WINNING ELECTIONS: STRATEGIES, POLICIES, AND SOLUTIONS FOR SUCCESS
THE AFRICA LIBERAL NETWORK IS TREMENDOUSLY PROUD TO PRESENT TO YOU THIS BEST PRACTICE GUIDE. THE PUBLICATION IS A RESULT OF THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN POLITICAL EXPERTS AND AFRICAN LIBERALS.

WE ARE GLAD TO PRESENT THIS TO YOU AS A GUIDE WHICH TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE CONTEXT OF AFRICA’S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE, AND IS ALSO ROOTED IN A FIRM BELIEVE THAT LIBERAL DEMOCRACY HOLDS THE KEYS TO OUR SUCCESS.

THIS GUIDE SHOULD SERVE YOU WELL AS A TOOL IN YOUR POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS. AS AN AFRICAN LIBERAL, I WISH YOU THE VERY BEST IN THESE PURSUITS.

Olivier Kamitatu
(ALN PRESIDENT)
As the Coordinator of the Africa Liberal Network, it is my pleasure to present this Best Practice Guide as our flagship ALN production to date.

The 2015/2016 ALN General Assembly in Johannesburg was held under the theme of Winning Elections: Strategies, Policies, and Solutions for Success and is exceptionally significant for having brought together political experts from across Africa and the globe. This was a meeting of some of the brightest political minds, all gathered to establish best practice grounded in principles of liberal democracy.

As the largest political network on the continent, the ALN is well-positioned to take the lead and demonstrate success which can bring about real change in the lives of all Africans.

It is my wish that this guide will serve you well and prove to be of invaluable assistance in your campaigns.

Luke Akal
(AFRICA LIBERAL NETWORK COORDINATOR)
It was a pleasure and honour to take part in the 12th Africa Liberal Network General Assembly in Johannesburg, South Africa. I hope that all members of the Network, both present and future, are able to fully use the ideas, concepts and strategies presented in this guide.

Strategic Campaign Management is a topic of incredible importance in the current age of political activities and campaigns. Through my own experiences and expertise, as well as the contributions of our fellow African liberals, I am glad to present a very useful set of strategies to you. This guide will help you navigate through your party’s own campaign in a systematic way.

I wish you every success in your election campaigns!

HUBERTUS VON WELCK
(REGIONAL DIRECTOR SUB SAHARA AFRICA, FRIEDRICH NAU Mann FOUNDATION FOR FREEDOM)

It is with great pleasure that we present to African liberals this best practice guide. Based on the Africa Liberal Network’s General Assembly in Johannesburg, South Africa, the guide serves to provide you with an outline of the strategies, policies, and solutions that are required in successful election campaigns.

On behalf of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, it is my hope that this guide will greatly assist you in achieving your objectives in elections. The need for African liberals to govern across the continent is great. I trust that this guide will help you achieve a number of your own and your party’s goals to further the cause of liberal democracy.

I’m delighted to see this compilation of best practice campaign communication materials following the 12th Annual Africa Liberal Network General Assembly in Johannesburg.

To win elections it is essential to communicate regularly and effectively with voters and your supporters. At the General Assembly we gathered together experiences and ideas on how to do this from across ALN member parties. These are included in this guide and I hope you find them useful as well as practical to use.

During the General Assembly, it was my pleasure to lead a workshop on the practical side of political campaigning, using the Democratic Republic of Congo as a model.

I wish you the best in making use of this guide and your future campaigns.

Since the inception of the Africa Liberal Network, the Liberal Democrats have sought to support its pursuit of the development of strong and stable liberal democracy throughout the African continent for the benefit of its entire people. At the ALN’s 12th General Assembly, we were delighted to collaborate with like-minded liberals on the operational requirements for a successful political campaign, hosting a series of training sessions which form the basis of this best practice guide. On behalf of the Liberal Democrats, I can assure African liberals that we will continue to work hand-in-hand for the achievement of liberalism and democracy across the African continent.

It is my hope that this guide will be of much value in your campaigns!

JONATHAN MOAKES
(FORMER CEO OF THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE)

VICTORIA MARSOM
(CAMPAIGNS AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST)

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MEDARD MULANGALA
(ALN VICE PRESIDENT: CENTRAL AFRICA)

As the ALN Vice President for Central Africa, I am proud to have been involved in this best practice guide. Winning elections is of critical importance for African liberals in order to steer the continent in the right direction and help Africa reach its full potential.

