

**CHUCK
MUTH'S**

CAMPAIGN HOT TIPS

“17 Ways to Get the Upper Hand on Your Political Opponents”



**How to Get an Almost Unfair
Campaign Advantage**

**Brought to by the
Campaign Doctor Himself:**

[Dr. Chuck Muth](#)

**Professor of Psephology
*(Homeschooled!)***



Dear Friend & Subscriber,

Over the years, I've written a number of *Campaign Hot Tips* on a variety of subjects without making it a regular, ongoing publication. And while some of the following tips were written a few years ago, the ideas and points are as relevant today as they were when I originally inked them.

So enjoy this "quick-start" compilation of back issues of *Campaign Hot Tips* to give you some immediate help with your campaign or grassroots organization. Your regular FREE subscription of invaluable hot tips will be coming to your inbox very soon.

In the meantime, let's get started, shall we?

Dr. Chuck Muth
Professor of Psephology
www.CampaignDoctor.com

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REMEMBER THE DOMAIN

If you haven't done so already...buy and protect your "name" domain name right NOW!!

And get the dot-com, not the dot-org or dot.net domain name. Everyone who's anyone looking for you on the 'net is going to go to "your name dot-com" first to try to find you. And in case you're REALLY new to this Internet thing, we're talking about, for example, obtaining www.chuckmuth.com - only for YOUR name, not mine.

Now, to purchase this Internet address, go to www.GoDaddy.com. It'll cost you about ten bucks a year per domain address you purchase. Discounts for 2-year registrations, 5-year, etc.

Go there NOW! Before your opponent snatches up your name on the web...which could be a nightmare for you beyond belief.

Do NOT buy a domain name with the number "4" in it instead of the word "for."

Over the years, some genius decided it'd be really clever to go with a domain name such as www.Muth4Senate.com. Problem is, anytime you're giving out your website address in a speech or on the radio or in a TV commercial, you'll have to explain that it's the "number 4" not "for" spelled out. Dumb, dumb, dumb.

And don't buy www.MuthforSenate2012.com because you'll just have to buy a whole new domain URL the next campaign season. Buy a domain name that will stick with your permanently no matter what happens...but again, the best domain possible is [www.\(your name\).com](http://www.(your name).com).

Now...

Wanna really give the opposition some heartburn? Buy HIS or HER domain name and set up a separate website on their behalf. Anyone can do this. It doesn't have to be the actual candidates in a race, though there are court cases on this issue working their way through the system.

For example, back in 2004 in Las Vegas, George Harris, chairman of the Nevada Republican Liberty Caucus, was opposed to the re-election of state Sen. Ray Rawson. So George went out and bought www.rayrawson.com.

Now, if an undecided voter went to www.rayrawson.com after receiving a postcard or seeing a billboard inviting them to visit www.rayrawson.com, the voter would normally expect to see a bunch of great things about Ray Rawson.

But since Sen. Rawson's campaign team neglected to secure their candidate's domain name and let George Harris get his paws on it, those undecided voters instead saw unflattering things about Sen. Rawson which Sen. Rawson would surely not want them to see.

Rawson, who ended up losing, should have sued his campaign manager for malpractice on that one.

Don't let this happen to YOU! Buy your domain name...NOW! And while you're at it, check to see if your opponent has purchased THEIR domain name. If not...scarf it up...IMMEDIATELY! Even if you don't use it, you'll at least keep your opponent from using it.

A "CHEAT SHEET" FOR DEALING WITH THE PRESS

Here's a "cheat sheet" for dealing with the press:

- If you avoid the press, they'll avoid you...or worse, roast you like a marshmallow. Don't duck the press. Learn to work with them. They'll never be your friend...but if you treat them professionally, many will be friendly.
- It's OK to take them to breakfast or lunch. Get to know them...and let them get to know you in a setting other than a press conference.
- There's no such thing as "off the record." If you don't ever want to see it in print...don't say it.
- Be accessible. Reporters are on deadlines. If you cannot be reached in a timely manner, they'll just find someone else to quote. Return reporters' phone calls promptly.
- Be candid. Reporters are used to being "spun." But they don't like it. Give it to them straight...and you're much more likely to be interviewed in the future.
- Never pick a fight with someone who buys paper by the ton and ink by the barrel. If you have a problem with a reporter, try to work it out PRIVATELY between yourselves. Only if your credibility is at stake and you can't resolve the matter directly with the reporter should you go to his or her boss. And only as a last resort should you "go nuclear" and criticize the paper or media outlet publicly.
- "No comment" is an acceptable answer. Reporters are free to ask you any question they like. That doesn't mean you have to answer it.
- Be yourself. Political reporters have generally been doing their jobs for a LONG time. They can smell a phony a mile away.
- Never lie to a reporter. You can lose your mind...and some reporters will still give you a pass. But once you lose your credibility, you can never get it back.
- If you're a candidate, be prepared to answer in 30 seconds or less why you're running for office.
- If you want your campaign to be taken seriously, then present a serious evaluation of your chances for winning. A Republican candidate with no money, living in a Democrat district, and running against a cash-flush incumbent, who simply says, "I'm going to win" without being able to demonstrate HOW will not be taken seriously by the press.
- Read the papers that you hope will cover you.

HOW TO HANDLE A ROYAL SCREW-UP

If you're human and running for (or serving in) public office, there's a good chance that somewhere along the line you're gonna screw up...royally. And that screw-up will have the potential of killing your political career if you don't handle it properly. And most candidates screw up the handling of the screw-up. And that's the last we ever hear from them.

One of the more common screw-ups I'm talking about here is getting arrested for Driving Under the Influence (DUI).

Now, I'm certainly not advocating drunk driving; however, the push to constantly lower the blood-alcohol limit means you could technically be busted after just a couple glasses of wine with dinner even if you weren't driving erratically. A cop might pull you over for a busted taillight...and then use that excuse to get you to blow up the balloon. But this isn't about the arguments for or against various DUI laws. This is how to handle a bad situation such as this should it arise.

Jon Ralston is Nevada's top political pundit. He not only has various columns published around the state, he hosts his own daily political television show and writes his own daily "insider" e-newsletter, "Ralston Flash." He has been a key staple of Nevada politics since before I became actively involved in 1994. He has regularly skewered candidates and elected officials, often with reckless abandon. He is, in short, every bit a public figure as any elected official.

