## ****Political Campaign Tips:**** 9 tips to get your campaign moving in the right direction:

**Don’t run unless you have a chance to win.** There is a political campaign presumption that if you run enough times, you will build name recognition and get elected.

**Know how many votes you need to win.**  Often, the biggest mistake people make is not calculating a vote goal at all. The simple act of creating a vote goal can save you a lot of time campaigning for a race you might not have had a chance to win.

**Create a difference.** Politics is a competitive game. Even in political campaigns where you are running against multiple candidates you still need to create a reason for voters to choose you.

**Run for the right reasons.** Don’t run because of external pressure or you feel wronged by your opponent. Run because you have skills that can help your community achieve their development needs.

**Don’t be afraid of asking.** Don’t feel sick of reaching out to people for contributions. The fact is if you are a candidate in a political campaign that is what you will spend the majority of your time doing—asking for help.

**Budget for the campaign.**How much will the campaign cost? Work with your team to get a real idea of what a winning campaign will cost. Don’t just budget for any campaign; make sure you plan to have the money you need to win your campaign.

**Listen more than you talk.**It is not about you; it is about the voters. We get so focused on the political campaign that we think the election is about the campaign itself. Political campaigns are a means to get our message out and they are not the message itself.

**It’s about the voter.** Political Campaigns should be about delivering results for the community. The candidate is a vehicle for that, but a lot of times campaigns can get lost by focusing on personal details about a candidate that are not relevant.

**A written plan is key.** Good campaign planning is your road map for victory. A campaign plan is a living document. It is not something that lives in a cupboard.

**EXERCISE on goal setting:**

1. How many people (not just voters) live in your district?

2. How many of these people are registered voters?

3. What percentage of these voters do you expect to vote in this election?

4. How many candidates will be running for this position?

6. How many of these candidates are serious contenders?

7. If the election were held today, what percentage of the vote do you think you will win?

8. What percentage of the votes cast will be needed to win?

9. If you talk to ten average voters, how many can you persuade to vote for you?

**Exercise on issue identification:**

1. What are the issues that are of concern to the voters? (Youth, Men and Women).
2. List all that you can and from the list select the three most important issues.
3. Why do you consider them to be election issues?

**Exercise on mapping voters:**

* **Geographic:** Which parts of the district do you have popular support and which parts of the district support your opponents?
* **Demographic:** What demographic groups support your candidacy? Are there other candidates appealing to the same group?

**Exercise on Budgeting:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Method** | **Target Voters** | **How Many** | **Unit Cost** | **Amount** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Exercise on identifying constituencies:**

1. Have you obtained a copy of the electoral roll? If you ever have a copy, what will you be looking on the voter roll?
2. In your district, do you know where the voters stand?
3. How will you identify people who will vote for you? (Phones call, canvassing,
4. What is a major challenge in voter engagement and mobilization?

EXERCISE ON VOLUNTERRING:

1. Whom are you looking for?
2. Where and how will you approach them?
3. Where and when do you need them?

VOTERS CONTACT TECHNIQUES:

* Posters and Banners
* Caps
* T-Shirts
* Community Meetings
* Rallies and Festivals
* Billboards
* Leaflets and Brochures
* Phone calls to voters
* Newspapers Advertisements
* Meetings with community leaders
* Social Media
* Policy Manifesto
* Press Release
* Radio Announcements
* Door to Door Canvass
* Community Dramas
* Text Messages
* Sports

**SUMMARY NOTES:**

**TOPIC ONE: SETTING A CAMPAIGN GOAL:**

Goal: **The goal of a candidate’s campaign is to win a majority of votes on election day.**

**TOPIC TWO: IDENTIFYING ISSUES:**

An election issue is different from a problem. A problem is a structural condition like poverty or rapid urban migration. An issue, on the other hand, is a solution or partial solution to a problem such as investment in quality education, health or agriculture. In developing your message, you need to consider how important is this issue to your target voters? Too often candidates focus on issues that are not important to the voters.

