

FROM WINNING TO GOVERNING EFFECTIVELY



INTRODUCTION

The International Republican Institute has over 30 years of experience training and consulting with political parties in order to improve governance structures and the quality of elections. This curriculum *From Winning to Governing Effectively* (WiGov)—is a comprehensive resource, which integrates some foundational aspects of IRI’s Campaign Academy for Successful Elections (CASE) political party training, as well as additional resources from the Institute’s Governance Resource Library. This curriculum supplements existing resources to cover the entire electoral transition cycle.

By focusing on the importance of a cohesive strategy for elections, WiGov demonstrates the importance of candidate’s aligning their campaigns with his or her political party’s platform. In addition, WiGov aims to provide incentives for parties to better support candidates, both during the election campaign and in between election cycles. The goal is to campaign effectively, making achievable and realistic promises that lead to effective governance and fulfilled service that builds trust between citizens and governments. Through this process, parties can facilitate improved accountability, fulfilling their role as vital links between citizens and governing leaders.

This curriculum consists of three sections: *Policy Driven Campaigning*, *Planning a Transition*, and *Governing Effectively*.

POLICY DRIVEN CAMPAIGNING	PLANNING A TRANSITION	GOVERNING EFFECTIVELY
<p>Party Development</p> <p>Campaign Strategies & Tactics</p>	<p>Managing the Transition</p> <p>Taking Office</p>	<p>Engaging the System</p> <p>Engaging Citizens</p>

- This curriculum should be used to provide political parties with guidance on how they can prepare their candidates for governing, including concepts and tools for how the party can support candidates throughout and between election cycles.
- This curriculum is accompanied by three training presentations that cover each of the three phases.
- Section 1 & 2 should be implemented in the pre-election period, while section 3 should ideally be implemented post-election.
- Additionally, in the Appendix section, we have outlined additional resources that the Institute can provide in line with other technical assistance to parties, candidates and newly elected officials.

CONTENTS

- Introduction** 2
- I. Policy Driven Campaigning** 4
 - Party Development: Party and Policy as a Whole 4
 - Vision 5
 - Agenda 5
 - Platform 5
 - Campaigning to Win: Strategy and Tactics 6
 - Building a Brand 6
 - Setting the Agenda 7
 - Getting the Message Out—Working with the Media 8
 - Engaging the Public 8
- II. Planning the Transition** 13
 - Adjusting to Non-Partisanship 13
 - Preparing for the Transition 14
 - Claiming a Mandate 14
 - Building a Strategic Plan 14
 - Managing Expectations 16
 - Planning for the Hundred Days 16
 - Taking Office 17
 - Managing Personnel 17
 - Developing Policy 18
 - Handling the Outgoing Office Holders 18
 - Working with the Civil Service 18
- III. Governing Effectively** 19
 - Engaging the System 19
 - Understanding the Role and Responsibility of a Public Servant 19
 - Navigating the Government 20
 - Implementing SMART Policies 21
 - Working With Your Party 21
 - Building a Coalition 23
 - Providing Oversight 24
 - Engaging the Citizenry 25
- Conclusion** 27



I. POLICY DRIVEN CAMPAIGNING

PARTY DEVELOPMENT: PARTY AND POLICY AS A WHOLE

The policy of a party and the different forms it takes in a campaign serve as the infrastructure of the campaign and the foundation of how a candidate will govern if elected. *Policies* are the solutions that parties or officials develop to respond to the problems that exist in society. Political parties develop specific solutions to societal problems based on their vision. How the problems are defined will inform policy and subsequent strategies for campaigning and governing. Decisions about policy should be *data driven*, meaning that they will require research and community input. This data should be obtained through direct contact with citizens, input from influential community organizations, and polling. The overarching goal of parties and candidates is to win elections, and that requires them to understand what citizens need, and how to communicate their solutions on a level that citizens understand and care about. The first step in policy development is *listening* to constituents, in order to accurately define the problems that policies need to address. Without a relevant, clearly articulated policy, a campaign is incapable of connecting with voters in a successful manner.

To build policy, a party should start with a *vision*, *agenda*, and *platform*. The *vision* of a party guides the *agenda* it puts forth, as laid out in its *platform*. The vision, agenda, and platform serve as the intellectual and policy infrastructure of the campaign and are the foundation of how a candidate will govern if elected.