And back in April 2005, Jon himself was arrested for DUI.

As a public figure, Jon had a lot riding on how he handled the situation. He recognized immediately that as a high-profile figure who had made a LOT of political enemies over the years, there was NO WAY this wasn't going to be made public. Running and hiding, as a practical matter, just wasn't an option. So on the Monday morning after the arrest, he announced to the public - on his own and before anyone else in the media got wind of it - what had happened over the weekend.

The very brief email message communicated to his newsletter subscribers is a textbook example of how to suck it up, take responsibility...and move on. Here's his message in its entirety...

"There is a danger in a professional life spent exposing the infirmities of others that your own fallibility is exposed. This is one of those moments. I feel obliged, dear Flashees, to disclose a stupid mistake I made over the weekend. I was arrested for DUI and taken to the detention center. Even though the law enforcement personnel uniformly behaved professionally and impeccably, it was a humbling and humiliating experience. I will do what I need to do to make this right and I apologize to my friends and family for

the embarrassment.”

You just can't do much better than this in addressing a lousy situation.

In addition, Jon stated plainly that he was guilty and wouldn't bother to try challenging the charges on some technicality or other. He took his lumps, paid the penalty and got on with his life.

Jon didn't try to hide what would inevitably become public...making a bad situation worse. He announced the negative information on his own terms and on his own schedule, not the media's. He admitted making a human mistake, took full responsibility for his own actions and didn't try to shift blame to somebody else. He asked for understanding and forgiveness...and moved on.

He's still doing his TV show. He's still writing his columns. He's still publishing his daily e-newsletter. You might want to keep in mind how Jon Ralston handled this situation should a similarly embarrassing incident hit your public career in the future.

DOING DOOR-TO-DOOR DIFFERENTLY

A political campaign is nothing more than a sales campaign. You're selling a service (government representation) to customers (voters).

So reading as much GOOD sales advice and material as possible is highly recommended. To that end, I commend to you anything ever written by the late marketing guru Gary Halbert. His writing style was a bit "earthy" at times, but his advice was also damned good.

In one memorable issue of his newsletter years ago, Halbert mentioned his days as a door-to-door encyclopedia salesman...which has particular relevance to any candidate going door-to-door seeking votes. Take a look at this parable...and take it to heart:

*Here's how I used to engineer a paradigm change when I was selling encyclopedias door-to-door. What they trained you to do was, dress up in a suit and tie, go to somebody's door while carrying a huge briefcase, knock loudly on the door...and...when someone opens it, you give them a big sh*t-eating smile, paw your feet back and forth on the ground (really) and ask if you can come in.*

Think about what that homeowner sees when he opens the door: An eager beaver, pushy person...

Who Has Salesman Written All Over Him!

Natural reaction of the homeowner? Tense up, get rid of him, tell him you're not interested.

Now, compare that encounter with this one: You (the homeowner) open the door and about five yards away a young man is standing with his back to you looking at the flowers in your yard. He's wearing a neat, short-sleeved shirt and he doesn't turn around when you open the door. He appears preoccupied.

After a few seconds, you ask if you can help him. He turns around slowly with a shy smile. "Sorry, I didn't hear you open the door," he says. "I guess I got a little wrapped up in looking at your flowers. Listen, I think maybe I've got the wrong house. I'm looking for the Buckwheat family."

"No," you say, "this is the right house. I'm Mr. Buckwheat."

"Oh good," replies the young man. "I've been asked to get in touch with you. May I come in and talk with you for just a minute?"

Bingo! Sir Gary Of Halbert Busts Another Door!

Trust me. Most people who see a candidate on their doorstep react to them in pretty much the same way they react to the typical encyclopedia salesman. You might THINK they're just sitting at home in front of the boob-tube hoping for a politician to come to their door and interrupt their life in order to talk about themselves...

But you'd be dead wrong.

As you contemplate your door-to-door strategy, you might consider how you intend to act at the start of such encounters in order to make yourself less annoying.

WHY YOU SHOULD CREATE LOTS OF GOOGLE ALERTS...AND HOW

What are they saying about you, your campaign and your opponent on the Internet? Here's one quick, easy and FREE way to find out...as it happens.

Go to www.google.com. Click on the "News" tab at the top. Type your name into the search box and click on "Search News." Up will pop links to any stories which include your name and/or whatever search phrase you entered.

Now, here's the best part: At the end of the list of "hits," you'll see a link saying something along the lines of "Create an email alert for (whatever you searched for)." Just click on the link and...Bingo!

Now all you have to do is create a permanent "Google News Alert" on "your name." Once you do, any time your name or phrase appears anywhere in the news on the Internet, you'll get an automatic email notification about the story along with a link which will take you directly to the story. Just fill out the "Create a Google News Alert" box with your email address and hit the "Create News Alert" button. That's all there is to it.

You can create as many of these alerts as you want. You might want to create additional alerts if you are referred to by different names on occasion. In other words, you might want to create one alert for "Charles Muth" and another for "Chuck Muth" if both names are sometimes used.

You definitely want to create a similar news alert using your opponent's name along with any particular hot button issues which may be of particular relevance to your campaign.

For example, John Doe is running for a legislative seat. He should create a news alert for "John Doe" to keep track of anything which might be written about him. He should create another one for "Plain Jane," which is the name of his primary opponent. And since the main topic of this race is, let's say, taxes, he should set up a news alert for "tax hike."

If you're involved with an organization or are "only" an activist with an interest in a particular issue, set yourself up a news alert for your organization's name and/or set one up for each issue of particular interest you may have.

There's a world of information on the 'net...literally. And finding JUST what you're most interested in just became a little bit easier.

COUNTERING UNION ENDORSEMENTS

I once attended a private Washington, DC, briefing in which a candidate running in a Republican primary for Congress addressed the gathering and handed out some of her campaign literature. Included in the information was a one-page, four-column listing in tiny print of all the individual endorsements she'd racked up...including agricultural folks, business folks, GOP folks, association folks, city folks, county folks, college students, etc., etc., etc.

It was an impressive-looking list. And in this case, size DOES matter.

