



\$20.00

My Promise for Every Issue

"You will get at least one idea that will either (a) get you more votes, (b) raise you more money, (c) save you time or money, (d) get you more media attention, or (e) get something done in your campaign that is not getting done now...guaranteed!"

From: Mount Reagan, Nevada
6:34 a.m.

A Lifetime of Learning

I homeschool my kids. Well, to be honest, my wife homeschools our kids...at least as far as the A-B-C's and 1-2-3's are concerned. My focus with them is primarily on the areas of government and U.S. history. Go figure.

While public school kids will tell you that the Civil War was all about ending slavery, my kids will tell you it had as much to do with the federal government's refusal to acknowledge that the southern states had the right to secede from the union.

But I digress.

When my eldest daughter, Kristen, was in her mid-teens, I'm started teaching her a subject I knew little about and was never taught myself as a kid in school: How to build wealth.

Investing, real estate, entrepreneurship.

I confess; I'm a learning junkie. Way back in the early 1990s, I had no idea how to take so much as a good Polaroid (ask your mom) let alone shoot a professional-looking video. But I decided to learn. So I bought books and tapes (now CDs and DVDs) on the subject and went to classes and seminars.

And I got pretty good at it. Good enough to be hired to videotape Wayne Newton's star-studded wedding at his home in Las Vegas in 1994 before abandoning the video biz for politics.

But again, I digress.

I wasn't taught about building wealth as a kid and don't want my kids to suffer the same lack of education.

So after reading about Robert Kiyosaki's "Rich Dad, Poor Dad" over and over again from various sales and marketing newsletters, I finally broke down and bought the audiobook version. And Kristen and I listened to it on a long road trip from Vegas to Carson City to Oakland and back.

Now, there's a ton of stuff to learn from this book. And if you're not already wealthy and/or want to teach your kids how to become financially independent, I can't recommend Rich Dad, Poor Dad highly enough.

But here's the point I really want to make here, and it has nothing to do with learning how to get rich.

Consider this short piece of advice which actually came towards the end of the book...

"Take classes, read and attend seminars. I search newspapers and the Internet for new, interesting classes, many of which are free or inexpensive. I also attend and pay for expensive seminars on what I want to learn.

"I am wealthy and free from needing a job simply because of the courses I took. I have friends who did not take those classes who told me I was wasting my money. And yet they're still at the same job."

I've been "doing politics," including the marketing and sales of politics, for over 20 years now. And I still know only a fraction of what there is to learn.

So not only do I continue to read books and newsletters, listen to training CDs in the car, watch DVDs and attend seminars and webinars on politics, but also on sales and marketing.

Whether it's learning something new or relearning something you'd forgotten, just one idea, one suggestion, one tip - when acted upon - can end up giving you a tremendous advantage over your competition or opponents.

So, absolutely, take Kiyosaki's advice and take classes, read and attend seminars as often as you can. And keep reading *Psephology Today!*

Stop Telling People You're Not a Politician

One of the most overused and useless things a candidate can say is, "I'm not a politician."

Yes, you are. If you are running for political office, by definition...you are a politician. And if you're claiming not to be a politician hoping that buys you something with the average voter...it doesn't.

Declaring, as a candidate, that "I am not a politician" simply tells people you are an inexperienced "newbie" who is to be regarded with suspicion.

I mean, come on. If you went to someone for legal advice and they told you, "I'm not a lawyer," would you put your full faith in them? How about someone who says, "I'm not a doctor"? Would you trust them to give you the best advice?

So if you're using that tired old phrase used ineffectively by countless others before you, stop.

On the other hand, the reality is that while you are a politician, as a candidate you are NOT in the political "business" any more than the owner of a plumbing business is a plumber.

Sure, he fixes leaky pipes...but only if someone hires him to fix their leaky pipes.

You see, the owner of a plumbing service is *really* in the sales and marketing business. Or should be. Because if he doesn't sell someone on using his plumbing service, he won't be in business very long.

Ditto candidates. Candidates are the equivalent of the business owner. And a candidate who doesn't effectively market and sell his or her service - which is representing people at some level of government - won't be elected. And an unelected politician is no more of a success than a plumber who no one hires.

