

Maximizing Resources

Making a big impact with limited resources

About Goal Setting -- what is a "big impact" to you? What is success for your campaign? Only winning?

Three traditional goals

- 1) get the most votes
- 2) change the debate, move a particular issue
- 3) grow the Green Party

Getting the most votes

This really requires detailed analysis of your district. Where have the votes come from before? How many votes will be cast in this election? How many candidates are in the race this year? How many votes (approx.) will it take to win? This is a "ground strategy" and requires lots of people power. Traditional ways of maximizing votes are through door-to-door canvassing and phone banking (even robo-calling), as well as targeted mail. Money, when you have it, is spent on literature (door hangers, lawn signs), and possibly robo-calling and traditional mail. In many ways, this is a strategy that focuses on individuals -- i.e. voters.

Changing the debate/Highlighting a Particular Issue - focusing on whole districts

This is the "air strategy" and often relies heavily on a savvy PR and media team. Once you've figured out how to frame the issue, how will you get the word out. You need multiple and continuous press releases, react (and be proactive) to your opponent's positions on the issue(s). Do stunts -- do things that will generate media. Money, when you have it, is spent on video news releases, generating media attention, ads on cable tv and/or billboards. In many ways, this is a strategy focused on your whole district.

Grow the Green Party

This can be a combination of both ground and air but really focuses on the long-term party-building rather than the short-term gain. This strategy simply has you target which communities within your district you are focusing on. This strategy might mean you spend time organizing meetings of Greens in neighborhoods with a strong Green presence or it might mean spending time in a neighborhood that you're trying to build a Green presence in. It also means working closely with the local Green Party and doing things that support and reinforce each other (the party and the campaign) rather than as completely separate entities. Money, when you have it, is spent on literature (that emphasizes your candidacy and the GP), training your volunteers, attending GP events, and organizing meetings in Green target areas. This is a strategy focused on a small group.

Depending on which goal you pick, you will make certain decisions at key points in your campaign. The hope is that you will be consistent in your choices (i.e. always keeping your end goal in mind) and thus maximizing your impact. Let's consider a specific example.

Candidate Joy Jenkins is running for County Commissioner of Blair County. The District contains some rural areas that are somewhat conservative and some urban areas that are more liberal. Joy is from the urban part of the district and knows that historically, the winner of this race will also be from the urban area. She calculates that turnout will be approximately 50,000 voters, and with two other candidates in the race, she can win with 18,000-20,000 votes. The

effects of local property taxes on school funding has been a big issue for Joy but it is not being talked about much by the mainstream candidates, and Joy's support of equitable school funding is generally opposed in the rural areas. Finally, the Green Party of Blair County has been steadily growing and gaining momentum, but is really only a viable presence in the university community on the west side of the city.

What should Joy's overarching campaign goal be? Why should she run for office?

During the campaign, Joy gets invited to a candidate's night in the rural part of the county. That same evening she's been invited to the local Green Party meeting. Which should she attend?

Joy needs to collect 1500 signatures to get on the ballot. How and where should she collect them?

What should most volunteers on the campaign be doing?

Issues & Challenges:

- Different people on the campaign have different ideas about what the goal is or should be and act at cross-purposes to each other.

- If the goal of the campaign is not simply to win (which is the mainstream expectation for all campaigns), it can be hard. Many candidates feel the need to publicly say they are in it to win it, but internally are really focused on an issue or building the party. This is fine, but at the same time you don't want to set up volunteers and supporters for disappointment. As much as possible, be realistic with supporters and donors about your chances and your overall goal.

- Be consistent. Campaigns will naturally pull people (especially the candidate) in 100 different directions at the same time. You will need to make decisions, particularly with limited resources, about how to spend your time and your precious little money. If you picked strategy a, then do things that get you to a -- don't go off and spend valuable time on strategy b.