

# **CAMPAIGN MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY**



# WHY ARE YOU RUNNING?

- **This is the first question any prospective candidate should ask themselves.**
- **You need to answer it in 30 seconds or less.**
- **And it needs to be relevant to the voters.**



# **THE LEESBURG GRID**

**How to develop a message without  
the benefit of a professional poll**



# THE LEESBURG GRID

<b>Good things about us</b>	<b>Good things about them</b>
<b>Bad things about us</b>	<b>Bad things about them</b>



# GOOD THINGS ABOUT US

- **Personal strengths:** Issues aside, what makes you an attractive candidate? Business, family, civic involvement, fundraising ability, etc.
- **Challengers:** Where does your stance on issues most line up with public opinion? Can you catch a wave?
- **Incumbents:** What popular/successful votes have you made and stances have you taken?



# **GOOD THINGS ABOUT THEM**

- **The toughest part of the grid to fill out.**
- **You and your team need to have an honest assessment of the opposition.**
- **Avoid the echo chamber. Solicit opinions from residents outside of the your closest allies and other party insiders.**



# **BAD THINGS ABOUT YOU**

- **There are very few secrets in politics. If you have a skeleton, don't kid yourself into thinking you can hide it.**
- **Likewise, don't assume something isn't an issue or a potential vulnerability. Let someone else be the judge.**
- **Failure to provide full disclosure is a recipe for disaster – for you and your running mate(s).**



# **BAD THINGS ABOUT THEM**

- **If you can afford it, hire an opposition researcher to compile and review all available public records about your opponent.**
- **Know your opponent inside and out. You don't need to use all the information, but you do need to know it. Knowledge is power.**
- **Opposition research is not negative campaigning, it's smart campaigning.**





# **DELIVERING YOUR MESSAGE**

**How to deliver a message that  
matters to voters that matter**



# INCUMBENT VS. CHALLENGER

- **Incumbents:** A message about what you've done must be complemented by a message about what you're going to do.
- **Challengers:** A message about why you should be elected must be complemented by a message about why the incumbent needs to be fired.



# MOTIVATION VS. PERSUASION

- **Base voters don't need to be persuaded to vote for you, just reminded that it's important.**
- **Spend the bulk of your time and resources messaging soft-partisans and independents.**
- **In either case, don't be afraid of using contrast/negative messaging. Just make sure it's true.**
- **People routinely vote against a candidate they don't like, as opposed to voting for a candidate they do like.**



# TARGETING IS ESSENTIAL

- **Not everyone is going to like you. You are never going to get 100% of the vote – so stop trying.**
- **Partisan affiliation, vote history, age, voter ID tags, voter scoring, modeling, where they live and who they live with ALL provide clues to how someone is likely to vote.**
- **There are an increasing number of affordable options out there to help with your targeting.**



# OK, WHAT'S NEXT?

**Email: [chris@checkmatewins.com](mailto:chris@checkmatewins.com)**

**Web: [CheckmateWins.com](http://CheckmateWins.com)**

