



CHAPTER VIII

Communications:

*Developing, Delivering & Getting Out
Your Message*

I. DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE

Perhaps the most important component of a winning campaign is the development and consistent communication of a compelling message. Your message is the central guiding theme of your campaign – one that conveys the reason you are running, why you are the most qualified candidate and what you will do to improve the lives of those in your community once elected.

It is also important to understand what a message is *not*. It is not your stump speech, your campaign slogan, the copy on your website, or the issue or group of issues on which you are running. Rather it both incorporates and informs all of these things.

According to the late Paul Tully, former political director of the Democratic National Committee, a message is defined as:

“A limited body of truthful information which is consistently conveyed by a candidate and an organization in order to provide the persuasive reasons for an audience to choose, and act on behalf of their choice of, our candidate.”

Your message should be relevant to the issues in your district, set you apart from your opponent, and make clear the values you stand for and what you will fight for once in office. Above all, it should be truthful, concise, and conveyed repeatedly throughout all of your voter communication, including speeches, debates, campaign literature, media appearances and fundraising appeals.

A. RESEARCH TYPES AND TOOLS

A good message takes time to develop and is carefully crafted to reflect the specific nuances of your candidacy, your district, and your voters’ concerns. You should conduct basic research to inform the development of your message, including the following:

♦ **Self and Opposition Research.** Getting a grasp on your own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of your opponent is an important first step in determining your strategy, preparing for potential attacks and developing your message. See Chapter IV for an outline of the personal, professional and public questions you should investigate prior to launching your campaign.

♦ **Issue Research.** You should also conduct research on the issues that are likely to emerge during the campaign. In legislative races, your state party or caucus may provide research on the most prominent issues in the state; your staff should also prepare basic fact sheets and talking points on these issues, as well as on major national issues on which you should have a working knowledge.

Following are the tools at your disposal for purposes of conducting research:

♦ **Polling.** Highly competitive legislative campaigns will want to consider budgeting for and conducting polls in order to assess their candidate's name recognition, perceived strengths and weaknesses and early standing in a head-to-head matchup against his/her opponent(s). Polls are also very useful in testing which issues are relevant to the electorate and which messages likely voters find particularly compelling.

There are two types of polls employed by political campaigns. *Baseline* polls are conducted at the outset of the campaign to identify the issues that will frame the election and help determine an overall message strategy. *Tracking* polls build on initial the baseline poll and are conducted later in the campaign, often repeatedly, to monitor the campaign's progress and identify message modifications that may be necessary as Election Day nears.

Depending on the pollster you hire, the size of your sample and length of your questionnaire, a baseline poll can cost your campaign anywhere from \$10,000-25,000. Tracking polls, which are shorter and survey a smaller subset of voters, run \$3,000-\$5,000. If you've made the decision to conduct a poll, begin by consulting your state party and caucus; they may be planning to conduct polls themselves to which they will provide you access, or they may have a deal with a pollster who will provide campaigns with a reduced rate.

♦ **Focus Groups.** Used by themselves or in tandem with a poll, focus groups are designed to dig deeper into prevailing attitudes on key issues than is possible in a phone survey. Usually two hours in length, focus groups are structured and moderated discussions among a small group of pre-screened

individuals – usually likely voters – who share the same general profile as your target audience. The discussion centers around those issues the campaign wishes to explore in detail, such as the image of the candidate, his or her credibility on a particular issue and the effectiveness of his or her overall message. Focus groups are also a common way for larger (usually statewide and federal) races to test the effectiveness of television ads and direct mail pieces. Focus groups will cost your campaign \$2,000 to \$5,000 each.

◆ **Research via Internet and Organizations.** As you or your staff begin to conduct research, you should make use of the resources offered by several national organizations, all of which offer substantive yet easily accessible and digestible information on a wide variety of issues. While it is not necessary to have completed your issue research before developing your message, it is a process you should begin early in the campaign so you are prepared as issues arise. The following groups should be among your first stops for assistance:

Progressive Majority. As a member of the Progressive Majority “farm team,” you have access to wide-ranging assistance from OUR staff in your state. Your State Director can provide fact sheets and talking points on issues within the six-point Progressive Agenda outlined in Chapter II, and can help you identify the best sources of information on issues expected to arise in your race. www.progressivemajority.org.

Campaign for America’s Future. Established to promote the principles of a common sense progressive reform agenda, CAF provides fact sheets on the economy, health care, education, Medicare, Social Security, and the environment. Visit them at www.ourfuture.org.

