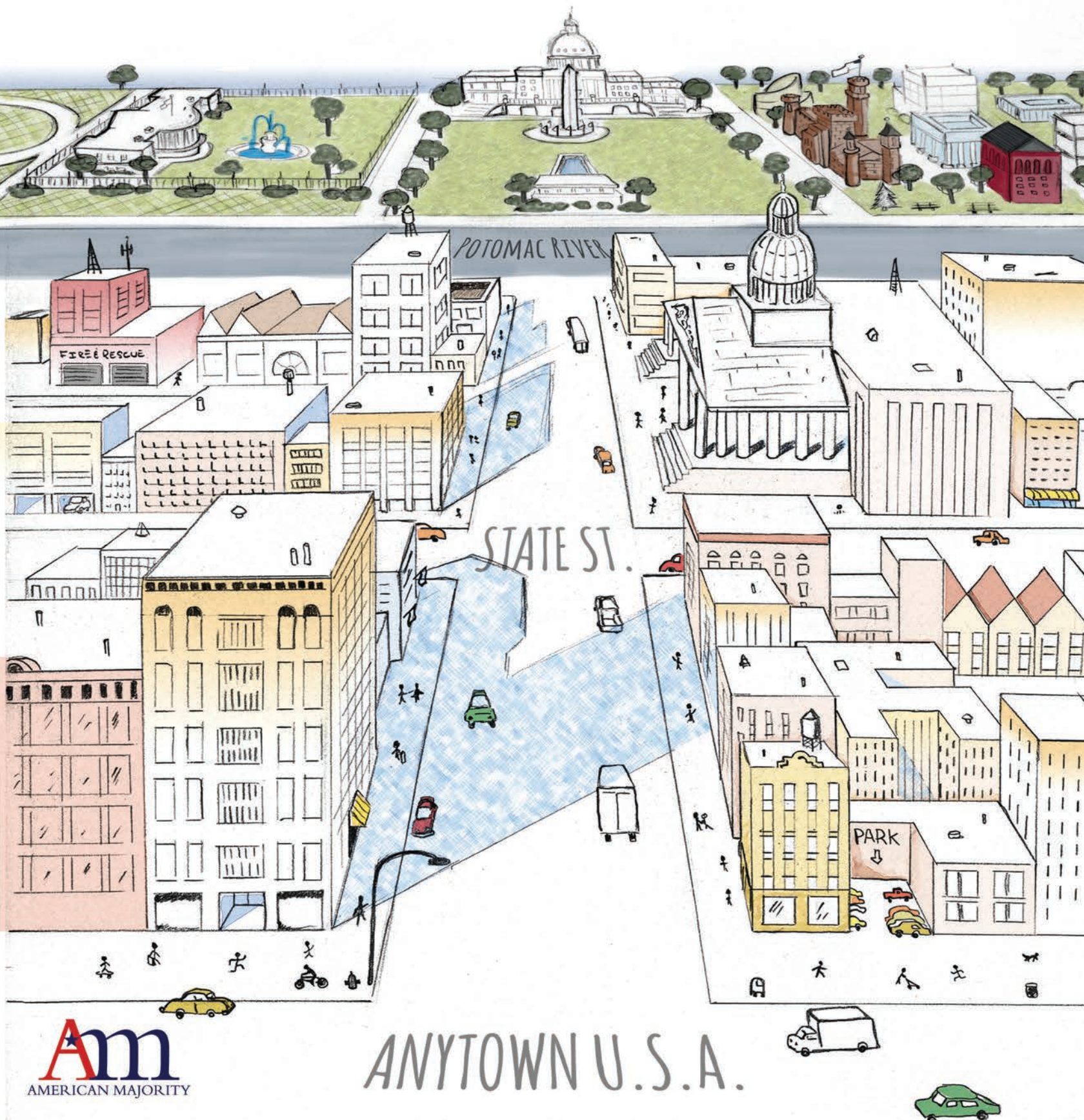


# EFFECTIVISM

ACTIVISM THAT WORKS





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## E•FFEC•TI•VISM (*noun*)

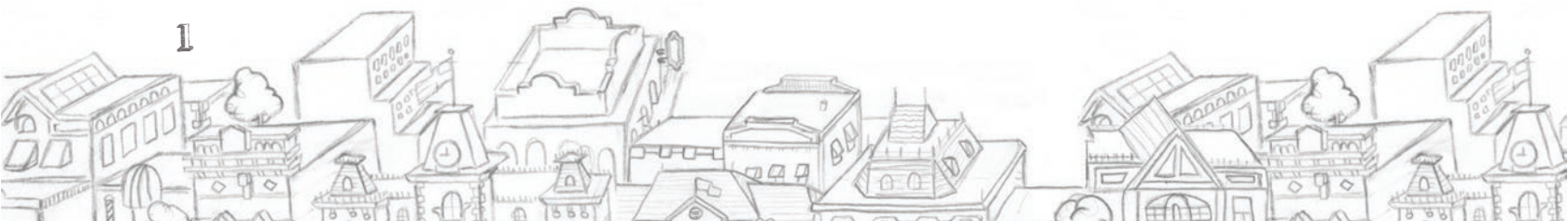
1. Focused, targeted actions that result in changing the political environment within a specific time period.

## DERIVATIVES

e•ffec•ti•vists (*noun*)

antonyms: ‘appearance of motion’, etc.

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# WELCOME

We've all seen a hamster on a wheel, exercising, spinning endlessly. It's a blur of activity—and goes absolutely nowhere. Consider then a construction crew building a house: they are also active, but in the end there is a successful product—a home. The building is evidence that, with a systematic, purposeful approach and a goal in mind, there can be a meaningful end to your efforts.

Many conservative activists fall into the habit of showing up with no real purpose in mind. They get involved in tasks and groups that don't actually bring success. Forwarding emails, attending conferences with like-minded people, or periodically rallying ad nauseam on the steps of a state capitol makes people feel like they're accomplishing something—and it changes nothing. Like the hamster on the wheel, there is motion as conservatives churn away, but they get nowhere.

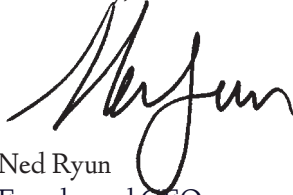
What if conservatives shifted their way of thinking? What if they created their own blueprint and became the architects of their own work—instead of simply following the plans of others? What if they found specific purpose and targeted a goal? Then their activism would become truly effective, and they would become effectivists (effective + activist = effectivist). Instead of simply sending along those emails, activists could become effective Wiki contributors, fighting the information war online. Instead of going to rallies on Saturdays, effectivists could canvass and hardwire political precincts. Think of the number of registered voters effectivists could locate if they spent weekends in their own neighborhoods instead of boarding a bus to D.C.

American Majority is not interested in leading protests, rallying crowds, or staging photo opportunities. We are interested in action. Action must be purposeful because purposeful action is the soul of revolution. And we need a revolution in America: not of guns and swords, but of the American people taking their government back. This revolution means rising up and reminding elected officials that they serve the people; the people do not serve them.

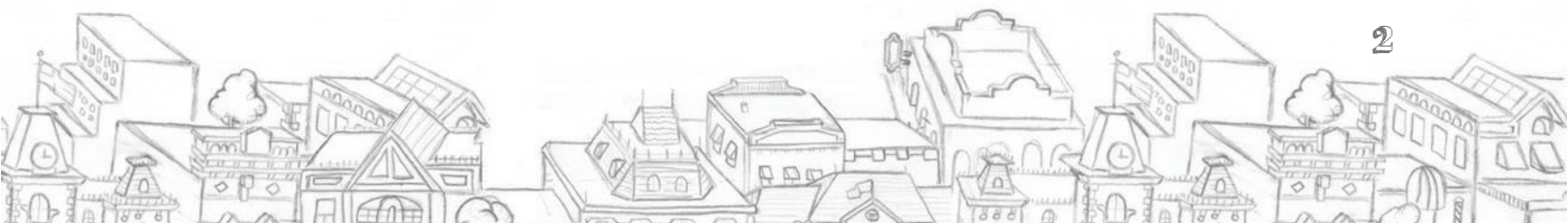
If enough of you who read this Effectivism manual take its ideas and information to heart and begin to build political infrastructure both online and off, we can and will change the direction of this nation.

