the candidate is unavailable. The delegation must be enforced. Therefore, the trust must be with a well-placed beforehand.

To get started in a large or small campaign requires three people beside the candidate:
 - A. The Campaign Committee Chairperson. As a trusted friend of the candidate, the campaign chair plays the key adviser and confidant role, and needs to become the morale officer for the entire campaign. They should also know the candidates positions and principles to serve as a representative of the candidate at negotiations when the candidate does

not participate. The key advice comes especially on platform and policy position issues as a direct part of the election dialog and debate.

The Chairperson must stay informed on all relevant issues which have a local aspect or impact. The world has become such that even international problems, like conditions of war and peace, energy policy, international trade, immigration, and transnational crime (drugs, human trafficking, WMD proliferation, etc). The levels of world and national policy level no longer belong to Congress or the executive. The issues now relate very directly to a district for any level of office, local, state or Federal: The conventional wisdom held that national security and international markets were inappropriate for local and state offices. This is now wholly untrue, if it had not always been a clear falsehood from the beginning.

As they say, all politics are local. Diplomacy, war, trade, and international organizations are nothing more than highly polished and formal politics. While the candidate and the campaign chair deal in their appropriate level of seeking office, the "big picture" needs clarity for the long-term (a future election to higher office, for example). A state and local candidate will have very little influence or legislative role in national security policy. But as a responsible steward of the public trust, candidates can lead their constituents in a call for desired positive change. This form of "leadership from below" can often affect national politics by influencing and changing local party affiliate branches. The voice carries upward, and the threat is implied of removing

financial, material, and personnel support from a higher-level candidate.

Almost anything today in politics, policy, partisanship or diplomacy impact the people at the community and neighborhood level. But the immediate issues of the district get the highest priority. A wise candidate will seize on this fact about the duality of local politics. . Elections, honest ones, cannot be about aiming for the spoils of political victory. That time has passed. The only way to successfully serve constituents is for a candidate to dedicate his/her term to fighting partisanship in all its forms, in order to create and implement policy. Partisanship in policy has become completely discredited The people starve for a politician who can withstand the allure of personal power and work in the name of empowering people and their community .More than anything, people see and support leadership. And leadership comes from some natural or learned skill. Either way, people will vote for and follow the people who get out in front and lead them toward solutions which involve them on the issues which concern the most people. This why candidates must meet people out in their community.

Balancing the message and taking stock of the all the issues forms the reason why the campaign chairperson keeps everyone focused and focused on the right things at the right time. Considering that, the chairperson is suited to figure out what things at all levels will their candidate have to address in the election. With this role properly defined in the chairperson, the candidate can be out doing what really works to get elected: Regardless of the issues, the candidate with the

most leadership skill or experience wins most often.

The most practical role of the Chairperson concerns the negotiation/solicitation of financial contributions: “the big checks or the coin bucket.” This involves taking leads and tips gathered by the candidate, the staff, and the entire organization, making personal contacts by phone, e-mail, letter, or in person, and securing contributions. The entire staff assists and supports this task

- B. The Campaign Treasurer. This is the single biggest headache of running for office. Books and reports to proper authorities must be exactly accurate and on time. The law and opponents are merciless on the matter. Depending on the level of office sought, the financial and accounting/bookkeeping experience required increases as the one approaches Federal Election Commission-governed campaigns. Familiarity with software programs simplify the matter. Also the Treasurer must be learned in the law. It may be useful at the level of a Federal election to hire an experienced accountant. Volunteers can be overwhelmed in any case and often prove inadequate in terms of accuracy and reliability. There are some useful software programs that could help keep track of the campaign finances.
- C. The Campaign Manager. This person is an executive director. She/he runs the day to day operations, coordinates the work of staff and the volunteers, sets the timing, the schedules, vets the communications and media relations, advises the candidate on campaign

matters—including policy and positions—and ensures that the campaign message and activity is focused and effective. She/he is responsible for ensuring that everything gets done and done on time. They attend to the details about which the candidate has insufficient time to oversee.