Center for Policy Alternatives. The nation’s leading nonpartisan progressive public policy organization serving state legislators, CPA has published the *Progressive Platform for the States*, a briefing book written specifically for state legislative candidates that covers a full range of policy areas. To receive a copy of the book free of charge, visit www.cfpa.org.

B. THE MESSAGE BOX

Using the research you have completed on yourself and your opponent and the information you have gleaned about the issues that will be relevant in your race,

you will have the information you need to begin the process of message development.

As noted in Chapter V, it is recommended that you work with a trusted inner circle of advisors to develop your message. One of the most effective tools for facilitating this process is the *Tully Message Box*, developed by Paul Tully. The message box visually categorizes the components of your message and that of your opponent into four categories: What your campaign says about itself; what your campaign says about your opponent; what your opponent's campaign says about itself; and what your opponent says about you. The Message Box displays clearly how the campaign will be defined if you control the message, and how it will be defined if you allow your opponent to do so.

THE TULLY MESSAGE BOX

WHAT WE'RE SAYING ABOUT US	WHAT THE OPPOSING CAMPAIGN IS SAYING ABOUT ITSELF
WHAT WE'RE SAYING ABOUT OUR OPPONENT	WHAT THE OPPOSING CAMPAIGN IS SAYING ABOUT US

Following is an example of a hypothetical state legislative campaign's use of the Message Box:

Our candidate, Ann Moore, is 42-year-old teacher and married mother of three. She has lived in the district all her life, is a member of the local school board, and has been active in local environmental causes. She is running in an open seat against Don Smith, 30, a wealthy developer who is unmarried; he has been active with the local GOP since moving here three years ago. The District is currently represented by a moderate Republican woman, and Democratic performance is 49%. A Midwest suburban community with many young families, the district has strong environmental sensibilities, but has recently been affected by the recent departure of one of the community's largest employers, the struggle to improve local schools, and rising delinquency among local teens.

<p style="text-align: center;">WHAT WE'RE SAYING ABOUT US</p> <p>Ann Moore is a teacher and school board member whose leadership has helped lower class sizes, modernize libraries, and improve after school programs for our kids.</p> <p>A mother of three who knows what it takes for families to make ends meet, Ann will fight to ensure that working families earn fair and just compensation and benefits for a hard day's work.</p> <p>For two decades, Ann Moore has helped protect the parks' green spaces that make our community a wonderful place to live and raise a family.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">WHAT THE OPPOSING CAMPAIGN IS SAYING ABOUT ITSELF</p> <p>Don Smith has managed a thriving company with a multi-million dollar budget and provided hundreds of local residents with good jobs.</p> <p>Don Smith knows what it takes to create jobs and invest in small businesses and he has demonstrated a commitment to helping our community grow.</p> <p>Don Smith shares your values of faith, family, hard work and prosperity for our families.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">WHAT WE'RE SAYING ABOUT OUR OPPONENT</p> <p>Don Smith is a young millionaire from a prominent Manhattan family who doesn't share a history with or the values of our community.</p> <p>Don Smith values money over people. He has spoken out against raising the minimum wage and has fought to eliminate overtime pay for his own employees.</p> <p>Don Smith is destroying our community's cherished parks, playgrounds and green spaces to build parking lots and strip malls.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">WHAT THE OPPOSING CAMPAIGN IS SAYING ABOUT US</p> <p>Ann Moore is ineffective. Since she joined the school board, test scores have dropped, school violence has risen and schools have gone without much-needed repairs.</p> <p>Ann Moore wants to raise your property taxes to throw money at the problems facing our local school system rather than solving them.</p> <p>Ann Moore is more concerned with saving trees than creating jobs and investing in our community.</p>

The message box encapsulates the positives of our candidate and the negatives of her opponent; it also anticipates the way the opponent will portray himself and the charges he will make against our candidate. Developed early in the campaign, the Message Box will provide the four legs of the message platform upon which all campaign communication is built.

C. THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MESSENGERS

Once you've developed the fundamental building blocks of your overall message, you will need to assess your message and make sure it is meeting a set of qualitative criteria for success. Outlined below is a checklist you should make sure your message accomplishes before taking it out on the road:

Establish Your Credibility. Have you run a small business? Held local office? Led the fight for social change? Voters want to back a candidate they trust -- someone who has the experience to hit the ground running and advocate and legislate effectively once in office. Identify what skills and experiences you would bring to office and why they make you the best choice for the job.