All that's required is your willing hands and hearts.

For Liberty,



Ned Ryun  
Founder and CEO  
American Majority



# ORGANIC POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

At this point in your life, you've probably been a cog in someone else's political machine. You've helped out whenever (or if) the right conservative candidate or campaign came around. But is that all you want for yourself politically? Do you want to be that proverbial warm body turned out repeatedly by the latest top-of-the-ticket personality?

Do you believe you are achieving anything by attending rally after rally, waving signs, and passing out copies of the Constitution? Is this battle over who will govern our nation an "our team versus their team" sporting event? With its "win some, lose some" mentality? Just an event you attend for a few hours on a Saturday and then go home?

Think Global, Act Local



In our trainings, we talk about "Thinking Global, Acting Local"—running where it most directly impacts your community. Now let's go green another way: what is "organic\* political engagement"? No, I don't mean drinking raw milk, but real-life grass roots do grow best when they're sprouting naturally from the ground-up (insert joke about politics providing plenty of fertilizer here).

This is what the Left has learned, internalized, and mastered. It's about showing up over and over and over again.

But instead of wearing yourself out on unchanging, year-in-and-year-out exercises, wouldn't you rather create—and then nurture—a sustained current of political activism that runs throughout your life, family, and community? How about one day possibly becoming a powerful, sought-after endorsement instead of only getting tapped as a volunteer?

What if you were to become a coalition leader who campaigners actually listen to? What if you were the first stop any prospective candidate in your area made as he or she considered a run? Or if your opinions became so valued that you attained the status of a trusted advisor? Shouldn't you have the grassroots muscle behind you to counteract the

usual suspects in the standard steering committee or kitchen cabinet surrounding an establishment candidate?

These are a few of your possibilities once you become an engaged citizen or member of a strong group over time. It requires more than simply ramping up and "rah-rah-rah-ing" once campaign season arrives. It's about being an ever-present source of information and support (or criticism, if need be) so that those whom we put in public office do not forget who sent them to the capital.



## Naked Self-Interest

The other side of the aisle instinctively gets this. It's why they have "boots on the ground" in every major metropolitan area in America. Organizations like the AFL-CIO, Democracy for America, or ThinkProgress have field staff across the states. Each understands that consistently interacting in neighborhoods, knowing your precincts and wards right down to the last household, and turning those targeted voters out on Election Day swings local elections.

They channel mountains of funding and dedicate plenty of staff to maintaining a presence in cities. They routinely show up at public hearings—and nail voter registration drives.

The Left understands that politics is always a game of "what have you done for me lately?" and strives mightily to keep their talking points and message (almost always one of naked self-interest) squarely in voters' faces.

***And it works.***

## Shaping the First Draft of History

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Longtime community activists are the go-tos for center-left groups. Their opinions and preferences become the first draft of local political history. They get to put their favorite sons forward for office, whether it's via a primary, party convention, general election, or straight political appointment. This is why it's vital to be a hyper-involved member of your party's base.

Left-leaning groups do this because they know politics is a game of musical chairs. With people rising through the system, turnover is a constant and political control is perpetually up for grabs. Unions, minorities—whoever wants a piece of the governing pie (and access to media limelight or taxpayer funds)—know that they have to continually groom a farm team of capable, competent, and credible individuals who can speak to local concerns.

It's important that these standard bearers have solid reputations. Unveiling polished people when presenting them for an appropriate level of office allows for the seamless transition of power. Thus party control (some would say co-opting) is ensured for yet another term.

## War Games

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So shift your paradigm until you view the “game” of politics like they do!

Understand that while you do post points on the board, it's also a war out there.

Achieve consistent victories!

Work like them! Go on the record and “present” like them. As often as possible. Every single officeholder, government authority, and journalist (in old and new media alike) should know your name and who you are. And they should also know that you will never go away quietly, but will voice your concerns across every available venue and medium.

## A Series of Locks and Dams

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Then, when it's that time once again for a business community / chamber of commerce / party elders / Powers That Be—approved candidate, campaign, or initiative to be rolled out and fed to the masses, you'll be utterly and completely prepared to properly assess their bona fides. You will have done your homework. You'll have research in hand. You'll know where they stand. You'll know their ambitions. And you will have known this prior to the announcement that they're running. There is absolutely no reason why an educated citizen or group of citizens can't turn the work and life skills they've amassed over decades and focus them on the political ruling class foisted upon them. Candidate and steering committees, and regular vetting, surveys, and feedback can all be staples of your weekly and monthly political life.

Present your philosophy, orientation, and demands in an assertive but measured way and officeholders, campaign aides, and staffers will see you as a factor to be dealt with.

Because you're now part of the political ecosystem. The same one they live and breathe in.

And you don't much care for how polluted it is.



# back to civics class

## State

### Legislative Branch

Responsibilities include formulating public policy, approving the budget, levying taxes, and confirming appointments. The titles, terms lengths, and number of representatives in each house vary by state.

### Judicial Branch

The State Supreme Court is the highest court and hears appeals from lower courts. Judges might be partisan or non-partisan and elected or appointed, depending on the state.

### Executive Branch

The Governor is the chief of the executive branch, which also includes the Lieutenant Governor, the Attorney General, the Governor's Cabinet, and most state agencies.

## Local Government

### County

Counties vary in size, operation, and scope of authority. Responsibilities may include setting and collecting property and other taxes, administering elections, maintaining rural roads, and overseeing certain aspects of public education. In recent years, county authority has increasingly expanded into the social services and economic development.

There are three basic county governance models:

1. Commission: Commissioners are elected to a board, and each one responsible for a specific aspect of local government, such as police, public works, or finance. The commission has both legislative and executive powers. One commissioner is designated as chairman or mayor and presides over meetings.

2. Commission-Administrator: An elected council oversees general administration, makes policy, and sets the budget. The council hires an administrator or manager to oversee day-to-day operations. Council members take turns serving as mayor on a rotating basis. This form of county government is the most common.
3. Council-Executive: A county executive acts as chief administrative officer and has veto authority over the county board.

## Municipality/City

Municipalities vary in type and structure by state. Incorporated towns and cities must meet a state-determined population minimum before be granted incorporated status. Municipalities provide local citizens with utilities, road maintenance, and safety services, among other things.

### There are 4 basic forms of municipal government:

1. Commission: Resembles county-level equivalent.
2. Council-Administrator: Resembles county-level equivalent.
3. Mayor-Council: The mayor has executive powers while an elected council has legislative powers. The mayor is directly elected, and is often full-time and salaried. Depending on the city charter, the mayor might have weak or strong powers.
4. Representative Town Meeting: All citizens may participate in discussion, and individuals are chosen by the electorate to represent them in voting. The selectmen are responsible for implementing policy. This form is rare, and is mainly found in New England.

### School Districts/Boards

These elected governing boards oversee public education, usually at the county level. Board size and length of terms vary by state. School boards have varying degrees of responsibility, often including setting the school calendar, choosing curriculum, levying taxes for education funding, developing a budget, appointing a Superintendent, and approving charter and other alternative schools.

