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A study of political campaign communication tactics

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A Study of Political Campaign

Communication Tactics

by
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A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division of
Rowan College of New Jersey.
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Approved by

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ABSTRACT

This study identified issues and campaign elements important to registered voters in Atlantic County during the 1995 general election. In addition, it measured the importance of issues versus party affiliation and character.

The researcher surveyed 197 registered voters in New Jersey's second legislative district. The survey queried voters about their campaign and candidate preferences in the race for the New Jersey State Assembly.

The study determined the importance of several campaign elements: channels, messages, party affiliation and voting records. Additionally, the research showed which issues sparked interest in voters.

Finally, the research determined that party affiliation and effective campaigning are probably the two most important elements of campaigns on the local level. This ranking is above other important factors such as experience in office and voting records.

MINI-ABSTRACT

This study identified issues and campaign elements important
to 197 registered voters in Atlantic County's 1995 general
election. The research determined that party affiliation and
effective campaigning are the most important elements of
campaigns on the local level. This ranking is above other
important factors such as experience in office and voting
records.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to my mother, C. Darlene Aruanno, for the unconditional love and support that enabled me to complete this research project. I am also indebted to my dear friends, Maria and Judy, who helped me overcome the obstacles along the way.

Thank you to Bob Wear, whose efforts enabled me to interpret and analyze my research. And finally, thank you to my advisor, Tony Fulginiti, for his patience, guidance and wisdom not only during this project, but also throughout my participation in the program.

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CHAPTER I

Early 20th century leadership in the United States
evolved from a lifetime of networking, hard work, and loyalty.
"Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected governor, and later
president, with the personnel and machinery of a great political
party, after years of service in that party."[1] FDR paid his dues
like most of the career politicians who came before him.
Conversely, only a few decades later, "Ronald Reagan was elected
governor with the personnel and techniques of contemporary public
relations and with only the label of a party he had joined four
years earlier."[2]

No longer are years of service and dedication a prerequisite
to party leadership. Image is as important as public service
records. The evolution of politics fosters campaign prospects
over experience, charisma over content. Experience and voting
records can be acquired, charisma and advertising appeal cannot.
Today, it seems it is easier to make a politician out of an
actor, rather than an actor out of a politician. Accordingly,

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[1]   Barbara G. Salmore and Stephen A. Salmore, *Candidates, Parties, and
Campaigns* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1989), 3.

[2]   Salmore and Salmore, 3.

candidates no longer need years of service and networking to seek or secure political office. Effective public relations and advertising campaigns can make a political star virtually overnight. Therefore, favorable media coverage is the key to success in the 1990s.

This new style of campaigning has its greatest effect on nonpresidential elections because campaign material is often the only information available to voters when they evaluate candidates. Local candidates are usually not featured in the media long enough before an election in any way that would penetrate the popular consciousness.[3] Contenders for municipal or county government are often newcomers to the political playing field. Constituents voting for local candidates typically have fewer preconceived notions about the candidates long before an election. Accordingly, an election is often won or lost on an image developed just a few months prior to an election.

In New Jersey alone, more than $7 million was spent on political campaigns in 1995 to capture 80 seats for $35,000-a-year jobs in the State Assembly. After the election, barely known candidates were deemed worthy of state representation while incumbents were sent home. The majority

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[3]   Salmore and Salmore, 4.

party with a popular governor lost three seats. How could this happen? To what extent is recognition important?

In Atlantic County, Frank Blee, a Republican candidate with merely eight percent recognition 10 weeks before the election ousted a Democrat, Tom Foley. Ironically, the fallen Democrat's voting record paralleled that of his fellow Republican Assemblyman, John Gaffney. However, when Gaffney passed away a few months before the election, his voting perished, too. The Republicans selected a new candidate and attacked Foley's voting record. A new campaign strategy developed almost overnight was an issue of hostile debate within the political community and the media. Appropriate or not, the campaign was effective. Foley lost his seat when many voters expressed concern over his voting record. However, his voting record was not the real issue. The interpretation of his votes by the opposition was the real issue. Voting records are not as important as the spin put on them. A successful campaign appears to be a matter of manipulating the minds of the voters. Campaigns emphasize party affiliation, issues, character, or build name recognition. But, what is the most effective campaign tool to obtain votes? What happens in elections?

According to Flanigan and Zingale, "Only a matter of degree separates different forms of influence such as campaigning, political persuasion, or even education. All the efforts covered by these terms are directed toward changing individuals' political ideas, values, and opinions or toward fostering some political action. At the extremes, the process of influencing political opinions is labeled brainwashing or propaganda."[4]

Voters form many impressions during election campaigns, from views about issue positions and personal traits to feelings about campaign prospects.[5] In Atlantic County, two issues dominated the election: taxes and senior services. While taxes is commonly a pervasive issue, a threat of cutbacks in services to seniors sparked concern with voters of all ages. Accordingly, both issues dominated the Assembly campaigns.