HARRIET SHONE
(HEAD OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT INTERNATIONAL OFFICE & WFD SENIOR PROGRAMME MANAGER)

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1. CLEAR OBJECTIVES

It is very important to set out what your election objectives are, in other words, what you are seeking to achieve. These need to be clearly defined and formulated objectives.

The party needs to ensure that a balance is maintained, between being realistic and being ambitious. The reason for this is that as a party, you want to grow from election to election, increasing your support. Over promising and under-delivering (or under-promising) from the start are not very successful strategies in terms of building momentum.

It should be kept in mind that momentum is essential in being able to fundraise between elections in order to support future campaigns.
2. VOTE TARGETS

Your objectives need to be translated into vote targets. The objective might read: “To become the official opposition at the next national election”. This needs to be translated into vote targets. In order to set vote targets, you need to:

1. Sketch an accurate picture of the voter landscape in order to understand how many registered voters there are, or will be, going into an election period;
2. Be aware of what your current support is; and
3. Quantify your specific voting targets;
   a. Your objectives need to be turned into vote targets, through data.

YOU NEED TO ASK:

i. How many votes do we need to reach our objectives?
ii. What is the projected voter turnout going to be on voting day?
iii. How many voters do we as a party need to turn out, to reach our objectives? - Aim at obtaining a certain amount of supporters (people who indicate they will vote for your party), taking into account that not every supporter will get out to vote.

b. In order to quantify your voting targets, you will need to ensure you have a voter database. This will allow the party to contact the voters and get them to turn out to vote. An example of this is from the Democratic Alliance (South Africa), where the party has developed a mobile application (“app”) which allows any registered supporter of the party to canvass voters, raise funds and learn more about the election campaign.

c. In order to ensure that the party will reach the set objectives, it needs to be ensured that there are more details of persons who will vote for you saved on the voter database, as not all persons on the database will turn out to vote on Election Day. Once again, this exercise needs to be translated into numbers. Every constituency (area) should therefore have set targets which need to be reached, thereby turning out persons on the Election Day.

4. The two key operational drivers of an election campaign are:
   a. Turning out existing supporters in high levels
   b. Shifting (or persuading) doubtful voters to support your campaign

Research and a tracking poll are very helpful in understanding where your party is currently tracking, especially in relation to your voter targets. Polling also helps to understand where the voters are located and who these voters are. Although it is expensive to conduct a sophisticated tracking poll, it is possible and more cost-effective to do smaller, snapshot polls at regular intervals during a campaign.
3. CAMPAIGN TEAM

Having a proper Campaign Team for election purposes is an absolute must-have. The Campaign Team needs to be selected well in advance of the elections.

This however does not detract from the fact that political parties need to work from election to election. Constant political activity needs to take place, allowing for election readiness and the garnering and solidifying of support, before an election takes place. The last eight weeks before election day often become more about voter turnout and less about persuasion of voters to vote for you. New voters are often won in between elections.

A GOOD CAMPAIGN TEAM SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING KEY PERSONS:

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

The Communications Manager is the team member responsible for media, specifically generating a party presence (on message in volume over time) on various platforms. These platforms amongst others include TV, Radio or Newspaper.

The Communications Manager is also responsible for earned media, media which is not paid for. This type of media is generated through party campaign activities which is earned through TV, print, radio or online. The Communications Manager should also work closely with the Field Operations Director, so as to ensure that the same message is driven on the ground as the one in the media.

For more on field operations and direct voter contact, see the Voter Outreach section of this guide.
FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

The Field Operations Director ensures that there is direct voter contact on the ground and that there is a successful canvassing operation in place, allowing for the party to speak to voters, obtaining their details and identifying if the voter/s support your party. This individual is also responsible for ensuring that voters turn out to the polls on Election Day via a GOTV ("Get Out The Vote") operation.

It is very important to deliver the campaign and party message on the ground. The best way to deliver your message and persuade voters is by foot and in person, usually through canvassing activities. The Field Operations Director will also be able to gauge very specific voter markets based on issues, thereby micro-targeting voters.

It is important to connect with voters around issues they care about. Establishing an emotional connection between the voter and the party will increase the likelihood of the voters turning out to vote for your party.

A further possible task of the Field Operations Manager is identifying and targeting voters who traditionally do not vote. These people are not necessarily emotionally connected to any party as yet and should the party communicate to them on message, taking into account the issues that are most important to them, there could be a good chance of these voters turning out to support your party.