People have a natural inclination to be "part of the crowd." When your campaign is able to show that a BUNCH of people are already signed onto your campaign, you make it far easier for fence-sitters to want to hop on the bus, as well.

Sure, readily recognized and respected names are optimal...but the fact is, a huge list of ordinary, otherwise unknown citizens willing to step forward and publicly

declare their support for your campaign can be a huge positive for you, especially if you, yourself, aren't well known.

Here are three simple things you can do with regard to such campaign endorsements...

1.) Ask every supportive person you come in contact with if they'd be willing to have their name publicly listed as endorsing your campaign. Have them sign a card, note or petition to that effect. Make SURE the statement specifically says that you can use their name in public. You do NOT want someone coming back to your campaign after you've published their name saying they never told you that you could.

EXAMPLE: "I _____ hereby grant the Chuck Muth for Czar campaign to add my name to its list of endorsements and grant permission to use it publicly in campaign literature." Signed: _____ Date: _____

2.) Set up a dedicated page on your website and list all of your endorsements - AFTER you have a sufficient number. Don't set up a public webpage with just your wife's and your mom's endorsement!

Folks visiting your site won't be able to help but look over the list to see if they recognize any names. So, naturally, the more the merrier.

Actually, an endorsement by one's neighbor often holds more sway than an endorsement by some muckity-muck. In any event, a long, comprehensive list of endorsements is an inexpensive yet powerful plus for your campaign. So don't ignore this on your website.

3.) I'm not a big fan of spending campaign money on newspaper ads. People read the articles; they don't read the ads...especially political ads.

The exception to the rule goes something like this: Weekly and/or specialty papers (seniors, religious, military, etc.) are sometimes a good idea...and almost always better than the dailies. However, I recommend a FULL-PAGE ad in any case...and make sure it's "right read"...which means when you hold the paper open, your ad appears on the right-hand page, not the left.

Now, it's usually terribly expensive to run FULL-PAGE newspaper ads, which is another reason I don't recommend using precious campaign dollars for that purpose, HOWEVER...

Once you've gathered a large list of individuals who have agreed to allow you to use their name publicly, you can go back to them and ask if they'd be willing to kick in a nominal amount of money in order to have their name listed in a full-

page endorsement ad to appear in the closing days of the election.

You'll be pleasantly surprised at how many people will kick in to have their name appear in the local paper. Just 500 people at just \$10 bucks a pop is \$5,000. That's a pretty good chunk of change which will more than cover a couple ads in most weekly papers. But the real beauty is that the money for this ad doesn't come out of your regular campaign budget. It's a dedicated expense that is self-funded...or you DON'T DO IT.

So print up those permission slips and start signing up your endorsements TODAY!

One last word on endorsements:

It's usually of tremendous value to tout support from cops, firefighters and teachers in a campaign. I mean, who doesn't love cops, firefighters and teachers, right?

Unfortunately, such support is usually extended not by cops, firefighters and teachers themselves, but by their UNION bosses who carry water for liberal candidates. So it is incumbent upon non-union endorsed candidates to set up separate campaign committees made up of individual cops, firefighters and teachers.

Back in 2004, you may recall, the international firefighters UNION came out big-time and early for John Kerry. But the Bush folks refused to concede that vote. So they set up a "Firefighters for Bush" committee. Smart, very smart.

Do the same for cops, firefighters and teachers for your own campaign. And for good measure, set one up for military veterans, too!

IT'S THE MESSAGE, NOT THE MEDIUM

When it comes to delivering your campaign message to the voters, most candidates - both novice AND experienced - make the same two mistakes...

- 1.) Confusing the difference between delivering a "pretty" message with a persuasive message, and...
- 2.) Using their local vendor or a "friend," instead of an experienced POLITICAL professional.

What is the definition of a proper campaign "message"? For the answer we quote from longtime political guru Ron Faucheux, former editor of *Campaigns & Elections* magazine (www.campaignsandelections.com)...

"The essence of political strategy is to concentrate your greatest strength

against the point of your opponent's greatest weakness. This is done through positioning, which is the development and delivery of messages that present voters with a choice based on candidate differences that are clear, believable and connected to reality.

"Campaign messages may be based on (a) the candidates personal strengths and weaknesses (i.e., experience, competence, independence, integrity, compassion, stability, preparation, etc.); (b) ideological and partisan differences (liberal vs. conservative, moderate vs. extreme, inconsistent vs. consistent, pragmatic vs. purist, etc.); (c) the situational context (change vs. status quo, right track vs. wrong track, reform vs. the old way, etc.); or (d) a combination of any of the above."

Now, it's one thing to come up with the right message theme for your campaign; it's another thing altogether to craft and deliver that message in a way which persuades voters or motivates them to show up at the polls. And THAT'S the part all too many campaigns botch...big time! Consider this admonition from marketing guru Gary Halbert:

"What I want you to know...what I want to POUND and POUND and POUND into you is...You Cannot Multiply Zeros! And the 'zero' I'm talking about in this case is a vapid, limp, non-compelling sales message. I don't care if it's a direct mail letter, a website, a newspaper ad, magazine ad, radio or TV commercial or whatever.

"If it's a 'nothing' message, I don't care how good your ad layout is, how well the ad is typeset. If it's a radio commercial, I care NOT how good the sound effects are or how vibrant, pleasant and commanding the announcer's voice is. If it's a website, I don't care how many website/internet secret tricks and techniques you know. Take any non-compelling message and show it to someone. That person will not respond. Show it to 10,000 people and none (or pathetically few) of them will respond."

Halbert continues:

"I don't give a damn what form of marketing you're in. I don't care how many tricks you know. I don't care how cheap you can buy your media. I don't care if the emails or newspaper ads or stamps and printing are FREE! Even if all this is FREE...if you can't write a 'killer' sales message, it is all for naught."

Get it? It's the message, not the medium. You can dress up a pig in a three-piece suit...but it's still a pig. It doesn't matter how "pretty" you make your message look...if the message stinks, it still stinks. And people won't buy what you're selling...even if it is on four-color glossy stock. Same goes for websites.

What your campaign should be shooting for is both a compelling campaign message AND a professional image. Many vendors can do one...or the other. Few can do both well.