**TOPIC THREE: MAPPING/TARGETING VOTERS:**

**What makes the voters you need to win different from other voters who will not support you?**

**Why do you want to target voters? To reserve resources of:**

* Time
* Money
* People
* To develop messages to reach out to voters you need to convince

**How do you target voters?**

* **Geographic**
* **Demographic (Age, gender, ethnicity, income, education level)**

**TOPIC FOUR: LISTING RESOURCES:**

* TIME
* MONEY
* HUMAN BEINGS/PEOPLE

**TOPIC FIVE: BUDGETING:**

**VOTER CONTACT METHOD**

**Voters are divided into three main groups:**

1. **Your core supporters** – these are the people who are going to vote for your party or candidate and they will not change their minds before election day
2. **Undecided Voters** – these are the people who have not yet made up their minds who they are going to vote for, or are thinking of voting for a different party than the one they supported in the last election
3. **Your Opponents Supports-** these are the people who are going to vote for your opponent and they are not going to change their minds before election day

**BUILDING THE CAMPAIGN TEAM:**

**Who should be on the campaign team?**

* Campaign Manager
* Volunteer Coordinator
* Fundraiser Coordinator
* Grassroots Coordinator

**How do you build the team?**

* Set the vision of the campaign
* Create a clear message
* Demonstrate trust and accountability (Lead by example/take responsibility)
* Establish a chain of command (Clearly defined roles and responsibilities)
* Keep your eyes on the ball

**Identifying constituencies:** Voter engagement and mobilization: What is the end result? To pull your supporters to the polls during election day.

**Developing & testing key messages:**

**MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT:** At the heart of messages development are key issues with corresponding promises.  **An example:**

**Example: Key Issue:** Increase community ownership of land

**Promise:** Passage of the Land Rights Act

**Elements of effective messages:**

**Short and simple:** Any message must be concise and delivered in less than a minute.

**Truthful and realistic:** It must be believable.

**Relevant and important to voters:** It must respond to the problems faced by voters

**Show differences:** Voters must distinguish your message from that of your opponent

**Speak to the head and heart:** Politics is emotional.

**Targeted:** Different voters have different needs so your message needs to respond to different targeted audiences.

**Tested:** Try the message out with people in your district to see if it makes sense to them.

**Repeated:** There must be no inconsistency in what you put out to the public because if there are too many inconsistencies, voters will not trust you.

KISS: KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE

**THE FACTS TELL, THE STORY SELLS**

**Recruiting volunteers:** People will volunteer to support your campaign for many reasons.

* Commitment based on loyalty to you or the party
* Your campaign issue (s) is of concern to them
* Social reasons
* An opportunity to get a job or other gains
* They want to be a part of history or to be recognized

**People will continue to volunteer for the following reasons:**

* They feel that they are making a contribution
* They feel they are appreciated and recognized
* The work is interesting and they are meeting interesting people
* The work is fun
* They feel their effort is making a difference

**Canvassing:** Is the process of getting to know your voters and getting into direct contact with them in order to build a relationship. It also helps you to identify and recruit new and potential voters.

**SCRIPT FOR CANVASSING**

1. Greeting – be polite
2. Statement of Identity –who are we?
3. Statement of Purpose – why are we here?
4. Question 1 – ask the voter a question about the election, their concerns or priorities to begin a conversation
5. Message – connect the party or candidate’s message to the voter’s concerns
6. Question 2 – ask the voter another question about the election, whether or how they plan to vote
7. Message – reinforce the party or candidate’s message
8. Anything Else? – ask the voter whether there are any other points they would like to make , identity, message and
9. Information – again, remind the voter of your party or candidate, what you are trying to achieve in the election, and how they can reach you for more information or to get involved

**Networking:**

Many of the tasks an individual campaign needs to accomplish can be done less expensively if they can be coordinated with other similar campaigns or can be coordinated with other similar campaigns. Your campaign may be expected to help the party achieve its objectives as well. Your campaign should clearly understand what the party expects from you and what you can expect from the party.

Often candidates think that their party should for some reason fund their campaign and their voter contact relies on the visit of the party leader to their district. In most cases there is not enough money at the national level to fund everyone's campaign and the national leader cannot go everywhere. Besides, a campaign that cannot raise its own funds and relies on the party leader to contact its voters is probably not organized enough or worth the effort.

**Possibilities for Networking:**

**Message and information sharing:** If the issues you are working on are the same as your party then the party may provide some general materials.

**Designing of materials:** Often national parties will be able to help you design your campaign materials so that they match the national message. The party may contract with printers and other vendors to produce all or much of the materials, thus gaining a saving in price for all its candidates.

**National Materials:** The national party can provide posters and leaflets and you may ask if it is possible for them to keep a blank space so your campaign can print or add stickers with your candidate's name. Sometimes national leaflets are printed on one side and your campaign can print on the back (to save money for your campaign.)

**Press:** Your campaign should check with the party office to know about national press events that your campaign can use to get local attention.