DIRECT MARKETING MANAGER

The Direct Marketing Manager is responsible for paid media such as posters, pamphlets, radio adverts, TV adverts, billboards and social media. As with all forms of messaging delivered to voters, Direct Marketing must be aligned with the core messages of the campaign and receive sign-off from the Communications Manager. Remember that all communication must be in volume, on message, over time.

LOGISTICS MANAGER

The Logistics Manager is responsible for the creation of any party political branded materials (e.g. posters and t-shirts) and also has to ensure that these materials reach their relevant destinations.

FINANCE MANAGER

There needs to be a person who takes charge of the financial aspects of the party and campaign. This person needs to ensure that money comes in to the party and also has to ensure that the money is spent adequately.

AN IMPORTANT POINT ON FUNDRAISING: IT MUST BE DONE ALL THE TIME! SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING TAKES PLACE THROUGHOUT ALL POLITICAL CYCLES, NOT JUST BEFORE THE START OR DURING A CAMPAIGN. REMEMBER TO LOBBY SPONSORS AND DONORS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO THEM. SHOW THAT YOU ARE REALLY DRIVING THESE ISSUES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
In the planning phase of an Election campaign it is important to formulate a clear election message. A good election campaign should focus on developing a clear election message that resonates and connects with the target market which will encourage people to vote for your political party.

One market research method used to formulate and test messages is that of focus groups, which are of a qualitative nature. Focus groups will also allow the party to formulate an effective core offer and message and then to test various concepts, issues and messages the party would like to execute. A further use of focus groups is to track campaign collateral. This would assist in understanding if the current methods and messaging used are working to obtain the targets set.

Market research also enables one to identify who the persons are that are most likely to support your party and message. It is vital to understand that as a party, you do not need to convince everyone to vote for you, as your focus should be to obtain votes from a specific group of people.

This will allow you to obtain a greater return from your investment in the campaign. Key is to start off by targeting the “low hanging fruit.” The polling and market research operation will be able to assist in identifying these persons.

Information needed by the party includes: who the target market is, where they are, what message needs to be communicated as well as how the message should be communicated.
5. CORE OFFER AND MESSAGE:

A MESSAGE FRAMEWORK SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

- **ATTACK MESSAGE**
- **CORE MESSAGE**
- **OFFER MESSAGE**
  (OFTEN THE SAME AS CORE MESSAGE)

These elements are divided into 5 points and further broken down into messages, which can be used by activists to communicate to voters.

In order to ensure the same message is communicated in a consistent manner across the party, a Brand and Communications Guide needs to be developed. In this document, it should also stipulate who should speak about certain issues and what should be communicated.

The custodian of the Brand and Communications Guide should be the Communications Manager, who should have the buy-in and backing from the Party President. The Guide should be part of the strategy and thus be approved by the Campaign Manager.
In order to prepare a clear campaign message, one has to be very clear on your strategic objectives and have a very good understanding of your target market.

Market research is key in this respect, both qualitative and quantitative. Your market research process should start with a series of representative focus groups to refine the questions and directions of a broader quantitative survey. The full process will generate a defined market that you should be targeting and what the critical needs of that target market are.

On the basis of that initial research, you should develop a core election message or value proposition that meets the following requirements:

1. Philosophically aligned: Consistent with the core beliefs of the party or candidate.
2. An actual promise: Something concrete a political party will do and which will benefit the voter.
3. Credible: The market must believe we will keep our promises and can do what we offer.
4. Differentiated: The message must be something different from what other parties offer.
5. Aligned with the critical needs of the market: The message must be something voters really want – and intersect with their values which allows for a real emotional connection with voters.

Once the election promise is decided upon, it is ideal to test it and various executions using market research to hone it even further and identify the vehicles and platforms to best deliver it in volume over the duration of the campaign.

Get out the vote (GOTV): This is an important component of Campaign Design. All efforts are focused on getting voters to cast their ballot with their cross marked next to your party’s logo on Election Day. In order to make this part successful, it might be a requirement of your country to first get voters to register in the correct areas, enabling them to vote on Election Day. In this case, registration becomes a vital component of your campaign.
6. CAMPAIGN DESIGN

The campaign design component focuses on executing your message across the various platforms. This requires developing a media programme which would include paid media (TV, radio, newspaper and billboard adverts) and a field operations programme.

