

Vote TN

Express Yourself...VOTE

Information Campaign Project

By

Richard Halversen, Nina Tidwell, and Viola West

Outline:

- I. Situation Analysis**
 - a. SWOT Detailed Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**
- II. Research**
 - a. Primary**
 - i. Interviews**
 - b. Secondary**
 - i. Statistical Research**
 - ii. Case Study Research**
- III. Planning**
- IV. GOST Analysis**
 - a. Goals**
 - b. Strategies**
 - c. Objectives**
 - d. Tactics**
- V. Timeline for Strategical and Tactical Implementation**
- VI. Evaluation of Campaign**
- VII. Campaign Budget**
- VIII. Ad Design**
- IX. MySpace Page Link**
- X. Press Releases**
 - a. Press Release for Youth Voters as Target Audience**
 - b. Press Release for General Public**

I. Situation Analysis:

Vote TN is a Tennessee non-profit organization dedicated to increasing voter turnout. Raising awareness and promoting voter participation among the youth of Tennessee is vital to democracy. With an approaching presidential election in November, we especially wanted to get the word out to everyone that wasn't old enough to vote four years ago, those between the 18-21-age demographic. The slogan for this information campaign is *Express Yourself...Vote*.

II. Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) Analysis:

Strengths: The strengths of this campaign include the fact that it is currently an election year and interest in voter participation and involvement is at an all-time high. Students as well as non-student residents are interested in the candidates and their respective campaign trails. Increasing voter turnout and participation is very important every year for state and county elections, but the advent of a national presidential election achieves a platform that can reach a wider audience and potentially accrue greater interest in political subjects.

Weaknesses: The weaknesses of this campaign are from a similar vein as the strengths. The pervasive media coverage and national 24-hour media inundates the average citizen constantly with new information, and in an election year, exposes people to a massive amount of political news coverage. With such a vast array of sources, it sometimes becomes overwhelming to know which to listen to and which to ignore. Students lead busy lives as it is, and it will be difficult to find a unique way to reach them

through the large amount of already-existing media current flowing through their daily routine.

Opportunities: One major opportunity of this campaign is that not only is this an election year, but having our mobile information units set up on campuses throughout Tennessee, we can hopefully provide a hassle-free, easy way for students to register and get involved politically without inundating them with extra tasks. Making politics more accessible and pertinent to the younger generation of first-time voters is a wonderful opportunity to be their first initiation into the political scene.

Threats: There are not many threats to this campaign, since it is a very positive informational campaign with positive objectives and goals. We are not trying to diffuse or neutralize any situation, and since our campaign is purely informational, it is non-threatening. We will have to make sure that our tactics are friendly and minimally time-consuming to avoid annoying students or potential voters and deterring them from the political scene.

III. Research:

Primary and Secondary research were needed to get as many young voters to register and attend the voting polls in November. Our primary research consisted of questionnaires and interviews. The secondary research was gathered from some various sources such as, The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, Tabulations from the 2002 and 1994 November, and Supplements of the Current Population Survey. Research into similar case studies about organizations on

campuses promoting voter registration and participation were helpful and instructive. Successful campaign such as Rock-the-Vote afford our campaign useful insight into the programs that work and those that are ineffective.

The research we gathered gave us insight to why many 18-21 year olds had not voted in the past or did not plan on voting in the future. Some of the other questions we resolved to answer through our research were: What were the reasons that prompted some to vote? What media is consumed most by this group? Through our research we were able to see how different demographics played into whether this age group voted or not. Through our research we were able to see the most effective way to approach this target audience and what tools to utilize.

