



**GREEN EUROPEAN  
FOUNDATION**



# **Campaign Handbook**

**A user's guide to campaigning**

# Campaign Handbook

A user's guide  
to campaigning



**GREEN EUROPEAN  
FOUNDATION**

The Green European Foundation is a European-level political foundation whose mission is to contribute to a lively European sphere of debate and to foster greater involvement by citizens in European politics. GEF strives to mainstream discussions on European policies and politics both within and beyond the Green political family. The foundation acts as a laboratory for new ideas, offers cross-border political education and a platform for cooperation and exchange at the European level.

Published by the Green European Foundation, in 2014  
Printed in Belgium.

Project coordination: Andrew Murphy and Adrià Belenguèr Sòria  
Text editing: Andrew Murphy

Production: Micheline Gutman

Printed on 100% recycled paper

Cover picture: © shutterstock

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors alone.  
They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Green European Foundation.



This publication has been realised with the financial support of the European Parliament.  
The European Parliament is not responsible for the content of this project.

This publication can be ordered at:  
The Green European Foundation – Brussels Office:  
15 Rue d’Arlon – B-1050 Brussels – Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 234 65 70 | Fax: +32 2 234 65 79  
E-mail: [info@gef.eu](mailto:info@gef.eu) | Web: [www.gef.eu](http://www.gef.eu)

Green European Foundation asbl  
1 Rue du Fort Elisabeth – 1463 Luxembourg

## CONTENTS

Introduction	5
A note from the project developer	6
<b>PREPARATION</b>	
Planning the Campaign Strategically	8
Campaign Organisation	11
Working with Volunteers	14
Green Youth Organisations	16
Gender in Campaigning	18
Campaign Finances	23
Doing the Research	25
Targeting Voters	30
Training Staff, Candidates and Volunteers	35
Developing messages	37
The candidates	40
Campaigning on the European level	45
<b>RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN</b>	
Opposition research	50
Traditional media	52
Grassroots – Word of Mouth	55
Canvassing (Door-to-Door)	57
Campaigning Online	61
Social Media	67
The Last 72 hours	72
<b>AFTER THE CAMPAIGN</b>	
Evaluating the Campaign	76
The election may be over, the campaign never is	78

For even more content, including best practice examples from across Europe, go to our online resource [campaignhandbook.gef.eu](http://campaignhandbook.gef.eu)

## Introduction

Dear reader,

Participation in politics is not only about good policies and exciting new ideas, but also about having the skills to make these visions heard and embraced by others. This is even more relevant in European politics that are often accused of being detached from people's daily realities. To bridge this gap between the Union and its citizens, good ideas need to be well communicated and campaigned upon. With the 2014 European Parliament elections around the corner, the Green European Foundation decided it was an ideal moment to publish its handbook to successful campaigning in a printed edition.

The Campaign Handbook was first developed in 2010 as an online platform that was both a manual on campaigning for green activists, as well as a platform of exchange of knowledge and experience for green campaigners. The idea was to collect the basic know-how on campaign management in an open, online platform where activists and campaigners could interact and learn from each-others' successes and failures. A majority of the articles in this collection are written by former or current green campaign managers themselves.

The handbook guides the reader through a coherent political campaign: from the strategic vision of what should be accomplished, to how to manage a campaign team in order to achieve the set goals, how to target the audience with the right messaging, and how to assess the gains and losses of the campaign.

Campaigning is a dynamic field, an area which is evolving with communication and political trends. Since we first published the Campaign Handbook online, social media has, for example, even further sped up the pace of campaigns. They have created a context where the issue is no longer accessing information, but rather breaking through the information "noise". The current update of the Campaign Handbook responds to these communication and campaigning shifts.

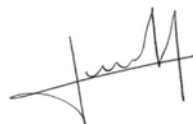
Campaigning will always have a certain local flavour attached to it. If we can aim for having European elections be fought on European topics, we cannot expect the same from the campaign strategies and methods. However, regardless of the flavours, the backbone of successful campaigns remains the same. This Handbook brings together these "musts" of successful campaigning, as seen by Green campaigners – whom we thank very much for sharing their knowledge!

In this sense, we can only encourage you to: read, debate, engage, campaign!

*Heidi Hautala,  
GEF Co-President*



*Pierre Jonckheer,  
Co-President*



## A note from the project developer

### What is Green Campaigning?

What is “green” in green campaigns? What's the difference between green and other types of campaigns? As a political consultant who was involved in the preparation process of campaigns in several European countries (and who conceptualised the online basis of this campaign handbook for the Green European Foundation in 2009) I've found five main characteristics: **1.** They address environmental issues more often, **2.** They target women and minority groups, **3.** They tend to be clearly pro-European, **4.** They are more issue-focused and **5.** They tend to be more open and conversational.

According to my experience (which is not based on any comparative research, just to warn you!) those characteristics are not always present at the same time and in every region but they are to be found more often in Green campaigns than in others.

For the first four characteristics there is certain empirical evidence throughout Europe and I don't want to discuss them here. They all can be understood as direct impacts of the green political objectives on green campaigning. The last one is less evident – but no less important. Therefore it is the “conversational style”, which I would like to discuss a little bit as that is what has underpinned many of the articles in this publication.

#### The conversational Green style of campaigning

Most political parties nowadays claim their campaigns to be interactive and their approach to voters to be dialogue-oriented. The old-fashioned way of campaigning seems to be outdated. What was the old style? It meant crafting a message, sending it out to the public, hammering it in (“penetrating”),

using one-way mass distribution channels like TV, radio, newspapers, tons of leaflets, organising spectacular big events and hanging billboards at every crossing. This is not an efficient use of your resources.

Today big parts of our campaigns are still the same but other parts are much more targeted thanks to more strategic preparation, more available data and more sophisticated technologies. The new style in most campaigns has not replaced the old one but has been added to it as a new component. Green campaigns are extremely open to interactive and mostly new means of campaigning.

Here is a collection of what I mean by “conversational, dialogue-driven, participatory, and interactive” and what you can find in most green parties (and in this campaign handbook):

- Database management for contacting voters
- Addressing advocacy groups
- Direct mail
- Email
- Social media (e.g. Facebook)
- Targeted online advertising
- Blogs
- Interactive websites (e.g. program discussions online)
- Online-voting (e.g. in primaries)
- Education & training programs for campaigners & volunteers
- Inclusion of interns and volunteers in campaigns on all levels
- Fundraising as part of the campaign (not isolated)
- GOTV-activities (get out the vote) online and offline
- Door-to-door campaigning (canvassing)
- Campaigning in the streets
- Info booths/info stands
- Bus tours

Pub-crawl/bar-hopping  
 Private invitations  
 Support creative and unconventional ideas  
 (e.g. in cooperation with artists)  
 Polling - focus groups and web-based  
 Opposition research and attack  
 Grassroots campaigning (e.g. collecting  
 signatures)  
 Guerrilla marketing  
 Mobile Apps  
 Text Messaging

Some of those means can be used either for one-way or two-way communication.

Why are those means so popular for green campaigns? Is it just because they are new and have proven to be successful in the United States before? I guess not. That's why all the others want to work with them and experiment a lot. For green parties the situation is different. Those means resonate with a green political core value: civic participation. Green campaigners embrace the new techniques because they allow them to use less propaganda and invest more in directly asking and convincing people. The attitude of a "conversational" green campaigner is not to agitate for something but to ask questions and to involve voters in a dialogue. He or she will try to empower people to take part in the decision-making process. This also means that even in a campaign for European elections local issues can be relevant and should be dealt with because they matter for the voters.

A "conversational" green campaigner talks about issues in a way that engages people. She or he listens to what the voters care about and tells them what the party stands for. Building up this relationship with supporters can only work when the campaigner or candidate is perceived to be a credible and open-minded person. Here are the self-limitations of the "conversational" style. Greens sometimes tend to be know-it-alls and fault-finders. Imagine a smart butt asking questions because he or she has to! This certainly would seem arrogant. Faked participation is much worse than no participation. Don't ask questions if you're not interested in the answers. Asking people to take part includes the responsibility to show or offer them an opportunity to really take part. There is a thin line between just enquiring about people's interests like an excessively polite call centre employee and to be open for a dialogue with a fellow citizen. The latter is Green Campaigning.

#### **Albert Eckert (February 2014)**

Albert Eckert main occupational fields are Organisational Development, Facilitation, Mediation, Moderation, Training, Coaching and Political Consulting. He is a free-lancing member of the teams of [www.denkmodell.de](http://www.denkmodell.de) – a Berlin-based international consultancy for organisational development – and of [www.green-campus.de](http://www.green-campus.de) which is part of the green Heinrich Böll Foundation.

He was editor of the online Campaign Handbook and a consultant for this print edition.

## PREPARATION

### Planning the Campaign Strategically by Ville Tuominen and Albert Eckert

*“Alice: ‘Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?’  
‘That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,’ said the Cat.  
‘I don’t much care where,’ said Alice.  
‘Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,’  
said the Cat”*

Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland



The strategy is the compass for your campaigns. Without a working strategy, a campaign will turn into a series of unplanned reactions to unanticipated events. The strategy defines the aims and shows how they can be achieved.

Planning a campaign is like building a house. First, you decide what to build and where; then you lay the foundations, upon which you create the visible structures and work on the details. The foundations of campaigning are clear objectives, and the blue print is your campaign plan.

A well planned and managed campaign can be flexible as the campaign grows or shrinks. Uncontrolled growth is nearly as harmful for the campaign as shrinking it. And you must make sure from the outset that the structure of the campaign can handle the growth.

The most important phase in designing a successful campaign is determining the reason for campaigning. Ironically, this phase in particular is often skipped. There is no axiomatic campaign objective. The objective has to be specifically decided, it has to be written down and you have to make sure that everyone understands it.

A surprisingly large number of campaigns fail because of vague objective setting. Establishing the objective is, without a doubt, the most important individual decision of the campaign. A small, well-built campaign with a clear objective is better than a large, uncertain one with vague objectives. An effective campaign requires strong team-spirit and a shared objective.

A campaign often has several objectives. In this case, when setting objectives, it is important to prioritise and divide them into the short-term and long-term ones. A campaign should have a clear primary objective, which all the other objectives must follow.

### The campaign plan

To develop a strategy (a campaign plan) you need:

- clear objectives;
- a clear **message**;
- a decision on the main topics and on the top **candidate(s)**;
- a precise idea about your **target groups**;
- in-depth knowledge of the conditions surrounding your campaign (including competitors and **opponents**);
- good timing (campaigns are fast, parties tend to be slow), starting with a rough schedule;
- a decision on the style and tone of the campaign;



- an initial decision on the campaigning methods used;
- a rough idea of the human and **financial resources** you can rely on;
- to write everything down!

A campaign plan that has not been written down is useless. Whenever the campaign faces difficulties it is important to have this strategic document on which people agreed at the start of the campaign.

It is the campaign manager's task to make sure that all planned issues are carried out on time, and as well organised as possible. If achieving the target result is not possible, the performance should at least be as good as possible.

As a starting point, the implementation of campaign operations must be delegated: it is not a job for the campaign manager or the candidate. **Those managing the campaign** are in charge of planning, acquiring and allocating resources. Other "doers" will ensure that the tasks assigned to them are performed, and they should be expected to report on progress.

It is significant to note that a campaign can be built in a great many ways. Even identical objectives can be successfully implemented using completely different methods. The fact that some campaigns are always carried out in a certain manner does not, in fact, reveal very much about how they should be done.

The best campaigns are born from a kind of new functional combination of various campaigning methods. It is important to ask why something is done, whether the chosen method is functional, how it could be improved, if the same can be accomplished at lower cost, or in an easier way, etc.

## Through joy – positive campaigning

Positive campaigning is the safest and most common basic tone for campaigning. A positive campaign is often better than a negative one: it is generally a more effective means of convincing supporters who have not yet formed an opinion, or who are predisposed to favour the cause you are defending.

Positive campaigns are safe in the sense that they do not easily cause significant damage. Positive campaigns have a slower effect, because a positive campaigner has to convince the target group of his excellence or the excellence of the cause.

In positive campaigns, trust and influence are often built up a little at a time. First, one has to gain the trust of the target person, then the target person must be convinced of the need for change. Finally, the candidate has to sell his or her own solution as the best one. In a positive campaign, it is therefore usually crucial to employ the tactic of several waves, approaching the target group slowly.

### A three-wave tactic (as an example)

In the first wave, the target group is prepared for the cause, by presenting the cause and the reasons behind it. In the second wave, more active communication is slowly put in place. In the final wave, a direct action is ultimately suggested.

A positive tone is a rather good starting point. It is better at forgiving small mistakes, and enables long-term, upward-moving campaigning. However, you should start a positive campaign early, so that the impact has time to take effect. But be careful: it is a good idea to start the actual chargeable advertising in municipal elections only a few weeks before the election.

## Status communication – a candidate as the “host” of his own campaign

Especially with Green parties, the traditional mistake has been to think that the contents alone of the message are enough. This is not the case, at least in politics, and it will most likely never be. The key is for the message to be presented and supported with favourable status communication.

In practice, this means that in all situations, the candidate must act as though he or she is the host of a party. This method must be used at actual events, as well as when in public. The candidate must “host” all situations for the duration of his or her campaign.

A good host takes control of the space, becomes noticed, and takes note of all those present. A host controls the situation with his or her being. Any participants acting as troublemakers should be guided elsewhere unobserved; the pleasant moments at which the candidate is present should be reserved for welcome guests.

The status expression of a Green Party candidate is considerate, oozing with expertise, emphatic and self-confident, but never arrogant or vulgar. Status communication is one of the most important elements of a campaign, and it is worth rehearsing.

All in all, the Green parties' brilliant candidates must merely behave as well and look as good as they really are.

### About the author

Ville Tuominen, born in 1978, is former Campaign Manager of Vihreät De Gröna (Finnish Green Party). He was involved in several campaigns at all levels. He lives and works in Helsinki, Finland. Albert Eckert is a Facilitator, Trainer, Coach, Political Consultant and Mediator.

## Campaign Organisation by Albert Eckert

A successful campaign can never be planned and carried out by one single person. Choosing the right group of people to prepare and run a campaign of any sort is among the most crucial strategic decisions you will have to take.

The individuals that make up the campaign team need not all be from within the party. But, together, they must be capable of that which a solitary campaign manager simply is not: seeing, understanding and shaping the broader picture, both inside and outside the party.

Crucially, the division of labour within the campaign team must be such that each of the principal functions is covered and that each of the main actors is involved. It is often necessary to distinguish between a “core” group, and other members of the team responsible for the calendar and events, printed material, opposition research, as well as a creative resource, and, sometimes, the candidate.

### The Campaign Team: Which people? What functions?

The best campaign team is a small campaign team. This, however, is not always possible, for there are often practical and political reasons to include certain functions and factions of the party. As a general rule, the campaign team should consist of nine people, and never exceed fifteen (although bigger teams, even in small countries, do of course exist!).

The larger the team, the more important and useful it is to establish a “core” group within it, which can act quickly and effectively when swift, and frequently unexpected, decisions are called for (your opponent ridicules the figures you have used to justify the party’s economic recovery programme; damaging revelations concerning your top candidate appear in the evening news bulletin...). The core campaign team should be composed of three to five in-

dividuals: always the Campaign Manager, the Secretary General, and the Media or Press Officer; sometimes also the treasurer and the volunteer manager. Speed kills in a campaign: the core team must be trusted and have the legitimacy necessary to act or react quickly, without having to consult others on the appropriate measure to take.



### Campaign Manager

Two scenarios are common. In the first of these, the Secretary General of the party is appointed campaign manager. The advantage is that he or she will be readily accepted by the party hierarchy, and can kick-start the campaign with a well-developed and well-oiled network throughout the party and across different regions of the country. But there is a danger that the Secretary General will remain bogged down with party work, and that he or she, although a competent long-term planner, will be ill-equipped to work at the pace required. A political party is slow; campaigns must be

fast. Campaign management is a proper, full-time job, and the campaign manager needs time and space to carry out his work. It is therefore essential that the Secretary General’s regular duties be passed on to a colleague or a replacement for the duration of the campaign.

The second option is for the party board, assisted by the Secretary General, to choose a person with campaigning skills. The individual may be an outsider, from a PR agency or with a solid PR background. But under no circumstances should it be someone without prior experience of dealing with a political party. In any event, he or she must be capable of garnering the trust of the party’s board and middle-management (this obviously applies differently to big and small parties).

Whoever she is or wherever he comes from, there are qualities that the campaign manager must always demonstrate: project management skills, PR knowledge, a political instinct, and absolute loyalty. Of course, given the nature of the tasks ahead, the campaign manager must be thick-skinned, stress-resistant, calm under pressure (which is likely to be constant), a good motivator, and an excellent team player.

## Creative Resource

A campaign team full of technocrats, no matter how talented or quick-witted, will rarely deliver. A creative person, therefore, can only be good news for the campaign. This could be someone from within the party, or an external but experienced public relations manager with close links to the party (the latter is a particularly good alternative for smaller parties).

## Printed material

It is always useful to have somebody who is in charge of publications or other printed material. The job is relatively technical, just as it is varied (typing, design, production, stapling, etc.). But it is one that, like so many others during a campaign, has to be done quickly and

well. Such work can be outsourced to an agency (known in the business as a “full service agency”) – but this inevitably pushes the costs up.

## Calendar / Events

Don’t just pick the person with the biggest calendar! A range of different tools can be used and combined: from a large wall calendar or an Excel sheet, to more specific time management systems (**Lotus Notes**, **Outlook**, etc.). Whoever manages the calendar must have an overview of all relevant and significant dates; he or she must be able to say, at a glance, what can or can’t be done, when and where. He or she must not only be aware of what colleagues have planned, but have notes and up-to-date information concerning opposition meetings and gatherings, public or school holidays, the parliament’s plenary sessions or committee meetings, government announcements, and so on. Even seemingly secondary events, such as football matches or localised demonstrations, need to be tracked. The objective is to always have an accurate idea of what’s happening inside the party, inside other parties (to the extent possible), and across the country.

The most sophisticated campaigns function with multi-layered calendars (**Microsoft Project** or open-source software). These are used by several people, and enable the individual responsible for the calendar, and timing more generally, to have instant access to the most important dates of all people involved in the campaign.

Much of the above software is not ideal for smaller campaigns or smaller parties. “Quick-and-dirty” is generally a good motto when getting started: a simple and effective initial approach is to map out the most important steps and events ahead using coloured post-its (green is for...); once this basic flow-chart is in place on a wall or on a board, the more detailed calendar covering all parts of the campaign and all people in it will follow.

In small campaigns, it is not unusual for the same person to be in charge of both the calendar and the events. In larger ones, where this is less common, it is important for at least one member of the “events team” be involved in the campaign team.

## The top candidate

It is certainly not always necessary for the top candidate to personally take part in meetings of the campaign team. But it is advisable that she be involved in the most important decisions or represented by somebody she trusts. A member of her staff cannot replace the top candidate; but he can act as her eyes and ears, function as a form of early warning mechanism, and, in all circumstances, encourage the two-way flow of information.

## Opposition research

Campaigning is a fight: know your opponent! Someone in the campaign team, or very close to it, must be responsible for researching and providing the latest facts and figures concerning the opponents’ policies, plans, weaknesses, etc. This information should always be ready and accessible.

## Volunteer Manager

Volunteers are often an untapped source of talent and enthusiasm; their diversity, their number, and therefore their potential, represent an outstanding opportunity for Green campaigns, political or otherwise: all contribute ideas, energy and help – all for free.

Frequently overlooked or quite simply forgotten, volunteer management is without doubt one of the most important functions in any political campaign, and the person in charge of volunteering must be a key member of the campaign team. How often do volunteers spontaneously turn up at campaign offices or get in touch with party headquarters hoping to offer a helping hand, looking for a task, leav-

ing their contact details? How often are their names and numbers then swept under the carpet, and lost? It is the volunteer manager’s responsibility to ensure this never happens.

What are you *able* to do? What do you *want* to do? How *much* can you do? Three important questions to determine and make best use of a volunteer’s skills, enthusiasm and availability. The best way to keep volunteers happy is to get them involved from the very beginning, to offer them ownership of the campaign. Bring them all together during the planning phase, and openly discuss the different tasks. Talk with volunteers; do not order them about.

A volunteer works from home on her computer? Another volunteer has a car? Yet another has plenty of free time? Get to know them, and get to know how they can fit in.

The person responsible for volunteers must, above all else, be an excellent communicator. This is not a job for the least important and least experienced person in the party. Your volunteer manager is a central figure of your campaign.

## Who decides?

From the moment it is set up, the campaign team must know how it can take decisions, and which decisions it cannot take. It is common for the party board to reserve some of the most sensitive decisions for itself. Precisely which these are must be made explicit. A lack of clarity will almost inevitably lead to disputes and disagreements, which, in turn, are certain to damage, or at the very least disrupt, the campaign. The procedural rules must be straightforward, transparent and agreed by all.

In many instances, the candidate has the final say. One rule, in particular, should never be broken: a campaign poster must always be approved by the candidate that it depicts or represents. Campaign posters are powerful strategic tools, and one which a candidate is unhappy with will fast become a subject of

extensive and predominantly negative debate (first and foremost because the candidate himself won't stop complaining about it!). If a top candidate doesn't like a poster, don't print it. Likewise, his or her veto concerning any part of the campaign should stand. Top candidates are not puppets of the campaign team or party board.

