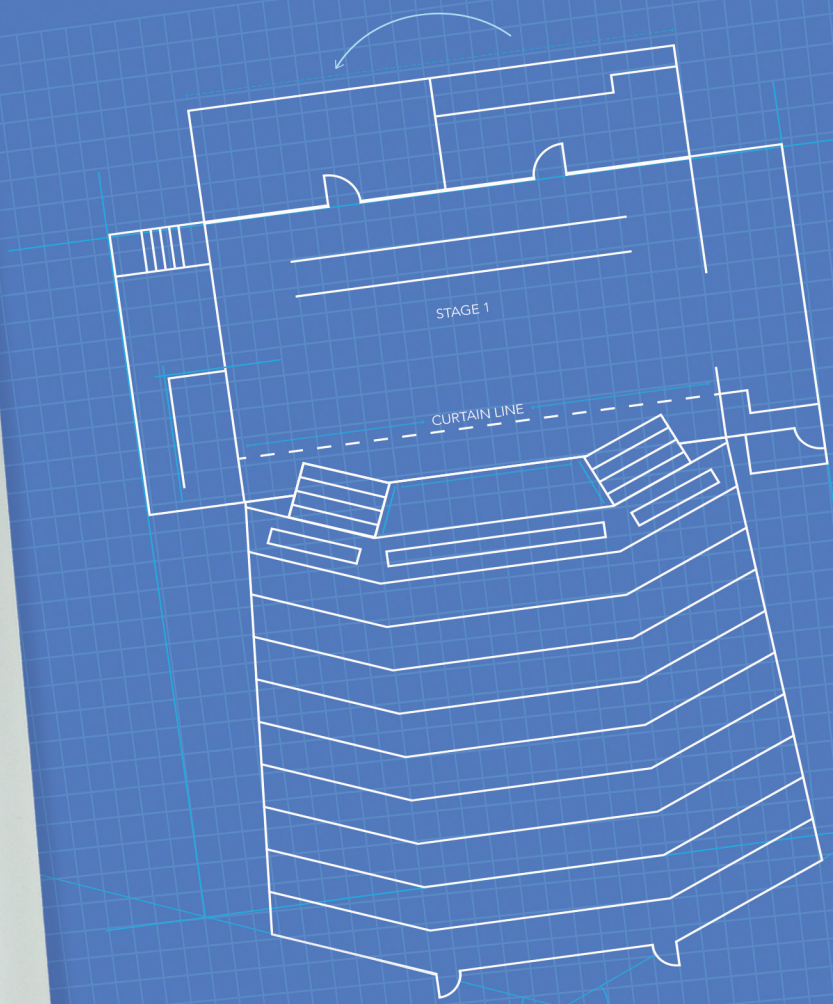


HOW TO

WIN A

POLITICAL CONVENTION



How convention delegates are elected is a very important rule to know when strategizing. Delegates may be elected at the precinct level during a primary election or they are elected at a county or district convention.

YOU CAN'T WIN IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE RULES.

The rules governing your convention and delegates to the convention will be made depending upon your county or state party's bylaws. It is extremely important that you know and understand the rules so that you can run an effective convention campaign and delegate operation. Understanding the rules and recruiting, filing and mobilizing your delegates will ensure your victory come convention time.

DELEGATES, DELEGATES, DELEGATES.

PRECINCT LEVEL

Precinct level delegates are elected on primary day to be delegates to your county or state convention. They will appear on the ballot and whomever garners the most votes wins the right to be a delegate.

ELECTED AT CONVENTION

Delegates elected at a county or district convention will be elected on the spot at the actual convention. However, the campaigning to become a delegate should have started long before the day of the convention arrives.

PRO TIP: KNOW THE DEADLINES.

Depending on the bylaws of your county or state party, filing deadlines and election dates may vary depending on the type of system they have for selecting delegates. This is why knowing your rules is vitally important. Many races are won and lost on filing day simply by one candidate filing more delegates to run for the position.

BUILDING PROFILES ON DELEGATES

You want to know everything you can about the delegates that are going to the convention. Building a profile on as many delegates as possible is not only smart, but also necessary. Understanding what makes delegates tick is similar to doing the same with the electorate.

Find delegates social media handles and see what they like to post. If they are interested in becoming a delegate, chances are they are politically active in their community and often post their opinions on federal, state and local political events on their social media accounts.

Their social media accounts will also help lead you to where they get their information. What news sources they read and trust or distrust in some cases. Also if they blog or read and repost blog posts from certain writers and thinkers.