Make it Relevant. Identify the issues of concern in your local community, and craft your message to address those issues. Like donors, voters act in their own self-interest, so communicating how you will address their specific concerns, from job creation to property taxes to improving our schools, is key to gaining their support.

Establish Contrast. Voters must make a choice on Election Day, and your message must frame the debate in a way that makes you not only a good candidate, but a *better* choice than your opponent. To do so, you must tie your positives to your opponent's negatives.

Tell the Truth. Whether you're touting your resume, answering questions about your income taxes, highlighting your voting record, or explaining what you'll fight for once in office, keep it honest. Voters respect candidates who they trust, and dishonest claims are likely to be discovered and exploited during the course of your campaign.

Keep it Simple. Paint a picture with your message using simple language. Avoid detailed legislative language or jargon, and keep your message to two to three salient points.

Make a Connection. People want to vote for people like themselves. Connect with your voters by highlighting shared experiences and telling personal stories that convey your humanity and your commitment to similar values. Explaining your personal and difficult experience placing your father in a nursing home, for example, will convey your commitment to nursing home regulation far better than simply stating your support for nursing home legislation.

Repeat, Repeat, Repeat. Your message should permeate and inform every speech, interview, public appearance, fundraising pitch, phone script and direct

mail piece in your campaign. Studies have shown that voters need to hear your message at least twelve times before it begins to sink in. If you're not tired of saying it, you're not saying it often enough.



"When developing your message, keep in mind that you will only have the time and resources to get two or three ideas across to the voters."

-- WI Sen. Minority Leader Jon Erpenbach

D. PUTTING YOUR MESSAGE TO WORK

So you've developed a message that effectively tells voters who you are, why you are the best candidate for the job and what you will do for them once in office. How do you make it translate to all areas of your campaign? Outlined below is an example of several ways our hypothetical state legislative candidate, Ann Moore, could thread her message through all aspects of her campaign:

STRATEGIC USE OF CAMPAIGN MESSAGE



II. GENERATING EARNED MEDIA

Earned media – or the coverage of your campaign through news outlets including television, cable, talk radio, newspapers and specialty press -- is an important way to get your message out to potential supporters. Press coverage is the cheapest way to reach the widest group of people -- you and your staff should always be thinking of ways to “earn” media.

A. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Any good press operation is one that is well-informed, well-organized and ensures that the candidate is prepared for whatever opportunities or issues arise. Taking the time to do some initial groundwork will go a long way toward maximizing your ability to generate earned media over the course of your campaign. Early preparation should include the following:

◆ **Build and Maintain a Media Contact List.** As outlined in previous chapters, good lists are the backbone of a winning campaign. You will need a database that enables you to reach and track your communications with every media outlet in your district. Begin by contacting your state party or caucus; they may be able to provide a list or share a statewide media guide from which you can start.

Your list should include all of the outlets that are within or cover your district, including television stations, local cable outlets and radio stations; daily, weekly and community-based newspapers; and the “specialty press,” or those outlets designed to reach out to a particular constituency or interest group of individuals. When creating your database, you will want to include columns for all of the following data:

Outlet Name	Key Reporter
Outlet Type	Beat
Circulation/Viewership	Phone
Frequency	Email
Deadline(s)	Fax
Address	Record of Contact
Editor/News Director	Notes

◆ **Establish Systems.** Establishing routine parameters for dealing with the media inside the campaign is critical to an effective operation. Following are some of the activities you will want to systematize:

Vetting Press Releases and Statements. When you're putting materials into the hands of reporters, one pair of eyes editing a document usually isn't enough. Have a system for multiple-person review, fact checking and signoff on materials before they are distributed.

Monitoring Clips. You will want to assign someone on your staff to watch local news outlets daily and compile any clips that deal with you, your opponent(s), or important news in your district. Breaking news in the district should be reported to the candidate immediately and positive stories on you and negative stories on your opponent should be clipped and saved for future use in ads, literature, persuasion mail pieces and/or fundraising letters.

Completing Questionnaires. Most organizations considering endorsement of your campaign will first require that you complete a questionnaire on their issues. The campaign manager and press staff should be aware of the questionnaires so there are no surprises and should help decide which should be completed and which should not within the context of your overall endorsement strategy. Staff should also be kept abreast of the endorsement schedule to take advantage of an opportunity to generate press coverage.

Rapid Response. Develop a system for responding quickly to breaking news in your district or statements made by your opponent. Maintaining blast fax and email lists is an important first step in ensuring you are ready to respond on short notice.