In order to inform the Field Operations component of the campaign design, questions such as the following need to be answered:

**HOW MANY ACTIVISTS IS THE PARTY GOING TO NEED TO REACH ITS TARGET?**

**HOW WILL THESE ACTIVISTS BE TRAINED?**

**HOW WILL VOTERS’ DETAILS BE CAPTURE?**

The voter data system (database) should include details such as: name, surname, address, phone number, e-mail address and possibly the voter’s social media tag.

The voter data system is used to effectively communicate to voters. Communication is especially useful in turning out voters during election time. The party should continuously communicate, even when elections are not taking place.

Field Operations should be asking voters what issues they care about most. This will allow for Micro Targeting. This means the party can communicate to a voter specifically on the issues that matter most to them.
Fundraising is an important part of any campaign. Streams of funding can come from high-net worth individuals, medium-net worth individuals as well as small donations occurring in high frequency. Small but frequent donations should not be underestimated, as these are loyal voters, bringing in a constant source of smaller income for the party.

Execution monitoring is important in ensuring that the plans and strategies put together are implemented. Planning without execution will not yield the party any votes.

Fast reactions: in an election campaign, timing is very important. Therefore, setting up a joint working space which will allow for the Campaign Manager, Field Operations Manager, the Communications Manager and other important role players to be in constant and immediate communication, could be a great advantage. This concept is at times called a “War Room” and allows for fast decision making.
1. ADDRESSING WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT FROM POLITICS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Major studies indicate that the majority of youth want jobs (along with the skills and education to gain employment) and an income, especially those that have some aspect of social impact in order to make a difference. Most youth are looking to make a contribution to their communities, broader region, and ultimately, their country. Identifying what matters to young people is important in targeting their needs, presenting means to satisfy them, and engaging with youth.

Young people are more attracted to political parties that:

- Engage them and their interests by allowing the youth themselves to play a role;
- Prove to be authentic;
- Are exciting and direct;
- Use technology;
- and provide a credible, believable and realistic alternative aligned with their own aspirations.
2. ADDRESSING WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT FROM POLITICS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Too often campaigns believe that using social media effectively on a campaign is just posting a couple times a day on Twitter or Facebook, but that’s not engaging your audience, that is only advertising.

Social media can be used as a tool to directly engage voters that are generally difficult to connect with, especially young voters. For example, using Direct Messaging in Twitter is a positive step in connecting with young voters in an authentic way. It shows that the political party, as a brand, has taken the time to connect with voters.

In social media, the following are key areas of concern for political parties in communication with young voters:

ISSUES TARGETING IN SOCIAL MEDIA
A party or candidate’s social media should relate to the issues that young people care about. This is based on polling and interviews with voters. Drive issues in a frank, clear and understandable way through social media.

ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSE
If your campaign receives support from young people via social media, make the most of the opportunity. Engage with them. Start a conversation and mobilise them for productive use in the campaign.

ADVERTISING VS CONVERSATIONS
It is always important to distinguish between advertising and having a conversation on social media. Whilst advertisements might be valuable, it is almost impossible to beat a conversation with supporters (and sometimes non-supporters) on social media for the simple reason that it is an actual engagement.

AVAILABLE PLATFORMS
A variety of social media platforms exist and could be utilised in campaign. The most popular social media networks include Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Social media managers must keep in mind that each platform serves its own purpose and is best for one kind of communication. For example, trends have indicated that the youth are more inclined to use Twitter over Facebook.

COMMUNICATIONS INTEGRATION
Social media can extend the life of an issue by communicating it for a longer period of time and in a more direct way. Instead of relying only on journalists and traditional media to communicate a campaign’s position or news, social media allows for direct communication with voters. In some cases, it removes the need for journalists as a mediator between the party and the supporter.
3. WAYS TO INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Harnessing the spirit of independence along with teamwork, the snowflake model helps us to understand how to ensure that young people interested in political issues spend time volunteering with their local candidate or campaign.

In this model, it is important to understand that a number of “snowflakes” (such as the one below) make up the broader campaign and form a very powerful collective. Often, committed staff members are at the centre of such a campaign, organising others around them to tackle important roles.

Each role contributes to the larger goal of that snowflake. In turn, the snowflake itself works with other snowflakes to create a critical mass in campaigning to win elections. This avoids the hierarchy so often (negatively) associated with organisations, political campaigns included. It also allows for direct person-to-person communication, instead of advertising and leaflets sent from one central location to a large population with a one-size-fits-all approach. The more personal, the better.

