The Importance of Building a Grassroots Campaign

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Grassroots Movements versus Grassroots Campaigning

A grassroots movement, such as the tea party movement, is different from utilizing a grassroots network in a political campaign.

A movement is started by a few individuals and spreads with, often, little central control.

A campaign utilizing a grassroots network has central control (the campaign), but relies on unpaid individuals to carry out tasks.
Why Build a Grassroots Network?

- In any campaign, there is too much for only paid staff to do.
  - Door to Door
  - Phone Banking
  - Letters to the Editor
  - Attending events in t-shirts on behalf of the campaign

- Volunteer activity shows momentum.
  - In 2008, the Obama Campaign had so many people out doing activities that there was a sense on inevitability.
  - In 2010, the same could be said about Republican campaigns.

- There is no reason not to.
  - The time it takes to build a good grassroots network will repay itself.
How to Build a Grassroots Network

1. Determine the type of grassroots organization that you will need to setup to accomplish your goal.
   A. County-by-County Organizations
      A. County Chairs and Co-Chairs
      B. County Volunteer Coordinators
      C. County Social Network Coordinators
   B. Area Organizations
      A. Statewide Regional Chairs
      B. Countywide Regional Chairs
      C. City/Village Chairs
      D. Precinct Chairs
How to Build a Grassroots Network

2. Identify issue groups that are supportive and can help provide volunteers.
   A. If your candidate is pro-life, pro-life groups can be great resources for finding great volunteer leaders. The same can be said of most issue groups.
   B. Appeal to the leaders of the issue groups you are targeting. An influential leader can attract volunteers to a campaign if they are supportive.

3. Contact each local county party and political group to find leaders.
   A. While county parties are often utilized, local clubs are many times forgotten and can be a great place to find help.
How to Build a Grassroots Network

4. Appoint individuals to serve in grassroots leadership positions.
   A. Empowering and giving ownership to individuals increases their desire to help.
      a) Titles are a good way to do this. Calling someone a County Campaign Chair makes them feel more involved.

5. Setting high but manageable goals gives your volunteer leaders something to work towards and a sense of accomplishment.
   A. Recruiting 10 new volunteers a months.
   B. Having 1 letter to editor submitted per month.
How to Build a Grassroots Network

6. Reward grassroots leaders that perform well and reach goals.
   A. Special t-shirts for top producers.
   B. Coffee or lunch with the candidate.

7. Keep your grassroots leaders updated as to what is going on in the campaign and give them opportunities to be involved in decisions.
   A. Weekly e-mails
   B. Monthly conference calls
   C. Organizational meetings
   D. Let your leaders advise you to what events the candidate should attend in their area.
How to Build a Grassroots Network

8. Don’t ever waste any of your grassroots leaders or volunteers time.
   A. A surefire way to lose a volunteer is to have them do something that they think is not worth their time.
      a) Make sure to explain the importance of what they are doing.
      b) Make sure each volunteer feels appreciated.
Conclusion

The most important thing to remember when building a grassroots organization and when working with the grassroots is that they are helping you.

Be appreciative and try to give them the tools they need to complete their tasks.