

Campaigning In The Time Of Coronavirus

9

Strategies To Succeed
In Uncertain Times

Superior.Blue



Welcome...

To The New Normal

We're in a different world.

Heroes no longer wear capes — they wear scrubs and gowns. Shaking hands is no longer friendly — it's careless. A month ago, “social distancing” was an idea — now it's the reality.

Campaigns and elections are changing too, but they're not going away. And winning candidates still have the same things in common: raising money, connecting with voters, and staying on message.

Winning your election, whether next week, next month or in November, starts with being smart about how you spend your time now. That's why we put together this e-book. These next few pages feature our **Nine Strategies For Campaigning During Coronavirus**. They aren't all easy, but they're what will keep you moving forward so that when this crisis is over, you're poised for success.

Stay Informed—

You're A Resource Now

1



Recent polling shows that more than 90% of us are doing the same things — limiting social interactions, going out only when necessary, and more.

But that doesn't mean anyone has all the answers. Contradictory updates flow from the White House. People are looking for information — what to do, when it will stop, and how to act in the meantime.

Be A Reference Librarian, Not A Professor

A good idea is to have a one-page cheat sheet handy with key resources: websites like the CDC, your state and county health department websites, phone numbers for local health experts, and more.

Remember, you don't want to be giving advice (unless you are a licensed medical professional). Guide people to the right resources, so they can make decisions for themselves.

Set Up A Video Chat Nook— And Be Ready For The Unexpected

2



Video chats have become more common. ZOOM alone is reporting their usage is up nearly 400%, and Microsoft is reporting that their video chat server usage is up more than 800%.

Make It Work

It's a good idea to set up a corner of your house to be "Video Chat Ready." This means:

- ✓ Minimizing clutter behind you, so people can focus on you
- ✓ Elevating your device so its camera shoots down at you (rather than up your nose)
- ✓ Thinking about your lighting: Is it too bright, or too dark? Where is the sun at different times of the day?
- ✓ Having a power strip handy, so that your device and your phone can stay charged

At the same time, people tend to be pretty understanding of the complexities of working from home, because many are going through the same frustrations and growing pains — even U.S. Senators.

If your kids, a pet or a partner disrupt a call, that's okay — just roll with it and show a sense of humor. It shows you're a regular person, which means you're in-touch with voters. Lean into it!



Keep Fundraising:

It's Still The Key
To Success

3



Fundraising is always challenging, and economic uncertainty doesn't make it any easier. Election Day is coming whether you like it or not. So it's time to get back on that horse and ride hard for the finish line:



Call Time - More on this later, but it's still location independent, still cost neutral, and while it may be a little harder right now, it still works.



Emails - With more time on their hands, people are reading more emails, with higher open rates for pieces that include an update or new content. Sending emails regularly (without overloading your audience) helps build readership, and you can increase the prominence, urgency and frequency of your asks over a few weeks.



Online Fundraisers - Many types of online video conference software offer great options for small group, online fundraisers. It's a great way to bring people together, especially remotely. Just remember, you're still going to have to call them to get them to attend in the first place.



Build For Your Future - You can still do lots of other things without directly engaging people (particularly important for the post-2020 crowd): list building with petitions and increased online engagement, list buying and list swaps, donor research for phone numbers (home numbers make more sense right now), and more.

Above all, remember to be gracious, and to care about the people you represent (or hope to represent).

If your race isn't until 2021 or beyond, hold off on financial asks for a quarter. Instead, spend your time researching lists and phone numbers, and start calling potential donors just to "check in," cultivating your relationships now, so you can harvest later.

Evolve With The Times: Update Your Call Script

4



You may feel awkward making a financial ask given news about unemployment, economic volatility, and more. But like we noted — the election is still coming.

Updating Your Call Script

For the foreseeable future, we recommend starting any call by asking your potential donor about the virus' impact on them directly: How are they holding up? Are they and their family staying safe? Connect with the potential donor over the weird, uncertain nature of the times we're in.



If folks are facing serious economic stresses (like job loss), they'll likely say so right away. If they do, you can bypass the ask, chat a few minutes and move on. But if they're financially OK, it's critical to push forward.