These are just a few of the myriad issues, coupled with personal convictions and non-campaign influences, that contributed to victory and defeat on election day. This research project explored the campaign-related influences on voters.

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[1] William H. Flanigan and Nancy H. Zingale. _Political Behavior of the American Electorate_ (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1994), 142.

[2] Darrell M. West, "Television Advertising in Election Campaigns," _Political Science Quarterly_, Winter 1994-95, 791.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

How can one determine what issues or campaign elements are important to voters when planning a political campaign? Can candidates simply campaign upon past practices without current research and data? What channels are most cost-effective? This study identified issues and campaign elements important to registered voters in Atlantic County during the 1995 general election. In addition, it measured the importance of issues versus party affiliation and character. It also measured what messages voters received and retained from the campaigns of the Democratic and Republican Assembly candidates. Lastly, this study identified the channels voters used to obtain election information prior to Election Day.

NEED FOR THIS STUDY

The need for this study is valid if there are distinct campaign styles, messages, and channels that influence voters in Atlantic County. Four candidates from Atlantic County spent over $500,000 to secure two seats in the New Jersey State Assembly. Though both parties conducted pre-election research,

post-election research is more common after state-wide and national elections. While local campaign leaders often gather to reflect and strategize after elections, the researcher was unable to identify intensive post-election research for local or county-wide campaigns. This study will provide research and evidence for candidates to conduct more effective campaigns.

BACKGROUND

Five candidates from Atlantic County ran for two seats in the New Jersey State Assembly. Frank Blee, 37, an Absecon City councilman, was initially the running mate of Assemblyman John Gaffney, who passed away in late August. Blee was chosen to complete Gaffney's term, making him an incumbent. He is a chiropractor and the current World Natural Powerlifting Federation and International Champion.

Ken LeFevre, 50, an Atlantic County freeholder, was selected in September to be Blee's running mate. He is director of economic development for Atlantic Electric, former deputy commissioner of the State Department of Commerce and Economic Development, and a Folsom councilman. He resides in Brigantine.

Tom Foley, 45, is an Atlantic City Fire Department battalion chief seeking his second term in the Assembly. He is a former Atlantic County freeholder and Pleasantville city councilman. He lives in Brigantine.

Barbara Hudgins, 57, is an Atlantic City councilwoman at-large. She was a math teacher at Atlantic City High School for 30 years.

Kim Fioriglio was the only independent candidate. He is a captain from Atlantic City's Fire Department and a member of the Natural Law Party which promotes "conflict-free politics and prevention-oriented government." Fioriglio had little funds and maintained a low profile during the campaign.[6]

Meanwhile, according to post-election ELEC reports, Republicans had raised $362,518 and Democrats $239,564. In the end, nearly $600,000 was spent for the two Assembly seats in the second legislative district. The Republican candidates spent approximately $364,329 for 41,829 votes, or roughly $8.70 per vote. The Democrats spent $226,251 for 32,367 votes or roughly $7 per vote. Does the amount of money spent correlate with the number of votes? Do campaign messages have any meaning with

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[6] Bett Norcross McCoy, "Candidates can boast backgrounds in public service, public office," The Press of Atlantic City, 5 Nov. 1995, B5.

voters or are the candidates simply using rhetoric to increase
awareness, reinforce identity or name and party recognition?

LIMITATIONS

The study was limited to registered voters from the Second
Legislative District in New Jersey, comprising most of Atlantic
County. It did not attempt to study campaigns in other races,
districts, or states. Nor did it include an analysis of an
independent candidate who received less than two percent of the
vote. This study includes information obtained through a
telephone survey conducted after Election Day. No data was
gathered from voters prior to the election or through other
channels.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this research was to determine what
issues, messages, and channels were efficacious to registered
voters in the 1995 general election. More specifically, this
study was designed to determine if registered voters received or
retained messages sent by the New Jersey State Assembly
candidates from the Second District. Finally, the study's

conclusions will provide guidelines for effective campaign
techniques in future Assembly campaigns.

PROCEDURE

The researcher queried the candidates about their election
campaigns to provide direction for the study. Both Democratic
and Republican candidates received a brief survey that inquired
about campaign issues, messages, and strategies. Both parties
stated that their platforms and campaigns were one and the same
and completed only one survey for two candidates. The
Republicans' survey was completed by their campaign manager, Bill
Layton, and returned through the mail prior to the Election Day.
The Democrats' survey was completed on the phone by Doug Brown.

