

# ***HOW TO GET OUT THE VOTE***

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## C O N T E N T S

Campaign Manager v. GOTV Coordinator .....	3
A List of Very Important Lists .....	4
GOTV Roles and Responsibilities .....	6
An Ideal GOTV Timeline .....	8
Sample GOTV Volunteer Packet .....	12
Sample Vote Toste Palm Card .....	17

***This presentation focuses more upon the mechanics of a successful GOTV operation. For information regarding GOTV strategy, you should begin by consulting the GPUS Campaign Manual:***

***[http://www.gpus.org/committees/campaign/manual/manual\\_2004.pdf](http://www.gpus.org/committees/campaign/manual/manual_2004.pdf)***

## **Campaign Manager v. GOTV Coordinator**

In many local races, the campaign manager also plays the role of the GOTV coordinator. I would, however, **recommend assigning this role to anyone except the campaign manager**. In an all-volunteer campaign, the final weeks of the campaign are especially trying given all of the tasks that require completion. The GOTV coordinator needs a lot of time to put together a well-organized GOTV operation, and time is something most campaign managers lack. During the final month before the election, the campaign manager is still organizing canvassing and call-banking operations, adjusting the campaign's strategy, often working on additional campaign pieces, trying to stage high-visibility campaign events, and managing their candidate's and their volunteers' stress levels. Also, since the campaign manager is one of the people most familiar with the candidate and the territory, this person should be out in the field as much as possible on Election Day greeting and turning out voters.

***Who should be your GOTV Coordinator?*** Ideally, you want to recruit an experienced GOTV organizer, but as long as you can find a detail-orientated and computer-savvy person who can keep calm under pressure, you can always train your GOTV coordinator. In general, you should try to avoid assigning other campaign coordinators to this role because coordinators, like the campaign manager, are often the most effective field and poll workers.

## **A LIST OF VERY IMPORTANT LISTS**

*The foundation of a successful Get Out the Vote operation is a thorough voter identification database. Prior to Election Day, you should have had volunteers canvassing your district or ward with voter registration lists in order to identify your supporters and recruit precinct captains and local volunteers. Throughout this voter identification process, you should have had a data coordinator managing and recording this information. The week before Election Day an electronic copy of this data should be provided to the GOTV Coordinator. The GOTV Coordinator will use this data to compile and prepare the lists discussed below.*

### **SOME INITIAL STEPS:**

1. Every identified voter should be assigned a voter code number. Generally, this number includes a two-letter prefix that corresponds to the voter's polling station (for example, if Bob votes at a local high school, his code might be HS0001). You should be sure that every code has the same number of digits for sorting purposes (i.e. HS0009, HS0010, etc.; NOT HS9, HS10, etc.). This voter code will expedite the watching process.
2. Purchase several reams of colored paper. Every voter list should be color-coded by function for easy identification on Election Day. You should also invest in several packages of different colored highlighters.
3. You should prepare and print out copies of all the lists BEFORE ELECTION DAY.

### **THE LIST OF LISTS:**

**GOTV Master List:** This is a list of all of your identified voters sorted by voter code number. After printing a copy of this list, it should be securely posted to a wall in HQ prior to Election Day. As you receive your marked watcher lists on the day of the election, the names of your supporters who have already turned out to vote should be highlighted on the master list for easy reference.

**Watcher Lists:** A watcher list of identified supporters should be prepared for every polling station, and you should print two copies of each of these lists. These lists should be sorted alphabetically for your watchers' ease, but each voter's code number should also appear on this list. As your supporters arrive at the polls, your watchers will highlight the voters' names on their lists. You need two copies because every two hours your runners will trade one copy for the other. These marked copies will be brought back to HQ and cross-referenced with the GOTV master. When the runners eventually return a previously marked list to a polling site, they should also provide the watchers with a different colored highlighter (this will expedite the recording process back at HQ).

**Ranger Lists:** Separate ranger lists should be prepared for each precinct. These lists should be sorted by address. You should make several copies of these lists. Before you send your rangers into the field and after they return to HQ, they should cross-reference their lists with the GOTV master.

**Caller Lists:** Several caller lists should be prepared. You should sort them by voter code, but you may want to prepare several calling lists depending on the kind of demographic information you have at your disposal. For example, you might want a separate call list for elderly supporters, a separate one for Latinos, a separate one for single-parent households, etc. The more precise the call list, the better your callers' sales pitches can be.

***\*\*\*Note: While you should have these materials prepared and printed before Election Day, you should also be sure to equip your HQ with a reliable computer and printer. You may need to print additional lists or make adjustments to existing ones. You may also need to consult your voter identification database, which will also include the names of voters who do not necessarily support you.***

# GOTV VOLUNTEER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## HQ STAFF

**GOTV COORDINATOR (*Ideally NOT the Campaign Manager*):** Recruits GOTV volunteers, schedules them, prepares all GOTV materials and oversees the entire GOTV operation from headquarters on Election Day. This person should be detail-orientated and able to remain calm in a highly stressful environment.

