

The Future of the GOP

VOTER-CONTACT 2014 - 2016

Attention: Candidates, Party Leaders & Campaign Strategists

From:
The Campaign Solutions Group [TCSG]

There is no shortage of analysis regarding GOP defeats in 2012. The “WHY” is well documented. These reports reveal the GOP’s fundamental failures:

- The Winston Group’s, “Analysis of the 2012 Presidential Elections.”
<http://winstongroup.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/2012-Post-Election-Analysis.pdf>
- The RNC’s, ” Growth & Opportunity Project”
<http://growthopp.gop.com/default.aspx>
- The College Republican National Committee’s, “Grand Old Party for a Brand New Generation” <http://goo.gl/KcMb1x>

The GOP failed to connect with women, minorities and young voters. The GOP also failed to motivate turnout. Moving forward the focus must be on “HOW” to win. The formula for future success includes major improvements in:

- Messaging
- Data management
- Use of social media
- Voter-contact

TCSG’s innovative solutions will function as a vortex integrating all four initiatives. To win in 2014/2016 GOP candidates must deploy creative voter-contact strategies that change hearts/minds and motivate turnout. Fresh thinking and a new playbook will convert contacts into actual VOTES.

The telephone is still a cost effective voter-contact tool. The failure in 2012 was not due to lack of effort. Mitt Romney spent \$40 million on telephone programs; however, the ideas and strategies were stale. Using telephone voter-contact was a good idea; however, old methods and an unimaginative playbook were fatal mistakes. No creativity and lack of vendor competition resulted in minimal ROI.

GOP campaigns must establish a new mindset regarding telephone voter-contact. As stated in the RNC's Growth & Opportunity Project . . .

- ***With respect to campaign mechanics, the GOP must be open and ready to rebuild our entire playbook, and we must take advice from outside our comfort zone. We must test "paid phone" methods and messages to determine which efforts are most effective in converting contacts to votes.***

The RNC task force recommends . . .

- ***Telephone tests should be conducted on not only advocacy but on actual voter interaction.***

The recommendation to shift focus to "**VOTER INTERACTION**" is a game-changer. When highly trained call center agents actually engage voters and talk "with" them (not "at" them), extraordinary results are inevitable. Engaging voters in meaningful conversation takes time, . . . and time is money. Completes per hour will go down, but "contacts-to-votes" conversion will go up. Consultants must view their telephone budgeting in terms of "net" ROI not list penetration and lowest cost per contact. ***The cost PER VOTE is the only truly relevant metric.***

GOP strategists must adopt a new way of thinking regarding the value/cost of telephone voter-contact. The trend over the last 15 years has been to drive the cost "per contact" down, thus commoditizing the product. When campaign consultants refuse to pay more than \$0.50 cents for a live agent advocacy call, the vendor must maximize completes per hour. Price pressure and increased hourly yield demands undermine program objectives. The primary emphasis should be "MEANINGFUL VOTER COMMUNICATION ON EVERY CALL," . . . not maximum completes per hour.

In recent years GOP campaigns have used the telephone for short duration voter-ID, short message advocacy, and Election Day GOTV. Telephone program deployments have become predictable, unimaginative and stale. The telephone is still a powerful tool; however, campaign strategists must think outside the box.

It's time to abandon the old playbook and implement new telephone voter-contact ideas and innovative strategies. For example . . .

- Live-agent persuasion calls to women, Hispanics, young people and minority voters, inviting them to visit an informational website, and/or view a short YouTube video.

- Robo-calls to minorities, women and young voters can be used for advocacy or to prompt feedback. The press-1 feature can trigger a “patch-through,” and a live agent can answer questions and track feedback.
- Effective Communication with minorities will require community-specific strategies based on geography and ethnicity. A multi-phase approach is recommended:
 - Phase-1, Conduct a live-agent telephone poll. Ask minority voters (community specific) to name their top-5 concerns and/or challenges.
 - Phase-2, Cross-tabulate the data, and use contingency tables to orchestrate a follow-up live-agent advocacy call (addressing the associated specific concerns).
 - Phase-3, Close the loop with a final call. Confirm the previously identified issues, restate the proposed (GOP) solution, and confirm understanding and buy-in.
- Compile multiple voting history profiles, and draft unique advocacy scripts for each group. If we can identify the reason(s) a constituent failed to vote in a previous election, we can offer motivation or reasons to vote in the upcoming election (perhaps offer absentee or early voting options).
- Identify “low-information” voters, and test multiple educational/advocacy scripts. Call objectives can include invitations to local events, invitations to visit a Facebook page, and invitations to join a webinar or podcast.
- Live-Agent calling campaigns that include “email address capture,” and EUT (email upon termination). Upon terminating the call, the agent pushes an email to the constituent. The email can be informational, or produce action (like voter-registration, event attendance, etc.)
- Live-Agent calling campaigns for “cell phone number capture,” which include text-message opt-in permission, which in-turn leads to text message broadcasts. [And/Or “push” a Tweet upon call termination]
- When conducting Voter-ID live-agent calls, identify “ardent” supporters, and recruit them for precinct door knocking.
- When conducting live-agent calls, encourage the proliferation of social media content sharing by requesting a favorable pro-candidate post on the voter’s Facebook wall and/or send a Tweet. Also, ask voters to visit the candidate’s Facebook page and click “Like.” Various scripts could be tested, but the goal is to convert each telephone phone contact into a social media broadcast.

- When conducting Voter-ID live-agent calls, identify “ardent” supporters, and seek approval to post a yard sign on their lawn. Coordinate all requests with local campaign offices for sign delivery or pick-up.
- Typically voter-contact phone efforts consist of isolated calls. Occasionally a campaign will deploy a 2-step effort, using a follow-up advocacy call after initial Voter-ID yields a group of “undecided;” however, phone efforts are typically one call and done. TCSG can archive agent-specific call records so the same agent can make calls to the same voter multiple times. Different scripts and call sequences can be tested. “Message continuity” and agent familiarity may yield groundbreaking results.
- Phone campaigns to promote voter-registration, absentee ballots and/or early voting.

The GOP faces many challenges and difficult battles ahead. The recent trend of declining victories can be reversed, but it will require bold decisions and a commitment to new strategies and new methodologies.

The old way of doing things must be abandoned. Fresh ideas must be used to create action plans, including innovative uses of the telephone as an integrated element of an entirely new campaign playbook.

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