



**MESSAGE:  
STRATEGY, DEVELOPMENT,  
DELIVERY**



# What is a campaign?

A campaign is:

Using limited resources...

...to deliver a specific number


...of favorable voters to the polls

...on a date certain - Election Day.



# Basic Steps


1. Craft a message for your electorate
2. Write a plan how that message will be delivered
3. Execute the plan



Your primary tool is... “the message.”



# Elements of Communications Plan

- Theme
  - Message
  - Target groups
  - Tactics
  - Timeline
- 



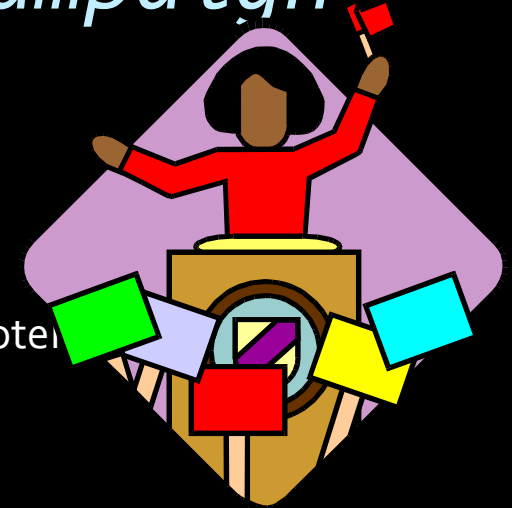
The Message:

The primary tool of winning  
elections

# 6 Truths About Your Campaign Message

Keep your message:

- ❑ **Relevant** – based on issue important to your targeted voter
- ❑ **Credible** – doesn't over-promise.
- ❑ **Stirs emotion or empathy** – makes voter feel important, that you care about them, not just yourself.
- ❑ **Short** – will they be able to remember it at the polls?
- ❑ **Creates a stakeholder** – gives a voter a specific, personal reason that they should participate in the election.
- ❑ **Repeat** – over and over again



# The two top message characteristics: relevancy and credibility

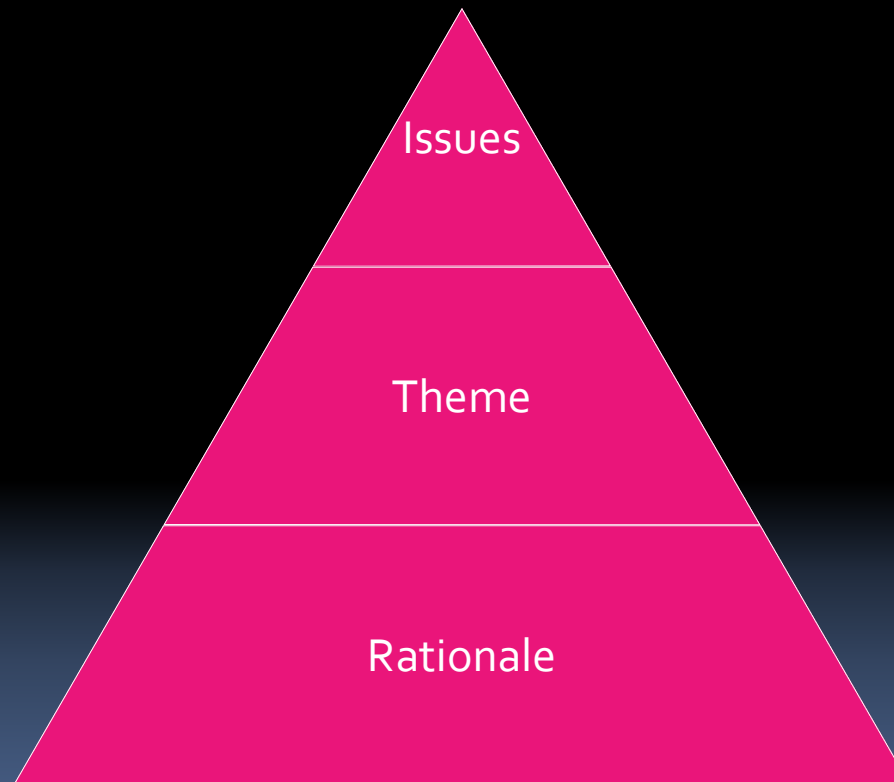
**Relevancy** – the primary way you establish relevancy is through a survey.

**Credibility** – if you have a message that is not credible, it will be ignored by the voter.

## Example:

1. “Everyone will be rich if I’m elected!”
2. “I will strive to improve the economy for you.”

# *Message elements*





# Why am I running?

Take the time to form the basis of your rationale...