Your local printer can give you four-color imaging but likely has NO IDEA how to come up with a proper and persuasive political message. Ditto your buddy who designs websites on the side. He'll give you all kinds of bells and whistles...but that doesn't mean he can deliver a persuasive political message.

A simple website delivering a powerful message is infinitely better than a powerful website with a crappy message.

WINNING THE EXPECTATIONS GAME

I've written about this before, but it bears repeating: Campaigns have a natural tendency to exaggerate. They feel the need to project the perception that the campaign is doing great...and everything on the campaign trail is "rosy."

Unfortunately, too many campaigns go overboard in this department, painting a picture *so* rosy that it actually *undermines* the campaign. No one takes it seriously because the candidate obviously isn't grounded in reality. The campaign ruins its own credibility.

This tendency to showcase the positive often leads candidates to make overly-optimistic predictions about what's going to happen in the campaign. Here's an example:

Your campaign decides to hold a rally at a local park. The campaign tells the press they expect 250 people to show up. But "only" 125 show up. As far as the press is concerned, your rally is a "failure" because only half as many people showed up as you predicted.

But let's say you tell the press you're expecting 50 people to attend the rally. It's not as impressive when you give such a prediction to the reporter. However...when 125 people show up, the story is that the rally is a huge success because the campaign EXCEEDED expectations.

Which story about your rally would you prefer to show up in the news?

An excellent example of successfully playing the "Expectations Game" was the 2004 Bush-Cheney re-election campaign.

Prior to the Democrat National Convention, the Bush-Cheney folks were telling the media that they expected Kerry-Edwards to get a post-election bounce in the polls of as high as 15 percent. And the media reported this OVER-stated prediction. Had Kerry-Edwards come out of their convention with a 7 percent bounce, it would have been described as a failure.

They came out, instead with no bounce...making it a miserable failure. For a convention which just about everyone says was wonderfully orchestrated with no major mistakes.

The Bush-Cheney campaign followed this up by UNDER-stating expectations for their own convention.

Despite the historical bounce of 3 or 4 percent the incumbent party generally gets following its convention, the Bush-Cheney folks were predicting no bounce from theirs. In reality, the Republican ticket maybe got a double-digit bounce.

Had the campaign gotten the traditional 3 or 4 percent bounce, it would have exceeded expectations and the convention would have been perceived as a success. As it is, the convention was instead perceived as a huge success.

The expectations game is especially important in the run-up to debates, as well.

Back in '04, the Bush folks put the word out that Kerry was a superior debater and the president would be lucky to hold his own. They predicted Kerry would win the debates overwhelmingly. That way, if the president had lost the debates, the campaign would say that's exactly what they were expecting; that the President would win over voters in other ways.

If the debates appeared to be a "draw," the president would still be perceived as having "won" because no one expected him to do that well. And if he crushed Kerry in the debates, it would be seen as a huge victory.

Take a page from the Bush-Cheney '04 campaign: When playing the expectations game, under promise and over deliver.

EARLY VOTING AND ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Today's hot tips concern absentee ballots and early voting strategies, courtesy of Jamie Miller, president of Miller Strategies and a former executive director for party development for the Republican Party of Florida:

As more people begin voting early (up to 25 percent expected this year), it will require candidates to extend beyond the box of "I have to do well the last 10 days to win the election." The great thing about marketing to absentee voters is that you can define yourself to these voters before negatives hit against you.

Of course, most people know that you should follow up by mail with every voter who requests an absentee ballot. Some other strategies to employ to reach these voters are:

- *Phone every voter who has requested an absentee ballot. If you are in a big enough race, you can do professional calls.*
- *In Florida, you can get the list of those who have returned their ballots, match them against those who have requested and have a list of absentee ballots outstanding.*
- *Call those voters with an advocacy message and remind them to mail their ballot by the deadline for your election.*
- *Focus your door-to-door efforts the last week on those who have ballots who have not mailed them. A team of two people can increase the number of these ballots returned by about 10-20 per day.*
- *Get the list of those who have voted early in past elections and focus an "early" campaign specifically for these voters. Make mail, telephone and door-to-door visits a priority for these voters. They are very likely voters and you can get your message to them before your opponent, and before your opponent can define you in a negative light.*

Anytime voters are voting, your campaign should be in full swing – Mail, Phones, TV, Radio, etc.

FUNDRAISING LETTER QUESTIONNAIRES

Here's another pet peeve of mine: Don't insult the intelligence of your donors!

The Republican Party is the most egregious at this. And sending out brain-dead issue "surveys" as a fundraising pitch is both a federal *and* a state problem. Here's a sampling of some ridiculously inane questions included in a Maryland GOP "Issues Survey" of Republican donors which landed in my mailbox a few years back...

1.) *"Governor Ehrlich opposes job-killing income tax hikes. Do you approve of his policy?"*

Duh.

2.) *"Do you agree with the big government liberals in the House of Delegates who have called for massive tax increases across the board?"*

Duh.

3.) *"Do you support in-state tuition for illegal immigrants?"*

Duh.

4.) "Do you believe that schools should be accountable to parents?"

Duh.

5.) "Do you support Governor Ehrlich's plan to get tougher on criminals who commit violent crimes?"

Duh.

6.) "Do you think the liberal media was justified in demonizing Governor Ehrlich?"

Duh.

Come on, folks. I know a lot of voters out there ain't exactly rocket surgeons, but questions like these are downright insulting...even to complete idiots.

Issue surveys are a VERY good fundraising device if you really want honest, intelligent feedback from your financial contributors. But if all you want to do is treat them like bubble-headed ATM machines, you're only going to needlessly offend a great number of people.

Take the extra time to develop and ask REAL and OBJECTIVE questions from your financial supporters. You might just be surprised at what you learn from their answers.

PROTECTING YOUR BUTT AGAINST VOTER FRAUD

A never-ending concern for every campaign should be ballot security and "election protection." Or as my friends over at the Republican National Lawyers Association put it: "Making it easier to vote but harder to cheat."

Protecting the ballot is a MAJOR problem in this country. And what makes the problem worse is that so many folks think this is only a problem in places such as Chicago and St. Louis...not where THEY live. And THEY couldn't be more wrong. This is a problem from sea to shining sea...as you'll see from this 2004 column by the Boston Globe's Jeff Jacoby...