### About the author

Albert Eckert (born 1960) works as a Facilitator, Trainer, Coach, Political Consultant and Mediator.

## Working with Volunteers

### What does volunteering mean?

The result of self-initiative and free will, volunteers are not oriented towards material gain. Volunteering is usually a community activity focused on the common good.



### Why should volunteer work be a cornerstone of every campaign?

Volunteering shapes and forms societies and is key to successfully accomplishing certain objectives. People who do volunteer work contribute a range of individual competencies: know-how, social skills and the ability to motivate people. Furthermore, they serve as opinion multipliers within a campaign.

The diversity and creativity of volunteers can add to the value and success of every campaign. The broader the supporter base, the higher the credibility with the target group.

### Why do people engage in volunteer work and what do they expect from it?

People volunteer because they want to contribute to society, because they want to change something or engage with others. They have different expectations of volunteer work. They regard it as very important that the work is fun, that they get to meet likable people, help others through their volunteering and contribute to the common good. They expect long-term planning of their tasks, a clear and well defined time span for their assignment, and appreciation and recognition of their contribution. It is important to provide volunteers with regular feedback, and to give them a say in decisions.

### How can volunteers take part in a campaign?

Basically, there are two ways people can contribute to a campaign:

- online participation, for example disseminating campaign messages via social media;
- direct local participation, on the street or at events, for example collecting money or signatures for a petition.

### What are measures of success for working with volunteers?

Prerequisites for the successful involvement of volunteers in a campaign are:

- acceptance: supporters are welcome to contribute to our organisation; their involvement is an integral part of our work;
- appreciation: it is recognised at all levels of our organisation that volunteers make a unique contribution to the success of our campaigns;
- specificity: we make offers to the supporters that are tailored to their individual needs, interests and skills.

### How can volunteers' work be planned and organised within a campaign?

The following key aspects have to be taken into account:

#### 1. Create a general concept and integrate it into the campaign strategy

- Why should volunteers be part of the campaign?
- What significance does volunteering have for us?
- How do we treat volunteers?
- Why should they work with us?
- What possibilities and rights do activists have with us?

#### 2. Identify demand and possible assignments

- In which areas can volunteers contribute to our campaign?
- In what specific way can they become active?
- How many people do we need for which activity?
- How attractive are the tasks?
- How can volunteers contribute their own ideas?

#### 3. Define target groups

- Which groups do we want to target, i.e. who can be mobilised for our campaign?

- Who is the topic relevant to, which groups of people see it as relevant?
- Which persons are most likely to accomplish the task?
- Are our offers sufficiently attractive to volunteers?

#### 4. Creation of task profiles

- What kind of qualifications do supporters need to possess?
- What information do they need to accomplish their tasks (for example, detailed task description, beginning and end of action, contact person and contact details, timetable, directions, etc.)?

#### 5. Gain supporters

- How do we motivate people to join our campaign?
- Where can we find appropriate supporters?
- Which media do we use to address them and how are our **press relations** organised?
- What **print material** should we prepare?
- Which **online tools** can we use to recruit supporters online?
- How do we manage volunteers and what data protection regulations must we heed in our work with them?

#### 6. Meeting and looking after volunteers

- In what setting do we meet the volunteers?
- How do I **train the volunteers**?
- What do they have to learn?
- How can their abilities be fostered and further developed?

#### 7. And last but not least

- Motivate, reward and appreciate volunteers!

## “Working with volunteers – best practice from New Zealand”

### Motivating activists to go the extra mile

A very successful action during the New Zealand Green’s 2011 campaign was their so-called “Green Machine”, with which the Greens managed to gather a record number of volunteers. The Green Machine, which was inspired by Obama’s presidential campaign, was an interactive website on which people can log in and earn stars by completing certain missions, e.g. liking the party’s Facebook page, becoming a party member, helping hand out leaflets, work on stalls, and door knocking. This “gamification” (introducing a competitive game element) had a positive reception, especially among younger volunteers, and appeared to have a positive impact on peoples’ motivation and participation.

In order to participate in the Green Machine, people had to create a “my green account” online, which they could log in to through Facebook. Once the account was created, participants in the Green Machine were able to see each other’s name and number of earned stars. Here the competition started. 30 stars would make people a HardCore Green, and the ones who were on top of the leaderboard could become Mayor of Greentown, etc. Although there were no prizes offered, people were seriously trying to get to the top.

Since the end of the campaign, participants can still access and use it, and there are still some new volunteers being attracted through the Green Machine website, but it is not actively used anymore and no new missions have been introduced. This is due to specific local factors rather than any concerns with the concept.

## Green Youth Organisations by Sabine Van Belle

A youth wing can prove to be an important asset for a Green Party when campaigning looms. As multiple election studies have shown, younger voters are more likely than older people to consider a vote for a Green Party. In this respect, a youth wing can be viewed as the perfect “tool” to connect with younger voters. However, the mother party must not forget that a youth wing can never be a mere “tool” and that a necessary amount of independence must be respected. It is important to stress that the message to the voter can only get through when both entities follow the same strategies. Most of the time, both the mother party and its youth wing are too small to work next to one other. So cooperation between a Green Party and its youth wing before and during elections is essential to the success of a coherent campaign. Such cooperation relies on mutual understanding,

for which the sharing of information, mutual consultation and a clear and detailed agreement are key.

### Preparation of the campaign

A thorough preparation is the precondition for a successful campaign.

First of all, the youth wing should draw up its own programme and make clear which points it wants to put forward during the campaign. This can be a deepening or an extension of the mother party’s election programme. It goes without saying that a youth wing approaches the existing programme from the perspective of a young voter and thus can point out what concerns younger voters in particular and how the mother party’s programme can best



be “translated” towards the young. The youth wing builds further on the mother party’s existing programme, adding its own content aimed at the young. It is understandable that you consider your whole programme worth communicating; however, choose and prioritise the main points you want to stress, and build your campaign around these focal points. Obviously, these decisions are taken after consultation with the mother party.

Youth wings rarely have enough financial resources to conduct a proper campaign that can generate any impact. Therefore, apart from any own budgetary means that are deployed for the campaign, draw up a list of the financial and logistical needs that are deemed necessary for the campaign and present it to the mother party. Rely on experienced people to assess which needs have priority for the youth wing.

Campaign material for younger voters should give a clear overview of the main points (e.g. a 6-point priority plan) and should present the young candidates on the list. A distinctive ‘look and feel’ for all the publications reinforces the singularity of the youth wing and appeals more to younger voters. Don’t hesitate to outsource the development of a specific graphic style to a professional lay-outer. It is a worthwhile investment if you use it afterwards for all your publications. However, a link with the mother party in the publication is recommended. Try to conceive diverse material for different occasions. A flyer to distribute on a market place, personal flyers or even a small newspaper to distribute at train stations.

Make an internal campaign calendar which gives an overview of when to do what, from the preparation of the campaign (e.g. deadline for publication & printing) up to election day. Choose what kind of actions you want to do at strategic places and times. Once again, attune your campaign calendar with the one of your mother party but don’t forget to specifically target those places and events where younger voters go.



Look for young candidates and lobby for their places on the list with the mother party. Promising candidates should be placed on visible places on the list. Support of the youth wing can prove essential to appearing on a list or not.

Inform the young candidates of your campaign strategy and calendar, preferably during a group event where all the young candidates can share expectations and experiences. It is the perfect place to get to know each other better, take campaign pictures and already fix moments to go campaigning together. If possible, provide them with personalised posters, cards, flyers, etc.

For a lot of young candidates it will be their first time ever on a list. Guide them as much as possible by providing basic training in campaigning, debating, addressing voters, etc. Regional/provincial focal points are a good intermediate level between candidates and the national coordinator/youth wing. Invest in their training and formation, so that they will be able to act as mentor for a group of young candidates from one region during the campaign.

## During the campaign

An updated information flow between the youth wing and the mother party enables each side to:

- stay informed about the timing of the other’s initiatives (actions, street rallies, focus on campaign points, and so on) and the campaign calendar;

■ reinforce the other on important events or rallies (do not organise separate events at the same time as your mother party!).

Don't get trapped in a hesitant attitude. Approach the mother party pro-actively to stay informed on a daily basis.

Stay in contact with the young candidates and provide support for actions. Campaigning can be very hard and tiring, so motivating the young candidates is crucial if you want them to pass on a positive and appealing image to the voters.

Finally, hold enough in reserve for the last week before polling day because it is only then that a very large number of voters decide. A last-week campaign offensive should therefore be considered crucial.

The seriousness with which a mother party treats its youth wing depends, of course, not only on its actions during elections. Building up credibility is a constant point of attention for a youth wing. Making yourself visible as the youth wing within the mother party is therefore highly recommended, year in, year out. This can be done by participating in various activities, congresses, parties or by constructing an own identity as a youth wing by being politically active.

### About the author

Sabine Van Belle was coordinator for the Young Greens of Flanders (Jong Groen!). She graduated in Biology and has a post-graduate degree in Environmental Sciences and Sustainable Development.

## Gender in Campaigning by Monika Vana



No doubt: gender plays a critical role in politics in general and for the Greens in particular. But why is gender important in Green Campaigns and what impact has gender on voting patterns?

This article takes up several arguments and elements for gender-sensitive green campaigns, bringing examples for the impact of gender in recent elections – especially from

the Austrian Greens, who conducted several surveys – and provides a checklist of how to support gender balance in political parties.

### Introduction

Gender is one of many social factors (as age, education, origin etc). Everybody is gendered; we all live to a large extent through an identity as “man” or “woman”, reflecting on roles we play socially that involve expectations of masculinity and femininity, and living a sexuality that shapes our relations to others while being judged according to prevailing ideas in our societies.

In political journalism, gender usually concerns a female politician: reporting is affected by sexual stereotypes – appearance and voice are commented on. Often, the question about compatibility of job and family is only faced by women.

Primarily women are confronted with the personalisation of political reporting. Politics and the public sphere are still considered to be male. Media are constructing gender roles and perpetuate sex-related stereotypes.

Therefore, Green campaign managers should not only ask themselves what kind of role gender plays in their own campaigns, but also how gender is received and dealt with in political communication of the media and of journalists.

Considering gender means questioning forms of power and privilege. As we are not gender neutral a campaign cannot be gender neutral.

**A gender sensitive campaign** means:

- avoiding gender discriminating subjects, issues and language;
- consider the implications of gender in each issue: for example gender-based violence/ mobility/ labour market etc.

### **What impact can and should gender have throughout a successful campaign?**

For Green parties throughout Europe gender is an important topic. The principle of equality of women and men and the instrument of gender mainstreaming are included in most of the parties' programmes. Gender balance is part of many party statutes. For example the European Green Party has a 50+ quota for women – more than any other political party in Europe. Most of the Green parties have a women's network and roots directly in the women's movement. For the topic of equal representation of women, the Greens have a kind of unique selling position, with all other political competitors being seen as less authentic.

### **Voters**

Attracting female voters has the potential to be an important factor in a Green campaign for

a number of reasons, but primarily because many policy areas that are important to many women are ignored by traditional parties. Greens acknowledge the gender-blind nature of many laws and seek to shift the balance. As such this opens up a number of electoral tactics for the Greens, including the ability to focus on certain gender specific topics, gender targeting, gender sensitive use of language and imagery.

The 2012 Eurobarometer-survey for the election of the European Parliament 2014 concerning gender equality in the EU showed interesting results worth to be taken into account in Green campaigns – adapted to national environments and experiences:

- Women (42%) were slightly less likely to vote in the 2009 European elections than men (44%).
- Women continue to be most concerned about issues affecting day-to-day life, including jobs, the fight against unemployment and pensions.
- Europeans believe that the overwhelming reason behind the under-representation of women in politics is the fact that the political world is dominated by men who do not value the skills of women enough.
- To combat gender inequalities, in both the political and economic spheres, women and men tend to prefer measures for encouragement rather than coercion.

### **Why should the principle of gender be reflected in Green campaigns? It's the women stupid!**

Most voting analyses show that Europe-wide the Green electorate is the most "female" of all parties. For example in Austria a gender gap (as well as a generation gap) can be seen since the 80s – both in recent elections and in long-term analyses:

Opinion Polls<sup>1</sup> for the 2013 national elections in Austria showed that more women (13%) than men (10%) voted for the Greens, especially young women under the age of 29. In general there was a clear gender gap<sup>2</sup> in the results: men tended to vote "right", women tended to vote "left". This is a trend we observe throughout western Europe: experts explain the gender gap in voting as – among other factors – due to better education of women that results in a higher closeness of women to post-material and socially liberal parties and movements.

## Gender and motives for voting

Of course the impact of gender on voting decisions cannot be measured by looking at the percentages in the results alone. Therefore we need measurements with more variables that take various factors into consideration: different **living conditions** of the voters, different **topics** with different impacts on different target groups (that are of course related to gender): During the early days of the Austrian Greens during the 80s topics such as women's quotas, environmental protection and peace policy were strong "pull-factors" for women. Another example: recent analyses show that topics related to traffic – a core issue for the Greens – tend to polarise especially among women and men.

■ Concerning the motives for voting, a survey of the Greens in Vienna showed a significant **gender gap** in two areas: for women (39.8%) the identification with basic aims and political orientation of a party is a less important motive for voting than for men (49.4%). And only for 3.6% of women compared with 10.1% of men was the protest motive important.

■ Concerning the **correlation between topics and gender** the survey showed a gender gap in the following topics: free parking, environ-

mental issues, respectful behaviour in public, distribution of wealth between rich and poor and financial support for unemployed and people with less income: Women want more political effort for those issues, whereas topics such as transparency and anti-corruption are significantly more important for men.

In general, analyses show that – among Green voters – the factors of age and education are more important for voting decisions than gender. But: the examples above show that the difference in the impact of certain political measures on men and women must be taken into consideration both politically and strategically when planning a successful campaign.

## Gender and political participation

Due to various factors, like socialisation, the political participation of women throughout Europe<sup>3</sup> is less than that of men. The existing gender gap concerning time, income, family responsibilities etc. makes it more difficult for many women to participate in the same way as men. To raise the participation of women it is important for Greens to take those differences into account when planning campaigns. e.g. in offering childcare or choosing comfortable meeting times (see also the "Checklist of how to attract women to green parties" below), but also in presenting topics in a coherent way: "wasted time" should be avoided; meetings without results have a tendency to be unattractive for women.

## Women in political communication: "suddenly important"

The "Green experience" shows that women as a target group are often neglected. Only right before elections do they come into focus – a phenomenon of all parties in the political spectrum.

1 <http://www.sora.at/themen/wahlverhalten/wahlanalysen/nrw13.html>

2 <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/wahlthesen-test-analyse-nach-geschlecht-links-die-frau-rechts-der-mann-1.1757549>

3 <http://paritydemocracy.eu/#9>

Although gender policy is one of the core issues of the Greens and Green parties try to present gender topics constantly, the resources for women within the party structures and the presentation of women in the media is often less. In many Green parties “gender” is not implemented as gender mainstreaming but as a special topic called “women’s issues” (or “gender issues” are treated like women’s issues. An emancipatory men’s policy is lacking in most parties).

During election campaigns women as voters are “discovered” by campaign leaders, special gifts for women are produced and heads of campaign exhaust themselves in mentioning that “women decide”. And after the election? Maybe one warm “Thank you for the vote” and then women’s issues are again put away until the next election. Greens have to act differently: we must not foster disillusionment with politics, but attract women directly and let them participate throughout.

### **Gender as explicit content of Green Campaigns: “Women on top”**

One example of a successful Green campaign<sup>4</sup> putting gender into focus is the women’s day campaign of the Austrian Greens 2013. Being the only party with a female top candidate, they published posters in the forefront of the national elections showing the male top candidates of the other parties as women. Thus the topic of underrepresentation of women in politics was taken up in a funny way: the Greens are the only party that takes gender balance seriously.

### **Concrete proposals**

Many previous green opinion polls and data analyses are lacking a focus on gender-related differences. Interrelations among gender, topical issue, top-of-the-list candidates and communication strategy have not been paid attention to in the past. It is necessary to un-

dertake gender analyses already during the preparation for campaigns.

We need a gender- and diversity-related communication.<sup>5</sup> If not yet available, it is necessary for Green organisations to deal with the issue of “gender-related public relations” and to elaborate a manual about gender sensitive phrasing and non-discriminatory language. It has to be ensured that Green campaigns are free of sexism (as well as racism and other discriminatory features) and do not reproduce gender roles in words or pictures.

Process plan for gender mainstreaming: Generally, it is advantageous to anchor gender mainstreaming in all levels and sectors of the organisation.

### **How and why is it important to have a gender balanced group of candidates?**

“Being a woman is not a political programme” is a traditional feministic slogan. But: women in politics and especially female top candidates are a role model for others. Gender Democracy is a basic Green principle and should not only stand on paper and in statutes but be shown in practice.

The decision to select women should not just be to maximise votes, but for the reason of credibility and equality. What tools can help to achieve gender balance, specific rules for candidate selection and by creating a positive environment in which all people feel they can contribute? Women should be preferred if two candidates have otherwise equal qualifications.

#### **About the author**

Monika Vana is a candidate of the Austrian Greens for the 2014 European Parliament elections and is an expert on gender issues.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gruene.at/spitzenfaeuen>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.wien.gv.at/medien/pid/pdf/leitfaden-formulieren-bf.pdf>

[http://hr.unimelb.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/87501/Watch\\_Your\\_Language.pdf](http://hr.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/87501/Watch_Your_Language.pdf)

## How to get women into the green party

### European Green Party Checklist:

Suggestions for Green Member Parties facing problems with getting women into politics

- Organise Green Events especially for women and special discussions of topics of women's interest
- Provide childcare during party meetings and events
- Provide pleasant meeting conditions:
  - meetings should be efficient, not too long during the evening and at proper times (late afternoon rather than evening);
  - Time limit for speakers;
  - Speakers lists with quotas.
- Active Mentoring (successful women or men in the party support new women), presenting "role models"; strengthen women's networking; implement a "feedback structure"
- Budget for women's issues and for supporting women to make a career within the party
- Coaching for Women, providing a network-structure for women
- Gender Trainings (for staff, activists and members)
- Guidelines and Statutes with Gender Regulations
- Be active in finding women for the green party! (not sit and wait until they come to the Greens...), internal party discourse on measures for women's empowerment
- Support women to make a career within the green party: promote women for untypical tasks (not only social, health or environment...; also budget, finance, transport, economy...); promote women for chairs, podiums and as experts; strategic planning of media presence of women; take women as paid experts
- Person (or group of persons) responsible for the process of attracting women for the party
- Learn from examples, you must not reinvent the wheel!

## Campaign Finances by Marc Urbatsch

### Learning from the past

Some people consider that you need a miracle to finance a campaign for a small party. Most of them do not even want to start planning because they are convinced that there will never be enough money. Of course, writing figures on a page, counting and calculating does not increase the budget, but it is the first step towards doing so.

The treasurer of a campaign should always be a well respected person. He or she does not necessarily have to be old, but should have the trust of all parts, regions or factions of your party.

First of all, you should get an overview of what you need and what you have. The best way to start a new budget plan is to look for an old one. What did you spend in your last campaign? What happened then? Where did you get your money from?

If you have never before run a campaign in your town or country you should try to find out how much other parties on your level spent. The more information you can gather about their finances, the better. You don't have access to your competitors' data? Then ask Greens in other towns or countries of comparable size and with a similar financial situation. If your party has a big bank account, the situation is different from that of a poor party with no assets, even if the size of the town is comparable. Look for best practices of budgeting campaigns in a comparable party and learn from them. The most effective way of learning is by copying – try to copy from the budget plan of others, adjusting it as required.

Search for colleagues. Try to find experienced Green treasurers who can assist you. They can have a look at the draft of your budget at a very early stage and provide you with useful information.



© shutterstock

### First the income

Initially, you should concentrate on the income part. How many assets do you have? How many donations do you expect? How much will you be able to raise from your members? Will there be a certain amount of government (re-)funding? Will you be able to get money from corporate sponsors (if you accept them)? How much money did your party receive for the last elections? In which election and at what level did you raise the most? Will it be possible to get this amount again? Try to make at least a rough estimate based on past experiences and recent developments. You then have to decide whether you want to use only your reserve funds that you have built up for the campaign or if you want to invest parts of your monetary assets.

Should you borrow money for the campaign? There is no easy answer. You first have to assess your chances of winning the elections and of perhaps having the money refunded. Look at the polls and try to predict how much money you would receive in a normal term. You should always be able to pay back a loan within one legislative period. Of course, there is always the risk of snap elections. Be aware of this risk and calculate carefully.

You do not always have to borrow money from a bank. In some countries certain branches of the party have enough cash to lend money without any interest rates to those who need it for their campaign. Don't hesitate to ask your Green relatives (parties) from within or outside your country to lend you money. To finance successful campaigns, it is much better to circulate the money within Green parties than to store it in a bank.

## Then the expenses

After having planned the income and set a rough financial frame for the size of the campaign, your focus should shift to the expenses. Start a brainstorming phase that involves the most important people and several parts of the party.