A review of previous research pertinent to this thesis was
also conducted. A plethora of material exists on messages,
channels, and strategies of political campaigns on the state and
national levels. However, no publications researched and
analyzed campaign messages and channels in New Jersey's
county-wide elections. The dearth of material on county
campaigns nationwide reinforced the need for research on the
effectiveness of these campaigns.

Publications utilized were selected based on their relevance to the topic and contributions to the research.

CHAPTER II

Myriad publications have been written about political

campaigns and voter behavior. A review of these publications

reveals, however, that many had a narrow focus, most leaning

toward state-wide and national campaigns and elections. Very

little information was found that specifically addressed

political campaigns on the local level. None focused on

post-election attitudes and recollection of voters in a

county-wide election such as this one.

Nature of Related Studies

In Political Behavior of the American Electorate,

Flanigan and Zingale analyze and generalize about political

behavior of Americans. This source illustrates trends with

longitudinal data primarily from the Center for Political Studies

at the University of Michigan. Through their research, Flanigan

and Zingale determined that public attention to particular issues

is not consistent. Instead, it tends to rise and fall. In

addition, Flanigan and Zingale said issue areas have many facets

-- such as the pervasiveness of issues such as crime or

education. They also stated that single issues rarely dominate the public's view of governmental policy.[7]

Chapter seven, "Political Communication and the Mass Media," reviews the basic process of opinion change and the impact of the mass media and election campaigns on individual political behavior.

> "Political persuasion is most effective in casual
>
> personal relationships. The impact of the mass
>
> media is probably important in shaping the
>
> contours of political discourse but only
>
> gradually and over fairly long periods of time."[8]

As a result, the mass media would be more influential in national or state-wide campaigns where the actual campaign process is typically longer than in local and county-wide campaigns.

Through his research, Darrell West concluded that much of the information on television political advertising dealt with presidential campaigns. A generalization can be made, however, to say that familiarity is important in any election. Candidates must become known to do well at election time. In addition to

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[7]   Flanigan and Zingale, 12.

[8]   Flanigan and Zingale, 142.

familiarity, West determined that other factors are necessary to win an election. He delineates how electability, or perceptions of a candidates prospects for winning, can influence the outcome of an election: when there is a clear leader in the polls, favoritism may result. This "favoritism" may increase voter support, as there is a tendency among voters to support a winner.[9]

"One of the most persistent criticisms about contemporary campaigns has been the casting of ballots because of winability. If voters are choosing candidates based on fleeting impressions of campaign prospects, it disrupts the linkage function of the election process."[10] In general, West found that much of voter reaction depends on the strategic context of candidate decisions and free media coverage. However, he believes that it is hard to go back and simulate voter assessments.[11]

Salmore and Salmore's Candidates, Parties, and Campaigns was the most informative and relative source. In their book, Salmore and Salmore addressed the role of political campaigns in America, the effect of the new campaign styles on American voters, and the change from party-centered to candidate-centered campaigns.[12]

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[9]   West, 792.

[10]   West, 807.

[11]   West, 794.

In their introduction, they acknowledged that nonpresidential campaigns have received much less sustained attention. Nonpresidential campaigns were the focus of this book[12] Although the book focused on national offices and statewide elections, its relevance was greater than most of the books dealing with national and state-wide campaigns.

Through their research, Salmore and Salmore discovered that many factors excluding the campaign are commonly attributed to electoral outcomes: party loyalty, presidential popularity, and state of the economy. Several decades ago, they found that majority party candidates and incumbents usually won. "A decade ago, the main ingredients for a successful campaign were support of the party leaders."[14]

Salmore and Salmore traced the evolution of campaigns. "For a long time, students of politics, in contrast to candidates and campaigners, believed that campaigns only minimally influenced the outcome of elections."[15] In the 1940s, researchers began limited studies of individual voting behavior and, beginning with the 1952 election, had reliable pre-and post-election data from

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[12]   Salmore and Salmore, 2.

[13]   Salmore and Salmore, 4.

[14]   Salmore and Salmore, 1.

[15]   Salmore and Salmore, 4.

national samples. These early studies, conducted by they Survey
Research Center at the University of Michigan, know as the
Michigan surveys, shaped the perception of a generation of
political scientists. They revealed the significance of party
identification in voting choice and generated theories about its
role.

