

LYNNE'S "RULES" FOR EVERY ELECTION

Retain your base, expand your base.
If you don't ask, you don't get.
It doesn't have to be perfect; it just needs to be good enough.

FIVE SIMPLE STEPS TO TARGETING

1. WHO IS YOUR TARGETED AUDIENCE?

Depending on the goals of your campaign, you likely need to make deliberate, strategic decisions about where to focus your campaign efforts. *I'm assuming that even if you don't expect to get elected, that you have already calculated your vote goal total, based on expected turnout and past election returns.*

Your "base" of voters may be based on some specific data (age, gender, political affiliation, geographic location, organizational identification, past voting results) or assumed/actual sympathy in an issue area.

Your candidate will have a certain background that appeals more to one group or another. Your campaign will be focusing on issues that some people care about more than others.

2. WHERE/CAN YOU FIND THEM?

If you can't find them, you can't target them. If you want to run a targeted campaign, get the list of registered voters in your district as soon as you can!

People interested in mass transit – head to bus stops and subways. Young voters – head to college campuses or high schools. The registered voter list cross-referenced with past election results can tell you where pockets of past Green (or Progressive Democrat, or Working Families Party, etc) live and make a good starting point for your door-to-door canvassing efforts. People worried about safe food / organics – visit health food stores. More bike lanes? Visit bike shops. Rent control / affordable housing: start calling people who live in apartment buildings (do a search for the "unit" field of the address in your database). Want to talk about senior issues? Do a search by age in the voter registration list...you get the point!

3. WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?

The Green Party has a diverse platform. Tailor your message to your audience, so you can get the dialogue started. This is not "changing your message" but being mindful of who you are talking to and what *they* are interested in.

You want something from them: their time (to listen to you) and, ultimately, their vote. You have to figure out what they want as well. It's a two-way street.

4. WHAT IS YOUR VEHICLE FOR DELIVERY?

How will you deliver your message? What can you afford (financially, in volunteers, and in use of the candidate's time)?

In my opinion (and based on most studies) one-on-one communication is the most effective form of voter persuasion: door-to-door canvassing, phone calling, tabling and speaking engagements.

Direct mail allows you to address your message to a specific recipient, but can be done on a large scale. Unfortunately it is very expensive.

Paid media – TV, radio, Facebook, and print – can often be tailored to a certain demographic, but you lose the one-on-one approach.

Emails can be targeted and hopefully you have a strong and active Facebook, Twitter, etc presence but lots of people might "like" or "join" who aren't necessarily registered voters in your district...

5. HOW WILL YOU TRACK YOUR RESULTS?

Part of all your efforts during the weeks and months you campaign is to develop a list of likely voters, so you can turn those into actual votes on Election Day (or through the mail by absentee ballots or during Early Voting). Ideally, you have purchased the list of registered voters from the Board of Elections and have created a database, where you can enter information you receive from voters.

VOTER IDENTIFICATION

In the weeks and months leading up to Election Day, your campaign should be accumulating as many names as possible – and tracking your voter contact with them, and their voter likelihood. Information is one of the most important resources your campaign can develop.

LISTS

In the beginning of a campaign, you should purchase the list of all registered voters in your district (the Party may be able to get a copy for free). If possible, you should purchase this data in electronic format; back in the day that was not always possible!

The data may include: Name, Address, Party Affiliation, Date of Birth, Date Registered, Date Last Voted, Country of Birth, District Information (City Council, State Legislature, and Congress). In some states, telephone numbers are included. Gold mine!

Having volunteers look up phone numbers in the phone book (or using an online search) is one of those nice, easy volunteer tasks that you can fall back on if someone drops by for an hour or two, or if you have someone who doesn't like to talk to people. It's also possible to purchase phone numbers (and email addresses) from outside vendors for not very much money.

DATABASE

Many people use Excel, a simple spreadsheet program. Ideally, you should try to put together an actual database to track contact with voters, volunteers and donors. Access is part of MS Office, and files from Excel can be easily imported. There are many web-based programs these days; a lot of Greens are using Nation Builder (which has pros and cons).

The most important thing is that the database is set up in a way that volunteers can easily enter data – and that you can easily sort the data into phone, mail, email and walk lists.

VOTER ID vs. VOTER PERSUASION

There are generally two phases in your voter outreach: voter persuasion where you are trying to convince voters to vote for your candidate and voter identification where you often specifically ask if they'll voting for your candidate.

Many Greens are uncomfortable with coming straight out and asking, "Will you vote for...?" but you don't have to be so direct. "Can we count on your support?" is a little softer...find what works/people are comfortable saying.

From your conversation, you should be able to make a judgment call. This applies to door-to-door canvassing, phone banking and any other two-way communication.

VOTER LIKELIHOOD

Your phone lists (or walk lists if door-to-door) should have a space for "voter likelihood." I like to actually list the five options and have volunteers circle: definitely, likely, undecided, unlikely, hostile. Using a 1-2-3-4-5 scale works well (as long as EVERYONE is using same scale).

After an event, I like to go through the sign up sheets and write notes next to voters' names. This data then needs to be transferred to your database or spreadsheet.

I've found there are usually one or two volunteers who love this kind of data entry activity.

GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV)

In the last week of the campaign, you need to take a careful look at your resources and your campaign goals. If you've been entering information about voter likelihood, you should be able to generate lists per each category. Now you need to decide where to focus your resources: do you try to convince those 'undecided' or do you concentrate on making sure your 'likelies' remember to actually vote?

Ideally, you will be able to do both. Voter turnout in this country is appalling and many of the people who like our message (young voters and the disenfranchised in particular) have often opted out of participation. It's your job to get them to the polls – by convincing them that their vote will count and/or by actually driving them there.

You should have a daily plan in the last week – for social media, who you are going to call, door-knock and mail.

DEFINITELY AND LIKELY: These voters should be contacted in the days prior to the election. I like to offer rides to the polls (ideally using a pedicab or electric car or hybrid!) so that you are seen as offering them a service, not just calling to nag them.

You want to be careful not to turn people off, as well. It can make the difference in actually getting your voters to the polls. *"Hi, this is Lynne from the Sara Amir for Assembly campaign. We're just calling to remind you that Election Day is this Tuesday. Your polling location is < >. Will you need a*

ride to the polls? Are there any questions you still have about Sara? Great. Thank you for your time. Don't forget to vote for Sara Amir – and change the face of politics.” (It whatever your tag line is).

Note: when writing a script for leaving voicemail, get your website and phone number in early, just in case they want to find out more!

Examples of some other activities: In San Francisco, volunteers meet at 5am and do a last literature drop before the polls start.

In New York City, volunteers are opening the polls at 6am to make sure the machines work and that Green Party candidates are actually listed on the ballot.

In New Orleans, volunteers stand on high-volume traffic street corners with signs and waive.

In Santa Barbara, volunteers do a midnight run the night before, getting signs up near polling sites (following rules re: distance).

In one campaign, we mailed a reminder GOTV postcard to all our definite and likelies – with the basic message: VOTE and the date and name of the candidate) card was green, letters were white).

***NOTE:** The information about who has voted on Election Day is public information. You can provide your poll worker with your list of likely voters. After lunch, your volunteers can check off who has voted. Your phone callers in the office (or at home) can then begin calling those who have not voted – with a message of reminder of what time the polls close. Do not say that you **know** they haven't voted – that's a turn off. In Brooklyn, we went around and placed reminder “stickies/post-its” on people's doors. It was labor intensive – but people told us they noticed them and were impressed with our organization.

FINALLY: Try stuff out. See what works, and what doesn't. Learn from your mistakes. And have some FUN.