Look again for best practices: what was successful in your most recent campaigns? How do the other parties plan and spend their expenses?

For the brainstorming phase it is very helpful if the treasurer can already present a relatively complete list of ideas and budgets. Then, new ideas can be added and the whole budget can be modified over the course of the discussion. Always try to use the experiences of past campaigns when you deal with new ideas. Where did you waste money last time? What was successful? Keep a critical eye on "big events" – money is often wasted on them.

After brainstorming, the decision making starts. You should first consider the opinions of experts, and then launch a democratic decision making process in the campaign team. Those parts that you have to cut can perhaps be financed later if lots of donations come in. Everything that you can't finance at the beginning should remain an option for later additional measures. You do not need a new additional budget for large donations if you can rely on the additional options that you already included during the planning process.

When setting the budget, please note that you should reserve lots of money (20-50%!) for the last days. A growing number of voters don't decide until very late on, so your ads, TV spots, posters and leaflets are extremely important during the final days of the campaign.

Unfortunately, donations are unpredictable and large donations arrive late in the campaign, sometimes even once it is over. This may save your budget – but you shouldn't count on that!

## Structuring the budget

Here is an example of the structure of a campaign budget:

### **Income:**

- Reserves
- Donations
- Sponsorship
- Proceeds from the sale of material  
(Plus perhaps a part of the party's assets)

### **Expenses:**

- Posters (including image rights, graphic costs)
- Agency (online + offline, possibly separated)
- Events
- Media advertising: ads, cinema, radio, TV, television in the underground, etc.
- Photo session with candidates
- Reserve for final phase
- Fundraising investment
- Campaign material, give-aways
- Campaign newspapers
- Personal publicity (mailings)
- Production of give-aways,
- Production of cinema spots, etc.
- Committee meetings (Election Campaign Convention)

### **Staff:**

- Interns
- Freelancers
- Permanent staff
- Employees on temporary contracts (usually persons at the beginning of their careers)



Experts with higher wages or as external advisers

Online agency

Keep your paid staff small. More personnel also means more effort to steer your campaign – this also needs to be taken into account. Without a working structure and clear leadership tasks, you will waste money on chaotic activities.

During the campaign you should always know precisely how much has already been assigned to specific activities – and how much remains. For a smooth running campaign, it is crucial to be able to monitor and control your budget effectively. The structure of the budget has to be clear so that all expenses can be easily be allocated. Never lose the overview, watch your budget closely!

The processes of decision making and spending have to be well defined. Who is allowed to place orders? Who has to agree? Be precise when defining responsibilities but don't forget that decisions sometimes have to be made quickly during a campaign. Somebody who is allowed to sign should always be available.

After the campaign you should always evaluate the financing of the campaign. Write down how your decision making and spending processes worked. What turned out well, where did you experience difficulties? Which parts of the budget had to be adjusted? Which ones were easy to plan and control? These notes will be of enormous help when you plan your next campaign budget. Good luck!

### About the author

Marc Urbatsch has served as treasurer of the Green Party in the city state of Berlin, Germany.

## Doing the Research by Lars Kreiseler

Niccolò Machiavelli already believed a detailed evaluation of our opponents' as well as our own strengths and weaknesses to be one of the most important preconditions for the preservation or expansion of power.

Although citing the Italian power strategist ("The end justifies the means") is sometimes frowned upon these days, even in modern electoral politics, knowing the strength of the weapons (or nowadays, the means and instruments) we face is an essential prerequisite for successful campaigning.

We need strategy and tactics, skill, endurance, resources – and knowledge! The more we know about voters' attitudes, desires, fears and demands, and the more we know about how and when to reach them with our messages, the more

exactly we can plan campaigns, minimise uncertainties and tailor our messages more precisely.

### In short: Knowledge is power!

#### Knowledge is power

The voter need not be an unknown creature.

There is no reason why political campaigns shouldn't be able to do what business, the advertising industry and political consulting agencies, do every day. Campaign organisers are every bit as capable of utilising the research tools provided by the social sciences. For years now, the introduction of any product or even new beer label has been conducted with more social scientific know-how than most election campaigns – at least in Germany and most other European countries.

## Know your potential

A variety of factors determine the outcome of election campaigns: mobilisation, themes, individuals and thus also the favour of voters. However, the “classic voter milieus” are not merely becoming more diffuse, but are increasingly disintegrating altogether. It has become far more difficult to predict how members of a given social or occupational group will vote.

While in the 1960s 80 per cent of working-class Germans still cast their votes for the SPD in the last federal election of 2009 the figure was only 24%. In the same election, 28% voted for the conservative Christian Democratic Union, 13% for the Liberals and 7% voted for the Green Party.

And with increasing frequency, it is the “Non-Voters” party that ultimately wins elections. If all the electoral abstainers who have stopped participating in democratic elections were to gain representation, as the largest party they would provide the head of government. While more than 91% of eligible voters still went to the polls in 1972, by 2009 the figure had fallen to barely 71%.

It is therefore important to mobilise as vigorously as possible, choose themes correctly and position key candidates deftly, thereby reaching potential new target groups. In order to do so, however, we need to know our potential voters inside and out.

## Know your strengths

“Strengthen your strengths, and weaken your weaknesses!” Formerly small parties such as the Greens frequently have an especially difficult time bringing their political objectives into alignment with the current themes that determine the outcome of elections. Often enough, alongside the “hard” issues, “soft” indicators or image values such as credibility, assertiveness, a clear profile and a close connection with citizens and their concerns are key to electoral success. Putting on a good performance is one

of the most important aspects of campaigning. It may sound strange, but it is generally true: not making mistakes is half the battle.

The earlier you gain an idea of what impression the voters have, the better you can respond to potential deficiencies. NB: negative images cannot be corrected overnight, but good image values can be ruined in very short order!

To prevent this happening, we need to use demographic tools! While we should never underestimate our “gut”, i.e., experience, intuition and that little measure of necessary luck – a good scientifically collected statistical basis is the best decision-making aid!

In short: If you can answer the following seven questions about your own voters, you are definitely moving in the right direction:

1. How many voters can envision voting for me?
2. Who are my voters?
3. Where do my voters live?
4. What do my voters want?
5. How do my voters see me?
6. What channels can I use to reach my voters?
7. Who would my voters vote for if not me?

You not only need to be able to answer these questions long before the election, but also to keep questioning and evaluating during the campaign. After all, the impact of a campaign requires constant monitoring. Otherwise, it resembles a hiker in the woods who has lost her compass. She knows where she wants to go, but will have a hard time getting there.

In choosing research tools, we distinguish roughly between “qualitative” and “quantitative” instruments.

## Quantitative – Painting by numbers

Quantitative tools (such as written interview questionnaires) try to describe reality with numbers. A classic example is the so-called Sunday question: “If the election were next

Sunday, who would you vote for?" The results are usually presented in percentages.

Quantitative analysis yields simple but robust statements about voter groups within brief periods of time: their socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, income, occupation, religion, origins, etc.), which topics they care about, how they assess certain politicians, etc.

To this end, a certain group of persons is surveyed (in direct face-to-face interviews, on the telephone or the Internet) who are representative of the general population (or the party's own voters). The selection of a representative group is made according to extensive scientific criteria.

NB: the absolute number of persons who need to be surveyed to yield representative results varies according to what you are trying to find out and the overall population. It can range from 100 to 1,000. A serious research institute can offer expert assistance. This is another reason to be sceptical of surveys that were not conducted by professional institutes.

### What use are numbers?

A quantitative study can be helpful both before and during the campaign.

Before planning begins, the study offers a good basis for answering the seven questions about the campaign's target group. When planning the budget, it is absolutely essential to allocate sufficient funds for this. Studies of this kind are expensive, but if done right they are priceless. The insights you gain are a compass that can accompany you throughout the campaign. Especially at those times during the campaign when you are unsure about whether you are taking the right path and addressing the right people, a glance at the "map of the electorate", the survey report or the volume of tables can be very helpful.

Such surveys can be very useful during the campaign as well. How popular is my candidate, how

did the voters stand on a current issue, and who is cutting the best figure during the campaign? Answers to such questions help not just the campaign organiser, but, if skilfully disseminated, can also influence reporting in the media.

Who hasn't read about an allegedly "internal" survey conducted shortly before election day that clearly yielded different figures than those published in the media? You can be sure that spin doctors were at work here and deliberately gave the survey to the press.

Many of us know from experience the commotion that changes of about two percentage points from one month to the next can set off. Few people know that, statistically speaking, two points often means that nothing has changed, or they choose to ignore it. After all, it is far easier for the media to write "party takes a dive" than "party surveys for XY are still within the margin of fluctuation".

### Spontaneous opinion polls as bus surveys

In order to organise such surveys of only one or two questions at short notice, polling agencies offer so-called omnibus or bus surveys. Here, each client can book a 'seat' and pose their questions. The large number of clients makes these studies feasible. Independent surveys are usually beyond the budgets of political parties, especially towards the end of an election campaign.

#### **When and where?**

#### **Quantitative research tools**

**What:** Telephone surveys, Internet polls, interview questionnaires.

**For what:** Voter potential analysis for campaign planning, adjusting the campaign to current events, increasing competence values, compiling socio-demographic profiles for micro-targeting or fundraising campaigns.

**When:** Before and during the campaign.

## Qualitative methods – getting closer to the electorate

Qualitative methods, in contrast, depend on the observer’s impressions. Generally, this involves longer, more detailed conversations, interviews or group discussions that offer the client an excellent overview of the individuals’ reactions to and assessments of a particular subject, message, claim or poster. These qualitative research methods, while relatively subjective, yield astonishing information and insights.

### When can we dispense with numbers?

Ultimately, the “qualitative” tools cannot provide usable representative results and “hard” figures. They are nonetheless important campaign aids. The most widespread instrument is the so-called focus group – a moderated discussion among a small group that addresses certain questions along predetermined guidelines. Socio-demographic criteria are used to “cast” the group in advance. This discussion is recorded both in written notes and on video or audio. The client can also attend the discussion, usually incognito behind a two-way mirror, or (more rarely) as a “participant observer” in the same room as the group.

For the observer, these discussions are often a revelation, since campaign organisers all too frequently forget to discuss their brilliant ideas with ordinary people. And by the time posters are hanging all over town, advertisements have been placed and campaign spots are hitting people’s television screens it is often too late. For that reason, focus groups in closed, semi-anonymous spaces save us from many mistakes or confirm our strategies. And some top candidates might find it useful to follow a discussion of their public appearances, or to see the puzzled faces when their names are mentioned. After all, self-perception is generally relatively far removed from the way outsiders see us. NB: Those who want more details should consider a “mirror process”.

Here, the candidate’s own personality and demeanour are ‘mirrored’ and then processed in coaching and training sessions.

### *When and where? Qualitative tools.*

**What:** Focus groups

**For what:** Image values, testing messages, poster motifs and campaign claims, evaluating candidates.

**When:** Before and during the campaign.

## Media resonance analysis

An additional tool that can be used to evaluate campaigns in progress, in particular, is so-called media resonance analysis. We are all familiar with the classic press review or newspaper clippings file, which offers an (albeit incomplete) overview of whether one’s own press efforts are working.

This is an important tool, but inadequate for the professional and up-to-date monitoring and evaluation of a campaign. After all, the person who compiles the clipping file is always unintentionally subjective.

Media resonance analysis seeks to analyse press reports “qualitatively” and to present the results in quantifiable figures. This includes not just counting the number of times the candidate is mentioned, for example, but also assessing the general thrust of an article: is the tone positive or negative for us? Is it more neutral? Is it the result of our own press work? How far do our own messages reach?

Even if you should be careful not to confuse media resonance with public opinion – media resonance analysis is the best and quickest way to discover whether your own media work is bearing fruit, and helps to discover at an early stage which media trends demand a response.

Professional agencies also offer media resonance analyses. Apart from newspaper clippings, they can include television and radio reporting as well, if desired. If your funds don't run to this kind of analysis, at the very least you will need an extensive press review, which you can prepare yourself with relatively little effort. Also helpful are the "alert" functions of some Internet search engines, which automatically send you a message when certain search terms appear in new (online) press publications.

### **When and where? Media resonance analysis**

**What:** Clipping files, press reviews, "alerts" from Internet search engines, content analysis, complex media resonance analysis.

**For what:** Assessing the scope of media work, discovering media trends early on and if necessary responding to them, evaluating the situation of the press and commentary on one's own campaign.

**When:** During the campaign.

### **Conclusions**

I. Research and analysis are not extra frills; they are basic prerequisites for a successful campaign. For that reason, never neglect them. Budget for them from the beginning, and budget generously.

II. Not all tools can be applied with equal success at all times. When planning your strategy, take a comprehensive quantitative approach in the form of a broad survey. In order to prepare for this survey, make an extensive analysis of all publicly accessible sources: studies by universities, polls by newspapers and television stations, publications of the EU Commission (Eurobarometer etc.)...

III. For strategy, the following generally applies: Make a plan and follow it through. Operate pragmatically. Pause at the markers along the way and evaluate. Take account of, but don't overestimate, unforeseen events. Readjust and adapt – when necessary!

IV. "The only statistics you can trust are those you falsified yourself." This quotation often attributed to Winston Churchill makes one thing clear: Opinion polls make politics. The campaign organiser is therefore well advised to make a careful study of survey techniques, statistics and questions of representativity. Whether it is a matter of unmasking the tactics behind such statistical tricks or making politics with them – if he or she prefers not to do this personally, investing in the right personnel is definitely worthwhile.

V. After all, nothing is more costly than a lost election.

### **About the authors**

Lars Kreiseler served as the head of office for Steffi Lemke – Campaign Director and Secretary General of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. In this position, he worked on the implementation of the 2009 European and federal election campaigns of the German Green Party. Lösche studied Communications, Political Science and North American Studies in Berlin and Washington, DC.

## Targeting Voters by Beate Potzmader



have enough resources to finance large campaigns, to pay for radio, television and cinema spots, or to place advertisements in the press. Furthermore, it is far more effective to communicate a message repeatedly to the same people, than to try reaching out to as many people as possible. Guided by the maxim “the right message for the right voter”, targeting helps campaigns conserve resources while maximising their impact.

A campaign must therefore focus on two groups:

### Who to target

Parties engaged in any political campaign are always confronted with a complex environment. Politics is blessed with a wide range of issues and a diversity of potential voters. Some people are more important than others and each person responds differently to a particular set of issues. Determining which voters to communicate with and what messages to use is called “targeting”.

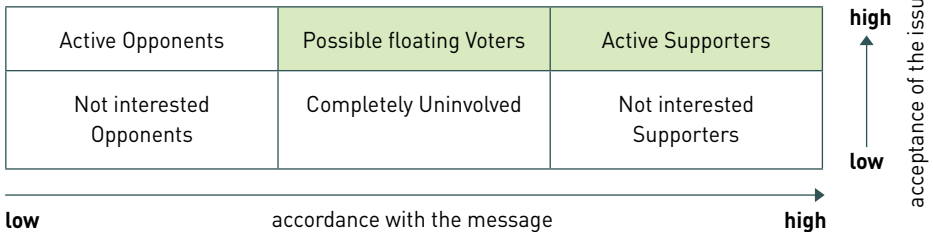
A campaign can never reach all people equally. The resources available (both staff and financial resources) are limited. We never have enough people working at information booths, talking, convincing others, etc. And we never

### Active supporters

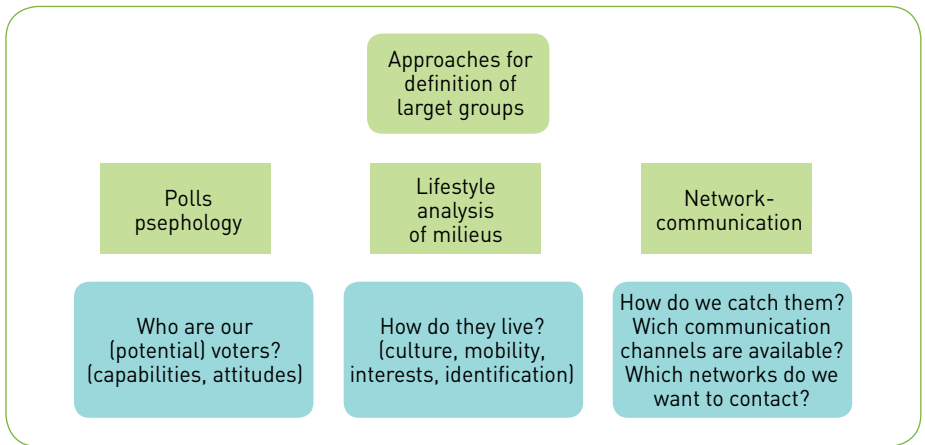
People who are FOR our concern: they no longer need convincing, and they require no further resources. Active supporters do not have to be persuaded to support the issue; they have to be motivated to discuss and gather support for the issue and objective, within their means and capabilities. The aim is to mobilise these people.

### Possible floating voters

The individuals that form this group are UNDECIDED: they can become supporters of the campaign, if the right arguments are used.



Source: M. Althaus “Kampagne! Neue Strategien für Wahlkampf, PR und Lobbying”



Identifying the right voters and crafting a message for them requires an understanding of how people decide to vote. Political professionals view the voting decision as a three-step process. During the “cognition phase”, a voter becomes aware of the campaign, and the candidates taking part in it. Next, in the phase described as “affect” or “persuasion”, voters form opinions about the candidates and decide who to support. Finally, during the “mobilisation” phase, voters must be motivated to actually go to the polls on election day.

### Polls and psephology

One way to develop individual targeting is to build a database. Polls generally cost a lot of money, but a relatively cost-effective way of compiling information is to use data available on official voter-lists, which include a person’s address, year of birth and sex.

With the help of official election statistics and an analysis of voting transfer, targeting is possible at no great expense. In this manner, swing voter strongholds and turnout can be analysed precisely, thus identifying the potential supporters and voters.

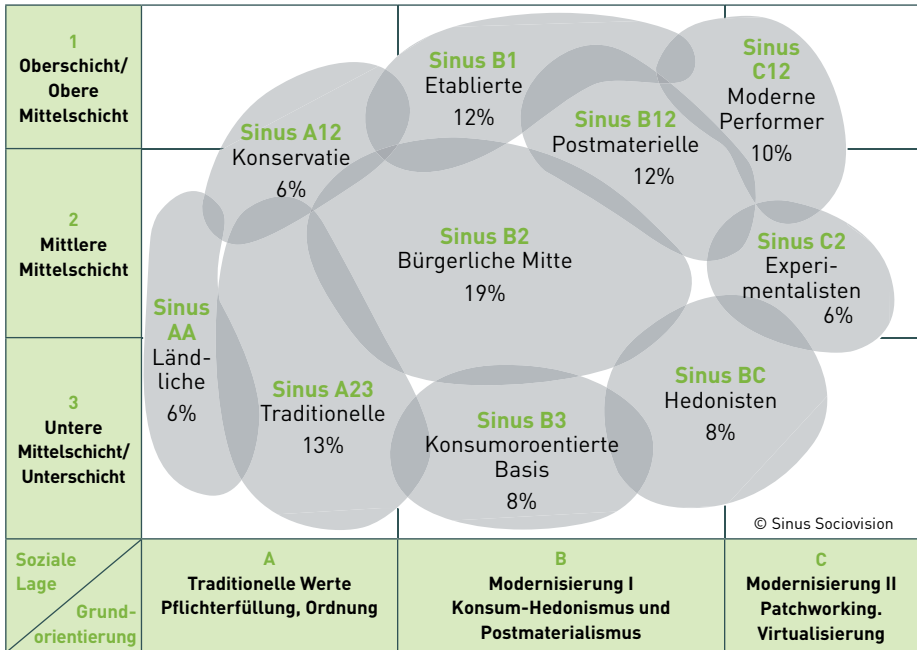
### Milieu analysis

In order to reach target audiences, we need to know more about them. It therefore makes sense to employ aspects of lifestyle and environment research. The ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation) and the Austrian banking sector, for example, use “sinus milieus”.

Using sinus milieus based on basic value orientation and personal settings like work, family, leisure, money and consumption, people with similar views and ways of life are pooled together. The argument behind the sinus target groups is that purely demographic characteristics, such as age or education, are not enough to define target groups; it is important not to disregard the diversity and individuality of persons. The sinus-environments bring people and their entire systems of reference concerning the world holistically into focus and thus offer more information on individual target groups than traditional approaches.

The structural environment of the Austrian population was determined and classified for the first time in a large scale qualitative and quantitative study in 2001. A fundamental part of the milieu concept is that there are points of contact and bridges between the different milieus.

### An example from Austria (source: <http://www.sinus-institut.de>)



Brief description of the sinus-environment® of an Austrian television audience (2007):

#### So-called **Exalted Milieu**

Sinus B1, Established: 12% the success- and performance-oriented elite: feasibility-thinking and focused on profit; strong exclusivity standard;

Sinus B12, Post-Materialists: 12% enlightened, cosmopolitan, progressive, critics of deregulation and globalisation; many cultural and intellectual interests;

Sinus C12, Modern Performers: 10% the unconventional young elite: flexible and performance-oriented, live an intense life (professional and private); multimedia enthusiasts.