Eventually, two more positions are necessary, especially at the higher-powered races. In lower-level races, the campaign manager can do these.

- D. The Communications Director. This is a very important job in areas where lots of media exist, especially over a wide area. It is also a helpful thing to have for normal inner-campaign and voter outreach communications. The director manages and updates the website; coordinates the phoned, e-mailed and p-mailed messages, systems, and materials; and supervises the development of all campaign literature. Most importantly, the Communications Director creates and maintains records on all print, web, and broadcast media—their coverage, their personnel, their contact info—and establishes personal contact with as many of these media personnel as possible. The director is the one who issues statements for the campaign and helps the candidate prepare all his personal statements and addresses. A multi-able person with a good command of language and technology is needed to fill this role.
- E. Volunteer Coordinator. This work is very crucial to success no matter what level of race and becomes critical in a district of large geography. The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for getting people involved. The

surest way to win a campaign is to have people help. The larger the number and the stronger the commitment of volunteers means people are “buying into” the effort. If people don’t buy into the effort, why would a candidate expect voters to do so? The coordinator lines up staff help in the office and directs the activities of workers in the “field” (outside of the headquarters). The coordinator builds the organization by recruiting “sub-district,” in other words, county/district chairpersons and local area captains. These people are a great asset if they can be found, are willing to contribute time and effort, and if they are motivated with a winning attitude. The Volunteer Coordinator is also one of the conduits of the campaign to enlisting the support of the members of the county and district party organizations. Depending on the level of the campaign and geography involved it might not be possible to win a high-end or even a medium-end campaign without a support organization and “field representatives.”

IV. A Word About Fund Raising—No matter how honest, grass roots, or labor intensive a campaign effort, it is impossible to win in modern politics without adequate funding. This issue cannot be scoffed at or ignored. A well-financed opponent, especially if SHE/HE feels vulnerable, can obscure the existence of the other candidate. It happens all the time. How much is enough? How much is adequate? It is hard to know because the answers depend on other factors. A general rule is: More is always better, not just more.

Money is needed for a whole lot of things. One of the important things in a Federal-level campaign is to support an office. Campaigns run out of homes are fine at the start. They

become ignored by the media and the party if not moved to an established headquarters. It is both more convenient for the work of all and a better image if one has an h.q. As with all fund raising, it is possible to take in-kind donations. Technical equipment (a dedicated computer that is network capable and fully loaded with software, a fax machine, a copier, phones) may come from a business-person willing to contribute unused office space or facility. Size is not so important as location. Even with an h.q. in a good location with enough room for the staff, work space can be found elsewhere for volunteers. But to stress the point: Fund Raising for any campaign is important and cannot be avoided.

V. Getting Support—Contributors to a campaign are divided into three classes and sub-divided and cross-referenced by type. The types are simply:

Time: A commitment to do either one or a small number of things to help a campaign—either talk to two friends, distribute 5 pamphlets, make three phone calls, attend a rally or fund raiser, or other limited commitments.

Effort: Acts that involve more than just what is described above as “Time.” Effort includes volunteering at the h.q., going door-to-door to canvas, chairing a county or acting as a local area captain, arranging for “coffee and cake” socials, soliciting friends, families, and associates for contributions, establishing “phone trees,” or contributing professional services in-kind.

Money: This includes in-kind things like stamps, printing, etc. Enough said.

The “Classes of Contributors:

Class 1: Extended family and friends of the candidate and staff, and their extended families and friends. This provides “seed” money. Whatever

time and money one can get from this category is adequate. This money comes with no promises or attachments. One hates to ask these people for support. However, if they do not believe enough in their relative or friend to help, voters will not either.

Class 2: “The big check” money comes from party officials and their contacts. Convincing this category to contribute means a candidate has significant party support. Without that support she/he can neither win the nomination or the general election. Most of this source will increase after the primary.