I. Secondary Research

a. Statistical Research

TN- Youth Voter past Elections Data

Table 1: Tennessee Voter Turnout Statistics:

- In 2006 midterm election- estimated 692,000 young people in Tennessee who were eligible to vote in U.S. elections.
- 2006 – Young People 18 to 29
Number of Citizens eligible to vote in 2006 – 853,000
- 2002 –
Number of Votes Cast – 186,000
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate – 21 percent
Share of all Voters – 10 percent
- 1994 –

Number of Votes Cast - 254,000
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate – 26 percent
Share of all Voters – 15 percent

Table 2- Tennessee Voter Turnout Rates Among Young Citizens ages 18 to 29, 2002 and 1994

Race/Ethnicity

- White non-Hispanics - 20 percent
- Black non Hispanics - 27 percent
- Latinos - ***
- Asian non Hispanics - ***
- Native American non Hispanics - ***

Gender

- Women – 24 percent
- Men – 17 percent

Educational Attainment

- Less than High School – 7 percent
- High School – 13 percent
- Some College – 21 percent
- BA or more – 61 percent

Marital Status

- Single Men – 16 percent
- Single Women – 24 percent
- Married Men – 21 percent
- Married Women – 25 percent
- Registered Voter – 50 percent
- All Youth, Tennessee – 21 percent
- All Youth, National – 22 percent

Source: The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE)

Author's Tabulations from the 2002 and 1994 November Supplements of the Current Population Survey.

*** indicates a sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate.

Reason most 18-21 year olds don't vote:

1. In their opinion, they do not matter and their opinion is not respected

2. Their vote will not count
3. Most are in college, whether in state or not ; they do not know the process
4. Some say the absentee process is an absolute mess and takes forever to figure out
5. Can't get to the polls
6. Some simply do not exercise their right to vote

What are reasons given by those who do vote?

1. Heather Smith, executive director of Rock the Vote says, "Young people are tired of being characterized as apathetic and uninterested in politics."
2. They want a voice in politics
3. Its our right

The media that is consumed most by our target public.

1. Radio
2. TV- MTV, BET, VHS- reality shows
3. My Space
4. Facebook
5. Text messaging / emails
6. Service Announcements at the movies

Areas we can display and exhibit voter information (Voter registration)

1. Universities
2. High School
3. Club scenes
4. Malls
5. Churches
6. Beauty salons and nail shops
7. YMCA
8. YWCA
9. Gyms
10. Libraries

ii. Case Study Research

Through research we discovered the Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature (TISL) program, which encouraged student involvement and participation in elections. TISL began 35 years ago at Vanderbilt University by the will of one student to become more involved in government. TISL is an organization that allows students from colleges all across the state of Tennessee to participate in a mock assembly at the Tennessee state Capitol. Here, similar to a law school mock trial, the students participate in Senate and House of Representative delegates.

This year, in 2008, the 39th mock assembly in Tennessee of TISL will enable students to debate and vote on a variety of several bills and issues, many of which are facing candidates in current political spheres.

TISL offers a unique opportunity that might interest our target audience. Since our campaign is focused in Tennessee, we will have a pamphlet at our *Express Yourself...Vote* campaign informing students and potential voters about TISL and their opportunity to take part in a mock assembly. This is an excellent way to foster student involvement in politics.

In Manatee County, Florida, the drive to acquire new voters enacted an unusual yet compelling tactic. The county sponsored a drive to acquire voters from high school seniors of voting age from the county's six public schools. An estimated 3,500 juniors

and seniors at Manatee county's school system were eligible to vote. Through a bipartisan effort, both Democratic and Republican representatives from Manatee County joined together to sponsor voter registration drives at the local high schools. Reaching students early is vital to fostering interest and involvement in politics. The schools also did research projects in their classes about the 26th Amendment, which established the voting age. Involving eligible voters, not only on college campuses, but also through high schools was an innovative idea. The students were presented with facilities on campus during their lunchtime in which they could register to vote.

The Higher Education Act of 1998 is a requirement that colleges must provide access to voter-registration forms on campus to every enrolled student. Results of not following this mandate are losses in federal funding. Harvard University's Institute of Politics and The Chronicle of Higher Education conducted a survey September 2004 that uncovered that nearly one-third of the colleges and universities in the United States did not follow the Higher Education Act of 1998. Statistics showing that nearly 41 percent of college students are independents, and not registered as either Republican or Democrat, implies that there is definitely a need that is required to be filled on these campuses to reach this audience.

