

Flying Upside Down

in the 21st Century

by Joseph Gaylord



GO PAC® PRESENTS

**A NEWLY REVISED AND UPDATED VERSION OF AN
AMERICAN POLITICAL CLASSIC.**

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by Joseph Gaylord

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Introduction

This is not a how-to book, as in “How to Succeed in Politics Without Really Trying.”

In fact, it's more of a how-NOT-to book.

I say that because there's been a growing collection of "rules" on how to run a campaign. And the result of that kind of rigid thinking has been a decline in the very ingenuity the Republican Party needs if we are to win more challenger races.

So, this book is about reasoning our way to victory, not following a yellow brick road of rules...

And, more specifically, it's about the kind of creative reasoning that leads to defeating Democratic incumbents.

To be frank, I think the problem of figuring out how to beat entrenched incumbents is particularly difficult for the GOP.

The more I analyzed what successful challenger campaigns had to do in order to win, the more I came to realize that there were five basic necessities ...

Confidence

Creativity

Contrast

Controversy

Capital

Yet, in analyzing elections all over the country, I also came to believe that Republican challenger campaigns have been getting, if anything, worse in all five areas!

To do better, we must first understand this:

Challenger campaigns are fundamentally different from incumbent campaigns ... and need to be run differently!

Simple? Obvious? Perhaps, but the only explanation I can give for the poor showing of most challenger campaigns (Democratic as well as Republican) is the apparent mistake a new generation of campaign operatives have made in trying to emulate the success of incumbent campaigns.

Granted, all sorts of new techniques have come out of well-financed incumbent campaigns ... specialized computer software, on going polling, sophisticated soft-cell public relations, long-term planning by management consultants, fundraising by targeted direct mail, et cetera. All of those things are very nice ... if you are an incumbent trying to make whatever marginal improvements you can to assure re-election.

A challenger, however, needs to be more entrepreneurial than managerial.

Now, what do I mean by that?

Consider the most obvious difference between an incumbent and a challenger. An incumbent has resources – an already established political operation, as well as tax-paid staff, tax-paid mailings, tax-paid offices – that need to be managed. But the challenger needs political entrepreneurship to create something from scratch.

That's just one profound difference. There are many ...

An incumbent wants to pretend there's no real contest, hoping that the voters won't wake up. But a challenger wants the opposite: **Controversy**. "Wake up voters, it's time for a change!"

An incumbent wants to discourage any comparison of the two candidates, preferring instead to act as if there really is no comparison; the unspoken message is, "You don't even have to consider anyone else because I'm doing a great job." The challenger needs to show a compelling **Contrast** between the two candidates to convince a majority of voters that the incumbent should be fired and replaced by the challenger.

An incumbent wants the challenger to believe what the "experts" will say: that the incumbent is virtually unbeatable. But the challenger needs to exude **Confidence** to change that perception ... in order to attract the right people, raise the necessary money, and convince reporters to cover the race.

An incumbent wants to take a very safe, scientific approach in managing his or her campaign ... “let’s not take any chances.” But the challenger needs **Creativity**, which means taking a lot of chances, to make up for the incumbent’s advantages in recognition and resources.

An incumbent learns quickly how to “maximize the incumbency,” which is a euphemism for: spending tax dollars and using power to win favor with as many voters as possible. A challenger has to maximize **Capital** by spending wisely, negotiating shrewdly, using volunteers wherever possible, and devoting more time to fundraising.

These five C’s – confidence, controversy, creativity, contrast, and capital – are the very heart of this book. Once you realize how very different a challenger campaign is from an incumbent’s campaign, you also realize ...

We are pioneering new territory.

If you’re in politics to find security, you won’t want to spend much time on challenger campaigns. But, if you enjoy the challenge of “beating City Hall” ... doing what the political “experts” usually say can’t be done ... defying conventional wisdom ... then you should think very seriously about what Flying Upside Down is trying to accomplish:

Encouraging a brash, new political entrepreneurship.

I said that Flying Upside Down is not a how-to book, but in a way it is ...

Instead of getting into the technical kind of advice (step one: do this; step two: do that) it offers a different kind of “how-to”:

How to avoid the mistakes commonly made by challengers.

Maybe that’s half the battle. If we understand what doesn’t work, then hopefully we will have an easier time tailoring solutions that do work.

I’ve divided this advice into 6 categories:

Meaning	Understanding the basic realities
Message	How to conceive the right contrast
Media	How to deliver the message
Management	Deciding, motivating, implementing
Money	Fundraising and spending
Momentum	Timing, and measuring progress

I think these categories are broad enough to cover almost anything in a campaign. Many of them overlap, of course; I could have put some advice about “media” under “message” or some advice about “momentum” under “management,” and so on. But it really doesn’t matter.

Each page is headlined by a ... truism.

I use the term “truism” because I think this advice is generally considered to be true by successful campaign veterans, not that it is always true. I don’t want to be guilty of the very thing I deplore: making up rigid “rules.”

I’m greatly indebted to numerous challenger candidates, campaign managers, consultants, and even incumbents, for their insights on challenger races. They helped shed new light on an old problem.

This is a new, revised version of Flying Upside Down, which was first published by the National Republican Congressional Committee in 1988. It has been updated on numerous occasions since then and this represents the latest version, which reflects the modern challenger campaign and its dynamics. Whereas the original book was written specifically for Congressional challenger candidates themselves, this new edition is for any and all decision-makers in a challenger campaign for any office.

An important editorial note: I reluctantly use “he” as an indefinite pronoun throughout the text because I thought it would be awkward to read “he or she” several hundred times. I hasten to add, though, that one of the keys to our winning majority status for the GOP is to tap more women candidates from our impressive ranks of local and state women leaders.

A request: I ask all good Republicans reading this book to keep it within our party family, rather than sharing it with friends who might not be Republican. I realize that there's always a temptation to share literature that might conceivably convert a heathen Democrat through sheer poetry of reason, but, please understand: If it were that easy, this book wouldn't be necessary.

A final thought:

Having worked as both a political consultant and as director of the National Republican Congressional Committee, I have seen how the trends toward "incumbent protection" have increased over recent years. A lot of this trend has to do with the tax-paid advantages of staff, public relations, mass mailings, and so on, that incumbents vote for themselves. That kind of "incumbentitis" is equally a problem in state and local offices as well, since nearly all incumbents have learned these tricks of the trade.

However, it is time that we view the wall of advantages enjoyed by incumbents as a political Maginot Line. We simply have to develop new strategy and tactics to go over, under, around and through that wall.

It all begins with our attitude.

When the Israelites saw Goliath, they said, "He's so big we can never defeat him." But David looked at the same giant and said, "He's so big, I can't miss!"

It's a matter of perspective.

I hope you enjoy reading Flying Upside Down. And if you happen to be reading this during an especially stressful period in your campaign, take heart: Many of us have gone through campaign crises just as frustrating as the one tormenting you now ... and survived to tell the tale! At the moment, that may be hard for you to believe, but that's not a truism. That's a fact.

So, fight the good fight and ...

Good Luck!

Joe Gaylord

MEANING

1. A Campaign is Essentially Persuasion.

It is natural to get so caught up in the details of what you're doing that you lose sight of the main purpose of your work.

That happens quite often in a campaign.

For example, a campaign manager might become so busy updating the computers in a campaign that he neglects P.R. and advertising. In political shorthand, that mistake is known as putting mechanics over message. In other words, he focused on the mechanical side of the campaign, the computers, but lost sight of the main purpose of the campaign: reaching voters with a convincing message.

To win, you have to keep your eye on the ball:

A campaign is persuasion, not “playing” politics.

It may be fun to fill a headquarters with balloons and streamers . . . but, are you persuading people to give money to your candidate?

It may be thrilling to march in a parade . . . but, are you persuading people to sign up as volunteers?

It may be fascinating to spend hour after hour studying past election results . . . but, are you persuading voters that your candidate would do a better job than his opponent?

With all the pressure in a campaign, you will certainly get immersed in the details.

At times, you will undoubtedly feel frustrated, confused, and perhaps even depressed. It is precisely then that you should pull yourself back and take a more objective, relaxed view of things. At that moment, ask yourself: Are we spending our time and money to be persuasive, or just to be impressive?

Knowing the difference between the two is to understand the difference between ultimately winning or losing.

You can think of it this way: A campaign is like a small communications company . . .

Communicating, selling, persuading.

2. The Energy of a Campaign is Created by the Candidate and the Message.

When we talk about a campaign surging forward, we use words like momentum and energy. If people don't feel that a campaign is moving and growing, they sense that it is failing. Energy is the life force of a campaign.

Like atomic energy, a successful campaign is an explosion of something invisible: an idea . . . an idea in the mind of one person, the candidate, who decides to run.

From that single decision, a chain reaction is set off. First, one's family and friends are caught up in the decision, then neighbors and associates, then activists and contributors, then journalists and opinion leaders, and ultimately, everyone who goes to the polls.

In that way, the energy of a campaign can be explained by that famous scientific equation: **E = MC²**.

The energy of a campaign, **E**, is created by **M, message**, times **C, candidate** . . . **squared**, in other words, multiplied, by advertising, publicity, volunteers, and so on.

Energy equals Message times Candidate, squared.

3. The Message Strategy of a Campaign is to be Found within a Triangle of ICE.

Three points of a triangle define the reality of a challenger campaign . . .

- 1) The strengths and weaknesses of the Incumbent
- 2) The strengths and weaknesses of the Challenger
- 3) The likes and dislikes of the Electorate

To conceive a successful message strategy (i.e. the right message and the right way to deliver that message) you need to find ideas that work within that triangle of reality.

I would say, too, that the above three points are stated in their order of importance.

#1 If the Incumbent doesn't have any significant weaknesses but a lot of strengths, then chances are, the voters won't fire him no matter how good the challenger.

#2 If the incumbent is vulnerable in some way, but your Challenger is weighted down with even worse negatives, then your chances are still not good.

#3 Assuming that the incumbent is vulnerable, and the challenger is viable, the Electorate's changing views on issues can decide the outcome.

To remember this triangle, you can use the acronym I.C.E. (Incumbent, Challenger, Electorate).

I. Begin by understanding the Incumbent. Don't kid yourself by exaggerating his weaknesses and underestimating his strengths. For example, you might think he's a fool, a liar, an arrogant liberal . . . but if his constituents think he's an honorable, honest, humble moderate, you have to start your calculations by conceding that one of his strengths is a misperception of his ideology and character. Understand: you can change the perception of the opponent, but you must first realistically understand what that perception is.

C. Next, and often more difficult, is assessing the strengths and weaknesses of your own Challenger candidate. Again, don't kid yourself. If your candidate is not a good speaker, you don't want to wishfully assume that he's going to become articulate overnight; that kind of misreading can lead to miscalculations in strategy, such as: wasting your time trying to force a debate you don't really want.

E. Finally, you want to understand how the Electorate views all relevant issues, how it views the particular office, and so on. Don't assume that old polling results, and old election results, still hold true. You want to understand today's "hot button issues" that turn voters on and off.

Somewhere within that triangle of I.C.E. is a successful message strategy. Now comes the hard part. Figuring it out.

4. A Persuasive Campaign Draws on Four Resources: Time, Money, People, Ideas.

Two of those resources can be budgeted: time and money.

You can schedule your time (while still being flexible enough to take advantage of unexpected opportunities). And, you can budget your money (while still being flexible in allowing for unexpected windfalls and shortfalls in the fundraising).

The other two resources, however, cannot be budgeted and calculated in advance: people and ideas.

You can't really estimate the talent or potential of people. And the same is true with ideas—you can't budget or calculate ahead of time what new possibilities will open up to you as a result of new ideas about issues, research, advertising, publicity, and strategy.

We can call time and money the **demand** side of a campaign. Time and money are both very limited, measurable resources and they demand a lot of budgeting in order to make the best use of them.

But people and ideas are the **supply** side of a campaign. They are virtually unlimited in possibility, so instead of budgeting them you need to concentrate on encouraging them.

5. There are 5 C's in "successful contemporary challenger campaigns".

The more I've analyzed successful challenger campaigns the more I have come to realize that there are five basic necessities. Unfortunately, many GOP challenger campaigns do poorly in all 5 areas. It's time to change that.

Confidence: We need the kind of brash entrepreneurship that loves to accomplish what "experts" often argue is impossible: beating an entrenched incumbent. GOP operatives often discourage an enthusiastic candidate (without meaning to) by telling him every technical thing they think he should do and setting up hurdles they'd like him to jump (so much money raised by certain dates, so much support in the polls by certain dates, etc.). They end up taking the wind out of his sails. Yet his confidence is vital to success. In politics, just as in starting a new business, optimism is reality.

Creativity: Republicans often take more pride in management than in creativity. But, in challenger campaigns at least, that has to change. The GOP needs to encourage political entrepreneurship. That means our campaigns need to be creative, risk-taking and innovative. This is necessary because if the challenger plays by the incumbent's rules, he loses. He has to change the rules in order to win, and the only way you do that is by taking risks and experimenting.

Contrast: An election is about making a choice. The contest becomes: who will frame that choice? If the challenger allows the incumbent to frame the choice then voters will be considering a contrast like this: Do I want an experienced guy who accomplishes wonderful things, or, do I want the inexperienced guy who couldn't accomplish anything? If it's the challenger framing the choice, voters will consider a contrast like this: Do I want the dishonest, too-liberal incumbent, or do I want the trustworthy, moderate new guy? As obvious as this need to sell the right contrast might seem, many GOP challengers fail to do it because they are too polite, or because they have an aversion to the following "C" word . . .

Controversy: Republicans are often uncomfortable with the unpleasantness and unpredictability of public argument and political confrontation. But, today's political debate is mostly through news coverage, rather than formal discussion on stage with a moderator. So, challengers have to learn to create and sustain the right kind of controversy, drawing attention to their message of contrast with the incumbent.

Capital: Raising money is difficult; spending money is easy. Too many challenger campaigns waste early money on expensive overhead, and don't get enough bang for the buck in their advertising. There's an entire section in this book on Money. But "capital" doesn't mean only cash; it also means using resources like volunteers, and maximizing capital by shrewd budgeting, price negotiation, and cost-effective fundraising.

T h e
P y r a m i d o f
P o l i t i c a l
P r i n c i p l e s

Persuasion

What is the essence
of a campaign?

Message & Candidate

Where does a campaign get its energy?

Incumbent & Challenger & Electorate

What is the triangle within which you determine
a campaign's message strategy?

T i m e & M o n e y & P e o p l e & I d e a s

What are the resources of a campaign?

Confidence & Controversy & Contrast & Creativity & Capital

What characterizes a successful contemporary challenger campaign?

6. Politics is not a science; it is an art form that uses some scientific tools.

Some Republican strategists have been so successful in recent years in applying new technology to political campaigns that they've gone overboard in trusting computer data more than common sense ... trusting paid workers but not volunteers ... trusting direct mail houses but not door-to-door canvassing ... trusting paid advertising but not public relations.

It seems that they only trust the things they can control: advertising, not publicity ... staff, not volunteers ... direct mail, not door-to-door campaigning.

As they've been smitten by the scientific side of politics they've come to distrust the art of politics.

But politics can never be wholly scientific, any more than voters can be totally predictable. People are too complex to be predictable. We have an emotional side, a mental side, a physical side, and I believe a spiritual side.

Any good strategy must take into account the unlimited possibilities of politics as an art form: the entertaining theatre of ideas and people. And not just the scientific probabilities that make political work more efficient.

7. The viability of a candidate is not found in early polling results but rather in the candidate's integrity, determination and ideas.

There are countless stories of unknown candidates starting out at 1 percent in the polls and then, defying all predictions, ending up victorious. Some of them were outspent by their opponents ten to one . . . some had to overcome the opposition of big city machines . . . some of them had newspapers harassing them once they started rising in the polls. Yet they prevailed.

Almost overnight, unknowns can become knowns, and popular incumbents can become unpopular losers.

So, don't get discouraged by early polls. They report opinions held in the past; they don't project the results of elections to be held in the future.

What makes a candidate viable is the candidate's integrity, determination and ideas. You have to put your faith in the ability of enough people to recognize, by election day, that your candidacy is superior to the opponent's. That realization might not take hold until the final weeks, or even final days, of the contest. But you should work with the faith and confidence that it will happen . . . because that is the way you can help make it happen.

Americans like underdogs. Americans instinctively understand what Thomas Jefferson argued: that we need a revolution in this country every twenty years or so . . . meaning, that we need to "vote the rascals out" and replace them with new leaders if we are to renew our country's vital spirit.

Upset victories prove that you can "beat City Hall". And, more than that, they prove that self-government works.

8. An ideal candidate has thick skin, quick reflexes, inspiring vision, keen hearing, fast legs, strong back, firm handshake, and a good heart.

I should also add: a strong ego.

By "strong ego" I mean, someone who is self-motivated and confident; I do not mean, egotistical. By "strong ego" I mean the sort of person who doesn't come unglued when attacked by an opponent in the newspaper, or who loses hope when a poll shows him thirty points down.

In truth, there's no such thing as an "ideal" candidate. Certain kinds of personalities are appealing in some areas, but not in others. Certain occupational backgrounds are appealing to some voters, but unimpressive to others. There are many factors that determine a candidate's appeal: his sincerity, accomplishments, advertising, the public mood, and his contrast to the opponent . . .

Still, if pressed to describe the qualities that make a candidate successful, I would suggest the following:

- I. Leadership qualities
 - A. Strong, decisive
 - B. Open
 - C. Able to get things done
- II. Honesty

Doesn't have to be a saint, but should be trustworthy
- III. Experience, expertise

Someone who is successful in persuasion; someone who understands and enjoys both people and ideas
- IV. Generates good will

A person who can make others feel good about themselves

V. Personal Qualities

A. Strong ego, resiliency

B. Stamina

C. Motivation (“fire in the belly”)

D. Understands who he speaks for, understands who wins when he wins (i.e. the coalition of voters who share his values)

9. The candidate is the head of the campaign: the owner, the chief asset, the major fundraiser, and the prime vote getter.

There are rewards to being a candidate that are unique to the political profession: the excitement and drama in making history, the exhilaration of winning, the fulfillment in making friends out of strangers, the satisfaction of debating ideas, the challenge of leading by example . . .

Candidates as wealthy as Nelson Rockefeller and John Kennedy found in politics a sense of purpose they couldn't find in high finance. Astronauts who've seen the earth as a small blue sphere in the blackness of space, and prisoners of war who were deprived of seeing any light at all, are among those who have entered our political system to seek new meaning and to serve their country in a new way.

But, let's be frank, it can be an exhausting, difficult job. A candidate has many responsibilities in a campaign. And, he is the person ultimately held responsible.

To understand the many roles a candidate must play, perhaps the best analogy would be the theatre. The candidate is the star of his own play; but also the producer; the owner of the company; and final script writer. He's the one who takes all the bows at the curtain calls, but he is also the one the critics go after in their reviews.

As the producer, the candidate has to choose the right kind of director, and approve the rest of the cast. He must know when to delegate authority, yet must always realize that he is ultimately responsible: It is his name on the ballot, and his name on the checkbook.

As the producer, he's also the chief fundraiser. The candidate is the best fundraiser. People will give money to the candidate that they won't give to anyone else. And so he has to learn to ask for money from friends, relatives, and complete strangers.

And, as the star of this play, he is the chief vote-getter. There's nothing like being a celebrity and having people hang on your every word—even though some of them will be reporters looking to hang you on your every word.

But to enjoy what real celebrityhood is all about, you have to win.

That is when the responsibilities really begin.

10. For a challenger to defeat an incumbent, there is one risk that can't be taken: not taking any risks.

A successful challenger campaign is characterized by:

- creative strategy;
- sustained aggressiveness; and
- innovative tactics.