**VISITS:** The visit of the national party leader can often draw local attention to your campaign; however this should not be your only strategy. If the national leader does come, you will have a lot of work to do preparing for the visit. You will have to make sure you have a good turnout of supporters and press so that the trip is not a wasted effort or worse, an embarrassment. Make sure that the visit does not cost the campaign too much in time, money and people. **The visit can be useless if the turnout is poor. If the leader turns out, make sure he or she introduces you during the event.**

**Reaching out to CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS:** Civic organizations can play an important role in your election campaign. While the development of civic organizations may be relatively low, there has been active, positive political participation by civic organizations in various election campaigns in Liberia. You should make a list of the civic groups in your district both formal and informal that could be supportive.

A civic organization can provide information in their area of expertise and help research the impact of legislation on the community. In addition, they can draft position papers, provide "talking points" to a candidate, or even help prepare speeches on issues they are concerned about. Civic organizations can also help with opposition research by identifying when your opponents have made statements or voted against their interests.

**Endorsement:** If an organization announces its support to your candidacy that can be a boost to your campaign.

**Communications and Media:**

Effective communication is an essential tool for running an effective campaign and it has to be a part of the campaign strategy. To also maximize results, it is important to develop a communication strategy. What you communicate is also depended heavily on the issues and the messages. Communicating revolves around the following:

When do you want to get the message across?

Where do you want to get the message across?

Whom do you want to get the message across to?

**The media likes:** Conflicts, scandals, disagreements, and personality rather than issues.

**Channels for communicating;**

* Radio
* TV
* Newspapers
* Outreach

**FUNDRAISING STRATEGY:**

**Legal Requirement**

**Community-based fundraising**

**PUBLIC SPEAKING:**

A speech made by an individual in front of an audience with less opportunity for interaction. Political campaign is about getting your message across. A good speech is one of the ways to do this.

TIPS:

* MESSAGE, MESSAGE, MESSAGE: Determine which message you want to communicate. What message do you want to convey to your audience? Every good speech must convey a clear message!
* Prepare: A thorough preparation is important for your speech. Do you have the necessary information?
* Structure: Make sure you structure your speech in a clear manner.
* Use vivid and evocative language: Facts tell and story sells. Be as narrative as possible.
* Speak plainly. Avoid long sentences.
* Demonstrate a sense of humor:
* Use quotes or find your own:
* Reference others who have made positive contributions to the development of the community.

DELIVERING THE SPEECH:

* Come early: Shake people hands
* Consult the paper but do not read from paper.
* Make eye contact with the audience, smile and stand straight.
* Use gestures to emphasize a point.
* Use some proverbs.
* If you lose track, give a joke to distract the audience.

**EXERCISE:**

Each participant will have the opportunity to give a brief presentation of 1-3 minutes speech. Participants are divided into groups of 4-5. In your group, decide the target audience and the message you want to deliver to that target. Make sure the presentation has a CENTRAL MESSAGE, that it meets the KISS requirement and it sells.

**DEBATING:**

In a debate, different or contrary views are expressed involving more than one person. Political campaign about competing ideas and most times the ideas are expressed through debate. It is a way of winning people over to your ideas and point of views. A debate can take place on TV, radio or in a town hall. How do you win people over to your views? MESSAGE!!! In the debate you want to convey that message and your priorities for the district. Say what you want to say in the shortest possible of time.

**TIPS:**

* You never get a second chance to make a first impression
* If a question is pose to you, always give a clear answer first, Yes, I am in favor of --------- and No, I am against -------- ) before you provide an explanation.
* Facts tell but stories sell. Push your argument from experience.
* Make comparisons: It is a big shame to be talking about increasing teachers’ salaries when re-elected when you earn $XXX per month plus other benefits like YYYY.
* Be mindful of non-verbal languages
* Look at people not the moderator and if you go for an attack, look in the face of the opponent
* Use humor
* Never be arrogant
* No personal attacks
* Remain respectful even if you disagree with the opponents’ views
* Attack the opponent’s views not their character: “You make a number of good points but there is one thing I fundamentally disagree with”
* Put questions to your opponents on facts and figures that they may not have an answer for: “Do you know how many women die in child birth in this district?
* Take your opponent off guard by confronting them with a statement they made in the past.

**Exercise:**

Participants are grouped into the district that they want to represent. The debate will focus on youth unemployment in their district (Montserrado) and for the other counties the debate will focus on improving the health care delivery system. Each panelist will be given at least 3 minutes to make her case on the subject matter. Any of the panelists can ask questions or counter the argument made by any of the other presenters. The present being countered can offer a response to the counter. The facilitator will moderate the debate and the other participants will observe and give feedback. Each debate will last for 20 minutes and each team will have 20 minutes to prepare.

GOOD LUCK!!!!!

