

Why We Talk to Voters

"Face-to-face contact seems to be the most effective tactic, raising turnout by 7-12 percentage points among those who are contacted." -- Dr. Donald Green, Yale University

[GET OUT THE VOTE! How to Increase Voter Turnout](#)

Talking to voters is part of a systematic approach to find our supporters so we can get them out to vote on election day. It is an incremental numbers game that builds and builds with every voter we contact. Each piece of data helps narrow the contact list further and further, making the campaign more and more efficient and effective. Knocking on doors and phone banking are the methods we use and the data we collect is like gold. Every voter you talk to is like finding a gold nugget that is deposited in a bank account and is used for a spending spree on election day.

Sometimes we can't get people at their door but we can talk to them on the phone. Many other people won't answer their phone but if you knock on their door, it's harder to pretend you aren't home if your windows are open and the TV is blaring. So door knocking and phone banking work together to help us identify as many voters as possible. The key is making a personal connection with each voter.

"many results suggest that it is the dynamic interaction of authentic person-to-person contact that is most important in determining whether a method will successfully mobilize voters."
-- Yale University

[Lessons from Recent GOTV Experiments](#)

"Personally delivered phone calls and door-to-door canvassing messages are effective in mobilizing turnout. Phone calls may be as effective as canvassing." -- Temple University

[Personally Delivered Campaign Messages](#)

"There are many elements that make for a successful campaign, but at Wellstone Action we teach that repeated, direct, face-to-face contact with voters is what it takes for a progressive candidate to win." - Wellstone Action

[Running a Doorknock Operation](#)

Don't get fixated on doors you can't access or discouraged when you have a poor contact rate because we will get to those voters one way or the other. It is the accumulation of many small and persistent efforts that adds up to help us win in November.

Once a voter is identified as a strong supporter they are moved to a GOTV list and will be contacted again near election day. Strong supporters of the other side, we leave alone and undecideds will be contacted again (and again).

Often the first personal contact is the first time the voter has heard about the election and they haven't had time to form an opinion. Answer any questions they may have and leave them with some useful information like the date of the election and where they will be voting. The next time they are contacted they may be leaning our way. The key is contacting more and more voters.

Sometimes it can seem like one person knocking on doors and making phone calls is pointless but if we get enough people to help and are persistent, it is the only thing that will actually make a big difference on election day. We've had incredible success door knocking on weekday evenings when people are home from work. We just need more people to help out.

"Face-to-face voter contact is the most effective way to meet people, exchange information, and make an impression for the Democratic Party and candidates." -- DNC

Canvassing (Door Knocking) Tips:

- Wear comfortable shoes and bring water!
- Work in pairs when possible for safety, support, and fun.
- Practice what you will say (out loud) with fellow volunteers or in your car.
- Keep It Short and Sweet (KISS Principle).
- Candidate messages are more effective than partisan messages.
- Determine best time of day to visit (weekday evenings (6-8pm) are great).
- Keep it on the porch, don't go inside (you have more doors to knock).
- Be honest if you don't know the answer to a question.
- Offer to get back to them with answers and follow through.
- Be respectful, use common sense and good judgment.
- Never leave anything in someone's mailbox (It's a Federal crime).
- If you aren't comfortable walking up to a particular home, skip it.

More Canvassing Tips

"The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, but wiser people so full of doubts." -- Bertrand Russell

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"What convinces is conviction. Believe in the argument you're advancing. If you don't you're as good as dead. The other person will sense that something isn't there, and no chain of reasoning, no matter how logical or elegant or brilliant, will win your case for you." -- Lyndon B. Johnson