# POLITICS:

## a contact sport

Ever see that Science Channel show called “How It’s Made”? It’s amazing how they actually make the sweet stuff we eat. I mean, really, who was the first guy who figured out those giant factory schematics—all to churn out chocolate in different sizes and shapes?

Politics is no different. It looks complicated but you don’t need a camera crew to wade hip-deep into your local or state government. Turns out most of those musty old civics books were correct—governing bodies are structured very similarly across the country. It’s up to you to pick your point of entry.

### An Offer They Can’t Refuse

Ever tried to call your congressman in D.C.? How did that go? You may not realize it, but you can have much more impact reaching out to your local office-holders than your higher-ups. It may seem like a small thing to buttonhole your polyester-clad city councilman or speak with that serious lady who sits on the school board. Yet folks at these lower levels have tremendous say over how literally millions and millions of your tax dollars are spent.

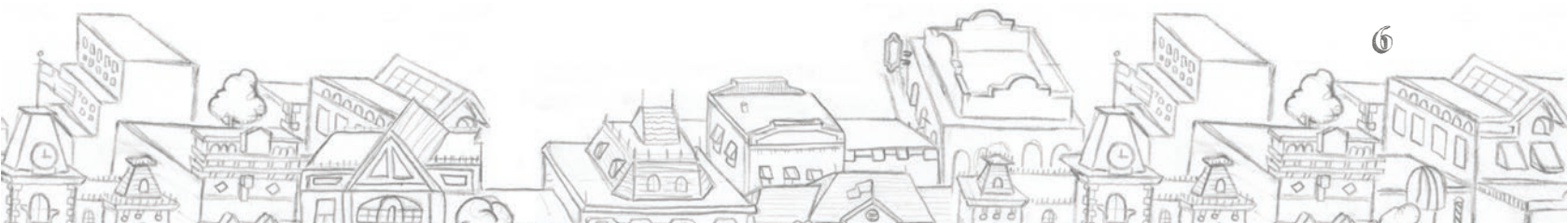
Don’t believe it? Check out the checkbook of your average county executive (who is unelected in many instances), or unearth the percentage of your annual local budget that is mandated to be put into “education” (70% sometimes). It adds up.

The good news is that you can get to these people. No, not in a Mafioso-type way—but you can and should seek them out wherever possible. Put monthly meetings and public hearings on your calendar. You have to be deliberate, but it’s not difficult to locate those much vaunted public servants and give them a piece of your mind, or even just observe them at work.



### Hitting the Easy Button

Find that sweet spot between your personal hot-button issues, your group’s reason for existing, and the people in government who are directly responsible for addressing these issues in your community. Once you do, you have a powerful channel for action. In bureaucratic circles they call this the “Point of Contact” (POC), and it simply describes the person on the hook for decision making and implementation. You’ll be surprised at how many bad governing decisions you can nip in the bud with concentrated, focused attention—often from behind a public microphone in three-minute increments.





# COMMUNITY ORGANIZING



Effectivists must begin community organizing at the most basic, local level: the political precinct. Every locale is different. Perhaps where you are, your elected officials are already conservative. Maybe they are not. In either case, it's important to identify every registered voter and turn them out for the conservative campaign or cause of your choice. That's the name of the game.

It is essential to have a small group committed to winning your precinct because being an effectivist is not just about holding elected officials accountable—it's about hardwiring and winning precincts for every election, whether local, state, or federal.

As an effectivist, devote time to get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts, informing voters in your precinct about candidates and how to vote wisely on initiatives. Also collaborate with your county, district, and state parties.

Put together your precinct team of effectivists. Think of them as your very own political Special Forces, a group who will charge up a hill, rain or shine. You'll need folks to phone bank, go door to door, and recruit volunteers to do door-to-door work on the weekends. It is essential that you have a small group committed to winning your precinct, because it's not simply about party governance—it's about hardwiring and winning your precinct for every election, whether local, state, or federal.

Continually recruit folks to work with you to lay out a strategy for covering your entire precinct. Do you do it in bite-sized chunks? Where do you focus first? How much time do you have? Take the time to put a comprehensive plan in place up front and then stick to it! You'll need one or two people who are computer savvy to keep an up-to-date database of voters.

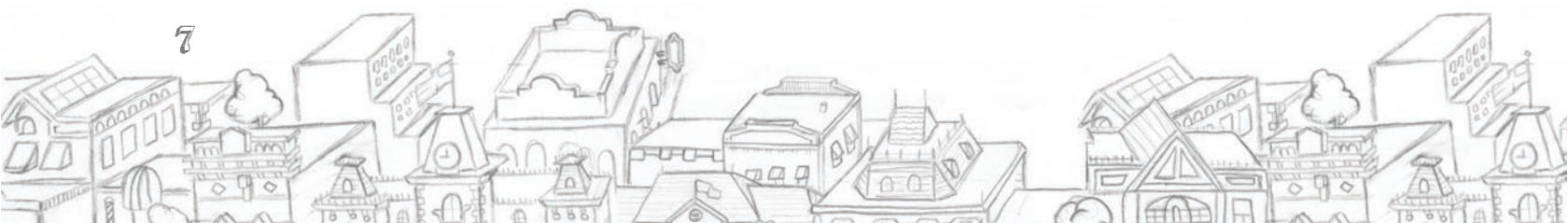
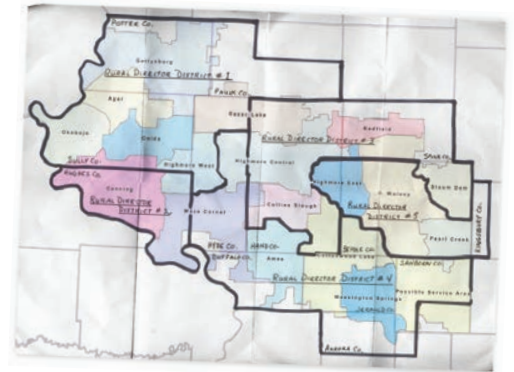
Your boots on the ground—a team of 10 to 16—will rotate doing door-to-door and phone survey work.

## Precinct Maps

You can buy these from your county clerk or, in some states, download and print them from the county clerk website. The bigger, the better. Laminate them, stick them on your wall, and draw all over them with dry-erase markers. Write the total number of votes in your precinct. How are you going to find these numbers? Go to the secretary of state or state board of elections websites and find the numbers for your precinct.

By studying the historical trends of both voter turnout and voter registration, you will begin to understand how many votes you will need to win your precinct. Once you get your numbers in place, you can pull together a systematic approach to how many voters you must contact. It's important to get an idea of how many voters you feel confident will vote the right way every time.

Think of it this way: if there are 1,321 voters in your precinct, you will need to know with utter certainty that you have 687 voters who will vote for your candidate. (Always employ the 52% rule to give yourself margin for error.) And then turn them all out on Election Day. What does this mean? You may not have to hit every door in your precinct to come up with the votes needed to win your precinct—you just need to hit on the right doors!





# WANTED

## EFFECTIVISTS

As an informed voter, you are an asset to any campaign. Yes, your financial donations are highly important at all race levels. But if you actively volunteer to distribute signs, go door to door, or make phone calls, you are doing tasks that are imperative to the success of any campaign. In the end, every campaign needs attention, energy, and volunteers.

Types of candidates and campaigns:

- Local: City Council and Mayor, School Board, Judge
- County: County Commissioner, County Clerk, Court Clerk, Sheriff, Judge
- State: State Representative, State Senator, Gubernatorial, Attorney General, Supreme Court
- National: House, Senate, Presidential

It is easier to get involved than you may realize. There is always a need within campaigns for energetic and willing volunteers. Always. No matter what you perceive your individual talents to be, there is a place for you on the campaigns that you are interested in supporting. Plus, campaign volunteering is an excellent way to meet people. Get out there and network with other effectivists and candidates. Create a stepping stone for greater involvement in the future.