◆ **Create a Media Kit.** A typical press kit is a two-pocket folder adorned with a campaign sticker that includes campaign literature, a photograph, a biography, a record of accomplishments, a list of endorsements and relevant news clips. You'll want to bring kits along on interviews and visits with reporters; they can double as information packets for your donors as well.

◆ **Meet and Greet.** Politics is all about relationships and that is particularly true when it comes to dealing with the press. Your staff (or you, if you have not yet hired any) should make the rounds early in the campaign, introduce yourself to and visit with reporters and provide a media packet and contact

information. This initial meeting should be followed up with regular and personal contact over the course of the campaign. Following are several guidelines to follow when dealing with the press:

Assume you're always on the record. Assume you're on the record when dealing with reporters and you'll never put yourself in a situation you will regret later.

Know that reporters are reporters first. Meeting a local reporter for drinks is fine, as long as you understand that their first loyalty is to their job. Your aim should not be to make friends with reporters, but rather to establish a friendly relationship. There is a difference.

Tell the truth. Gaining a reporter's trust is an important cornerstone of a good relationship. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't be afraid to admit it.

Respect a reporter's time. Return phone calls promptly and respect deadlines. Doing so will ensure you're called again.

Be prepared. Remember that any meeting or visit with a reporter is an important time to be on message about your candidacy, the issues and the politics of your campaign. Never meet with a reporter, even socially, without knowing and being prepared to stick to your talking points.

B. USING THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

There are a variety of tools you will want to utilize to generate press coverage for your campaign. Listed below are the most common, with advice for the use of each:

◆ **Media Advisories.** Used to alert the media to an upcoming event, advisories include only the facts, including the name of your campaign; the date, time, location, and purpose of the event; and who the reporter should contact for more information. Advisories should be sent three days in advance and again the day before the event. The day before the event, follow-up calls should be made to make sure it was received and encourage/ascertain attendance.

♦ **Press Releases.** One of the most common ways for campaigns to communicate with the media is through written press releases, which are news stories written from the perspective of the campaign used to inform the press about campaign news. Following are some general tips for their use:

If it's not news, don't 'release' it. Ever heard of crying wolf? Campaigns that send a release every time the candidate makes a move risk losing credibility and damaging their capacity to get coverage when it's warranted. Use releases smartly and they will be taken more seriously.

Keep it short and simple. Releases should be no more than a page in length, begin with a catchy and descriptive headline and include the most important information in the first paragraph. Your objective is to get the attention of, and communicate your message of the day to, busy reporters -- a goal best accomplished with a tightly-written release.

Follow the formula. There are five components to the body of your press release: Headline, lead paragraph, quote, relevant facts, and closing quote. Any more is unnecessary to communicating your message.

Don't overlook small outlets. Small media outlets will often reprint a press release verbatim since they lack both staff and a steady stream of content; make sure smaller outlets are included on your distribution list.

Don't let press releases replace relationships with and phone calls to key reporters. Maintaining personal contact is the key to generating coverage, and sometimes calls to a few key reporters is the most effective strategy.

Two words: spell check. Nothing communicates incompetence on a campaign faster than a poorly written press release. Employ your vetting system to ensure the quality of your material before it hits the streets.

♦ **Press Conferences and Media Events.** Press conferences need to meet two fundamental criteria: they should be newsworthy and rare. This tool is most appropriate for big news in the campaign, such as the launch of your campaign or the announcement of a major endorsement.

Media events are those hosted for the purpose of gaining coverage of your campaign; they are most successful when they provide a unique hook, engage

lots of local activists and supporters, and provide good footage for the evening news. Following are tips for holding effective press conferences and events:

Issue a media advisory and follow up. As noted above, advisories should be sent out in advance of your event and your staff should call key reporters to ensure they received the release and encourage attendance.

Consider convenience, story angle and camera shot when choosing a location. Your location should be convenient for local reporters to get to, relevant to the topic at hand and visually interesting enough to generate coverage on the local news. If you do have cameras there, make sure a diverse group of supporters are standing behind you with your campaign signs in hand; it amounts to free TV advertising for your campaign.

Know the media cycle. Hold your press conferences at times that are convenient for reporters to attend and provide time for your event to appear on the day's big news broadcast. Holding a press conference at 5:00 pm – just as reporters are filing their stories for the 5:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. local news broadcasts and print reporters are putting their stories to bed for tomorrow's daily – will almost guarantee you get no coverage.

Provide a press release. All press in attendance should receive a pre-written release about the event that provides the basics as well as a few key quotes from your remarks; they may use the release verbatim.