Also, bear in mind that as a candidate, you're not just selling yourself and your services as a representative of the people. Odds are, unless you have no core political philosophy whatsoever, you're selling ideas, as well.

Indeed, conservative candidates are selling the idea of limited government, low taxes, personal responsibility, individual liberty and free markets. Liberals, on the other hand, are

selling the exact opposite...with the additional challenge of fooling people into thinking that's not what they're selling.

So get used to this...

If you're a candidate, you're a politician, as well as a marketer and salesman of political representation. And while knowledge of the tax code or other issues might make you an expert on the subject, if you can't sell your ideas or your candidacy based on them...you're not going to win.

Don't Just Read a Book, Write a Book

Nothing, and I mean nothing, establishes authority and gravitas as strongly as possessing the title, "Author." Nothing.

And an autographed copy of your book is an absolutely great gift to donors who contribute at a certain level.

Indeed, you could essentially be "selling" your book for \$25, \$50, \$100 or more - for a book that only costs you a couple of dollars to print, depending on quantity.

But you could never write a book, right?

Wrong.

First, your book need not be 7 gazillion pages long. Nor does it need to be hard-cover. Nor does it need to be published by one of the big publishing houses.

A self-published paperback of around 100 pages is perfectly acceptable and relatively inexpensive to do.

Secondly, you don't have to "write" the book...and if you follow this tip, you could have your finished book written, typeset, designed and printed in less than 30 days.

Start with an outline of what you want to include in your book. The outline will serve as the "Chapters" of your book.

For example, let's say you want to publish a book outlining your ideas for fixing the government's problems on certain issues. You might do an outline along these lines...

Chapter 1: Biography

Chapter 2: Education

Chapter 3: Taxes & Spending
Chapter 4: Health Care
Chapter 5: Creating Jobs
Chapter 6: Etc., etc., etc.

Now for each chapter, you'll create talking points, such as:

Education

Parental involvement
Discipline in the classroom
Ending teacher tenure
Ending social promotions
Charter schools
School vouchers
Reducing administrative staff
Etc., etc., etc.

Now, instead of writing about each of these talking points in each chapter, here's what you do...

- 1.) Set up an account with a telephone recording service. FreeConferencing.com is what I use.
- 2.) Have someone do a recorded interview with you over the phone using the conferencing service. It's a simple Q&A.

"Tell me what role parents have in assuring their children get a good education."

Then you answer. In your own words. And in a conversational tone. You don't want this to come off as a term paper. Nobody likes reading term papers. Even teachers!

And don't worry about making a mistake or leaving something out. There will be plenty of time to make corrections and/or additions in the editing process.

- 3.) Have your digitally-recorded interview segments transcribed by a professional transcription service. I use iDictate.com.
- 4.) Edit the transcription. Shorten paragraphs, change text, add to it, spell-check, grammar-check, etc.

Also, pick up just about any published book and go through the pages to get ideas of extra pages you might want to add, such as table of contents, a copyright page, an introduction, dedication, forward, or acknowledgement page.

And if you're going to use the book strictly for your campaign, make sure you put your campaign contact information in there somewhere. I often put this on the back cover.

Lastly, don't hesitate to include lots and lots of testimonials (see next item below) of friends and colleagues saying how great you are! You can add these at the beginning or end of the book.

5.) Have a professional graphic artist design a cover in full color. You can find extremely affordable and talented "virtual" pros using services such as Upwork.com or Fiverr.com.

Get and use a PROFESSIONAL photograph of yourself.

6.) Have the finished manuscript typeset in book form and uploaded to the self-publishing house. There are folks who do this, too, at Upwork and Fiverr.

7.) Get it printed. There are plenty of self-publishing services out there these days. I use InstantPublisher.com

Author and marketing expert Henry Evans says, *"Don't talk to anybody until they know you're somebody."*

If you have a book, you're somebody. And that will open all kinds of doors for you with the media, potential donors and organizations looking for a speaker.

Indeed, your book will be the biggest, most impressive business card you can possibly imagine.

So don't put this off. Decide you're going to do it...and just do it!

Testimonials

Let's say your opponent, who is an incumbent, is criticizing you for being inexperienced. And let's say your campaign decides to counter that criticism by maintaining you're a fast learner. So here's the question...