### Planting the Flag

Signs: Campaign signs are a great way to increase name recognition and remind voters who the candidate is and why they are running. Place them in high-traffic areas, and make sure that they are clearly visible.



**QUICK TIP:** Put signs in visible but legal places.

There is a lot of confusion on where it is appropriate to place signs, so check the municipal and state laws to make sure you do it properly.

Placing them illegally can cast a bad light on the candidate.

**Canvassing:** One of the best ways to solicit votes and identify supporters is to knock on doors and talk with people face to face about the candidate. Canvassing is the primary component in winning a local campaign because it provides one-on-one contact with voters. It is a great way to recruit volunteers, find out what issues are important to voters, and increase visibility. Studies done at Harvard and Yale show that with door-to-door canvassing, for every 12 voters you speak with face to face, one will vote for your candidate—even if they've never heard of the candidate before.

### Benefits of Canvassing for Voters:

- Two-way communication
- Allows voter to express concerns and discuss issues
- High impact: leaves greatest and longest lasting impression on voters
- Brings campaign closer to the voter
- Engages and includes voters

### Benefits of Canvassing for the Campaign:

- Cheapest and most effective form of direct voter contact
- Raises awareness of the messages voters are hearing
- Ability to deliver campaign message through a familiar surrogate

• Increased visibility in the community The campaign will probably have walk lists and strategies ready to implement, and the state party and the county election board between them should have a fairly comprehensive breakdown of voters in the district you are canvassing.

When canvassing, have a script ready ahead of time and keep it to the point. Supplement scripts with a campaign card or piece of literature to leave with voters. Only identify the person you are speaking with and the candidate they should support.



When you meet people, create a bond with them—make a quick note of things around their property that you can identify with and use those to relate to them, like bumper stickers, specialized license plates, or children's toys. These things can also indicate the voter's connection with certain issues that may draw them toward your candidate. Be careful not to take up too much of their time, or spend too much of yours.

When speaking to voters, make note of their responses and listen to feedback. If you encounter questions that you can't answer, or face a belligerent voter, direct them to a website for more information. Always be polite. Explain the candidate's position, but do not argue.

#### Sample: Door-to-Door Script

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_;

I'm one of your neighbors. I'm volunteering to pass out campaign literature to help [candidate] in his/her campaign for [office sought]. (Hand them the literature piece).

[Candidate's first name] is a conservative we can trust to make the right decisions in [capitol city/county/etc.]. He'll/She'll work to cut wasteful spending and balance the budget without raising taxes.

If you'd like more information, you can visit the website [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www._____). Thank you for your time. Please remember to vote for [candidate].

Phone Bank: A call script is tricky, as many people get frustrated with political phone calls and sometimes they can hurt the campaign if the call is executed poorly. Generally, live calls are most effective when used for event invitation purposes or short GOTV messages. Do not ask a lot of questions but rather keep your call to the point and have a simple message.

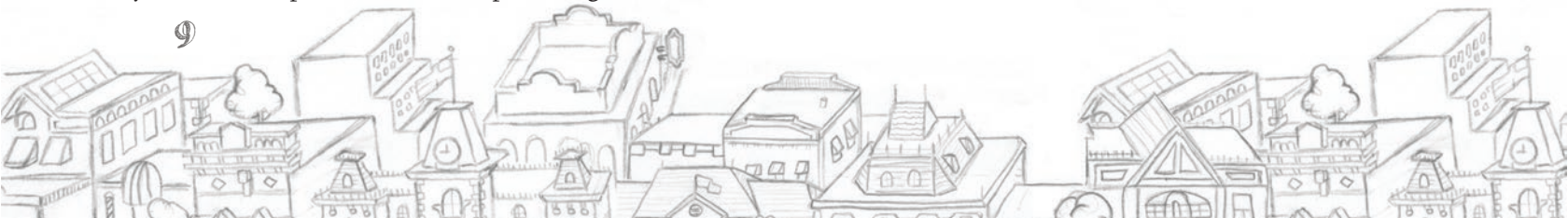
### CHECKLIST FOR EFFECTIVE AND SMART CANVASSING.

- Work in pairs: it's safer and yet still efficient.
- Determine the optimal time of day to visit the targeted area.
- Be prepared with your script and be comfortable. Dress well.
- Stay safe and do not approach a home that makes you uncomfortable just for the sake of a vote.
- Have a map, list, plenty of pens, and a clipboard to carry paper materials.
- Have plenty of literature and yard signs, but do not put anything on or in mailboxes; it's illegal.
- Be polite and greet voters with a smile.
- Stay confident and make good eye contact; do not use your clipboard and script as a crutch.

Get Out The Vote (GOTV): This is a final push during the last 72 hours preceding an election (or even earlier in states with early voting) to motivate and remind supporters to vote. The focus of GOTV is to remind voters who are likely to cast a ballot for the cause you are supporting. Phone calls are a popular way to implement a GOTV drive, but any kind of personal contact is known to cause a better turn out on Election Day.



QUICK TIP: You can't explain the candidate's position on an issue if you don't know it- make sure that you know where the candidate stands on a wide range of topics.





# TAKING IT TO THE

The Greek mathematician Archimedes once said: “Give me a place to stand and with a long enough lever I will move the whole world,” thus introducing the concept of leverage. This same principle is at the core of all local politics.

Figuring out where the windows of opportunity, the bottlenecks, and the pressure points are is half the battle.

And that most basic of campaign tools—a calendar—allows you to plainly see exactly where and when to intervene in the process. Campaign cycles rarely change (barring special elections), so with the proper planning, you can leverage even meager resources to the hilt. For instance, you can turn a motivated but small group of conservative voters into a powerful primary election turnout machine when most people aren’t paying attention.

## Primary Colors



Primaries are a prime example of voter intensity versus voter preference. Never confuse the two. If asked, registered voters may say they prefer the incumbent candidate, but they probably don’t feel strongly about someone who’s been in office for years. They certainly aren’t likely to show up at the polling place on a nice spring or summer day for them.

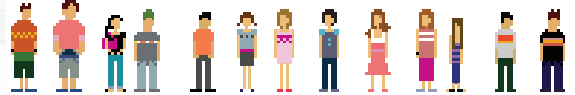
Targeting and then getting these core folks out on that second Tuesday in June (or whenever the big day falls) is the secret. Relatively low margins here can rock the conventional wisdom of who was “supposed” to win.

# STREETS



## Messaging the Masses

Not so in general elections, when registered voters of all parties get to pick and choose who to vote for. After a primary victory, your goal is to win and gain political power.



After all, if your candidate doesn’t get sworn in and seated in elective office, your views and agenda can’t be implemented. Backing a candidate in a general election race as a political party’s formal nominee changes nothing about who you are or your group is at the core. However, it does require different messaging, and a broadening (without forgetting or omitting your core stances) of your political brand. Fiscal conservatives who vote as Independents may not care that your candidate pledged to expand gun rights—but you had better believe they are listening for the candidate’s position on tax increases and bond issues. On the flip side, a single-issue voter from any partisan background is probably not interested in your candidate’s practical, real-world solution for the privatization of county trash services, but they are focused like a laser on his or her commitment to their motivating concern, whether it’s life, taxes, or school choice.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

The bottom line: it’s all hypothetical unless the person you back actually achieves political power. Take stock of the differing electoral scenarios that present themselves in your area, and leverage your support and skills wisely!

The base of a party is always the most pure philosophically, and relying on it as much as possible ensures vital and needed turnout at the ballot box.

Therefore primary elections are the perfect entry point for the competent candidate backed by a conservative group.