Because of the political realities of the time, however, the
Michigan studies dismissed the effects of campaigns, and their
methodology made it difficult or impossible to find evidence to
the contrary.[16]

Salmore and Salmore go on to address how the role, or
understanding of the role of campaigns evolved over the last
century. The traditional view holds that campaigns were a minor
factor in election outcomes. By the late-1940s, political
pundits acknowledged the influence of "short-term factors," but
contended they would not disturb party suitability for a long
time.[17]

Thirty years later, studies documented the increasing power
of incumbency. It was believed that incumbent success resulted
from being better known, having more continued exposure which
engendered greater attention, and because they often became more

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[16]   Salmore and Salmore, 6.

[17]   Salmore and Salmore, 7.

detached from party loyalties while in office.[18]   Salmore and

Salmore described political campaigns as an attempt to get

information to voters that will persuade them to elect a

candidate or not elect an opponent. The process to meet this

objective follows a basic pattern of persuasion. As stated by

Salmore and Salmore, the first step was to learn what information

will best serve this purpose (research). The next step is to

acquire the data. Then, decide how and when messages should be

communicated (strategies / channels). To do this, they noted,

campaigners need useful and reliable voter information to get

appropriate and persuasive information to the voters.[19] In their

book, Herzberg and Peltason use a congressional campaign as their

model "because that seems to be the level of campaign in which

most students are interested."[20]

Through their research, Herzberg and Peltason found that

political campaigns in the United States tend to be longer, more

chaotic, more decentralized, and less issue-oriented than

campaigns in any other country in the world.[21] In the United

States, "elections can be won or lost depending upon which party

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[18]   Salmore and Salmore, 8.

[19]   Salmore and Salmore, 10.

[20]   Donald G. Herzberg and J.W. Peltason. A Student Guide to Campaign
Politics. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company). 1970, v.

[21]   Herzberg and Peltason, v.

is most effective in reinforcing the convictions of its own faithful and bringing them out to vote."[32]

Herzberg and Peltason's interpretation of issues is that they are chess pieces to be manipulated to gain votes. Their research indicated that the great majority of voters are not likely to be issue-oriented. "Some will be intensely aroused by a particular issue. Most voters will have only the vaguest notions about who is running."[33] Herzberg and Peltason concluded that most voters do not carefully weigh all alternatives or thoroughly inform themselves of all the facts. This reinforces their assertion that elections can be won or lost depending upon which party is most effective in generating the most voters. They found voters to be more party-oriented than issue-oriented.[34]

Herzberg and Peltason do believe that we may be entering a period in which campaigns will become more significant, not merely because of the greater effectiveness of new political techniques, but also because of what appears to be a growing number of independent voters. "Although party loyalties will

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[32]   Herzberg and Peltason, 22.

[33]   Herzberg and Peltason, 21.

[34]   Herzberg and Peltason, 20.

probably not disappear, there will be fewer votes to whom one can

appeal in terms of party loyalty alone."[25]

The only source discovered that focused on campaign

practices for the N.J. State Assembly was David Byrd's, A Case

Study of a Candidate's Campaign for N.J. Assembly in 1985. His

research, however, focused on the candidate and campaign process,

not on voter attitudes and behavior. He did, however, in his

search for related information, report that, "Most studies,

campaign manuals and the like concentrate on elective races from

statewide to the national levels. Rarely is any significance

given to races below the gubernatorial level unless there is some

uniqueness to it," he added.[26]

Byrd found that the campaign he studied was not issue-

oriented. "Issues were determined not to be an overriding

factor. Instead, the 'issues' as determined for the public, was

to establish [the candidate] as a viable candidate (the name

recognition factor) and to determine what incumbents stood

for."[27]

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[25]   Herzberg and Peltason, 78.

[26]   David J. Byrd, "A Case Study of a Candidate's Campaign for N.J. Assembly in 1985," (M.A. diss., Glassboro State College, 1986), 1.

[27]   Byrd, 2.

Incumbency creates issues that influence voters. Incumbency normally increases recognition while providing voters with tools (i.e. voting records) to assess candidates.

No other studies were found that were suitable for this research. Topics were either too broad, looking at outcomes versus demographics, or too narrow, focusing on a specific issue, such as negative campaigning.

While all of the sources in this study focused on different levels or components of political campaigns, many common threads were found that were echoed in the researchers' findings. Party loyalty continues to be an overriding factor in Election Day voting. While some attention is paid to issues by some of the people, voters remain who possess little awareness or understanding of the issues at hand when casting their ballots on election day.

This study identified similarities in electioneering on the local, state-wide, and national levels. The influencing factors or elements discovered in the study were addressed in the related literature. This study will provide researchers with additional information that reinforces notions about party, issues, and recognition. Additionally, this study provides a local perspective that can be used to format research for other local

campaigns. This study fills a void resulting from the absence of research and literature on local or county-wide elections.

