

BUILDING YOUR CAMPAIGN TEAM - CANDIDATE TIP SHEET

After much soul-searching, questioning and exploration, you've decided to take your political leadership to the next level by running for elected office. **Congratulations!** Now what?

Many candidates struggle with defining the role of a candidate in their first campaign. "Do I have to do everything myself?" Or, conversely, "Do I have to do everything everyone else tells me to?" Good news: the answer to both questions is, "No!"

As the candidate, your job is to meet voters, raise money and get elected. You can't - and shouldn't - do it alone. There is no one perfect way to set up your campaign team, no rules about how many people to bring on board or how to structure their responsibilities, but here are some key best-practices to keep you sane and set you up for success.

The Candidate Should NOT: Manage her entire campaign herself.

The Candidate SHOULD: Delegate responsibility for the day-to-day management of the campaign to someone else. Find someone:

- You trust whole-heartedly.
- Who is well-organized, detail-oriented and loves multi-tasking.
- You can confide in and who will be discreet

The Candidate Should NOT: Spend her time chasing down every dollar pledged, planning every fundraiser and tracking/reporting every contribution.

The Candidate SHOULD: Directly ask for contributions to her campaign. The campaign manager or a finance director can handle the details once the ask has been made by the candidate. The candidate's role in fundraising is:

- To get comfortable asking for donations,
- Make an ask of every person in her networks and
- Ask for the highest possible contribution.

The Candidate Should NOT: Draft every press release, tinker on every website detail or hound every media outlet.

The Candidate SHOULD: Be the public face of the campaign. The campaign manager or a communications director should take on the finer details of getting your campaign's message out to the voting public. The candidate needs to spend her time:

- Telling her story as often as possible,
- Defining her campaign's key messages,
- Preparing for questions, and
- Signing off on all quotes and final copy.

The Candidate Should NOT: Personally attend every event or knock on every door in the neighborhood.

The Candidate SHOULD: Personally meet and talk to as many voters as possible. The campaign manager or a field director can help decide which events are good uses of your time and which houses have voters in them. A volunteer coordinator can recruit people to help the candidate knock the right doors and make phone calls to people who vote.

Your Campaign Manager

Every campaign manager and candidate relationship is different, and will be influenced by the specific skills, strengths and personalities you each have, AND the overall kind of campaign you want to run.

You will be spending a lot of time with this person in stressful situations and need to trust them. You should also be looking for someone with critical skills in areas you're not as strong in, and someone who shares your values and vision.

A good place to start is to [MAP YOUR SKILLS](#) and see what skills and qualities you should be looking for in a campaign manager, that can compliment or fill in some of the holes. Have them fill it out too!

The Campaign Manager is tasked with leading many endeavors within a political campaign. These can include:

- Devising a campaign strategy
- Creating a campaign budget
- Keeping expenditures within the set budget
- Building and maintaining a database to track voters, donors, and volunteers
- Hiring and training staff and volunteers
- Overseeing fundraising
- Researching and maintaining awareness of campaign finance laws
- Being the primary point of contact for the candidate
- Liaising with various team members, consultants, external agencies and organizations

A campaign manager may not personally execute all of these tasks, but he or she will have an intimate awareness of all of them, making sure that a qualified individual is effectively running each department.

Your Field Director or Volunteer Coordinator

If you are planning to have a robust direct voter contact program, hiring a Field Director or Volunteer Coordinator will ensure your campaign is executing your canvassing or phone banking strategy and achieving your goals. The position of Field Director encompasses all things related to talking to voters, from setting the strategy to leading the GOTV efforts. Field Directors often spend the majority of their time talking to others, so strong people skills, good verbal communication, and the ability to multitask are qualities to look for in a potential Field Director.

More specifically, a Field Director's role includes:

- Setting the direct voter contact strategy
- Creating lists and cutting turf for canvassing and phone banking
- Writing the scripts for volunteers to talk to voters
- Recruiting volunteers
- Coordinating and launching canvassing and phone banking shifts
- Training volunteers on
 - How to call voters
 - How to canvass voters
 - How to use campaign platforms for voter contact

If your campaign manager has the experience and ability to design and implement the voter contact strategy, then bringing on a Volunteer Coordinator will provide your team with the support needed. While having a Campaign Manager be able to execute field work is helpful, having a Volunteer Coordinator will ensure that your campaign is engaging with volunteers, but not overwhelming your campaign manager.

Volunteer Coordinators could be people who are in your kitchen cabinet, passionate volunteers you are close with, ect.

Your Volunteer Coordinator would focus on:

- Recruiting volunteers
- Coordinating volunteers for canvassing and phone banking shifts
- Training Volunteers on
 - How to call voters
 - How to canvass voters
 - How use campaign platforms for voter contact

Your Fundraising Director or Call Time Manager

Fundraising is a crucial part of running for office, and fundraising directors or call time managers provide support, organization, and structure to raising money for your campaign.

Your fundraising director or call time manager is tasked with:

- Researching potential donors
- Developing and implementing fundraising strategies
- Organizing of fundraisers
- Managing fundraising call time

Your Communications Director or Social Media Manager

A Communications Director is a public face of your campaign and needs to have strong written and verbal communication skills, as well as an understanding of social and local media platforms. Since your communications director will be uplifting your messaging and values, it's crucial to find someone who you trust to speak on your behalf.

Your Communications Director or Social Media Manager is tasked with:

- Creating and implementing a communications plan to get your message out to voters
- Writing press releases or pitching stories to local media outlets
- Working with press, community influencers, and organizations to amplify your message
- Coordinating and regularly posting on social media
- Supporting the campaign manager and you on messaging throughout the campaign

For more local or smaller campaigns, bringing a social media manager to the team may be a better fit. Social media managers are often part time, and have experience with different platforms and are comfortable designing content. Responsibilities of a social media manager often include:

- Regularly post campaign updates, uplifting messaging and activities
- Designing graphics for highlights, content, or to uplift endorsements
- Creating a regular communications calendar or schedule

Campaign Culture and the Leadership Ladder

Traditional political campaign culture often burns people out (especially young people without families) because of high expectations, tons of hours, and low pay (that often only privileged people can afford to take). We need to collectively work to create a new normal where the campaigns we're building are reflective of our values and provide opportunity to our communities. Here are some ideas, but reflect and brainstorm on what's uniquely needed in your campaign to ensure it is inclusive and respectful:

- Reasonable expectations
- Fair pay for staff and good rewards for volunteers

- Clearly post policies, like zero tolerance for harassment, inclusivity commitments, etc.
- Culturally appropriate food
- Child care, child friendly spaces
- Paid sick time, paid family leave

A good campaign doesn't just win on election day, it uses the campaign to build a movement and build community. One of the best ways to do this is through a leadership ladder. A leadership ladder works to develop new leaders over time who are excited about campaigns and want to take a more active role in the political process. Your campaign can give them opportunities and skills to gain more leadership.

Also, a leadership ladder ensures that everyone finds a valued place on the campaign team. Often campaigns will only ask volunteers to canvass/knock on doors (it is usually the most needed), but then lose that volunteer if they don't have other jobs to offer them. Reward volunteers, make them feel like part of the team, have a dedicated time where they can meet and learn from the candidate, ask them what else they want to do and what skills they want to build. This is a win-win.