# FORCE MULTIPLIERS

Have you ever gone to your hometown fireworks show? Remember how the most spectacular and loudest display comes at the very end? We can view campaigns or initiatives the same way, with victories being that enormous explosion. And just like those exciting fireworks, your carefully chosen partnerships and coalitions have to be packed just right to get the biggest bang when they go off.

Let's determine who you can count on as one of your "fellow travelers." To do this, you must fully consider who it is you are allying yourself with before you publicly link arms. The end goal, after all, is multiplication of your efforts, not division of your forces.

## The Fear of All Sums

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The sum should be greater than its parts. That is, if partnering with another group or entity brings no added value, you should not do it. Either way you slice it, the media will likely identify you with the most controversial or potentially inflammatory member of your political persuasion, so choose your partners wisely and don't present any additional opportunities.

And remember that politics can make for strange bedfellows. The enemy of your enemy can (temporarily if need be) be your friend. Or at least a neutral player. Sometimes one player staying out of the fight can make all the difference.

And if by combining your firepower (think of those Transformers all merging into one giant robot) you can take down an organized opponent or entrenched incumbent, then by all means do it. You typically get only one clear shot at knocking off a powerful political force, so be practical and multiply your efforts with each and every offer of man-hours extended to you.

## Coalitions That Work

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As effectivists, you are leaders who want solutions. When you connect with individuals or organizations within your communities, you are then able to build coalitions based on any beliefs you share. The key is to work well together and stress your common values. As you go about creating a coalition, purposely look for other people or organizations that have a passion for the same issues.

Reagan said, "If you agreed with him 80% of the time, you were an ally—not a 20% traitor." This lesson is often forgotten by grassroots conservatives who occasionally make the perfect the enemy of the good. Any effectivist or group should always stop to think about first pouring the boiling oil on the barbarians at the gate before they allow themselves the luxury of turning to the so-called collaborators inside the castle.



## Basic benefits of coalitions include:

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- Greatly increased potential for success
- Ability to win on more fronts than a single person or organization can when working alone
- Opportunities to add value to the overall strategy (more bodies mean increased efficiency and streamlining of efforts)
- Increased group knowledge of your particular issue expands general awareness
- Sharing of resources that fosters networking and increases knowledge for everyone involved
- Influx of resources and perspectives that adds layers of valuable experience
- Builds a stronger and more focused foundation for effective change and de-duplicating efforts
- A broadened ability to develop leadership skills among your members



One of the best ways to organize people is around issues, especially those issues that touch on fundamental needs such as security, family values, and money.

Build your coalition in a way that will allow it to continually grow. The impact your coalition will have within your community is directly related to its short and long-term strength.

While motivation is key, it isn't everything. You must not only motivate members of your coalition to be as involved as possible, but educate them to become authoritative sources for any questions others may have about your organization or issues.



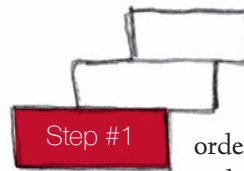
### Organizing People

When you get a group together:

- Have an agenda and a list of discussion topics ready beforehand.
- Make time for socializing.
- Write a list of goals and brainstorm with the group to create your roadmap and strategy.
- Allow members to set their own commitment level but maintain accountability. Follow up, don't check up.
- Be sure you have accurate contact information for people—multiple phone numbers, email addresses, and a mailing address.
- Give volunteers a voice and include everyone in meeting discussions.
- Keep people informed and ensure that they update you on their activities. This helps your group to stay focused and motivated.



**QUICK TIP:** To help your group stay focused and accomplish your goals, write a vision statement for your group and outline the steps you need to take to achieve it.



*Identify goals and targets of your group.*

Break down large goals into smaller ones. Examine different tactics and angles in order to reach a more diverse group of supporters, and utilize the different talents of each coalition member.

When developing a game plan and organizing your group, remember that the credibility of both the group and its leaders is paramount. Leaders must have the ability to make progress and achieve goals while also motivating others to follow them.



*Take positive steps to increase community awareness.*

This can be done by planning events that communicate your issues, attending local government meetings, and engaging in online projects and marketing strategies like websites, wiki projects, and blogs.

These positive actions keep people motivated about your cause.



*Understand that people who pool their resources and work together are far more powerful than those who jockey with each other over power.*

Make it a priority to identify potential supporters through petitions, voter ID, and surveys. A collection of databases pooled from different sources is a great advantage to coalitions. A database is useful for identifying donors and supporters, increasing name and issue recognition, spreading credibility, and engaging in strategic planning for the future of the organization. Reach out not only to your friends and neighbors but also to groups and other organizations that share your concerns and are willing to combine efforts.



**WATCH OUT:** Lack of clear goals and step-by-step planning will make a well-meaning coalition completely ineffective. This is why coalitions should avoid the mistake of holding meetings that are based simply on discussion, instead of on implementing strategic methods to promote or resolve the uniting issue. "Gripe sessions" accomplish nothing.

### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

Some groups and coalitions may accomplish their goals by existing simply as meeting groups or fellowships. However, others may be interested in taking the next step and creating a more formal organization such as a non-profit.



# THE RIPPLE EFFECT



Once you have established a goal or purpose and strategically planned how to accomplish it, you need to reach out to the community. Purposely research and contact other like-minded groups to let them know about your organization, and use their networks to your full advantage.

## Examples of Organizations to Contact:

### Civic clubs:

Lions  
Key  
Kiwanis  
Ruritan  
Rotary

### Political clubs:

Party Women's  
Party Men's  
Party Young Adult  
Business Associations  
County Party

Be visible within your community and be accessible. Reaching your community requires involvement and local credibility. By building your networks, you learn more about your community and the people who live in it. For example, hold meetings in local restaurants and coffee shops where others will notice your presence and can easily participate. By increasing your recognition in your community, you will increase your influence and motivate others to join you.

## Hints on Effective Outreach

- Be friendly with anyone and everyone at an event. Don't just sit there!
- Keep a good record of names and contact information and stay in contact with those you meet.
- Follow up with people who contact you.
- Always thank someone who has been helpful or gracious with a note or a call.
- Build relationships with other community leaders and activists.

## The Medium is the Message



It's the 21st century. Our forms of communication are probably changing more rapidly than since the invention of the printing press. No, that's not a blanket call for all political activity to migrate

to the Internet. In fact, many of the most effective ways of disseminating what you want to say are still counter-intuitively personal and old-fashioned. But to ignore the fact that the advent of 24/7 news, on-demand entertainment, and online information and services has changed the way we live is to bury your head in the sand. Activism must change accordingly.

There is no excuse to not be as engaged as you want to be. Be that go-to blogger. You can light up local and state political blogs with commentary and reactions. You can draw others to your cause, or dominate the public debate on Facebook or Twitter. Or you can rock it old school and simply show up in person at those regularly scheduled monthly meetings and hearings: take a number, wait, and then step up to the microphone, letting all who are listening or watching on cable know exactly what you think of the seated public servants and their latest plans. There is an age- and experience-appropriate avenue of entry for any and all who want it.

## The Pied Piper Effect

Opinions are beautiful things—because everyone has them! Begin offering to write small or community-focused op-eds in that struggling-for-content daily or weekly town newspaper or neighborhood newsletter. Do the same for their online versions. Build a following, however small, of local readers who look forward to and value your perspective, and you may keep that perch for as long as you want it.

