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Re: General Election Strategy

The purpose of this memo is to present a general election strategy for the 2016 Presidential campaign between Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, and Republican nominee, Chris Christie. In addition, this proposed strategy is presented to fulfill the application requirements for job title Campaign Strategist. This strategy will address Clinton's political platforms, discuss her strengths and weaknesses, provide an electoral strategy, and deliver descriptive examples of biography, issue-oriented, and attack literature advertisements.

2016 General Election Strategy: Hillary Clinton vs. Chris Christie

As we are aware, Clinton lost the Democratic nomination to President Obama in 2008, even after securing the popular vote during the primaries by almost 300, 000 votes. Additionally, in 2011, polls showed that Hillary Clinton was a more favored politician than the President, and most importantly, exit polls in the 2014 primaries showed Hillary Clinton as the favored front-runner among both Democrats and Republicans for the 2016 Presidential election (Mitchell 1). It is beyond obvious that the American people want, and has wanted, Hillary as their President since 2008.

However, it is the responsibility of the campaign strategists to ensure a victory for Hillary Clinton. The political stars have been aligned because all factors have fell in place for Hillary to be a prime and prepped Presidential candidate. Even more experienced after an attempted run for the nomination, this has allowed strategists to hone their skills at deciding which campaign approach would prove the most effective. Despite Hillary's continuous popularity in the American political arena, there are of course

those who have an immense distaste for her (Mitchell 1). More importantly, there is a widespread weariness of the Democratic Party, as the 2014 primary election results exemplified. The Presidential race of 2016 is going to be incredibly close; much closer than both the 2008 and 2012 Presidential elections. Regardless of the projections, the Hillary Clinton campaign needs to stay focused on strategies that work, and in a highly mobilized society, it is important that our candidate create strong relationships among the voters.

Field-Oriented Election Strategy

Research has shown that field-driven campaigns are often viewed as the most effective, but are rarely utilized on a large scale in national political campaigns. President Obama was a two-term president primarily on the basis that he had an outstanding strategist team and field operation. Therefore, drawing from Democratic predecessors, and in order to establish a well-developed and strong Field Staff, mobilizing and gaining momentum among the youth is of the utmost importance to the success of this Presidential campaign. As of now, the most common age in America is 22 (Barton, Castillo, & Petrie, 297). When we consider Hillary Clinton's age compared to Chris Christie's, we can see why generational disconnects are said to exist. Additionally, and according to research, one of the main reasons Hillary lost votes in the 2007-2008 Democratic primary against President Obama was due to the mass amount of support Obama's Field Staff was able to generate on behalf of their candidate (Barton et al. 301). Chris Christie is also younger than Hillary and does possess a strong brigade of young Republican supporters. Increasing Field Staff, which is primarily

compiled of young college graduates, will be the most effective way for our campaign to appeal to the younger generations of voters.

Strengths

In addition to a strong Field Staff, having our candidate ready and available to campaign is the primary strength of this campaign strategy. Unlike the mass majority of Presidential candidates within recent decades, the fact that Hillary is currently unemployed greatly works to the campaign's advantage (Pearce 4). Christie, for example, is the sitting Governor of New Jersey and is highly involved in the American Governor's Association. Unlike Hillary's Presidential nomination campaign of 2007-2008, in which she was Senator of New York, she is currently void of employment obligations. This greatly frees her schedule to commit to numerous political appearances, and travel extensively without having to worry about other work requirements. This will literally place the Hillary Clinton we know and love in an entirely new light. In addition to the aforementioned strengths, Hillary Clinton's seasoned and effective political career speaks volumes on her behalf. She has truly experienced almost every national position within all areas of government since being First Lady of Arkansas, First Lady of the United States, Commissioner on Healthcare Reform, United States Senator, United States Secretary of State, and the first female to win a Presidential nomination election (Shambaugh 4). She has overcome adversity, gridlock, and excelled during times of crisis. Most importantly, Hillary Clinton does not have a stone that has been unturned; she remains one of the most vetted politicians in American history, and at this point in her career, this is considered strength rather than a weakness.

Electoral Strategy

As expected, our electoral strategy will begin long before Election Day approaches; in fact, it has already started. Building further upon our strong field –driven strategy, our electoral strategy will focus on ground operations to get out the vote. With particular attention being paid to battleground states, per usual, coupled with a strong presence in states with high rates of minorities, ensuring that all qualified voters are not only registered but able to make it to the polls on E-Day to vote will remain the primary goal. According to research compiled on election zoning, voter registration, and voter turnout, the GOP’s strategy has remained at attempts to redistrict areas with large populations of minorities (Barton et al. 300). The greater field staff presence we have overall, the more effective our GOTV operations will be. As expected, voters with poor voting records, newly registered voters, registered Independents, and recorded undecided voters will be the primary targets of the Field Staff’s GOTV operations.