#### So-called **TRADITIONAL Milieu**

Sinus A12, Conservative: 6% Christian social thought, strong sense of duty and responsibility, high appreciation of education and culture;

Sinus A23, Traditional: 13% living in security, stability-loving war- and post-war generation, deeply-rooted in the old middle class world or in the traditional working class culture;

Sinus AA, Rural: 6% traditional rural milieu, rural roots: estate, family; community and church seen as a natural framework of everyday life.

#### So-called **MAINSTREAM Milieu**

Sinus B2, Middle Class: 19% conventional mainstream: striving for a proper social status and a comfortable, harmonious life;



Sinus B3, Consumer Oriented: 8% strongly influenced modern materialistic underclass: attempt to achieve the consumption standards of the broad middle as compensation of social disadvantages.

#### So-called **HEDONIST Milieu**

Sinus C2, Experimentalists: 6% the extremely individualistic new bohemians: freedom, spontaneity and originality; living with contradictions;

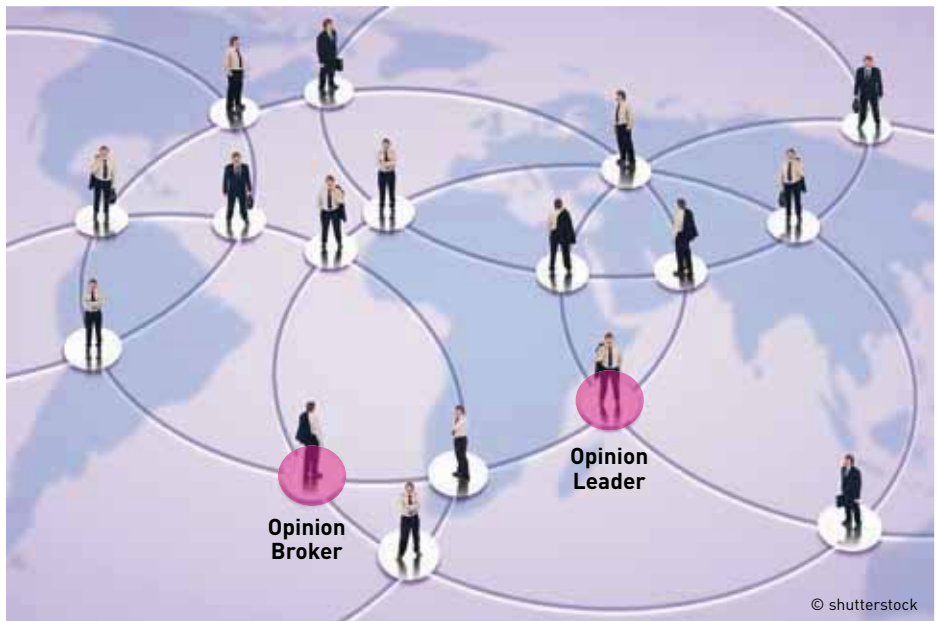
Sinus BC3, Hedonists: 8% the younger lower and lower middle class: searching for fun and entertainment; rejection of the expectations and conventions of meritocracy.

## Network Analysis

Network analysis offers a number of findings that may be relevant in target group work.

We know that in Austria, for example, the Green voters are those who have the largest networks and who talk about politics with the majority of people in their immediate surroundings. Such a phenomenon exists in various professions and age groups.

Opinion makers and connectors between internal networks have important roles in target group work.



Source: [www.fas-research.com](http://www.fas-research.com)

© shutterstock

## How to identify the key players: Opinion Leaders vs. Opinion Brokers

Opinions form around the utterances of central persons, who take on the role of “opinion leaders”. In a given group, opinion leaders are those who have the most relations with other members. They possess accurate knowledge about the current mood of the network, and they stabilise rather than influence opinion within it. Opinion leaders can be identified by a simple “snowball survey” – one chooses a person at random and asks, for example: “If I want to know what’s going on in the company, who should I turn to?” If you then ask these people the same question, and repeat the procedure 5-10 times, you end up with a list of individuals who are frequently referred to. These, then, are the opinion leaders. They are a particularly important group for action and direct communication.

Opinions are spread not only by opinion leaders. Spreading also takes place at departmental, educational, professional sites, and at bridges between core networks. These are the so-called “opinion brokers” (or “connectors”). Opinion brokers transport information into a completely different environment, and feed their network. In contrast to the opinion leaders, they are often the innovators, and a gateway to another world. They are often situated on the edge, rather than in the centre, of a network. Opinion brokers are responsible for ensuring that information between different social groups is exchanged, while at the same time exerting influence on various social networks, and thereby changing their opinions. Opinion brokers can also be identified using the snowball practice.

## Micro-Targeting

The latest trend of campaigning, especially in America, is ‘micro-targeting’. How does it work? American parties appear to have access to the electoral roll and to be able to collect information from customer databases (bonus cards, newspaper subscriptions, etc.). The data from the electoral roll is ‘enriched’ with this data. Individuals can then be contacted in telephone surveys (or home visits), and asked to verify the information. Direct and targeted personal actions (home visits, telephone calls, e-mail campaigns) may sometimes be crucial to winning or losing a seat, if the margin is by a few votes. Currently, the two major parties in the USA are working to build huge databases of people and infrastructures, a task that consumes huge amounts of time, energy and finances. In Europe, micro-targeting will not succeed so quickly. Not only because of the smaller budgets, but also because of the more stringent privacy rules. Nevertheless, in Europe, also, the dialogic web will become more important for parties and it is increasingly important to know the needs and concerns of the voters.

### About the author

Beate Potzmader is the campaign manager for the Austrian Green Party. She studied European Economy and Business Management in Vienna, as well as Coaching and Organisational Development. She has worked as Campaign Manager for the Greens at regional and national level since 1997.

## Training Staff, Candidates and Volunteers by Christian Neuner

Practice makes perfect. This is certainly true for political engagement and successful election campaigns. Of course, a lot of the know-how comes from experience. But training courses for staff, candidates and volunteers are effective tools and important opportunities for the sound preparation of campaigns, and, in particular, ahead of decisive phases of election campaigns. It is at moments such as these, when the time to prepare has long passed, that everything must run smoothly and quickly fall into place.



### For what objectives are trainings well suited?

- Collective brainstorming activities
- Development of strategies and concepts
- Sharing and exchange of knowledge and experience
- Preparation of concrete campaign situations
- Further development of participants' personal competencies
- Team building and motivation

### Examples of campaign preparation themes

- Strategy and campaign planning
- Time management and responsibilities
- Developing messages
- Volunteer work
- Fundraising measures
- Internal communication
- Media training
- Public speaking
- Personal communication at the campaign stall

### Formats

It is generally advisable to call upon professional trainers, coaches or facilitators, who possess the skill set required to accompany

or guide successful workshops. They have experience in the subject area, can encourage knowledge sharing and productive working relationships, and know how to best overcome and moderate sometimes difficult situations. External trainers have the added advantage of being able to see things from a fresh and objective perspective. This commonly leads to better results.

The Green European Foundation and GreenCampus (the training academy of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung in Germany) both have considerable experience organising and carrying out workshops of this type. GreenCampus has a far-reaching international network of trainers and experts. If you're interested in a workshop or anything else that's on offer, please just get in touch.

Of course, not every workshop and not every personal coaching session has to be accompanied by paid external trainers. Own means and resources are often sufficient for the concrete preparation of campaign situations and for the exchange of knowledge.

Above all, it is important to establish and agree on a shared objective (for example, "after the workshop, we want to be better at convincing potential voters in the street", or "I want to receive open and honest feed-

back on my speeches so that I can further improve my skills"). For workshops with a large number of participants, it's usually a good idea to pick someone with experience (acquired at university or through other projects, for example) to moderate exchanges.

Below are three suggestions for smaller groups which can be implemented fairly easily.

### Exchange of knowledge for staff

Invite your own experts along. You will frequently find the important knowledge and experience you're looking for in your immediate surroundings.

**Example 1:** You want to organise an election campaign in a city next year? Further south, in another city, your Green Party friends organised a series of exciting fundraising events through which they acquired a large part of their **campaign funding**. How did they manage this? What worked well or less well? Did they produce documents and lists that could prove helpful for your work?

**Idea:** invite those responsible for the fundraising actions in this other city to an internal evening event or reception of yours. Give them the chance to present their experiences and instruments, then consider which of these methods and approaches you could adopt.

**Example 2:** It has been decided that you need to organise your **volunteers** better. Because when they're around, it's not clear what they should do; and when you have too much on your plate, they've disappeared. You know of an environmental NGO that works a lot with volunteers. How does the NGO deal with volunteer management? What planning tools does it use? How are tasks distributed? How does it keep in touch with its volunteers, inform and

motivate them? How are they thanked **once the successful campaign is over?**

**Idea:** Ask those responsible for volunteer management within the NGO to attend one of your smaller workshops. With their help, you can determine what objectives you should set yourself in your work with volunteers, how they can be better organised and their contribution made more efficient.

### Personal speech coaches for candidates

As a **candidate**, it is a good idea to get hold of your own personal speech coach. Only with practice and feedback will you be able to improve.

Public speaking stars don't just fall from the sky. The same rule, therefore, applies here also: practice, practice, practice. But not alone in front of a mirror. Do you know what effect you as a candidate have on others? When do people find what you say and how you say things to be convincing? A speech coach could help you develop. But not everyone can afford a professional adviser like Obama or Clinton.

**Idea:** Look for someone close to you, someone you trust. Ask him or her to accompany you to big and small events over the following weeks, and to pay particular attention to what you say (whether it is understandable, too long, etc.) and how you speak (too loud, too quiet, body language all wrong, etc.). The two of you can then discuss in detail his or her impressions and feedback. In this way, although it may prove somewhat hectic, you will improve more rapidly and become far more confident and convincing than if you were to simply speak to yourself in the mirror.

## Volunteers: the basics

**Volunteers** need support, especially if they are not yet familiar with political work or everyday life on the campaign trail.

An election campaign means work. Convincing people **on the street, at their front door, at the campaign stall**. For untrained co-workers, it is unfortunately not always immediately obvious who they should speak to (is it worthwhile embarking on a long conversation or will this man in fact never vote Green?), how long a conversation should last (so that there's enough time remaining for other conversations), how they should react to (often critical) questions, or who they should point to when more complex queries arise.

**Idea:** Once your **election campaign message** is clear and your flyers have been printed, get together and practice common campaign situations with the people who are going to be out on the streets campaigning by your side. Team up in groups of three, switch roles regularly, and spend around five minutes

on each typical situation. One person is the campaigner looking to convince others that his party is the one to vote for, another plays a passer-by, while the third observes and provides feedback. The whole thing is usually fun and amusing, since people are generally quite happy to adopt other roles (an elderly grandmother one moment, a young father the next, then a banker on his lunch break) – much like an actor, but as part of a role-play. After a few rounds, the overall effect is that participants become more self-confident in their personal abilities and when communicating with other people. This is particularly important when the ultimate objective is to convince others of the merits of your own political programme.

### About the author

Born in 1976, Christian Neuner heads GreenCampus – the Academy for Politics and Management at the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Berlin. He is a Photographer, Coach and Consultant for Communication and Strategy.

## Developing Messages by Robert Heinrich

### Issues, conflicts, what's up?

Parties tend to know best what is necessary for the future. But unfortunately they often do not know what their surroundings are like at any given moment. In other words: they talk to themselves about their lengthy papers and their internal struggles but they often do not know or forget what matters most to their voters.

Voters will always punish you for such snobbish behaviour. If you want to move and motivate people, start where they are, not where you are.

Any German Green over 40 will tell you the following story: after the reunification of the two parts of Germany in 1990, national elections were held. The Green campaign focussed on climate change instead of the unification process. And the German Greens suffered an emphatic but deserved defeat. It took years for them to recover, but by then they had learnt the lesson.

To be effective, election campaigns need to be informed:

- What's happening at the moment?
- What's going on?
- What's important for your voters now?



■ What will be most important to them at the time of the election?

Elections are about choices. People have to choose between different philosophies, different programmes, different styles and different candidates. An election campaign provides support to the voter in the decision-making process. A campaign shows differences and makes it easier for voters to spot them.

Issues usually do not attract people simply because they exist. They mainly attract voters if they highlight the divergences between various organisations, governments, parties and candidates.

Green topics can often be found in highly conflictual areas. Use the conflict to gain attention. Form alliances around hot topics – alliances are temporary partnerships for certain themes: a recycling plant, a nuclear power plant, a new airport, a border conflict with a neighbouring country, and care for immigrants...

Before you start a campaign you should always invest time and money in research: What's up in our country/state/municipality? What are people talking about? Listen! Only then will you be able to approach them where they are – and not just preach from the high Green rock on which you stand. Get as close to your constituency as you can and win the sympathy and respect that such an

effort creates. You may not immediately win the next elections, but you will in the long run if you really care for people's needs.

## How to find the right message

Finding the right message is probably the most important task in a political campaign. Unfortunately, it is also among the most neglected ones. At the start of many campaigns there are enthusiastic and lengthy discussions about posters, pictures, events and "give-aways". It is in fact better to begin with a simple, but sometimes very tough, question: What do we have to say? What is the key argument to convince voters in the short and precious time that they give us?

Sometimes, the answer to this question is obvious and easy to find. At other times, the situation is complex and it is hard to come up with a good message. There are also those occasions when you simply can't see the wood for the trees.

But with the right message for your campaign, life is so much easier. Your message becomes the heart of your campaign. It serves as a guideline, as a leitmotif, and everything you plan will have some element of the message in it.

## What is a good message?

The message consists of the eight sentences (or less) that answer the voters' question: Why should I vote Green this year? There is no magic formula, but it will come more readily if you ensure that it has the following characteristics:

■ A good message is simple and clear. It is written in plain colloquial language, not in the flowery phrases used by politicians or the artificial slogans of advertisers.

■ A good message is true and credible. Be aware that truth and credibility do not necessarily coincide. A message can be true, but

at the same time not credible, because the voters don't believe it. As an example, I would never say that people should vote Green because we are the "party for the economy" even though I am convinced that the Greens have the best ideas for the best economy. Because nobody would buy it. I would instead say that people should vote Green because we are the party which reconciles economic interests with environmental concerns: "Greens know how to grow sustainably". This is a message which is both true and credible.

■ A good message gives a reason to vote Green at this particular election. Therefore, it is not enough to say: the Green Party promotes the environment and social justice. No, you must make clear what your **answer is to current problems**. Write a message in the specific context of the present campaign – and not as a general statement.

■ A good message gives voters a clear choice. It shows the difference between you and your main political opponents: This is what I stand for and this is what the others stand for.

■ If you come under attack, a good message will defend you pre-emptively.

## Developing a message

Reserve a few days, not just a few hours for message development. Talk to ordinary people about their expectations, worries and hopes, about their opinion of the Greens and the opposition parties. Compare what you hear with your own opinion – and see if there are gaps that need bridging. Then go into retreat with your **core campaign team**. Message development must be done in a small team, not more than four or five people. The bigger the group is, the more diffuse the discussion will be.

Message box: A good tool for message development is the "message box", as it arranges the most important aspects in a systematic order:

- What do I say about myself?
- What do I say about the opponent?
- What does the opponent say about me?
- What does the opponent say about himself?

This "message box" is an auxiliary analytical tool to help you focus on the most important points. You will have to do most of the work, however, with creativity, in discussion with others, and using common sense.

## Testing the message

Once you think you have found the right message, start testing it. You don't have to spend tens of thousands of euros on focus groups. Go out into the street or to the pub next door and talk to those people you know are **potential voters** (it is probably not a good idea to start with a 62-year-old conservative banker). Introduce your message in a normal conversation and observe the reaction. Or be open and frank and say: "I believe the Greens deserve your vote, because...", then ask your counterpart if he or she agrees.

## Spread your message:

After you have found the perfect message, internalise it. You should be able to recite it quickly, like a shot, even as you lie awake in the middle of the night.

After internalising it, start spreading it. As the leitmotif of your campaign, you can include your message in:

- the interviews of your candidates;
- direct talks with citizens;
- your most important campaign material (newspapers, flyers, commercials, etc.);
- your **online communication** (website, blogs, social networks).

Of utmost importance: never tire of repeating it again and again. Always remember: only when you can no longer bear hearing

it, will the journalists start to recognise it. And only if the journalists cannot bear it any longer, will the voters start to remember it. This is precisely what you want! Therefore, the rule is: One message, a thousand voices! (Not the other way round.)

### What is the difference between the message and a slogan?

The message is not identical to the main slogans on your posters. But these slogans, which consist only of a few words, should be

a condensed version of the message, which consists of a few sentences.

#### About the author

Robert Heinrich is the Director of Communications for "Bündnis 90/Die Grünen" since 2007, Robert was part of the team which led his party's European and national election campaign in 2009, with a strong focus on the Greens' online campaign, which invested heavily in social media, volunteers' participation, and dialogue.

## The Candidates by Beate Potzmader



### It's the candidate, stupid!

People who strive for public office should be aware of what awaits them there and what they should expect from the job. If you want to be a candidate, ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the purpose of this candidature?
- What is my situation?
- What skills do I have that may be useful for job?
- Will I enjoy working with people?
- Do I have enough energy and can I motivate myself?
- Is this the right time for a candidature?

- Do I have the personal qualifications to convince people?
- And so on...

### Basic requirements for candidates

#### Emotional Competence

- A basic requirement is to show respect to people, irrespective of their political orientation. It is necessary to attack opponents to show their substantive shortcomings, if it is appropriate to your own strategy. But this never should lead to personal, private attacks.
- Candidates should be empathetic and listen to people, to the needs they articulate. It is more important to learn from their perspective, than from expensive surveys. Not for nothing is a politician – i.e. a "man or woman of the people" – more popular than an introvert.
- Someone who can reflect on the activities he or she undertakes could have what it takes to make a good politician. Employees must also be allowed to express themselves and question you critically; they are not there simply to carry out the decisions their superiors make.



## Professional competence

- **Expert knowledge:** You must know the legislative process, and the department you are responsible for.
- **Communication:** In the multimedia-centred world of press, radio, television and internet, you must be familiar with the communication rules to be competitive.
- **Efficiency:** Be aware that you have a lot of issues to work on, a lot of problems to solve. You will therefore need plenty of energy and to be able to resolve the problems efficiently. Within a well organised structure, you will have the possibility to “sell” your successes.
- **Charisma:** Some people have it – some don’t. Some say that charisma cannot be learned. But there are a few things you can do to be seen as a charismatic person. Try to inspire people. If you love your work, if you are particularly enthusiastic on a certain topic, if you try as hard as you can to find a solution – people will feel all of these things. Your eyes shine brightly when you talk? Then you know how to be charming...

- **Credibility:** Be honest to people, try to be authentic. That is the best way to be viewed as a politician the people can put their trust in.
- **Vision:** Voters and potential voters want to know your programme and your positions. Don’t change your mind every day, don’t offer people a constantly different vision of what you want to work on.
- **Responsibility:** Take your responsibility seriously. Make promises and work hard to carry them out. Take action!
- **Development:** Be self-critical and work on your own development. This is a crucial aspect of leadership!

### About the author

Beate Potzmader served as the Campaign manager for the Austrian Green Party. She studied European Economy and Business Management in Vienna, as well as Coaching and Organisational Development.

## Moving countries, and getting involved in politics

The number of Europeans who move to other Member States is increasing every year. The EU Treaties made this easier than ever, giving European citizens the right to work and the right of residency in all Member States. We shouldn’t forget though that the Treaties also gave European citizens other rights, such as the right to vote in local and European Parliament elections or even to stand as a candidate in other European countries. If you live abroad in another Member State and you are interested in the day-to-day politics of that country, why shouldn’t you get involved in its politics? You can be active either as a volunteer, campaigner or even stand as a candidate! GEF’s Campaign Handbook interviewed Sergi Corbalán and Ania Kitcat, originally from Spain and Poland,

who both ran for the Greens in Belgian and UK local elections respectively. They share with us their positive experiences.

### Sergi Corbalán: From Barcelona to Brussels

Sergi Corbalán was born in Barcelona and after his studies he moved to Brussels initially for 6 months but has ended up living there for 12 years now. He is the director of the Fair Trade Movement Political Advocacy Office before the European Union, coordinating political advocacy and campaigning work in support of Fair Trade and Trade Justice.

When Sergi was first able to vote in the local elections in Brussels in 2006, he already

voted Green. When local elections were next due to take place, in 2012, he decided he was ready to take a step further and run as a candidate for the Greens in the Brussels commune of Saint-Gilles. “After 12 years of living in Brussels I consider myself a local, with rights to vote for the local and European Parliament elections. I wanted to go a step further and also to take up the right to be a candidate in the local elections”.

Although Brussels has a huge number of foreigners living in it, less than the 20% of them have registered to vote. According to Sergi Corbalán, this creates the risk that political parties do not pay enough attention to issues faced by foreigners. That is why during his campaign, Sergi tried to encourage non-Belgians living in Brussels to register and to vote so that foreigners’ voices could also be heard.

### Why local politics, why with the Greens?

“I did not know much about local politics in Belgium, but I was very interested in knowing more about how political decisions at a local level can have an impact on the daily lives of people.” To be involved in local politics, as Sergi explained, is also a great opportunity to get to know your neighbours, your city, community groups and to better integrate yourself in your new country.