Which would be more effective: If you say you're a fast learner or if a third-party says you're a fast learner?

The answer, of course, is if someone else attests to your quick learning abilities on your behalf.

This would be true in any profession, but especially true in politics where, if you maintain the sun rises in the east some are going to start questioning the truth of the statement.

Indeed, nobody trusts anything a politician says...with, unfortunately, good cause - thanks to many a lyin' weasel before you.

So you can go out there and tell people you're a fast learner 'til the cows come home, and many, if not most, voters will be skeptical of the claim. It reminds me of the old Margaret Thatcher line about being a lady. "If you have to tell people you are, you aren't."

With all that in mind, most campaigns do go through the process of obtaining endorsements for the candidate. But those endorsements usually fall far short of their potential power.

If just having the individual's or organization's name on the candidate's endorsement list is considered a positive, how much more so if that individual or organization offered up a full-blown testimonial rather than simply adding their name to an endorsement list?

And how much even more powerful would such a testimonial be if it either (a) affirmed a positive attribute about you or (b) countered a criticism of you?

Back to our example of the inexperienced candidate.

Now you could add the candidate's employer's name to your endorsement list - and that might be helpful. But what if, instead, you were able to use a full statement such as this in your campaign marketing material...

"I hired John Smith as a mail clerk fresh out of college. Within six months he earned his way into management and two years later I made him my vice president of our western region. Whatever he didn't know, he learned. Fast. He'll do the same in the Legislature."

Or let's say you're pro-life, but your opponent is claiming you're not.

"Am, too!"

"Are not!"

"Am, too!"

“Are not!”

You can't win that argument.

But what if a local right-to-life leader drafted a testimonial along these lines...

“I’ve known John Smith for ten years. He’s as solidly pro-life as they come. He doesn’t just talk the talk. He’s been in the trenches with us every step of the way. And anyone who says otherwise is a lying schip-weasel.”

OK, OK...you can't say THAT! But you get the idea.

People think you're soft on guns? Get endorsement testimonials from known and respected gun owners and/or gun rights activists.

People say you're puppet or a tool of party leaders? Get endorsement testimonials declaring your independent streak.

Testimonials are one of the most powerful, yet under-utilized tools at the disposal of any campaign. They can be far, far better than simple endorsements...especially when used to affirm a positive or knock down a negative.

Lastly, if you have an iPhone or other smartphone, whenever someone comes up to you on the campaign trail and says something nice or positive about you or your campaign, ask them:

“Would you mind repeating that on video so I can maybe use it in our campaign?”

Bam! Another testimonial...on camera! Doesn't get any more powerful than that.

BTW: You do have a campaign YouTube or similar account for hosting videos on your website, don't you?

Offer a Guarantee

While every candidate is, by definition, a politician, what you want to demonstrate is that you're not the “typical” politician.

In the minds of an increasingly cynical electorate – and not without good cause – the “typical” politician stands for nothing, breaks his or her word, and is only in it for themselves.

Few believe anything a candidate or the candidate's campaign says.

In the private sector, manufacturers and service providers overcome such buyer skepticism and hesitation with guarantees; often money-back guarantees.

Risk-free, unconditional guarantees provide a lot of very useful benefits...

- They build trust
- They offer reassurance
- They differentiate you from your competitors
- They help “rationalize” a buying decision and reduce “buyer’s remorse”
- They keep you accountable

So why not, as a candidate, offer a guarantee?

Indeed, can you imagine the positive effect you’d have on potential donors if you ended a solicitation letter with something like this?

“I guarantee that I will never vote to raise your taxes, and if I do, I’ll not only immediately resign my seat and never run for public office again, but I’ll give you double your donation back.”

Is that a guy who’s going to raise your taxes?

And if high taxes are your issue, would a guarantee like that in a fundraising pitch give any prospective donors a tremendous comfort level in contributing to your campaign?

Now, for such guarantees to have any power, they have to be specific and unequivocal. You can’t guarantee that “if elected I’ll work hard every day.”

I mean, come on. That’s what “typical” politicians say.

“You” is the Cure for the Dreaded “I” Disease

One of the biggest communication mistakes consistently made by candidates for office at all levels is in crafting messages that are about themselves (or their organizations) rather than about their voters/donors.