Too often political parties rely on young people as volunteers, with little in return. The number one barrier or challenge for young people to get involved in political parties is the cost. Often events with elected officials or leaders are restricted to donors, pricing out young people.

Within reason, free, open access to elected official and party events is the first step in breaking down the barriers of long term engagement of young people in a political party.
A manifesto is a summary of a party's policy platform. It encapsulates the party’s principles and priorities, and sets out those policies and plans that the party would implement in government. Although they can be very lengthy, a manifesto should be summarised into a one page document that crisply sums up the party or candidate’s offer.

Manifestos are important because they show voters what a party thinks & cares about most:

**PRINCIPLES: WHAT WE BELIEVE IN**

*“An open society where every individual’s freedom is protected by the Constitution.”* This statement shows that the party believes in and is guided by the principle of individualism.
PRIORITIES: WHAT WE CARE ABOUT

“Speed up the delivery of housing and basic services through clean and efficient government”

The party cares about basic services and provision of a home for all, which would be a priority if in government. This kind of message must be reiterated in the campaign’s communications in the same way.

POSITIONS: WHERE WE STAND ON KEY ISSUES

“We want specialised Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence courts to protect vulnerable citizens from abuse and to make sure that sentences are commensurate with the crimes committed.”

On the issues of the criminal justice system and hate crimes, the manifesto outlines the courts it would establish once in elected

PLANS: WHAT WE WILL DO IN GOVERNMENT

“Create an enabling environment for growth. By investing in economic infrastructure and, where possible, bringing down the cost base in the economy, the government can provide an enabling environment for economic activity, growth and job creation.”

The party’s plans for improving the economy and increases employment are addressed in the manifesto.
2. TRANSLATING A MANIFESTO AND POLICIES INTO POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

A manifesto is usually clustered into different policy areas or themes. The policy priorities are crystallised into an offer – based on a series of pledges – which usually forms the basis of the campaign slogan.

The policy areas should be grouped under specific titles and meaningfully communicated to the audience of voters. An example of policy areas includes:

- ECONOMY
- HEALTH
- EDUCATION
- GOVERNMENT

In order to convey these in a way that individuals can understand and relate to with the basis on shared values, the above policies can be rephrased and personalized:

YOUR BUSINESS / YOUR WELLBEING / YOUR EDUCATION / YOUR GOVERNMENT

By communicating these policy areas and their individual policy proposals in this way, the voter is more likely to feel engaged, understood and addressed by the political party. It is not simply the party providing information in a very technical way, but rather, bringing ideas to the people so that the average person on the street can understand that a better alternative exists. And very importantly, the voter must know that they have the power to choose that alternative themselves.

You need a communications strategy to convey the offer “on message, in volume, over time” through various media:

EARNED (FREE) MEDIA

By addressing the media through statements, media releases, events, rallies and speeches, it is possible for a political party to earn free publicity or airtime. This is the field of political public relations (PR).

Gaining coverage for your party or candidate in this way obviously achieves one major benefit: it is free. Commenting on a popular issue that really matters to voters during a particular time not only shows that you are in touch with the audience, but also that the party’s voice can be heard and published.

An important word of caution is to always keep in mind that free media means the party’s communications team cannot control what the media says about the party and how they say it. It’s free media, so even the most well-intended message can be distorted to fit a journalist’s perspective or a newspaper’s ideology.

PAID MEDIA (DIRECT MARKETING)

Direct marketing can be carried out through a number of channels. Some of the most important and commonly used ones are listed below:

- POSTERS
- PAMPHLETS
- BILLBOARDS
- TV ADVERTS
- RADIO ADVERTS

Unlike free, or earned, media, direct marketing carries a direct cost to the campaign. The design of any of the above-mentioned materials can be produced in-house (by staff of the party itself) or outsourced to advertising and design agencies. Ultimately, this all carries some sort of cost to the political party. A major benefit is that the party can control the process almost entirely. The characters, script and overall message of a radio advert, for example, would be directly controlled by the campaign team.
Online and social media have revolutionised the political campaigning space. Social media offers a number of channels through which parties can both send out their messages to voters and supporters, but also receive important feedback and engagement from their target audiences. The increasing availability of smartphones will revolutionise politics in Africa, bringing social media and direct marketing to voters across the continent.