Sergi Corbalán had already participated in some Groen-Ecolo (Groen, the Green Party for the Dutch speaking community and Ecolo, the Green Party for the French speaking community) activities and campaigns, but he is not a member of either Party. He had been however impressed by the good work done by the local Ecolo-Groen section in Saint-Gilles. He therefore accepted the invitation to run in the joint Groen-Ecolo list as a “candidat d’ouverture”. By opening up lists to non-members, Ecolo and Groen aim to build links with civil society and citizens and involve the

largest number possible of people in politics. In his eyes, Ecolo-Groen is the party that was addressing best today’s and tomorrow’s societal challenges, by aiming at social progress and people’s emancipation, while at the same time putting this in a framework of the limited resources, inequalities between North and South and growing social inequalities within societies.

Sergi was also pleased with how Groen and Ecolo were doing politics in a more transparent and democratic way, by putting in place, in his view, a more transparent internal decision-making process than other parties. He stresses the importance of both parties’ policy of giving as many political offices as possible to as many people as possible, in or beyond the party. “It’s is very important that people who are not working full-time on politics can also take part in the political decision-making processes in order to break the perceived division between citizens and politicians”.

### Immigrants on the lists: a way to better represent society

When Sergi Corbalán ran as a candidate on the Groen-Ecolo list, his priority wasn’t to try and appeal to the Catalan or Spanish community. Instead, he chose to reach out to as many citizens as possible, with a special focus nevertheless on the wider community of foreigners living in Brussels, regardless of their nationality. “When you decide to run your campaign as a foreigner, you have to choose whether and how to use politically your membership to a particular community or group. If your sole objective is to be elected, it is probably more effective to do so. However, this may also give the impression you are a candidate representing one specific community, which is not what I wanted to do”.

Parties also benefit from having immigrants on their list, as they bring new ideas and

new networks. Having foreigners in the Brussels Greens lists makes the lists more representative of the city population and contributes to creating a society where all the voices are heard. Although Sergi was eventually not elected, he thinks that Groen-Ecolo's policy of integrating people from different nationalities is a practice that should be continued and strengthened. However, he cautions that diversity isn't just about recruiting immigrants to run; there also has to be other kinds of diversity that must be ensured, such as candidates from different socio-economic backgrounds. It is also important to address the diversity within the leadership and elected positions in government and within parties, which, in his view, seem to take longer for foreigners to have access to.

### Ania Kitcat: A Pole living in the UK

Ania was born in Poland and in 1998 she decided to move permanently to the UK where she finished her studies. Ania worked part-time as a local party coordinator for the Brighton & Hove Green Party and in 2011 she was elected to represent Regency Ward in central Brighton. She is the first Polish citizen elected to local government in Brighton and Hove.

The Green Party in Brighton is very dynamic, well organised, and strong, something Ania Kitcat wanted to be part of. Brighton and Hove is one of the few places in the UK where the Green Party is considered one of the major parties and in 2011 the Green Party in Brighton and Hove managed to win most seats on the Council which meant that they formed the first Green council administration in UK history.

According to Ania, the UK is a society that is open to foreigners and many of them are involved in politics, especially in the Green Party. As an immigrant, Ania recognises that

at first a lot of immigrants' free time is spent in reconnecting with their country of origin (organising cultural societies, language schools) but, when they have decided that the UK is their permanent home, they tend to be quite active in terms of voting and elections.

### A prior involvement in the local Green party

As an immigrant, one can be unfamiliar with the political system and discussions in their host country. Although this was not the case for Ania Kitcat, who has an extensive background in Politics (holding a bachelor, several masters and a politics-related PhD), Ania warns that it is very important to be aware of the political differences from each country. "For me, the most striking difference between the British and Polish political systems is in the electoral system. In Poland you have predominantly PR (proportional Representation). In the UK it is the "winner takes all" known as "first-past-the post". That in turn has a massive impact on the political systems of the countries. In Poland you have many parties, coalitions, negotiations etc. In the UK it is predominantly a two party system with each party (either the Conservatives or Labour) taking charge in turns but not because they have attractive policies but due to the fact that people get fed up with the incumbent party and go for the opposite option. The electoral difference is also in the type of campaigning. I don't recall canvassing taking place in Poland (I don't think this has changed in the time I have been living in the UK). Local elections in Poland are media based while in the UK it is primarily the canvassing that wins elections".

To be able to understand these differences it is also useful to have a prior engagement in the party or in politics for some years. According to Ania her prior involvement in running the Green's local office (managing volunteers, dealing with public inquiries, getting involved in campaigning for elections) and work as lo-

cal party coordinator, gave her an additional understanding of how things were done, not only theoretically but in practice.

But, as Ania points out, becoming a politician for the first time, regardless of nationality, country of residence or political experience is always a challenge. Many of Ania’s colleagues “struggled as much as I did to find their feet in the first year of office. The learning curve is the same for almost everyone. But the Council is very supportive, providing lots of different types of training and briefings. I started learning quickly both from my more experienced Green party colleagues but also from the opposition councillors, some of whom are extremely dedicated, experienced and knowledgeable councillors”

### Immigrants’ campaign

Unlike Sergi, Ania did try to mobilise the Polish electorate. She stood in an area that had a higher number of Polish residents and an organised Polish community. She was also involved in this community (sitting as a trustee on the board of a Polish charity and in a Polish Saturday School) and even producing campaign leaflets in Polish explaining the process of vote registration.

However, the mobilisation of the Polish community was not her main goal, as she was also appealing to the wider electorate in the ward. As in all campaigns “this means lots of leg work: canvassing, leaflet delivering, community meetings...”. In fact,

Ania did succeed quite spectacularly in appealing to the British electorate; she scored the highest percentage of the vote out of all 54 Green candidates, making her the most popular Green candidate.

### Recommendations from the candidates:

#### Sergi Corbalán

“Just do it, not only you will learn a lot about local politics, it will also make you feel even more at home in the country that you have moved into. Do not wait until election time before contacting the Party, show your interest before. The campaigns are prepared months before the elections. Getting involved early will allow you to understand better the issues at stake and to contribute to the drafting of the programme, which will make you feel it is -your-campaign”.

#### Ania Kitcat

“Do it, do it, do it! Or if you are not too sure, go along to one of the local party meetings. Get to know people. Get to know policies. Find something that interests you. Don’t be put off by something that you disagree with. There are no parties in the world that will tick all your boxes- be realistic. If you find that the Green Party is the right balance for you then you can get involved in varying degrees: as a volunteer, campaigner, try to apply for some professional positions or ultimately stand as a candidate”.

## Campaigning on the European level by Michael Scharfschwerdt

Will the upcoming European elections be only one more of those elections with a low participation rate, 28 national election campaigns and a business as usual result? No, of course not. 2014 will be different. This will be the first time with European issues high on the campaign agenda, parallel to national issues. And the election result will have an even greater impact because the European Parliament will decide after the election who becomes the next President of the European Commission.

Additionally populists, right-wing parties and some movements in several EU Member States campaign against the European Union and the European integration itself and some of them can unfortunately hope for a good result in their country. But how can the Greens deal with this difficult situation and defend or even improve on their excellent result from 2009?

### Accept the circumstances

No we don't live in the ideal world where voters take some time to find out what the different party positions are and who achieved what in the current legislative period. We live in the real world where one-third of Europeans don't know any of the EU institutions. Only half of Europeans know that there is a European Parliament. Unbelievable as it sounds, it is one of the results of the Eurobarometer from June 2013. This has simple consequences for election campaigning: you can't expect an electorate to know what the role of the European Parliament is and how it works. So you have to develop simple messages so that you and your candidates can explain what the job of an MEP is and why voting Green can make a difference on the European level.



Probably the upcoming elections for the European Parliament are the most important event in your campaign calendar this year but for most of the people it's not. Citizens in those EU Member States that are in an economic crisis are more interested in keeping their job or finding a new one. Very often they don't expect anything good from politicians and don't want to vote.

And there are all the clichés about the EU. They are not new, but they are being heard more and more. Of course the EU is not perfect, and especially we Greens want to change a lot, but it's not the bureaucratic monster as some of the populist parties describe it. Be well prepared and convince with arguments. But don't make the mistake of accusing a voter of being "Anti-European" if he or she comes up with one of these clichés.

### The crisis and the Green issues

The financial and economic crisis in the EU and especially in the Eurozone will dominate 2014. Although you could get the impression that the crisis is over because of a slightly better economic trend than a year ago, the further developments are quite unsafe, the unemployment rates in some EU Member

States is still dramatically high and the fiscal debts have not been resolved.

All these economic and financial issues are not traditional playing fields for Green parties from the perspective of most voters. Nevertheless the Greens must give a green answer to these problems. In 2009 the European Greens were very successful with the idea of the “Green New Deal” because it focused on the economic problems and presented a way to create new jobs that are more sustainable and at the same time help to fight climate change. This time is no different. The Greens will only be successful if they don't ignore the economic situation and give a unique answer on how to overcome it. But this doesn't mean giving up on traditional green issues. Why? Because climate change doesn't wait and the voters expect Green parties that fight it. And there is one more piece of good news: Europeanwide polls underline that the EU institutions have a high degree of credibility in consumer protection, healthy food or data protection. And all these issues are green issues with a high mobilisation potential among electorate.

### Be on the offense

For decades it was quite easy to be a Europhile. The process of the European integration gave the people safety and hope for a better life. This has changed in recent years and especially since beginning of the financial and economic crisis. Nowadays a lot of European citizens associate fear and unsafety with the EU institutions. Doubtless it seems much easier for the populists, nationalists and anti-Europeans in this upcoming election campaign because they will concentrate on blaming the European Union for everything and will offer so-called simple solutions to the voters like “renationalisation solves all problems”.

Do they tell the whole truth? Certainly not. But then it's time to be on the offense and to offer

opposition to this argument. And who could do this better than the Greens who believe that transnational problems need transnational (European) solutions. The European Green Party and its national member parties campaign together for the European elections with a common manifesto, a common campaign and common top candidates.

### Motivation, Motivation, Motivation

In 2009 only 43 percent of the citizens voted in the European elections. In other words: the party that best mobilises its supporters wins. For that reason don't focus on the voters of your opponents and instead concentrate on your own. It's necessary to find out what kind of issues are most important for them and to give green answers to these issues. But you will not mobilise them by detailed concepts and elaborate proposals for new EU legislations. Instead talk about values, goals and why the Greens make a difference.

### Be innovative

The Greens have traditionally not had the biggest campaign budgets. But the Greens can be very creative and innovative. This will be necessary in this European election campaign on the European and national level. But what if a campaign idea doesn't work as desired? Go on and try the next one. Especially in the case of the European elections there is no handbook that guarantees success but some trends:

- The voters decide later and later if they vote and which party will get their vote. Save money and power for the last days of your campaign.
- Don't wait for the media. They are traditionally not really interested in the European elections. Get in direct contact with the voters and focus on face-to-face campaigning. Of course it depends from the political culture in your country but Greens in different EU Member States had good experiences with door-to-door campaigning, for example.

■ Be creative in the web. Creativity doesn't mean that it's enough that a party or a green candidate has a Facebook or Twitter account. You have to be an active player and visit the virtual hotspots where you can get in contact with your voters and spread your messages. And you should have the courage to use new trends that are provocative or funny or both like an extraordinary video or a MEME motive.

Will everything be different in campaigning in 2014? No, of course not. Perhaps it could be a little bit more difficult than 2009 because traditional "green issues" are not as high on the agenda and Europe is not as

popular as in the past. But on the other hand why should Green parties be sceptical? They are the only political movement that takes Europe seriously and have run a common campaign. This is a unique selling point and it makes the Greens strong because they stand united.

### Author

Michael Scharfschwerdt has served for several years at the highest levels of the German Green Party in Berlin and Brussels and currently works as a senior consultant for Joschka Fischer & Company.

## Using the Green New Deal to punch above your weight – Northern Ireland Greens

The Green Party of Northern Ireland have a difficult political environment to deal with. Decades of often violent sectarian division within this province of the United Kingdom, mean that parties not aligned with the two communities often find it difficult to break through and make an electoral impact. This was true of the NI Greens, but recent elections have seen them grow considerably in strength and make a major breakthrough in provincial elections in 2011. Part of the reason for the success, apart from hard work and great candidates, was the adoption of the "Green New Deal" in their elections.

The Green New Deal is an ambitious policy agenda adopted by the wider European Green movement in response to the financial crisis that began in 2008. Used by many Green across Europe in the European elections in 2009, its core belief is that it is possible to solve our environmental, social and economic problems by a concerted shift to a more sustainable and socially-just economy.

The Northern Ireland Greens can be seen very much as a "best practice" for how they adopted the Green New Deal and how it paid dividends in their campaigns. They fought three campaigns in three years (European, Westminster and Provincial in 2009, 2010 and 2011). In 2009, the GND formed the core of their campaign for the European Parliament elections. The result was a trebling of their vote compared to 2004. The GND was used again in Westminster elections in 2010 and provincial and local elections in 2011.

In this article, we interview some of the key people involved in the Northern Ireland Green campaigns and suggest how other Green parties can successfully integrate the GND into their campaigns. In particular, we look at how other Green parties on a limited campaign budget can achieve this.

### GND – a simple but effective message

As Adam McGibbon, a former candidate, argues, the GND is a simple but effective message that is easy to communicate to voters.

The slogan for the 2011 provincial elections was “Good for people, good for the economy, good for the environment”, which effectively communicated what the GND was all about. “It evokes the central, holistic aim of Green politics in plain language without losing the message in translation into the oft-technical of sustainable development” says McGibbon.

For McGibbon, it was the ability of the GND to move the perception of the Greens beyond being “just” an environmental movement was crucial. It demonstrated that the Greens were also concerned about more everyday issues such as jobs and taxation, which is a crucial development especially for smaller, less established Green parties.

### How to deliver your message

However, even the best message can be useless in a campaign unless it is used in a coordinated manner across the campaign. As Clare Bailey, a candidate in 2011 indicated, all candidates got behind the strategy of talking about the GND. It was used in literature, interviews and on the doorsteps.

Tying into the overall European Green Party's campaign also proved an effective means of running a low-budget campaign. A great example of this is the election video used by the Northern Ireland Greens in 2009, which was the EGP's video edited to include their candidate for the European Parliament.

As well as tying it into the European campaign, it is also important to localise what a Green New Deal would mean for the vot-

ers' local community or city. For Adam McGibbon, this proved to be an easy task. His South Belfast Westminster constituency is located a stones throw from the Harland & Wolff shipyards. Known in a previous era as the home of the ill-fated Titanic, the shipyard now has a new lease of life building wind turbines and tidal turbines. The iconic H & W cranes which dominate Belfast's skyline are now a recognisable example of what a “Green New Deal” for all of Northern Ireland's economy would be like.

### Mobilise a wider campaign behind you

For a small Green party, it can be hard to raise an issue or a policy all by themselves. It was therefore a crucial part of the NI Green's success that there were other actors in Northern Ireland who were pushing the Green New Deal. Friends of the Earth were early supporters of the idea, but so were businesses, farming groups and Union leaders. They released their own versions of the Green New Deal (in most cases referred to explicitly as a Green New Deal), which gave it added credibility and recognition in the political environment of the province.

Other Green parties can replicate this success across Europe by engaging with key actors. Sending these groups copies of various Green New Deal publications from the European Green movement or organising seminars and discussions with them can be effective means of creating new alliances in arguing for a transformation to a sustainable economy.



## What to do about other parties?

While other organisations adopting the GND model is always a positive development, it can be a little trickier when other parties do so. As it may be some time (though hopefully not too long!) before Green parties are in the majority across Europe, it is essential that other parties come around to the Green way of thinking on the need to rapidly transition to a sustainable economy.

The Northern Ireland Greens therefore adopted a two-pronged approach. Parties that didn't support the idea of a Green New Deal were publicly criticised for failing to recognise the essential requirement of switching to a low-carbon sustainable economy. This had some high profile success, for example when one of the larger centre-left parties came out in support of the GND after being publicly criticised by a Green candidate.

When parties did adopt the idea of a Green New Deal (as many did by the 2011 elections), the NI Greens welcomed it but argued that the Green Party were the only ones with a full understanding of the change required, whereas other parties were just cherry picking the easier aspects of the plan without fully understanding the full change that is required.

## Green New Deal – not just at election time

While the GND is an effective message at election time, it is something that Green parties should campaign on between elec-

tions so as to raise awareness of the idea and attract new members and supporters to the Party. Northern Ireland Green Councillor Cadogan Enright updates his website regularly with news on the Green New Deal, especially on the steps that are needed to develop renewable energy in his local area.

There are lots of ways that even small Green parties can use the Green New Deal in their campaigns. Petitions in support of renewable energy, public meetings etc all provide low cost ways of raising the Green New Deal. There are some dangers and pitfalls that need to be avoided by parties wanting to adopt the Green New Deal concept. The first may be cultural difference specific to the country. For example, in the Czech Republic the concept of a "New Deal" is less positive and has connotations of Communist-era big Government. Instead, they use the term "low-carbon economy". The second is that party candidates and activists must be trained so that they can defend the idea of a "Green New Deal", which has its detractors. Criticisms can range from it being too expensive, to it damaging the environment through the construction of wind farms. These criticisms may be easy to refute, but it is important that the party speaks with one voice on some of these issues.

However, a well thought-out use of the Green New Deal can give your Green campaign that crucial boost in credibility and innovation that can be essential for smaller, less established parties.

# RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

## Opposition Research by Beate Potzmader

*"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle."*

Sun Tzu, The Art of War

### What is opposition research?

Political campaigns are mostly defined according to the opponent. The observation of opponents is a key instrument of political strategy and, for over two decades, a professional part of election campaigns, particularly in the USA. Some party-people still resist opposition research – "Why do we need it? We have no money and no people. We prefer our own, positive message; let's concentrate on this." But it is an unavoidable fact that, in the coming years, the consistent observation of opponents will be an integral part of any campaign. This concerns in particular publicly accessible information. So it does not involve the invasion of privacy, baseless allegations or snooping! Opposition research detects developments and projects at an early stage, but also the opponents' conflicts and contradictions. It is important to know how that information can be used for one's own campaign.

Opposition research is not just about the opponent's weaknesses; it can also serve to anticipate attacks. It is crucial to recognise one's own potential weaknesses in communication and to ward these off with appropriate responses (arguments, counter-attacks, or ignore them).

### There are 3 main activities of opposition research:

#### Planning of scenarios / analysis of opponents

- Monitor strategies of the opponents in order to plan your own activities
- Understand the opponents and their "script": what persons, messages, strategies, arguments are used in direct confrontation?
- Analyse past election campaigns and election results
- Understand the communication strategy of the others

#### Observation: what should be observed?

- Reading newspapers is not enough! Overall **media monitoring** is required
- Portraits and profiles of opponents
- **Campaign material**
- Direct contacts (mail, canvassing, activities on the streets)
- Events
- **Networks**, trade unions
- **Online media** (social media, blogs, etc.)
- Political attacks and allegations by opponents directed at the Greens

#### Documentation

- Archives are worthless if you can't find any information
- Material should meet three criteria: correspond to the truth/ be open to the public/ have political relevance

### Negative Campaigning

Negative campaigning is a tactic that attacks the opponent directly – with or without comparison to the alternative(s) proposed by one's

own party. In some countries, the Greens are subjected to massive amounts of negative campaigning. Negative campaigning is likely to become an increasingly decisive element of campaigning. Both in day-to-day political debates and in communication networks, polarising statements will get on to the agenda more easily. The sustained success of negative campaigning for campaigners is open to question, however. In the meantime, the negative campaigning in election campaigns has itself become a topic of discussion (e.g. dirty campaigning). In any case, it is crucial to know about attacks by opponents in advance.

## Objectives of opposition research

The goal is to integrate and organise opposition research as part of the election campaign to enable the systematic collection of relevant information. Specific objectives are to:

- Understand the strategic direction of the opponents in order to improve the way we can respond or react. Who is the opponent attempting to reach, and with what message? Which target groups do they communicate with?
- Identify attacks on the Greens as early as possible, and provide interfaces for rapid response measures
- Identify and demonstrate your opponents' weaknesses, such as substantive contradictions, dissent within opposition ranks, weaknesses, etc. Obtain information for mobilisation and de-mobilisation strategies
- Select, document and archive relevant information
- Collect relevant information for direct conflicts with opponents (street campaign), media (candidate discussions), online, etc.

## Instruments of opposition research

### Media monitoring

- National news agencies
- Determine the selection criteria: what is important (attacks on the Greens, thematic priorities, strategic announcements)
- Clarify who is responsible for rebuttals, and prepare arguments to refute attacks on the Greens
- Relevant local newspapers and other local media (TV, radio, etc.)
- Online media
- Ongoing monitoring of the other parties on the internet, including party organisations and initiatives
- Watch forums and provide internet activists with information
- Monitor discussions: what is discussed intensely?

### Preparation of discussion points (for candidates) and direct communication

- Content for confrontation with political opponents
- Not only the media but also 'on the road'
- Goal: to maintain direct contacts
- "Food" for training of activists, officials, candidates
- Know the opponents' arguments

### Regular support – strategic evaluation

- How did the opponents communicate? How do they position themselves?
- Regular updates with essential information

### Timetable of opponents

- Overview of **opponents' most important events**

## Regional information

- Establish a network between the federal and state governments for opposition research
- How to communicate with the opponent in countries and communities? Are there any differences compared to the federal line? Are there targeted attacks on the Greens?
- Media, events, advertisements, campaign material

## Target groups and network monitoring

- How do our opponents communicate in our major networks and with target groups?
- Observation of direct mails, events for target groups
- Organisation of feedback loops with Green supporters in Green networks
- How effective is the opponent's communication strategy?