“I did this.” “I did that.” “I believe this.” “I believe that.”

I once received a fundraising letter ghost-written for U.S. Sen. Rand Paul on behalf of the Leadership Institute.

Now don't get me wrong...I'm a huge supporter of both. But the opening of this letter is a classic example of an "I" letter (and wait'll you read the first sentence!)...

Dear Mr. Muth,

I'm a doctor, not a politician.

I had spent my entire adult life diagnosing patients' problems and helping them recover.

In my spare time, I enjoyed coaching baseball, soccer, and basketball teams for each of my three sons.

But I couldn't just stand on the sidelines and watch while we lost our country. So I ran for the United States Senate in 2010, and I'm proud to represent Kentucky there today.

The political elites in both parties opposed me, and the "experts" didn't give me much of a chance.

And it went on and on from there.

Now, do my red pen/blue pen test on those first five paragraphs: Circle in red every time you see the words "I," "me" or "my." Now circle in blue every time you see the words "you" or "your."

The rule of thumb is that if you're seeing a lot more red than blue, you need to rewrite.

Also, your headline and opening paragraphs should be about the voter or the donor in order to capture their interest and pull them into the letter. If you don't grab them immediately, you'll probably lose them...and they'll never read your full message.

A better opening would have been something along the lines of: *"If you're like me, you're worried about..."*

Then describe the problem. Then explain why your opponent is the source of or part of the problem. Then describe the solution. Then ask for action...either a request for the recipient's vote or a donation.

Make it about THEM. Make it about what THEY get by supporting you.

To get there, quite often all it takes is a little re-write in which you change the focus from “I” to “you.” Do it...and you’ll see support for your cause or campaign increase dramatically.

And isn’t that what YOU want?

The More You Tell, the More You Sell

If a standard 4-page or 8-page letter can be used effectively to get people to give a candidate their money, why can’t a standard 4-page or 8-page letter be used to get people to give a candidate their vote?

It can. To great effect. But most “professional” campaign consultants don’t think that way.

Indeed, unlike a standard post-card mailer, a standard fundraising-type letter allows the candidate the opportunity to tell voters - who probably know little or nothing about the candidate - a lot more.

And the more you tell, the more you sell.

For example, candidates in a GOP primary might consider the following 7-letter weekly schedule. These should probably go out beginning 8 weeks before Election Day or before early voting begins.

“Why I’m running” letter. What you want to do, not what you want to be. What are the problems you think need to be solved? Define the campaign in YOUR terms rather than let your opponent define the campaign in his or her terms.

Experience letter. Sort of a bio, but from a marketing standpoint. “I have (insert experience); you get (insert benefit to voter/donor of that experience).”

Simply saying you were involved in something that has nothing whatsoever to do with the office being sought means nothing to the voter and probably shouldn’t be included.

Issues letter. Focus on the top three issues you want voters to think about when they walk into the voting booth – and just a brief position statement on other issues of interest to the voter.

Contrast letter. What’s wrong with your opponent? Where do you disagree on issues that are important to the voter? Why should the voter “fire” the incumbent or not hire your opponent?

GOP platform letter. In a GOP primary, Republican voters want to know if the candidate is in tune with the party platform, especially the hard-core party regulars.

IF the party platform is reasonable, reprint it and sign it. If there's anything on which you disagree, explain why or take that part out, and sign the rest of the platform.

Tax Pledge letter. Specifically point out if your opponent hasn't signed the Taxpayer Protection Pledge (www.ATR.org) promising not to raise the voter's taxes. You should include a copy of your own signed Pledge with an explanation for why raising taxes is a bad idea.

Contract letter. An actual "contract" in which the Candidate and Voter agree to certain terms. Term limits, tax pledge, ethics, other issues, etc. – whatever promises the candidate chooses to make to the voters.

Ask for the voter's vote. The voter should be asked to sign the "contract" and return it. The candidate should then personally sign every one that is returned, make a copy, enter their name as a "For" voter in the Voter ID database, and return the original...along with a request for a donation!

In addition, you'll want to send an "Inoculation" letter for any issues you know the opposition is going to throw your way. This way you get it out first and explain it in your terms rather than let the opposition explain it in their terms.