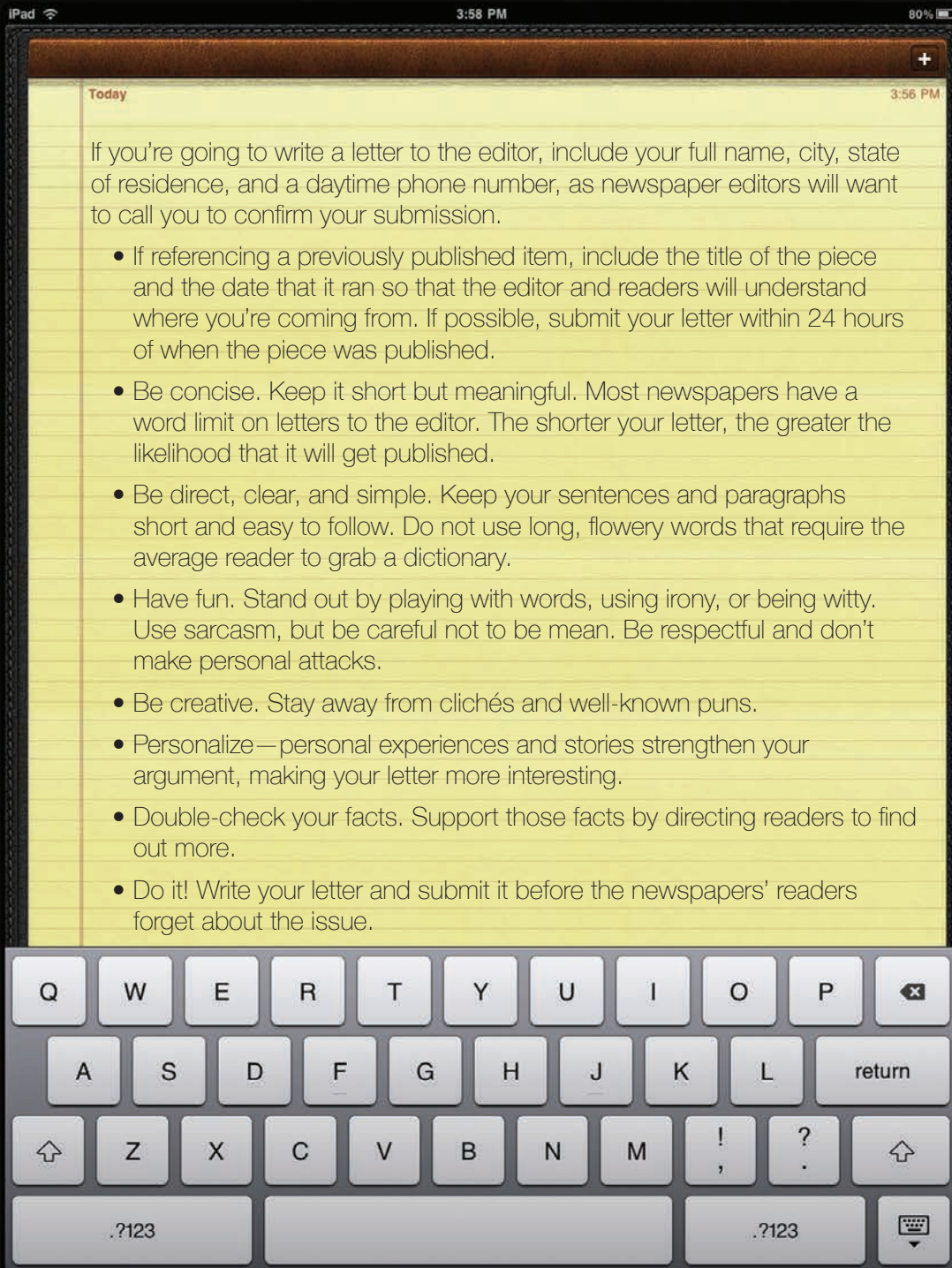


## Hit & Run

Of course, some of the reindeer won't let you play their games. Then it's time to adopt guerilla warfare: via the world wide web; very public group appointments and demands for meetings with elected officials or boards; or even select and extremely judicious uses of what is called "street theater"—staging an event or gathering strictly for the purpose of drawing attention to an outrageous or unacceptable situation. Imagine, for example, rallying on the sidewalk at your elected officials' house pointing out that he no longer lives in the district he represents. Precious few scandalous facts, sweetheart deals, or backroom dealings can long survive intense, prolonged spotlighting of their flaws or contradictions.



# DEAR EDITOR,



# Blogging for\_

# FREEDOM

Excerpts from American Majority's blogging manual. To learn how to blog as an effective citizen journalist, view full manual at: [AmericanMajority.org/Resources!](http://AmericanMajority.org/Resources!)

## Filling the Void

The founding fathers knew the last protection against an overreaching government was the freedom to speak freely against the government itself without risk or fear of being accused of seditious treason.

The founders also knew that this right needed to be available to all equally, and not only to a particular class or group of people. They therefore left it out of any branch of organized government and solely in the hands of the people. Of course media entities such as publishing companies and local newspapers filled the void; over time, with the advent of radio and then television, broadcasting companies also began bringing us the "news."

However, with the conveniences of relying on "professional" reporters, newspapers, broadcast news and other forms of news publication, it is easy to feel a level of protection from the media that no longer exists.

It is now becoming evident that media entities have often colluded with the federal, state, and local governments. So rather than offering a layer of protection by holding the establishment accountable, the media has become part of the establishment itself. And just as the government has a natural tendency to grow and consume more power, the media has a tendency to aid and abet it, rather than provide the final check against it, as was intended by our founders.

So it is now up to the people to fill this "free speech" void. We have a right to speak and publish freely, to scrutinize



the authority of the government. This is the last frontier in the battle to preserve the founding ideals and principles that were bestowed upon us in the founding of our country. Today we have the tools to shine a light on what's wrong in our government and media, and the ability to proclaim that message loud and clear to our fellow Americans.

Everyone has an ability to participate in citizen journalism. All you need to do is show up. There are stories all around us everyday.

## Some of the places that experience the least coverage by mainstream media outlets:

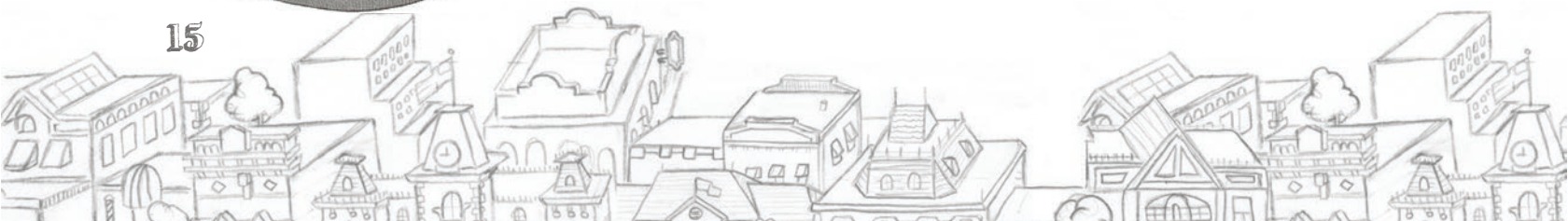
- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Candidate forums        | 2. Town hall meetings    |
| 3. County board meetings   | 4. City council meetings |
| 5. School board meetings   | 6. Public protests       |
| 7. Campaign events/rallies | 8. Local zoning meetings |

Just attending these sorts of meetings has been known to force elected officials to modify their behavior. When people start showing up, especially with video cameras in hand, it's not uncommon for those elected officials who usually come to meetings in jeans to start showing up in a shirt and tie.



## How to Report the News

Once you know the events you want to cover, there are many ways to be the eyes and ears of the people and communicate what you see. For instance, these days almost everyone has







phone with a built-in video camera (or at least a photo camera). If not, small compact digital video cameras are inexpensive and easy to find.

If you're not into using a camera, a pen and paper work well for taking notes. That may sound like an antique option, but firsthand accounts and well-documented statements are often enough to crack open a story and draw more attention to it.