Class 3: “The coin bucket.” The voters are bunched in this class, generally party voters who are not paying members and independents and disaffected opposition. Every opportunity must be seized by the campaign to offer the “average Joe” a way to support the campaign with either time, effort, or money. This is where the return slips on literature with directions for donating come in most handy.

VI. Focus the Message—Getting elected comes down to one goal: Convincing more voters to cast their ballot for the candidate rather than the other candidates. Any other purpose in running for office becomes either an “educational experience” for candidate and voter or a “laughable entity” like Harold Stassen.

About 50-60% voting electorate can be expected to cast a line ballot for their major party of identification during general election. That leaves barely over 1/3 of the rest acting and voting independently, with 5 % of those casting fringe protest votes. The particular

candidate for the office is irrelevant as faithful party voters (members and non-members) vote for the party rather than the person. Those who vote straight tickets may not even know any of the candidates. They do know, on the other hand, that they always vote for the same party the same way. For the other voters, those who make a conscious choice for whom to cast their ballot, the candidate must either really impress or really offend or be even the lesser of evil in the voter’s choice.

Winning a grass roots campaign requires that the candidate create in more voters a preference for him/her based on a “hope, belief, or expectation,” about the race, either positive for themselves or negative ones about their candidate. Party faithful who even make a point to go to the polls in odd years, during the local spring and larger fall elections, even the depth-of-winter primaries, are choosy voters and independents. They are not easily convinced to vote different than usual or against the person they “hope, believe, or expect” to fulfill their own primary concerns.

The candidate for whom the “Tom J. Normal” votes must represent “service to the public interest,” even at the default “lesser evil to the public good.” It is when the candidate defines and articulates her/his values, a fundamental process in campaigning, that the “hope, belief, or expectation” creates a personal commitment on the part of the voter. This is simple to understand but rather difficult to achieve in any election, let alone a grass roots/outsider campaign.

Images create the strongest emotional responses. It is debatable whether any amount of talking logic and reason can change the strongest emotions based on fictions. Humans explain reality by forms of language—visual, aural, body, spiritual and written/drawn out forms. People often discipline emotions with language to understand or express thoughts and feelings. It is in this way that people can

remain logical in good times and suppress fears in times of confusion. This is what psycho-sociology might define as “normal” behavior.

The candidate must remember at all times that the message and the language intentionally or unintentionally used creates in one voter at a time the “hope, belief, or expectation” about his/her stand (true or not) about the issues that are important to that voter.

Every item of the campaign—every piece of literature, every press release, every statement by the candidate or staff—must state matters in positive phrases and retain a positive reflection on the purpose of the candidate and his values and convictions. The motto “we need to bring positive change to our country [our government, our foreign policy, our economy, etc.]” should be stated first and the last mentioned in every and all message.

Staying positive creates an emotional “hope, belief, or expectation” that leads to stronger than negative images. Implied or unintentional negativity can compel inaction/indecision or even “political paralysis” . “Touchy-feely” concepts should be avoided (“world peace,” “spirit of Camp David,”) and over-used words and concepts (“fiscal responsibility,” “Marshall Plan,” “common sense”) should also be avoided. They either create weak images or disillusionment that the candidate is pursuing “politics as usual.” (That is a phrase which also needs to be avoided for it betrays a lack of intelligence and imagination). New words and phrases—original, creative, and expressive—can always be found to explain even old ideas. They create the image of “fresh and new,” the opposite of “politics as usual,” an inferred criticism on the part of the voter that will move the voter toward the candidate’s direction. Fresh sound-bytes and key words resonate better with the media.

A Word About the Media: The media are the cheapest and most affective ways of reaching

the largest number of people. Reporters and producers publish and broadcast “sound-bytes,” a reality that the campaign must accept or else the campaign will succumb to ignorance of others. The public remembers sound-bytes. Usually, only by a sound-byte that captures interest , people can fill in the details. Furthermore, and much underutilized, the sound-byte can be the detail.