**GOTV CO-COORDINATOR(S) (*Optional but Strongly Recommended*):** Assists GOTV coordinator with preparation for and management of GOTV operation. Specific duties might include: processing and dispatching of volunteers from HQ, voter list receiving and processing, managing calling and field operations, and notifying the media of any Election Day irregularities. Data and media coordinators are good candidates for these positions.

**CALLERS:** Call identified supporters and ask them if they've voted yet. Inform voters where to vote and ask them if they need a ride to the polls. Should be equipped with a list of voters to call and a script to follow on Election Day.

## POLL POSITIONS

**ENFORCER:** Ensures that your opposition doesn't get away with breaking election laws. Enforcers should initially report to headquarters. If any of your greeters or watchers report suspicious activity at a polling place, an enforcer will be dispatched to the location to address the situation. When an enforcer arrives at that polling place, s/he should speak to the volunteer who reported the suspected violation. The enforcer should then ask the poll workers on site to address the problem. If the problem persists, then the proper electoral authorities should be contacted. ***Note: If your poll workers believe that their rights or election laws are being violated, they should ALWAYS call GOTV HQ immediately to dispatch the enforcer. If possible, your poll workers should avoid getting into confrontational situations—leave confrontation to the enforcer. Your enforcer should be a person familiar with election laws and comfortable being placed in confrontational situations.***

**GREETERS:** Hold a campaign sign and greet voters as they approach their polling areas and pass out campaign literature and palm cards. Try to recruit your greeters from the local neighborhood and match your greeters to the demographics of your precincts (children often make excellent greeters at any polling station). You should provide your greeters with their initial set of materials the Sunday night before the election; your runners will replenish their materials as needed throughout Election Day.

**WATCHERS:** Charged with the crucial task of tracking voter turnout inside the polling stations. Assigned to man a particular precinct on Election Day and equipped with a voter list and a highlighter. This list includes only those voters who were identified as supporters. As the names of the voters are read aloud, watchers look to see if they appear on the list. Anytime one of these voters appears on the list, they highlight the voter's name. Every two hours a runner picks up the list and provides the watcher with a fresh one. Watchers should not leave their post until another volunteer relieves them.

**RUNNERS:** Drive to each polling station to re-stock greeters with materials and to pick up and drop off the watchers' voter lists. Also ensure that your volunteers working at the polls are well fed and in good spirits. Depending on the size of your district or ward, you may want to have multiple runners.

**CLOSERS:** Usually the last watchers at your polling stations, closers remain in the polling sites after the polls close to witness the counting and record the results for their precincts. Once the results are announced, closers should call HQ and report them.

## **FIELD WORKERS**

**DRIVERS:** Usually paired with a team of rangers, drivers ensure that your supporters get to the polls. They should report to HQ on Election Day to be assigned to a ranger team. They are deployed in precincts throughout the district and door-knock with rangers to *tell* supporters to get out and vote NOW. Drivers then transport these supporters to their polling places. Drivers should always be provided with a map of their assigned neighborhood, which has the target polling place clearly marked on it.

**RANGERS:** Rangers ensure that your voters get to the polls by knocking on the doors of supporters who have yet to vote. On Election Day, rangers should report to HQ to be assigned to a driver and at least one other ranger. These ranger teams are then deployed in precincts throughout the district where they will door-knock to *tell* supporters to get out and vote NOW. Rangers should make sure that voters head to the polls immediately. Anytime they speak with a voter, they should put a check next to their name on the walking list provided to them.

**SIGN HOLDERS (*Ideal but the Least Essential*):** During the day (especially during rush hours), you may want to have some of your volunteers stand on busy street corners with campaign signs.

## **AN IDEAL GOTV TIMELINE**

### **ONE MONTH BEFORE ELECTION DAY:**

- Recruit and train (if necessary) a GOTV coordinator.
- If you do not have a campaign headquarters, then you should find a place within your district or ward (perhaps your own apartment or house) that can serve as your GOTV headquarters.
- Review your state's absentee voting laws and begin to target likely absentee voter groups like the elderly in your ward or district.

### **THREE WEEKS BEFORE ELECTION DAY:**

- If you have the monetary resources, you should buy ad time on selected radio stations for the week before the election. You should also design print ads and purchase space in local newspapers.
- Place as many yard signs in your ward or district as possible.

