

Building a Winning Campaign



Why are You Running?

Is it to get your concerns on the municipal agenda?

To push for specific issues in your ward or immediate community?

The top three reasons will be the basis of your campaign.

You Must Take a Hard Look At Yourself

Write down your personal experience, family, community, finances and existing commitments.

Is there something in your past that could be a problem and can you bear it if everyone knows?

Ultimately, you must be comfortable with your decision since you will have to live with the consequences.

You Must Make the Decision

Do not doubt your abilities; you are capable.

Remember that deciding to enter politics should not be about a career; it could be short lived.

Know that participating in municipal government will have a major effect on your life.

Understand the full commitment of the job.

Have a genuine interest in serving your community.

Enjoy social events, a good discussion and learning.

Like other people.

Don't run exclusively for one issue.

Be prepared to lose.

And be prepared to win!

Pre-nomination Organization

- **DO NOT SPEND A PENNY OR RAISE A PENNY UNTIL YOU HAVE REGISTERED TO RUN.**
- **Sit down with your team and plan the campaign.**
- **Make a timeline, start your database, develop a platform and budget.**
- **Get your ward or city polling map once you have registered and also the document that shows where the votes are. If there is a cost, see the first bullet.**
- **Open a bank account only for the Campaign and only put in donations and amounts for specific expenses.**

Key Roles in a Political Campaign

- Candidate
- Campaign Manager
- Fundraiser
- Communications
- Treasurer (CFO)
- Canvassing coordinator
- Sign coordinator
- Volunteer coordinator (In a Large Campaign)

Costs of Running

- Up to \$3000 for School Board.
- from \$3,000 to \$10,000 for ward councillor candidates
- from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and up for regional councillor candidates.
- Mayoral candidates can easily spend \$15,000 to \$45,000.

Over \$10,000 you have to have an audit, so try to stay below \$10,000

Signs

Many local sign companies. You will need small signs for front lawns, big signs for Regional road allowances.

You will get a copy of the sign by-law, memorize it, it gives legal sizes, places to stick signs, when go up and go down, etc.

Ask friends and family, ask volunteers, ask at good spots as you go door to door. Remember, people are insulted if you don't ask, not if you do.

Brochures

- You must have a brochure.
- They can be a postcard, three panel brochure, door knocker, two panel brochure.
- Two colors, each added colour more expensive.
- Don't use green and white, your face will be green!
- Given out when canvassing and at meetings.
- A mail out must go to most of your campaign area.
- Can skip student area and apartments in mail out.
- Canada Post (most expensive) or flyer delivery. Not recommended tucked in a newspaper or Pennysaver.
- Brochures and mail out most expensive part of campaign but essential

Advertising

- TV ads on the six o'clock news, not seen by everyone. If do it, have it at the top of the hour.
- Radio, still not sure if it actually reaches the audience of voters for the cost.
- The Record – Essential for Kitchener Candidates but very expensive.
- Best bet: Pennysaver and Community papers like the Cambridge Times and Waterloo Chronicle.
- Banner, Quarter page, Half page, Eighth of page in corners. Colour or black and white. Papers have election packages.
- Facebook and google ads? Facebook is local.

Range of Community Papers

- We are delivered to 32,500 homes in Waterloo. Some of our papers are delivered with the Record, but the homes that don't get the Record also get the Chronicle. With only 11,000 home deliveries of the Record in Waterloo, the bulk of our Chronicle deliveries are done without our distant cousin and get to more homes. In Cambridge, (Cambridge Times) our circulation is 41,000 for our Tuesday and Friday papers and 46,000 for our Thursday paper. It goes three times a week to every home in Cambridge, and on Thursday is also delivered to North Dumfries. We also have the New Hamburg Independent in our chain with about 7,000 paid circulation to New Hamburg and the surrounding towns and township. The person to contact for advertising at Waterloo is Gerry Mattice at 886-2830, ext. 229. In Cambridge it is Ted Anderson at 519-623-7395. In New Hamburg it is Advertising at 519-662-1240. Sincerely, Bob Vrbanic, Waterloo Chronicle.