Reporters usually report the things they wanted to hear. All media, even on alternating days, are always one of three things: friend, foe, or neutral. The key to more effective mass communications for a campaign is to get the media reporting to focus on the things the candidate wants the voters to hear. That may sound complicated, but it is not impossible. People do not want to remember complicated details other than to note that there were details and that they may or may not have agreed with or supported the details. Most importantly, people will recall their emotions to “images”—those created in their minds by words or pictures—far easier than they will remember specifics. This is a major part of creating “hope, belief, or expectation” within voters.

VII. Issues and Answers. In the 2008 Federal-AND State-level elections, three issues might dominate all the races. These issues will be force-fed to the public by the media machine. They are also fairly accurate as to what the majority of people want to see addressed by the country’s political leadership. They are phrased here, hopefully, to best effect:

1. National Security and Foreign Policy. This covers every specific topic from oil dependence and resource development, immigration control, the United Nations, military policy, and, of supreme importance to voters over the next year, the wars on terror and in Iraq.

2. Fiscal Stewardship of the Public Treasury. People worry about how much they pay in taxes, on what the tax revenue is spent, where it is invested, and making ends meet. This topic of debate includes Social Security, the personal and national debt and deficit, monetary supply, home mortgages, tax reform, private sector and personal finances, etc.
3. Environmental Sustainability and Energy Conservation. Whereas issue one and two above appeared in the 2006 edition of this manual, and third one was Community Values stated in this manual, the 2008 election will continue to emphasize National Security and Foreign Policy, and Fiscal Stewardship of the Public Treasury, the environmental and energy issues will come into wider play. People hold as much concern for the debate between saving the planet and converting to sustainable and renewable energy and fighting against as any of the issues #1 and #2.

VIII. Packaging the Message. The nice thing about organizing all issue specifics around and under these topics is that on the surface the themes are “neutral” in semantics but positive in effect. How can anyone be opposed to national security? a better foreign policy? making the tax system more fair to everyone? and managing money wisely? Phrasing the specifics in a positive way with the theme summarized beginning, middle and end gets the theme title and phrases reported, repeated, and remembered. It is mostly through repetition that people remember images best and for the longest term.

If the candidate says on a specific issue, “taxes are too high and the government spends too much money,” all the rules of media bias (from any perspective) apply. The headline automatically could become in even the neutral

press: “Candidate Calls for Tax Cuts for Wealthy.” Or, it could even read: “Candidate Calls for Cut in Social Security in Times of Greatest Need.” Never underestimate the hostility, skepticism, or ignorance of the press. As mentioned above, the foe and neutral press (the majority of it) will report what it wants depending on every sort of fact or consideration except what will give the candidate the most help for free.

A positive way can be found to frame almost every issue and keep the focus on the message, properly the “emotional image” the candidate is trying to communicate to the voters. As above, if the candidate says “we need a tax system that is fair and just for everyone and one that will promote the economic well-being of all income levels—that is why we need a top to down reform of the nation’s tax system,” the headline might be “Candidate Calls for Tax Reform to Make it ‘Fair and Just.’” The same sort of phrasing can be applied to other issues, all related to the dominant theme under which the issues fall.

The beginning, middle and end of every statement must reflect the emphasis on the neutral theme that has positive effect. All discussions and debates should be brought back around to the candidate’s thinking and the themes upon which he is basing his candidacy.

IX. Unite the Theme, and Thereby Unite the Voters. A Unifying Theme for a 2008 campaign centers on something entirely necessary to the future of our country (according to “cepia” philosophy) and also provides areas to incorporate the three main issues. The theme, designed for originality, serves as an entire campaign in itself. A theme provides the implied message inferred by both the supporters and the voters. It is about finding solutions to all of our problems via “Community Values and Responsible Citizenship.” The theme makes the challenge to the voter and non-voter alike. If you don’t

like how things have turned out up until now with partisan politics—local, state and Federal—then the problems can only be permanently solved from the grass roots up . In the 2008, it may prove a touch of the nerve to get people excited about a campaign or candidate. The great part about it is how all of the other issues combine within the need for community awareness and activism.

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