CHAPTER III

Data Needed / Data Sources

To determine which campaign messages and channels affected
voters' attitudes and behavior, responses were needed from a
large number of registered voters. To evaluate effective
campaign practices in Atlantic County, it was determined that a
post-election phone survey would provide the most information
with the greatest accuracy. By removing the element of
face-to-face contact, the phone survey enabled the participants
to maintain a certain level of "anonymity" which would increase
participation, frankness, and honesty on otherwise sensitive
questions. This method enabled the researcher to secure 197
random participants with a seven percent margin of error.

Research Method / Sample Selection and Size

The sample was randomly selected by Labels and Lists, Inc.,
Bellevue, WA. It provided the names, addresses, age, and
telephone numbers of 1,999 registered voters from the Second
Legislative District, comprising most of Atlantic County. The

names were weighted geographically throughout Atlantic County to

provide a representative sample. Appendix A lists the breakdown

of registered voters in the sample population by Precinct and

Ward. Labels and Lists scrambled the names to enable the

researcher to stop surveying upon completion of the sample

without affecting the composition of participants.

The survey included responses from 197 registered voters in

New Jersey's Second Legislative District.

Data Collection Method

Election Day 1995 fell on Tuesday, November 7. This

post-election research was conducted by one interviewer who

called participants' homes between November 10 and November 17,

1995. Calls were made at different times and days during the

week to reach diverse segments of the target populations. The

times with the highest participation were weekdays between 6 p.m.

and 8 p.m. and Sunday between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Calls were

placed to over 1,200 homes to collect the sample of 197

participants. The high number of calls was needed because of the

large number of unavailable people or lack of interest to

participate. The former was the larger problem.

The survey included nine questions and lasted from three to fifteen minutes. Questions one through three asked registered voters what were the three most important issues to them during the recent campaign.

Question four asked participants to rank three factors in order of importance when voting for a candidate. The three factors were party, issues and character.

Question five probed what sources of information were used to collect information on the candidates. Participants were asked if they used five different sources a lot, a little, or not at all for information about the candidates. The sources were radio, television, newspaper, direct mail, and public debates.

Participants were then asked to name the candidates from the Second District's Assembly race to measure awareness and political activity. The researcher then read a complete list of the candidates before asking which two candidates were favored. Next, respondents were asked what issues from the candidates' campaigns stood out.

Finally, participants were asked to identify their party registration and a final confirmation that they voted was once again requested.

Data Analysis Methods

This study was a probability study with a 7 percent margin of error. With the assistance of Bob Wear, from Rowan University's MIS Department, the researcher assigned a numerical and letter symbol to the questions and responses, respectively. Next, the researcher translated the responses into a format that could be interpreted by the MIS system and processed the sheets into a raw data format. After referring back to the original survey, the computer translated the raw data into frequencies, percentages, and cross tabulations.

Survey responses were then compared with information gained through a questionnaire completed by campaign staff representing the Democratic and Republican Assembly candidates. Both parties completed one survey for two candidates. Their responses included their campaign themes or the top three campaign issues.

CHAPTER IV

The survey comprised 197 respondents who answered "yes" to

the preliminary question of whether or not they voted in the

November 7, 1995 election.

When asked what were the top issues during the recent

election, 68.4% provided specific issues, 19.9% said there were

no issues and 9.2% said they voted based on the party affiliation

of the candidates. Only 3 in 100 said their votes were primarily

influenced by the negative campaigns.

TOP ISSUE

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Party	18	9.2	18	9.2
Issues	134	68.4	152	77.6
None	39	19.9	191	97.4
-Campaign	5			

Frequency Missing = 1

Appendix B provides a more in-depth look at the issues named in

response to question one.

The researcher then named three factors that could influence

a vote: party, issues, character. The participants were asked

to rank the three factors from most important to least important.

Six in 10 ranked issues as most important. Roughly 3 in 10 said

character was most important. Accordingly, only 1 in 10 said

party was the most important factor.

PARTY - IMPORTANCE

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Most imp.	22	11.4	22	11.4
Second	31	16.1	53	27.5
Third	119	61.7	172	89.1
Neutral	21	10.9	193	100.0

Frequency Missing = 4

Party was ranked as least important by 61.7%. Character was

cited by 15.6% as least important and issues by 4.7% of the

respondents.

Next, five sources of campaign information were given:

radio, television, newspaper, debates and direct mail.

Participants were asked if they used each source a lot, a little,

or not at all as a source of campaign information. Only 2 in 10

said they used radio "a lot" as a source of campaign information.

Four in 10 said they used radio "a little" and one-third said

"not at all."   Four participants did not answer this question.