All of those traits require taking risks.

That is why an anti-incumbent strategy is more often compared to guerilla war than conventional war.

MESSAGE

11. A challenger must demonstrate three things in running against an incumbent: contrast, contrast, contrast.

An election is simply this: making a choice.

Most incumbents, naturally, would like to pretend that there is no real choice. They prefer to ignore the challenger in the hope that reporters, and voters, will ignore him. The challenger wants the opposite. To beat an incumbent he needs to convince reporters that he's worth covering, and needs to convince voters that it's time for a change.

The reality is this: If the challenger doesn't frame what the choice is all about—the contrast between candidates—voters are not likely to reject the better-known, “experienced” incumbent. As with our system of justice, most voters presume an incumbent is innocent unless proven guilty.

Despite the need for a challenger to be aggressive in drawing a contrast, it is surprising how many fail to do so. Many challengers are so uncomfortable with controversy and criticism they eagerly believe naive friends who advise them: “Just be positive; don't mention the other guy; people only want to hear what you have done.” Too bad that isn't true.

Following the 1986 elections, Fred Barnes, a conservative columnist, wrote: “Given their thick-headedness, Republicans may fall for all the pious condemnations of negative ads and miss the real lesson of the 1986 election. No, the lesson is not that negative TV spots don't work. It's that they do, and you'd better get on the air with them fast ...” This was true in 1986, it was true in every election since then, and it is true today.

However, one should not mistake contrast with personal attacks. In 2000 George W. Bush successfully campaigned on the idea that he would “change the tone” in Washington. That is, that he would try to bring a civility to discourse and do away with negative personal attacks on opponents. But, while he succeeded in not personally attacking Al Gore during the campaign, he maintained a successful strategy of letting the American people know what Al Gore's record was and how liberal his ideas were.

A so-called negative ad is not necessarily perceived by voters as something negative. A negative ad will often simply reveal that the opponent voted a certain way, or took a certain position. Revealing that fact might be considered negative by the candidate about whom it is revealed, but the voters often value it as something very positive: a fact helping them make an informed choice. After all, democracy is meaningless without information being made public, and then debated. As long as the information is fair, accurate, and germane, it is usually legitimate to advertise it.

This is especially true when the ad shows both sides. For example: the incumbent voted one way; the challenger would vote the opposite. That's called a comparative or contrast ad. Such an ad can convey a variety of themes: youth versus age; liberal versus conservative; honest versus dishonest.

The bottom line is this: Contrast is vital. Otherwise, voters see no reason to fire the incumbent. And until they hear a reason, they're not ready to hire a replacement.

12. Understand what makes your opponent vulnerable to defeat.

To develop the right strategy, and to keep the right focus even when things get stressful, you need to understand what makes the incumbent vulnerable.

You may detest your opponent's ideology, or personality, or lack of character...

But, what matters most is what the voters perceive.

So, don't let your own personal feelings cloud your judgment about what makes the opponent beatable.

To evaluate your opponent's vulnerability, you can begin by considering these ten factors:

- 1) Has he lost touch with voters?
- 2) Does he have an offensive personality?
- 3) Does he suffer, or might he soon suffer, from scandal?
- 4) Are his accomplishments meager?
- 5) Does he have poor relations with the media; or does he project poorly through the media?
- 6) Does overall party registration, or voter turn-out, work against him?
- 7) Is his ideology out of sync with most voters?
- 8) Will he have a problem raising enough money?
- 9) Does he perform poorly under pressure and in handling criticism?
- 10) Is he less active due to age, health, or apathy?

If you can't honestly answer yes to at least one or two of these questions, you're probably not going to win. If voters don't see a reason to "fire" an office-holder, they usually vote to retain him.

As the campaign progresses, you will of course learn the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent in great detail. The earlier you do, the better your chances will be of devising the winning strategy.

13. Republicans have the advantage of greater unity, but the Democrats work hard to divide and conquer.

No political party can expect to enjoy perfect harmony on the issues, but the GOP has been unusually united on most public questions in recent years. A lot of the credit for that unity deservedly goes to Ronald Reagan, George Bush, George W. Bush and the Contract With America. They have all contributed to a new consensus for our party based on three propositions:

... that holding the line on taxes and unnecessary government spending will help stimulate economic **growth**;

... that the traditional values of family, work, excellence, and faith are essential to restoring the greatest possible **opportunity** for all Americans;

... and that a strong America improves the prospects for freedom and **peace**.

These are the three major propositions that have enabled the modern-day Republican Party to enjoy unprecedented unity, and a testament to their power as guidelines for our party is the fact that they are as true today as they were 40 years ago:

Growth
Opportunity
Peace

Republican candidates will be more successful if they can focus public attention on these larger ideas that unite people, rather than on those issues that divide us into small fractions of opinion. It's best to appeal to that 80 percent of the electorate that agrees with basic Republican principles: that the average taxpayer is not under-taxed; that America is not what's wrong with the world; that our public schools need accountability; that bureaucracy does not create wealth; that the budget surplus belongs to the American people, not to the government, etc.

At the same time, Republican candidates should be aware of emerging issues of potential divisiveness among would-be supporters. Democratic campaigns and liberal editorialists will pounce on any opportunity to "Divide and conquer."

Republican strategists need to keep in mind that if the Democrats and their allies in the media are allowed to set the agenda, the GOP will be on the defensive ... we will end up appearing not as a mainstream candidate that appeals to the majority of voters, but talking about minor mistakes that are blown all out of proportion as if they're major scandals.

So appeal to the 80%.

14. THE ISSUES MOST IMPORTANT TO VOTERS CAN BE THE MOST IRRELEVANT.

What are some of the important issues in the upcoming elections? Education? Saving Social Security? Health Care? All of them are major issues, and the polls tell us that voters are concerned about them. So, in most campaigns these issues will be largely irrelevant.

But, how can that be?

How can an issue be important, and a concern to voters, and yet be irrelevant at the same time?

First, these issues will usually not serve to distinguish one candidate from another. How many candidates take the position that educating our children or saving Social Security is unimportant? How many will demand a major increase in overall federal spending, or support lighter prison sentences for felons? How many will oppose peace or advocate military involvement anywhere by the U.S.? The answer, of course, is very few, except for the occasional incumbent who is so safe that he could run on a platform of free pretzels for everyone and still win.

Everyone will be in favor of reducing pork barrel spending, will oppose crime, and will want to improve education. In general, unless an issue will distinguish a candidate from his opponent in a way that is favorable to himself, it isn't very useful no matter how important it is.

The second reason that important issues can be of limited value is that the public is deeply skeptical about the ability of one person to make a significant difference on these issues. Voters don't really believe that one congressman alone is going to preserve the surplus, end violent crime, or bring about utopia. In fact, over-promising on these issues can sometimes create a backlash in the minds of voters—they come to think of the candidate as foolish and a windbag. That distrust in turn can undermine the candidate's credibility on other matters.

Of course, a challenger may be lucky. His opponent may run as an extreme liberal on these issues in a conservative district. Or, the challenger may have some specific "new idea" or qualification that does indeed separate him from the incumbent on major issues in a way that favors him. For example, he may support school vouchers and his opponent does not, and most local voters may care about that difference. Perhaps he has an established record of controlling spending, or cleaning up some economic mess.

Just keep in mind that "importance" by itself is only one consideration in evaluating an issue's tactical value.

15. To control the campaign agenda, you need to get the media and your opponent talking about your issues.

In discussions about political strategy, you'll often hear that in order to win you have to "control the agenda."

What does that mean, and why is that so important?

Well, basically it just means that you want the media, and your opponent, and the voting public, to be talking about the issues that favor you. For example, if your opponent is a liberal taxaholic who passed popular childcare legislation, you obviously want people to be talking about his addiction to taxes, not his childcare program.

Now, in reality, of course, you can't "control" what people talk about. But you have to try to keep the media and your opponent talking about "your" issues. So, you call news conferences, and unveil new advertising, and give speeches in order to "control the agenda."

Your opponent, naturally, will try to do the same.

He will constantly be trying to shift attention away from your strongest issues onto your weakest ones. If you have him on the ropes because he has voted against every proposed tax cut, he may well hit back at you by claiming that you would vote against programs to clean up toxic waste sites, or another popular sounding program.

Many campaigns hit the panic button when that happens. Staffers and supporters see some negative publicity about their candidate, and suddenly the pressure builds to "answer" the charges.

Sometimes you should mitigate the damage by answering. But, a candidate should be very careful about becoming reactive to his opponent's strategy.

Every day and dollar you spend talking about the other guy's issues is a day and dollar not spent promoting your own.

Moreover, the fact that you are talking about the issues raised by your opponent signals to the media that these are the important questions in the campaign, and it increases the likelihood that the media will focus on these issues at your expense. If that happens enough, you will have lost control of the campaign agenda.

So, remember: To control the campaign agenda, it is not so much how you talk about the issues, but rather, which issues you talk about.

16. If your opponent is not well-defined in the minds of voters, do the defining for him.

When you analyze polling data about your opponent, keep in mind that the less the voters know about him, the bigger your opportunity to define him.

Even when a high percentage of voters tell a pollster that they favor someone's re-election, if they can't think of anything substantive about that incumbent, the better chance a challenger has to fill up that blank slate . . . and win.

17. Campaigns that attach little importance to research end up paying for it in big mistakes and lost opportunities.

It's not unusual for a campaign to delegate the job of opposition research to an inexperienced college student. The campaign might end up saving some money that way . . . but, at what cost to winning?

Opposition research is often the key to victory, and it should be assigned to someone who has the time and know-how to do it thoroughly.

An experienced campaign consultant, Rich Galen, notes:

"The saddest words in politics are not 'what might have been.' The saddest words are 'Oops, I guess I should have checked that.' Small errors in fact will do more to damage your campaign than the original attack could ever have done to your opponent's.

"The problem most campaigns have with opposition research is they spend too much time looking for the big knockout punch—the one piece of information which will be so damaging that the opposition will simply crumple. That almost never happens. What you are looking for is a pattern of behavior that will lead the voter to believe your conclusion about the inadequacies of the incumbent.

"The first step in research is examining the public record. If the local newspaper does not have a readily available morgue, your local library is a good secondary source. After you've clipped all the news

stories about your opponent and filed them in meaningful categories, your next step is talking with the old timers . . . the people who have been involved in the political process for a long time. They know where the bodies are buried.”

Early on, you should somehow obtain a copy of your opponent’s resume. A lie on a resume can be fatal to the candidate; check the accuracy of every claim. Check any lawsuits against him, etc.

If he has a legislative record, check how he voted on controversial issues. Check his attendance record; did he miss key votes? Also check: Taxpayer-sponsored junkets . . . Voting for his or her own pay raise . . . Voting for new or higher taxes . . . Not living in the district . . . Involvement in a scandal . . . Police blotters . . . Previous business records . . . Campaign contributions, honoraria and gifts.

Compare his past rhetoric, and past promises, with his actual performance. Above all: **triple-check every “fact” before you act to ensure its accuracy.**

18. You actually have to research two candidates: your opponent and yourself.

We know, of course, that it’s important to research the opponent—his background and what he claims about himself, his stands on the issues, his legislative or administrative record, his campaign finance disclosure statements . . .

But, realize too that your opponent will be researching you, just as you’re researching him.

Consequently, it’s become almost standard practice now for a campaign to research its own candidate—in order to anticipate what the opposition might try to use against you.

No one is perfect; everyone has made their share of mistakes. Candidates, though, are people willing to go public with their life’s story and they need to be prepared for criticism that might come their way as a result. The best thing for the candidate to do is to sit down with his campaign manager and/or strategist and discuss anything in his past that might be dredged up and used against him. Quite often, candidates can defuse a potentially explosive issue by revealing it early to a reporter.

Just about every Clinton scandal that you can think of ballooned out of proportion because his initial instinct was to cover it up rather than make it public. Even in the case of Monica Lewinsky, a rational argument could be made that had he simply admitted to a personal affair the American people would have looked down on the incident but forgotten about it. As it turned out, Clinton decided to lie about the incident, which inevitably caused a year-long scandal that culminated in his impeachment.

By trying to anticipate anything and everything that could be said against you—fairly or not—you are then in a much better position to figure out the best way to deal with it. If it’s an accusation that was proven false, you can prepare not only to refute it but also to criticize the unfairness of its being brought up. If the charge is true but ancient, or trivial, or irrelevant . . . you can be prepared to answer it in a way that prompts most reporters and editors to downplay it.

One thing the Clinton years did was re-define the way the media covers scandals that involve someone’s private life. The generally accepted guideline is that it’s fair to talk about a candidate’s public record and public life, but not his private life unless it clearly affects his public performance . . . and certainly not his family.

People can be very forgiving, if they see that you’re basically honest and well intentioned, and don’t feel that you’ve lied to them. So candidates should begin by being honest with themselves, and with the people they’ve entrusted to present them in the best possible light.

19. The better an issue is for you and the more harmful it is to your opponent, the more careful you should be in verifying its accuracy and stating it correctly.

It is crucial that research be accurate. And that is far more of a challenge than most people realize.

Let's say that someone doing research in your campaign discovers in a past issue of a newspaper a truly offensive, foolish quote by your opponent. What should be your next step?

A good researcher will then check letters to the editor and corrections/retractions for the two-week period following the quote's appearance to make certain the newspaper didn't make a mistake. How would you like to be standing before a room full of reporters at a hastily called news conference, slamming your opponent for a foolish statement only to have a reporter point out that the quote in question was retracted by the newspaper as an error in reporting?

Even so-called "objective" facts can turn out to be dangerous. Do you or your researcher understand the major difference between 50 percent of black teenagers being unemployed and a 50 percent unemployment rate for black teenagers?

Another example: How much money does organized crime gross each year in the United States? In the past, *The New York Times* has reported \$50 billion dollars. Is that accurate? How does the *Times* know? Mob bosses don't exactly report their earnings to the I.R.S. A reporter looked into this very question and discovered that the estimate came from a witness who appeared at the Kefauver hearings on organized crime in the 1950s. The witness was asked how much money organized crime grossed each year in the United States, and he answered, "No one really knows. It could be \$5 billion. It could be \$50 billion." Afterwards, the newspapers and even experts picked up that statement, at first using it to say that organized crime grossed as much as \$50 billion a year, and later using the \$50 billion as an established fact. The amusing thing is, that figure didn't change for the next 30 years, despite inflation and despite the fact that everyone agreed that organized crime was a "growing" problem.

If *The New York Times* – which calls itself "the paper of record" – can fall into that trap, so can the average political candidate. So, the basic rule is: check your facts, double-check them, then triple-check them.

20. If you don't ensure that your campaign is in the Information Age, it may as well be in the Dark Ages.

At some point in the planning of the campaign, you will need to take a moment and consider the impact technology will have on your operation.

We already know that the remote control has revolutionized the way we watch television and therefore television ads. But how about other technology?

Will every staff member have a computer at their disposal? Will you put all of your volunteer, voter and donor lists on a database that you can access in the headquarters? Will you utilize specialized campaign manager software to help you keep track? How will the schedule be kept?

These are all critical questions. Every member of the campaign who needs to be reached must have a cell phone or a pager or both. The campaign will need at least a fax machine, and it will need access to the Internet and email. There are any number of ways that voice mail and conference calls can be utilized.

Technology also has a large impact on how you conduct your research because of the capabilities of the Internet. After all, everything that your campaign does or might do will now appear immediately on the Internet.

But the largest impact is in the area of research. It is very important that you research your opponent and yourself on the Internet. It is more important that this be done by someone who is both web savvy AND has enough political savvy to know where to look and which questions to ask.

The bottom line is, the conventional wisdom of campaigns and how they are set up has not yet grasped the impact of technology. You are running an entrepreneurial small business that has a going-out-of-business sale on Election Day. There are almost an infinite number of technological assets at your disposal should you choose to use them.

21. A poll is only as good as its interpretation.

Surveys of public opinion can help you understand which issues are most likely to move voters into your camp.

It's not just a matter of seeing which issues draw the highest percentage of public support. 71 percent of the voters sampled may agree with you on an issue like removal of parking meters, but it might be an issue they don't really care about.

What you really want a poll to reveal is . . . what are the cutting issues; what issues cut in your favor, and against the opponent? In other words, what are the issues that would cause undecided voters and independent voters and even some supporters of your opponent to decide to vote for you?

To discover cutting issues in a poll, you can't just look at the results of one question, such as: "Do you favor raising taxes?" You need to take the results of that question and then cross-reference it with the results of other questions, such as: "Are you a Democrat, Republican or Independent?" and, "Do you support Mr. Smith or Mr. Jones for Congress?" By cross-referencing those three questions, you can determine whether the fact that your opponent favors raising taxes could turn off some of his Independent and Democratic supporters, if you made that fact known to them through your advertising and publicity.

Polling results often surprise you. Some issues you assume will be most persuasive for you turn out not to change many voters' minds. Other issues, less important in your view, strongly cut in your favor.

So, it's not enough to skim through the polling results. You need an expert reading of that poll—a reading between the lines, so to speak—and that usually requires the knowledge of someone not only astute about polling but also familiar with the politics of your contest.

A word of caution about early polling: it can be a waste of money, and very demoralizing. To get good value from a poll, you need to ask the right questions. In order to know the right questions, you first need to do some basic research about your opponent, pertinent issues, and the district. Only then can your pollster craft intelligent questions that will reveal useful insights. And, if you're a relatively unknown candidate taking a poll in the hope of encouraging numbers, think again. You take the risk of being demoralized and demoralizing others in your campaign. Do your research first, then, once you commission your poll, keep your expectations low.

Poll numbers can change radically in your favor in the course of an election, especially if you use polling wisely: not as a crystal ball, but as a helpful guide.

22. If you want to represent the future, you'd better have a campaign website.

It is simply inexcusable for a campaign not to have a website. In fact, it sends a message to the voters if you DON'T have a URL (web address) included on your campaign material. The first place your opponent, the media or a potential voter may to "check you out" is the web, so you'd better be there.

Not only are websites a useful tool for getting out your "message," they can be very useful for organizing volunteers, maintaining a public schedule, informing the media of what your public events are, and getting feedback and input from voters.

The interactive capabilities of a website can be particularly critical in districts that cover a large area. Often times potential supporters will be unable to visit the campaign office to pick up materials or to fill out response cards, but a website brings your campaign into their home and allows you to contact them wherever they are.

Your website should be:

- 1) **Informative**
- 2) **Attractive**
- 3) **Interactive**
- 4) **Constantly Enhanced**
- 5) **Always Up to Date**

- 6) **Accurate**
- 7) **Easy to Use**

Perhaps most important is the ability a website gives you to raise money. In the 2000 Republican presidential primaries John McCain raised millions of dollars through small donations made on his website. This capability enhances your ability to raise money from all over the country and increase your donor file.

I am not suggesting that your campaign will raise millions of dollars this way, or even that a website will win or lose an election for you. Indeed, I would suggest that you resist the urge of an ambitious staffer, consultant or volunteer to create an interactive masterpiece with very expensive bells and whistles that looks nice but is not cost effective.

But, even if you use a free service and create a website that only has a simple layout with a basic message, if you want to project yourself as someone who represents the future for your district, you'd better have a campaign website.

23. What makes a poll reliable is not the number of people interviewed but the quality of the questions asked.

Polls can be very revealing, but they can also be very misleading if the right questions aren't asked.

The language that is used is particularly important. Do you understand the difference between personal approval and job approval? The impact on a poll respondent of the term "tax relief" versus "tax cut?" What the implications are when you refer to "school vouchers" versus "scholarships?" Creating "personal" Social Security accounts versus "privatizing" Social Security?