It is illegal to register to vote simultaneously in different jurisdictions, but scofflaws have little to worry about. As the Daily News noted, "efforts to prevent people from registering and voting in more than one state rely mostly on the honor system." Those who break the law rarely face prosecution or serious punishment. It's easy -- and painless -- to cheat.

I learned this firsthand in 1996, when I registered my wife's cat as a voter in Cook County, Ill., Norfolk County, Mass., and Cuyahoga County, Ohio, and then requested absentee ballots from all three venues. My purpose wasn't to cast illegal multiple votes -- I think I've still got those absentee ballots saved in a file somewhere -- but to demonstrate how vulnerable to manipulation America's election system had become.

It was a simple scam to pull off. "Under the National Voter Registration Act - the 'Motor Voter law' -- states are required to accept voter registrations by mail," I wrote at the time.

How fouled up are the voter rolls? So fouled up that in some cities there are more registered voters than there are adults. So fouled up that when the Indianapolis Star investigated Indiana's records a few years ago, it discovered that hundreds of thousands of names -- as many as one-fifth of the total -- were "bogus" since the individuals named had moved, died, or gone to prison. So fouled up that when a Louisiana paper filed 25 phony voter-registration forms signed only with an "X," 21 were approved and added to the voter list.

Illegal aliens have been registered too, since under Motor Voter, any recipient of government benefits can sign up to vote -- no questions asked.

What can you do?

First, contact your local and state parties and ask them what (if any) training or briefings they have coming up on ballot security.

Second, find out from your local election department what the rules are governing your ability to place volunteers at polling locations on Election Day. Then recruit poll watchers for your campaign and train them on what to watch out for.

Lastly, make sure you have a lawyer familiar with your local election laws on-call Election Day...and make sure all your volunteers have his or her phone number. If anything suspicious pops up, who ya gonna call? FRAUD-BUSTERS!

HOW LONG SHOULD YOUR FUNDRAISING LETTERS BE?

A question which routinely comes up in my live seminars and workshops is how long fundraising letters should be. Most amateurs and non-political friends advise candidates to keep their letters short. After all, nobody will read a long letter...right?

Wrong!

In short (pun intended), a fundraising letter CAN'T be too long.

But it can be too boring!

And that will inevitably happen if you mail the wrong letter to the wrong list of people. If you mail a gun rights letter to a list of home-schoolers...you've sent the wrong letter to the wrong list. Your letter could be just three paragraphs...and THAT would be "too long."

On the other hand, if you mail a gun rights letter to a gun rights list; if you keep the copy interesting and actually have something to say, that letter could be 20 pages long - and your recipients would read every...last...word.

Let me give you an example from personal experience.

I was late joining the "Harry Potter" fan club. There were already three books out and the fourth had just hit the shelves before I read my first one. The new book, "*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*," was a thick, heavy and intimidating 734 pages long. I took one look at that monster and said, "Too long. Don't have the time. Thanks, but no thanks."

Then I found myself at the airport in Las Vegas heading for Washington one day...and realized I had forgotten to bring anything to read on the five-hour flight. So I slipped into the airport bookstore and let my curiosity get the better of me.

I picked up a paperback copy of the average-sized and non-intimidating 309-page first volume, "*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*." I just wanted to see what all the hubbub was all about. But once I started, I couldn't put the book down.

When I was finished, I immediately bought Volume Two. Then Three. And finally the 734-page Volume Four mamma-jamma. When the Fifth Volume was released - the gargantuan 870-page "*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*" - I HAD to have it the first day it went on sale. And when I got to page 870...I was disappointed that it wasn't even LONGER!

But if you're not a Harry Potter fan and don't care for that kind of fiction, the books could have been five pages each...and that would have be "too long" for you.

So you see, length is relative. If you have the right subject and the right audience and can present your story in an entertaining and compelling way...length doesn't matter. In fact, the adage of a true marketing expert is: "The more you tell, the more you sell."

HOW TO ORGANIZE A HASSLE-FREE PHOTO-OP

If you're fortunate enough to have a "big name" appear at your fundraising event

(especially Lincoln Day dinners), don't miss the opportunity to raise a little extra dough by offering a photo with the VIP (if the VIP agrees). However, these photo-ops can become very confusing and very long if not done correctly. So here are a few tips to make your "grip-and-grin" go a lot smoother.

- Make sure the folks who will be getting their picture taken with the VIP are lined up BEFORE the VIP gets there.
- Make sure everyone's name tags are removed in advance.
- Position a table at the head of the line for purses, bags, etc.
- Have a "pusher" and a "puller" keep the line moving. The "pusher" pushes the next person from the front of the line up to the VIP for the photo when ready. The "puller" pulls the guest away from the VIP after the picture has been snapped and guides them to the exit.
- Limit verbal conversation with the VIP unless initiated by the VIP.
- Avoid hiring "wedding" photographers. This is "in-and-out" photography, not a family portrait. There's no time to pose everyone "just right."

You should also have a card prepared for people to fill out while in line which includes...

- Their name, address and phone number (and email address if they have one).
- A brief description of their clothing (colors, etc.) for ID purposes.
- How they want the photo signed (if that's to be included). "To..."

There should also be a spot on the card for the "pusher" to record the film/shot number.

Lastly, if your VIP is an author, conduct any book-signing SEPARATE from the photo op.

SECRETS TO A KILLER POLITICAL SPEECH

One of the most excruciating experiences in life is sitting through a badly prepared and/or badly delivered political speech. No wonder the fear of public speaking ranks right up there with root canal surgery and an IRS audit.

But it doesn't have to be that way. By simply avoiding two common mistakes and following a few simple secret techniques, any candidate can deliver a speech which won't cause your audience's ears to bleed - or put them to sleep.

First, two of the most egregious mistakes most novice (and many experienced) candidates make are:

- 1.) Transparent pandering. It's one thing to seek common ground with your audience or extend sincere flattery to establish rapport. It's another

thing altogether to suck up to them like some kind of political Eddie Haskell. People see right through this kind of crass flapdoodle. And they don't appreciate it. In fact, most will find it insulting and offensive.

2.) The "I" Disease. All too many candidates, experienced and novice, spend most, if not all, of their public speaking time speaking about...themselves. "I did this. I did that. I believe in this. I believe in that. I have a job. I have 26 kids and 83 grandkids. I went to pre-school. I had a puppy. I, I, I, I, I."