RADIO USAGE

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
A lot	44	22.8	44	22.8
A little	79	40.9	123	63.7
Not at all	42	21.8	193	100.0

Frequency Missing = 4

The results showed that essentially one-third used television "a lot" as a source of campaign information. Almost half used television "a little." However, one in five said they do not use television as a source of campaign information.

All but 40% said they used newspaper "a lot" as a source of campaign information. Over one-third use newspaper "a little." Only 6.2% said they do not use newspaper for campaign information.

NEWSPAPER USAGE

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
A lot	114	59.1	114	59.1
A little	67	34.7	181	93.8
Not at all	12	6.2	193	100.0

Frequency Missing = 4

The data indicated that only 9.8% of the participants used debates "a lot" as a source of campaign information. Only one in four used debates "a little," and nearly two-thirds do not use debates.

DEBATES USAGE

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
A lot	19	9.8	19	9.8
A little	48	24.9	67	34.7
Not at all	126	65.3	193	100.0

Frequency Missing = 4

The results showed that 17.1% used direct mail "a lot" as a source of campaign information. Over half used direct mail "a little." And 31.6% do not use direct mail.

The researcher then asked participants if they could recall the names of the candidates who ran for New Jersey State Assembly in the Second Legislative District. More than one-third were not able to name any of the five candidates. Six in ten were able to name one or more candidates. Three participants did not answer this question.

RECALL CANDIDATES

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
No	70	36.1	70	36.1
Yes	124	63.9	194	100.0

Frequency Missing = 3

Because the researcher anticipated a low name recall, the candidates' names were read before each participant was asked to name the two candidates whom they favored. The respondents were then asked to identify the favored candidates.

Tom Foley was mentioned by 20.6%. Barbara Hudgins was selected by 17.9%. Frank Blee was chosen by 28.6%. Ken LeFevre was mentioned by 28.9%. Kim Fioriglio was selected by less than 1%.

Eleven responses were incomplete because the participants did not know the names of one or both of the candidates they favored. These two questions were not answered by 27.5% of the participants.

FAVORED CANDIDATE

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Foley	66	38.8	66	38.8
Hudgins	6	3.5	72	42.4
Blee	89	52.4	161	94.7
LeFevre	6	3.5	167	98.2
Fioriglio	1	0.6	168	98.8
Not Sure	2	1.2	170	100.0

Frequency Missing = 27

OTHER CANDIDATE

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Foley	4	2.4	4	2.4
Hudgins	55	32.5	59	34.9
Blee	8	4.7	67	39.6
LeFevre	92	54.4	159	94.1
Fioriglio	1	0.6	160	94.7
Not Sure	9	5.3	169	100.0

Frequency Missing = 28

If the participants named one or two favored candidates, they were asked which issue(s) stood out from the campaign(s) of the favored candidate(s). Less than 30% named specific issues. The issues mentioned did not necessarily match the campaign issues as identified by the campaign representatives. The number

of matching responses was so insignificant that the responses to question one (which issues were important) were integrated with these answers before a comparison was made between actual and perceived issues. As a result, this question did not meet its intended purpose: to determine which campaign issues were remembered. Instead, it complemented a question researching which issues were perceived as important. This was done under the assumption that issues mentioned in the latter question were deemed important.

Both parties said taxes was a campaign issue. Taxes was mentioned by 80 participants. The Democrats other two issues were working people and independent voices, which were mentioned by 11 and 0, respectively. The Republican's other two issues were spending cuts and crime reduction, which were mentioned by 12 and 13, respectively.

Over one-third did not identify any issues as important. Party affiliation was identified as the determining factor by 28.3%, and negativity by only 6%. This question was not answered by 31 respondents.

Finally, respondents identified their party registration. Democrat was stated by 33%. Republicans

represented 54.8%. Independents numbered 8% and 4.3% said other. Nine did not respond.

ISSUE STOOD OUT

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Party	47	28.3	47	28.3
Issues	47	28.3	94	56.6
None	62	37.3	156	94.0
- Campaign	10	6.0	166	100.0

Frequency Missing = 31

Cross Tabulations

Questions one (top issue) and four (influential factors) were cross tabulated to measure the consistency of responses regarding the influence of party affiliation. The results showed that 3.13% of the participants ranked party as the least important factor and later identified party as the determining factor. Of those who said issues was the most important factor, only 4 in 10 identified specific issues of importance.