Programs such as Rock-the-Vote and Vote-or-Die have been successful in motivating college students to get involved in their local and national elections. The youth voter registration program The New Voters Project has made an impact on the political scene by directly registering 340,000 college-age students in six states. Rock the Vote, an organization sponsored by MTV, has registered more than 1.3 million people

through its website and campus campaigns. The program Declare Yourself has registered nearly 1 million new voters.

III. Planning:

Our target audience for this campaign was eligible voters between the age of 18 and 21. We needed to not only get them to the voting booths in November but also to get them registered to vote before the cut-off date

IV. GOST Analysis: (Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Tactics)

a. Goals:

1. To increase voter participation by 18-24 year-old residents of Tennessee by 20% from the previous election year.

b. Objectives:

1. Increase the Tennessee voter turnout for residents between the age of 18-24 20% from the previous election year.
2. Educate Tennessee voters between the age of 18-21 the importance of voting, how to register to vote, and when they should vote.
3. Generate statewide awareness through publicity in local media, advertising, exhibitions, and speaking engagements.
4. Recruit local advocates for Vote TN's *Express Yourself...VOTE* campaign.

c. Strategies:

1. Prepare press releases, VNRs, and PSAs for release
2. Develop brochures and handouts to post around town and on campuses to inform students and residents of Tennessee about our campaign to raise voter awareness
3. Make appointments to present at local high schools, colleges, churches, and community centers
4. Radio and television commercials to be aired featuring our campaign to disseminate information to the public

d. Tactics:

1. Design and set up MySpace page about *VoteTN* campaign
2. Create brochure and handout with info about the importance of voting to be distributed at speaking engagements and live events. Brochure will have a perforated part at the bottom for audience to tear off and fill out contact info.
3. Begin making appointments to present free, public presentations at universities, colleges, high schools, civic centers, and church youth groups.
4. Utilize cellular text messaging and e-mail to reach constituents to remind them about upcoming events
5. Prepare a questionnaire to be used at sponsored events to gauge reactions of college students and potential voters
6. Set up *Express Yourself...Vote* exhibits at local universities, colleges, and civic centers. These exhibits will hand out info on the importance of voting as

well as try and register 18-21 year olds to vote. At exhibits we will give *Express Yourself...VOTE* sticker to anyone who signs up to be on the *Vote TN* mailing list. Those who register to vote at the exhibit will receive an *Express Yourself...VOTE* button, and those who sign up to be local advocates will receive an *Express Yourself...VOTE* t-shirt.

7. Send promo email blasts to all email addresses in database once a month until 30 days before register deadline. Send promo email every week for the last 4 weeks before deadline.
8. Send first promo text 30 days before registration deadline; send second 24 hours before registration deadline.
9. Send press release to local newspapers and college papers.
10. Run newspaper ad in 6 Tennessee papers for the last two weeks before the registration deadline. Also, work with local universities and colleges and try to place ads in school papers at no cost.
11. Run 3, 30 second, commercials daily on 4 radio stations (radio station with the most 18-21 year old listener base) beginning one week before voting registration deadline. These radio commercials will be aired at prime-time in Tennessee's 4 largest cities: Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville, and Chattanooga.

V. Timeline

Our timeline and strategies to implement that timeline to increase the target 18-21 age public:

12 months before event:

- Begin compiling research, statistics on past elections, etc.
- Design and set up a MySpace page of Vote TN's Express Yourself...Vote!
- Create simple brochure/handout with info on the importance of voting to be handed out at speaking engagements and live presentations. Brochure will have a perforated part at the bottom for audience to tear off and fill out contact info.
- Begin making appointments to present free, public presentations at universities, colleges, high schools, civic centers, and church youth groups.

