



HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF CANVASSING THE 10 ESSENTIALS

1. *Get a team around you*

First skill any politician needs to develop is the ability to ask for help. Particularly women: “I don’t want to impose...” Nobody gets elected on their own. Pull together a team and keep them with you. Pick people who are up for it and optimistic. (Read Seligman about optimism.)

2. *Map out your terrain*

Some areas within your constituency will be home to people who are retired or are stay-at-home young parents. Work out ways to canvass those areas during the daytime and cluster re-calls so that you never cover more mileage than you have to. Do not work in so predictable a pattern that after several weeks, when you knock on doors in one area, they know they were last on your list.

3. *Establish a schedule*

Your team should meet at a set time and you should always be first to arrive. Everybody should be asked to commit to a specific manageable length of time. Much better to get 90 minutes a week than 3 hours once every four weeks. Start when you say you’ll start. And finish when you say you’ll finish.

4. *Dress right*

You’re going to be walking. A lot. In rain. Frequently. Carrying literature. Always. Buy yourself good shoes (as opposed to four inch heels). Buy yourself a great coat or windcheater: loads of pockets, easy to send back to your car if the sun breaks through. Don’t offend people by looking sloppy or by carrying a handbag or a pen carrying a luxury branding.

5. *Respect and engage*

Get people’s names right. Everyone’s name matters to them. Have a *nomenclatura* on your team. Learn how to retain names. Don’t insult a Marie by calling her Maree if that’s not how she pronounces it. Look at the voters when they’re talking. Shake hands properly.





HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF CANVASSING THE 10 ESSENTIALS

6. *Ask, don't spiel*

You're not there to rhyme off GDP or chunks of your party's policy. You're there to learn about *them*. The more they talk, the better they like you. Use big open questions and *listen to the answers*.

7. *Don't argue*

No politician ever created a follower by defeating them in an argument. Many a politician has created an enemy by defeating them in an argument in front of witnesses.

8. *Don't accept an offer of a cuppa*

Oh, come on, it's obvious...

9. *De-brief*

Every canvass outing is action research. You are profiling each individual constituent. Capture the information and use the process to deepen the capability of your team. [Harvard Business School case study.]

10. *Follow up*

If you're in politics, you're in the business of managing expectations. Fail to meet a constituent's expectations and your reputation gets a potentially lethal dent. Exceed those expectations, on the other hand, and you're on the way to creating a trusting relationship.

