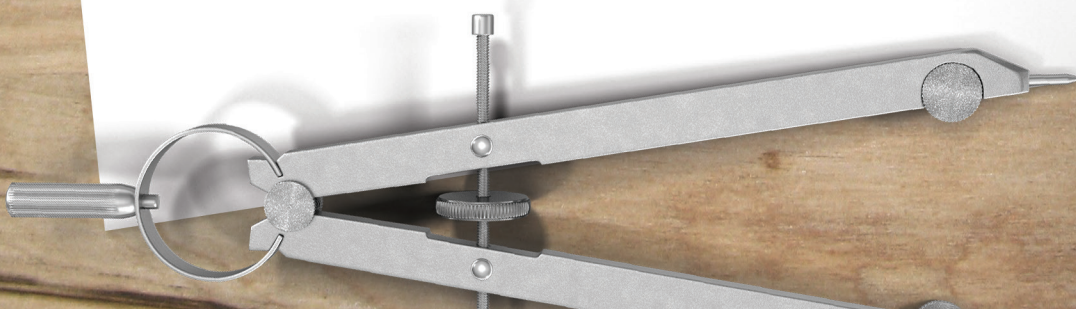


HOW TO

RUN A SUCCESSFUL
VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN



What many campaigns make the mistake of overlooking about voter registration programs is it offers you the ability to literally change the universe of people you need to get out to vote for the candidate(s) you support.

VOTER REGISTRATION IS A KEY COMPONENT TO WINNING CLOSE ELECTIONS.

Voter registration programs are often overlooked for being “too difficult,” “too expensive,” “too volunteer dependent” or “something other groups will do for us.”

What many campaigns make the mistake of overlooking about voter registration programs is it offers you the ability to literally change the universe of people you need to get out to vote for the candidate(s) you support. It’s never too early to start doing it in a cycle, it can be an effective way to build a core group of supporters and volunteers, and it can be done effectively and inexpensively if done properly.

First Step

This must be done before you start any work or put together any literature for your Voter registration program.

You need to find out the rules and regulations for your state/district and they need to be followed to the letter. When you are talking about tiny margins being the difference between winning and losing, this isn’t the time to skimp on the rules and try to cut corners. You could find yourself having wasted a lot of time, effort and valuable campaign cash if your registration efforts are rejected because you didn’t follow the rules or didn’t check with your local elections official. Stop-in and talk to your local elections official before you start, ask any questions and make sure you understand the rules and regulations, then pick up a stack of blank registration forms while you are there. You should always have registration forms with you in your car so if you are at an event and you discover the person you are talking with just moved, turned 18 or has never registered to vote, you can quickly and easily help them register.

Where to Look to Register Voters

It’s unfortunate that unregistered voters don’t wear signs around their necks declaring that they are currently not registered to vote. So finding them takes some thought, data crunching and leg work to accomplish building out your base of supporters.

New Movers

Thanks to continual improvements in data analytics and information we have access to today about vote history, we are able to determine:

Who the new people who move into the district are

This can be very basic demographic information all the way up to sophisticated data that is available as public record.

How they’ve voted in the past

This information can tell us what elections they have voted in the past. It does not and will never show you who they voted for. This will help you get a sense of how serious a voter they are. Do they vote in every election, do they only vote in the state and presidential years or do they only vote once every four years during a presidential election? This information will also help you determine how much of a partisan this person is. Do they vote the same way in every primary or have they switched sides in the past or recently?

What issues are important to them

Chances are you have taken a voter identification phone survey at one point in your voting life. Well those surveys help build a voter profile based on the answers you give. So matching a new move voter in a database to where they were previously registered will help you see the issues that they care about the most in their voter file. This will be a key piece of information to use when contacting them or not contacting them at all. If their issues match up with yours, then it’s a match made in voter registration heaven. If they don’t, then sending someone a registration form to help your opponent probably isn’t in your best interests.

How to reach new movers

Reaching these new people can be done in different ways. They can be incorporated in a door to door effort in person, they can be mailed a voter registration form that can be easily filled out and mailed to the local elections clerk or statewide elections official to process, they can be sent digital or mobile ads with the ability to link to an official website where they can fill out an online voter registration form, etc.

Door to Door

A door to door voter registration effort is a direct way to approach a new mover or unregistered voter. This is where your strategizing, data crunching and leg work all come into play. You want to maximize your time and resources because the likelihood of the houses being near each other will be very slim. With targeted door to door for voter identification and persuasion, you can fold your voter registration effort into your overall door to door program. This is a less expensive route to take, but more time and labor intensive.

Mailings

Voter registration mailings are another way to remind new movers and unregistered voters that they still have the opportunity and time to register for the coming election. The two mailings should be done differently with different messages. After taking the steps above to learn about the new movers, a mailer from the candidate with a note that says welcome to the district, etc. and a family picture and two voter registration applications is a great way to introduce yourself to them, welcome them and remind them to switch their registrations for voting. It's more of a subtle way than directly knocking on their door.