If you truly want to win over your audience, talk about what interests THEM, not you. If you're talking to the PTA, talk to them about education. If you're talking to senior citizens, talk to them about health care and Social Security. Don't go to a gun rights group and talk about abortion. Don't go to a tax group and talk about environmentalism.

Here's a quick little tip for evaluating your speeches and inoculating against the dreaded "I" disease. Take a red pen and circle all the instances in your speech where you find the words "I," "me" or "my." Then take out a blue pen and circle each use of the word "you" or "your." If your speech shows more red circles than blue circles, you have a problem. Go back in and try to reword it from the AUDIENCE'S point of view.

OK, beyond that, here are some additional tips for delivering truly effective political speeches.

In a *Campaigns & Elections* magazine article a few years ago, Jacob Maor - a speech writer and political consultant in Israel - shared the secrets to his success in writing political speeches which connect with voters. "Most campaign speeches are merely presentation of a message and a platform," writes Maor, "which doesn't work well with the audience. It doesn't resonate. It's heavy, and frankly, it's boring. In most cases, members of the audience forget what was said within two or three days."

Sound familiar?

The most important rule Maor says to remember is that you must communicate your message with your heart as well as your brain. "(Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu taught me that people are not quick to forget a good feeling, even after the content of the speech fades away," Maor says. "It is critical that a speech squeeze a smile out of the audience. You need to show people 'a good time.'" Which is why Maor's speeches always open with something humorous. He notes that at the outset of a campaign, he gathers a dozen or so jokes and has the candidate use only one of them at each speech.

Next, the speech must be local. The candidate is instructed to say something such

as, "I am happy to be here today in your hometown of (fill in the blank) and see (fill in the blank)." The thing he or she is happy to see is something local and identifiable, "be it a new shopping mall, business opening, school event, etc." This is an integral part of building rapport with your audience...to make a connection... before delivering your political message.

Maor then advises the candidate to evoke some nostalgia from the audience by graphically describing a particular problem and a project which fixed the problem. This part of the speech would end with something along the lines of, "Three years ago we started to change things to your benefit. Give me the power to continue to create additional projects like this one. Give me the opportunity to improve your quality of life." (Note the emphasis on the word "YOUR." Not "I.")

People vote for people they like...and people like people who solve problems for them. Be a problem-solver and the electorate will beat a path to your door.

The next part of the speech is something Bill Clinton perfected in office. Identify, in advance, a local hero. It might be a "football player, an author or a child who had won a chess tournament," but preferably someone who would not be identified as being very political. At this point in the speech, you ask, "Is Mr. So-and-So with us today? I would like him to come up and stand next to me."

Of course, you should make sure "So-and-So" is in the audience before using this in your speech.

Once "So-and-So" takes his or her place next to you, put your hand on their shoulder and say something along the lines of, "For me, So-and-So is a source of pride. The immediate political problems are dwarfed in comparison to an ordinary boy from your home town who has achieved such prominence." Maor says he's not always able to find such a local hero, but does find a large number of them by mailing a questionnaire in advance to local activists seeking such information.

He also subscribes to all the local newspapers and maintains files of local stories he might find useful in the future. "I have archived details about every achievement that the local population is proud of," writes Maor. "I have the names of the important people in every town, the names of the local amusement spots and the important workplaces in every region. I have collected amusing anecdotes that have occurred in every town in the country."

At this point, you move into the meat of your speech, where you talk about a specific problem or problems and explain your solution to it.

Later, you provide contrast by outlining your opponent's "solution" to the problem and "what is wrong with it." Contrast, contrast, contrast. In fact, Maor specifically writes into every speech a section which "focuses on criticism - and, at times, mockery - of the opponent." The objective, he says, is to "take recent

pronouncements by the opponent and show how absurd they are." Maor admits this is often easier said than done.

At the end, Maor's speeches include a reference to "some current event that was in the news that day" or bring up a new issue for the first time. This part of the speech would start with something along the lines of, "I'd like to share some confidential information with you..." Not only does this flatter the assembled crowd, but it gives any reporters in the audience a "scoop" which would make headlines.

Finally, the wrap-up almost always includes a quote that in some way relates to either the audience or the locale. "As Ronald Reagan once said..." Maor prepares a number of quotes from various sources covering different topics, using the most appropriate for the occasion.

Piece of cake once you know what to do, huh?

Writing a good political speech isn't something you whip up on a napkin over coffee at the local Dunkin' Donuts one morning. It takes time, research and thoughtful consideration. You owe it to yourself to invest the time necessary to do it right...and your campaign will benefit immensely. And so will the poor saps stuck in the audience who now won't be listening to you telling us about how winning the high school badminton tournament prepared you for a life of public service as an elected city councilman.

So let it be written. So let it be done.

A SURE-FIRE WAY TO GET PEOPLE TO READ YOUR CAMPAIGN BLOG

A couple of quick notes here to get started:

- 1.) People will not continue to visit your campaign website unless there is NEW information posted on your campaign website.
- 2.) The "new" information has to be something interesting or controversial in order to attract readers attention.
- 3.) The most beautiful sound to the ears of a human being is the sound of their own name.

Now let me tell you a short story...

I took a recent Southwest Airlines flight from Reno to Las Vegas and got to the airport late...which meant there were nothing but center seats available. As it turned out, I got squeezed between a candidate for office and a registered voter. Fortunately, I have two young daughters, so I've learned how to sleep through

anything!

Anyway, what transpired for the next hour or so can be summed up thusly: The candidate spoke for about 45 minutes...the voter for about 15. Give or take.

This is far from unusual...candidates LOVE to talk about themselves and their campaigns...though it's also far from what SHOULD have taken place. A smart candidate would have taken this opportunity to ask the voter a boatload of questions and make him feel important. Voters like to have candidates ask for their opinion.

A Golden Rule of politics is: God gave you two ears and one mouth...use them in the same proportion.

Which finally brings me to today's "hot tip" on campaign blogs.

A campaign blog on your website is the perfect opportunity to add new content which folks will be interested in reading. And the only thing better than hearing one's own name is seeing it in print. So what I'm suggesting here is the following...