The Africa Liberal Network has published a Best Practice Guide to Social Media

**THE MAIN CHANNELS OF SOCIAL MEDIA INCLUDE:**

**3. OBTAINING AND USING VOTER FEEDBACK**

Focus groups are a good way to test your messages with voters. They can help to give a campaign valuable insight into which messages and methods of delivery are likely to be effective.

Focus groups will normally have about 10 individuals selected at random by the political party. For example, the group can be selected after a member of the team calls eligible voters in a particular, well-defined geographical area. The selected area could be a target constituency for the campaign based on previous polling and election data. It is absolutely essential to involve non-party members to gauge their responses to your party’s messaging. Ideally, the focus group should be conducted by someone not associated with the political party and recognised as impartial.

A set of questions and discussion topics should be preselected by the campaign for implementation in the focus group. The questions will normally relate to:

- The candidates of the campaign, their traits, speeches, appearance and more
- Political, national, regional and local issues to be driven during the campaign
- Phrases, words, messages and slogans the party is considering for the campaign
- The design of logos, pictures and graphics to be used in the campaign’s marketing
Based on this, a huge benefit of focus groups is that they allow the campaign to get in touch with what voters think, value and understand. There is no point driving a campaign or issue using language that voters do not at all comprehend. The message will not be understood and no value is added to the campaign; the party’s position and alternative is not presented to the voters.

Understanding the specific issues voters consider important care about how they understand them; what they want to be done about these topics; and how the voters want them to be presented are all important pieces of information to collect before finalising a campaign message.

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Based on this, a huge benefit of focus groups is that they allow the campaign to get in touch with what voters think, value and understand. There is no point driving a campaign or issue using language that voters do not at all comprehend. The message will not be understood and no value is added to the campaign; the party’s position and alternative is not presented to the voters.

Understanding the specific issues voters consider important care about how they understand them; what they want to be done about these topics; and how the voters want them to be presented are all important pieces of information to collect before finalising a campaign message.

Polling is a sampling or collection of opinions on a subject, taken from either a selected or a random group of persons for the purpose of analysis. This is another very useful tool in obtaining and using voter feedback. Polling gives a campaign a clearer idea of where the general public stands on a particular idea, policy or issue at a given point in time. It’s much broader than a focus group, as a reliable poll needs to be representative of the party’s target audience.

This means that a large number (such as 600) people need to be asked a specific question within certain parameters. For example, if we wanted to know the support of a party amongst females over 40 years of age, we would only ask women within that age group. Collecting data from men or voters under 40 would be completely irrelevant and not at all representative.

It’s vital to remember that the results of a poll are not valid for all time. A candidate or party might seem very popular on one week, but consider that a huge scandal involving corruption and fraud of the party’s leadership was to be revealed later that week. The results of the same poll would look very different in the following week.
A ground game program includes how a party engages directly with voters through personal conversations in the community and online/on mobile. A ground game generally has these elements:

Direct Voter Contact: An infrastructure that has conversations about the party, issues, candidates, and election directly with voters whether in person, on the phone, or online.

Organizing: An approach to engage strong supporters and bring them into action doing direct voter contact and further engaging other supporters.

Data Tracking: A system to track which both supporters and voters. This system captures information from all actions taken by supporters and all interactions with voters.
2. MESSAGING FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH VOTERS

It is important to provide training for those having ground game conversations with voters so they can have maximally effective conversations. The most effective conversations are when supporters connect with voters on shared values. The supporter connects the values they share with the voter to the values of the party.

An effective rubric for supporter conversations with voters is:

1. Acknowledge & Relate: Ask the voter what is concerning them in their community. Listen, and acknowledge your concerns. You might share a similar concern you have, or a personal experience that illustrates how you’ve experienced similar concerns.

2. Connect on Values: The supporter should share what values of the party cause her to support the party’s position. The supporter should highlight values that she expects the voter to share. This should relate to one of the core messages.

3. Give Policy Examples: The supporter should then choose an example of how the party’s policies and actions manifest its values. This can be a policy accomplishment or a policy plan for the future.

4. Draw Contrast: Finally, the supporter should define the choice the voter has to make between two parties or two different actions by drawing contrast with the alternative. This can be the alternative party or what will happen if no action is taken.
3. DRIVING MESSAGING ON THE GROUND

The party’s main message should be a reflection of the party’s values and policy priorities. Polling can help determine how to best talk about an issue with voters, and help understand how to connect the party’s values with the voters’ priorities. However, it should not be used for trying to determine how the party stands on issues. The party’s values are drawn from the shared beliefs of its members on what policy approach is best for the country.