- Your life; personal, professional and political
- Your goals; personal, professional and political

*"I'm running for President because our country must be prosperous. But prosperity must have a purpose. The purpose of prosperity is to make sure the American dream touches every willing heart...I'm running because my party must match a conservative mind with a compassionate heart."*

*- Texas Governor George W. Bush, 1999*

# Why should they care?

Theme is the bridge linking your rationale for candidacy to the issues on which you are running.

- Summarize briefly your campaign as it relates to your rationale
- Tell voters why your priorities and vision are relevant to them

*"Prosperity With a Purpose"*

*George W. Bush*

*"Bringing America Back; Prouder, Stronger, Better"*

*Ronald Reagan, 1984*

# Why should people choose you?

Issues are where the rhetoric or your rationale and theme meet the reality of the specific policies that you want to change.

- You only get three issues!
- Reinforce your message by using the same language to outline your issues as you employed in your rationale and theme.




*"It is conservative to cut taxes. It is compassionate to help people save & give & build."*

*"It is conservative to reform welfare by insisting on work. It is compassionate to take the side of charities and churches that confront the suffering which remains."*

*- Bush Cheney 2000*

# How do you develop a message?

1. Start with the reason you are running for office
2. If possible use a poll or survey to fine tune that message.
3. Draft a primary message. Stick to the message checklist.
4. Draft 3-5 secondary messages that support your primary message.
5. If possible, test these in a focus group and fine-tune your language.



# What does a message “look like?”

Primary message is one concise phrase or sentence.

All messages imply change or status quo.

Examples:

You deserve better health care - now.

Promises made, promises kept.

# How many messages should I have?

- One primary message
- 3-5 secondary messages that are linked to the primary message.
- It is also possible to have policies spelled out in detail for individual voters who seek such information.

# Message levels – the role of “sub-messages”

“You deserve better health care now.”

- Idea # 1 – Better equipment
- Idea # 2 – Better treatment
- Idea # 3 – Less corruption

Sub-messages must support your original message, giving it credibility.  
Typically, primary messages are emotional, sub-messages are more factual.

# The Strategic Positioning Grid

## Mary Jones/Mary Jones

Not a politician  
Hometown girl  
Against higher taxes  
Wants spending cuts  
For school choice  
Moderate conservative

## Mary Jones/Sally Shimoney

Typical incumbent  
Not like us (never held a job)  
Tool of labor unions  
Democratic party hack  
Radical pro-abortion  
Tax and spend

## Shimoney/Shimoney

Compassionate Democrat  
Experienced/has seniority  
Close to the people  
Smart/intelligent

## Shimoney/Jones

Wealthy – family money  
Republican fat cat  
Against public schools  
Tax evader



# Create a Contrast

Identifying differences between you and your opponent is critical for winning

- Examine your strengths and weaknesses as well as your opponent's in the strategic message grid; consider the following:
  - Issues of public policy (cutting taxes vs. raising them)
  - Personal histories (long-term vs. recent resident)
  - Professional histories (police officer vs. trial lawyer)
  - Political histories (County Chairman for George W. Bush campaign vs. supporter of Ralph Nader).

# The role of polling and focus groups

**Polling** is used to identify which issues should be the subject of your message and to which voters you should allocate resources.

**Focus groups** identify the emotions and feelings behind those issues. This helps you know how to craft a message that will persuade and motivate voters.

# How many people do you target and how do you target each message?

Factors to consider when targeting:


- ✓ The size of your entire electorate versus the extent of your resources.
- ✓ How many voters to win or achieve your vote goal.
- ✓ Which “delivery techniques” you are using.
- ✓ Target based upon message appeal to specific audience.

# *Message Delivery...*

The 4 main types of voter outreach:

1. News media coverage
2. New Technologies
3. Paid media placement
4. Direct voter contact





How many ways are there to  
deliver a message?

“Paid”

“Earned”

# Paid delivery modes

- TV
- Radio
- Mail/brochures
- Signs
- Internet
- Other?

# “Earned” delivery modes

1. Media
2. Volunteer

# “Earned” delivery modes

## 1. Media

- News conference
- Interview
- Opinion piece
- “Retail” photo opp
- Other...



# “Earned” delivery modes

## 2. Volunteer

- Phone
- Mail
- Person-to-person

# Who delivers the message?

- Paid messages: candidate and “surrogates”
- Earned media messages via media: candidate and “surrogates”
- Earned direct voter contact: volunteers

# Candidate and surrogate delivery principles

- A “surrogate” is anyone who can speak well on behalf of the candidate.
- Multiply your voices - Use surrogates to help deliver messages.
- VIPs and spokespersons– can do news conferences, etc.
- Volunteers – can do person-to-person contact

# Remember...

- Develop a clear and concise message that connects with voters' concerns.
- Repeat it constantly!
- Stay on message even when a reporter or an opponent's attack attempts to distract you.
- Deal with damaging news quickly!