9-3 months before event:

- Begin speaking at local universities, colleges, high schools, civic centers, and church youth groups.
- At live events and presentations recruit advocates for the project as well as getting contact info, (email, phone number, MySpace page, etc)
- Send out text messages as reminders of future events (such as exhibition) as well as a final reminder to register to vote before the 30 day deadline.
- At speaking engagements we will also hand out a questionnaire that will ask a series of questions gauging everyone's interest in voting, do they plan on voting, why or why not? Do they think their vote matters? What

would it take to get them registered and at the voting stations in November.

3 months-30 days before voting (last day before registration deadline):

- Set up *Express Yourself...Vote* exhibits at local universities, colleges, and civic centers. These exhibits will hand out info on the importance of voting as well as try and register 18-21 year olds to vote. At exhibits we will give *Express Yourself...VOTE* sticker to anyone who signs up to be on the *Vote TN* mailing list. Those who register to vote at the exhibit will receive an *Express Yourself...VOTE* button, and those who sign up to be local advocates will receive an *Express Yourself...VOTE* t-shirt.
- Send promo email blasts to all email addresses in database once a month until 30 days before register deadline. Send promo email every week for the last 4 weeks before deadline.
- Send first promo text 30 days before registration deadline; send second 24 hours before registration deadline.
- Send press release to local newspapers and college papers.
- Run newspaper ad in 6 Tennessee papers for the last two weeks before the registration deadline. Also, work with local universities and colleges and try to place ads in school papers at no cost.
- Run 3, 30 second, commercials daily on 4 radio stations (radio station with the most 18-21 year old listener base) beginning one week before voting registration deadline. These radio

commercials will be aired at prime-time in Tennessee's 4 largest cities: Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville, and Chattanooga.

Last registration day-day of voting:

- Send reminder emails & texts one week before voting day, and 24 hrs before voting day.

The Day After Voting Day:

Send simple email with one question "Did you remember to vote? With a button for "Yes" and one for "No"

Send a simple text message with one question "Did you remember to vote? with a number for them to text for yes and a number to text for no.

Contact via phone those on contact list that didn't email or text a response

VI. Evaluation:

In order to improve Vote TN's *Express Yourself...VOTE!* Campaign it is vital to evaluate the success of our strategies and tactics. Through a good evaluation process we will be able to see how well our program worked and if there were any weakness. Some of our methods for recording our success will be as follows:

1. Send simple email with one question "Did you remember to vote? With a button for "Yes" and one for "No"
2. Send a simple text message with one question "Did you remember to vote? With a number for them to text for yes and a number to text for no.
3. Contact via phone those on contact list that didn't email or text a response
4. Finally, check government sources such as the United States Elections Project, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, and the U.S. Census Bureau.

VII. Budget:

Radio: 84 commercials at a \$100 ea.- \$8,400

Newspaper: 12 ¼ page, color, newspaper ad \$500 – \$6,000

University and College papers: Free

Graphic Design: Free (Volunteered).

Printed Material (brochure, handouts, etc.): \$1,000

Travel expenses, (gas, hotel, etc.): \$500

Exhibiting booths: \$800

Giveaways:

100-T-shirts: \$1,000

3,000-buttons: \$634

5,000 bumper stickers: \$500

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$18,834

III. Ad Design

VOTE TN PRESENTS

EXPRESS YOURSELF...VOTE!



EXPRESS YOURSELF...VOTE!

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

• REGISTER TO VOTE BEFORE NOVEMBER 1

• REGISTER ONLINE AT: WWW.DECLAREYOURSELF.ORG

COME SEE OUR BOOTH ON OCTOBER 25, ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TN IN FRONT OF THE STUDENT CENTER FOR INFORMATION AND SOME COOL FREE STUFF!