### **TWO WEEKS BEFORE ELECTION DAY:**

- Contact existing volunteers and recruit new ones to volunteer for your campaign on Election Day; you should record their times of availability. Throughout the campaign you should frequently remind your volunteers to save their Election Day for the campaign (ask them to make arrangements to take time off from work or school).
- You should also begin purchasing, preparing and producing promotional materials for Election Day (special signs, palm cards, etc.). If you want to have your palm cards professionally printed, then you should probably prepare them much earlier.

### **ONE WEEK BEFORE ELECTION DAY:**

- A copy of the existing voter identification database should be provided to the GOTV coordinator. The GOTV coordinator, along with a few assistants, should convert this database into a set of color-coded lists. One master list should be prepared and posted in HQ, and all caller, ranger and watcher lists should be prepared and printed.
- Volunteers should be assigned GOTV roles, scheduled accordingly and their times of availability should be confirmed (this is also a good time to tell them to attend a GOTV meeting the Sunday night before Election Day). You should

prepare assignment packets for all of your volunteers, which you will distribute during your Sunday night briefing and training session.

- Throughout the week you should have volunteers calling previously identified voters to remind them to vote for your candidate.
- Review your state's election laws and make copies of statutes pertaining to polling places (the # of feet your greeters must be from the polling entrance, etc). You'll want to include copies of these laws in your assignment packets.
- Purchase some cell phones for volunteers that might not have their own.
- You might want to make arrangements with restaurants to provide food for your volunteers on Election Day. Locate a local bar or restaurant where you can host your victory party (whether you win or lose, you should always have a "victory" party).

### **SUNDAY BEFORE THE ELECTION:**

- Have your candidate engage in visibility exercises: shake hands in front of supermarkets, at bus stops, etc.
- Set up your headquarters.
- Hold a meeting for all of your Election Day volunteers. Distribute assignment packets and GOTV materials to your volunteers and brief them on the roles they'll be playing. This meeting should be as brief as possible, and you and your candidate should thank them for their support and get them excited about Election Day.

### **ONE DAY BEFORE THE ELECTION:**

- Have your candidate engage in visibility exercises: shake hands in front of supermarkets, at bus stops, etc. Remind your candidate to get a good night's rest.
- Distribute any remaining volunteer packets to anyone who could not attend the Sunday night GOTV meeting.
- Later that evening (11PM – 3AM) you should have a previously assembled "guerilla" team plaster campaign signs throughout the ward or district—on light polls, overpasses, etc. These signs might win some votes, and they will definitely energize your volunteers and supporters on Election Day.

### **ELECTION DAY:**

#### ***Morning (Opening – 10AM)***

- GOTV coordinator and other HQ staff should arrive at the headquarters an hour before the polls open.
- Watchers and greeters should arrive at their respective locations 15 minutes before their polls open and call into HQ. The enforcer and the runners should report to HQ 15 minutes before the polls open.

- After they check in at HQ, your runners should deliver water bottles and food to all of your poll station volunteers. Once food and water has been distributed, your runners should begin the watcher-list circuit (the lists should be exchanged every 2 hours).
- During the first two hours of morning poll operation, your candidate should stop by a couple of key polling locations to greet voters.
- If you have the resources, you might want to place sign-holders at busy intersections and bus stops during the morning rush.

#### **Mid-Morning (10AM – 12PM)**

- Callers should report for duty and begin contacting supporters who did not already show up at the polls (by now, your first round of watcher lists should be back at HQ). If you don't want your candidate to staff a polling location, s/he can participate in the phone calling (opinions differ on what the candidate should be doing during these "low-traffic" periods).
- As noon approaches, your runners should distribute another round of food to your poll station volunteers.

#### **Mid-Afternoon (12PM – 4PM)**

- Rangers and drivers should report for duty at around 1PM. They should be given assignments and provided with the appropriate materials. You *might* want your candidate to participate in this activity.
- If s/he isn't already at a polling station, you should have your candidate return to an important polling site before 4PM.
- Continue executing your calling operation.

#### **Late Afternoon/Early Evening (4PM – 7PM)**

- As the dinner hour approaches, your runners should distribute another round of food to your poll station volunteers.
- If you choose not to assign your candidate to a single polling station, your candidate should resume touring high-voter density polling stations at regular intervals until the polls close.
- Continue executing your ranger and calling operations.
- If you have the resources, you might want to place sign-holders at busy intersections and bus stops during the afternoon rush.

#### **Evening (7PM – Closing)**

- During the last two hours of poll operation, you may want to recall your watchers with their lists and have them join your ranger and calling operations to maximize voter turnout.
- Depending on where you think your level of support is at, you may want to initiate cold calling (especially if you didn't achieve your voter identification goals). Your callers will probably hate you if you ask them to do this, but it can be an effective way to boost your results.
- Cease all ranger and calling operations 10 minutes before the polls close. Tell them to go to the site of the victory party.