Once you've got the story, you need to get it out. You can't sit on news. If it's old, its legs are shorter and so is its life. Unless it's something really big, it may be more appropriate to release the information strategically, helping it get more traction.

The best bet for distributing information is to provide a home for it on the Internet. You can set up blog easily and for no cost.

Before you set up a blog, it's time to set some goals. Everyone's goals will be different depending on what you hope to accomplish. You may want to start out by choosing a few local elected officials or public bodies to focus on. Find out when they are having public events or meetings and put them in your calendar. That way, you will always have a reminder in case it slips your mind. This will also help you prioritize your news coverage.

You might want to find five websites belonging to local organizations, candidates, or government bodies and sign up for their email alerts. This way you will be up to speed on where and when different events will be held.

Most importantly, set out to have fun. While citizen journalism is not for every activist, there can be great satisfaction in knowing you went out on your own and found out some important information no one else knew and broke it in the public arena as news. Such successes can lead to future media opportunities, career advancement, and even fame. But most importantly, they provide a way for you to make a difference as an individual, particularly in an age in which many people feel their voices have been lost.

[Log in](#)[Sign up](#)

# brave new world

Blogging offers great opportunities for local leaders. A well-run blog can share information on key issues, keep people interested in your project, help you to connect with like-minded leaders, and strengthen your messaging.

Here are a few tips to make sure that your blog is successful.

1

While sites like WordPress, Blogspot, and Tumblr are free, any domain name from these sites will be [www.yoursuperblog.blogspot.com](http://www.yoursuperblog.blogspot.com). This will not help with Search Engine Optimization. So instead, go to [GoDaddy.com](http://GoDaddy.com) and buy a personal URL (e.g., [www.yoursuperblog.com](http://www.yoursuperblog.com)) and, with a click, you will be able to set up a blog with your personal domain name.

2

A good blog post is about 300 words long and contains 3 to 4 hypertext links (linking to sources to document the information in your post).

3

If you want your post to get some love from a Google search, you need to name your post properly. A post titled "Some Crazy Things Happening at the State Capitol," about debates over state education reform, will not do anything meaningful to get you noticed. Instead, title the post something like "Education Reform in Kansas Being Proposed."

4

Write your blog about something very specific. There are plenty of people talking about the U.S. Congress. So instead, talk about your local school board or city council. Find your niche and blog the heck out of it. Become the expert on your local subject and the go-to source for information on that topic.

5

Don't blog for a week or two and then stop. Successful blogs are consistent in their information flow. Blog several times a week at a minimum; once a day is even better. If stretched for time, find 2 to 3 like-minded people and have them post once a week. You will only drive traffic to your blog if the site is constantly updating with new information.

6

To find information to blog about, sign up for Google alerts on local topics.

7

To drive traffic to a blog that centers on the local city council, go to the next city council meeting, ask an intelligent question, and then announce that your blog will be covering the goings on of the city council.

# WISDOM OF THE MASSES: Wiki Sites

Like personal and community blogs, wiki-style entries can be a potent one-two punch on top of the “warm-bodies” approach mentioned earlier. You might be familiar with Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, but there is a whole other world of wiki projects that cover a multitude of subjects and purposes. Wikis are essentially websites with content that is created and edited by visitors. This gives effectivists such as yourself a tremendous amount of power because you are able to edit and define exactly what movements, legislation, and issues mean in your community.

Here are several wiki projects that need your involvement to help them grow and thrive:



**SunshineReview.org:** government transparency and accountability, especially in budgetary issues.



**Judgepedia.org:** all things judicial, including recent Supreme Court information and pages about local justices.



**Ballotpedia.org:** electoral issues, including everything from ballot and referendum initiatives to school board bond elections.



**WikiFoia.org:** the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), providing information on statutes of each state.



When you want to edit or create a wiki page, you must first register with the wiki project. Registering is free, just like you would register as an account holder for any other online community. Next, become familiar with the articles that are on the wiki site.

Find out what the site’s purpose is, what types of articles they are looking for, and even check out the project guidelines. Then, take note of what information is NOT there—maybe there is no information about your county or your city council. Decide what information you want to make available to others, and make sure you have sources and correct information.

Most wiki projects have a “how-to” page on their site; there are specific formulas to follow regarding formatting and citing. SunshineReview.org has a very user-friendly editing and creating guide that will lead you through the process.

Wikis are powerful because they are dynamic and changing, but they depend on active, engaged citizens to drive their development.

## Here’s how:

- Research your local school board and city council web pages and post information or links to Sunshine Review’s database
- Create new pages with additional information on Sunshine Review.
- Check into your local judges and edit the available information about them on Judgepedia.
- Find out what’s happening in your state or local area with government transparency and accountability, and update WikiFoia and Sunshine Review with what you find.



# BE THE BEST...

1

Allow open comments on your blog. This means don't require that your reader's comments be approved before they appear

live on the site. Closed comments discourage participation and increase the likelihood that people won't come back to your site. Blog readers want to be involved in the conversation.



2

Comment on other blogs when you know something about the story they are telling. This can give you credibility with that website and help you can become a trusted source for information. Usually you are allowed to add your website name in your comment, which can also help bring people to your site and find the information you are trying to get out.

3

Have a blog roll on your sidebar. This is a list of websites you like to read or recommend.



If you have a group of bloggers you know, you can ask them to add your site to their list and return the favor. This helps grow the network.

4

Another great trick for driving people to your site is embedding your current post with links to your past posts, where relevant. If another website picks up your story and uses part of it, they can pick up that link and embed it in their post as well. Then when readers are looking fore more information and facts about the story, they will be directed to your site. This can improve your page views tremendously.



5

Include share links on your posts to encourage readers to share your posts on their social networks to help spread your story.



Check out the full blogging manual for more tips on how to most effectively impact your community through blogging!



# EXTRA, EXTRA, EXTRA

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## LANDING ABOVE THE FOLD

Press releases are important tools for getting information out to members of the media and general public, and are most effective if they are crafted in a writing style and format that reporters are familiar with. Make sure reporters can see the most important information right away, determine the newsworthiness of the information, and then take the desired course of action.



Remember, reporters and editors receive hundreds of press releases each day, so keep yours to one page. Your goal is to get read and published.

Letterhead and Logo at the Top of the Page, if Appropriate

### **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Date

Name

Phone number

E-mail address

### **Title of news release (in bold)**

**STORY LOCATION (ALL CAPS)** – The first sentence should be interesting and grab readers' attention. The next sentence covers who, what, when, and where, which establishes local interest. This paragraph contains no more than three sentences.

The next paragraph connects the first sentence with a quote about the story. Write your release in a style called "inverted pyramid": this means that the most important information comes first, followed by less important information.

"Quotes should only be used if they convey color, emotion, or opinion. Avoid statistical or fact-based quotes. A news release will rarely contain more than two quotes; and if only one outstanding quote is available, just use the one," Jane Doe said.

The last few paragraphs usually contain general information dealing with the news story. The news media like concise wording, specific information, reputable sources, and objective facts. These tips, combined with strong local interest, will ensure that the news release will be successful.

# NOT~SO~NEW MEDIA

Emergent technologies offer effectivists the opportunity to broadcast their message to a wider audience than ever before. Social networking is the most popular online activity. We are choosing to receive information and connect in new ways, controlling what and when content is received. The question you should be asking yourself is “How do I take advantage of these new communication tools?”

The biggest mistake made by social media users? Not taking the time to fully understand the purpose of each platform. For starters, social media requires interaction. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogging sites like Tumblr offer organizations some of the largest return on investment for active participation within the community. Sharing information and dialoguing increases the social value of the network overall.



American Majority provides a number of resources covering social media, including three guides that specifically focus on Facebook, Twitter, and blogging, respectively. To get started, check out our Resources tab at [AmericanMajority.org](http://AmericanMajority.org).