Voting is one of the greatest privileges we have in this country. With our vote we can change the course of history and allow our opinions and voice be heard. For more information contact us at: 800-777-7777 or visit us on line at: myspace.com

**VOTE AND
BE HEARD**

VIX. MySpace Page Link

<http://www.myspace.com/expressyourselfvote>

VX. Press Releases

i. Press Release for Youth Voters as Target Public

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT:

Viola West, Nina Tidwell,
Richard Halversen
Vote TN
901 219 8389
901 200 0000
voteTN@memphis.edu
(myspace page URL)

VoteTN Announces Initiative to Increase Youth Voter Turnout

Memphis, TN, 10/9/08 – Vote TN is a Tennessee non-profit dedicated to increasing voter turnout. Our focus is on educating and reaching the young first-time voters in Tennessee. The upcoming election provides an arena where the voice of Tennessee's youth can be heard loudly and clearly.

Many young eligible voters are interested in making a difference but have not registered. VoteTN is designed to facilitate voter registration primarily among the college-age students of 18-21.

Voters need to register not only before the election but before the cut-off date. VoteTN is establishing brochures and handouts to be distributed on college campuses throughout the state of Tennessee. Guest Speakers and live presentations will contribute to the project's success.

Not only will VoteTN focus the campaign on college campuses in Tennessee, but also in civic centers, large community events, and church youth groups, to reach and motivate as many young people as possible to vote.

Live events and presentations at college campuses throughout the state will encourage young people to become politically involved. *Express Yourself...Vote* exhibits displayed throughout campuses and civic centers in Tennessee will hand out stickers with the *Express Yourself...Vote* logo on them to participants who register on site. Those who sign up to be local advocates will receive an *Express Yourself...Vote* t-shirt.

VoteTN has created a MySpace page for easy access through the Internet. Students as well as other youths in Tennessee can join the VoteTN page and be provided with an easy alternative way of attaining information about the election and the candidates. With the help of local advocates and volunteers, VoteTN will increase voter turnout among the youth age bracket of eligible voters.

-MORE-

ABOUT Vote TN- Vote TN is a nonprofit organization designed to increase voter turnout primarily among the youngest age bracket of eligible voters and to enhance voter registration percentages.

-END-

ii. Press Release for General Public

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT:

Viola West, Nina Tidwell,
Richard Halversen
Vote TN
901 219 8389
901 200 0000
voteTN@memphis.edu
(myspace page URL)

VoteTN : ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR VOTER PARTICIPATION

Memphis, TN, 10/9/08 – Vote TN is a Tennessee non-profit dedicated to increasing voter turnout. Our focus is on educating and reaching the young first-time voters in Tennessee. The upcoming election provides an arena where the voice of Tennessee's youth can be heard loudly and clearly.

Statistics from the Tennessee Voter Turnout Rates among young citizens ages 18-29 in 2002 and 1994 state that women comprise 24 % of the voter turnout and men represent 17 percent.

There were an estimated 692,000 young people eligible to vote in U.S. Elections during the 2006 midterm. 21% of college students or graduates vote, and 61 % of citizens with a Bachelors' degree or more voted in 2002.

Utilizing multiple media channels is a vital part to Vote TN's campaign to reach these publics.. Newspaper Ads will be run in newspapers throughout the state of Tennessee as the election approaches. Radio commercials will be aired in Tennessee's four largest cities: Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville, and Chattanooga. Text messages will be sent 30 days before and 24 hours before the registration deadline.

Many young eligible voters are interested in making a difference but have not registered. VoteTN is designed to facilitate voter registration primarily among the college-age students of 18-21.

VoteTN has created a MySpace page for easy access through the Internet. Students as well as other youths in Tennessee can join the VoteTN page and be provided with an easy alternative way of attaining information about the election and the candidates. With the help of local advocates and volunteers, VoteTN will increase voter turnout among the youth age bracket of eligible voters.

-MORE-

ABOUT Vote TN- Vote TN is a nonprofit organization designed to increase voter turnout primarily among the youngest age bracket of eligible voters and to enhance voter registration percentages.

-END-