One example of this discrepancy comes from the budget battle in 1997. Many news outlets ran polls that asked: "which would you rather have, a tax cut or a balanced budget?" In the false choice given by this poll, a majority opted for what must have seemed to most Americans as a more responsible stance – the balanced budget. The media took this as a sign that President Clinton's proposal to balance the budget with no tax cuts was winning in the public forum.

But Republicans had introduced a budget that contained both tax cuts, and cuts in government spending that would enable a balanced budget. Republican pollsters asked the question: "which would you rather have, a balanced budget with tax cuts, or a balanced budget with more government spending?" As you can imagine, in this case tax cuts won overwhelmingly.

We can go back a little further to find another example. When Ted Kennedy was considering a run against incumbent president Jimmy Carter in 1980, the polls gave Ted a 2 to 1 lead. But, that was because voters were simply asked a "head to head" question: whom did they prefer between the two Democrats. A different pollster, however, followed that question with one reminding the person being polled of Chappaquiddick, and then asked which Democrat the person preferred for President. Immediately, Ted Kennedy dropped ten percentage points in that poll.

When Ted finally announced, he did an embarrassing interview with Roger Mudd, wherein he could not give a coherent answer when asked why he was running for President, and couldn't explain what happened at Chappaquiddick. Within three months, Ted Kennedy went from 2 to 1 up, to 2 to 1 down. The point is: those polls that convinced leading Democrats and leading journalists that Ted Kennedy would be unbeatable didn't mean much because the question didn't frame the true choice: Once people were reminded of Chappaquiddick, and once they learned he was inarticulate without his speechwriters, would they support him?

In framing good polling questions, then, it is important to anticipate the arguments that voters might hear in the course of the campaign—to learn not just what they think at the time the poll is conducted, but how their thinking might change once they hear both sides.

24. It is said, there are three kinds of lies: “lies, damned lies, and statistics” . . . but only polling can combine all three.

Another way that polling can be misleading is when people lie—consciously or not—to the pollster.

One great example of this is the issue of campaign finance reform. This is the pet issue of the mainstream media in our country. They give it greater coverage than almost any issue of modern times, and an advocate of “reform,” John McCain, nearly parlayed it into a successful presidential bid. When respondents are asked a yes or no question of whether this issue is important to them, they will overwhelmingly parrot what they have been bombarded with by the media – yes of course it is important. However, if you then give voters a list of issues and ask them to rank which is most important to them, campaign finance reform consistently comes in around 15th, 16th, or 17th. Can you even NAME 17 issues?

The point is certain issues elicit a kind of automatic “acceptable” response from voters: Yes, I favor peace, believe in racial harmony, and oppose prying into the private lives of other people.

When George Wallace ran for president, it was considered “not quite right” to back his campaign, and most people interviewed gave pollsters “proper” answers when asked about their choices for the presidency. As a result, Wallace’s support was consistently understated in the polls; when the votes were actually counted, he almost always received far more votes than anyone expected.

Because of his high job approval ratings and an effective communications campaign by democrats, polls in 1998 showed that a majority of Americans were against having Bill Clinton impeached. They especially did not feel that a “private affair” warranted the impeachment of a president. However, when the question was put to them “if the president lied under oath, should he be impeached?” the answer was much different. Within a year of his impeachment, fully two-thirds of the country supported the actions of the House Republicans.

There are two lessons here:

First, be careful in relying on public responses when “fashionable” issues have a strong moral or personal aspect to them. Second, however, never ignore the general importance of fashionable morality; you do so at your own risk.

25. To discover a new political issue, candidates should try trolling rather than polling.

Often the most effective issues for a candidate may be those that barely show up in the polls, issues where people feel strongly but don’t yet realize it. A candidate who recognizes one of these hidden issues can emerge both as a perceptive leader and as the main spokesman for that issue.

In the 1998 midterm elections, prescription drug coverage was a phrase that was hardly uttered. The country had just endured an election in which the Medicare program was a central theme, and while it was mentioned in 1998, it was hardly a hot-button. By 2000, both presidential candidates had come up with major drug-coverage plans and made them central themes of their campaign. How did this happen so quickly?

While no pollster may have had the foresight to ask seniors about their prescriptions, below the surface an issue had been bubbling for years. To our north, Canada has a state-run health system that subsidizes prescription drugs. Many seniors in border states, unable financially to cope with rising drug costs in our country, were getting on buses and riding north to illegally buy their prescription drugs and bring them back to the country.

The issue surfaced when ABC’s *Nightline* did a special report on it. Congressional Democrats, recognizing an opportunity to strike at Republicans, immediately called a meeting on how to exploit the problem and label Republicans as defenders of the big drug firms that were gouging seniors and forcing them to get their life-saving drugs from another country.

The point is, no pollster discovered this issue. When voters are asked by a pollster which issues they consider the most important, they tend to give conventional, predictable answers: education, health care, crime, etc. After all, these are the issues that they read about in the newspapers and hear about on television. They

come to mind easily, especially when some stranger at the end of a telephone line is asking for an immediate answer to such a broad question.

But “hidden issues” are not so easily discovered. If they were, they wouldn’t be hidden. Gut instinct, common sense, and creativity are the best tools to uncover them.

Candidates who go door to door campaigning and who take time to listen to what people have to say—their worries, their suggestions, their complaints—can get an intuitive sense of the public’s mood. By truly listening to hundreds of people, you will, in effect, conduct your own in-depth poll. Unlike telephone surveys, however, by talking casually with people in their own comfortable surroundings, you can detect in the words and tonalities they use to express themselves how deeply they care about a given issue, and what they realistically expect and hope you might do about it.

We might call this “trolling” for issues, rather than polling. For readers unfamiliar with fishing, Webster’s defines trolling this way: “to angle for with a hook and line drawn through the water from a moving boat.” Sounds to me like a candidate . . . listening . . . for hidden issues.

26. Test-drive an issue before buying.

Powerful, controversial national issues can produce a big yawn locally.

You should not assume that just because a certain issue is important to national editorial writers—or a cutting issue in someone else’s district—that it would be compelling in your own contest. You need to judge an issue in the context of your own area’s unique political, social, and economic environment.

And you need to test what effect it would have against your opponent.

There are ways to test an issue’s potential impact:

First: through actual firsthand discussion with voters in the course of campaigning. A candidate or volunteer can meet and talk with hundreds of people in a single day.

Second: through newspaper columns and letters to the editor. If people feel strongly about an issue, you will undoubtedly find ample evidence of that in local newspapers.

Third: through “focus groups”—a group of people selected at random by a pollster, and persuaded for some nominal fee to come to a conference room with other voters also selected at random, and discuss political questions posed by a neutral moderator. As the focus group discusses issues in this way, participants sometimes change their minds as they consider new insights and new information. Spontaneous statements made by some of the participants can be very revealing about the emotional dimensions of an issue.

Fourth: through various studies done by universities, chambers of commerce, or special interest groups.

Fifth: by taking a public opinion poll. Some campaigns make the mistake of conducting such surveys as their first and only means of understanding issues of concern to the voters. It is a useful tool, of course, but not the only tool.

Usually it is a combination of these methods that will best help shed light on which issues work to your advantage, because each method uncovers information in a different and revealing way.

27. Most people are not ideological.

For years, public opinion polls have shown that more people will describe themselves as conservatives than as liberals. But does that really mean that 40 percent of Americans go around thinking in the conservative philosophical tradition, while 30 percent of Americans go around thinking in contemporary liberal philosophical terms?

No, plainly that is not the case.

Man may be a political animal, as Aristotle put it, in the social and self-interest sense, but man is not ordinarily an ideological animal.

Most people do not interpret political reality—events and candidates and issues—in the context of abstract principles. They more often view politics in very personal terms, rather than philosophical terms.

This is not to say that Americans do not identify with certain overarching philosophies. Freedom and justice are concepts that we all understand. Most Americans understand broad themes of lower taxes and smaller government as well. But they come to these understandings less from reading the Federalist Papers than from balancing their own checkbooks.

For example, George W. Bush was successful in identifying tax cut “families” in 2000. He used them as an example to illustrate the actual amount of money – \$1,500 – that voters would take home if he was elected and his tax cut implemented. That is, an actual dollar and cents amount that your family would stand to gain – a pragmatic explanation of his policy. If Bush had instead made his case by waxing poetic about laissez-faire government, and the philosophical underpinnings of the free-market system, he would not have made the same connection.

And in saying this, I don’t mean to imply that people who think more abstractly and philosophically are necessarily more in touch with truth than those who think in more personal and concrete terms. In fact, one could argue that intuition about a man’s character will tell you more about how that man would act under pressure than all the words and ideals with which that man is associated.

Anyway, the point is, those of us immersed in politics day after day often lose our sense of perspective. We forget that most people do not live in our abstract world . . . where words and arguments are reality.

28. People vote not only their pocketbooks, but their families, their safety, and their idealism.

It’s an old cliché in politics that “people vote their pocketbooks”.

Like all clichés, it became one because it contains a large dose of truth in what it says. But if it were unqualifiedly true, then how did the Democrats—the party of higher taxes—control the Congress for so many decades and recently hold the White House?

A great many values tug at voters—money, family, safety, idealism—and the exact balance among those forces depends on the time and circumstances in which elections are conducted. During affluent times, people can afford to vote their idealism, and they often do. Their taxes might rise, but that is acceptable if their take-home pay rises, too.

One could argue that most people want to have their cake and eat it too. They want to vote for self-interest and altruism at the same time.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan blended both self-interest and altruism by arguing that tax cuts were best for everyone because they provided the incentive for, and made possible, economic growth. He pointed out that economic growth is necessary if we are to produce the wealth needed to care for the disadvantaged.

Speaker Gingrich made the point in 1998 that “if you work all of Monday and half of Tuesday to earn money for the government, that you ought to have the rest of the week to earn money for your family, your retirement, your church or synagogue and your favorite charity.” These are far more edifying ways to frame the issue than simply telling people: “You made it; you keep it.” These leaders reached people in terms of self-interest but also gave a moral justification for it.

Another example is the death penalty. A majority of voters support the death penalty for major, violent crimes. However, if in supporting that position a candidate comes across as a “hater”, as someone who wants to electrocute people, potential supporters may be turned off. They may be on that candidate’s side, but they feel bad, not good, about that. It would be better for the candidate to be the champion of victims—the defender of elderly people beaten up for their Social Security checks, women who are raped, young black males for whom

murder has become a leading cause of death. People want to see fewer innocent victims, not blood-thirsty punishment.

So, appeal to both conscience and creature comforts . . . self-interest and public interest.

29. If you have political dynamite to throw at your opponent, make sure that stick of dynamite is not shaped like a boomerang.

Just think of the number of times Republicans in Congress were convinced that they had Bill Clinton dead to rights, only to discover that the very issue they raised was now being used against them. One shining example was the Senate's investigation into foreign campaign funds in the 1996 presidential campaign, led by Senator Fred Thompson. Republicans were sure that they would be able to show the country how corrupt the Clinton administration was. In the end, Clinton himself was unscathed (although many of his associates were not). But, various Republican officials including their party chairman had to endure serious investigations and had their reputations tarnished. In the end the country concluded that Republicans as well as Democrats engaged in unseemly fundraising tactics, hardly a success.

Or, remember when Rick Lazio attacked Hillary Clinton on the issue of campaign finance reform? He, along with many pundits, was convinced that with her big labor and feminist special interest funding, along with the corruption associated with the Clinton name when it comes to fundraising, meant that Lazio would hit Clinton effectively with the issue of soft money. In fact, Lazio went so far as to dramatically leave his podium and walk over to Mrs. Clinton during a debate with a pledge to swear off soft money in his hand, daring her to sign it.

But it backfired. Lazio looked like he was bullying a woman who many people still saw as a sympathetic figure. It came off as arrogant and disrespectful to approach her because, after all, she was still the First Lady. Then, to make matters worse, she "called his bluff," signed the pledge, and began pointing out all of the soft money that Lazio had raised. As a national liberal icon, it was much easier for Hillary to raise large amounts of money from other sources while the relatively unknown Lazio, who began his campaign late, struggled to keep up.

In the end, this attack – which seemed like such a brilliant idea to so many, including the campaign strategists – turned out to be the undoing of Lazio's entire campaign.

More than one politician has survived an attack from his opponent by counter-charging "dirty politics" and "mudslinging". Indeed, several candidates have even used the same TV spot to counterattack: a commercial where mud is slung at a poster of the candidate, then the mud disappears as a voice-over tells the "truth" about the maligned candidate.

As voters have become better educated, they have become more resentful of unfair politics, especially when it is a "personal" attack. Does this mean that negative "character issues" rarely work in politics? That depends. They are most damaging when someone other than the opposing candidate or his staff—preferably the press—raises the issue. But, what if you have some explosive, legitimate issue to use on your opponent? In that case, ponder the following advice:

First, run aggressively against your opponent as early as possible. If you run as a low-key, gentle candidate for most of the campaign then suddenly go on the attack with a controversial issue in the final weeks, both the press and the public may see you as a desperate candidate, someone who is willing to do anything to win.

Second, before you use the explosive issue, start with issues less controversial which guarantee that most voters will be on your side. In this way you will establish greater credibility.

Third, if you begin attacking your opponent with a controversial issue, never back off the attack! If you do, voters will almost certainly interpret your retreat as an admission that either your facts or your tactics were wrong.

30. Issues that appeal only to a minority of voters can sometimes add up to a majority of voters on Election Day.

F.D.R. and other Democrats have shown that elections can be won by appealing to disparate groups that together add up to a majority.

Reagan, both Bushes and Congressional Republicans also succeeded in winning, but by appealing more to a “silent majority” than to sub-groups. Both Reagan and George H. W. Bush stressed broad, sometimes emotional, ideological issues that effectively split the national Democratic coalition. The Contract with America contained issues that were simultaneously targeted toward mainstream American families and voters who had sided with Ross Perot in 1992 but whom otherwise may not have even bothered to vote in the election.

All of which points up an interesting difference between the way Democrats and Republicans develop election strategy. In plotting strategy, Democrats usually begin by thinking of the groups of voters they need to turn-on and turn-out to make up a majority coalition . . . very specialized interest groups, such as: government employee unions, elderly voters in public housing, feminist and gay rights activists, various ethnic groups, etc. But when Republicans think about winning a majority they more often think of an overall majority of opinion, rather than component groups that might comprise it. Republicans tend to think like this: We need to aim for the 60% of the electorate here that voted for Bush, and the 65% that voted against raising taxes in a local referendum.

I think the difference between the two ways of thinking was illustrated in the 2000 presidential election. I call it the difference between vision from the mountaintop and vision from the weeds. George W. Bush created as a major campaign theme “bringing people together,” and described himself as a “uniter, not a divider.” He was appealing to the society at large and tried to use large themes that did not contain complicated specifics but set out a broader vision. Al Gore, on the other hand, gave a convention speech that almost listed by name every single disparate interest group in the Democrat party. A major theme for Gore was “fighting” for the common man against big corporate interests. This common man could be an environmentalist one day, a union worker the next, a minority job seeker the next. His programs contained very specific details so that every different interest group could be identified and stroked by one facet of his plan or another.

Republicans should continue to fight to keep the focus of debate on the larger issues where Americans clearly share traditional Republican values: the proposition that endless taxation leads to economic stagnation; that local government is more efficient than federal bureaucracy; that violent crime is not going to diminish by blaming society; etc.

However, for Republicans to be more competitive locally, our candidates also need to emulate successful Democrats in addressing people not just as individual citizens interested in large national themes and “good government”, but also as self-interested members of groups concerned about specific matters that affect their future. There’s nothing wrong with targeting specific interest groups like the elderly, veterans, neighborhood groups etc., as well as appearing to the public as a whole. The best strategy combines both the Democratic “special interest” focus and the Republican “general interest” focus. Most voters think on both levels.

31. Forget the K.I.S.S. rule of “Keep It Simple, Stupid” and remember instead to Keep It Smartly Simple.

You have to make your points clearly and simply if you’re to have any hope of being on the 6 o’clock news, or if you want to communicate your message in a 60 second radio commercial.

We can wish it were otherwise, but it is not.

The irony is that it takes much longer to say something much shorter. It’s easy to go on and on about an issue, but it’s painfully difficult to compress your thoughts into a few persuasive words.

A message both simple and smart can be profoundly convincing and memorable. We may have gotten very sick of it, but Bill Clinton and the Democrats were very successful in communicating a simple mantra in 1996: Medicare, Medicaid, Education and the Environment. Their leaders and talking heads inserted this simple phrase into every interview they gave. It wasn’t a complicated manifesto of the progressive movement, but it effectively told voters what the Democrats wanted them to believe they stood for.

In 1994, the Contract With America offered a very simple contrast between the two parties. One had signed a contract that it would keep its word once elected. “A campaign promise is one thing; a contract is quite another.” The other party didn’t sign anything, leaving you to believe they would be business as usual. In addition, the message contained within the contract was a simple, positive, straightforward agenda: tax cuts, a balanced budget, welfare reform, higher defense spending.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan perfected the simple message by asking the American people the question, “Are you better off now than you were four years ago?” Carter’s candidacy was finished when Reagan asked this brilliant question, yet it was not complicated or overwhelmingly cerebral.

It’s important not to confuse a simple message with a simple- minded message. Don’t give in to the temptation of offering simple solutions to obviously complicated problems. People can see through that, and candidates then lose their credibility. For example, it’s one thing to develop a theme that it’s time to crack down on violent crime; it’s another to argue that if we simply restore capital punishment that will end most violent crime.

Keep it simple, but keep it smartly simple.

MEDIA

32. Television, and every other medium, is only as powerful as the message advertised through it.

It's understandable that we are somewhat in awe of the power of television. It creates new celebrities, and destroys reputations. It can make a product, or a disease, or a scientific concept a household word overnight. And, because it is both sound and sight, it can captivate the imagination unlike any other medium.

The television is actually on in the average U.S. home seven hours a day. Now, that doesn't mean it is necessarily being watched at all times; sometimes it's only half-watched, as someone irons a shirt. Still, it is certainly pervasive.

The classic example of the power of television in politics is the infamous "Daisy" commercial, meant to strike fear in the hearts of Americans regarding 1964 presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. The spot showed a young girl in a field, picking a daisy; suddenly the tranquil view was displaced by a mushrooming nuclear explosion. Subtle it was not. But the commercial was so potent that Lyndon Johnson's campaign pulled it after broadcasting it only once. That's all they had to air it, for it to have had its desired effect. Public controversy about the commercial kept it fresh in voters' minds after that.

But, that raises a question: Was it the power of TV that made such an impact in that case ... or was it the power of the message itself? Now, that particular message could only have worked effectively on TV. But that is not always the case. The creator of that spot was Tony Swartz, a media recluse in New York who has done many Democratic campaigns. But ironically, he is a great believer in radio for political persuasion. Radio has some advantages over television: a person listening to a 60 second radio spot can often follow the reasoning of the narration better than when distracted by visuals in a 30 second TV spot; radio commercials are cheaper to produce; the air time is usually less expensive; commercials can be targeted to very specific audiences; many people listen to the radio in their car, where they do not have the option of 120 channels; and spots can be produced within hours, when you need to respond quickly.

Newspaper ads also afford certain unique advantages. When you want to reach "opinion leaders" with a message not easily reduced to 30 or 60 seconds of talk, a well-designed newspaper ad can accomplish that. Newspaper readers tend to vote more often; they tend to be better informed and more interested in politics. Creative eye-catching newspaper ads can stir useful controversy by making a persuasive case against the opponent with documented proof. Newspaper space also allows room for a coupon at the bottom, urging readers to send money and join the campaign as volunteers.

The bottom line is this: Any medium is the best if the message works best in it. So, first, figure out the message.