As you transition into preparing for your ask, a few talking points can help:

Continuing the campaign is continuing the work of democracy and maintaining an important norm

Election Day is still coming, whether we like it or not

With knocking on doors not really an option, it means mail, digital and phones are more important than ever

I still need to pay my staff — they're helping make all of this voter contact happen so we win on Election Day

If people say they can't help, that's okay. Just thank them for their support anyway, and just move on to the next call.

Remember: say "Thank you," and always keep up your thank you note programs.

Personal, (In)Direct
**Voter
Contact**
Still Matters

5



In a way, voter contact hasn't changed much — you still want to have a conversation with voters. Now it's just by phone, instead of at the door.



Convert Door Lists To Phones. Location doesn't matter anymore; you can start and stop anywhere. Your campaign team should be able to generate phone lists for you, and a list of 50 should take you a little over 2 hours to call. Don't get caught up talking for too long!



If you're an incumbent, consider having your campaign volunteers begin their calls by checking in on constituents on your behalf. If there are issues in the household, you can pass their info along to the official side for immediate follow-up. Then, you can move into your ID questions with a gentle transition.



Set Up Virtual Phone Banks. VoteBuilder has built-in capabilities for running virtual phone banks. It's still good to build your phone banks with a team focus. For example, some campaigns have success with things like Women Wednesdays — and you can build in a video-conference kickoff before launching. You can learn more about the virtual phone bank feature here: <https://callhub.io/phonebank-votebuilder-smart-easy-way/>



Text Messages, Including Image Texts And Peer-To-Peer. Texting has grown in the past few years because of its strong open rates, sometimes as high as 50%. And now there are new breakthroughs, like texting images and using peer-to-peer programs for relational organizing. But remember, as this tool gets used more, its effectiveness will become diluted.



Follow Up Postcards. Brief, handwritten postcards are a great way to get an additional, personalized “touch” with a voter, because you can reference the discussion and thank them for the conversation.

Continue To Show A Broad-Scale Presence

6



Rarely can a candidate meet every voter one-on-one, so look for opportunities to do larger-capacity engagements. It's what many voters, particularly low-information and low-awareness voters, think a campaign looks like. Don't be afraid to engage voters — they're looking for contact.

Schedule Webinars And Virtual House Parties

Video conference platforms like ZOOM/ Skype/ Google Hangouts/ GoToMeeting also allow you to invite multiple people into a scheduled video conference, so you can connect and take questions.



Have A Virtual “Bouncer.” Make sure you designate a staffer or volunteer to be vigilant on the platform. They can keep people muted to avoid audio quality issues, coordinate questions, and, most importantly, eject uninvited participants who are “Zoombombing” — disruptively crashing the meeting for their own non-constructive means.



Be Careful How You Spread The Word. Advertising your event on your social media can help build a crowd. But to help avoid the “Zoombombing” referenced above, a good idea if you're going to promote this type of gathering is to ask participants to RSVP for a password. That way, you can weed out bad actors ahead of time.

Consider Tele-Town-Halls For Immediate Engagement

Telephone town halls are another tool that allows you to contact a large number of voters at once to engage them in conversations about the community and upcoming elections.

Look For A Partner With A Built-In Audience

Building your own audience for an online event is always challenging. So look to partner with someone who has already done some of the work. To help broaden your event's appeal and audience, consider featuring a key endorser, a regional leader, a leader of a key constituency, or a respected voice on a specific topic.

Social Media

Can Be A Great Tool,
But Only If You
Use It Right

7



While “likes” feel great, they aren’t real engagement. You’re rarely changing minds or reaching new voters with your posts. So while it can help inform your later digital investments, owned social media isn’t the end-all-be-all of digital engagement.

Content Matters

Good content, like a new resource page or an upcoming event - works wonders, especially when coupled with images or a video of less than 30 seconds (don’t forget to include captions). Remember to tag everyone and everything you can. And don’t be afraid to get outside the box. Maybe take an isolated walk with a selfie stick in front of a school and talk about kids or post in groups and/or organizations to which you belong.