Weaknesses

One of the primary weaknesses Hillary faces at this juncture in her political career, ironically, is that she is such a seasoned politician, especially compared to Christie. Since George W. Bush left office, the most popular consensus is that life-long politicians are not able to lead the change that Washington needs. Christie is less intertwined with the White House and Washingtonians than Hillary. Worse case scenario, this will make her less appealing to the blue-collar working class compared to Christie. This may create an image of Hillary that did not exist 20 or even 10 years ago among most Americans. It appears as though her first Presidential bid and term as

Secretary of State have somewhat branded her as an elite completely separated from normalcy, and as we know, this is not the case.

Despite the aforementioned weaknesses, an effective strategist can find innovative and successful ways at turning negative focus into positive exposure. In order to off-set the anticipated attacks from Governor Christie regarding Hillary, our campaign will need to create, publish, and strategically distribute various types and styles of political advertisements.

Biography Advertisement

As we know, Hillary's biography far encompasses the scope of a political advertisement. An effective ad will highlight and emphasize her previous accomplishments within various positions she has held in political office. Rather than focusing on the amount of time she has spent serving children and families, we need to reiterate her impact on policies regarding healthcare, human and civil rights, and equality throughout all social institutions. These are the primary principles on which Hillary Clinton the politician were founded over forty years ago, and these are the same principles in which Americans wish to see Washington govern by to this day. This is the type of Hillary Clinton that we need to portray so as to exemplify that Hillary is "Everyone's American" because of her ability to overcome adversity. Instead of spending a small fortune of treasured campaign funding on television advertisements, I would recommend that ads regarding Hillary's biography be sent to voters via postal mailers and canvass literature. This literature would best serve being distributed to a large range of voters, especially registered Independents, and including those that lean or typically vote Republican.

Issue Advertisement

The issue advertisement should focus specifically on the economy. The economy continues to be the most prevalent issue facing the country according to an overwhelming number of polled Americans. Unfortunately for the Democratic Party, public recognition of the improvement of economic conditions during Obama's presidency remained extremely low and ill-accepted (Mitchell 1). Therefore, an advertisement highlighting economic improvements, as well as new economic ideas will be vital. Similar to her predecessor, Hillary will need to focus heavily on alternative sources of energy as a means for job growth and development (Pearce 12). Alternative energy continues to be a growing concern and popular topic among the American public. This is an opportunity to educate Americans on alternative energy and the ways in which it can benefit the economy. Showing pictures and information about the wind turbines in Texas, for example, will be a great way to familiarize more Americans with this alternative energy source. This advertisement should be run on all types of media outlets such as the television, radio, and printed literature for mailing and distribution. Additionally, this advertisement will have to be modified dependent upon its specific area of release with special attention being paid to areas where coal production is still prevalent in terms of consumption, consumer opinion, employment, and manufacturers.

Attack Advertisement

The most effective forms of attack advertising during Presidential campaigns are often in the forms of literature either left by a canvasser or through the postal service. An attack ad against Chris Christie should carefully focus on

his negative leadership traits. Rather than focusing on blemishes on his personal record, or even his political record, it will be important to show his inability to remain calm in public situations, especially during times of ridicule and criticism. The position of the President is by far the most invasive and critical political positions within American government. Showing a picture of Christie getting loud and hateful with an inquisitive reporter and critic would provide an accurate depiction of the imagery and message we are trying to portray (Redlawsk & Koning 2). The ad would provide the opportunity to exemplify Hillary's ability to be firm yet respectable in similar circumstances. Showing an image of her during the Benghazi questioning before Congress, for example, would be a great image to include in the ad as well. Captioning the image of Christie with the words, " Shut up! You'll talk when I'm finished!" exemplifies his disgusting attitude, and we can reiterate that this is how he will act if elected President and having to deal with Congress (Redlawsk & Koning 3). Most importantly, this will give our campaign the chance to suggest that Christie will fail to act as an effective bi-partisan President, which will hopefully deter Independent voters away from him.

Summary

In summation, Hillary Clinton has the clear advantage over Republican nominee, Chris Christie, yet her success depends on our ability to create the best and innovative election strategies to be executed. If allowed to join the Hillary Clinton Presidential Campaign as a campaign strategist, I will work diligently to ensure our victory to the White House. This strategy will address Hillary Clinton's political platforms, discussed her strengths and

weaknesses, provided an electoral strategy, and delivered descriptive examples of biography, issue-oriented, and attack literature advertisements.

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