## Advertising and campaign events

- Monitoring and collection of the most important advertising campaigns of other parties, especially those with the "wrong" content and/or strategically relevant messages

## Archiving

- Database with selected information
- No excessive claims: the point is not to collect all the substantial details of the opponents, but specific information which could be used against the opponent in a political context
- Also provide information that could be used at the local level

### About the author

Beate Potzmader was the Campaign manager for the Austrian Green Party. She studied European Economy and Business Management in Vienna, as well as Coaching and Organisational Development.

## Traditional Media by Damian Connon

### Overview

Generating and directing media coverage is a difficult "dark art" at the best of times. It is always a challenge to find original, relevant and understandable messages and ideas, which at the same time are not too "dumbed down". Photos have to be compelling and eye-catching, but if too extravagant it could appear to be a stunt or make your candidate look like a clown. The good news is that during an election campaign, papers, radio and TV stations are covering and giving lots of priority to political stories. The bad news? All of your competitors are fighting you for those column inches and to dominate the airwaves. So what can you do to gain an advantage?

Try to maintain positive, professional relations with media. Even if it does seem as though they are not treating you as well as you deserve. Also DO try to keep an eye on how much coverage other parties are getting: the number of front page stories, photos published and stories carried prominently on TV and radio news bulletins. Different countries have different rules: you might be entitled to as much as your share of the vote in the last election, in the last poll – or you might not be entitled to anything at all!

If you are getting disproportionately ignored, do contact the news editor. Try to make the case that you've got a good/unique story to tell and their readers/audiences would ben-

efit from hearing it. Ask if there is anything you could change about how you are organising your events to improve the likelihood of coverage (timing, notification, structure and messages could all be tweaked to help get better coverage). You can be sure that your counterparts in other parties are complaining if they're getting a bad deal. It almost certainly will annoy your media colleagues, but sometime the loudest voice will dominate.

It can be useful during a campaign to conduct regular media briefings. For bigger parties this might be daily. Or for parties who get less attention from the media, every couple of days. Ideally, it will be in a regular spot so that journalists remember the location! This also reduces transportation of backdrops, lights, podiums, etc.

## Campaign planning

Under the intense pressure of an election campaign there is rarely enough time to run a campaign, let alone plan one. So it is a very good idea to have as many plans as possible in place before the campaign begins. Ideally, you will have a framework prepared for the most critical last weeks of the campaign, when most people make up their minds about voting and when being visible to the public is most critical. This can be as detailed as you need it to be, but it should be well thought out, and agreed and familiar to the key decision-makers in the political and communications roles.

The purpose of a campaign plan – or “grid” – is to give everybody on the team an overview, and to facilitate efficient work. It is important to consider spacing out your events to take account of your capacity to organise interesting events, and also of the media's ability or probability of covering them. This point is particularly important if there is a system of proportional media coverage (stopwatch). If in doubt, spend your



time organising a smaller number of well-researched, well-run events, rather than lots of lower-standard events; quality rather than quantity.

During the campaign itself, it is useful to issue a media notice by email containing details of important events taking place the following day. Even if there are no specific media events organised, the schedule could contain details of speeches or meetings in which senior figures are participating. For very important and last-minute events, it could be useful to send an SMS to political correspondents, news editors, photographers, etc.

If your party does not have a press clippings or media monitoring service, it is a good idea to plan to do an early morning newspaper review, so you have an overview of the big stories and can fine tune your messages and events as needed. This task would likely need to be rotated, as all those early starts will quickly wear out a press officer if she or he has to do it all on their own!

## Ideas for media events

Most campaigns will contain a number of similar elements – set-pieces like: launches to get the campaign going, unveil posters, publish the manifesto, showcase an election broadcast and, eventually, to wrap up the campaign.

There will also usually be opportunities to present different policy ideas. These need not take the format of a press conference; it is usually a good idea to present your ideas with visuals that create an idea of the policy in action. A press conference provides little visual material for TV stations and photographers to work with. And even the best communicator will struggle to make detailed policies interesting in a room full of bored journalists.

In the election campaign for local councillors in 2009, the best covered media event that the **Irish Greens** held was a press event to outline the party’s plans to improve cycling facilities in Dublin.

A dozen bikes and helmets were borrowed from a cycle shop, and journalists and photographers were invited to accompany politicians on a mini tour of the city to point out good facilities as well as bad points (they also were treated to refreshments and pastries in a café in a new, pedestrianised urban plaza which has good bike parking – as well as good coffee.) A similarly successful event was held on a regular Dublin bus, hired for a couple of hours, to point out public transport facilities to media.

## Politics – as well as policies

Making policy more interesting and understandable is one approach to take. (For an education event, why not consider holding it in a school or playground with children spelling out your message on large toy letters?). But Greens also have a tendency to talk exclusively about policies, and wonder why we suffer from a lack of coverage. We sometimes forget that journalists are often – and sometimes more – interested in the processes of politics and the personalities involved.

It is a good idea to prepare research on your political opponents – both their ideas and their

people – and work them into sound-bites that can be used in conversations with journalists.

As green party campaigns are usually more poorly funded than our competitors, we often have less money to spend on expensive items like outdoor advertising. We can try to use public relations to leverage our spending. Consider hiring a mobile “ad-mobile” for a press launch – a photo of this in the papers can be worth 20 billboards, and can make your budget go further

## Useful campaign accessories:

1. Stand with multiple microphone clips: keep photos tidy, stop journalists “crowding” your speaker.
2. Digital camera: good for web use, and for smaller newspapers that don’t have their own photographers or can’t use photo agency pictures. Preferably a **Canon** or **Nikon SLR** with an external flash unit.
3. Digital audio recorder: it is a good idea to record any press conference, in case of quotes “out of context”, and also for podcasting.
4. Video camera: there is not very much work involved in putting up a **YouTube** clip.
5. Name plates: a good idea for press conferences, so photographers can sort out their captions more easily.

Other ideas:

1. Create a “war book” or election book, of election-focused messages, including positive messages, attack messages and defensive sound-bites to cover difficult issues. This is ideally prepared in advance of the campaign so that key candidates and spokespeople can be familiar with them and repeat them for consistent messaging.
2. Media monitor alerts: Have a system with which you can send **SMS alerts** to volunteers and supporters alerting them to listen to radio broadcasts – especially those featuring green candidates – and text in with supportive messages.

3. Issue a media notice on the eve of voting about when the campaign's key individuals will be casting their ballot, so photographers can catch this image for the following day's newspapers.

### About the author

Damian Connon was the Green Party of Ireland's Communications Manager between 2007 and 2011 and previously worked as Press Attaché for the Green Group in the European Parliament from 2003-2005.

## Grassroots – Word of Mouth by Beate Potzmader

### Definitions:

■ **Grassroots** lobbying is the process by which interest groups identify people with the same concerns; sensitise, recruit and activate them (activists, volunteers, etc.).

■ **Grassroots campaigning** defines the campaign management/method of grassroots lobbying.

■ **Grasstops lobbying** is the integration of local or regional opinion leaders as advocates for a specific cause. Grassroots campaigns are particularly effective for the creation of alliances (coalition building) with interest groups or individuals who share a common concern (through either a formal alliance or an ad-hoc and informal one). Use Grassroots mobilisation as a moving spirit for campaigning.

### Topics

■ Management of activists and volunteers: a lot of people are necessary for a good grassroots campaign. They have to be coordinated, trained and provided with proposals for activities, arguments, etc.

■ **Targeting** and micro-targeting: grassroots campaigns must reach specific target groups. They should be localised and fed with messages, actions, and so on.

■ **Web applications:** blogging, video integration, viral campaigning, fundraising, **mobile phones**, web 2.0 (social networks) are some essential tools in grassroots campaigning on the internet.



■ CRM: Customer Relationship Management is not an empty buzzword. Collect data, store them in your database (be aware of the privacy rules!) and communicate with your activists and sympathisers regularly. If they want information or become active in a specific campaign, they should be kept informed – or they will switch off again.

■ Campaign management within the party structure: ensure that grassroots campaigning is always an integral part of your campaigns. For this you will also need personal and financial resources within the party structure.

### Levels

■ During the election campaign: mobilisation, stabilisation of supporters and (potential) voters.

■ Mid-term projects (between two elections): building the basis for electoral mobilisation.

- Keep the fire burning!
- Continuous communication; web

## The three phases of Grassroots campaigning:

Input phase >>>> Organisation phase >>>>  
Training Phase = Mobilisation

### 1) INPUT:

- Get family, friends, etc., involved in the action (maybe with the help of a survey).
- How can our concern be strengthened? (Research!) Set goals you want to aim for. These goals are to be communicated later on.
- What are you prepared to do? The message for the audience: You are prepared to give all of your energy for these goals.

### 2) ORGANISATION:

- Construction of a network of activists.
- Feeding structures: teams and team leaders to serve the activists should be built. They have to assume their well-defined responsibilities.
- Geographical position of the activists: in large countries and regions, activists should be pooled geographically – as should the responsible teams and team leaders.
- Objectives: everyone should know the aim they are working towards.
- Activists have different goals, different resources: keep in mind that activists cannot do all the campaign work. You should suggest different actions to them, in line with their goals and resources.
- Communication with the activists: this is a very important issue! Continuous communication – face-to-face, on the internet, or via e-mail – is necessary to jolly the activists along, ensuring their continuous support.
- Feedback options: give your activists the chance to give feedback on the actions and support they receive. They talk to plenty of people – they may possess information that is essential for your party and campaign.

Activists want to be taken seriously. So please take their feedback seriously.

### 3) TRAINING:

Train your activists and enable them to talk to their friends in their own language. They must receive the following information:

- What are the objectives (of the campaign)?
- What is the strategy?
- Which tactics are used?
- Which **message(s)** should be communicated?
- What will the activists do exactly?

*Note:*

*Offer exclusivity for your activists. (Give them "insider" information, offer them information earlier than the public.)*

### Word-of-Mouth (WOM)

In today's overloaded advertising world, personal recommendations are the best and most effective way to get through to our potential voters. Friends communicate openly, honestly, credibly and accurately at the point of interest.

- 90% of consumers trust recommendations from friends
- 67% of the U.S. economy is influenced by word-of-mouth
- 70% of consumers trust consumer opinions on the internet

Word-of-mouth-marketing is often understood as a tool in downstream communication used in the last phase of the communication process. The power of WOM is in the end-to-end integration of the target group – from the development of the issues and the campaign development to the communication itself.

- Get to know and to understand your target groups and opinion leaders
- Use your target groups as multipliers



## The 4 steps of WOM:

1. XPLORE: Really understanding the target audience. Use existing and relevant market research data to understand and enrich WOM-activities (interests, lifestyle, trends, topics, etc.).
2. TOUCH: working with opinion leaders from the target group, for example in trend scout programmes.
3. INVOLVE: put the marketing in the hands of the audience, for example in the form of brand ambassador programmes.
4. ATTACK: understanding communication with the audience and spreading the message to the target groups.

Factors that increase chances of success:

- The topic should be current, relevant and simple.

- Support/alliances/partnerships: form alliances, enlist celebrities for support, embed media cooperation, convince opinion leaders (such as internet bloggers).
- Emotional approach: specifically address the target groups, communicate authentically using witty, not old-fashioned, messages.
- Use all relevant web 2.0 tools (Facebook, Youtube, MySpace, Twitter, etc.)
- Adapt all on- and offline activities.

### About the author

Beate Potzmader was the Campaign manager for the Austrian Green Party. She studied European Economy and Business Management in Vienna, as well as Coaching and Organisational Development.

## Canvassing (Door-to-Door) by Beata Maciejewska

During a campaign, whether it is an election campaign or a campaign within a district or town, media advertising or poster and leaflet distribution are no substitute for direct contact. Door-to-door is one of the most important forms of direct marketing (other forms include organising meetings and debates). It is one of the most time-consuming ways of conducting a campaign, but it is also one of the most effective. If we come to somebody's home, there is a much greater chance that he or she will remember us (compared to, say, reading our leaflet or an article about us in the local press).

Door-to-door campaigns are always worth doing even if we are inexperienced. It may be that someone is more willing to vote for a slightly lost-looking young person who knocks on their door and presents his or her programme than for a completely anonymous individual displayed on a leaflet left

in their postbox. Remember that people/voters appreciate effort.

Visual impressions are most important when it comes to direct contact. That is why, when conducting a door-to-door campaign, the focus should be not only on the **verbal message** but also on **non-verbal signals**: appearance, gestures, facial expression, breathing, attitude, tone of voice, etc. In direct contact, our credibility depends on whether our verbal and non-verbal signals are consistent. If they are not, the recipient will rely on visual signals, assigning them greater importance (she will trust what she sees, not what she hears).

### Where is it best to conduct door-to-door campaigns?

Door-to-door campaigns are best done in apartment blocks or areas with terraced



housing. In areas of low-density housing, with free-standing gated homes, going from one door to the next will be very time-consuming.

### One important piece of practical advice

Start at the top and proceed to the bottom (buildings, roads).

### How many people should do door-to-door campaigns?

Door-to-door campaigns can be done individually, but experience shows that two-person teams are best, i.e. the candidate and an assistant, which can be useful if the conversation becomes prolonged (and the situation requires speaking with other voters).

### How should conversations be conducted?

Before the door is opened, it is a good idea to take a step backwards so that the household member does not think we are trying to enter their home. Your opening statement can be constructed in the following way:

- who you are;
- why you are canvassing votes / what the purpose of your campaign is;
- how things are (bad);
- how things should be (good);
- how this will be achieved.

Thus constructed, the statement should communicate that:

- we are aware of the issue that is of importance to the recipient;
- we are a person/organisation that understands the issue;
- we have the necessary competence to resolve the issue;
- we are sending a message with a specific intention, e.g. asking the recipient to vote for us.

### What should you do if the person who opens the door is clearly busy/irritated, etc.?

The problems associated with direct contact include recipients' reactions that interfere with our message and recipients' subjective feelings that are at odds with our intentions, for instance: the person is tired, has had an argument with a family member, is busy looking after their child, or we have interrupted their favourite television programme, etc. In such cases, we should be sensitive to the given situation. We could, for instance, say the following: *I see you're busy, don't worry, I understand, I also have a small child. Here's my leaflet, please have a look at it when you have a moment, I'm canvassing votes; or: I'll be coming past your house again. Would you mind if I came back in half an hour?*

**Remember:** don't focus on, or take to heart, the reactions of people who open their door to you. What is important is to present your proposal briefly and effectively, to win support, and to hand over a leaflet.

### What should we do if the person we are talking to engages us in a long conversation?

When conducting a door-to-door campaign, we should expect to devote approximately 3 minutes to each person. If we exceed this limit, we should say: *I would very much like*

*to speak with you further but I have two visit 30 other people today. Please call us or send an e-mail to our office. All our contact details are in the leaflet.*

However, we must not avoid answering the most important questions, e.g.: what's your view about the incineration plant (our response should not be: *we discuss this in the leaflet, please read it*). We should briefly present our opinion and, for example, invite them to visit the website.

### **When should we ask for someone to vote for us?**

We should ask at the end of the conversation and do so openly. For instance, we could say: *Please vote for us in the coming elections.*

### **Should we offer small gifts or gadgets bearing the party logo, and if so, when?**

All gifts should be offered at the end of the conversation. It is also important to hand over the leaflet together with the gift or gadget – the person may read it later or show it to other people.

#### **About the author**

Beata Maciejewska works for the Zielony Instytut in Poland.

## **Door-to-door Canvassing – a good strategy for Greens?**

Who hasn't heard about the successful canvassing of the 2008 Obama-Campaign and wondered whether it could work in their election campaign as well?

So far the traditional focus of German street activity is on public campaign stands. But how to reach those who never stop by? Our answer was "if people don't come to you, go to the people". Compared to USA or UK there is no canvassing tradition in Germany. Due to privacy concerns, some of our activists were uncomfortable convincing people of a political opinion at their home. Are these fear right or would it have the same positive effects that you read about in U.S. Campaigns?

There is neither much literature or scientific research about canvassing in Germany nor many experiences from German green candidates until now. If canvassing is a new campaigning tool for greens, we can only find out by trying. A couple of candidates did this in the Berlin election of 2011, among

them me in the historic centre of Berlin with many tower blocks each with 250 flats. After three weeks of canvassing, there were 5,000 doors knocked on and lots of interesting conversations. Here is what my team and I learnt from it:

- They don't bite. Overall we had a quite positive feedback. As in the reports about canvassing in the USA the voters appreciated the effort to come the whole way to their home just to talk about a candidate and the Green Party. Sometimes it was the first contact ever that someone had with politicians. The most "extreme" reactions have been slammed doors of people who obviously dislike Alliance 90/The Greens. But then you just go to the next door where maybe someone who is happy to talk about green ideas lives.

Teamwork is important. Work in teams of at least two people. It's more fun and more motivating. But don't ring with more than 2 people at a door. It's even better to divide the house

among you and take one door per person. By the way: Best "door-openers" are women!

■ Strongholds or "lightholds" – where to start? Considering the little time and limited human resources you have to take a well-considered decision with which houses you start. We used for this decision only public data the election supervisor provided such as voter turnout or green results. Our decision fell for "the unconsidered" – those districts where voter turnout was below 50 % and for the "green-growers" – those areas where green results increased significantly over the last elections.

■ Start early enough. That's important for two reasons. First, remembering the narrow time frame of Monday till Friday early evenings and imagining quarters without escalators or 200 neighbors in one apartment block, it takes some time to get through the blocks. Second, check the part of the postal voters in your elections. In Berlin 27,6 % of the eligible voters gave their votes by post, around 2/3 already more than 3 weeks before the elections. So start early enough to canvass not to miss these people. You usually get these public datas from your regional election supervisor.

■ The time frame is crucial. We have found that Monday to Friday between 17.45-20.00 is the best time to come. That's the time when most people are at home doing basically nothing "really, really important". It is good to know that in Germany that's the time between work and the daily TV-news at 20.00. Saturday is a day that worked in some areas even in the late morning. However, in general, according to most candidates' experience at the weekend itself the citizens preferred to have their privacy without politics at the door.

■ Many doors stay closed – simply because the people are not at home. We had a 30% rate of door opening, but the others should see as well that someone came all the stairs along to present the green ideas. Our solution was to hang a leaflet at the door knob like the "Do-Not-Disturb-Signs" at the hotels. We received some reactions via Email that some people like these unexpected greetings. Others had the constraint that the door-signs could be a help for burglars. Nevertheless we strongly recommend an "I was there" sign at best with a prepared personal message and your contact data.

■ Most conversations are short. More than 90 % of the conversations at the doors follow the same scheme. We started with giving a leaflet to the person at the door with "Good evening, sorry for disturbing you, I would like to introduce to you YOUR candidate XYZ for the upcoming state house elections." Then a polite "Do you have any further questions?" followed. As a result, you usually leave the door after less than 60 seconds with a friendly "Goodbye and don't hesitate to contact us" and go to the next door. This makes canvassing a very effective campaigning instrument. You meet more voters in less time than standing behind a campaign booth.

■ Have a short and clear message. You have 30-60 seconds to talk to a possible voter. So say in the first sentence why you came all the way along. This should be the guiding principle for all canvassers. Sometimes it makes more sense to only promote the party instead of the candidate. This depends on the electoral system.

### **5,000 pressed bell-buttons: a good time investment?**

Against all expectations in the run-up it was easier to get volunteers for canvassing than for "classic" campaign-activities. Of course

it is time-limited, diversified election-activity after work. What are the effects on voters? It is difficult to say. Due to the high rate of postal voters who are not attributable chronologically and a new structure of the regional vote allocation it's not easy to prove a real effect. But nevertheless you see something. Having rung 5,000 doors in the electoral district where Silke ran, the result shows an increase of 944 votes compared to 2006. This means gaining 35 % new votes. But does this justify 5,000 pressed doorbells?

My conclusion: Canvassing is a good measure to talk to many people personally and to

introduce to green policy. You reach groups not/barely in touch with (green) politicians. Combined with an additional appearance in the neighborhood you have a high recognition value. We will keep on Canvassing in the upcoming elections.

### Author

Silke Gebel has been a member of Alliance 90/The Greens since 2003 and Secretary General of the youth organisation GRÜNE JUGEND from 2007-2008. She was candidate for the Berlin state house elections 2011 (both district and regional list).

## Campaigning Online by Jon Worth

### Why should you campaign online?

As a starting point it is vital to think about the demographics of the electorate – where do you need to find support, and does that correlate with the highest levels of internet use?

In short this means any green party, anywhere in Europe, has a very good case to be actively engaged in online campaigning. Across Europe older cohorts of the electorate (in percentage and actual terms) vote in greater numbers than younger cohorts. The graph of regular internet usage in Europe is precisely the opposite – with younger people using the internet much more than older generations.