We did this for Dennis Hof's 2018 campaign for the Nevada Legislature - which he won even though he died three weeks before Election Day!

Dennis owned seven legal brothels in Nevada. We KNEW the opponent was going to try to use that against him. So we sent out an "inoculation" letter early in the campaign telling people what was coming and countering it.

In advance! We addressed the problem on our terms BEFORE the opposition hit us with it. And when they did, we simply said, "See, I told you this was coming."

Lastly, maybe a "Bullsh*t" letter in which you take the opponent's false or exaggerated claims and rip them to shreds.

Depending on the campaign strategy and budget, you might want to start the mailings sooner and/or do two a week instead of one.

If you're looking to stand out from the crowd and crowded mailboxes chocked full of campaign "postcards," this would definitely be one way to do it.

Secrets to Giving Great Speeches

At a four-day “boot camp” I attended on public speaking and marketing in Los Angeles with James Malinchak, one of the key points he drove home was...

“Nobody will ever hear you until they know you.”

So, so, SO true for candidates.

In fact, ESPECIALLY for candidates since so many of those, as I noted earlier, who have gone before you have so poisoned the well of public opinion.

Anyway, the point is you HAVE to tell your audience about yourself - your “story” - in a way that makes them feel like you’re “one of them.”

This is actually easier than you might think, as marketing expert Yanik Silver explains:

“We all have a ‘creation story,’ but few of us use them in our marketing. Think of it like a comic book character.

“If I asked you, ‘Who was bitten by a radioactive spider and started fighting crime to avenge his Uncle’s death?’ you’d probably know that was Spiderman.

“This is all part of the creation story and every business, brand and personality has that creation story that should be made more public.”

Ditto candidates.

For your campaign, ask yourself some questions. How did you start in politics? What was your reason or inspiration?

“Share this with your customers (voters/donors),” Silver says, “and you’ll create a deeper connection.”

Absolutely.

One other tip in this regard: Talk about your experiences in your youth - something everyone can relate to. Your first job. Your challenges in high school. Your first car. Your childhood sweetheart. Etc.

In fact, here’s a Gold Star public speaking secret I use myself (hat tip, James Malinchak)...

If you REALLY want to get your audience involved and relating to you right off the bat, ask them to tell you what some of their favorite TV shows were when they were growing up...and watch the room come alive with audience participation!

Then tell them what one of your favorite shows was. They'll be eating out of your hand.

You're no longer "Joe Candidate, Politician." You're a regular guy (or gal), just like them. And NOW that they've gotten to know you a little better, they'll be more inclined to listen to your message.

My favorites was "Dallas." I loved J.R. Ewing. The guy had no conscience and never failed to screw an opponent. Or friend! I guess that explains how and why I got into politics.

Celebrity Sells

It pretty much takes a pretty healthy ego to run for office. But when it comes to "selling" your campaign, unless you are your own celebrity - like, for example, actor and former U.S. Sen. Fred Thompson - you should look for ways to add a little "celebrity" appeal.

From marketing expert Dan Kennedy:

"What I can GUARANTEE you is this: Almost without exception, even a barely relevant celebrity's photo, name and some brief statements can get more envelopes opened than would be opened otherwise; get an ad read by more people than would read it otherwise; stop and give a TV commercial a chance to sell to them when they would otherwise instantly click away; attract more to a tele-seminar or webinar than would otherwise come; flood a local event that would otherwise get ho-hum reaction - yet this is the least followed advice of all I provide."

Now, a "celebrity" doesn't have to be a famous Hollywood actor. It can be just about anyone with some name recognition, even if only locally. And it can be a sports figure, a business figure or, of course, a political figure.

And bear in mind, it isn't necessarily the message itself that's the most important part of communications in your campaign...

"The mistake most people make with advertising and marketing," Kennedy writes, "is endlessly trying to improve the message to boost response instead of working on boosting readership, viewership or listenership of an effective message."

Democrats are GREAT at using celebrity appeal in their campaigns. That's not by accident. Republicans are lousy at this. That needs to change.

Raise Money OUTSIDE Your District

Consider the following from the January 2012 edition of Political Diary:

“If you thought Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown's \$3.2 million fundraising haul in the fourth quarter last year was impressive, think again. The campaign for his opponent, Harvard law professor and consumer advocate Elizabeth Warren, announced Wednesday a jaw-dropping \$5.7 million haul over the same period. And it's only January.