Send your release and statement out to no-shows. Once the event is over, send the press release and your statement to your full media list. Not showing up doesn't necessarily mean they're not interested or won't cover your announcement.

♦ **Interviews.** You will want to take every opportunity to be interviewed by local television, cable, radio and print reporters. Whether preparing for a full interview about your campaign or a request for comment on a particular issue, make sure you know the topic, come prepared, stay on message, remain honest, project an air of confidence and are quote-worthy. If you're doing an interview in studio, arrive early to get comfortable with your surroundings and make sure to meet and greet the administrative and technical staff. Above all, remember that the real audience isn't the reporter, but the readers, viewers or

listeners. Use this and every similar every opportunity to connect with the voters and communicate your message.

◆ **Editorial Board Meetings.** Ed Board meetings are opportunities for you to meet with the editorial decision makers for your local paper(s), usually within the context of seeking an endorsement. The importance of these meetings cannot be overstated. Gaining the support of your local paper gives your campaign credibility and momentum, while losing that support to your opponent can have a chilling effect on your fundraising, your base voters and ultimately the support of swing voters.

You should be fully briefed by your staff or conduct significant research yourself in preparation for these meetings to ascertain the paper's political bias, editorial positions on local issues and past endorsements of political candidates. Know who will be in the meeting and which issues they believe to be the most salient in your district/race, and come fully prepared to discuss those issues as well as all others that may play a role in your campaign. You should be on message, but also be flexible enough to address specific questions.

◆ **Radio Feeds and Actualities.** A radio feed is a recorded quote, no longer than a sound bite, that is sent to local radio stations for use in their broadcasts. A feed should be no longer than 30 seconds in length, *including* a both a lead in and a closing line from a member of your staff giving context. An actuality is a feed for which the quote was recorded during an "actual" event or speech. Your campaign should acquire the materials necessary for feeds, such as a microphone, two cassette recorders and a supply of tapes. Your staff should prepare and send feeds to local radio stations at least once per week, preferably in the early morning hours so they are available for use by drive-time hosts in need of content.

◆ **Stump Speech.** Every candidate needs one good stump speech that is on message, can be modified to suit each particular audience, and that he or she can internalize and is comfortable delivering. Your stump speech is the foundation on which all other speeches are built; its primary purpose is to deliver your message.

CONSTRUCTION OF AN EFFECTIVE STUMP SPEECH

- ◆ **Introduce Yourself.** Tell your audience who you are and what has compelled you to run.

- ◆ **Tell a Personal Story.** Share something about yourself that will reinforce your message and your reason for running, paint a picture for your audience and help them relate to you on a personal level at the outset of your speech. Think Bill Clinton as “the little boy from Hope.”

- ◆ **Outline the Issues.** What are the issues you’ll fight for if elected? Start with that which spurred you to run. Why do they matter to you, and what will you do to bring about change? Highlight no more than two or three issues that fit within your overall message, include those that are of particular relevance to your particular audience and talk about them in ways that make them relevant to people’s lives rather than using complicated legislative jargon.

- ◆ **Establish Contrast.** If you haven’t explained why you are the better candidate for the position, you haven’t done your job. Make it clear to the audience why they must not only vote *for* you, but also vote *against* your opponent.

- ◆ **Reinforce and Make an Ask.** End your speech by reinforcing your message, and asking the audience for their help. Don’t miss an opportunity to welcome support, volunteers, and donations, and don’t forget to ask for their vote.

♦ **Surrogates.** Surrogates are credible campaign supporters who can advocate on your behalf to the press and general public. While the most common surrogates are those with high name ID who generate instant credibility, such as local elected officials or progressive leaders, using “real people” from your district to speak out on your behalf can also be an effective strategy.

Surrogate activities can take a number of forms, including writing letters to the editor, speaking on your behalf at local meetings and events, writing fundraising letters on your behalf, or calling local radio to challenge your opponent or support your candidacy or your work on a particular issue. Your campaign should cultivate and communicate regularly with surrogates and provide them with weekly talking points and a list of potential opportunities to keep them on message and maximize their exposure.

♦ **Internet and Web Communication.** It is becoming increasingly important for campaigns to establish a presence on the web. You should invest in a website that posts your biography, campaign contact information, and central message at a minimum. Campaign websites are also perfect places to accept contributions, list volunteer opportunities, tout your endorsements, and post photographs and favorable news stories; your campaign would be wise to seek out a volunteer willing to help with this functionality free of charge.

