Tactics That Work

Research-Based Tactics for Effective Voter Mobilization

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Preface

Welcome!

• This tutorial will help you choose effective voter mobilization tactics.
  – To understand the principles behind effective GOTV campaigns, see *Evidence-Based Practices for Voter Mobilization*.
  – For talking effectively with voters, see *What to Say: Effective GOTV Conversations*.

• Odds are that if a tactic is not on this list, it won’t work!

• The single most important element of any voter mobilization tactic is urging the person to be a voter.

*Find tutorials at https://my.lwv.org/texas/best-practices-gotv
1. **Voter Mobilization Tactics**

- Conversations
- Pledge cards
- Text messages
- Door hangers
- Social pressure on social networking sites
- Videos
- Live phone banks

Impersonal emails, display ads, or robo-calls
Conversations

“It is the dynamic interaction of authentic person-to-person contact that is most important in determining whether or not a conversation will successfully mobilize voters.”
Conversations

Elevator speech

Have your 30-second elevator speech ready to use anywhere with anyone!

I’ve been hearing a lot about the upcoming election. I’m voting because I know my vote is my voice...How important is it for you to be a voter in this election? ....

- Early voting is going on now. What are your plans for going to the polls? ....
- Can I count on you being a voter in this election?

Bryan et al., 2011; Issenberg, 2012; Nickerson & Rogers, 2010
Conversations
Informal

• Talk about voting informally with friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors
  – Use a flexible, personalized message.

Hey – I’ve been thinking a lot about the upcoming election and getting ready to vote. How about yourself? … Do you need any help in finding out what’s on the ballot? … If we vote during Early Voting, we won’t have to worry about standing in line on Election Day. And we’ll be bothered by fewer phone calls!

Bedolla & Michelson, 2012; Green & Gerber, 2015; Yale University, n.d.
Conversations

Tabling

• Set up an eye-catching table.
• Stand in a high traffic area.

• And don’t just stand there!
  – Move around
  – Be friendly
  – Be assertive
  – Be enjoyable

Rock the Vote, n.d., p. 5
**Conversations**

**Canvassing**

- Local canvassers with something in common with the community are more effective than outsiders.
- Most effective within the 2 weeks before Election Day

*Hi, I’m ____, your neighbor down the block. And I’m out talking with our neighbors about the upcoming election. Do you have a minute? ... The neighbors have been telling me that they are definitely going to vote in this election. Do you plan on being a voter? ... Do you know where to vote? [Check/confirm polling place.] For me, I usually go before work because that works for me. Do you know what time you’ll be voting?*
Pledge cards

- Collect a pledge card from your contacts during Early Voting.
- Mail back shortly before Election Day.
- Most effective when collected during a personal conversation.

Borgida et al., 2009; Burgess et al., 2000; Libka, 2017b; Miller, 2018
Text messages

- Collect cell phone addresses during events/conversations.
- Send a reminder close to Election Day.

Brooks, 2017; Green & Gerber, 2015, p. 101; Johannesen, 2015; Malhotra et al., 2011; Vote.org, 2017
Door hangers

• Carry door hangers with you in case your target isn’t home and you don’t plan to return.

• It takes at least 7 door hangers to be as effective as one personal contact.
Social pressure on social networking sites

Use social pressure to increase voter turnout among your friends on social media through a series of chatty posts during Early Voting.

Green & Gerber, 2015, p. 99
Videos

- Eye-catching
- Peer-delivered
- 30-90 seconds
- Formatted for
  - Social media
  - Smartphones

Minooie, 2013; Pedersen, 2015
Phone banks

- Live!
- Relaxed, authentic style
- Short-interactive script
- Two-round phone banks improve impact:
  - Make follow-up calls to those who said they would vote made during the week before Election Day.
- ~ one voter produced for every 35 contacts

Arceneaux, 2007; Bedolla & Michelson, 2012, pp. 78 & 83; Green & Gerber, 2015, pp. 80-83; Nickerson, 2007
• Impersonal mass communication is ineffective in increasing voter turnout.
• **But** friend-to-friend personalized communication that encourages voting through a series of chatty posts is about as effective as face-to-face canvassing.
2. VOTER MOBILIZATION RESOURCES

• Evidence-Based Practices for Voter Mobilizations
• What to Say: Effective GOTV Conversations
• Engaging Target Populations
  – Asian and Pacific Islanders
  – Hispanics
  – Millennials
  – Gen Z
  – Youth

Find tutorials at https://my.lwv.org/texas/best-practices-gotv
3. References