“Campaign donations are pouring into the Bay State because the Brown-Warren contest is one of the few toss-ups in an election year widely expected to be dominated by Republican victories in the upper chamber.”

The important thing to note here is that Warren was getting big-time contributions from folks who didn't live anywhere near her state, let alone in it. Why? Because her race could have been the difference between whether Democrats or Republicans controlled the Senate after November's elections.

Which meant Democrats in Alaska, Idaho, Texas and every other state who didn't want Republicans to control the Senate had a vested interest in seeing to it that Republican Brown was defeated.

Which presented a fundraising opportunity to expand the prospect list for Warren that few other U.S. Senate candidates could capitalize on.

It's the same kind of opportunity Republican Sharron Angle enjoyed in 2010 in her race against Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid in Nevada. In that race, Angle raised some \$25 million...most of which came from donors OUTSIDE of Nevada.

Look for opportunities for your own campaign to raise money from people and organizations outside your district, as well.

If you're pro-gun, for example, and your opponent is demonstrably hostile to gun rights, you likely have an opportunity to raise money from gun owners outside your district who have an interest in defeating the gun-grabber even if they don't live in your district...and maybe even in your state.

Swipe File

If you want to learn how to write great fundraising letters that actually get donations through

the mail, you should invest in what will essentially be a “continuing education” course in direct mail fundraising.

You do that by making a \$5 or \$10 donation to similar campaigns and organizations who have the dough to hire the best copywriters and direct mail firms in the country today.

In return, every few weeks you’ll receive a NEW direct mail fundraising solicitation – authored and produced by some of the best and most expensive direct mail professionals in the country today – which you can then use as a template/inspiration for your own direct mail letters.

It’s called a “swipe” file.

Now...don’t plagiarize others’ work word-for-word. You’re not Joe Biden, after all. But you can ethically imitate the look and feel of other direct mail letters – the font type, style and size, the headline placements, the use of bullets, bolding and italics, underlining, the margin sizes, graphics, the P.S., the length, etc.

Here are some good ones to get you started. Send \$5 or \$10 each to:

Republican National Committee
www.GOP.com

National Rifle Association
www.nra.org

Club for Growth
www.clubforgrowth.org

Trump 2020
www.donaldjtrump.com

And make both an online donation AND send a donation by check so you get future solicitations from both avenues.

Secret to Setting Up an Effective Finance Committee

Want to raise \$10,000 for your campaign? Simple: Just create a program in which you recruit just 34 people to agree to donate just \$3.33/day (the cost of a coffee at Starbucks!) for the next 3 months.

That’s \$99.90/month for three months from 34 people = \$10,189.80

Need \$20K? Find a donor to your campaign who will agree to find his or her OWN 34 people who will donate \$3.33/day for the next 3 months.

Need more? Rinse and repeat.

Want to be a little more moderate in getting off the ground? Find 22 people who will give \$2.22/day for the next 2 months. That'll get you right around \$3,000.

Find 10 people who will do the same and you'll have \$30,000 in the next 60 days. For some campaigns...that's their entire budget!

A little more aggressive? 44 people at \$4.44/per day for next 4 months raises you...\$23,000+.

This is the essence of a Finance Committee. It's not rocket surgery. Just...do...it.

The Absolute 1st Thing You Must Do to Put on a Fundraising Event

"You know, we ought to do a fundraising BBQ," someone will say.

Great idea, everyone agrees. But in campaign after campaign and organization after organization it never seems to come about. Why?

First, fundraising events should definitely be an essential part of any campaign or organization's fundraising program.

Some donors prefer to be somewhere in person with other people – especially the candidate or organization head - rather than making a donation in response to an email, mail or phone solicitation.

Now here's how to solve the #1 problem in getting fundraising events off the ground: Set a date.

Too many campaigns and organizations waste too much time with too many people discussing themes, speakers, menus, entertainment, invitations, etc., etc., etc., without doing the one thing that makes the event real and sets the wheels in motion...

