

Lessons Learned in the Campaign Trenches

A 10-Part Series Leading Up to Election Day

Lesson #10:

Put it on autopilot at the end? **No way!**

As the campaign season enters the final stretch, it may be tempting to switch it over to autopilot. With direct mailers and print/digital ads in the queue, and yard signs, banners and door hangers distributed, why not take it easy? Because a surprisingly large percentage of voters wait until Election Day, or the last few days before Election Day, to decide on tax-related referenda.

There's always more that can be done when it comes to campaigning, including get-out-the-vote (GOTV) initiatives, honk-and-wave efforts, strategic signage repositioning and other strategies.

GOTV efforts are often important, especially for low-turnout elections like primaries and coordinated general elections. The goal is to get low- to medium-propensity voters who are likely supporters to cast their votes. While it's not an easy task, given that voters are creatures of habit, it's critical. Why? Because most low-turnout elections are dominated by older, more fiscally conservative voters. Voter databases, coupled with phone banking, text messaging and email, are how most campaigns implement GOTV efforts.

Another late-in-the-game strategy is honk-and-wave. That's when volunteers wave signs and banners in high-trafficked areas during morning

and afternoon drive-times. These efforts remind people to vote and send the message that there is energized support for the referendum, especially if there is strong participation.

One of the most memorable honk-and-wave events was when a large group of volunteers advocating for an Eagle County School District referendum in Colorado created homemade vests out of the campaign's poly sleeve yard signs to grab the attention of commuters and the press. It was front-page news in the Vail Daily.



As Election Day closes in, the campaign needs to think about where voters will be voting and reposition yard signs accordingly. The closer the signs are to polling places, the better. Of course, the campaign will need to follow laws pertaining to electioneering boundaries. While most voters have decided on key political races well before Election

Day, many are still undecided on local referenda.

As the campaign winds down, it's time to think outside the box. That's precisely what volunteers in Sweetwater County, Wyoming did to help promote the passage of a countywide sales tax. Less than a week before Election Day, a large group of volunteers hung helium-

filled red, white and blue balloons on yard signs throughout neighborhoods that had the highest concentrations of voters. Imagine driving to work and taking in that colorful, impactful scene. You'd surely remember it's time to vote and be reassured that the community cared deeply about supporting the referendum.



This 10-part series brings together some of the most important campaign lessons that members of the Beyond Your Base team have learned throughout the past 28 years. We also provide a behind-the-scenes look at strategies employed by citizen-led campaign committees that were highly successful.

Beyond Your Base (BYB) is a public affairs and pre-referendum consulting group of Wight & Company that develops and implements comprehensive public engagement programs that incorporate voter analytics, public opinion research and strategic communications.

BYB's focus is on engaging taxpayers and other stakeholders to deliver capital improvement projects that are truly community-driven.

Paul A. Hanley
Paul A. Hanley
Managing Director
Beyond Your Base

Wight
WightCo.com

BEYOND YOUR BASE
A CONSULTING GROUP OF WIGHT & COMPANY
BeyondYourBase.com