33. Your "image" as a candidate should not be based on what you think the people want, but rather on what you are.

Television has been called an x-ray machine because viewers can usually see through insincere, pretentious people who appear on it.

Candidates are being X-rayed by people all the time—on or off the tube. That's not because people want to see through you, but rather because they want to know whether they can believe you, and then believe in you. The lesson in all this is very simple: Be yourself. You aren't perfect, you may not be magnetic—indeed, they might say you've had a charisma bypass operation.

But just be yourself. If you're genuine—if you're not trying to be something you aren't—you'll stand out and be respected. That's the way to live, and that's the way to win.

It will be tempting for your campaign manager, press secretary and advertising consultant to try to publicize and advertise an image of you that reflects their enthusiasm and high opinion of you. But just as you wouldn't make the mistake of embellishing your resume, neither should you allow a misleading representation of you in other ways.

Think about the 2000 presidential campaign. It seemed that every time Al Gore got a bad poll, his consultants tried to make him something he was not. He brought in consultants to change his clothes, to make him an "alpha male" and then to make him polite and quiet during the debates. In the end, what the voter got was

a sense that Al Gore didn't know who he was. On the other hand, George W. Bush may flub a few words here and there, but he consistently let the American people know that he is who he is.

A smart campaign will stay in character with the candidate.

34. Fights make news; shyness doesn't.

Sometimes it seems that Republicans are, by nature, shy. And they tend to shy away from controversy.

In a way, it's just human nature to be shy in public affairs. After all, who likes the unpleasantness of conflict and controversy? The problem is, Democrats don't always subscribe to human nature. They profess to love "nature", as environmentalists, but human nature they sometimes have trouble with ...

Anyway, Republican challengers need to overcome their inherent shyness and politeness if they are to prevail in the arena of political combat.

Perhaps the best example of that was the 1988 Bush for President campaign. Refreshing your memory, the Democrats and many leading lights in the news media painted the then Vice President as a "wimp". They knew he had shown singular courage in World War II, and many of them knew the private George Bush well enough to know how unfair it was to depict his gracious and gentlemanly nature as being wimpy. Yet, when George Bush came on as a warrior and forceful leader in his own right—leading the charge against the Massachusetts liberalism of Michael Stanley Dukakis—these same people who had slandered George Bush as a wimp immediately started whining about the unfairness of his being too aggressive. What hypocrisy.

Frankly, some Republican candidates make the mistake of worrying too much about what friends, neighbors, family members and the so-called country club set might think if they "go negative" and get aggressive. Democratic opponents are aware of this concern, and often arrange to get League of Women Voters types to complain vigorously to the Republican candidate ... "I've always been a loyal Republican," they invariably say, true or not, "but this kind of negative campaigning is awful and all of my friends are turned off by it ... blah, blah"

Many sincere Republican candidates, despite their early resolve to be tough, then buckle under to these complaints. Unlike Bush who fought his way up from a 17 point deficit in the polls, they stop attacking. They discover that they didn't have the stomach for confrontation and controversy, and, essentially give up the fight.

To win, Republicans have to overcome their aversion to controversy . . . and learn to take the fight to the other side.

35. Before launching a new idea to attract attention, first evaluate what kind of attention it will likely attract.

Every challenger campaign needs to spark the kind of news coverage and public discussion that will give it a lift and momentum.

But before launching a new idea to accomplish that, be sure you've considered all the possible consequences.

To evaluate an idea, consider the following:

Perception—Will it enhance, or at least be consistent with, the candidate's image and reputation?

Timing—Is it consistent with the overall strategy and schedule?

Newsworthiness—Will it interest reporters, and can it be sustained to keep their interest?

Fundraising—Does it help, or at least not harm, efforts to raise money?

Volunteers—Does it help attract workers, and does it help keep their morale up?

Issues—Does it help illuminate useful issues?

Voters—Does it appeal to your target voters?

Advertising—Will it reinforce, or at least not detract from, the advertising?

Opposition—Does it help demoralize the opposition?

Fairness—Is it accurate and fair, so that it can withstand scrutiny and debate?

Now, few ideas will accomplish all of the above. But, you at least want to consider all of the angles beforehand . . . then decide whether to proceed.

36. All reporters are biased, and their bias is for news.

Many Republican candidates assume that reporters are all liberal, and therefore predictably hostile and unfair. Yes, polls taken after the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections showed overwhelming support for Bill Clinton amongst Washington journalists. However, most young reporters are skeptical of any elected officials (which can help a challenger candidate.) They actually tend to be more libertarian in their thinking.

But, as a matter of practical politics, the bias among reporters that is more important is their bias for news. Having grown up with the history of Watergate taught in every journalism school, most of today's reporters that cover politics are eager to break "the next big story," no matter which party the elected official is in.

Give reporters something provocative and newsworthy to cover, and they'll cover it. Even if they disagree with you on most issues, they want to see a contest. In fact, the modus operandi for journalists is to create a fight for every story. They, and their readers/viewers/listeners, can easily break down a story when it is cleaved into two sides that disagree with one another. And, believe it or not, most reporters try to be fair. (They know it's unprofessional not to be.)

At the same time, though, you can't assume they'll go out of their way to cover you just because you're an announced candidate. There are other stories tugging at them, and if they don't hear anything from you they'll assume that you're not all that active or credible.

Keep in mind, too, that reporters and editors are distrustful of campaigns; they are afraid of being "used", and tend to classify most campaign pronouncements as mere "politics" rather than legitimate "news". They have a vague internal standard to measure the difference between the two: Poll results are news. Personal scandal is news. Raising a lot of money is news. But, one press release, or one speech about an issue, or one public appearance to highlight an issue . . . well, that's just "politics" (especially if they have already heard the speech or if it does not cover any new positions.) After all, every candidate at every level is churning out press releases, giving speeches, and making personal appearances all the time.

Repetition and imagination are both useful tools for overcoming this threshold resistance on the part of the media. If you hammer away hard enough, often enough, and effectively enough at a few issues in your press releases, speeches, debates, and advertising, the press usually comes to view all this in a different light. "Ah," they say to themselves, "now I understand. These issues aren't just episodic political stabs for attention; they are a central part of the campaign strategy." Once you cross this threshold—a credibility threshold—the press is much more likely to pay attention to your issues, particularly if you are making progress in the polls or in fundraising or if the opposition is becoming sensitive and striking back.

37. Candidates need to read as regularly as students because they are tested everyday.

There should be time reserved in a candidate's schedule for daily reading, in order to keep up with current events and current thinking.

Ideally, a candidate should read newspapers, magazines, and books ... underlining significant ideas, facts and arguments. Those that are relevant for possible speech material or debate material can be put in a notebook. Someone skilled in dealing with issues can then organize that material along with other information received by the candidate from the national and/or state GOP.

That issues notebook can help the candidate quickly bone up for things like editorial board meetings, news conferences, one-on-one press interviews, as well as debates.

Candidates are students as well as teachers.

In reading publications, candidates should resist the temptation to accept a writer's opinion simply because it seems factual and authoritative. And a candidate should not simply seek out the thinking of people he agrees with, but should also read points of view in conflict with his own. The best way to prepare oneself for debate is to know the arguments of the other side.

A candidate should find a good political thinker who can help prepare him in understanding the ins and outs of issues, and work with that person to figure out the best way to present his issues and defend his positions.

Remember that the challenge of being a candidate is to:

- 1) understand the complexities of an issue, and then;
- 2) distill it for those who might not, and;
- 3) do it in an interesting, persuasive and memorable way.

38. Before any news conference or media interview, play 20 Questions.

Before you announce your candidacy and make your first impression ... before you go on record with words that may later haunt you ... try to anticipate the questions that reporters might ask.

And then prepare good answers.

You shouldn't memorize every answer, of course. Unless you're a professional actor, you'd come across as stilted and insincere if you tried. But, you should a) think through the main points of what you'd want to say in answering any question, b) practice answering questions with your advisers, and c) be ready with some quotable "sound bites" that you'd like reporters to share with the voters.

A prepared candidate will go into an interview with a clear definition of success in their mind. Speaker Gingrich used the model "Headline, Picture, Story." That is, he knew going into any interview what he wanted the headline of the article to say, what he wanted the picture to look like, and what he wanted the story to say.

A prepared candidate will already know what message they want to communicate, regardless of what the questions are. This requires the confidence you can only get from being fully prepared.

You must anticipate the obvious questions, because that's where any good journalist has to begin in writing a story. For example, if you're announcing your candidacy you'd better be ready to answer questions like these:

- 1) Why did you decide to run? Why should the voters elect you?
- 2) What's your background? Schools, work, family ... ?
- 3) What are your main qualifications?
- 4) Why do you think the incumbent can be beaten?
- 5) What issues are you going to advertise?
- 6) How much money do you hope to raise; will you put in your own; will you restrict special interest money?
- 7) Have you done any polls, or seen any poll results; do you plan to run one soon?
- 8) Who will be heading up your campaign?
- 9) What's your strategy?
- 10) How do you describe yourself, ideologically?

- 11) How do you view the Bush administration; how do you differ from the President on the issues? (Congressional leadership; Governor; your state's delegation; etc.)
- 12) Will you be receiving money and help from the party?
- 13) Where do you stand on the fiscal issues?
- 14) Where do you stand on social issues?
- 15) Will you be running negative advertising?
- 16) What kind of image will you be offering the voters?
- 17) Do you know the incumbent personally; what are his strengths and weaknesses?
- 18) How much time will you be spending on the campaign?
- 19) What big names are supporting your candidacy?
- 20) If elected, what do you hope to accomplish?

Sometimes reporters won't ask that many questions; sometimes they'll ask many more. The point is: try to anticipate as many questions as you can, so you'll have a chance to mentally prepare good, quotable answers.

39. Attacking you can be the nicest thing an opponent will do for you.

Every attack by the opponent is an opportunity for counter-attack.

As in the martial arts, you have to learn to turn the force of an attack back on the attacker. In political terms, you take the media attention that his attack will generate for you and use it to your advantage.

Now, with all this talk of "attack" and martial arts, you might think I'm suggesting that you simply answer his criticism head-on then aim some of your own at him. No, that's not necessarily true. In fact, some of the most effective counter-attacks don't come across as attacks, at all. For example, in Ronald Reagan's famous debate with Jimmy Carter, what was the counter-attack that put Carter down so effectively? "There you go again." And when Walter Mondale hoped to exploit Reagan's age as an issue, President Reagan successfully put the issue to rest when he answered a question about his age with the quip that he wouldn't use his opponent's inexperience and immaturity against him.

Likewise, in 1994, when Democrats attacked the Contract With America, they said that balancing the budget, cutting taxes and reforming welfare were dangerous, right-wing ideas. This only served to reinforce the effectiveness of the Contract's message, since most Americans considered those things to be just common sense rather than dangerous.

You don't have to be rude or deadly serious to turn back an attack. Indeed, to be humorous and sincere can be much more potent in making the attacker look bad.

However, do realize that you have to be factual and serious in refuting serious charges against you. A mere quip or shrug of the shoulders won't get the job done. Someone in the campaign, if not the candidate himself, should make sure the record is straightened out; otherwise, damaging charges not refuted can be spread by the opposition very easily.

If the criticism leveled against you is just part of a barrage to keep you on the defensive, answering charges might make you look bad if people start assuming that "where there's smoke there must be fire". Keep in mind that the candidate doesn't have to answer charges personally. A campaign spokesman can set the record straight, and usually if it's just a spokesman rather than the candidate, reporters tend to give it less coverage. A story about feuding candidates is considered newsworthy by editors; a story about a press secretary refuting a candidate is hardly headline-making.

And when criticism is shot at you, don't over-react. Make sure you've heard the charges correctly, word for word. Then give it some thought. And fire back.

40. A minor detail can communicate a mega issue.

No one can truly comprehend the enormity of the federal budget, nor even the rate of its increase from year to year. Let's face it, you don't hear people complaining, "If it went up only \$38 billion I wouldn't mind so much, but \$47 billion is horrifying!"

That's why, for example, Democrats latched onto the school lunch program in 1995 to illustrate that Republicans "didn't care about school children." Never mind that Republicans wanted to increase the amount of money going to the program and had simply proposed a reduction in the rate in which the program would grow. The next thing you saw were thousands of children on Capitol Hill, holding signs that read "please don't take my school lunch from me."

Voters can get indignant about what they believe they know – they know that they can feed a child for two dollars and fifty cents – but they don't pretend to know how the federal budget for education works, or even how a federal school lunch program works.

They don't know how a President should schedule his time to give the right priorities to his administration, but they know Bill Clinton shouldn't have made Air Force One wait 3 hours on the tarmac in Los Angeles for him to get a haircut.

Minor details can be very effective in telling a story. That's why the Democrats pounced on the announcement by the EPA that they would not continue President Clinton's last minute order to reduce the levels of arsenic in drinking water. Democrats and liberal activists quickly called a press conference to use the opportunity to depict President Bush as "anti-environment." Of course, the levels of arsenic that are at issue are so miniscule so as to barely affect anyone in our country. In fact, when President Clinton issued the order, he did so knowing full well that it would be almost impossible for the Bush administration to effectively uphold. But, Americans know that arsenic is a poison, and most of them didn't know that safe levels of it exist in drinking water.

It may have been a minor detail that Al Gore had hired Naomi Wolf to coach him on how to dress and act in public. But knowing that she had joined the campaign as a paid consultant helped illustrate the larger idea that Al Gore was unsure of who he was and wanted to change himself.

Whether you are telling an anecdote, or drawing attention to a complex issue, keep in mind that most people tend to seize on small, colorful details that illustrate the bigger picture. So think big, but also think small.

41. Labeling a candidate can make selling a candidate more difficult.

Think of some one-word labels for the most recent presidential candidates. Al Gore? Exaggerator. George W. Bush? Dumb. Bob Dole? Old. Bill Clinton? Waffler. Slick. Womanizer. (We could probably go on and on with this one!)

Candidates for office often obtain labels during a campaign that helps shape their image. As impressions "trickle down" to voters who may not be paying close attention, the number of adjectives shrinks – often down to one or two words. This is their label, and it was usually given to them by their opponent.

In the 2000 election, the Bush for President campaign helped highlight the many times that Al Gore had exaggerated his record - "I was instrumental in inventing the Internet." Even as Gore spent precious weeks trying to wriggle out of that characterization, he only ended up reinforcing the perception when he exaggerated stories during the presidential debates. (Gaffes that would not have carried nearly the same weight had the Bush campaign not already been playing up the label.)

Gore was successfully labeled as untrustworthy ... beholden to the unions ... an environmental extremist ... a traditional tax and spend Democrat ... another Clinton scandal waiting to happen.

To label him was to define him. And, once defined, he was defeated.

Meanwhile, George W. Bush labeled himself a "compassionate conservative," and a "reformer with results."

Quite often, it is the news media that labels a candidate, rather than the opponent. It's understandable that reporters, especially on television or radio, don't want to spend a lot of time explaining the philosophical bent of a candidate in reporting a given story. It makes their job much easier to be able to refer to Congressman Smith as a "social-conservative," or Congressman Jones as an old-line liberal—instead of getting into details about how the candidate votes or discusses his "vision".

But, while labeling makes a reporter's job easier, it often makes a candidate's job more difficult.

Most voters are not very political in their thinking. What "liberal" means to one person, for example, may mean something very different to another. For example, to some it still means F.D.R. and J.F.K and civil rights laws; to others, it means McGovern and Hillary Clinton and raising taxes.

The same is true when a conservative coyly refers to himself as a "classical liberal", meaning that Edmund Burke's liberalism is now today's conservatism. How many people out there in television-land understand that? And how many non-political people understand terms like "neo-conservative"? Or "economic empowerment," or even "libertarian"? Remember, as tragic as it is, we live in a time when many high school students cannot identify Joseph Stalin or Winston Churchill.

So, don't assume that labels you think are meaningful necessarily mean all that much to others.

Al Gore made the classic mistake of letting his opponent label him and thus define him. Don't make the even bigger mistake of narrowly defining yourself.

42. Republican campaigns don't use repetition enough.

I think that's worth repeating ...

Republican campaigns don't use repetition enough!

What am I trying to say?

Basically, that Republican campaigns don't use repetition enough!

Now, I'm not suggesting that this is a character flaw. To the contrary, it probably reflects favorably on our politeness and respect for people. Yes, that must be it: We don't want to insult the intelligence of our listeners by saying something over and over.

Unfortunately, the reality is this:

In a political campaign, you're reaching voters on a hit-and-miss basis; if you don't repeat a message over and over, it won't get through to them.

You might catch John Smith with a 30-second radio spot as he backs his Buick down the driveway, but you might not reach John Smith again for another six days when he happens to catch the last four seconds of your TV commercial as he zaps through channels with his remote control. And he rarely reads the general news sections of his daily newspaper so he'll probably miss any positive mentions of your campaign in political articles ... And, sadly, your campaign brochure that one of your volunteers left on John Smith's doorknob was made into a nifty paper airplane by his-nine year old son.

The point is, if you want your message to get through to John Smith—and if you want it to stick to his brain—you have to repeat it. Yes, you have to repeat it. That's right; you have to repeat it.

After all, the average person is bombarded with hundreds of advertised messages every day—store signs, radio and TV commercials, newspaper ads, junk mail, the back of cereal boxes ...

You have a lot of competition for the voter/taxpayer/bill payer/consumer's attention.

So I hope you agree with me on this. I'd hate to repeat the fact that:

Republican candidates don't use repetition enough!

43. You can psych out an opponent without acting like a psycho.

It can be beneficial, of course, if your campaign is so effective that you psych out the opposition ... throwing them off-balance so that they make a mistake.

That can be an important breakthrough for your campaign.

However, you should not become so fixated on how the opposition responds to your aggressiveness that you make the mistake of measuring your campaign's progress by what the opposition says or doesn't say, rather than by what you're actually accomplishing in persuading voters.

It's understandable that a contest between two candidates becomes intensely personal. It often becomes so bitter that a candidate thinks of a debate as mortal combat.

It is natural, too, that the campaign strategist is often drawn into this prize-fight mentality ... wanting to unleash such a devastating attack on the opponent that he'll come unglued, preferably on live television.

More likely, though, you will psych out your opponent by working extremely hard, raising a lot of money, and aggressively zeroing in on his weaknesses in an appropriate way. If they see that you are mounting a legitimate campaign, bringing in volunteers, earning media coverage and not making mistakes, they will certainly take notice.

So, yes, it's good to psych out the opposition. But don't get so obsessed with doing it that you are, in effect, psyched out by being overly focused on the opposition.

Turning on voters is your main aim, not scaring the opponent.

44. "To debate or not to debate" is *not* the only question.

A challenger won't get very far with an "I won't debate" attitude. And few incumbents in this era can get away with not debating, either. But before you give a definitive answer to a debate invitation, you should consider many questions ...

Who would sponsor the debate? Will it be an established organization, like the League of Women Voters, or will it be jointly-sponsored by the campaigns? Who will attend? Will there be tickets allotted to both campaigns, or will each side try to pack the place with its own supporters?

Will it be televised? By a network-affiliate or cable? Will it be in prime time, or during fringe time?

What will be the format? Will there be opening and closing statements by the candidates? Will a panel of reporters put questions to the candidates? Will the two candidates ask questions of each other? Will there be questions from the audience, first screened by the moderator? How long will a candidate have to give an answer, and rebut?

Who will you authorize to negotiate on your behalf—with the sponsoring organization and with the opposing campaign—to try to get the format, location, panelists, promotion, and coverage that gives you maximum advantage?

Is there a good debate coach to prep the candidate? Do you have media people who can take care of technical details? Ever since Richard Nixon was said to have lost his first televised debate with John Kennedy because of poor make-up and fatigued appearance, campaigns have paid more attention to the details of lighting, camera angles, and cosmetics. As much as possible, professionals should take care of the technical matters so the candidate need only worry about getting his message across.