Setting a date. Once you set a date, the clock starts. There's a deadline. People start to focus. Without setting a date, the event is just something that will happen "sometime" in the future. Decisions can be delayed. Actions can be put off until later. Procrastination is easy.

So, if you really want to hold that BBQ fundraiser, set a date. Everything else will follow.

#1 Secret to Successful Fundraising Events

When planning an event for your campaign or organization, you must decide if it's going to be a

“fun-raising” event or a “funD-raising” event.

The “d” in “fundraising” stands for “dollars.” And no matter how good a time everyone might have at your “funDraising” event, if you didn’t net dollars for your campaign...it was a failure.

If you charge \$50 per person - but the cost of food, room rental, beverage and entertainment cost you \$75 per person - you’ve LOST MONEY!

And don’t laugh. It happens ALL THE TIME.

Now, you might think the #1 secret to a successful fundraising event is ticket sales. Actually, no.

The #1 secret to successful fundraising events is getting sponsors and in-kind donations! As the National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth puts it...

“A good way to avoid the high costs of planning an event are to beg, borrow, and—well, don’t steal. But you can get a lot of things for free or at low cost: food, goody bags and door prizes, auction items, ad space, invitations and programs, speakers’ and entertainers’ fees, and venue costs. A committed corporate or individual sponsor might even be willing to cover all or most of your administrative costs for the event.”

If you take this seriously when planning your event, every ticket you sell will be pure profit. That means DOLLARS for your campaign. And THAT’S what “funDraising” is all about.

How and Why You Should “Smith Barney” You Big Donors

Nobody has been harder on the United States Post Office than I’ve been over the years; however, there **IS** a lot to be said for the virtues of snail-mail these days...*especially when it comes to communicating with your donors.*

I have a space on my desk where I keep personal cards and letters I’ve received because they’re so personal and so out-of-the-ordinary. And meaningful.

The most recent was a **HAND-WRITTEN** greeting card from my Dad following up on a certain “meaning of life” conversation the two of us had.

And I kept the **HAND-WRITTEN** card Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid sent me after we bumped into each other on an airplane from Phoenix to Las Vegas.

And there’s a **HAND-WRITTEN** card from Sharron Angle thanking me for a donation I made early to her campaign in 2009.

But my favorite is a **HAND-WRITTEN** personal one-page letter – IN CURSIVE! - from the late Nevada State Senate Majority Leader Bill Raggio.

Again, none of these were standard-issue form letters. They were all hand-written and personal. True personal; not “mail-merge” personal. And they must have meant *something* special to me, even if on an unconscious level, because, well, I saved them.

Folks, do **NOT** underestimate the value of communicating with your donors and your constituents – as Smith Barney (ask your mom) would say – the “old-fashioned way.”

Why You Shouldn't Send Christmas Cards to Donors

Every December everyone's mailboxes begin to fill up with Christmas and holiday cards. And if you send yours along with everyone else's, it'll be lost in the mailbox with everyone else's.

So, here's a better way to recognize and thank your donors...as well as your key supporters and volunteers: Send THANKSGIVING cards instead!

Very few people send Thanksgiving cards, so yours won't get lost in the Christmas card clutter. And when you think about it, what better time to say “thanks” to your biggest and best supporters than Thanksgiving?

Now, maybe you'll think I go bit overboard in thanking my best financial supporters – folks who had given \$1,000 or more to my non-profit organization – but I don't think so. Here's an example of what I sent them last year in a 6x9 envelope...

- A personally-signed Thanksgiving Day card (79-cents)
- A small box (1.75 oz.) of Whitman's Sampler chocolates (cost \$1.00)
- A copy of a “Special Humor Issue” from December's Reader's Digest (cost \$3.99)
- A letter printed on Thanksgiving-themed paper again thanking the donor for his/her support and reassuring them that I couldn't do what I do without them (which is 110% true!)

Even with first-class postage, the total cost of my thank you package was less than \$10. Is a \$1,000+ donor not worth \$10 to you? They sure are to me!

But even if “all” you send is a traditional Thanksgiving Day card (available at any drug store or grocery store), it's more than most people will send...and will definitely arrive much sooner and apart from everyone else's Christmas card.