- A.) As you meet voters and citizens at large, ask them a lot of questions about issues that are important to THEM.
- B.) Hand them your campaign business card (which better have your campaign website address on it) and ask if they mind if you "report" on your conversation in your campaign "blog."
- C.) Then write and post a brief description of your conversation with this voter on your blog.

For example:

"I was in Parts Unknown, Nevada, earlier today and ran into Fred Smith at the deli. Fred raised a great point regarding education. He has two young children an George Washington elementary and wondered why he keeps hearing that there isn't enough money for books, yet they are completely re-sodding a perfectly good soccer field. Good question. As I've said in my campaign, the problem isn't so much a lack of money for education, but a failure to establish priorities and make sure the money is getting into the classroom. In fact, you can read my education proposal on this very issue by clicking here. Thanks, Fred."

Do you think Fred will check your website to see what you wrote about your conversation with him? Do you think this just might positively affect Fred's decision on who to vote for on election day? Do you think Fred will send his

family, his friends, his neighbors and his co-workers to your campaign website to read what you wrote about your conversation with him?

You betcha.

SUBJECT LINES: GRAB 'EM BY THE THROAT AND DON'T LET GO

An iron-clad rule in marketing, including political marketing, is that the HEADLINE of any written piece is CRITICAL.

If the headline of your press release doesn't immediately grab the media's attention, it will be ignored.

If the headline of your fundraising letter doesn't immediately grab the donor's attention, it will be discarded.

If the headline of your op/ed doesn't immediately grab the reader's attention, he'll skip over and move on to the next item.

Well, the "Subject" line of your emails is your headline. As such, it better immediately grab your audience by the throat and pull them into reading your message or your reader will hit the "Delete" key and off to the "Recycle Bin" it will go....un-read.

As such, I've gotten a bit of a kick reading the kinds of "Subject" lines our friends on the Left have been using for the past several weeks. They are vague, at best, and marketing disasters. They do NOTHING to cause the email recipient to immediately say, "Hey, that's something I want to read immediately!"

Here let me give you some recent real-life examples from the Democrat Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), which I think may have pioneered the use of useless, meaningless, clueless Subject lines:

- ***Avalanche***
- ***Idiocy***
- ***Concocting lies***
- ***No brainer***
- ***Jeopardy***
- ***Awful***
- ***Nightmare scenario***
- ***Doubled down***
- ***Off the table***
- ***Dogged***
- ***Sail***
- ***Catastrophic***
- ***Moments***

- **Fire hose**
- **Irresponsible**
- **Strategy maps**
- **Cake**
- **Backwards tattoo**
- **Bluff**
- **Petulance**
- **Nine**

Insane. Reading these subject lines tells you absolutely nothing about what the subject is. And here are some additional recent ones from the DSCC's mini-me, MoveOn.org:

- **A dramatic turn**
- **The home stretch**
- **Crisis**
- **Stunning**
- **Tonight!**
- **We're seeing this everywhere**
- **How much more pain?**

Again, these tell you NOTHING. They're terrible. They suck. Fortunately, they're from our philosophical opponents.

Unfortunately, however, some of our friends on the Right appear to have noticed this tactical change and apparently think it's really, really clever. As such, they've been following the Left's lead and are now doing the same.

For example, I just received one yesterday from Campaign for Liberty with the following Subject line:

"No"

Huh?

Here's another one from Herman Cain's campaign yesterday:

"Leadership"

Huh?

Look, if you're a Herman Cain supporter and you see that headline with his name in the "From" box, maybe you open it. Then again, maybe not. But if you're NOT a Herman Cain supporter, how in the world does an email with the Subject line "Leadership" make me want to immediately open the email and find out what the whole thing is about?

Got this one from a tea party organization yesterday:

"The Establishment Lash Out"

Huh?

Here's another one I received yesterday:

"Part 2"

I'm not even going to TRY to explain that one! But let me ask you the following about it to further drive home this point: Did it come from a conservative or liberal group? Did it come from a Republican or Democrat group? For that matter, did it even come from a political organization at all? What is the issue involved? Where does the group stand on the issue?

But most importantly, why should you care enough to immediately open the "Part 2" email and find out?

Do you see what I mean?

So what's a good Subject line look like? Well, it's one that arouses interest about a specific subject the intended audience should be interested in, in addition to conveying a sense of immediacy - often with a call to action - which causes the recipient to open it right away.

For example, here's the Subject line of an email I received yesterday from Americans for Prosperity:

"Stop Obama's tax-heavy budget 'fix' by August 2nd"

If you're a conservative, which is obviously the intended audience, this immediately captures your attention. It also calls for action NOW. Before August 2nd, not after. See what I mean?

Here's another good one from our friend Ilario Pantano, who will again be running for Congress in North Carolina next year:

"Stop the Nanny State; Sign the 'Cut, Cap and Balance' Pledge"

The American Conservative Union usually has some good Subject lines, including these recent gems:

• Obama Campaign Investigated For Illegal Contributions

- **Urge your Senator to say "NO" on the McConnell cloture vote!**
- **Help STOP Goodwin Liu - Obama's Worst Judicial Nominee!**
- **Help Save the Light Bulb - Tell Your Congressman to Repeal the Light Bulb Ban!**

Some of the best conservative Subject lines come from The Political Insider e-newsletters:

- **Breaking News: Obama in Office and Gas Prices more than Double**
- **Gangster Government - Obama and His Union Buddies**
- **For the Republican Woman in your Life!**
- **Stop Union Bosses from Buying another Election**
- **What Obama Can't Do, These SIX Events Could**
- **Gingrich and Pelosi: Same Ad, Same Beliefs?**
- **Taking Back the Senate Starts Right Here, Right Now**
- **Gear Up and Tell the Dems That We've "Seen" Enough**
- **Iran's Plan For Israel - Urgent Warning?**
- **Block Dems Demand of Higher Taxes and Another Stimulus**
- **Obama's campaign is already on the attack!**
- **Act Now: Did filling up your gas tank empty your wallet this weekend?**
- **Obama plans Back-Door Amnesty for Illegal Aliens**
- **News Update: Media Matters Uses Tax-Free Funds to Attack Fox News**
- **Alert: Obama chooses terror organization over American security**
- **Stop George Soros from Controlling another member of Congress**

Seriously. Is there any doubt what the emails attached to these Subject lines are about? Can you tell immediately whether or not these are subjects you want to read more about?