**Tips for dealing with adversaries/opponents:**

**1. Hold your nose and lie about how great they are.** Insincerity is the force that binds a society together. What if everyone were to say honestly whether those pants make you look fat? No marriage could last, no team could function, no center can hold.

Politeness is a polished insincerity (and that's why successful liars are often called politicians).

If you praise someone who suspects you hate them, they might see it as a sign of surprisingly good taste on your part—and that might defuse and even begin to transform what's been a mutually antagonistic relationship.

**2. Lie with more than mere words.**"Our body language communicates more to others than we imagine," workplace psychologist Bill Dyment tells me. "Instinctively, we can often discern between a real smile and a contrived one. When we feign a smile, the many small muscles around the eyes don't smile along with our mouth—that’s a dead giveaway.”

**3. Trust that there’s some truth within the seemingly hollow praise that you offer.** You can always find something to salute in a person who irritates you. Admit it: Your rivals and nemeses couldn't possibly have become richer and more powerful than you if they didn't have some genuine market value stuffed away in there somewhere. So swallow your pride and be gracious for strategic reasons.

**4. Look to see how others are managing to deal with your adversary.** It usually turns out that some people get along famously with the person whom you find to be a menace.

**5. See your adversary as a blessing.** “Love your enemies, for they tell you your faults," Ben Franklin said. You tend not to know where your blind spots are, because your friends are (ironically) too polite to warn you. Thus, your rivals, critics and adversaries might be the only persons able to give you invaluable feedback about where you need to improve.

**6. Humanize your adversary.**Philo had some helpful words. “Be kind,” he said, “for everyone you meet is having a hard battle.” Consider that the most annoying people may have been the victims of the worst mistreatment, the most emotional deprivation.

**MANAGING CRISIS:**

**1. Anticipate and Have a Plan**

Anticipate every possible crisis and ask “What if ...?” for every possible incident and scenario that can be envisaged. Organize a crisis management and communications team, and then create a detailed plan to communicate and be in a position to control the message to the media and the public.

**2. Respond Immediately**

When a crisis strikes, respond immediately. Have the spokesperson prepared and ready to go. The first few hours are most important in establishing credibility and building public trust and believability. Be responsive to the media and inform the people who need to be kept informed, especially the voters.

**Eliminate "No comment" from your vocabulary. One way or the other, the media will get information, but it may be inaccurate and the sources unreliable. In a crisis, perception is stronger than reality and emotion stronger than fact. When those responsible do not communicate, the crisis still gets played out in the media.**

**3. Do Not Over-talk**

Do not overtalk or release information without having all of the facts. Never speculate on what may or may not be happening. Be sure to analyze each situation for its newsworthiness. You don't have to answer every question. Just because a question is asked doesn't mean you have to answer, but you should have some kind of response. Hypothetical questions and speculative questions should be politely turned away. But never withhold information that should be disclosed.

**4. Always Tell the Truth**

Never lie or deceive the media or public with misinformation. It is all right to say “I don't know” if you don't have the facts. The media and public will respect you for that, and know that you are telling the truth.

**5. Accept Responsibility**

If there is a problem, admit it. Be accountable and accept responsibility: “bad things never have owners. Everybody disclaims responsibility when things go wrong.

**6. Select the Right Spokesperson**

Determine in advance who will speak for the company in the event of a crisis. More than likely there will be several individuals who are the only ones authorized to speak for the organization during a crisis. Have one individual designated as the primary   spokesperson and another as the backup.

**7. Stop Rumors and Correct Misinformation**

A no-response is almost the same as implied consent. When something incorrect is printed or said, immediate action should be taken to point out the error and ask for a correction. Otherwise, the media involved will only assume that what was written or said is correct.

**8. Show Compassion and Remorse**

It is not against the law to show compassion, sympathy, passion and remorse for victims and their families and friends.

**9. Build Your Reputation Before A Crisis**

Never take any chance of losing your credibility with the media and public. That is why it is so very important to establish your reputation before a crisis.

**10. Listen**

During a crisis, it is important to listen to what the public and adversaries are saying and to be sure that they, and the media, understand what you are saying. Listening is essential to communicating, negotiating, resolving conflicts and even avoiding crises. You have to be an active listener to anticipate the actions of others. However, listening is hard work. For some people, it is very difficult, but it can be learned. Listening is truly an admirable and enviable art for those who listen well.

From our earliest development years, we all are taught how to speak, read and write. No one is there to teach us how to listen. Stephen R. Covey ranks listening as one of his “7 Habits of Highly Effective People.” “Seek first to understand, then to be understood,” he says. “Most people don't listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. They're either speaking or preparing to speak.”