

Direct Voter Contact While Social Distancing

Direct voter contact is still the best tactic to use when running for public office, but right now the definition of how we do direct contact has changed. However, the principles of a great campaign remain: Great candidates like you still need to identify voters, persuade them, and turn them out on Election Day. Here's how to do it during the pandemic:

Keep Connecting With Voters

People may have more time, but they are also more stressed and may have shorter attention spans. Right now, voters are looking for human connection and your campaign should be poised to provide it. That said, you don't need to have everything figured out. Highlight both the ways you *are* handling this crisis and, crucially, *aren't* dealing with it. For example, if you're having trouble homeschooling your kids and campaigning, be honest! It's okay.

Continue to Cultivate Endorsements

You won't have time to talk to every voter, so you still need endorsements. But traditional endorsers may be too busy themselves to send an email or film a video on your behalf. Consider getting endorsements from local influencers: a neighbor down the block, a teacher in the district, or the mother of a nurse who is working on the front lines. Make a graphic that folks can use on their social media pages. Go local and provide the tools for nontraditional endorsers to make it happen for you!

Stay informed

During this time of uncertainty, people are looking to our leaders for clear and fact-based information. That means YOU. Join the local COVID-19 Facebook support group, sign up for your governor's daily alerts, visit the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website. Gather LOCAL knowledge and share it regularly.

Campaigning hasn't drastically changed with the onset of COVID-19, but you must do direct voter contact differently. *Here are some tips:*

1. **Update Your Pitch and Loop Back.** Nowadays, consider 1) introducing yourself and the position you are running for; 2) asking the voter how they are doing; 3) acknowledge COVID-19 and these unprecedented times; 4) offer a resource, an update, or something you are doing to help; 5) ask for their vote; 6) then follow up with an email, text, or phone call from another person on the campaign to confirm the vote. Number 6 is what is called a loop-back. Persuading voters is hard and takes time, but you should expect each of these direct voter contacts will take a lot more time than usual.
2. **Explore Different Tactics.** Consider other tactics such as virtual phones, texting, and even reverse robocalls. Explore having large community meetings via Zoom, or block parties via Google Duo. Livestream chats on Instagram. Host a Q&A session on Facebook Live, YouTube Live, or Twitter. Set up telephone town halls/ dial-in calls with a service like [TTHM](#). Use a voicemail service to send recordings straight to voters' inboxes. Be creative.
3. **Match Platform With Demographics.** Depending on the demographic of the voter, try to customize the social media platform with the demographic group that is most prolific on that platform. For example, if you are targeting younger voters, you might choose to utilize TikTok or Instagram more, compared to Facebook and Youtube where older voters may be more active.
4. **Pay Attention to Who's Not At The Table.** We must utilize technology to do direct voter contact now, but what about folks who don't have access to the internet, a computer, or a smartphone? What about people who don't have internet that is fast enough to live stream, or a data plan large enough to download videos? What about people who don't have emails or don't know how to login to GoToMeetings? COVID-19 is revealing not only the fragility of life, but also the inequities in our communities. So consider doing a special call to voters who are 60 years old or older; writing handwritten notes to voters in low turnout precincts; sending a video to public access television to broadcast; or organizing a dial-in town hall meeting. Pay attention to those who are, at first, invisible to you.
5. **Include Voter Education.** Every day comes with new changes. Political conventions are being postponed. Primary Election Days are being rescheduled. Old polls sites are being closed. In these uncertain times, you must include voter education in your communications plan. Update primary and election dates on your website. Link verified and trustworthy sites about voting to your campaign emails. Inform voters on what they can and cannot do to vote. Robust democracies demand free and fair elections and making sure that everyone who votes, gets their votes counted.