Pro Tip:

For unregistered voters in strongly Republican precincts/areas, the best approach is a mailing from the candidate introducing themselves, encouraging the unregistered voter to register to vote today, because every vote counts. If possible, reference a local election or recent high profile election that was decided by just a handful of votes and always be sure to include two voter registrations forms with the mailing.

Mobile

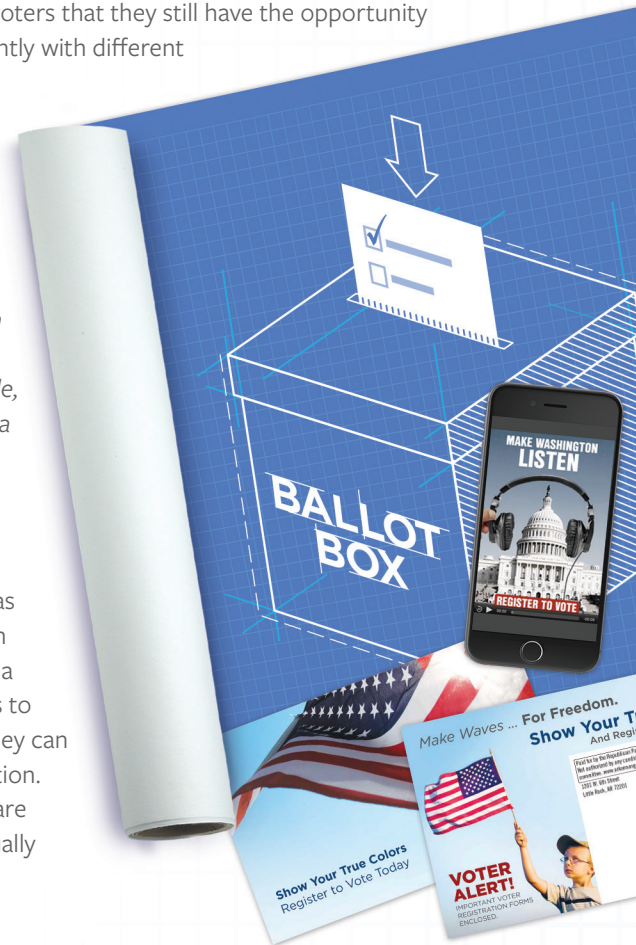
With increasingly more and more time spent in front of our mobile screens, mobile has become an excellent option for any voter registration program. Mobile has become an important part of our lives with people looking at their mobile devices over 150 times a day. Again with data analytics and targeting options, you can send targeted mobile ads to new movers and unregistered voters with a link that takes them to a website where they can request a voter registration form or register online if your state allows online registration. A cool thing with mobile also is you can see the rates and percentages of people you are reaching with your ads, who viewed the ads and if they clicked through them and actually went to the website to register. All help in the tracking process for your program.

Where Else Do I Find Unregistered Voters

Looking for a unregistered voter is like looking for a needle in a stack of needles. They don't look differently or wear signs, so you need to be smart and tactical when it comes to your time and resources. To get the most bang for your buck, it's smart to stick to places with large amounts of people that will maximize your time and efforts, fairs, festivals, Veterans events at the Legion Post, VFW or trap and skeet shoots at gun clubs are all examples that could payoff for you come Election Day.

High Concentration Areas of Similar Voters

Focusing on target rich areas has the potential to save you both time and money. With some research (data analysis) you can ascertain areas within the district that support your type of candidate and you can blanket that area looking for unregistered voters. In similar ways as we discussed with new movers, you can mail them, visit them in person, and/or advertise to them with digital or mobile ads directly to their computer and mobile devices.



Like-minded Organization Hosted Events

If your candidate is a social conservative, attending church related functions might be a good idea to canvass the participants to see if anyone is unregistered, recently moved, has someone who has recently turned 18 years old in their household, etc. Another great example for this type of effort are local gun clubs or sportsmen groups. In fact, many organizations will undertake a voter registration effort themselves if asked to do so or shown how. This method is a great way to build relationships with supporting groups and help your campaign register new like-minded voters. Offering your campaign to staff the county party fair booth for a day during the fair to help register new voters is another great 2-for-1 that can help build out your voting base.

Busy Locations

This method is high risk and can be high or low reward. These type of locations allow canvassers to interact with a lot of people, but can be difficult to find the type of voters who will support your candidate specifically. These should obviously be within the district, and you need to have enough volunteers to handle the amount of people. This is an intensive way to try to register voters, but can bear fruit if done correctly. Examples of busy locations are fairs and festivals where your team can interact with as many people as possible.

Ignoring voter registration or putting your head in the sand and hoping some other group does it for you is a recipe for disaster – and losing.

You don't want to be the one on Election Day that loses by a handful of votes – a handful that a voter registration program could have made up the difference to take you from loser to winner. It might sound dramatic, but elections really do come down to a handful of votes more often than you think – especially in local elections when turnout is at its lowest.



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