PARTY IMPORTANCE / TOP ISSUE

Frequency
Percent
Row Pct

Col Pct	Party	Issues	None	- Campaign	Total
Most important	9	9	4	0.00	22
	4.69	4.69	2.08	0.00	11.46
	40.91	40.91	18.18	0.00	
	50.00	6.82	10.53	0.00	
Second	3	20	6	1	30
	1.56	10.42	3.13	0.52	15.63
	10.00	66.67	20.00	3.33	
	16.67	15.15	15.79	25.00	
Third	6	86	25	2	119
	3.13	44.79	13.02	1.04	61.98
	5.04	72.27	21.01	1.68	
	33.33	65.15	65.79	50.00	
Neutral	0	17	3	1	21
	0.00	8.85	1.56	0.52	10.94
	0.00	80.95	14.29	4.76	
	0.00	12.88	7.89	25.00	
Total	18	132	38	4	192
	9.38	68.75	19.79	2.08	100.00

Frequency Missing = 5

When questions 4 (influential factors) and 7b (issues stood out) were cross tabulated, the results conflicted. Of the 47 who responded that they voted along party lines, 51% ranked party as the least important factor.

PARTY IMPORTANCE / ISSUE STOOD OUT

Frequency
Percent
Row Pct

Col Pct	Party	Issues	None	- Campaign	Total
Most important	15	2	2	0.00	19
	9.20	1.23	1.23	0.00	11.66
	78.95	10.53	10.53	0.00	
	31.91	4.26	3.39	0.00	
Second	7	8	9	3	27
	4.29	4.91	5.52	1.84	16.56
	25.93	29.63	33.33	11.11	
	14.89	17.02	15.25	30.00	
Third	24	32	38	6	100
	14.72	19.63	23.31	3.68	61.35
	24.00	32.00	38.00	6.00	
	51.06	68.09	64.41	60.00	
Neutral	1	5	10	1	17
	0.61	3.07	6.13	0.61	10.43
	5.88	29.41	58.82	5.88	
	2.13	10.64	16.95	10.00	
Total	47	47	59	10	163
	28.83	28.83	36.20	6.13	100.00

Frequency Missing = 34

Findings

Campaign Messages and Appeals

* Nearly 60% prioritized issues before party & character.

* When asked, three in 10 did not identify any issue as important.

* Over 10% said party was not a consideration.

* Nearly 5% said character was not a consideration.

Influence of Party Affiliation

* When asked early in the survey which issue was important, 1 in 10 said they voted along party lines.

* When asked late in the survey which campaign issue stood out, 3 in 10 said they voted along party lines.

* Ironically, nearly 90% voted for candidates from the same party.

* Only 11.8% split their votes.

Campaign Channels and Information

* Nearly 4 in 10 do not use radio.

* Two in 10 do not use television.

* Only 6% do not use newspaper.

* Six in 10 use newspaper "a lot."

* Fewer than 1 in 10 use public debates a lot.

* Six in 10 do not use debates.

* Half use direct mail "a little."

* Almost one-third do not use direct mail.

CHAPTER V

Summary and Interpretation / Conclusion

This study determined what issues, messages and channels were efficacious in the 1995 State Assembly campaigns in New Jersey's second legislative district. The author surveyed 196 voters during a five-day period after the general election to ascertain the information.

The study's accuracy depended on the voters providing truthful responses to the questions. With a margin of error of +/- 7 percent, this survey accurately indicated vote distribution when compared with actual votes as reported by The Press of Atlantic City.

Although many voters in this study attempted to minimize their tendency to vote for a particular party, party affiliation remains an integral part of the campaign process. The party vote comes from not only a heartfelt commitment to a particular party, but also a lack of knowledge or understanding of the issues. Evidence of this came from the voters in this study who first responded that issues were the most important factor, but later

said they voted along party lines when asked to identify specific issues.

Party voters remain a stable voting block. The importance of the campaign, then, is to get party voters out on Election Day while soliciting enough swing votes, or those not predetermined by party affiliation, to win an election.

This study displayed that candidates can win or lose an election simply by having the most effective campaign. While exemplary character, and favorable actions and voting records help candidates, they are not enough. This study suggests that the packaging of a candidate is more important than a candidate's background.

During the election, the media and Democrat party sharply criticized Republicans for misrepresenting and distorting Tom Foley's voting record. It appeared, through telephone interviews, that the more knowledgeable voters criticized Republicans for using "dirty" campaign tactics. In fact, one voter claimed to have voted for a Democrat for the first time as a result of this campaign.

Conversely, the less knowledgeable voters were more likely to pick up and believe the messages as they heard them.

The author subjectively classified the voters as more or less knowledgeable, based on conversations with the voters. In the future, another study could determine or classify voters according to their knowledge level or awareness about the candidates and issues. This study did not do that.