And lastly, what groups are they involved with. Look at their friends on Facebook and those that frequently comment on their posts. See what associations they have. All this will help you put together a profile of what each delegate looks like politically.

DATA IS THE NEW BLACK

Doing all of the before mentioned things in regards to delegate profiles is useless unless you build a database and are able to analyze and track the information. Like your own way of polling, tracking delegates will help you get a picture of what the convention delegates are talking, thinking and reacting to.

MONITOR SENTIMENT

Check delegate's posts on social media. See where their heads and hearts are at in regards to the current political climate and how they feel towards your campaign/candidacy.

TRACK RELATIONSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

As I'm sure you are aware, new Facebook groups pop up daily and new people join Facebook and Twitter every day. Keeping on top of delegates online relationships can show you how their thinking has or is evolving over time by who they are associating with and what groups they are joining or leaving. For twitter you can see what tweets they are favoring and who they are retweeting. All this can help later if you find someone in their affiliations that supports you and can help sway certain identified delegates to support you at the convention.

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR VOTES

It is absolutely critical to have an honest and accurate vote tracker. You must know where you stand in the pre-convention vote count so you can continuously work on undecided voters through supportive surrogates and direct campaign contact as well. This should be updated daily and not shared publicly as some supporters may not want their support to be made public for professional or private reasons. It may also open up your supporters to intimidation and dirty tricks.

LOG CONTACT WITH DELEGATES

Your campaign will be extremely busy and your head will be filled with important information, names and issue positions. Tracking when you, your campaign or campaign surrogates last contacted a delegate is not one of those things you need to keep in your head. This can easily be tracked just by updating your database each time you make contact so you know when the last time a delegate was talked to and what if any information they had heard or if they are getting questions or being contacted by other campaigns. Getting this information out of undecided delegates is delicate and should be done with subtlety as to not upset an undecided delegate and potentially lose a vote come convention time.

PRO TIP: YES, MEANS YES. MAYBE MEANS UNDECIDED.

Accuracy is paramount in vote counting and leads to victory in tight races. You want to have the most accurate vote count possible. If a delegate says yes, they are supporting you that is one vote for you. If they say maybe, or say nice things about you, but are noncommittal, they are not a yes, they are an undecided. If you make the mistake of putting someone like this into your yes column, you are setting yourself up for failure.

RECRUITING DELEGATES

Asking someone to stand up and publicly support you is a serious request and should be taken seriously by the one who is asking it. You, the candidate should meet with delegates, have coffee with them and in some cases, call them on the phone. Humanizing yourself to them and letting them get to know you and your personality will help you secure their support and allow you to grow the bonds of trust with your delegates so they will fight for you when the time comes.

TRAINING DELEGATES

Many delegates might be political people that have experienced this type of thing before and think they know it all because this isn't their first rodeo. Other may be totally new and green to the process. It's important to train all your delegates no matter what their experience level so there is no confusion and no excuses.

WINNING DELEGATE RACES

Your county and state parties will determine how your delegates are elected. In either case, you will need to run campaigns for any contested delegates to ensure your delegate wins. These will be boots on the ground, press the flesh grassroots campaigns. Targeted mail and voter outreach should be done to ensure victory.

ORGANIZING YOUR DELEGATES

If there is one theme to this guide, it is organization is the key to victory. After delegate elections have finished, it's time to get your delegates that won organized and ready for the convention. It's also time to see what undecided delegates are left, if any, and start persuading them to join your supporters.

WHIP DELEGATES

The months of work has set the table, now it's time for the main course. You can't win if your delegates don't show up or vote when they are supposed to vote.

GETTING OUT YOUR VOTING DELEGATES

You have run a great campaign, done all the organizational things you needed to do and have put yourself in a position to win. Now you have to get your voters to the convention to cast their votes for you. If you have the money and budget to do so you should make this as easy as possible for your delegates. If you are running statewide Charter buses in convenient locations around the state to drive them to the convention. If it's a county level offer them rides to the convention to ensure they get there. Use every tool you have at your disposal to get your votes to the convention.

MANAGING THE CONVENTION

Conventions are big events that have many moving parts. You can't be everywhere all at once. If you are the candidate, you shouldn't be worrying about the small stuff anyways. You should be talking with delegates and meeting people, not worrying about details. If this is a statewide convention you should have a convention team that has been working together for months from around the state that will see to it that rules are followed, details are done correctly and everything is running smoothly or as smoothly as possible. If you are at the county level, it may be more likely that you will need to depend on a few trusted friends, family and or supporters to help ensure a smooth convention and well-earned victory.