Don’t Feed The Trolls... Except When You Should

To consolidate progressive votes, taking on trolls provides endless opportunities. Consider promoting petitions on polarizing issues like choice, immigration or another issue, particularly if you can tie it to COVID-19 responses. When right-wing trolls respond, engage them with calm, progressive arguments. When one inevitably lashes out, highlight their attack in your fundraising efforts. If you’re not trying to antagonize trolls for your own good, just don’t engage them at all. Use the “hide comment” feature instead on Facebook, and consider a temporary “Mute” on Twitter or other platforms.

Beware Of The “Boost”

Boosts are like sugar highs, producing quick, cheap validation (and maybe a few likes) but fleeting long-term gains. Plus, boosts can add up fast, and you can quickly dig yourself a budget hole with a bunch of \$10-here-and-there boosts.

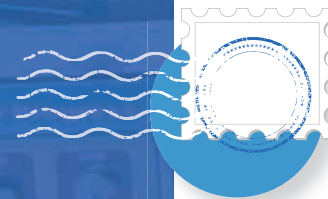
Be Methodical And Patient

Once you start communicating on a certain platform, don’t stop or you’ll lose your momentum. The vast majority of social media activity is on Facebook, so start by focusing your energy there, posting at least once a day, before expanding to Twitter or Instagram. And be patient: It takes a while for people to see it, longer for them to engage with it, and even longer for them to interact with it.

Direct Mail:

Expanded Utility For A Proven Tool

8



More than ever, people are at home and looking at their mail. As the federal government's proprietary tool to communicate with taxpayers, the United States Postal Service isn't going anywhere. USPS still delivers every day, and that means direct mail is an even more useful tool for campaigns.

Direct mail has four huge advantages over digital, phones, or any other medium:



100% Penetration Rate

Even when voters say they just "throw junk mail out," to figure out if it's junk they have to scan it, giving us an opportunity to drive a message.



No Limits On Capacity

The USPS has seen drops in volume as a result of COVID-19. It's built to scale up to extraordinary volumes with almost no impact on delivery timelines.



Consistent, Predictable Costs

Unlike digital, where costs can fluctuate based on bids and inventory, printing and postage costs are easy to project and budget.



Targeting Precision

With very few exceptions, every voter must provide a mailing address on their registration form. Phone numbers, email addresses and more tend to be optional fields.

Mail Programs Still Connect

Even in normal times, mail is proven effective. Research by the USPS shows that physical communications (like mail) are more effective than digital ads: readers spend more time with them, recall them better, and, research suggests, connect more strongly with the candidate after receiving them.¹ In fact, nearly nine out of 10 voters check their mail at least five times per week² — including millennials,³ who actually read and retain mailed information at higher rates than Boomers or Gen Xers.⁴



Check the Facts: 1) www.USPSdelivers.com/why-direct-mail-is-more-memorable/; 2) www.USPSdelivers.com/why-direct-mail-is-more-memorable/; 3) USPS white paper, "A Look At How Millennials Respond to Direct Mail," 2019; 4) USPS white paper, "A Look At How Millennials Respond to Direct Mail," 2019

Remember To Listen:

The Best Version
Of YOU Makes It
All About THEM

9



Whether people call it “authenticity” or “being your own special self,” make sure the content you put out there is really “you.” When you don’t believe in what you’re saying or how you’re saying it, voters can tell, and it will erode their trust in you.

Talk About Values and Issues In Ways That Matter To Voters — And To You

Very few regular people contemplate public policy or how they interact with government (until very recently, at least). When you’re talking issues, remember to localize it. Don’t talk about “the public education system” — talk about your local school. Don’t talk about “infrastructure” — talk about the one intersection in your community that’s especially dangerous or poorly maintained.

Use Your Campaign To Meet People, Not The Other Way Around

While a campaign is in many ways about you, it’s really about the voters. What do they care about? How do they think about issues? If you show them you listen and you care, you’re making your election about them and their lives. Time and again, voters vote for the candidate in whom, in some capacity, they see themselves. If you’re an extrovert/people-person, this voter-oriented engagement will come easily. If you’re an introvert? Well, stock up on some good books to recover with when you’re done with your day.

Chart Your Course



It's a lot of change, all at once.

But we're here to navigate it with you —
and to help light the way.

Ready to get started? So are we.

Drop us a line at Info@Superior.Blue,
and let's talk about what's on your mind?



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