- Have your closers report to their polling-station assignments 15 minutes before the polls close. Be sure they check in via phone ASAP prior to closing to ensure that you have all of your polling stations covered.

### **Closing**

- At closing time, ask all remaining GOTV staff to please leave HQ and head to the site of the victory party.
- As the numbers start coming in, only the campaign manager, the media coordinator, the candidate, and the candidate's loved ones should be there to hear the initial results (regardless of the outcome, the candidate will need some time to compose herself/himself).
- Once the results are all reported, the media coordinator should fax the appropriate release or media advisory to the press (in the case of a victory, you might want to stage a media event), and the candidate should head to the victory party to address her/his supporters.

***SAMPLE GOTV VOLUNTEER PACKET FROM  
THE 2004 TOSTE SENATE CAMPAIGN***

# VOTE TOSTE GOTV VOLUNTEER SHEET

Name: Frank C.

## Assignment(s):

Job	Shift	Location
Watcher	10AM – 2PM	DM

## KEY TO GOTV POLL ASSIGNMENT CODES

Precinct	Place	Address	Code
2810	Regency A	1 Regency Plaza	RE
2812	Regency B	1 Regency Plaza	RE
2860	Regency C	1 Regency Plaza	RE
2862	Dominca Manor	100 Atwells Ave.	DM
2861	Carl Lauro School	99 Europe St.	CL
2863	Parenti Villa	25 Tobey Ave.	PV
2869	Aaron Briggs	301 Cranston St.	AB
2864	Olney Towers	1 Valley St.	OT
2870	Joslin Rec. Cntr.	17 Hyat	JR
2842	Manton Mngt. A	31 Salmon St.	MA
2859	Manton Mngt. B	31 Salmon St.	MA
2867	Manton Mngt. C.	31 Salmon St.	MA
2865	Engine 6	489 Hartford Ave.	FH
2852	Engine 15	136 Mt. Pleasant Ave.	MP
2866	Pocasset Manor	20 Kelley St.	PM
2896	Webster Ave. School	191 Webster Ave.	WS
N/A	Toste Headquarters	85 Oak St.	HQ

**TOSTE HQ PHONE #: 401-XXX-XXXX**

# VOTE TOSTE GET OUT THE VOTE TASK SHEET

**\* YOU ARE A WATCHER! \***

## **DUTIES:**

You are charged with the very important task of tracking voter turnout inside one of our polling stations. On Election Day, you will be assigned to a particular precinct and will be equipped with a voter list and a highlighter. This list will include ONLY THOSE VOTERS WHO SUPPORT US AND VOTERS WHO WE SUSPECT NO LONGER LIVE IN THE DISTRICT. As the names of the voters are read aloud, you should look to see if they're on our list. Anytime one of these voters appears on the list, you should highlight their name. Every two hours one of our runners will pick up your list and give you a fresh one. This list will be used to ensure that our supporters turn out and vote for Toste.

## **SOME POINTERS:**

\*If you are working inside a polling place, you CANNOT wear campaign gear of any kind nor can you campaign for Jeff in any way.

\*When you enter the polling site, identify yourself to the poll workers as a watcher for Jeff. They should provide you with a table to sit at.

\*Make sure that you hear every name; if the names aren't read loudly and clearly, you should ask the poll worker to repeat them.

\*Do not show your list to anyone and only surrender it to the runner who should show you their Toste Campaign I.D. badge and have a replacement list for you.

\*If you suspect the Caprio team is violating elections law in any manner, you should call John immediately at **401.XXX.XXXX** to dispatch one of our poll enforcers.

**IF YOU ARE AN “OPENER”:**

On Election Day, you should arrive at the polling place at least fifteen minutes before the polls open at 7AM. Once you arrive at the polling place, please call John to check-in if possible. If you are the first watcher assigned to a poll, you will be provided with a voter list this evening. DO NOT LOSE OR MISPLACE THIS LIST! This list contains highly sensitive information that we cannot allow to be circulated.

**IF YOU ARE WAITING TO BE RELIEVED OF DUTY:**

You should not leave the polling place for any reason until another watcher arrives to relieve you of your duty. If your shift has ended and you are still waiting for another watcher to arrive, you should contact John at HQ ASAP. We will send someone to relieve you immediately. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE THE POLLING SITE UNTIL SOMEONE ELSE ARRIVES TO RELIEVE YOU OF YOUR POST.

**IF YOU ARE A “CLOSER”:**

If you are closing a poll, you should remain in the polling site after it's closed to witness the counting and hear the results for the precinct. On a sheet of paper, write down the number of Toste votes and Caprio votes respectively. Then call John and report the results to him immediately.