The Most Important Person Every Candidate Must Hire

Chris Ingram is the president and founder of 411 Communications - a corporate and political communications firm - and publisher of Irreverent View, a conservative blog on Florida politics. And he has some great advice on “How to determine who and what to hire for your campaign”...

Most campaigns have limited resources. Scarce dollars requires even more prioritizing of expenditures than ever before.

Many candidates start their campaign with the idea that they will hire a pollster, a press secretary, a campaign manager, and so on – until they realize those guys (and gals) cost money. In most areas, anyone running for county commission, town council, school board, or the like ends up being their own manager, press secretary – I’ve even seen a few try to be their own pollster!

My advice to candidates is always this: the first person any campaign should hire is not a strategist, manager, or pollster – it’s a good accountant who will file their campaign finance reports. I also advise them not to rely on a friends or relatives who are accountants who will do it for free.

Allow your accountant friend or family member to serve as your campaign treasurer who signs the reports if you want, but you should pay a professional to do the grunt work and keep you out of trouble. And since you’re a paying client, they will return your phone calls, which free labor doesn’t always do.

The person in this role could be called lots of things, but I would call them your campaign finance compliance officer. Ideally, they have familiarity with campaign finance law as well as accounting. This person is the most invaluable person on your campaign team and worth every penny. Filing bad campaign finance reports can be embarrassing, costly, distracting, and can result in civil fines and even criminal prosecution.

So when it comes to tracking donations, expenditures, campaign finance law, and disclosure reports, don’t skimp. Pay up and hire a good campaign finance compliance officer.

10,000-Hour Rule

In his best-selling book, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, author Malcolm Gladwell discusses the “10,000-Hour Rule” - that to reach “expert” status in a business, industry or any other

endeavor, you need to devote some 10,000 hours of study to master a particular skill or craft.

That comes to about five years if you devote full-time, 40 hours per week.

“Training and practice are critical,” adds Robert Skrob, president of the Information Marketing Association...

“I invest in training all the time. I invest my time into learning - and practicing. I invest in consultants and coaches to help speed up implementation. I consult with a coach monthly who is on-call via email if I have a question or run into a roadblock I need help overcoming. I invest in these tools because my life is in my own hands. I must make sure I have the tools and the resources I need to make myself successful.”

Bear this in mind when and if you’re hiring campaign managers and consultants. I’ve seen way too many candidates over the past 20 years who hired someone they **thought** was a political expert, only to find out - too late - that the guru really didn’t know what the hell he was doing.

Seriously, a lot of self-proclaimed campaign **experts** really only work on campaigns for six months every other year during an election cycle. The rest of the time in between is devoted to their “real” job trying to make ends meet before the next election.

Before spending big bucks on a campaign consultant or manager, bore down and find out *exactly* how much time this individual has really spent, not just working on campaigns, but *studying and practicing* the art and science of political campaigns.

If you’re a first-time candidate who knows very little about campaigns and elections, don’t be intimidated by your lack of knowledge when interviewing potential consultants and staff. Ask the questions below. Because the fact is more candidates lose on Election Day, not because they were a bad candidate, but because their manager or consultant ran a lousy campaign.

Your campaign should not be somebody else’s “on the job training” program.



Dr. Chuck Muth, PsD
THE CAMPAIGN DOCTOR
*Professor of Psephology**
(homeschooled)

** Psephology (see-follow-gee): The study of campaigns and elections*

Resource Directory

Virtual Assistant

Jay Chauhan
<http://jaychauhan.in>

Voter Contact Mail

Jim Bieber
Bieber Communications
(714) 210-3630
info@biebercommunications.com
www.biebercommunications.com

Automated Phone Calls

Jerry Dorchuck
P.M.I., Inc.
web: <http://www.robocalls.com>
cell: 215-370-5509
office: 850-482-5079
fax: 877-561-5261

Blogs / Websites

Word Press
<http://wordpress.com>

Website Hosting

Go Daddy
(480) 505-8877
<http://www.godaddy.com>

Book Self-Publishing

www.InstantPublisher.com
(800) 259-2592

Email Service

Mail Chimp
mailchimp.com

Conference Calling

Free Conferencing
(877) 482-5838
<http://www.freeconferencing.com>

Transcription Service

i-Dictate
(866) 995-3000
sales@idictate.com
<http://idictate.com>

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