The Political Insider doesn't make you guess what their email is about the way the DSCC and MoveOn do. One might even draw the conclusion that the DSCC's positions and issues are so offensive to so many people that the only way they can get anyone to open their emails is to fool them with these vague Subject lines!

As for an individual candidate or elected officials, I've found that Sen. Tom Coburn does an excellent job in writing compelling Subject lines. Here are some sent out from his office recently:

- **9,000,000,000,000 Ways to Balance the Budget**
- **Coburn, Levin to Hold Hearing on Tax Cheating Stimulus Contractors**
- **Dr. Coburn Releases New Oversight Report Exposing Waste, Mismanagement**
- **Shrimp on a treadmill and Jello wrestling at the South Pole, paid for with your tax dollars**

- **77,000 federal employees paid more than governors**
- **Dems distorting fundamentals of GOP plan to reshape Medicare**
- **U.S. government giving billions in foreign aid to same nations we are borrowing from**
- **RELEASE - Dr. Coburn Introduces Enumerated Powers Act w/ 24 cosponsors**
- **Lawyer paid \$25,000 in stimulus funds for writing two sentences**
- **Two unfinished Navy ships costing \$300 million will now be scrapped**
- **\$2 million being spent on a 3 mile trail to nowhere in Texas**

Again, you don't have to guess whether or not you want to open these emails and read further. The Subject line tells you all you need to know about whether or not to read further....or delete and move on. Why waste your supporters' time?

If you are a campaign or head of an organization, do not imitate failure. Do not fall for this latest strategically foolish "fad" of sending out emails with vague, meaningless Subject lines. Tell your readers what you're gonna tell them...and then tell them what you told them you were gonna tell them.

So let it be written; so let it be done.

CONTRACTS WITH VOTERS: THE NEXT GENERATION

Back in the spring of 2006, a "political massacre" took place in Pennsylvania where 16 incumbents were knocked off in primaries - including the state senate's top two GOP leaders - by unknown, underfunded candidates. Apparently, voter unrest and distress over Republicans voting for higher taxes, more spending and bigger government finally boiled over.

The challenger campaign rallying cry for the underdogs was: "It's time for Republicans to be Republicans."

That being said, the challengers deployed a political weapon which was first successfully used by Newt Gingrich & Company back in 1994 - The Contract With America. In this case the document was called The Promise to Pennsylvania. Republicans challenging "bad" incumbent Republicans this year ought to consider banding together and drafting their own home-state versions of these platforms.

To help give a better idea of what such a platform might look like, below you'll find The Promise to Pennsylvania which worked so successfully a couple weeks ago...

— — — — — — — — —

The Promise

As Republican Members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, we promise to: 1)

Advocate the principles upon which our Commonwealth was founded; 2) Restore trust between the citizens of Pennsylvania and their government.

Despite Republican control of the Pennsylvania House and Senate since 1995, the size, scope, cost and inefficiency of government have increased dramatically. Meanwhile, we've witnessed a severe deterioration of the people's faith in the willingness of our elected officials to legislate with humility, honor, and altruism. It is more important than ever for men and women embodying these values to serve in our State Legislature.

This year's election offers the opportunity for a new majority that will transform the way our General Assembly does business. With this new majority will come a new era of accountability in state government and a renewed dedication to freedom and personal responsibility.

During the 2006-2007 Session of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, we will introduce, and work diligently to advance, legislation embodying the following reforms and policies:

1. Legislative Reform:

ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE TAXPAYERS:

- * Require an independent auditing firm to conduct a comprehensive audit of the General Assembly for waste, fraud and mismanagement.

CITIZEN INCLUSION IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

- * Mandate that the "PA Sunshine Law" apply uniformly to all legislative sessions, meetings and hearings conducted by State Government, granting appropriate access to the public and media.
- * Disallow passage of any legislation that has not strictly met the procedural rigor detailed in Sections 1-4, Article III, of the Pennsylvania Constitution.

ENACT STRICT LOBBYING REFORM

- * Enact a five-year waiting period for former legislators and cabinet officials to become lobbyists.
- * Eliminate gifts to public officials from lobbyists for any entity desiring business with the Commonwealth.
- * Require legislators to abstain from voting on any legislation that could benefit their personal or business interests.

2. Political Reform:

RESTORING THE CONCEPT OF A CITIZEN LEGISLATURE

- * Enact a Constitutional Amendment limiting the number of years Senators and Representatives can serve to 12 years in each legislative body.
- * Enact term limits on committee chairmanships and leadership positions.

OPENESS AND TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

- * Create a system to post legislators' voting records on the Internet within 24 hours, like other states.

ENDING TAXPAYER SUBSIDIZED INCUMBENT PROTECTION

- * Rein in taxpayer subsidized newsletters and public service announcements, which are tools for reelection and further the status quo in Harrisburg .

3. Taxation and Spending Reform:

STOP THE SPENDING SPREE IN HARRISBURG

- * Implement the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR) to strictly limit increases in state spending to the concurrent rates of inflation and population growth.
- * Eliminate unfunded mandates to the counties, municipalities and school districts in the Commonwealth, which shift the tax increases to these taxing bodies.
- * Limit the ability of politicians to distribute tax dollars to special interests.

AN END TO BURDENING THE TAXPAYER

- * Require a three-fifths majority to pass a tax increase.
- * Work to eliminate property taxation.
- * Eliminate "nuisance taxes."

4. Legal and Labor Law Reform:

END THE JACKPOT JUSTICE SYSTEM

- * Pass a constitutional amendment giving the General Assembly broader authority to implement commonsense legal reform
- * Reform lawsuit abuse by ending unlimited jury awards and enforcing a “loser pays” rule.

PROMOTE WORKERS’ FREEDOM

- * End forced unionism in Pennsylvania , giving people the freedom to choose whether or not they want to join a union.

We hereby pledge our names to this Promise to Pennsylvania .

John Eichelberger
Mike Folmer
Mark Harris
Gary Hornberger

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

“The purpose of a political campaign is to win an election; it is not to kowtow to the wishes of the press.” – **Former Reagan strategist and adviser, Lyn Nofziger**

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