Is there available time in your campaign schedule prior to the debate to allow for adequate candidate preparation? Will you have time to determine specific debate strategy ... time for the candidate to do issues homework ... time for practice debates ... debate coaching ... videotaped rehearsals?

Should you hype the event with pre-debate publicity or possibly even advertise it? What is your post-debate strategy to maximize a good performance by your candidate and/or take advantage of any gaffes the

opponent might make? Can you use footage from the debate in your advertising? Pass out materials to reporters during the debate?

What would constitute “winning” the debate for your candidate? What statements or revelations or sound bites by your candidate would you like to see reported by the news media afterwards? How can you prep the candidate to accomplish those objectives?

45. In political advertising, there is a vast difference between production value and persuasive value.

Campaign advertising can be seductive.

Staffers and volunteers are often tickled to death to see almost any commercial of their candidate ... because it means that their friends will finally see that the campaign they've been working so hard on is for real. But, that's not the basis for deciding whether a commercial is good.

Does it persuade the voters?

The candidate's ego, of course, is often a factor. In previewing a television commercial any candidate is naturally going to be struck by how he looks and sounds. That's human nature. (Even in this sophisticated era of camcorders and VCRs, people are still aghast at how they sound on tape ... “I don't sound like me!”)

But campaign decision-makers have to be concerned about something more important than the candidate's feelings and the eagerness of the staff: Is the message right, and does the spot sell that message convincingly?

Now, part of what makes the commercial persuasive is certainly a matter of image and style ... how the candidate comes across as a person. But many, even in the advertising business, make the mistake of thinking that an ad's slickness is its quality. Not so.

Most voters have learned that, in both politics and life, sincerity is worth a helluva lot more than slickness. Despite what many think, voters aren't usually swayed by image alone.

So, don't spend a huge amount of money on special effects and slickness. Try sincerity. You will find that in the kaleidoscope of hyper-paced jazzed-up commercials, it's the one thing that stands out.

46. Experts in corporate advertising can be amateurs in political advertising.

Some advertising firms handle both corporate and political clients, and do a good job with each. But you shouldn't assume that an ad agency that does only corporate advertising can do quality work for a political account. If they don't understand politics, chances are good that their instincts will be off-base in trying to “sell” your candidacy ... despite their best intentions.

Contrary to predictions that political TV advertising would lead to merchandising candidates like cereal, there are major differences between the two kinds of “marketing.”

For one thing, those who are oriented to advertising corporate products and services usually have difficulty trying to “package” intangibles like issues and integrity.

For another thing, in corporate advertising you can win 9 percent of the market and be considered a phenomenal success. But, in politics, if you win 49 percent of the market you're called a loser.

In addition, corporate advertising specialists are trained to cope with the rigors of a campaign. Rarely do you see Colgate have to come up with an ad within 24 hours to combat what Aquafresh just said about them!

In the dot-com era, the new corporate producers are even further away from what's necessary in political advertising. Conveying a political message takes more than a good logo, a happy slogan and a snappy

jingle. In a campaign, you are trying to persuade voters; dot-com advertising is based around getting to a destination (a web site) where you will be persuaded at a later time.

It's not a matter of political advertising being inherently more difficult – just different.

If possible, get an advertising firm that knows what politics is all about. If you prefer to have a friend in corporate advertising do your production work, fine ... but, if he doesn't know politics, be sure you have someone savvy working alongside him to help conceptualize the right message and image.

47. It's best to advertise in a combination of media because voters usually need to hear something from more than one source before they accept it.

Some political operatives seem to believe in a magic formula for media budgeting, such as: 50 percent of the total campaign budget should go to television. Or some such arbitrary number.

But the best media program is one that is tailored to the unique realities of the candidate's strategy, taking into account:

- a) the specific message being presented,
- b) the audience being targeted,
- c) the cost-effectiveness of each medium,
- d) the limitations of the campaign budget,
- e) the timing dictated by strategy,
- f) and the strengths and weaknesses of both candidates.

Depending on what a campaign can afford, it's usually best to have some variety in what's called the "media mix", i.e. the combination of advertising media you use. And the reason for this is much the same reason that a good speaker will mix humor with dry material, and mix anecdotes with financial analysis: people need variety, and need to hear something from different perspectives, to be persuaded.

It's just like making up your mind about someone or something based on what you hear from other people. When you hear something the first time, you think to yourself: "Well, that might be true." The next time you hear it from someone else, you think, "That's probably true." And the next time you hear it, you think, "That must be true; I've heard that from everybody!"

A good media mix is also important because some voters get most of their news from television, while others get theirs from newspapers (daily and/or weekly), while still others get theirs from radio and of course don't forget the influence of the Internet. So, if your campaign can afford it, let people hear your message on radio, read your message in print, watch your message on television and interact with your message on your website.

MANAGEMENT

48. Running a campaign is like flying upside down.

Like a pilot in combat, a campaign manager will often be forced to make important decisions under intense pressure, in the midst of confusion, and in the heat of battle.

It's impossible to train someone for that kind of topsy-turvy experience because there is no way to simulate what that pressure is really like. It can be disorienting. It can be scary. A lot of it has to be learned firsthand, and a lot depends on that vague thing we call "instinct."

But perhaps the first step to prepare oneself for this kind of "high anxiety" is to understand beforehand that running a campaign is much more of an entrepreneurial job than a management job.

In creating a campaign, you need the instincts of an entrepreneur because you are trying to make something out of nothing—as opposed to managing an already established enterprise. Like an entrepreneur, you will know what it's like to operate on a shoestring, take enormous risks, and make decisions by the seat of your pants. You will be more concerned with motivation than messiness, and more concerned with persuasion than procedure.

And what makes this entrepreneurial effort even more topsy-turvy is the fact that you are designing a business to go out of business! Every effort and every dollar goes into a gigantic going-out-of-business sale called Election Day.

It is certainly a strange challenge, when you think about it ... To create a campaign out of nothing, and then see it disappear after its climactic moment.

But, to succeed, you have to enjoy that challenge ...

The challenge of flying upside down.

49. For Effective Planning and Management, "Vision, Strategies, Projects, Tactics" is the only model big enough for a campaign

Whether it is writing the entire campaign plan, defining each staff member's job or simply planning out the individual goals that the campaign needs to accomplish, the only planning model big enough to work for a campaign is:

Visions, Strategies, Projects, Tactics,

This is a hierarchical model; it starts at the top and works its way down.

Vision – this is the overarching goal that you are trying to achieve. It is a statement of what you want to accomplish, as opposed to what you want something to be. You may want the campaign to "be" fun, or successful. But what you want to accomplish is what the end product looks like when the campaign is over, and your vision statement should contain a definition of what success is. (Example: To win the election in November by getting more of our voters to the polls than our opponent.) Vision is the most important part of the model. Without vision, strategies make no sense; without strategies that make sense, projects cause motion rather than progress; and tactics make no sense at all.

Strategies – these are broad, non-detailed themes that you do to achieve your vision. Think about the simple synopsis a newspaper might write at the end of the campaign explaining why you won. (Example: Creating an image to voters of a competent businessman; changing the way voters think about the incumbent; appealing to my conservative base.) It is important to remember that every strategy you design is detrimental rather than helpful unless it's execution accomplishes your vision.

Projects – these are definable, delegatable achievements that if accomplished will implement your strategies. (Example: Give speeches to civic organizations; raise \$300,000; register 500 new voters per month; advertise on television; conduct radio, print and television interviews twice a week.) Whereas strategies are themes, projects are tangible assignments that can each have their own vision, strategies, projects and tactics created for them.

Tactics – these are the basic, day-to-day tasks that you carry out to implement your projects. (Example: coming to work each day; talking to the volunteers; sending out press releases; going door to door to meet voters; handing out leaflets in a busy mall, sending out the invitations to an event.)

If you follow this model, you will always know simultaneously what it is that you are trying to ultimately achieve, and what it is that you are supposed to be doing at that moment to get it done.

50. A campaign manager is less a manager than a director.

A candidate will often hire the campaign manager first, who in turn will take the lead in recruiting an effective staff

The qualities of the campaign manager are crucial because in many ways he is a surrogate candidate, acting as a substitute for the candidate in motivating volunteers, speaking to reporters, and so forth.

It is important, therefore, that the candidate find a campaign manager who is:

a) trustworthy, b) compatible, and c) capable in terms of having good political judgment and know-how.

One could argue that the very name “campaign manager” has become outdated. In creating a campaign you have to infuse it with contagious enthusiasm, so what is needed from the campaign leader is less “management” than motivation. In a challenger campaign especially, the leader needs to ignite a spark of creative energy in people that keeps them working hard no matter how far behind the candidate may be in the polls. That spirit of creativity is dampened by a campaign manager who is eager to manage but not to lead.

John Sculley of Apple Computers discovered that nearly all of our models of motivation are derived from industrial labor where management is often antithetical to creativity: “Management demands consensus, control, certainty, and the status quo; creativity thrives on the opposite: instinct, uncertainty, freedom and iconoclasm.” Sculley said that Apple enjoyed phenomenal growth because its founder, Steve Jobs, wasn’t a manager, but an impresario.

“It is an important metaphor for inspiring creativity,” Sculley explained. “Not unlike the director of an opera company, the impresario must cleverly deal with the creative temperaments of artists. At times he may coach because he knows that creativity is a learning process, not a management process. Other times he may scold because he knows that creativity requires a demanding commitment of self. The impresario must be alternately tough and admiring toward his people. In art, he ensures that the setting and stage are conducive to the production of a masterpiece. His gift is to merge powerful ideas with the performances of his artists.”

Well, I think “campaign impresario” might be a bit much. But perhaps campaign director is an improvement. Anyway, what’s important is not the title we assign to it but the meaning we give to it. And the basic meaning of that position is in this simple truth: If you want to inspire people, don’t try to manage by memo. Lead by example.

51. To be a leader, you first have to follow the model Listen, Learn, Help, Lead.

Anyone who is running for office is applying for a leadership position. Anyone who manages a campaign is in a leadership position. In fact any parent, employer, or person who is in some way responsible for another person is a leader.

The first “tasks” that a good leader carries out every day is to Listen – listen to staff, to voters, to friends and to your opponent. This brings me to the second management model. While the first is the hierarchical planning model of Visions, Strategies, Projects, Tactics, **Listen, Learn, Help, Lead** is a linear model.

Listen – You begin, as I said by listening. This means asking questions and having appreciative understanding – not only listening to what people are telling you but understanding and appreciating *why* they are telling you what they are telling you. This process not only enables you to learn but also gets you into the

habit of engaging people who have problems or solutions. You build a system of networking into your campaign and – more importantly – you become recognized as someone that folks can go to just to talk, or to get something off of their chest.

Learn – It isn't enough to just listen with appreciative understanding. You also must learn from what you are being told. You need to process what you have heard, remember it, and learn from it. You need to build systems so that information is captured, staff is tasked with solving problems and knowledge is imported directly from people into your campaign.

Help – Now that you have listened to what people have said with appreciative understanding, and have learned from the experience, you can be the catalyst in getting something done to help them. This requires some kind of proactive action on your part, a demonstrative act that you undertake in order to solve someone's problem.

Lead – Once you have listened, learned, and begun to help people, you will almost inevitably be asked to lead them. In a sense, the minute that you began helping them you became a leader. It is at this point when you must say, "here is my vision, here are my strategies, here are my projects and these are my tactics; what do you think?"

Which is when you need to listen with appreciative understanding all over again.

52. Campaigns are hard work.

Campaigns are no day at the beach, even if your schedule has you campaigning all day at a beach.

Challenger campaigns, in particular, are hard work.

Challenger campaigns are almost always carried out by relatively few people ... in limited time ... with very limited money ... under incredible pressure.

That is not a prescription for relaxation.

But, campaigns should be hard work. To represent Americans in government is an honor that has to be earned, and anyone who thinks that they can just breeze into office will justifiably receive a rude awakening. Keep in mind – the incumbent you are running against has learned first hand how hard a campaign is, and succeeded. I have heard of one campaign manager who would anonymously call his opponents' headquarters every evening, and refused to leave his office until no one at their office was there to answer the phone any more!

Now, frankly, campaigns often attract people who like to talk more than work. They enjoy the drama, the gossip, the egomania of politics. But, they often drain campaigns of the optimism and energy needed to keep people motivated. You can usually recognize the typical-talker-type quickly: they are full of ideas for others to do; full of questions and complaints and flattery and self-importance; and just plain full of it.

Probably the best way to test whether a big talker is worth wasting time on is to ask him or her to raise X dollars by X date ... something very do-able, like raising two to five thousand dollars within a ten day period. Usually they'll have a lot of excuses why they can't get it done, but if you persist in pinning them down to some minimal amount of money, chances are good that when they leave, you'll never see them again. They will take their delusions elsewhere.

So, yes, campaigns are hard work ... not just schmoozing and strategizing.

Beware the difference, because it often ends up being the difference between winning and losing.

53. Murphy's Law is the only law that has never been broken in a campaign.

Murphy's Law states: "What can go wrong will go wrong."

In politics, even that which can't possibly go wrong will somehow go wrong.

If you're planning an outdoor rally, forget the weather forecast, it will rain. And then the microphone won't work. A staffer will forget to pick up the helium tank for the balloons. The sign-maker will have misspelled the candidate's name on the huge platform banner. And the speech you asked a staffer to re-type in a large type size now contains about eleven words per page so it's 145 pages long ... But, don't worry, because the most influential reporter in the area will get sick on the way to the event and won't be able to report any of these blunders anyway.

As hard as you try, there will be foul-ups regularly. You shouldn't accept inefficiency as your new lifestyle, but it is best to accept the fact that mistakes will be made, and some of them hard to believe. It is better to accept that fact because you'll be a little more patient if you do.

There is actually a special Murphy's Law of combat that pertains directly to campaigns that states that you must keep your eyes open for the obvious, because the important things are always simple; the simple things are always hard; and the easy way is always mined.

The important things are always simple is, in some ways, what this entire book is about. When you get caught up in all of the complications of a campaign and all the problems you will face, it helps to remember that the really important aspects of a campaign are as simple as a truism. Then you must remember that campaigns are hard work. The concepts that you must grasp are simple; executing them is hard. Is something a problem or a fact? It is a simple question yet can be the most difficult thing to ascertain.

Then you have to remember the easy way is always mined. It is human nature to try and short-circuit some of the more difficult things we have to do in a campaign. But it is precisely when you try to cut corners that you will step on a land mine and blow yourself and your campaign up. The bottom line is, some things are just going to be hard and you simply are going to have to accept it and understand that nothing in a campaign is easy.

So, strive for the best, but prepare for the worst.

Chances are, you'll get a little of both.

54. A good campaign organization is an art, not a chart.

Assigning responsibilities in a campaign should be based on the unique talents and needs of the people willing to work. It's pointless to draw up an ideal organization chart, with boxes, lines and job descriptions, and then arbitrarily try to stick available people in each slot. Real life isn't so neat and orderly.

A campaign has to be flexible in order to take advantage of the unexpected opportunities that come along ... and to be able to adjust to the inevitable mistakes that will be made, as well.

This ideal of flexibility—quickness, resilience—is only possible with teamwork.

Teamwork is not a rah-rah cheerleading spirit in a campaign, but a practical, day-to-day, working necessity. The spirit of working together as a creative team, rather than as an employer-employee rigid-organization-chart, can make or break an underdog campaign.

Challenger campaigns can't afford to hire everything done; you need stout-hearted volunteers. And a volunteer will not work long, or well, if his or her heart isn't in it. A volunteer isn't looking for a "boss" but, rather, looking to be part of a winning team.

Realistically, a campaign is more circular than linear. The candidate has an "inner circle": the campaign manager, finance chairman, the consultant and senior advisers ... And the campaign manager has a somewhat different circle around him or her: office manager, scheduler, finance director, volunteer coordinator, issue adviser, press secretary ... The field organizer, in turn, also has a circle of people to tend to: district coordinators, who in turn might have town coordinators, and so on.

In addition, you need the employees to work so closely together that they can “wear more than one hat.” That is, they know enough about each other’s circles that they can fill in when necessary or take on responsibilities outside of their “job description.” Why shouldn’t the finance director help put up some yard signs with the field organizer after work? At the next fundraiser, the field director may be the person handing out name tags.

The point is, an organization chart does not capture the living reality of teamwork in a campaign. Lines of authority between boxes, and lines of communication between boxes, suggest a rigid, inflexible structure. No matter how impressively the chart is drawn, such a hierarchical picture does not truly depict a lively, growing campaign. For a campaign to be resilient and enthusiastic, the people within it need to feel free to communicate with one another, to help one another, to learn from one another ...

There has to be an openness, a camaraderie, within a campaign for there to be the kind of flexibility and mutual respect that instills the ultimate:

Creative teamwork.

55. You should foster the spirit of teamwork.

There are any number of ways to encourage a sense of teamwork in a political campaign. For example, you can schedule volunteers on a rotating basis to personally campaign with the candidate. When volunteers feel that the candidate knows them on a first-name basis and appreciates their hard work, they tend to work all the harder. After all, everyone wants to be appreciated.

Similarly, a candidate’s family can also lift the spirit of campaign workers by congratulating someone for a job well done ... or occasionally bringing donuts or coffee into the headquarters. There are many ways to let people know that they’re important and needed.

We begin to learn the practical lessons of teamwork at a young age when we first participate in team sports ...

In winning and losing we come to discover that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Later, as fans of professional sports, we learn that the offensive front line of a football team is much more dedicated to protecting a quarterback from being tackled when they strongly believe in that quarterback ... and what makes them believe in that quarterback is the example he sets, and the respect he earns, by being willing to suffer almost any pain in order to win for the team. A team is more willing to work strenuously for a quarterback—like a campaign for its candidate—when there is reason to believe that the leader, in turn, cares deeply about the team and not just about himself

The same is true of everyone on the campaign team, not just the candidate. Those who are truly dedicated to the cause end up being the most respected.

You can’t really structure teamwork, but you can instill the spirit of teamwork. It’s not structure that makes you feel good about your work; it’s knowing that other people appreciate your efforts and enjoy working with you. So when you feel that gratitude, express it and share it with others ...

Let that spirit of teamwork win out.

56. “Strategy” means: how are you going to win?

Strategy need not be complicated. It simply answers the question:

How are you going to win?

However, strategy is the end result of something fairly difficult: creative thinking.

Creativity has been defined as simply putting two things together that haven't been put together before. (Sometimes, two heads.) But in the chaos of a campaign, with the ringing of telephones and the demands of deadlines, it's difficult to even put two minutes together, let alone two ideas.

There are certain conditions, though, that make creative strategizing easier:

Detachment is important in coming up with a fresh perspective. So, a little privacy helps. It's a good idea for strategists to leave a busy headquarters and use a different environment for brainstorming.

Flexibility is necessary, the willingness to pounce on new opportunities even if those opportunities disrupt the schedule and plan. You can't be obsessed with "implementing the plan" and "sticking to the schedule" if you are to seize unexpected opportunities that pop up.

Accountability means that, ultimately, one person alone must feel responsible for the campaign strategy. No committee has ever produced an artistic masterpiece. Two brains, and three brains, are better than one when it comes to thrashing out new ideas, changing priorities, and so on. But one person alone must be responsible for synthesizing and finalizing strategy because otherwise it ends up a hash of compromises, and half-baked ones at that.

Ultimately, of course, the candidate is accountable for the strategy. And therefore, as soon as the strategy is conceived and agreed on, the campaign manager should make sure the candidate signs off on it.