When translating the party’s values and policy priorities into message for the ground game it is important to:

- Relate policy priorities back to values that resonate with voters.
- Choose easy-to-remember language that is concise but evocative.
- Focus on one key message that is reiterated repeatedly, and which can hold the top policy priorities of the party.

Once your message is chosen, it is important to consistently echo the message in multiple media, whether candidate speeches, press events with party leaders, online content, flyers/ mail, or conversations with voters at the doors and on the phones.

4. THE PURPOSE OF CANVASSING

Personal conversations with voters is the most effective way to move a voter to support and to action – but it can also be one of the most challenging. However, while ads or press attention and even flyers or mail can help to inform the voter nothing is more effective at ensuring they will support and will vote than a personal conversation. Building an infrastructure with enough staff to have enough conversations with voters to win, is incredibly expensive. This is why it is so important to engage and build a volunteer organization.
5. CANVASSING AND DOOR-TO-DOOR ACTIVITY

Canvassing can be done in a number of ways depending on your local context, but the most popular and effective means is to undertake door-to-door activity in groups of small teams. A canvassing team not only supports each other, but different individuals within the team can carry out specific roles.

The canvassing conversation should consist of five basic elements, tailored to your campaign’s specific messaging:

1. Who you are
2. Why you are talking to the voter
3. The current situation (for example, poor service delivery)
4. The way things should be (good infrastructure, no corruption)
5. How we will achieve this (new policies, dismiss poor performers)

Remember to always align your message with the values of the voter. The person being addressed at their door must remember you, not only because you spoke to them, but because you identified with what they care about. Connecting and resonating on an emotional level with a voter is a powerful tool.

Canvassing also carries the major advantage of being able to collect reliable data first-hand from voters. Not only can this data be targeted, but it also means we can collect important information such as:

- Identity numbers
- Addresses
- Contact numbers
- For messages
- Age and gender
- Issues of importance to the voter
- Party affiliation

One cannot run a successful GOTV operation without this kind of data and information.

This kind of information can tell us a lot about a voter, group and a particular area. We may, for example, get to know what certain voters care about and develop messaging to address those issues. It also gives us the opportunity to follow up with voters at a later stage, reminding them to vote on election day, sign up for party membership, follow the campaign on social media etc.

6. BUILDING A VOLUNTEER ORGANISATION

Building a volunteer organisation takes investment in staff to identify, train, and develop party volunteers who can take on increasing responsibility in their local communities. Elements of a powerful volunteer organization include:

1. Developing volunteers to become leaders of other volunteers
2. Consistent communication about strategy and tactics to create consistency in program
3. Diligent tracking of data related to volunteer actions (as well as voter interactions)
4. Emphasis on building personal relationships between staff organizers and volunteer supporters, as well as among volunteers working together

Training volunteers is crucial for a successful voter outreach. Empowering the volunteers and activists takes them to the next level and ensures that they are appreciated by the campaign and the political party. Even the very basics should not be taken for granted: thank volunteers, offer them opportunities, provide them with refreshments, and assist promising individuals to become team leaders. Most importantly, keep communication clear and ongoing between volunteers and operational structures so that you know the sentiment and reaction on the ground.
15 QUESTIONS TO ASSESS YOUR PARTY’S CAMPAIGN READINESS

1. Have you set clear objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART)?
2. Do you know the demographics and profile of your party’s supporters?
3. What is the projected voter turnout and do you have targets in place?
4. Have you appointed a campaign team? Most crucial here, is there a campaign manager who directs the overall campaign?
5. Has your party established a clear message for the campaign?
6. Are your communications integrated so that the party is always on message, in volume, over time?
7. Do you have a strong message script for direct voter contact, such as with door-to-door activity?
8. Does your campaign connect with voters on issues they care about?
9. Is fundraising a constant activity of your party, involving senior leadership in fundraising engagements?
10. Does your campaign have a strong youth element that allows young people to get involved in exciting ways?
11. Is social media used to stay in touch with voters via platforms like Facebook and Twitter?
12. Does the campaign have a strong manifest that is based on your principles, priorities, plans and positions?
13. Do you have a communications strategy for free (earned) media, social media and direct marketing?
14. Has your party developed a website with at least the basic principles of the party, information about leadership, and campaign information?
15. Do you have a database of volunteers who are committed to spending some time on the campaign trail?
THANK YOU