

More than your Message:

Communications on the Campaign Trail



What Is Your Message?

- Simply explains why you are running for office
- When was the pivotal point that made you decide to run?
- Contrasts you with your opponent
- IT is not a slogan



Why Stay On Message?

Former President Nixon once said to his speech writer: When you are sick of rewriting the same speech, that is when you know the American people are hearing it for the first time.



The Best Message

- Is concise, defines, and contrasts you from your opponent
- Is a persuasive statement that is value-based and focuses on issues.
- Makes 3 points



Message Example

“In Michigan I’ll lead, I’ll protect our families and educate our kids, I’ll hold corporations accountable and run a government that is lean, but not mean.”

-Governor Granholm



Creating Your Message

- Research you and your opponent
- Know who you are representing
- Know the voting records
- What is your personal story? (tv clip)
- Use this information to craft a simple, concise message



Tully's Message Box

What I say about me

What my opponent says about me

What I say about my opponent

What my opponent says about himself

Message Box Example

What I say about me?

I will work to make Georgia the best state in the nation, by ensuring that our working families have affordable quality health care, that every child has the opportunity for a top-notch education, and that our state sets the standard for renewable energy creation.

What my opponent says about me?

Tanya is a tax-and-spend liberal who will use your money to fund her social programs that waste money, show little results, and aren't held accountable.

What my opponent says about himself?

Tom will fight to cut taxes and keep government small. By working for the people, He'll keep more money in your pocket and hold the government accountable.

What I say about my opponent?

My opponent lacks the vision our state needs to make it a national player. In failing to see our state's potential, he misses the opportunity to allow our state to lead the nation in renewable energy, top notch health care, and state-of-the-art schools.

Finally, Don't Forget The 3 R's

- Repeat
- Repeat
- Repeat



Robin Hood Steals The Show

- At a press conference, a lawmaker denounces a proposed ballot initiative that would “use severance tax money from rural residents to offset heating bills for low income families in the city.”
- His opponent: “My friend Tom Calder may fancy himself a big-city Robin Hood, but for those of us in rural Colorado this sounds an awful lot like highway robbery

But Nixon forgot the next media rule

Don't use the opposition's or reporter's terminology:

“I'm not a crook”

(While Nixon was vigorously defending his record in the Watergate case, these are the words he used to say he had never profited from his public service.)

Speak In Words, Not Letters

- Lose the Jargon
- Speak in words, not letters
- Using words and ideas that are colorful, creative, and interesting make you the winner in the media wars