



The presidential and many other local elections are upon us now. An election year is a great time to think about how the candidates will get their information to the voters. While many may think the best way to get ones campaign information is through using social media. But is it? While it would seem to be a great way to get campaign information quickly to users it is limited at best. Articles have been written, for example, how to block political blasts on your Facebook page! Others, like Twitter limit you to 140 characters. This is great for day to day updates on a candidate but limits deep candidate information.

According to a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, social networking sites play a modest role in influencing most U.S. users' political views. According to the survey, for most of those who use the social sites, political material is just a small portion of what they post and what they read. Plus the impact of their use of the sites is modest, at best which is all the more reason to send printed material which can contain far more and substantial information. So what's the best way to get good candidate information out? The answer? A tactic that has worked for many years and still does. Direct mail!

If your direct mail piece isn't designed effectively: however, you will waste this opportunity to catch the voters eye right away. Hence your direct mail piece needs to be different so that it stands out from other direct mail pieces and or other campaign pieces. A well designed political direct mail piece can offer a wide range of information the candidate is trying to get out to the voter. Personalizing the piece connects the candidate right to the voter. Thus if the piece is not well designed the candidate will lose the opportunity to make a direct connection.

There are three key principals, per Local Victory, when designing a campaign direct mail piece:

- **BREAK THROUGH THE CLUTTER.** Since most people have a tendency to toss out direct mail quickly you need to design the political communications pieces for maximum impact and make it easy to remember the candidates name and the office for which they are running. Also make sure your brochures, palm cards, etc, are easy to read but include lots of headlines, pictures, etc.
- **BE CONSISTENT.** Keep your campaign's political looks recognizable. Same logo, color scheme, and font. This means that when a piece arrives in the voters home they can recognize which candidate the piece is coming right from the "get go." This consistency makes your campaign, and the candidate more memorable to the voters.
- **THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.** In conjunction with principal number two, use a combination of different colors, colors that are not typical. The use of non-traditional colors can catch the voters eye. Think of different ways to catch and hold the voters attention. Think different and creatively.

There are several types of direct mail campaign pieces:

1. Bio pieces that talk about the candidate and his views, platform, etc.
2. Comparison piece that talks about the differences between candidates, which is one of the most effective.
3. GOTV piece (Get Out To Vote) hopefully reminds voters to get out and vote, especially for a particular candidate.
4. Endorsement piece which may tout information that was reported in a newspaper or association endorsement for the candidate.

There are other unique design items that can be done such as the use of QR codes. Adding QR codes which take the reader to videos, additional information, etc., can be of Benefit. In summary you need to grab the voter's attention, watch your visual rules, try to stand out and know what people read but above all think differently. There is a lot more information online through a variety of campaigning or direct marketing web-sites.