57. To be a successful manager, you need to follow the 7 steps of effective management.

There are seven key steps to effective management that every campaign manager must follow in order to run a successful campaign:

1. **Appreciative Understanding** – As I mentioned, it is crucial that you listen every day. But to be truly effective you have to create a new skill that goes beyond listening, which I call appreciative understanding. That is, rather than simply conversing with someone – talking, then waiting for them to quit talking so that you can begin again – you come to understand what they are saying and, more importantly, why they are saying it.

2. **Problems vs. Facts** – It is critical in a campaign that you determine what are problems and what are facts. Problems can be solved; facts cannot. This is a critical lesson because very often we mistake facts for problems, and try to fix or change something that is simply not changeable. For instance, a candidate's family is not a problem. They are a fact. It's what you do about the family that is a problem. The sooner that you learn to differentiate between what the problems are and what the facts are, the more effective your campaign will be – and the more secure your job will be!

3. **Avoid Quicksand** – Once a project is undertaken, many people's natural inclination is to see it through to fruition no matter how difficult or time consuming. This is an admirable work ethic but can be damaging to your overall goals. It is very important to avoid getting bogged down in the details of a project or becoming obsessed with seeing it completed to 100% perfection. A good manager will learn to accept that they have done all they can do and move on, or to delegate the remaining portion of a project to someone else so that they can focus on the many other tasks at hand.

4. **Import Knowledge/Export Work** – As an entrepreneur, you are always open to new methods, new ideas and new opportunities. In essence, you must have the ability to import knowledge into your campaign. You then must determine how this knowledge can be translated into a tangible result. Talk is cheap and there are lots of brilliant but impossible ways of achieving success. Once you have determined how a new opportunity can actually be utilized, you must recognize who is the best person to carry out the new task and delegate the work to them (export work). Your job as the head of the campaign is to seek out new knowledge, import it, then export the work to someone who will make it a reality.

5. **Delegate With Clarity** – As the head of the campaign you must delegate work so that you are not responsible for every project. It is important that when you do this, you don't simply tell someone "I need you to handle the fundraising dinner." Instead, you need to delegate with clarity, laying out exactly what success is. In fact, the more you can explain about why the project is being done and how important it is, the more you increase your chance of it being done properly. "I need you to ensure that 200 people come to the fundraising dinner and that we don't spend more than \$2000 on it because this is our best chance to raise money this month."

6. Define What Success Is – This is critical no matter what the task is. You cannot expect someone to carry out a task for you – be it taking out the trash or creating a new donor file – if you do not define for them what success is. I would encourage you to even use the phrase “Success for this will be ...” This creates accountability in the campaign and allows the campaign staff to be responsible. There can be no misunderstanding of expectations if you have clearly defined success for every project.

7. Be For What’s Going To Happen – Very often decisions are going to be made behind closed doors in a campaign: How much should we spend on our ad buy? How should we respond to the latest attack? What should we ask the volunteers to do for us tomorrow? In each case, there will be differing opinions amongst the various campaign staffers. Someone may deeply believe that you should conserve money for later expenses and will make a passionate speech about this. Still, someone else may believe that ads are the single most effective thing you do and that you should spend more than you currently are spending.

Either way, once a decision is reached, it is critical that everyone emerges from the meeting singing from the same song sheet. No matter how deeply you may have felt about a decision, that decision is now a fact, not a problem. It cannot be changed and – since it is now going to happen whether you want it to or not – you need to be for what’s going to happen. Nothing will undermine the chemistry of a campaign and demoralize volunteers quicker than having members of the staff continue to argue or openly question decisions that are made, or to have someone say “I told you so” when something doesn’t work.

58. Learn the Territory, Know the Leaders, and Know the Followers.

Regardless of what office you are running for, or what kind of campaign you are running, one thing is essential: you must know the territory.

Knowing the territory shows a level of respect for those that you would represent. Having an awareness, geographically, of where the voters live and what they experience in their every day lives is essential to gaining their trust.

This goes for the candidate, the campaign manager and anyone who works on the campaign or who might be seen as a representative.

First of all, if you wish to represent a group of people in an elected body, you must know who these people are and what they experience in their everyday lives. Not only must you know the leaders and the followers, but also what moves them.

Second, the job you are applying for is one in which you will go to Congress and represent this area and its interests against competing areas. You will be expected to promote your area to the rest of the country, so you’d better know what you are promoting!

Nothing will make a candidate look more silly or out of touch with voters than not knowing a basic-knowledge item about the district he is running for.

What are the district’s geographical boundaries? Which counties, townships, boroughs or cities are contained within the district? Who are the large job suppliers? What is the main highway most of the commuters use? How many people are employed in the district? How many are unemployed? How many are African American, Latino, Asian, Catholic or another identifiable demographic? How many are men and how many women? How many voters are there versus constituents? What do the folks eat at their family picnics – Crawfish? Bar-b-cue?

Some things you will just need to illustrate knowledge in to have credibility as a government official. Others – like where the malls are, how much gas costs or which sports teams the constituents follow – you will need to know to demonstrate that you are in touch with the community and that you experience the world the same way that they do.

This is monumentally important if you are not originally from the district you want to represent. Every day you will be tested in one way or another on your knowledge of the district. A voter may ask you if you follow their child’s high school football team, or if you have been to the park that members of their community frequent. But in particular, your opponent will be eager to label you as a “carpetbagger.”

Of course, no one could possibly know everything. You could have been born and raised in the district, and have written a book on its history, and there will still be things that you don't know.

59. The best campaign vehicle has four-wheel drive.

There is only one steering wheel in a car because there is only one driver. You wouldn't want to be a passenger in a moving car while two or three drivers fought for control.

In any campaign, there are always "back seat drivers", offering good and bad advice. And that's all right, as long as there is one strategist/decision-maker who is ultimately responsible for the steering . . . keeping his mind on the destination even as he thinks of possible short-cuts . . . looking out for bumps in the road even as he plans a stop for gas . . . and, prepared to hit the brakes when necessary.

Now, for the strategist to steer the campaign vehicle in often-hazardous racing conditions he needs to make sure that each of the four wheels are perfectly aligned and reliable.

What are the four wheels?

- 1) Ideology ... The power of ideas and principles.
- 2) Research ... The power of polling and fact-finding.
- 3) Organization ... The power of management and motivation.
- 4) Media ... The power of publicity and advertising.

Strategists make decisions based on their own expertise: If a strategist is trained in survey research, he tends to look at a race in terms of polling numbers. If he has an issues background, he tends to look at a race in terms of ideology. If he has a management orientation, he tends to look at a race in terms of budget and organization. If his expertise is media, he tends to look at the race in terms of news coverage and advertising.

It is only natural that someone would conceive strategy from the perspective of his or her own expertise—whether ideology, research, organization or media. That's preferable to wasting time, energy and money by pretending to be expert in areas where you have less knowledge and, for that matter, less interest. But, still ...

Do not make the mistake of ignoring any one of the four. Ideology motivates many people, to volunteer, to contribute, to vote. Research (whether it's polling, or research on the issues or on the opponent) can reveal invaluable information on which to base strategy. Organization is the central nervous system of a campaign: deciding, doing and delivering. Media is the central nervous system of society at large.

The best campaign has four-wheel drive.

60. There is no set formula for winning.

It's fairly easy to come up with all sorts of rules about what a campaign must do to win. But the truth is, if you are following fixed rules rather than observing what's going on and thinking independently about it, you are probably heading for defeat.

General George Marshall made this same point about military combat. Let me quote him at length because he could just as well have been talking about political combat:

"The art of war has no traffic with rules, for the infinitely varied circumstances and conditions of combat never produce exactly the same situation twice. Mission, terrain, weather, dispositions, armament, morale, supply, and comparative strength are variables whose mutations always combine to form a new tactical pattern. Thus, in battle, each situation is unique and must be solved on its own merits.

“It follows, then, that the leader who would become a competent tactician must first close his mind to the alluring formulae that well-meaning people offer in the name of victory. To master his difficult art he must learn to cut to the heart of a situation, recognize its decisive elements and base his course of action on these. The ability to do this is not God-given, nor can it be acquired overnight; it is a process of years. He must realize that training in solving problems of all types, long practice in making clear, unequivocal decisions, the habit of concentrating on the question at hand, and an elasticity of mind, are indispensable requisites for the successful practice of the art of war.

“The leader who frantically strives to remember what someone else did in some slightly similar situation has already set his feet on a well-traveled road to ruin.”

Another famous general, Douglas MacArthur, said that there is no substitute for victory. Well, there is also no substitute for thinking your way to victory: there is no set formula; you need strategy and tactics that suit the special circumstances of your own contest.

61. Good strategy evolves.

In politics, circumstances can change rapidly, and sometimes you will want to change strategy accordingly.

News events can drastically change the political climate. (Example: The Oklahoma City bombing. Aided by President Clinton blaming conservative talk radio, many Americans who supported shrinking the bureaucracy suddenly felt guilty for being “anti-government.” Or, when Elian Gonzalez was ordered back to Cuba by the Clinton administration, angering the Cuban population in Florida and driving them back to the Republican camp.) Your opponent will do things (Example: Michael Dukakis posing in a tank), or say things (Example: Al Gore using fabricating anecdotes in the presidential debates) that you will want to pounce on immediately. Opportunities, and problems, will arise. Ideas for new themes and tactics will occur to you out of the blue, unexpected flashes of creative inspiration that can make the difference between winning and losing.

You do not want to ignore great opportunities because . . . “That’s not in the plan; we have to stick to the plan!”

A good strategy is not necessarily fixed or flexible; a strategy is good if it’s right. It’s that simple. This is a major difference between the business and political world. Very often the business world is about process and structure, not about changes based upon instinct and situational knowledge.

Now, usually for a strategy to be right (i.e. successful in targeting the right voters with the right message with the greatest persuasive impact at the lowest possible price), the strategy will be both flexible, to allow for short-term adjustments and jumping on unexpected opportunities, AND firm in its focus on long-range, well-defined goals.

Strategy should not be changed on a whim or in panic. The original thinking that went into conceiving the strategy in the first place was probably done in a quiet period of time, before all the turmoil began, so there was likely a clear sense of purpose about what had to be done and why. All of that shouldn’t be thrown out the window just because circumstances change somewhat.

A good campaign plan will be . . .

- 1) Written down, and easily understood.
- 2) Oriented toward winning, and realistic about getting there.
- 3) Divisible, for assigning responsibilities; and measurable, for ensuring the right kind of progress.

So, in summary: Be willing to change strategy, just as you’re willing to suddenly swerve in your car to avoid an accident or stop your car suddenly to pick up a friend . . . but be sure you’re still heading in the right direction in order to reach your destination.

62. Take your time in choosing a consultant.

You may not need a consultant, but a good one can be a tremendous resource for a challenger campaign.

A consultant can provide a detached, objective view of what needs to be done to win. Campaign staffers often get bogged down in the details, and predicaments, of day-today work. An outside consultant can offer fresh analysis and practical solutions to keep things on track.

A consultant has the experience and knowledge to help guide you through the minefield of political combat. When your campaign runs into unexpected trouble, chances are good that the consultant will have had firsthand experience dealing with a similar situation.

There are different kinds of political consultants:

Some act as general consultants. They help put together the whole framework of a campaign: everything from hiring a campaign manager and pollster, to formulating the strategy and message.

Most political consultants are specialized: Pollsters are experts in designing, conducting and analyzing public opinion polls; they advise you on which issues “cut” in your favor. Media consultants produce your advertising, and often do the buying of commercial time and newspaper space. Sometimes they also help with what is called “earned media”, in other words: free publicity. Fundraising consultants help you set up your own fundraising operation, and do some of the fundraising for you.

Keep in mind, though, that each consultant has strengths and weaknesses . . .

Before you sign any contract, get a clear understanding of how much actual time and help a consultant will devote to your campaign. Some of them get over-extended, and their clients with less money or with less chance to win often get shortchanged in the final critical few weeks. Try to get a good idea, for example, if the top consultant who is trying to sign you up with his firm, will personally be handling your campaign . . . or will he later delegate a junior member of his staff to do the work?

Understand, too, that each campaign consultant tends to offer advice based on his or her own background and expertise. For instance, a media consultant specializing in television production will urge you to put more of your budget into television. A pollster will recommend a lot of polling. A consultant renowned for field organization will probably advise you to devote more of the budget to field organization.

Don't rush into a decision; and know what you're buying.

63. In hiring staff, your first choice doesn't have to be a political professional.

A major campaign will likely need full-time, capable people who can handle:

- 1) fundraising
- 2) press
- 3) field organization
- 4) scheduling

But you shouldn't begin your search and interview process with the assumption that each staff position will have to be a paid position. You will often luck out and find a retired person, or the spouse of someone well-paid, or a college student available for a work-study program . . . someone who would be willing and eager to take a job that would provide an opportunity to do something challenging and worthwhile.

On the other hand, don't hire people for important positions if they are incompetent, or poisonous in their dealings with people, simply because they'll work for free. They can capsized a campaign without even trying.

Hire people based on ability and attitude, but don't assume that the best workers will necessarily require high salaries. Most of the leading professionals in politics today —campaign managers, consultants, and candidates—got their start as volunteers.

Keep' em coming.

64. A campaign should be voter-centered, not staff-centered.

It's common for staffers to view their headquarters as Campaign Central—a political center where people come to ask for things, and, of course, often have to be turned down:

“No, the candidate can't come to your pancake festival.”

“No, we can't hire you.”

“No, you can't interview the candidate for your school paper.”

“No, you can't take more than one bumper sticker.”

Soon, it seems that the whole political world revolves around your campaign— especially if things are going well. Staff people start to think, “By gosh, I'm a lot more important than I thought. And I like that!”

But when staff people fall into the error of seeing their campaign as the center of things, and feeling self-important, their attitude is pointing them in the direction of defeat.

Voters must be the central focus of a campaign, just as customers must be the central focus of any business.

So, think constantly of ways to take your campaign out of the headquarters and ... to the voters!

65. Speed Kills.

One of the most important developments in recent years has been the speed with which campaigns are conducted. While we may not have enjoyed the outcome, the documentary “*The War Room*” captured a turning point in modern campaigns in its illustration of how quick to respond the Clinton/Gore 92 campaign was, and how speed killed the Bush/Quayle 92 campaign.

The fact is we now live in a 24 hour a day, 365 day a year news cycle. The stock markets close on the weekend, and banks are closed on federal holidays, but the news never ever takes a break. If you turn on CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, CNBC or even the networks ABC, CBS and NBC at 4 AM on Christmas Day, you will likely find a live newscast. It NEVER ends. And this doesn't even take into account the Internet, the ultimate 24-hour worldwide news source.

Well, if someone is monitoring the world news in the twilight of Christmas day, you'd better believe that they are working at full speed during campaign season – something your opponent is acutely aware of.

This concept has very physical ramifications for your campaign. First of all, the campaign manager and press secretary physically need to be obtainable 24 hours a day, by pager, cell phone or both. You never know when the next crisis will occur. You automatically have less time to react to it than you think. Unfortunately you simply cannot be AWOL and unattainable. Ever.

Second, a campaign must organizationally be prepared to quickly react to a new crisis. The decision making process has to be streamlined. Where as you may normally convene your kitchen cabinet or consult some outside experts when you try a new message, there is no time for that in an emergency. You need to have in place an “emergency response protocol” BEFORE the crisis occurs that dictates the immediate course of action. It should call for a quick conference call or meeting to be convened that includes your media consultant, pollster, press specialist, the candidate, the manager and anyone who is critical in developing your message.

This can be a daunting task. Where is the candidate? Does he know anything about the crisis? Do you know if any advertising time is available to be purchased? Are you sure of what the opponent has said? Are you sure that your response is accurate? Is this an accusation that warrants a response? These are all decisions that have to be made quickly by the RIGHT people in the campaign.

One thing to keep in mind is that the speed of campaigns can be an advantage. As former Dole 96 campaign chairman Scott Reed points out, the time between the end of the conventions and the final two weeks

of presidential campaigns are actually daily battles rather than wars. They literally try to manage each day by staying on message, and doing whatever they can to keep their opponent off-balance.

Consider some stories that the Bush 2000 campaign had to deal with: “Bush is shaking up his campaign staff”; ads with “subliminal” messages; “is Dick Cheney registered to vote in the state of Wyoming?”; did someone steal a campaign tape from the Bush/Cheney headquarters? None of these stories was critical to the campaign – except that each news cycle that the Bush campaign spent talking about these stories, Al Gore spent talking about a Patients’ Bill of Rights, or Social Security.

It is possible to use speed to your advantage – to push an opposing campaign into making mistakes and saying things that they might regret – simply by repeatedly testing their ability to respond quickly. The trick is to make sure your campaign isn’t the one being killed by the speed!

66. Let the candidate’s family decide what role they want in the campaign—if any.

A candidate’s family can be the most effective volunteers in a campaign, but they should be precisely that: volunteers.

Politics isn’t for everybody. If family members are unhappy doing certain kinds of campaign work, it doesn’t help the candidate’s spirit, or the campaign’s morale, to implore them to continue.

On the other hand, the candidate’s family should be encouraged to participate as much as they are willing.

It is not uncommon for a husband and wife to find renewed commitment to each other by going through the adventure of a campaign; they make new friends, and enjoy a shared sense of purpose. That is the way it should be, and it doesn’t take all that much effort to make sure it is.

The important thing is this: There should always be enough time in the candidate’s schedule to allow family togetherness. Campaigns can be fun yet all-consuming, so don’t underestimate the stress and strain they can put on family relationships. Remember: family first; other voters, second.

67. For a candidate to be the “good guy”, sometimes the campaign manager must be the bad guy.

A candidate needs a strong campaign manager—someone strong enough to tell him when he’s wrong and when he’s taking himself too seriously. And the candidate needs to give that campaign manager his full backing, letting others know that he has confidence in him.

There are a lot of practical reasons to make clear that the campaign manager is truly directing the campaign.

One, of course, is that staffers and volunteers will work harder under his direction if they see him as genuinely representing the candidate’s own wishes.

Another reason is the simple expedient that when something unpleasant has to be done—a staffer has to be let go, a volunteer has to be told not to swear at the opponent when he sees him in a parade—it is usually the campaign manager who will have to do the “dirty work”.

Moreover, sometimes the campaign manager has to act as a spokesman for the campaign, perhaps slugging it out with the opposition through the news media. In order for a campaign manager to have credibility in attacking the opposition, there can be no doubt among the press corps that he truly speaks for the candidate.

So, for the campaign manager to be the guy who sometimes has to don the black hat, everyone needs to know that the candidate trusts him and stands behind him. (Sometimes far behind him.)

68. A challenger campaign is the most upwardly-mobile organization of all.

An effective challenger campaign won't value job titles, status and seniority as much as it values getting results.

No matter how little political experience a person might have had prior to coming on board a campaign, someone who is willing to work hard often rises very fast in a challenger campaign.

The "Peter Principle" is that people are promoted in an organization until they reach their level of incompetence, and then they remain at that level of incompetence. But a campaign usually doesn't exist long enough to become that bureaucratic, thank goodness. More often than not, people with talent and energy will rise in a campaign to their highest level of competence . . . and then continue to be competent at that level because they know their job status and job security depends upon getting results. In politics, there's an old question that tells the tale: "Yes, but what have you done for me lately?" In a campaign, you have to produce, produce, produce . . . right up through election day.

There's a very practical self-interest reason why people in a campaign should think in terms of putting the campaign's good above their own personal ambition of climbing the proverbial "corporate ladder." In politics, someone's career is advanced more by the prestige of his candidate winning than by the prestige of his winning an impressive job title in a losing campaign.