Practical Influence on Field

Future campaign managers should cautiously use the results of the study to construct messages and select channels. This research was specific to the Assembly race in New Jersey's second legislative district. The time and events surrounding the election influenced the outcome. These influential factors will not be exactly replicated. One should conduct new research to determine effective campaign practices based on circumstances at the time of the study.

This study did, however, provide useful information that can influence formative campaign research. Based on the research, voters ranked five sources of campaign information from most to least effective: newspaper, television, radio, direct mail, and debates.

Pre-campaign research can determine what are the hot issues with voters, such as senior issues and taxes. Candidates who convey a popular stance on two or three hot issues will be more effective than candidates who do not identify their position on the issues. While voters could name issues that were important to them, most were unable to name more than two issues addressed in the campaigns.

This study also reinforced the importance of party affiliation. While many voters claim not to vote along party lines, the data disagreed. Accordingly, campaigns need to inspire party members to get out and vote on election day.

Further Research

As indicated throughout Chapter Five, several studies could further explore or enhance this research. This study did not attempt to explore the "why" behind the responses, although it was not uncommon for participants to share more information than requested. One study might explore why certain media were used or votes were cast. In addition, one could replicate this study in 10 years to measure change. To effectively repeat this study, timing of the surveys is critical to participation and responses.

All interviews for this study were conducted within five days of the election. Toward the end, participants appeared less interested and more forgetful. A better time frame might be to complete the surveys within 48 hours of the election.

This survey required extensive calling on part of the researcher. A group of properly trained interviewers could increase effeciency. However, to avoid skewing the results, intercoder reliability must be present. Some answers (i.e. important issues) were disclosed only through probing by the interviewer. But it is critical that the interviewer does not lead the responses.

The author did not fully explore one question in this survey because of perceived impatience or resistance from participants. It appeared that some participants started to lose interest or became frustrated when were asked to identify all four candidates. It was assumed that they reacted this way for two reasons: voters were uncomfortable or embarrassed because they couldn't identify all the candidates or, this question required much thinking and time. This question made the survey longer than expected. As a result, the author modified the question to "identify a minimum of one candidate." A future study might

concentrate on respondents' ability to recall names and party

affiliation.

. In your opinion, what was the top issue during the most recent election? _____

    1. (a) What action you would like on this issue? _____

!. What other issue was important to you? _____ *(None / Go To Question 4)*

    2. (a) What action would you like on this issue? _____

}. Is there a third issue that was important to you? _____ *(No / Go To 4)*

    3. (a) What action would you like on this issue? _____

4. I am going to read to you three factors about the most recent campaign. When I finish reading them, please tell me which you consider the most important and the second most important. Ready?

    ___ Party   ___ Issues   ___ Personality   *(Mark 1, 2, 3. Use 0 to indicate neutral or not a factor)*

5. Now I am going to read to you five sources of campaign information. After I read each one, please tell me which source you used a lot, a little, or not at all for information on the candidates. Ready?

	A lot	A little	Not at all
Radio	___	___	___
Television	___	___	___
Newspaper	___	___	___
Public Debates	___	___	___
Direct Mail	___	___	___

6. Can you identify any of the candidates who ran for State Assembly from your District?

    no _____   yes _____   *(Let them recall. Please check all that apply)*

    Tom Foley ___   *Barbara Hudgins* ___   *Frank Blee* ___   *Ken LeFevre* ___   *Kim Fioriglio* ___

7. I am now going to read to you the names of candidates for the State Assembly. When I am finished, I am going to ask you which candidate you favored the most. Ready?

    Tom Foley   Barbara Hudgins   Frank Blee   Ken LeFevre   Kim Fioriglio

    7 (a) Which candidate did you favor the most? _____
    7 (b) In your opinion, which issue from that candidate stood out? _____

    7 (c) Did you favor any of the other candidates? _____
    7 (d) In your opinion, which issue from that candidate stood out? _____

8. Please tell me your party registration?   *(Let them identify)*

    Democrat _____   Republican _____   Independent _____   N/A _____   Other

9. Did you vote in this election?   yes _____   no _____

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Appendix B - Top Ten Issues

1. Lower Taxes 39.0%

2. No Issues 18.7%

3. Honest, Responsible Representation 12.7%

4. Crime (Includes gun control) 11.7%

5. Party Support 10.7%

6. Local Issues 10.1%

7. School Improvements 9.6%

8. Strengthen Support for Senior Citizens 7.1%

9. Avoid Medicare Cuts 7.1%

10. Negative Campaigns 5.0%

This information was compiled from the responses to the question asking what three issues were important to the participants. This data does not include responses given for Question 7, regarding the recollection of campaign issues. As a result, the number of responses for each issue is different from those listed in Chapter IV.

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