IDENTIFYING CURRENT DELEGATES

It's time to build profiles on each delegate. These should be extensive enough that you feel you get a sense of the person from the profile you have put together. Don't be afraid to dig deep and gather as much about them as possible. Here are some suggestions to help you build profiles.

BASIC BACKGROUND

Who are they? What do they do for a living? How much is their house worth? The answers to these questions will help you figure out what type of person these delegates are, what their home life is like, what their job is and how they earn a living and what their income is and relative wealth. These will all help you start to get a picture of each delegate.

CLUBS OR ASSOCIATIONS

Finding who they choose to associate with can tell you a lot about people and their beliefs and values. Are they members of service clubs like the Lions Club, Elks, Moose or Eagles. Are they involved in their church, do they coach little league or volunteer at a shelter? Knowing these will help you to connect with delegates and talk about your shared experiences. Delegates will see that you share their interests, values and principles and they will see you as one of them.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media can and usually is a goldmine for delegate research. Facebook alone will provide you with associations, friends, where they get their news, and what their opinions are on current local events and political events. Twitter is good for opinions as well. You can tell what and who delegates support by their tweets, retweets and favorites. Their follows will help with associations as well.

Instagram can help with what they like to do in their free time, family events and anything else they want to document in their lives. LinkedIn will help with the professional side. You can see their work history, their associations and what groups they have joined. All should be tracked so you get a sense of their opinions and if they evolve and change during your campaign so you can keep ahead of any issues with your campaign or candidacy that your tracking will uncover.

BUILDING A DATABASE

As we briefly discussed in the overview, building your database is essential. Doing all the work we have previously discussed will be wasted if it's not centrally organized and easy to access at any time. The homework you do on delegates will come in handy when you set up delegate meetings to meet face to face or calling them on the phone. Use your database will be an advantage your campaign should use to build delegate support and track votes for your campaign. Your database should track, social media posts, delegate touches – how many times you have met or talked to every delegate and the date of the last touch, and delegates that have pledged their vote to you.

DECIPHERING THE DATA

All this hard work on the back end has now led you to the all-important task of determining which delegates are friendly to your campaign and cause and which are not going to support you. These decisions should be honest and without influence of your ego. Getting an accurate baseline vote count of delegates will ensure your numbers are built on a strong foundation.

Those that you have determined are with you and supporting your campaign should be separated into supporting delegates. These are the delegates that you have pledged their support to at meetings, events or over the phone.

Those that are not supporting your campaign should be separated out in your database. These people are going to need to be replaced with supportive delegates to your campaign. It is crucial that you recruit your supporters to run and replace delegates that are unsupportive to your campaign.

FILING

Your first critical deadline is filing day. All your supportive delegates should have their paperwork already checked by your team prior to filing. The reason to pre-check paperwork is to make sure everything is filled out correctly and none of your delegates will be thrown out because of clerical errors that can be avoided by a pre-check. If you are doing this at the county level a pre-filing day meeting where all your supporting delegates gather to go over their paperwork and filing procedures will be enough. If you are filing for statewide, you should hold regional meetings or regional conference calls/video conferences with your delegates, the convention team and the candidate to get all your delegates on the same page and ensure there are no questions a week before the filing deadline. Your team should then go back and check in with your delegates to make sure they are clear about the procedure and have no questions. All of your supporting delegates should call you after filing at the Boards of Elections or where ever your state elections officer directs them to file.

FILING CHALLENGERS

Filing day is just the deadline to file. People can and will file long before that day comes and that's where we talked about doing your research on people that have already filed. Part of that research that pays off on filing day is to file delegates to challenge other delegates that don't support your campaign. Through your research, meetings, phone calls and it should be obvious which people are not supporting you and will never support you. It is important to find challengers in these people's precincts, districts or areas that support your campaign and are willing to file as a delegate and run against the non-supportive people.

BREAKING DOWN FILING DAY

Once Filing day is over the first step is to break down the filings. You want to make sure all of your supportive delegates are filed and your slate is full or as full as possible. Secondly, you want to check the places you file challengers and make sure they were able to get on the ballot as well. Lastly, you want to evaluate. Where are the races. Who is going to need help, where are the strong delegate candidates and where are the weak ones. Who do you think you can pick off and how much do you think it will cost to run each contested delegate race.