The very nature of green parties – edgy, forward looking, creating a new vision of the left and environmentalism distinct from the traditional parties of the left (most often linked to organised labour) – means the natural green electorate is going to be younger and more web savvy than supporters of the traditional *Volksparteien*.



In terms of party organisation, and even at the level of ideology, greens should be at the forefront of the use of the web for campaigning. Green parties traditionally have flatter party structures, are more open to internal debate and discussion than longer-established parties, and these more ad-hoc and participative forms of organisation are common across the net. Furthermore, smaller green parties, especially in central and eastern Europe, may simply not have the long established structures of their older and often better funded opponents – effective use

of the internet may act as a partial alternative in these cases.

Any green would be in favour of one less poster and one less leaflet in election campaigns – purely in terms of sustainability. So while questions are legitimately being raised about the green credentials of data centres used to run websites, the environmental case for message delivery online, as opposed to via traditional routes, remains clear. The same applies financially – the costs of online activity can often be substantially lower than traditional means, although this is of course only so if online activity can be translated into success at the ballot box. The following sections of this article will explain how this can be done.

### In what elections does internet campaigning work?

As a campaign consultant I am often asked “Well has anyone actually won an election thanks to their use of the internet?”, “When are we going to see the first internet election?” or “When are we going to see someone using the net in Europe in the way Obama did?” Sorry to disappoint, but all of these questions rather miss the key issue. We already have very net based election campaigns, yet determining the impact of the internet as separate from other factors is the complicated issue.

Think of it this way: without e-mail between activists and staff, **Google searches** for the latest opinion poll data, and all the latest news drawn from news sites, modern election campaigns would simply not function. There is to be no return to the use of paper and telephone.

The important question is about comparative advantage moving forward.

I would argue that there are four types of elections where an internet campaign can have a decisive impact. These are:

- internal party selections or elections;
- elections with little media coverage;
- elections with predominant themes;
- elections with strong characters.

I will deal with each of these in turn.

First of all, party selections or elections. Here the case for a net campaign is incredibly strong. The electorate is small, motivated and often geographically dispersed, especially when a matter concerns the national level of a party. The traditional campaigning means – knocking on doors, tables on street corners, leaflets – do not work or are not cost effective. Often a party only allows a limited biography to be distributed with ballot papers, and speeches at party conventions are too late to change an outcome. So online activities are the vital means to build a reputation and build standing.

Secondly, any election that is covered little by the mainstream media is ideal for online campaign efforts. This of course applies to internal party selections and elections; debate about these is seldom carried out in the newspapers, television and radio. The same, however, applies to second order elections – local elections and **European elections** when the media has its eyes elsewhere. If turnout is going to be low then those that will vote are the motivated ones, and possibly motivated enough to look you up online. Equally the election area – a local ward council for example – may not even have its own media (even local newspapers are not always that local), yet web campaigns can be very narrowly and locally targeted.

Elections fought strongly on policy themes are also a fertile ground for online campaigning, where the net can be used to build bridges between **candidates** running on platforms that raise certain issues and NGOs and other campaigners raising the same points. The crucial question here is what brand to use – how much of this net-

working should be on the sites of the party, and how much elsewhere – but clear policy thinking works well online, and matches how an electorate thinks (and Googles).

Strong candidates and interesting characters are a further important component of a vibrant online campaign. The electorate can see who is behind the information being produced, and can relate to the individuals involved at a much more intimate level than can be done via the mainstream media. The net can also be used progressively develop a different reputation for an individual than the one portrayed by the regular press. Furthermore a candidate cannot be expected to meet every single voter in a constituency, especially in large urban areas, so effective net campaigning can help bridge this gap.

To conclude this section, where does it work less well? Things work far less effectively when online activities are nothing more than a reflection of the offline, i.e. parties themselves are to the fore, to the neglect of individuals and policies important to the electorate. This means that effective online campaigning can also contribute to the organisational evolution of traditional parties.

## Where to start

Like so much else in party political campaigning there is no substitute for good preparation in online campaigns. As the previous two sections of this article have stressed, online activity is about presentation of individuals and policies, and it is also about the overall impression gained by the electorate. These are not matters that can be left for the short campaign in the weeks before the election itself. This is especially valid when it comes to traffic driven from search engines, and a sustainable social media strategy also takes time.

First and foremost try to set some objectives for any online campaign activity. SMART objectives work as well for the web as they do offline and are always a good place to start.

**Specific** – Objectives should specify what they want to achieve.

**Measurable** – You should be able to measure whether you are meeting the objectives or not.

**Achievable** – Are the objectives you set achievable and attainable?

**Realistic** – Can you realistically achieve the objectives with the resources you have?

**Time** – When do you want to achieve the set objectives?

It is perfectly acceptable to set objectives for the web alone – numbers of site visitors, or numbers of others linking to your site, for example – but do try to set something clear and measurable. All too often websites are created for no reason other than everyone else has one, so why not? More rigour is always welcome.

Second, a clear staffing plan is vital. Who is going to do what online, according to what time frame? It cannot be expected that the candidate themselves will produce all content, or indeed sign off all content. Content displayed on a campaign site needs to be timely, accurate and interesting, so there is no place for complex sign off procedures.

Having said that, web campaigning, and especially social media, works best when the individual seeking election is in some way involved in online activities. This might be a blog or **Twitter** account that is written by the individual politician, while other parts of a website are written by staff members. There is no correct mix of these aspects, although as a matter of preference I would always verge on the side of more candidate involvement wherever possible. Web campaigning does not demand great prose; instead the priority is the quality and immediacy of content.

Above all it is vital to be honest in all web communications – there is no legitimate expectation that a candidate writes all his or her own content, but if a candidate is writing some of it, then find ways to highlight this – making it clear in a sidebar for example that this really is the candidate. Conversely, if a candidate simply has no personal interest in anything to do with the internet then it is questionable how much time should be invested online. A web campaign that is too distinct from the candidate's own style and political aims will soon look hollow.

## How to commission a website

The website for a candidate in an election campaign is going to be the hub around which all other online activity revolves. Hence decisions taken in this area are vital to ensure success of all other online activities.

The main question here is: where do you compromise? Your campaign will have finite **financial resources** and not everything will be possible within the time and especially the finances available.

When approaching a web agency to commission a site it is good to have a clear idea in mind about what sorts of functions the website is going to need from the start, what functions may need to be added in future, and also to draw up a list of links to sites from similar organisations or individuals that you consider to be good in some way.

The brief for a new site should be something between 1 and 3 A4 pages in length. If it is shorter the agency will have to guess what you want, and correcting problems later will be time consuming for all concerned. Conversely, a brief that is too long and detailed may bind an agency so tightly that costs of a project rise as programmers and designers strive to meet every last criterion.

At the heart of every modern website is a content management system – this is essentially a web-based software system that allows users to update content from a web browser, using a username and password to login. Any campaign is fast moving and you need your content online now, not when someone from your agency has time to fit it in.

In terms of technology, the main costs that can be cut depend on the choice of **content management system**. I am yet to see a system programmed by an individual agency that comes close to the capabilities of the main **open source** (i.e. free) content management systems such as **WordPress, Drupal** or **Typo3**. So insist on open source, and, if told an open source option will not work, then ask why not, and consider going elsewhere. The vast majority of campaign sites are not breaking the mould of net politics – this is primarily about doing the basics well.

A detailed guide on how to choose a Content Management System can be found at WebDesignerDepot here, but in simplest terms it depends on the style of site you wish to create. Are you looking for something blog or magazine style? If so, then **WordPress** would be a good starting point. Are you looking for a detailed, structured site with dozens of pages that will develop over the years? If so then **Typo3** could well be the place to look. If you're looking for a combination of those things then **Drupal** might be a good option, although it is not always the easiest system to use.

When it comes to design it is important to see the big picture, and make sure all design ideas are collated by one staff member before sending them to a designer. Further, avoid getting stuck in a cycle that concerns the exact shade of green or blue, or whether a certain object requires a shadow or not. Some design tasks are simply not worth the financial outlay to make them work – especially when you consider that websites look



very different considering the browser used to view them. Above all make sure you do not end up in design hell, and try to build an effective and constructive working relationship with the people doing the design work.

So, in short, you should be able to compromise when it comes to the technical choices that you make. But it is content where fewer corners can be cut.

I cannot emphasise this strongly enough: your online campaign will be made or broken according to the quality of the content produced, and not due to tech or design.

So, if you have limited resources, think content, content, content. Focus relentlessly on that. The smartest tech or smoothest design without the necessary content serves no purpose whatsoever.

## Additional tools

Above and beyond the text and images your website will be able to deliver, what are the other tools you are going to need? Here are a few suggestions.

### 1. A newsletter system

You need a solid and reliable way to mail supporters, activists and the press, so a reliable newsletter tool is important. If you are mailing more than 50 people in one go then a newsletter tool will do a better job than Outlook. You have essentially two options – an open source system such as phplist that allows you to mail as many people whenever you like for no additional cost per mailing, and features a web-based signup and unsubscribe function. Alternatively, paid services such as **MailChimp** and **Campaign Monitor** offer detailed statistics on how many people open a newsletter, but charge for each mailing sent out.

Regardless of the technology you choose, make sure you keep your mailings short and snappy, linking wherever possible to your website, and also asking for something from the readers – practical action to take.

Do not be over-reliant on your newsletters, however – as we are all so swamped by e-mail you will be lucky to get more than 1 in 5 recipients actually opening your messages.

### 2. A website news system

Not a separate technology as such, more of an aspect of your website. You are going to be producing all kinds of news stories throughout a campaign – who did what, where and when, who was quoted in which newspaper, etc. – and you need a simple way to catalogue all of these stories. “Posts” in WordPress and the News plugin in Typo3 can accomplish this function for you.

### 3. A blog

Essentially a blog is a website with content written in an informal manner, in chronological order, and with the opportunity to comment on articles. The latter is important – blogging is about building a conversation, and the lack of a comments function prevents that happening. Avoid falling into the trap of just calling site news a “blog” to try to sound cool – it does not work. Take a look at **Carl Bildt**, **Iain Dale** and **Tom Harris** for examples of good political blogs, and see how these individuals highlight important political issues in an informal yet serious manner.

Importantly, do not be too worried by the prospect of negative comments on a blog. **If the US Air Force can manage to have a blog commenting policy** – and they work in a very sensitive sector – then I’m sure you can do the same.

#### 4. RSS feeds

There are many different ways to read articles on the web, and **RSS (Really Simple Syndication)** is a vital aspect of any modern website. This allows users to subscribe to content in a RSS reader, meaning they do not have to visit your actual website for news about what you are doing. Keeping an eye on RSS feeds from your opponents' sites is an important way to monitor online reputation (see section 6 below).

#### 5. Flickr

A photo sharing website that takes imagery of what you are doing to a wider audience, although using it for your own ends – the Creative Commons option in the Advanced Search for royalty-free images – might be more useful on an everyday basis.

#### 6. Youtube and Vimeo

Youtube pioneered video sharing online, while Vimeo is its challenger with more flexible tools for not-for-profit organisations. These services make the tech aspects simple – upload a video in more or less any format and the sites handle the rest, and embed codes allow you to integrate videos from these services into your own site. The problem comes when you have to ask yourself what to film and how, and whether your video is going to be adequately interesting to garner hundreds or even thousands of views. Effective use of online video can be expensive and time consuming – ask yourself whether use of video is the best use of your time.

#### 7. Something cool?

What is going to set your campaign apart from the rest? If this is your aim then it is worth giving some thought to using some new, innovative services and being the very first person to be active using a particular technology. The current web boom areas are location based

services, and smart phone applications. Have a look at **Foursquare** and **Layar**, and think whether there could be **mobile phone** applications that could be developed for your campaign. As with anything else keep a close eye on the finances, but doing web tech well is still interesting enough to generate coverage and interest in its own right.

#### Keeping an eye on your online reputation

This article has so far covered all the proactive things that can be done in online campaigning, the things that are in your hands as a candidate or a campaigner. But what about the things others are going to write about you online?

Start by Googling yourself, and keywords that are important to your campaign. At the very least you need to make sure the top Google search results when searching for your name are you, and ideally your website should be the top result. To assist with this put your whole name in the domain name of your site. For example [franzsimmering.com](http://franzsimmering.com) is much better than [franzfuerhamburg.com](http://franzfuerhamburg.com) or [vote-franz.co.uk](http://vote-franz.co.uk) when it comes to Google search results. Give your Google search results time to develop – you might need 6 months of your site being live before it reaches the top of Google search results.

Secondly, keep an eye on what Google finds about you by using Google Alerts. You can receive an e-mail as-and-when, or daily, when Google finds any new stories mentioning you or keywords you define, or if anyone links to your site. You can then determine whether to respond to what has been written or not.

Lastly, learn how to use **RSS**. This is especially vital if you want to exploit networks of bloggers as part of your campaign, but it is also generally useful anyway. Open an account with **Netvibes** or **Google Reader**, and add feeds from national, regional and local press,

and from blogs that are relevant to the policy issues you work on. You will never have time to visit 30 blogs a day, but keeping an eye on 30 blogs via RSS is possible.

### About the author

Jon Worth is Partner and co-founder of techPolitics LLP, a European communication and campaign partnership. Jon has many years' experience designing websites for politicians and political organisations. Jon is one of the founders of Bloggingportal.eu, an EU affairs blogging aggregator.

## Social Media by Andrew Murphy

### Social media – what it is and isn't

Social media is a term used to describe a number of (relatively) recent forms of online interaction, many of which can be very useful for running campaigns if used correctly. Using the different forms available, you can use social media to spread awareness about your campaign, provide an easy way for supporters to get in contact/follow the campaign, interact with supporters, coordinate events, raise money and subvert the need to use traditional media to reach voters.

Social media however is not three things. Firstly, it is not a free and easy form of campaigning. Many forms of social media are becoming increasingly crowded (such as twitter and Facebook) and therefore require extra time and energy to ensure that you get your message across from the din of a crowded online media.

Secondly, social media should be seen as one part of campaign's overall on-line presence. The other essential parts are web and e-mail which, together with social media, create a much bigger impact on the prospective voters.

Lastly, social media should not be considered as a substitute for more traditional forms of campaigning. This is especially true during election time, when voters may want a more personal form of contact than

just "following you" on Twitter. Because of these limits and downsides, it is important for your campaign to decide in advance its strategy for online media in general and social media in particular. Making it up as you go along is not really an option!

What are the different tools?

### Facebook

Facebook is the largest and best known social media site. It offers the opportunity to set up personal profiles, groups or pages.

Personal profiles are the most common – establishing an account for your personal use where you add friends, upload pictures. Groups were formerly used by organisations and campaigns, but recently pages have become more popular as they are more flexible and interactive than groups.

Pages need only someone to click "like" in order start following that page. This is considered more informal than having someone "join" a group, and so ensures that your campaign reaches as many people as possible. Pages should be the standard way of reaching your audience, unless you are trying to organize small, local or affinity groups of up to a few hundred people.



Facebook pages have downsides. By far the biggest one is that it is controlled by a corporation interested in profit. You will soon notice that only 10-20% of your “fans” actually get to see your posts, no matter how great they are. That is because Facebook is trying to push you into paying for their promotion which brings us to the next topic.

## Facebook and promotion

Facebook gives you the option to advertise your page on its site or pay for the promotion of specific posts. While it's always preferable to try and get your number of “likes” up without having to pay for it, Facebook offers a convenient means of advertising should you choose to go down that path.

Under Facebook, you can target ads for your page at certain groups of users (i.e. young people, people with an interest in environmental issues). You don't pay unless a user clicks on your page, and you can set a maximum daily amount (from a minimum of €1 upwards) which will ensure you stay within budget.

Free is always better, but advertising could allow you to quickly increase numbers, which will help you spread your message. The prices of Facebook promotion vary wildly across Europe, but with €10 your post can reach anywhere between 10,000 and 50,000 people and “buy” anywhere between 20 and 400 “likes”. Worth the investment, but only

if you have the money and if you use that investment wisely!

**Facebook and events:** A great way to be active on Facebook is to organise “events”. You can create events for a campaign rally or even Election Day (Vote Green on Feb 25th, for example). You can invite your supports, and encourage them to invite friends (or, as above, advertise it). This will result in the event appearing in people's news feeds as the event approaches, and is a great way to translate online interaction into actual, on-the-ground action.

Facebook is becoming especially crowded with events, so it's important not to overdo it (i.e. don't make every campaign meeting an event). Try and limit it to major events, and try and give the event a catchy name and interesting description.

## Twitter

Twitter has been described as a micro-blogging site where you posts 140 character tweets to “followers”. These tweets can contain links to websites, press releases, event info or just a simple message. Anyone with a twitter account can follow you, and anyone can retweet your tweet (forward it on to their followers). Twitter is often seen as a bridge between private and public and the most popular profiles are usually not official party accounts but those of prominent party officials. People on Twitter are usually looking for behind the scenes, semi-official information, witty commentary and personal views.

In increasingly crowded Facebook universe, some people (especially journalists) find Twitter more useful way of gathering information. However in order to establish yourself as a credible and reliable source of information worth following you have to invest heavily into interaction with “influencers” – people with many followers and strong voice in the community. Mentioning (@) when something is relevant to specific

users, engaging influencers in conversations and providing opinions on 'hot topics' are the ways to build Twitter audience.

Although it is possible to use Twitter passively by only providing and tweeting links and official information, no social media can be truly passive to be effective – fans and followers are nowadays used to questions being answered and they do appreciate it. So if possible, do make an effort to respond to each tweet.

**Other twitter tips:** Twitter is like a community, and like any community, there are sometimes 'hot topics' under discussion. In twitter, these topics may appear with a hash tag at the beginning (i.e. #election2012). A tweet beginning with a hash tag becomes a link, and clicking on that link brings up all the posts containing that hash tag. So it's a great way to join a conversation on twitter, or start one of your own (i.e. #reasonstovotegreen).

### Other social networks

While Facebook and Twitter are at the top of social media list, there are others worth mentioning. You should not waste your energy and trying to be active on more than a few social networks. However, if members of your party are already active on some odd social network, encourage them to share your party's information, videos, and photos from the "main" social networks. Of course, every social network has its own rules so it is often very difficult to simply "translate" the messages.

**LinkedIn** is often seen as a professional network. However, it is one of the fastest growing ones and it offers some interesting tools that other networks lack. For example, discussion groups on LinkedIn are much more developed and extensive than on any other social network.

**Google+** Google's "Facebook killer" hasn't managed to live up to its expectations. However, with Google ecosystem becoming increasingly tightly integrated – Youtube,

G-mail, Drive and other commonly used tools are being pushed towards Google+. Moreover, Google+ unique feature is Hangouts – an easy way to stream live video and share it with large audience.

**Snapchat, Vine, Pinterest, tumblr, Flickr, Instagram and others** are very popular with some potential voters. They can be useful and interesting, but their audience is much more limited than the one of the previously mentioned social networks.

### Using social media to develop engagement

Social media works best if you try and make your followers have a sense of involvement in the campaign. A great way to do this is to use social media to keep supporters involved in how your campaign is doing on a daily basis. Writing a blog entry, or getting a campaign volunteer to help you keep a video diary, can result in some really great content that you can tweet or post on Facebook.

### Social media – how to win friends and influence people

As discussed above, social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are becoming increasingly crowded, making it difficult to keep your message visible during campaigns. One simple solution on Facebook is to request your campaign team to "like" every single posting that you make. By clicking "like", your post gains popularity on people's homepage and so is more likely to be seen. A free, simple means of keeping your campaign visible online!

With twitter, maintaining coverage is dependent on a degree of coordination. Twibbons, hashtags, retweeting are all essential tools in this. That is what it is important to appoint one person to be in charge of social media (see below).

Like any campaign tool, it helps to be able to quantify how successful your efforts are. A great site to help with this is bit.ly. Bit.ly allows you to shorten links to videos, websites etc., which is great for Twitter and Facebook. Importantly though, if you register for a free account with them you can keep track of how many people actually click on these links. You'll be surprised (perhaps unpleasantly so) at how many people click on such links.

## Social media – the need to plan your campaign

Social media may appear to be a cheap, informal, bottom-up means of communicating. However, that does not negate the need to ensure that the social media aspect of your campaign is well planned. That means two things – deciding on resources and drafting a communication plan for on-line presence and specifically for social media.

**1) Resources:** Dedicating one member of your team to lead the social media efforts is a must. After that, it might be useful to pull together a team of volunteers who can ensure that you are active on social media on a continuous basis (especially if you are going to actively engage on twitter). Social media is usually a multimedia experience – it involves videos, images, infographics so to produce good and engaging content it is the best to approach it professionally and to really try and find people with video and image-editing skills, as well as copyrighters and designers to help you lift your social media presence to the next level.

Financially, it's up to you to decide how much to contribute. As discussed above, ads can be an effective way of getting followers, and without a decent base of followers than your efforts won't have much impact where it matters – votes.

You may have people who wish to help with your campaign, but who dislike the more di-

rect forms of campaigning such as canvassing or leafleting. If they have any computer skills then this may be a great way to get them involved in the campaign, thus expanding the number of people on your team. Its also a great way to involve your supporters who may be living overseas during the election.

