



## 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.





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### **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.