## Facebook



You probably have a Facebook account, but do you know how to use this powerful tool to its full potential? The largest online social network, Facebook offers its millions upon millions of users a chance to meet new people from around the country and the world. Effectivist organizations and campaigns that want to build their fan base, communicate ideas, and even raise money must know how to master this tool. Whether you represent a group looking to build its membership or want to increase your personal network of like-minded individuals, Facebook will increase your effectiveness. Download our Facebook guide, available on the Resources page of [AmericanMajority.org](http://AmericanMajority.org).

## Twitter

Twitter is a communication platform that simply allows members to share information in very small messages called tweets. Think of a tweet as anything you can say in about one breath. Confined to a 140-character limit, you can share information from photos to breaking news quickly and conveniently. Because Twitter relies on its 250 million+



members to upload and share content, one will often find important breaking stories from users at the scene. And a wide variety of news stories can be quickly skimmed by relying on your network to share the most interesting thoughts from around the web. Be sure to download our Twitter guide, available on the Resources page of [AmericanMajority.org](http://AmericanMajority.org).

## YouTube



YouTube is a viral video-sharing service that allows users to post personally developed videos online. YouTube offers campaigns, organizations, and even individuals an opportunity to bypass the traditional advertising networks and directly reach voters, organizations, and other effectivists. From digital cameras to iPhones to Flip Videos, there are endless ways to capture and share your world with others.

One of the great advantages to having a YouTube account is that the site will host, or “store,” your content for free. Instead of fumbling with electronic devices or having to worry about file size when sharing via email, simply direct website visitors, friends, or family to your YouTube account and there they will be able to view all of your videos easily and conveniently. In addition, each video can be accessed by its own, specific URL.

## Tumblr

Tumblr revolutionizes the online blogging experience. It streamlines content display, giving you more time to focus on content development and less on site layout. Say goodbye to hours of slaving over confusing dashboards. With Tumblr, posting is made simple. Users can quickly share text posts, pictures, videos, and links on their own blogs hosted by Tumblr. Tumblr integrates concepts from other social media giants, like Twitter, to deliver familiar features such as the ability to follow other Tumblr blogs with ease. In short, it’s known for customizable design layout combined with simple maintenance tools.





# AMERICAN MAJORITY OVERVIEW AND RESOURCES

American Majority is the nation's premier political training non-profit developing the next generation of conservative, free market political leaders. Its non-partisan role is to identify qualified individuals who should run for public office. We educate and equip these leaders with the philosophical foundation necessary to guide effective decisions once elected. Through its different training tracks, American Majority is creating a new nationwide network of leaders and grassroots supporters who will integrate the ideals of individual freedom and the free market at all levels of state and local government.

## Manuals for Activists and Candidates

Our manuals supplement our in-person training. We currently offer manuals for our Activist, Candidate, Campus Majority, Public Speaking, and Social Media Training. We also produce state-specific manuals on running for county commission, city council, and school board.

## Election Integrity

The Election Integrity manual is a guide to voter registration and voter fraud identification. From absentee voting to provisional ballots to Election Day operations, this course teaches engaged citizens how to preserve their right to vote legally.

## Pamphlets

In tribute to the pamphleteers of the American Revolution, we are once again reviving this art form to educate and inspire a new generation. Topics in the first five pamphlets center on America's rich heritage, rule of law, an appeal to justice, and self-government.

## Podcasts

Our podcasts are available at [AmericanMajority.org](http://AmericanMajority.org) and on iTunes.com. Podcasts include a 21-part series on running for office and a 5-part series on effectivism.

## Presentations

Many of our most popular presentations, including "The System" and "Precinct Power," are viewable online.

## Facebook and Twitter Guides

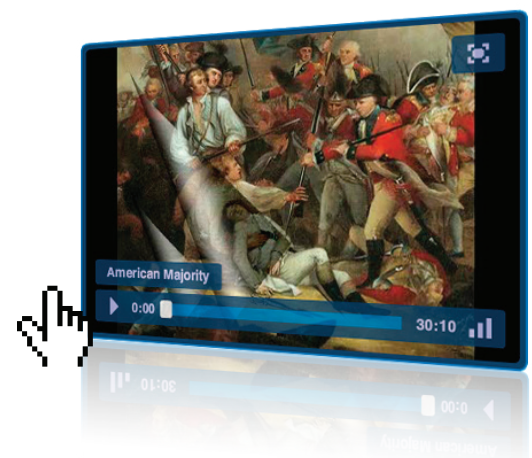
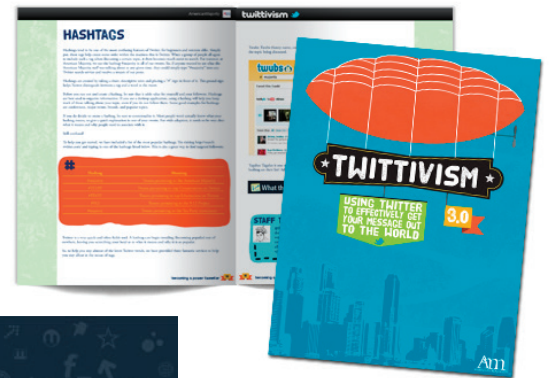
You don't have to be the voice that gets lost among the millions using social media. Creating channels and tools to win online is one of American Majority's goals. We have developed a Twittivism guide explaining the basics of Twitter and the tactics effectivists can use to make their tweets heard. Our Facebook guide covers everything from creating an account to effectively advancing a cause.

## Vote Goal Worksheet

Using election data from the precinct level to calculate vote goals is one of the first steps on the road to victory.

## 20/20 Video Tutorials

Our video tutorials complement our new media training courses. Online activism can be a daunting new world for many, so these 20-minute videos are an easy, quick way to access information about Facebook, Twitter, online video editing, YouTube, blogging, and much more.





# EFFECTIVISM *in action*



In the historic Republican victory over Democrats and their union allies in the June 2012 Wisconsin recall election, 10,000 grassroots activists successfully employed GOTV strategies. Governor Scott Walker's success was due to disciplined efforts of local citizens and tea party groups in key districts. They banded together to implement effective community organizing, bringing out the votes to make Walker the first U.S. governor to keep his seat in a recall election.

In Oklahoma, Ronda Vuillemont-Smith, Don Wyatt, and the Tulsa 912 Project helped convince the Oklahoma governor and state legislature to reject a \$54 million Early Innovator Grant from the Obama Administration that would have gone to the implementation of a federal healthcare exchange. This move made national headlines, and Tulsa 912 Project leaders played a key role in making sure the will of the people to reject Washington's power grab was heard through phone calls, emails, and personal visits to state leaders. <http://tulsa912project.com>

Dan Schultz, a regular contributor to Redstate.com, has cracked the code for community organizing: precincts. Dan blogs and trains on how to become a precinct chairman and begin taking over political parties--and all while identifying voters. <http://redstate.com/coldwarrior/>

PBCtab is just that: an online taxpayers' action board "keeping tabs" on local government employees and their pay, pensions and performance. Presenting information in clear terms while cultivating whistleblowers, PBCtab has become a trusted source for Florida media. <http://PBCtab.org>

## CONNECTING WITH AMERICAN MAJORITY

American Majority has several means of connecting with you as you begin to be involved with social media. Utilize the American Majority site as a tool for getting started and as a resource as your projects develop.

# Join us

on our social networking sites:



**[www.AmericanMajority.org](http://www.AmericanMajority.org)**

Check out the rest of American Majority's guides, podcasts, and pamphlets by clicking the Resources tab on the homepage.

Join the conversation and follow us on  
Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube:



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**twitter**

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**You Tube**

[youtube.com/AmericanMajority](https://youtube.com/AmericanMajority)