Other Advertising Stuff

- **Buttons.** Get about 100 for all canvassers to wear and also supporters.
- **T-shirts – Only for Mayors.**
- **Small fridge magnets are excellent**
- **Magnetic signs on side of cars a good one. (Keep your car clean and rust free!)**
- **Optional but not recommended for campaigns our size: Water bottles, pens, writing pads, stuffed animals, etc.**

Website and Survey

- You must have one with your domain name. It can be simple or elaborate, but these days people go to websites for information.
- I put up my answers to all surveys as well. You will get surveys. Answer them all unless they make you feel very uncomfortable e.g. anti or pro abortion.
- Many local web designers and lots of templates on the web.
- Your website **MUST** be on all your literature and signs.

Parties and Office.

- You do not need an office in this Region unless you are running for Mayor.
- This means you are using your house, so find a place for storage, etc. like your basement, spare room. Some have been run from the dining room table.
- Always have an election night party thank you for supporters. At your home or at a restaurant.
- You do not need a kick-off party unless you are running for mayor.

Volunteers: How to Find Them

ASK ASK ASK ASK ASK ASK ASK ASK

- **Volunteers canvas, put in signs, phone potential voters, carry out administrative tasks, communicate with the media and complete other jobs required**
- **throughout a campaign. Candidates often rely on volunteers to canvass, It is important**
- **to follow through with anyone who offers to contribute their time to the campaign. Not accepting offers of help can turn voters off or leave them with the wrong impression**
- **ASK! People want to be asked to help or have a sign or give money.**
- **Ask people from church, clubs, sports, work, friends and family, when going door-to-door and seems interested.**
- **Gather business cards – I have a box I put them in before putting in the computer database.**

Databases and Getting Out the Vote

- I use Excel and it is an excellent database program. There are many computer databases from cheap to expensive.
- I use excel for volunteer lists, budgets, sign lists and so on.
- Not easily lost between elections if you back up your computer.
- You will need a volunteer to manage the databases.
- On the week end before the Monday vote, phone everyone on your lists and remind them to vote.
- E-mail lists are now also used but be careful of a spam reception. Make sure people can unsubscribe to your emails or newsletter.
- On the day of the election, it is useful to contact all of your identified supporters and ensure that they are able to get to the polling station.
- Additionally, campaign teams can help facilitate transportation or childcare for supporters if necessary.

Door to Door to Door to Door

- Start as soon as you get your brochure.
- Go with a volunteer, friend or relation.
- Volunteers do one side of the street, you the other or they do every other house.
- When a person is interested, the volunteer comes and gets the candidate to speak to that person.
- Volunteers do not speak about issues, that's the candidate's job.
- You can go out alone but go in the day or between 4 to 7 in the evening.
- Do not go into a person's home, it holds you up and can be dangerous.
- Ask for support or a sign if person interested.
- If first campaign, start with medium voter turnout polls and move to highest voter turnout polls at the end.
- If running again, start with polls where you have strongest support and work down.
- You should be able to hit all homes in a ward if you start now and go until the election.
- Go to seniors apartments and nursing homes near the end of the campaign. Give nursing station in the senior home a nice bouquet as you can inconvenience them and they can influence votes also.
- By law, you can canvas in apartments and nursing homes.
- Do not canvas at businesses except areas such as local or downtown owner run stores.
- Don't canvas at a funeral (I have seen this happen!!!!)
- Canvas at the local farmers market, outdoor festivals, though many are tourists.
- Do not canvas at such things as Rotary or Business club dinners, take off election button but make sure you wear a name tag.
- School board, if you have a volunteer like my husband, make up lists of public or separate school electors and visit them only. Or tear up a voters list for ease of use.

Final Advice

- Get to know your community, the voters and the issues personally;
- Develop a specific campaign strategy that tells you what, when and where things need to be done;
- Brand yourself with strong taglines, signs and brochures;
- Practice your public speaking skills: Speak simply and factually, do not move your head and arms to convey your point;
- Use the personal touch; for example, handwrite “**Sorry, I missed you**” notes on campaign literature and leave when no one is home;
- Ensure clear, succinct and consistent messaging is on all of your campaign literature;
- Seek professional help for graphics, signage and oral communication;
- Connect with and drum up support from “typically male” bases: hockey teams, coaching, sports, business groups;

Final Advice

- Go door-to-door to talk to voters ;
- • Form a core group of friends/supporters/cheerleaders who are not on your campaign
- team and who can keep your morale and energy high during the campaign;
- • Build a network of supporters that cross many boundaries, not just in your own field, but
- throughout the whole community;
- • Develop two or three “specialties”, but still be able to reach out into the community; and
- • Do not take what the media or your opposition says about you personally.