69. Cynicism, gossip and backbiting poison a campaign; the antidote is setting a good example.

A campaign's spirit is also its substance. A negative attitude of defeatism is usually self-fulfilling. Optimism, trust and enthusiasm are contagious.

There will be times when pessimism threatens to spread throughout your campaign . . . maybe because a new poll came out showing the opponent far ahead. The candidate and campaign manager must then realize that the key to getting things back on track lies in their own attitude. Staff people, volunteers and contributors look to see how their leaders react to bad news, to judge how bad a situation is. If the leaders shrug it off and get back to work, chances are good that the others will be inspired to follow that example.

Setting the right example in attitude can give your campaign altitude.

It is especially important for the candidate and campaign manager to set an example of respect for others. Gossip, backbiting, cynicism and other kinds of negative communication can poison the atmosphere in a campaign.

In every campaign there will be individuals who are annoying. And, after so many twelve-hour days in a row, it's inevitable that other members of the campaign will express among themselves a certain cynicism about that person. But be aware that even the most good-natured cynicism can cause staffers and volunteers to accept that attitude as a sign that things are going badly . . . that morale is bad, or that someone might be fired, or that the campaign is mis-managed.

Good communication within a campaign isn't easy. Even the candidate and campaign manager will sometimes seem to be communicating from completely different worlds . . . preoccupied by very different concerns.

When things get hectic in a campaign, and plans go astray, good communication within the campaign is often the first casualty. (If people in a campaign communicate a lot about the importance of communication, that usually means they aren't communicating.) But it is precisely during that stressful period when good communication is most important.

So, discourage the negative communication that makes a campaign un-fun: Cynicism. Defeatism. Gossip. Backbiting.

And, encourage the positive communication that makes a campaign succeed: Openness. Patience. Respect. Teamwork.

70. Challengers won't necessarily win with volunteers, but they rarely win without them.

Without active volunteers, a campaign seems lifeless.

With volunteers, a campaign headquarters comes alive. More people are drawn into useful activity; reporters are impressed and can't help but report the reality of a living, breathing campaign working hard to win. It creates a cycle of on-going growth.

Volunteers can certainly do important work, everything from canvassing neighborhoods to faxing press releases to the media. And they represent a way to conserve money so there is more available for things you can't get free, like advertising.

Frankly, it shouldn't be necessary to point out such obvious advantages. But, regrettably, political thought in recent years has tended to discourage campaigns from relying on volunteers because paid staff people are considered more dependable. That is the kind of "safe" thinking that makes a campaign lifeless and mechanistic, and thus less able to inspire others.

Former Speaker Newt Gingrich has always emphasized that Republicans have got to start thinking of our party as the majority party, and acting with the confidence and aggressiveness of a majority party. He explains that we have to reach out not just to confirmed Republicans but also to people who are our natural allies in our local communities—in many cases, people who have never been active politically. We have to bring them in under our tent, make a place for them at our table, and get them involved in our decision-making. What better way to do that than through our campaigns?

We're all volunteers in politics. We all chose to enter this arena at one time. So let's accept the same challenge that others accepted in welcoming us into politics: Let's bring others in . . . as many as we can.

71. When volunteers walk into a headquarters, they are psychologically ready; so the campaign should be ready for them.

A campaign needs to be ready for volunteers by giving them:

- * something specific to do;
- * a reason for doing it;
- * a place to do it;
- * a way to have fun doing it;
- * a deadline for doing it; and
- * recognition for getting it done.

People who aren't being paid deserve at least to have pleasant working conditions, a sense of order, and the rewards of recognition and gratitude. All of that gives dignity to their work . . . and dignity to our democracy.

Keep in mind that volunteers devote themselves to the campaign not merely because of the excitement and camaraderie, but because they truly believe in the candidate and his message. When they talk to friends and neighbors and associates at work, they frequently add a plug for their candidate. It becomes their personal crusade.

So the candidate, in particular, should go out of his way to thank volunteers and affirm the importance of their work. When the candidate takes time to join volunteers in canvassing voters door to door, or stuff envelopes for a hurried mailing, or just to chat about some development in the news, the volunteers' enthusiasm for the candidate grows even more.

As much as the candidate, volunteers truly are the campaign.

72. Targeting voters: hunt for votes where the voters are.

Targeting enables you to locate those voters most likely to support you, and zero in on them.

Mathematically, you're looking for big groupings, not small ones. You're looking for those groups of voters most receptive to your political party, to your hometown, to your message . . .

You then want to schedule your candidate's appearances, your publicity, your advertising, your volunteer canvassing . . . to reach those targeted voters.

Designating who and where to target is based on the old principle: hunt ducks where ducks are.

Obviously, besides solidifying the Republican vote you need to concentrate on those voters who tend to split their ticket rather than voting a straight party line. You examine past voting results to determine where these ticket-splitters are:

First, determine a base race—usually a statewide race where the GOP candidate got the lowest vote. Then find your high attractive vote—a statewide Republican who wins big. Subtract the base vote from the high attractive vote and you'll have the number of ticket-splitters. A volunteer or your researcher can do this in every precinct. You'll be able to rank each precinct then, and easily determine which has the most potential to capitalize on. For example:

Precinct—A—300 ticket splitters—500 registered voters
Precinct—B—6 ticket splitters—400 registered voters
Precinct—C—300 ticket splitters—1000 registered voters

If you have a volunteer to do door-to-door campaigning, where will you send him? You have the choice of canvassing 500 people to reach 300 ticket-splitters, or canvassing 1000 people to reach 300 ticket-splitters. Obviously it would be a better use of the volunteer's time to canvass the 500.

This same kind of analysis can help you decide where to do direct mail, where to do phone calling, and where the candidate should campaign in person.

Targeting can give you the winning edge.

73. A campaign mirrors the personal qualities of its leaders.

An expert on corporate management said that there are eight personal characteristics that successful corporate leaders tend to share in common. Each of those qualities applies to campaign managers and candidates as well . . .

The ability to focus attention—You must have a clear idea of what you want to achieve, and then you have to be able to convey your goals with single-mindedness.

An emphasis on simple values—A leader has to express a set of basic values. The values have to be understandable, and the leader has to keep stressing them. Those values become the guiding spirit of the organization . . . a unifying influence . . . helping to create a sense of teamwork.

Contact with people—It's as important for the leader to stay in touch with people on the outside of the organization as it is to stay close to those on the inside. If a leader only hears what is filtered through to him by paid staff people, he'll too often be hearing what others think he wants to hear rather than the bad news he should hear. And within the organization, the effective leader is rarely considered aloof. He cares about his people, so he's involved with them.

Avoidance of pseudo-professionalism—In this age of management gurus and self-help books, it's tempting for an executive to try to impress people with the latest management tool. The true leader, however, realizes that he does not need to inspire people to have confidence in him so much as he needs to inspire them to have confidence in themselves.

The ability to manage change—A leader needs to have a good sense of timing to anticipate change, and a good sense of timing to implement change.

Acceptance of failure—There will be failures and snafus along the way in any enterprise. An effective leader knows how to deal with failure: by accepting it as a teacher for future success.

Avoiding do-it-all-ism—Leaders who are successful recognize their own limitations. They know how to delegate.

Knowledge of people—A leader understands that to motivate people to do their best you first have to respect them enough to want to know what they want . . . in their work and in their lives. That's where mutual respect begins. Don't expect loyalty to you until you provide the basis for loyalty—namely, showing respect and honesty to them.

74. The planning is easy; the execution is hard.

A plan can unveil ideas that are wonderful to behold, and goals that are impressively ambitious. But, if those ideas and goals cannot be translated into reality on this planet, what good are they?

Successful execution is what ultimately counts.

It is not uncommon for people to sit around a headquarters pontificating about strategy. But frequently a lot of their speculation is basically just worrying . . . “What if that doesn't work? What if this or that happens?”

If your campaign gets stuck in the “what if?” mode, nothing gets done. Worrying and planning have their place, but they must not preclude the actual doing.

Deciding not to decide . . . is a decision.

To make good strategic decisions, you need to take your time, but you must also realize that time is working against your strategy.

Someone once said that “decision is a sharp knife that cuts clean and straight: indecision is a dull one that hacks and tears and leaves ragged edges behind it.”

General Omar Bradley put it this way: “A second best decision quickly made and vigorously carried out is better than the best decision too late arrived at and halfheartedly carried out. In everyday affairs, as in battle, we are given one life to live, and the decision is ours, whether to wait for circumstances to make up our mind—or to act, and in acting, to live.”

You don't want to be rushed into making decisions just to impress people that you're decisive. But you need to keep in mind that a strategy is only as good as the decisions and determination to carry it out.

MONEY

75. The average challenger candidate needs to spend about half his time raising money.

Incumbents can raise money pretty easily. It's much harder for challengers.

Where does a challenger begin? He starts with those closest to him: members of his family . . . friends . . . acquaintances . . . business associates . . . then, people who are known to be angry with the incumbent for some reason.

How do you raise the money? You ask for it, and you devote time to it. Now, that seems overly simplistic, but you would be amazed at how many candidates don't do it. The fact is, most people don't like to ask other people for money. Neither do most candidates. Many of them try to duck the problem by hiring a fundraiser or putting together a finance committee to do the job for them.

But the candidate is always the prime fundraiser. He is the one everyone wants to meet. Why? 1) They want to hear his pitch as a way of sizing him up. 2) They want to know that the candidate is aware of, and grateful for, their financial sacrifice. 3) They want a chance to discuss the campaign and the issues, to give advice and/or encouragement.

Raising money should take up about 50% of a candidate's time. I know that is regrettable. I know that's not what a candidate thinks about when he makes the decision to run. He thinks about the compelling issues, about debates, parades, speeches, interviews, and all of the other interesting parts of a candidate's job. But without a reasonable amount of money, a campaign has little chance to succeed.

Knowing that a candidate's reluctance to spend time on fundraising is a common problem in campaigns, I included a question about it in a survey I sent to Republican campaign strategists. I asked how much time the average challenger candidate a) should spend on raising money, b) how much the average challenger actually did spend raising money, and c) how much the average challenger thought he spent on it.

The cumulative answers: a) They should spend at least 50%. b) They actually spend 20%. c) They think they spend 65%.

Scheduling the candidate to make fundraising calls does not mean he'll actually make them. Unconsciously, he often makes excuses to do other "urgent" work instead. To counter that tendency, someone needs to be there; prodding and helping him make his calls.

In time, fundraising becomes easier for the candidate. Well, a little easier anyway.

76. The key to successful fundraising is not to get someone to reach for his wallet, but to reach for his Rolodex.

A successful fundraising drive involves a lot of people who in turn involve a lot of other people, who in turn . . . Well, I'm sure you get the idea.

Ideally, you want a fundraising plan aimed at getting every buck you can . . . from large contributions to the five and ten dollar variety. That usually means a "multi-tiered" approach – a plan to solicit "major donors" and a plan to raise lesser amounts.

To raise a lot of money you've got to have some kind of system to pull people in, and keep them turned on.

The steps are basically these:

- 1) Define the objective clearly, and why it's necessary.
- 2) Tell people exactly what you need them to do, and when. Don't overload them or they will try to escape.
- 3) Make the mechanical part of their job as easy as possible.
- 4) Give them prospect cards from which to make their solicitations.

- 5) Specify the key dates: the beginning, the deadline, and reporting dates.
- 6) Tell them how to get prospects from their contributors. (“It’s time to hit up those folks you’ve done favors for.”)

For all this to work successfully, the volunteer finance chairman needs to dedicate something like 50% of his free time to the campaign. That’s a lot. But it can make the difference between winning and losing.

77. To put on a successful fundraising event, you don’t need a “big name” draw; you need a big mouth.

A classic mistake made by well-meaning people in fundraising is to arrange for a “big name” celebrity or political figure and then go overboard in making it a costly event: holding it at a ritzy hotel, printing expensive invitations, arranging for costly decorations and costly refreshments . . . And then it actually ends up losing money. It happens more than you might think.

Fundraising does not have to be terribly complicated. Indeed, when it becomes terribly complicated—with time wasted on long discussions about invitations and decor—it’s usually because people want to avoid and postpone the unpleasant reality:

Asking ... for ... money.

Let’s face it, asking for money is not enjoyable for most people. They’re not comfortable twisting arms of friends or asking total strangers to cough up some money for a candidate they might never have even met.

However, for a campaign to raise “serious money”, at some point the finance chairman, or finance director, or campaign manager, or candidate, or more likely a combination of all of the above . . . must insist that the excuses and the planning and the impressive talk be put aside to actually . . .

Ask ... people ... for ... money.

So, in planning an event, it’s best to err on the side of simplicity. It doesn’t make sense to develop a fundraising idea that will take 80 percent of the finance people’s time just to stage the event, leaving only 20 percent of their time to ask ... for ... money. It should be the other way around: at least 80% of successful fundraising is, you guessed it, asking ... for ... money.

Now, on some occasions—such as a Presidential visit where you’re asking for \$1,000 per person—you obviously will have to spend significant money to make it an impressive event. But, always, keep in mind your main aim:

The purpose of a fundraising event is not to give every ticket-buyer his or her money’s worth in the sense of fun ... but, to give them a victory. So, keep the overhead low and the profit margin high.

78. Keep the fundraising people apprised of the fun-raising.

As things get hectic in a campaign, it’s natural that people working in fundraising feel a little cut off from the front line action: the fun stuff, like news conferences, advertising, debates, and so on.

It’s harmful to have the fundraising people feeling divorced from the rest of the campaign. The campaign manager should go out of his way to make sure they feel close to the action—because this is what keeps them motivated. They want to know that all their hard work is paying off.

As they hear the good news—by receiving favorable news stories from the press secretary, or previewing new TV commercials with the campaign manager, or seeing confidential poll results showing progress—their enthusiasm is sustained and they, in turn, get contributors all the more excited about the candidate’s prospects for winning.

79. If you have too much overhead, the roof can fall in on you.

A common error in campaigns is to spend too much money on overhead.

Of course, at the time such decisions are made they don't seem wasteful, merely sensible ...

Status syndrome

"Well, yes, I suppose we could have just used that old, beaten up furniture somebody offered to loan us. But we rented this expensive stuff to help impress people when they come in."

Rent-a-person rationale

"Well, sure, maybe we could have found volunteers to do this, but I got fed up waiting so I just hired some people."

Edifice complex

"Well, yes, we could have saved ten thousand dollars over the six month period if we had leased that cheaper space for a headquarters, but this building has greater visibility, and space for a big sign out front."

There are many good reasons why campaigns spend a lot of money on overhead. But, taken together, do they outweigh the desperate need a campaign has in the final weeks for large amounts of money to do advertising?

For a challenger to save money on overhead, it's necessary to think like a challenger...

You don't have the resources for a conventional war; you have to conserve your resources for a guerrilla war.

80. Spend campaign money like it's your own.

(Unless, of course, you are a spendthrift.)

It is tempting to spend campaign money to solve vexing problems . . . such as:

- * Appeasing a close friend of the candidate who always argues that the campaign should buy quarter-page ads in his hometown newspaper . . . even though it's nine months before the election.
- * Rather than putting up with the aggravation of finding volunteers to put up yard signs, why not just hire someone to do it full-time?
- * The candidate would like to spend five thousand dollars to lease an enormous billboard near his house.
- * Businessmen on the finance committee insist that the campaign hire a fulltime driver for the candidate so he doesn't look so bedraggled when he's out campaigning.

There are almost an unlimited number of ways a campaign can spend money to make things more efficient and easier, but if you're not frugal you're not going to have much money for the truly essential things: advertising your message, publicizing your candidate, and targeting the right voters.

To safeguard against sloppy decision-making in campaign spending, there are two basic guidelines you can use:

First, is it **cost-effective**? Spend the money as if it were your own. In other words be frugal. Consider carefully whether the expenditure is truly necessary, and if so, whether you've found the best possible price.

Second, is it **voter-effective**? Imagine if the election ends up being decided by just a few votes. Does the expenditure you're considering actually help win those votes?

Every year, there are any number of campaigns where the candidate far out-spends the opposition, yet goes down to ignominious defeat.

Money alone does not advance a campaign; only the intelligent use of money does that.

81. Optimism in a campaign is worth \$138,000.

In truth, of course, one cannot even begin to estimate the value of optimism in any enterprise. But, perhaps if we tried to measure what optimism can mean to an underdog in actual dollar terms, we would better appreciate the practical need to cultivate and sustain an optimistic spirit.

So, let's visualize a "typical" challenger campaign (there's no such thing in politics, of course, but let's imagine one anyway). If we did an "accounting" of what optimism can accomplish, it might look something like this:

Fundraising: The candidate and finance chairman conveyed an optimism that was contagious. As a result . . .

MAJOR DONORS contributed **\$59,000** more than they would have otherwise.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS raised **\$43,000** more . . .

DIRECT MAIL was more persuasive than it would have been, raising an extra **\$32,000**.

SMALL DONOR EVENTS were more productive as a result, raising an extra **\$36,000**.

News coverage: The candidate was much more impressive to reporters as a result of his infectious optimism. As a result, he received additional free publicity that, if paid for in advertising, would have been worth **\$72,000**.

Volunteers: The candidate's optimism helped both attract, and sustain, dozens of volunteers who would not have gone out of their way to help a candidate who lacked confidence. If the amount of time given by those volunteers had been paid for at minimum wage, the value would have been **\$18,000**.

Staff Productivity: As a result of the candidate's upbeat attitude, the campaign's paid staff people worked longer hours and accomplished more in those hours. That increase in productivity was worth an extra **\$15,000**.

Voter contact: As a result of the candidate's positive outlook, whenever he met voters he made a better impression on them, which in turn, caused many of them to spread the word about him to their friends, neighbors and co-workers. The value of that free word-of-mouth advertising was an additional **\$17,000**.

By gosh, optimism is even more important than I thought. In fact, apparently it's worth a **grand total of \$292,000** . . .

Now, knowing that in advance, don't you feel more optimistic?

MOMENTUM

82. Once a challenger starts running he needs to keep going, because, most likely, the incumbent has never stopped.

A challenger will often make a formal announcement of his candidacy and then seemingly go underground for several months—studying the issues, hiring staff, trying to put together a finance committee . . .

But the effect of that “disappearing act” is somewhat demoralizing to supporters: The candidate raised hopes and expectations for a strong challenger campaign, but then wasn’t heard from again.

It’s often better to delay an official announcement for a while, and get prepared to hit the ground running. Because once you go public, you should be prepared to keep some sense of movement going.

A challenger usually needs to start early in order to gain recognition, to prove that he’s going to mount a serious, credible campaign, one that will attract capable workers and extensive publicity. In other words, it’s necessary to convince the “opinion leaders” and would-be contributors that the race is winnable.

One of the exceptions to this “start early” rule is the case of a wealthy candidate who is willing to spend a lot of his own money on a late advertising blitz. Theoretically, another exception would be a candidate who could somehow build a nearly-invisible grassroots organization that would suddenly emerge in the final weeks and catch an unsuspecting incumbent unprepared.

But, realistically, most challengers need more than an eleventh-hour blitz to convince a majority of voters that it’s time for a change. That kind of persuasion takes time, and usually has to be somewhat gradual . . . First, you have to open people’s minds to the idea that the incumbent is not all he’s portraying himself to be, and second, you have to make a case that he’s been acting against the best interests of the public or that he’s been asleep at the wheel. Only then are most voters eager to hear about the alternate: a new person.

It takes time. The earlier you start, the more time you have.

The trick is, you want to start early without spending all your money early. Early starts are good . . . if you control early spending.

83. Avoid the trap too many Republicans into: unwittingly giving the campaign a summer vacation.

Remember: a whole ballgame depends on the final inning. In the political ballgame, you can be great for six months but if your public presence seems to disappear in the final six weeks you’re probably not going to win.