**2) Communication strategy:** before the main part of your election campaign kicks off, it's important to have a well thought out communication plan. Posts, tweets, videos etc should all try and coincide with the overall communication strategy for the campaign. So if the overall campaign is divided into a different policy area per day, then your social media communication strategy should try and mirror that so as to reinforce your message. Social media is just a part of overall online communication. It is important that your social media presence supports your other online efforts. For example, if you are posting about one issues on Facebook, you should include the same issue in your newsletter as well as having some additional info on your web-page. It increases the likelihood that information will stick with the audience and that it turn increases the probability that people will vote for you.

Social media has an overall younger profile than the wider electorate (though it's not exclusively limited to younger people!). You should take this into account when deciding which policies to prioritise on social media.

As the Dutch Greens said of their campaign during their regional elections in 2011, it was important that they did not approach social media in a "half hearted" way but professionally.

## Social media – the risks

Social media presents itself with risks as well as rewards. This is particular true of twitter, where its diffuse nature means that it is very hard to maintain any sort of

control over the debate. While such a non-hierarchical structure is to be welcomed, it is important that this is factored in when planning for the campaign.

For example, if you start a hash tag such as *#reasonstovotegreen*, it's possible for your opponents to join the conversation with sarcastic, fake reasons to vote Green. That has happened to Green campaigns before, so it is possible!

A recent risk for candidates is media checking their personal social media profiles (twitter or Facebook) and discovering inappropriate photos/comments. The most recent example is a Green candidate in Canada, who was forced to resign after the media found comments on his Facebook page which were offensive to rape victims.

A final risk, as discussed above, is overestimating the role that social media can play in campaigns. As Malcolm Gladwell discussed in his widely read article on the topic, social media is a very weak form of connection to a campaign or cause. After all, connecting to a campaign online only requires a few clicks of a mouse, and very little effort beyond that. But for your campaign to succeed, you will need people to make a greater commit-

ment than just "liking" you on Facebook. As Gladwell says "Social networks are effective at increasing *participation* – by lessening the level of motivation that participation requires" (Gladwell, M *Small Change* The New Yorker, Oct 4th 2010).

So you should only see social media as a tool to get to that high former of interaction with your campaign – to advertise events, and to share information that your supporters can use when talking to friends and family.

One idea from the Dutch Greens during their 2011 regional elections was to combine on online and a face-to-face event. They staged an event at the train station the day before the election, handing out coffee to voters who had questions. But they also took questions, and broadcast the whole event, online.

### About the authors

Andrew Murphy is a project assistant at GEF, where he is editorial assistant to the *Green European Journal*. Updated in 2014 by Marko Gregović, a social media expert who has worked on European and Croatian campaigns.

## The Last 72 hours by Robert Heinrich



### Until the last minute

**“Getting out the vote”** – every political campaigner and every politician in the USA knows this claim. It is a symbol for election campaigning on election day itself, until the polling stations close their doors. But it is no longer just an American phenomenon.

In probably all European countries it is becoming increasingly important to campaign until the election day. Potential Green voters, in particular, tend not to decide until “notoriously” late on. For example, at the last election in Germany’s biggest federal state, Nordrhein-Westfalen, with its nearly 14 million voters, 39% of the Green voters left it until the final days before deciding whether to vote at all and, then, whether to vote for the Green Party. As a result: you can win and lose everything during the last 7 campaign days or even the last 72 hours. But what must one do to be on the winning side?

First of all, mobilisation is everything. But you should mobilise those who support you and not the supporters of your political opponents. Forget those voter groups you have never convinced before. Why would you be successful now? It is better to contact those

who are open to Green ideas and/or voted for you before. You do not need a special survey to find them. In most cases, you only have to look at the polling stations’ last election results. These show where the strongholds are, i.e. your “battlefields” for the last days.

But **do not count on the media**. At this stage, in most European countries, TV and radio stations as well as newspapers traditionally cut down on their reports about parties’ election campaigns. Your top candidate may receive a small amount of media coverage, but the time for long articles about your positions and visions is over. It is now time for direct contact with **your possible voters**. Go to the places where they are, such as pubs, events, parties, markets, and so on. Small teams of activists and volunteers, equipped with branded clothes and “give-aways” can reach a lot of people in the streets in a short period of time. But this strategy has two further advantages: Number one: it is quite cheap because you only need **volunteers**; Number two: it will convey the message in the streets and to your voters that you are motivated and convinced that you will win.

Rely on your members and supporters. Smaller parties, in particular, always have **financial campaign limits** (with not enough resources for buses in the campaign design, or hundreds of TV and radio spots). So opt for the strategy of using your members and supporters as your “ambassadors”. Send them small packages of give-aways, posters and background information to distribute to their neighbours, colleagues and friends. There is no cheaper and easier way to spread your campaign material. In addition, these kinds of ambassadors generally have much more credibility than paid activists or expensive spots.



Be creative. You are the expert of your country and you know what the people in your country like. Use your knowledge and experience, and impress and surprise people. For example: rent a video projector and project a funny campaign motive on the town's landmark in the evening. Or distribute coffee and tea in the morning at a railway station when the commuters go to work. It need not be an expensive action, but it should be an innovative one.

Do not forget that the campaign actions of the last days must be planned in time and not one week in advance. This last offensive should be mentioned in your **campaign plans** and your internal communication from the very beginning onwards. Otherwise you will send your material and ideas to supporters that have already invested all of their money and energy, and all of your strategic and creative "Get out the vote" ideas will remain no more than that: ideas.

Last but not least, the **internet**: it is not surprising that the internet has become more and more important for political campaigning. But perhaps the best practice example of the **German Greens** shows how you can beat the top runner in political online communication: **The German Greens: Three Days Sleepless on the WWW.**

### About the authors

Robert Heinrich is Director of Communications for "Bündnis 90/Die Grünen" since 2007. He was part of the team that led his party's European and national election campaign in 2009, with a strong focus on the Greens' online campaign, which invested heavily in social media, volunteers' participation, and dialogue. Michael Scharfschwerdt has served for several years at the highest levels of the German Green Party in Berlin and Brussels and currently works as a senior consultant for Joschka Fischer & Company.

## German and Dutch Greens Sleepless on the World Wide Web

*This article describes two similar campaigns: the "3 Tage Wach" German campaign in 2009 (article written by Robert Heinrich and Michael Scharfschwerdt) and the "4 Day Wake" Dutch campaign in 2012 (written by Blanca de Riquer, then GEF's intern).*

### German three nights awake

By Robert Heinrich – Michael Scharfschwerdt

During the last three days of the 2009 election campaign, the German Greens started a "Get Out The Vote" project which turned out to be the most successful event of the whole campaign: from Thursday 6 p.m. until Sunday 6 p.m.,

the Greens offered to answer every question the voters asked via internet – around the clock, day and night, for 72 hours. For this task, a team of more than 200 volunteers gathered in shifts in the party's headquarters in Berlin in a room full of computers, laptops, bottles and pizza boxes. Most importantly: complemented by a varied programme of sofa talks and Skype interviews with prominent Green guests from home and abroad, the whole 72-hour session was broadcast by a live stream on the website [dreitagewach.gruene.de](http://dreitagewach.gruene.de).

This event became a huge success both among voters and media. Enthusiastic voters shared their thoughts: "I have never seen such a great campaign!" or "I might not vote for you, but I praise you for doing this!" All major TV shows and online newspapers reported on it. More than a quarter of a million

users visited the website. And more than 12,000 questions were asked.

### Three ingredients made this campaign cocktail such a major success

1. **Dialogue.** In any election campaign, people are looking for answers. With “3 Tage Wach”, we responded to this most basic demand of the voter.

2. **Event.** We enriched this simple principle with sporting and show elements. It was the marathon character which made 3TageWach such a fascinating event: Will they really hang on? Will they be able to answer even the most remote question? Will every answer be personal and true?

3. **Authenticity.** We broadcast everything: the laptops, the pizza crusts, the empty beer bottles, the dark circles around the eyes at night. The voters who asked questions did not face an anonymous machine or smooth call centre voices. They faced real-life, enthusiastic, devoted volunteers who spent their free time to a dedicated cause and answered every question as well as they could. The answers were not streamlined texts, but personal, authentic answers – written in a “Green spirit”.

### Dutch 4DW– Four Day Awake campaign

By Blanca de Rigeur

In the context of the last national elections the Dutch Greens have also launched a

sleepless campaign this September 2012. The idea of the campaign was similar to the “3 Tage Wach” German experience: for the last four days of the campaign, GroenLinks answered any question the voters asked via mail, facebook, twitter or any media. From Saturday afternoon to Wednesday night, the GroenLinks Utrecht’s office was full of volunteers, Members of Parliament and green party members with one objective: make a final push in the campaign and try to convince more people to vote Green. These four days were fully broadcast by live web stream.

### Night during the 4DW

Taking as a reference the first German experience, the Dutch 4DW campaign introduced new elements.

This time, the volunteers were not just waiting for calls but also calling party members asking them go out and to convince their neighbours and friends to also vote for Greens.

Dynamism and fun were two new features added to the campaign. In order to make the web stream more energetic, they decided to produce hourly update videos and live concerts in the GroenLinks office. In the videos, volunteers reported their experiences from that day and Members of Parliament and local councillors were interviewed. In fact, anyone that passed by and could tell an interesting story was recorded. This updates were broadcast hourly and even during the night there was people creating these videos. As the hours went by, the videos had funnier and crazier stories. For instance,

one night, all of a sudden, 3 volunteers and a candidate for Parliament decided to improvise a live concert and a performance for the web streaming.

The political circumstances were also different from the German experience. Dutch polls were predicting bad results for GroenLinks. Therefore, the campaign became not just a “get votes campaign” but also a way to send a positive message inside and outside the party. In words of Huub Bellemakers “the objective we had with the campaign was also to keep people with high spirit and send the message that although we were losing the elections, GroenLinks was still a nice party to belong to” The high motivation and enthusiasm showed by all people involved and the good time they all had during these 4 days of madness will make of this experience something to remember. Even though the great efforts, GroenLinks just managed to get 4 parliamentary seats from the 10 they had in previous elections.

### Key ingredients of the Dutch campaign

■ **Fun and working:** It was really important to combine the having fun with the working. It was essential to send the message that was really cool to be participating in this green campaign.

■ **Show yourself as an open party:** they enriched this principle by listening to citizens concerns and giving them answers in an honest way.

■ **The image that you don't give up:** with this campaign they tried to show that the party was strong and united, and even though they were having a tough time, GroenLinks was a cool party to be in.

### Recommendations for other similar campaigns

■ **Create stories:** the web stream has to be fun and dynamic. During the 4DW many nice stories occurred. One day while GroenLinks were calling green members, a woman on the phone explained that her 78 years old husband was alone in the train station handling out GroenLinks flyers. After this call 4 volunteers decided to go there and help him with the flyers. These kinds of stories make the campaign nicer.

■ **Scenario set:** the office where you launch the campaign should be in the centre of a big city. A problem of the Dutch campaign was that they were in a location that was a bit isolated. It is important to be able to attract people that are walking in the street.

■ **Well-known people:** for any campaign is essential to have good media coverage. Therefore, a recommendation is to involve known people in the campaign, for instance an important member of the party or a celebrity.

## AFTER THE CAMPAIGN

### Evaluating the Campaign by Albert Eckert



After any campaign, the **volunteers** as well as the staffers tend to sleep long for the first time in weeks, or – after a big success – to engage in new stressful activities in new jobs. Quite often, campaigners forget to put their campaign to bed and to look back on it systematically.

#### Putting the campaign to bed

People do not want to see your campaign posters for the whole year. Please make sure that all your posters, banners and displays are removed quickly and completely after the election. Environmentalists should take care of their environment and clean up! Thank everybody who has been helping you in the campaign. The earlier you do this, the better. You can already start on the day of the election before the results are published. If the top **candidate** or the **campaign manager** calls all or the most important **volunteers** personally on their **mobile phones** on the day of the election, thanks them for their work, and invites them for the election-night, the reward will be considerable. This would be talked about in the evening, at the election party, even if the party loses – preparing the ground for support in the next election campaign. Many campaigns again invite their volunteers to a party or for coffee and cake afterwards to mark the end of the campaign and to thank them.

Do not forget to also thank your **donors** after the election. Why not send them a letter ex-

plaining how you or your party analyses the election results, what kind of plan you have now, and how they can contribute to further success? They will feel valued and not just used as a source of money.

If you lose, don't forget to congratulate your **opponent!** Only bad losers blame their opponent's actions and their own **campaign team** and **volunteers** for their defeat. Show that you are able to deal with it.

#### Evaluating the campaign

Evaluating the campaign should not start after the campaign but from the very beginning: it should always be a formative evaluation. This is one of the many tasks of the **campaign manager** or of the Secretary General of the party. To evaluate a campaign, you need to know **the goals that were defined at the beginning**. A **written strategy** of the campaign is the basic document for its evaluation.

Formative evaluation is a process of ongoing feedback on performance. Already at certain milestones during the campaign (e.g. after choosing the candidates, after deciding on the programme, after the launch of the campaign) it is very useful to discuss among the campaign team which targets have been met and what has gone right and wrong so far. The more precise the goals, the better and easier it will be to control and evaluate the campaign. In a bigger campaign, an "evaluation manager" could support the campaign manager or the Secretary General in this process and make sure that notes are taken during all evaluation discussions.

The summative evaluation after the campaign tries to identify larger patterns and trends in performance – and to judge these against the targets that were set at the beginning. One of the best ways to do it is a facilitated

half-day workshop. The participants (not more than 40-50) should include the main campaign staffers, certain members of the Board and from regional and local levels, some volunteers (from **online** and offline campaigning!), 1-2 sympathising journalists, somebody from the PR agencies involved (if trusted) – and a person to take notes!

### The summative evaluation workshop schedule could be like this:

- 09:00 Welcome
- 09:10 Quick start: everybody should write down the 5 best and the 5 worst things about the campaign
- 09:15 Buzz groups (3 people) discuss their findings, and each buzz group agrees on the 7 best and 7 worst things, writing them on cards in 2 different colours
- 09:25 Bigger groups (3 buzz groups = 9 people) agree on the 10 best and 10 worst things, writing them on cards in 2 different colours
- 09:40 Plenary: presentation of the results of the bigger groups, clustering the results. Patterns? What is missing?
- 10:05 Input/Reminder: our campaign strategy as we developed it at the beginning (goals, message, target groups, competitive position)
- 10:15 *Coffee break*
- 10:25 Prepared inputs and discussion. The input can be provided by several people. It should be well structured and give facts and figures not just opinions. Certain aspects should be mentioned, such as:
- Our opposition research – and our opponents
  - Our performance online in the campaign
  - Our media relations
  - Our grassroots activities
  - Our big events or decisive moments in our campaign
  - The last 72 hours before the election
  - Cooperation with volunteers
  - Our youth organisation (or other important parts of the party) in the campaign
  - Our campaign finances and fundraising
  - Cooperation with PR agencies
  - Our campaign team
  - Our candidates
- Do not forget to gather the inputs and take notes of the discussion.
- 11:40 *Coffee break*
- 11:50 Conclusions (moderated discussion, visualisation on flip chart and pin board)
- 12:45 Feedback on the workshop
- 13:00 Lunch (together!)

Maybe after the workshop somebody will want to sit down and write an article for the party members' journal in which she or he reflects on the campaign? In any case: write the minutes, distribute them among the participants and keep them for the next campaign. It will be a valuable document to start with!

### About the author

Albert Eckert (born 1960) works as a Facilitator, Trainer, Coach, Political Consultant and Mediator.

## The election may be over, the campaign never is by Wim Borremans

Election Day is finally behind you. All votes have been casted, victories have been celebrated and defeats have been mourned. Whatever the case for your party, the campaign is not over. It never is.

### Thanking your supporters

The most important thing to do after an election is oft forgotten: thanking your supporters. Use your campaign machine to send out thank you notes as soon as the votes are in. Mail, text messages, Facebook and Twitter posts, for the occasion banners on your campaign posters... any way is good to let your voters know you are grateful for their support. Even when that support is smaller than you expected. Let your base know from day one that you will not let them down and will continue the fight for a greener society.

You should also thank the hundreds or thousands of hard working staff and volunteers who made your campaign possible. Be generous and throw them a special party after the elections. You know they earned it.

During the campaign, you have enlarged your base. New volunteers and new members flocked to your banner to fight for your cause. So stay in touch or you will lose them quickly. If you're negotiating government participation you should keep your supporters informed, of course without revealing anything sensitive. If you need to reorganise your party after a defeat, explain to your supporters what you are doing and why, even when it's painful. Don't forget, they share your loss as they share your victory. So keep them close. And keep them busy.

### Preparing the next campaign

Regardless of the results on Election Day, you need to start focusing on the next elec-

tions as soon as you've caught up on that sleep you've been craving for.

The first step in preparing your new campaign is making an honest and thorough evaluation of the one that just ended, thus enabling yourself to clearly identify your strengths and weaknesses. Make sure you also talk to journalists who covered the campaign and with academics that have a more distant look at what you've done. They will point you to flaws or successes in your strategy and communication that you yourself might not see.

### Keep your members involved

Many parties tend to fall back into business as usual after election, concentrating on the work in parliament or government. While this is of course extremely important, it also puts a lot of weight on your party structure. For parties with a smaller staff, this behaviour tends to limit the internal democratic process thus risking alienating your members.

A party can't just put their members' political engagement in the freezer and re-use them in the next campaign. If the party doesn't give them an engaging platform for their political energy, they will seek to use that energy elsewhere, e.g. in civil society organisations. Regaining their enthusiasm, confidence and involvement might be much harder than you thought. Successful parties are therefore organisations that work the whole year around on a variety of issues.

During the campaign, you collected a lot of information on issues that are important for your potential voters. Some of these issues became the building blocs of your campaign. It is of course very important to keep working on these issues. But you should also explore new topics.

The data your party collected during the campaign, e.g. through a door-to-door survey, is a very valuable source of information to keep your members occupied. Look at issues that other parties neglect to help broaden your base. This will help you to get in touch with new potential voters. It will also help you as a party to build political credibility outside your core topics. Develop small campaigns around these topics to keep your campaign machine well oiled. It will give you a clear advantage on your political opponents.

Working on issues identified in the campaign is not to only thing you can do, though. The calmer period of a non-election year should also be used to do new research around both your key issues and new issues. A political party cannot keep running on the same promises and proposals. They will start to seem old to the electorate, thus giving your potential voters the impression that your party is no longer political relevant and up-to-date with current day's questions. Ask your members for their input in updating your platform.

While identifying new issues, be aware of a common mistake to only identify negative issues. Although it's often easier to gather support against an issue rather than in favour of a policy, your party might be conceived as negative and naysayer if you focus too much on what goes wrong. This negative perception will work against you in the next electoral campaign and will make you vulnerable for critique once you yourself are in power.

Finding a good balance between updating your core issues and exploring new topics will help you strengthen your base and attract new potential voters. This cannot be done by the party headquarters or your elected officials alone. Your members and supporters are vital for success.



## Adapt your party to the new reality

Whatever the result of the elections, you are working in a new political reality. As a party you will have to deal with your defeat, victory or status quo. But you will also have to deal with the results of the other parties. After all, you are not working in a political vacuum.

The first thing you'll have to do, is to evaluate your internal communication structure and your decision making process. It may have become too heavy after losing the elections or too rigid after a big win. Adapting your party structures to this new reality will avoid frustration between staff, elected officials and members.

But you'll also have to adapt to the external reality. As the political landscape has shifted, so will your political action. A party that continues to work with the same political attitude as before the elections – especially after a major political shift – will likely be seen as political irrelevant, thus losing a lot of its support. Your party will need to find a new balance on the political scale, without betraying its core principles.

## Finally, start planning again


So you have some years before you need to run again (if you don't have any elections on another governmental level). That does not mean that you shouldn't start planning right now. The easiest way to improve your election result is to start earlier. Make a four (or five) year plan from the past elections until the next. You can already schedule time for all

these mini-campaigns we've talked about in this chapter. Use your time to organise fundraising events, to train your (new) members on campaign techniques and to strengthen your internal and external communication. Look at the world around you and learn from other campaigns, but don't try to imitate them. And most of all make sure to have some fun while doing all this.


### Author

Wim Borremans is a long-time Green activist with the Belgian Green Parties Ecolo and Groen.





Participation in politics is not only about good policies and exciting new ideas, but also about having the skills to make these visions heard and embraced by others. This is even more relevant in European politics, where the distance between citizens and decision making can be better bridged with efficient communication and campaigning.



The Green European Foundation first developed the Campaign Handbook in 2010 as an online platform that was both a manual on campaigning for green activists, as well as a platform of exchange of knowledge and experience for green campaigners. The handbook guides the reader through a coherent political campaign: from the strategic vision of what should be accomplished, to how to manage a campaign team in order to achieve the set goals, how to target the audience with the right messaging, and how to assess the gains and losses of the campaign.

This edition of the Campaign Handbook is updated to respond to the latest shifts in campaigning practices. It brings together the “musts” of successful campaigning, from the point of view of experienced Green campaign managers. We therefore hope it will be a useful guide, accompanying you all the way in exciting and efficient campaigns.



**GREEN EUROPEAN  
FOUNDATION**

1 Rue du Fort Elisabeth, 1463 Luxembourg

Brussels office:

T +32 (2) 234 65 70 F +32 (2) 234 65 79

info@gef.eu www.gef.eu

