

The Key to your Primary Win: Our Top 3 Suggestions to Elevating your Constituent Support

When looking at the recent polls there is indication that the incumbent is leading slightly however there are ways to switch the polls towards your favor. You have many attractive characteristics such as your looks, your young age as a 33-year-old woman, and being up to date on youth culture that can be very helpful tools in raising support as a challenger. Using our knowledge on voter responses we can give the best suggestions possible to lead you to your primary victory.

Our first suggestion would be to put out negative ads focused on the incumbent and the current state of our district. These ads should be placed on cable TV targeted towards the older generation of the democratic party. We suggest primarily using the following TV networks: ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN. We believe this to be effective in gaining more support based on voter responses to fear and stress. The theory of affective intelligence tells us that humans have a dual system of emotional responses, the disposition system, and the surveillance system. The approach of using a negative ad targets the surveillance system response to emotions. The surveillance system is focused on anxious emotions. When a person is experiencing high anxiety, they pay more attention especially when the anxiety is accompanied by an unfamiliar situation. Anxiety causes people to take conscious consideration when making decisions. A consequence of the emotional reaction to anxiety is people do more research. Anxious people are less likely to vote based on their partisanship, and more likely to based on issues and candidate attributes; This works in your favor because anxious people know more about candidates' beliefs and are more likely to be open to other candidates besides the incumbent. It is important as the challenger to

use anxiety to your advantage to have voters make the best decisions possible and optimize instead of satisficing. Persuasion is most likely when fear is present, that's how anxiety can get people to change their minds.

There is some research that could be used to argue against the use of negative ads. The stress created by these negative ads do not translate to higher voter turnout, people who are stressed are not more likely to vote. Cortisol is a stress hormone that is not good for you if you have a lot of it. There was a study that was conducted on cortisol levels; in the experiment, people were given a stressful task to see who produces the most cortisol hormones and how that relates to voting history. Those with the lowest cortisol levels had the strongest voting history. However, if a potential voter does the research in order to optimize and make the best decision possible, they are more than likely going to implement their findings. There would be no point to doing research on both candidates and not turn out to vote. Anxiety makes you pay more attention, and an anxious voter's choice relies 57% on policy preference. With those two facts combined, anxious voters will do the research on your policy stances, and when they see you're the better candidate they will turn out to vote because of all the research they put into to making a conscious decision.

Our next suggestion would be to illicit the feeling of enthusiasm from your already dedicated supporters. You have a very large lead in voters 30 and younger compared to the incumbent, specifically 80% of that age range prefer you to the incumbent. That can be used to your advantage. With such a high support rate among younger individuals it is clear that to the newer generations, you have redeeming qualities that the incumbent lacks. To further your support

among younger voters we should utilize the use of social media to get your message out there, specifically social media platforms used primarily by those 30 and younger. This means no more Facebook instead we should use Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat. These platforms are used way more frequently by younger voters. Now in the message that is being displayed across these platforms we want the voters to feel enthusiastic about you. The message needs to get people excited. Talking about your ideas and engaging with people will help create enthusiasm, emphasize on all the good you plan to do for the community and the positive results your plans will have. Relying on the theory of affective intelligence, like in our first suggestion, we can see how enthusiasm and excitement affect political responses. Regarding voter turnout, more emotional, happy ads increase interest and intention to vote. Along with increased voter turnout enthusiasm also increases participation, meaning people are more likely to donate money. Obviously having more money is extremely helpful in being able to increase promotion and gain more support.

There are two possible counter arguments involving the relationship between attention rates and enthusiasm, and the voter turnout rate for the younger generations. Some may argue that in a campaign, enthusiasm doesn't make a person pay more attention. Enthusiasm has no effect on the learning consequences of emotional reactions, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing for us. Since we are targeting an age range that you already have 80% support from people doing more research isn't particularly necessary. Through the disposition system we know that enthusiasm results in following heuristics. If a voter already supports you following their heuristic is fine, it still results in them voting for you. In comparison to our previous suggestion where we need those voters to not follow their heuristics and instead optimize in order for them to vote for you.

Heuristics and following a routine are not always a bad thing it depends solely on each voter. The more valid argument against our suggested use of targeting younger voters would be that of all the voters, those 25 and younger vote the least. However, we took that into account and have a plan on how to increase younger voter turnout. By using choice architecture, or nudges, we can try and get citizens to use the right heuristics. One way of doing this is by giving social and psychological incentives. This works because people often lack the motivation to engage in critical thinking, but by knowing this we can motivate them to engage. An example of this would be using social pressures as incentives can increase voter turnout. In addition to our ads that illicit the emotion of enthusiasm there will also be a section at the bottom of the ad that uses social pressures to our advantage. There will be a button at the bottom to click “I voted for _____” with your name attached. Next to this button will be a list of all that person’s social media friends that clicked that they voted for you. This makes people more likely to not only click that button which would then put your ad on all their friend’s pages, but it also makes them more likely to seek information about a polling place and actually go vote. This social pressure will encourage our younger voters to not only support you, but actually go out and vote. We can also use consequential decisions as incentives as well. As seen in 2020 and 2024, those elections had the most votes ever. This is because people thought these were big elections and viewed the election as more important. That can be used in our advantage as well by showing how competitive and important this election is in your ad. This will also cause an increase in voter turnout among the 25 and younger voters.

Our last suggestion would be to utilize your attractiveness to garner more votes. Implicit reasoning are decisions made effortless and automatic, it can be described as uncontrollable and

unconscious. There are situations when a person is given a decision and they make the choice quickly but don't know why they made the choice they did. These fast decisions show that sometime information is used automatically. So why does this matter and what does this have to do with looks? Well people make unconscious evaluations based on attractiveness. People associate attractiveness with competency. In a study where people were shown a one second image of each candidate of the 2000 and 2002 Senate elections and were told to pick who was more competent accurately predicted 69% the outcomes of those Senate races. In another study where voters were given "how to vote" cards with images of the candidates found that the more attractive candidate received more support. Another way to further help you would be to smile more. Smiling candidates seem to win warmer evaluations from voters. Something that may seem insignificant like attractiveness and smiling can push you into the lead in the polls. Appearance is bundled together in memory with other desirable qualities, such as leadership, competence, and reliability. The more association between your name and face, the better. That's why in every ad we run the ending scene will be you and your name to further attach your image and attractiveness with your name.

One may raise concerns about how much effect utilizing your appearance would actually have. When looking at the study on attractiveness with the "how to vote cards" the findings were that the more attractive candidate only had a 1.5-2% increase in support. This is obviously a very small amount however you'll only trailing in the polls by 2.3%. In a more competitive race relying on looks would not be the best option, but in this election, attractiveness can have great benefits. In a general election the tactics of using attractiveness might not be as useful, but since this a primary this method of gaining support could be the push needed to have you winning the

election. People are likely to follow heuristics in a general election and vote down party lines, but since this is a primary and you and the incumbent are both democrats voting partisan isn't an option. So, when voters are making a decision, they will have to rely on other factors, both conscious and unconscious; one of those unconscious factors being attractiveness.

Based on all the information we've been given these are the best three suggestions for securing your win in this primary election. Good luck!

Bibliography

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