In addition to building a website, your staff will want to consider a “friends of” email list that allows the campaign to keep supporters updated via email. Much like a website, such lists will also provide an added means for you to raise money, generate turnout, and recruit volunteers. It is important for your campaign to remember that any material posted on your website or sent out over your email list is public and can be forwarded around quickly. Always ensure such material is fully vetted and on message before it hits the cyberstreets.

♦ **Letters to the Editor.** LTE’s are a wonderful way to get your message heard in local papers without incurring the cost of advertising. In addition to writing letters yourself, you should consider launching a Letter to the Editor Campaign which engages your supporters and volunteers in writing to local papers on your behalf.

Studies show that voters value the opinions of their friends and neighbors above all other surrogates when deciding who to vote for, so letters from those in your community to the local paper are a particularly salient tool. Letters should be short, written in conversational language, and always communicate your message. Supporters writing letters should also include a full name, address and phone number as many papers will call to verify authorship prior to running a letter.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR


Dear Editor:

As a Virginia commuter who becomes a real crab apple following my arduous daily commute to and from work in DC, I applaud Rep. Leslie Byrne for her efforts to make my life a little easier.

I was enormously pleased with the May 25 Journal article announcing that nearly \$40 million has been authorized for transportation projects in Northern Virginia. I understand it was Byrne's hard work on the House Public Works Committee that made this dream become reality, and I, for one, am thankful.

I look forward to the extension of Metrorail to Dulles, the expansion of the 14th Street Bridge, and the countless other transportation projects that will improve the lives of every commuter this side of Goochland County. I also look forward to casting my vote for Rep. Byrne in November. She is one public figure who has earned the right to call herself my representative. Thank you, Leslie, for a job well done.

Sincerely,


Jane Smith

III. PAID MEDIA

Paid media, or the purchase of television, cable, radio, or newspaper advertising, is a necessary component of nearly all competitive campaigns. In fact, paid media is such an important and effective tool to communicate your message that together with voter contact, it should comprise at least 70% of your campaign budget.

The first and most important rule of investing in paid media is to dominate the medium, or buy enough time and/or space to rise above the clutter. As a general rule, you should plan to choose a medium – be it TV, radio or the local daily – and dominate it. Ideally you will have the resources to purchase ads with the most prominent media in your district, and you will have enough resources to run ads consistently in the final three weeks of the campaign. Following is information on paid media in each of its forms:

A. TELEVISION

Given that most Americans get more of their news and entertainment from television than from any other source, it is not surprising that TV ads are the most expensive to produce and air. As indicated above, you should not purchase TV unless you have the resources to produce quality spots that will run with enough frequency to ensure that your targeted audience sees your ads at least three times.

Four primary factors impact the cost of a buying television ad space, including the size/total viewership of the media market, the time of day you run your ad, the length of the spot itself, and the frequency with which it will run.

If you plan to buy TV you will require the assistance of a professional media consultant to produce the ads and to buy the time; you cannot advertise in this medium without one. It is important that you choose a consultant whose work you trust and respect. Begin by consulting your state party or caucus for information on the consultants in your area and to get a sense of the going rates for both production and airtime. Before hiring consultants, take the time to interview several, review their work on past campaigns and ensure they will be a good fit with you and your staff.

RADIO

Radio can be an incredibly effective tool for local and state legislative campaigns, and rates for both production and airtime can be up to ten times less expensive than television. As with TV, the size of the market, time of day and length and frequency of your spot all impact the cost; a media consultant can help determine what type of buy is best for you.

As a general rule, drive time radio during morning and evening rush hour is the most effective; you should plan and budget for enough resources to place ads on several stations during these time slots during the final weeks of the campaign for maximum saturation.

NEWSPAPERS

As a general rule, newspaper ads are most effective in small towns and rural communities where the local paper still remains the major source of news. Your ads should be professionally designed, well placed within the paper, and run often enough to break through to the reader. They should also communicate your message visually just as a television or radio would do so verbally.

SPECIALTY PRESS

Running ads in local African-American, Hispanic or Asian press is not a stand-alone strategy, but can be a positive addition to a well-rounded media plan. Many specialty outlets will express a willingness to cover your campaign if you show support by purchasing ads, so they can be a good investment on many levels. Too often, many constituencies get “reached out to” only as an afterthought in the days leading up to the election and forgotten the day after Election Day. Advertising in the specialty press *early* can establish you as a candidate sensitive to the issues and eager for the support of that particular constituency. If you’re advertising in a newspaper written in a language other than English, make sure your ad appears in that language as well.