DELEGATE RACES

Delegate races are grassroots, pound the pavement races. They are about voter contact like door to door, phone calls and direct mail. These races tend to get overlooked by voters so that why it is imperative to try to make your delegates cut through the other noise from other candidates campaigning and get your delegates elected on primary election day. You will need to budget for each race as many of your delegates will not be able to pay for their race out of their own pocket. Budgeting for campaign literature, automated phone calls and a few mail pieces should be the right amount of voter contact touches. Combine that with door to door and hitting all the events they can. Hopefully they will pull out a hard fought victory. Your convention team should be helping each contested delegate with their campaign and checking in on them often to see how things are going and get any information they have picked up from their area.

DELEGATE ELECTION EVALUATION

Delegate elections are all about name identification and getting out the vote. Building name ID for each of your delegates through the methods we just discussed above will help your delegates with this.

EVALUATE THE RESULTS

Who won? Which delegates won in the challenged races. All should be updated to your database.

VOTE COUNT

How many of your delegates made it through and what does your vote count look like now?

YOUR GOTV UNIVERSE FOR THE CONVENTION

Now that the delegate elections are over you have now switched to focusing on making sure your delegates turn out for you at the convention. You or your convention team should start scheduling phone calls to organize delegates to ensure there are no reasons your delegates cannot attend the convention and cast their vote for you. If this is a larger statewide effort, chartered buses at designated regional areas should be strongly considered.

LOCAL CONVENTION: GET OUT THE VOTE

Making sure your delegates turn out for you at the convention is the first step to a successful local convention. You or your convention team should start scheduling phone calls to organize delegates to ensure there are no reasons your delegates cannot attend the convention and cast their vote for you. Your team and delegates should be on the same page about everything. All questions should be answered previously to convention day and if they have a question on convention day, you and your team should get them the answer. They should focus on doing what they are there to do. Vote for you.

LOCAL CONVENTION: WHIPPING YOUR VOTES

During the convention you or someone you completely trust and is a supporter of yours should continuously talk to your other supporters on the convention floor during the voting. This will ensure that your delegates don't miss any votes and don't fall prey to another campaign's empty promises if they switch sides. Vote counting is essential and should not be taken lightly at all.

LOCAL CONVENTION: EVALUATE THE RESULTS

Who won? What worked and what didn't. Which delegates are still not supportive and are there any undecided or wavering delegates. All should be updated to your database.

LOCAL CONVENTION: VOTE COUNT

How many of your delegates made it through and what does your vote count look like now?

LOCAL CONVENTION: GOTV

Now that the local conventions are over you have to focus on making sure your delegates turn out for you at the state convention. You or your convention team should start scheduling phone calls to organize delegates to ensure there are no reasons your delegates cannot attend the convention and cast their vote for you. Chartered buses at designated regional areas should be booked and weekly regional calls to delegates should be done to ensure no conflicts might arise as the convention approaches.

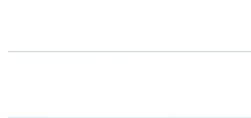
STATE CONVENTION: GOTV

Depending on your state it could be a long trip to the convention for some of your delegates or it could be a short one. Your campaign should budget for chartered buses for your delegates to ride to the convention because it eliminates a number of excuses and variables for votes getting lost or not being able to make it on time or at all. Buses regionally deployed are excellent also for team building. Each regional bus should be populated with one of your convention staffers and that region's member of the whip team. During the trip your staffer should go over the convention procedures and answer any questions the delegates might have. They should also go over voting procedures and have the member of the whip team say a few words so that everyone is comfortable with everyone. Name tags would be a great idea as well for the bus ride. Your staffer should have a list of all delegates with contact information, like cell phone, email address, hotel room etc. The whip team member should have this list as well and should give his number to all the members he is responsible for.

Upon getting to the convention all delegates should get their credentials and then meet with your convention team and candidate to go over the schedule and to give the candidate a chance to thank all the delegates for taking their time and support. Your delegates should get a swag bag with campaign swag in it. T shirt, hat, signs are all examples of things that your swag bag could or should include.

STATE CONVENTION: WHIPPING YOUR VICTORY

Your whip team should have whip cards with the names and cell phone numbers of the delegates from their assigned region. If you have money in your budget, there are apps that you can have your delegates download and use throughout the convention that will alert them to when voting has started as an extra safeguard so none of your delegates miss a vote. Whip team members should assist the delegates they are responsible for and be continuously talking to them throughout the process. Your convention team and staffers should be circulating as well to ensure everything is as smooth as possible.



After The Vote Smile and enjoy your well-organized, hard fought victory. Congratulations on becoming the nominee of your party. Now it's on to November.



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