Now, for whatever reason, many Republican campaigns seem to come to a screeching halt in August. They postpone work, lose enthusiasm, and generally collapse. The “excuse” you always hear is that campaign workers are frustrated because so many of the people they’re trying to reach are off on vacation. And, of course, the workers themselves want time off to enjoy the last days of summer, too.

But, unlike all those other people off on vacation, campaign workers will have their time off – after the election.

So give campaign workers a weekend off, even a week off . . . and give the candidate some time off . . . but don’t give the campaign itself a vacation. It might decide not to come back.

Republicans are hurt by this “lazy summer” phenomenon more than Democrats because, somehow, in the final days of a campaign the Democrats manage to get their troops marching no matter how chaotic their campaigns might seem. But Republicans tend to be more methodical and don’t respond to that kind of frenetic eleventh-hour panic. Republicans need to continuously build momentum right through the summer in order to dominate the final weeks of the campaign.

84. Since 40% of the electorate doesn't tune in to politics until the last two weeks of the campaign, you should be ready to play your "big hits" all over again at the end.

When you've worked long and hard to reach voters, it may be hard to believe, but . . .

Two weeks before the election some forty percent of the electorate will not have really "heard" anything—in the sense of actually thinking about the choice to be made.

And what is equally incredible is the fact that this 40% is pretty much like the other 60%. In other words, these people are not necessarily less intelligent or more liberal or more urban or anything else.

So, to reach these people and win them over, you have to reprise the "big hits" that worked for you earlier. Obviously, you'll want to present those issues in new and effective ways so as not to tire voters who have been tuned in, but you have to communicate in that last phase of the campaign on the assumption that voters don't know the basic things: the candidate's name, the principal themes, and so on.

In a way, that final phase is a mini campaign all by itself. And in terms of message, it's definitely "back to basics."

85. Go out with a bang, not a whimper.

In the final ten days, when non-political voters are finally tuning in and trying to make sense of who's who among the candidates, you want your campaign to be so visible that voters can't miss it.

You want an explosion of campaign activity . . .

Wherever voters are gathering, you want the campaign to be there. You might have volunteers waving signs at key intersections and above highway overpasses. You might have volunteers passing out brochures at ballgames and community events. You might have volunteers canvassing key precincts door to door, airplanes towing message banners, new billboard advertising going up, et cetera.

It's not enough that you have phone banks making calls. In the end, people need to see the campaign, hear it and feel it.

Do some of your campaign planning backwards. Start with election day and work backwards.

What is your plan for a mini-campaign the last weekend?

For the last week?

For the last month?

You want to build a sense of drama at the end so that your campaign reaches a crescendo . . .

You want to go out with a bang, not a whimper.

86. Be ambitious in your planning.

Some campaign "strategists" have such a fear of failure that they seem to write plans to ensure they fail.

They set low goals to make sure they can meet them, but in doing so, they are unconsciously lowering their chance of winning.

You're not in this to lose impressively.

You're in this to win. Period.

So, if you're ambitious about winning, be ambitious about setting your goals. Be ambitious in planning a major canvassing blitz, or phone banks with volunteers, or a Get Out The Vote drive, or a major fundraising event, or a gala announcement of candidacy . . .

Be ambitious. You have little to lose but your fear of losing.

87. Don't confuse motion with progress.

A campaign needs to have some tools of measurement to see if it is progressing.

Whether it's a milestone chart, or a timetable, or a budget, the campaign manager and candidate will want to periodically review whether the strategy is working.

Polls are usually a part of this, of course. But, you can also measure specific progress in specific areas of the campaign, such as:

- * the number of households canvassed by volunteers

- * the number of volunteers recruited

- * the number of letters mailed

These are just examples of what might be measured. It depends on your strategy.

The point is, you need some identifiable goals, and you need to make identifiable progress, to keep people focused and working hard.

But don't confuse motion with progress. If you canvass 100,000 voters in your area, but because you failed to do targeting beforehand, 50,000 of them were unregistered and another 30,000 were die-hard Democrats, was that success or just the appearance of success?

So, make sure the progress you're making is real—adding new supporters, not just adding new numbers to a piece of paper.

You want to measure results, not effort.

88. There is no crystal ball for predicting an election, but you can have a ball trying.

Analysts try to divine the political future in every way imaginable . . . from tea leaves and the width of men's ties, to economic indicators and the weather. But, there are too many unpredictable factors. Even exit polls taken in bellwether precincts have been faulty in foretelling a final outcome.

Unknowable as the future may be, it is still useful for a strategist to try to envision the probable future . . . as a way to question his working assumptions.

A good way to begin is to compare your own campaign with your opponent's. One political analyst devised an exercise to compare two rival campaigns so that, theoretically, it predicts the final result. It's called the D.O.M.KE. method: Determining Outcome Measuring Key Elements . . .

First, compare both campaigns in ten categories. Assign each campaign the percentage you estimate it would receive if the entire election were determined by that one factor. For example, in the category of "Money", if your opponent was raising three times the money you were, give him a rating of 75% to your 25%. In the category of "Advertising", if you think the impact of your advertising will be somewhat better than your opponent's, you might give yourself 55% to his 45%. When you're done rating both campaigns in every category, add both columns and divide by 10. That would be the predicted final outcome.

This is, of course, a somewhat whimsical exercise. (And it assumes that the contest takes place on a fairly level playing field; that party registration is not way out of balance). Still, it can help you review how your

campaign is progressing vis a vis your opponent. In that way, it can serve as a creative management tool, helping reveal where you might need to pay more attention.

Determining Outcome Measuring Key Elements

What would the outcome be, if determined by:

- 1) **Voter turn-out** (as opposed to just party registration)
- 2) **Money raised** (and intelligently spent)
- 3) **Candidate image and reputation**
- 4) **Candidate performance** (meeting voters, working hard)
- 5) **News coverage** (both quantity and quality)
- 6) **Advertising, direct mail, etc.** (quantity and quality)
- 7) **Quality of message** (cutting issues, persuasive theme)
- 8) **Staff and consultants**
- 9) **Volunteers and activist allies**
- 10) **Timing, tactics, targeting**

89. Don't look to the national or state party for reality.

I'm not trying to be facetious here. I don't mean to joke that our Republican committees in Washington, or the various GOP state committees, are out of touch with reality. True, some party operatives might seem that way at times . . .

But I'm saying something else.

In creating a challenger campaign "out of nothing" (it just seems like "nothing" because the start-up materials are intangible: ideas, talent, energy, personality, etc.) it's only natural that a candidate, campaign manager and others in the campaign have doubts about whether they can actually win. After all, most challengers start out as unknowns, way behind in the polls. Their perspective is not unlike that of someone climbing, Mount Everest . . . "Gee, are we really making much progress? It looks even higher than when we started."

So . . . a challenger & company often make the mistake of looking to some operative with the national or state party to give them a sense of reality: Are we making progress? Are we taken seriously by the party pro's and experts?

If your campaign's sense of "reality" is based on what distant party operatives might be thinking, rather than what the voters are thinking about your race, you're heading for major trouble. You have to realize that party committees are far removed from the actual battleground and are often the last to accept your credibility—no matter how many news clips you send them.

And frankly, in the final weeks of an election, many of those operatives who had been able to spend time on your campaign will suddenly be busy elsewhere trying to save some Republican incumbent who unexpectedly is in trouble . . . rather than trying to help challengers who are assumed to have less chance to win, and who, unfairly or not, have less clout with those inside the party who decide how help is allocated.

Now, this isn't to say that you shouldn't try to get the most out of your state and/or national party committees. You should. Early on, you should try to find out what they are going to do for you, specifically. It's better to know where you stand right from the beginning. Then, lobbying for them to give you even more support should be part of your campaign.

Don't count on the party delivering everything they say they "might" do. You don't want everyone in your campaign demoralized if they fail to deliver. It's wiser to maintain a feisty attitude: "One way or another, with or without those skeptics in the party, we're going to win this election!" That attitude has more "reality" to it than whatever a party operative might tell you, because that kind of confidence in a campaign can be contagious and self-fulfilling.

90. A party that ignores minorities will become a minority party.

When it comes to attracting African Americans and Latinos, the Republican Party in 2000 had arguably its most attractive candidate in a generation in George W. Bush. In fact, President Bush's convention in Philadelphia was centered on the theme of inclusiveness. Yet, the performance of the Republican Party at the polls on Election Day was abysmal.

Why was this? The fact is that while many of the ideas that the Republican Party stands for draw majorities of support in the African-American and Latino communities, the Republican Party itself has become so detached from those communities that it simply didn't matter what we stand for.

The Republican Party simply was not seen as a trustworthy home for the hopes and dreams of millions of Americans who actually fear it. When one of the two major political parties receives less than 10% of the African American vote in an election it is not only unhealthy for our electoral aspirations, it is unhealthy for our country and our future.

I believe very strongly that we must resist the urge of some in our party to simply write off voters that don't traditionally vote for us and "move on." The simple mathematic equation is staring our party in the face – if we continue to lose by the margins we lost by in 2000, we will not be the majority party in this country.

Republicans have a problem accepting new people into our ranks. Not just people of color, ANY new person that comes into the midst of a Republican group is often mistrusted or resented. "Why are THEY here?"

Of course, this is exactly the WRONG attitude. Our party has to fundamentally change itself. And by change, I do not mean to nip at the edges – to conduct "outreach." I do not even like the term "out" reach, which by definition is what you do to someone who is not "in" with you.

We must build a common community with people of color in this country. We have to find a way to schedule the time to go to the communities, we have to hire people of color to represent us, and we have to listen to people of color to earn their trust.

This all begins with first changing our campaigns before we get to elected into office. How much time are you scheduled to appear in minority communities? How many campaign roundtables have you created to reach into those communities? How many interviews do you give to minority newspapers and radio stations?

Democrats in recent years have resorted to a reprehensible strategy of race baiting in order to turn out their base vote. However, it is incumbent upon us as Republicans to behave in a manner that makes their outrageous accusations seem preposterous rather than credible.

91. A candidate should mentally travel ahead in time to election day, and discuss the campaign with his future self.

Having met so many candidates at both the beginning of their campaign and at the end, I can't help but wish that I could somehow introduce the beginning candidate to his future self. Because I know that the election day self would urge the early-campaign self to campaign harder . . . to start earlier . . .

The seasoned campaigner would urge his early self to ignore the pessimistic predictions, the discouraging newspaper columns, the apathetic friends who let you down with their meager contributions. And that election day self would tell the early self:

"Imagine the mob of supporters waiting for the election results to be tabulated and announced. They'll be there, for you. Imagine the enthusiasm and excitement in the hall. It'll be there. And be confident that things are going to come together in the campaign at the end. They will. The early skepticism and apathy vanish in the final weeks. So, fight harder in your early time. If you do, that mob waiting for you on election night will be celebrating a victory."

Now, this exercise might tax your imagination, as well as your reputation if you're caught talking to yourself. But all too often a candidate will lose narrowly and then, looking back on the campaign, be tortured by those "if only" regrets:

If only I had prepared more for that debate . . . If only I had called that editor sooner . . . If only I had gone door to door months earlier . . . If only I had forced myself to spend more time raising money.

If only . . . if only.

We can't have perfect foresight, of course. But we can work harder at keeping those "if onlys" to a minimum.

92. It ain't over 'til it's over.

As we learned in the year 2000, Yogi Berra was right when he said, "it ain't over 'til it's over."

You will remember this experience for the rest of your life. That includes the way you accept the outcome of the election. Win or lose, you have to behave with dignity and with the responsibility that comes with being a candidate for office. After all, as the CEO of the campaign, your entire organization – volunteers, friends, donors, family and ultimately the thousands of people who voted for you – will be looking to you for leadership.

If you happen to come up on the losing end of a campaign, you should bow out with grace and not needlessly prolong a recount out of spite or in the hope of some "miracle" happening.

However, there are occasions when calling for a recount is warranted.

Do you have reason to believe that ballots were tampered with? Were voters denied access to the polls? Did your voter projection models swing way out of whack in certain precincts while remaining on target in other places?

There are numerous reasons why someone may want to call for a recount. In many states, laws are set up to trigger automatic recounts when the vote is very close. In others, the candidate them self must take legal action in a court or with a state election commission to request a recount. (Someone in your campaign should be tasked with knowing all of the campaign laws.) Either way, you have a responsibility to the voters to request a recount if you believe that you lost the election because of an error or misdeed.

Likewise, your opponent may request a recount after you have been declared the winner. Again, remember that there is an expectation once the "game" is over to shake hands with the other team. (There is a county in Delaware where political opponents follow a tradition of literally burying a hatchet after every election.) You will need to be careful in how you approach their desire to exercise their constitutional rights.

Having said that, it ain't over til it's over! Do not allow anyone to intimidate you or persuade you to back down. Remember those folks that didn't want you to run the "contrast" ad because their friends down at the "club" thought it was too mean? These may be the same friends that would advise you to bow out gracefully in order to appear magnanimous.

You have a responsibility to the people who donated to your campaign, who worked for you and who voted for you, and you have a responsibility to yourself and to what you believe in, to wait until a winner has been legally decided and certified by the state before you concede – or celebrate.

93. Candidates have one standard by which to measure their own performance: are they doing the best they can?

Every so often, candidates will ask themselves: "Am I doing what I set out to do?"

If you can't always enjoy what you're doing, you can still believe in what you're doing. So, no matter what troubles develop, do the best you can.

Win or lose, you live with yourself afterwards. Win or lose, you return to family and friends who respect you for having had the courage to enter the arena in the first place.

And, as a candidate you might as well enjoy the campaign while going through it . . . because you'll be moaning about it and joking about it the rest of your life.

That's the long view. In the short run, candidates should remember three things:

Don't mortgage your house.

Don't mortgage your soul.

Don't forget your family's birthdays.

Other than that, enjoy the adventure of it all: the unexpected excitement, drama and applause. Like me, you'll probably end up wondering why more people don't run for office. Not me, of course . . . other people.

INDEX

MEANING

1. A campaign is essentially persuasion.
2. The energy of a campaign is created by the Candidate and the Message.
3. The message strategy of a campaign is to be found within a triangle of I.C.E.
4. A persuasive campaign draws on four resources: time, money, people, ideas.
5. There are 5 C's in "successful contemporary challenger campaigns".

(The above 5 truisms make up the Pyramid of Political Principles. See the page between truisms 5 and 6.)

6. Politics is not a science; it is an art form that uses some scientific tools.
7. The viability of a candidate is not found in early polling results but rather in the candidate's integrity, determination and ideas.
8. An ideal candidate has thick skin, quick reflexes, inspiring vision, keen hearing, fast legs, strong back, firm handshake, and a good heart.
9. The candidate is the head of the campaign: the owner, the chief asset, the major fundraiser, and the prime vote getter.
10. For a challenger to defeat an incumbent, there is one risk that can't be taken: not taking any risks.

MESSAGE

11. A challenger must demonstrate three things in running against an incumbent: contrast, contrast, contrast.
12. Understand what makes your opponent vulnerable to defeat.
13. Republicans have the advantage of greater unity, but the Democrats work hard to divide and conquer.
14. The issues most important to voters can be the most irrelevant.
15. To control the campaign agenda, you need to get the media and your opponent talking about your issues.
16. If your opponent is not well-defined in the minds of voters, do the defining for him.
17. Campaigns that attach little importance to research end up paying for it in big mistakes and lost opportunities.
18. You actually have to research two candidates: your opponent and yourself.
19. The better an issue is for you and the more harmful it is to your opponent, the more careful you should be in verifying its accuracy and stating it correctly.
20. If you don't ensure that your campaign is in the Information Age, it may as well be in the Dark Ages.
21. A poll is only as good as its interpretation.
22. If you want to represent the future, you'd better have a campaign website.
23. What makes a poll reliable is not the number of people interviewed but the quality of the questions asked.
24. It is said, there are three kinds of lies: 'lies, damned lies, and statistics"...but only polling can combine all three.
25. To discover a new political issue, candidates should try trolling rather than polling.
26. Test-drive an issue before buying.
27. Most people are not ideological.
28. People vote not only their pocketbooks, but their families, their safety, and their idealism.
29. If you have political dynamite to throw at your opponent, make sure that stick of dynamite is not shaped like a boomerang.
30. Issues that appeal only to a minority of voters can sometimes add up to a majority of voters on Election Day.
31. Forget the K.I.S.S. rule of "Keep It Simple, Stupid" and remember instead to Keep It Smartly Simple.

MEDIA

32. Television, and every other medium, is only as powerful as the message advertised through it.
33. Your "image" as a candidate should not be based on what you think the people want, but rather on what you are.
34. Fights make news; shyness doesn't.
35. Before launching a new idea to attract attention, first evaluate what kind of attention it will likely attract.
36. All reporters are biased, and their bias is for news.

37. Candidates need to read as regularly as students because they are tested everyday.
38. Before any news conference or media interview, play 20 Questions.
39. Attacking you can be the nicest thing an opponent will do for you.
40. A minor detail can communicate a mega issue.
41. Labeling a candidate can make selling a candidate more difficult.
42. Republican campaigns don't use repetition enough.
43. You can psych out an opponent without acting like a psycho.
44. "To debate or not to debate" is not the only question.
45. In political advertising, there is a vast difference between production value and persuasive value.
46. Experts in corporate advertising can be amateurs in political advertising.
47. It's best to advertise in a combination of media because voters usually need to hear something from more than one source before they accept it.

MANAGEMENT

48. Running a campaign is like flying upside down.
49. For effective planning and management, "Visions, Strategies, Projects, Tactics" is the only model big enough for a campaign.
50. A campaign manager is less a manager than a director.
51. To be a leader, you first have to follow the model Listen, Learn, Help, Lead
52. Campaigns are hard work.
53. Murphy's Law is the only law that has never been broken in a campaign.
54. A good campaign organization is an art, not a chart.
55. You should foster the spirit of teamwork.
56. "Strategy" means: how are you going to win?
57. To be a successful manager, you need to follow the 7 steps of effective management.
58. Learn the Territory, Know the Leaders, and Know the Followers
59. The best campaign vehicle has four-wheel drive.
60. There is no set formula for winning.
61. Good strategy evolves.
62. Take your time in choosing a consultant.
63. In hiring staff, your first choice doesn't have to be a political professional.
64. A campaign should be voter-centered, not staff-centered.
65. Speed Kills
66. Let the candidate's family decide what role they want in the campaign—if any.
67. For a candidate to be the "good guy", sometimes the campaign manager must be the bad guy.
68. A challenger campaign is the most upwardly-mobile organization of all.
69. Cynicism, gossip and backbiting poison a campaign; the antidote is setting a good example.
70. Challengers won't necessarily win with volunteers, but they rarely win without them.
71. When volunteers walk into a headquarters, they are psychologically ready; so the campaign should be ready for them.
72. Targeting voters: hunt for votes where the votes are.
73. A campaign mirrors the personal qualities of its leaders.
74. The planning is easy; the execution is hard.

MONEY

75. The average challenger candidate needs to spend about half his time raising money.
76. The key to successful fundraising is not to get someone to reach for his wallet, but to reach for his Rolodex.
77. To put on a successful fundraising event, you don't need a "big name" draw; you need a big mouth.
78. Keep the fundraising people apprised of the fun-raising.
79. If you have too much overhead, the roof can fall in on you.
80. Spend campaign money like it's your own.
81. Optimism in a campaign is worth \$138,000.

MOMENTUM

82. Once a challenger starts running he needs to keep going, because, most likely, the incumbent has never stopped.
83. Avoid the trap too many Republicans fall into: unwittingly giving the campaign a summer vacation.

84. Since 40% of the electorate doesn't tune in to politics until the last two weeks of the campaign, you should be ready to play your "big hits" all over again at the end.
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