Constructing a Platform

When talking about developing the party's policy and utilizing it in a campaign context, we will use the example of building a house. Like all home construction, the first step is laying a solid foundation. For the party's policy, the *vision* is that foundation. Once the foundation has been laid, the frame of the house must be raised. The frame of the house is the party's *agenda*. Then comes the actual construction of the house. This is the campaign's political *platform*. After the infrastructure has been raised, the roof and the walls—the party's *messaging*, must be placed on the house. The messages are what the public sees and shape how citizens perceive the party. We will discuss messaging in further detail below. At that point, the house is ready to be lived in; people can move in and live there, confident that they will enjoy a better life.

④ MESSAGING

③ PLATFORM

② AGENDA

① VISION



Vision

Vision is how the party sees the future.

Vision is the broad idea—sometimes also referred to as a narrative—of what the party hopes the country will become.

Vision is the “what”; that is, *what* the party hopes the country will be if it is elected to govern.

Vision is also the “why”; that is, the reason, or the rationale, for *why* an individual is running for office.

The party’s vision is based on its ideology and answers the fundamental questions of what it thinks of the current situation, and how to best organize strategies to improve the country.

Vision defines the issues that will inform policy positions, and subsequent strategies, for campaigning and governing. Decisions about policy should be in keeping with the party’s vision and core beliefs, but it is also imperative that they be data-driven, as well. Such a data-driven approach requires data, and lots of it; that is, it requires research, including public opinion research, as well as consultation with organizations, stakeholders, and, of course, citizens and the community.

TAKEAWAY: Record Keeping – A data-driven approach produces a lot of data, and parties need to have processes and platforms in place to manage that data. Knowledge management is a key element we found missing in many parties, who did not have voter records, training or policy centers, or even a way to aggregate the data they wanted to collect. Having these platforms in place is imperative if we are emphasizing a data-driven approach.

The overarching goal of parties and candidates is to win elections, and that requires them to understand what citizens want and need, and that requires listening.

A failure to listen—and listen closely—can have grievous consequences for a candidate or party: *they lose*. However, mere knowledge isn’t good enough; the knowledge has to be grounded in a caring empathy for people. Such empathy is sometimes

the single most important strength in a winning campaign. As is often said of the public, “They don’t care that you know, until they know that you care.”

So, policy development—including the human dimension—must be taken very seriously.

Agenda

The agenda is the “how,” the way in which the party’s vision is to be realized.

The agenda builds on the long-term idea of vision, aiming at the far horizon, and it lays out a road map for the party’s strategic planning.

The agenda articulates priorities and measurable milestones. “To govern is to choose,” the candidate is *choosing* priorities when he or she says that we focus on jobs and the economy, or on the healing of social wounds, or on the making of peace with another country.

Platform

The platform, or manifesto, is the issues “checklist.” The platform is usually comprehensive, subdivided by issue categories, and further subdivided as needed.

The platform defines the party’s priorities and guides much of the campaigns communications, both internally and externally. The language of the platform should underlay all messaging, including speeches, so as to articulate an issue or to provide an answer.

The platform, must be carefully written and well-researched. The platform is the fruit of the “data-driven” process described above. Sometimes for instance, a supporting document or footnotes, or hyperlinks, can be made available so as to fend off accusations of inaccuracy.

TAKEAWAY: Research and Fact Checking – Managing knowledge and maintaining issue or policy research that support party platforms is key to creating solid and consistent branding and messages over time. This also helps candidates and party leaders to get out in front of accusations of ‘fake news’ or other opponent attacks.

A well-executed platform is a “fortress” for a campaign: candidates, activists, and volunteers should be confident that they can stay on message and clearly articulate points especially in a debate or interview.

The platform can be short or long: The upside of shortness is conciseness; brevity is “punchy.” The downside of shortness is that some important constituency might feel scanted or left out completely. And so, the instinctive tendency is to make the platform longer, so that every “base is covered”—that is, every constituency or interest gets a mention.

The upside of length is thus comprehensiveness: every topic is covered. The downside of length, and detail, of course, is that it increases the possibility of internal wrangling, even as it increases the likelihood of some inexactitude creeping into the text. So there’s no one right answer: Sometimes less is more; sometimes, more is better.

Either way, the platform is thus a key starting point for shaping vision and agenda into a winning strategy, for both campaigning and governing.

We might recall that one of the most successful party platforms in U.S. presidential history was that of Ronald Reagan in 1980. In that year, his platform said that he would do three things: reduce taxes, cut government spending, and stand strong against the former Soviet Union. He won the 1980 election in a landslide. Four years later, even his critics had to admit that he had kept those three promises. In 1984, he was re-elected in a bigger landslide. So, there’s a lot to be said for making popular promises—and keeping them!

CAMPAIGNING TO WIN: STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Building a Brand

One benefit of undertaking the careful process of Vision>Agenda>Platform is that the candidate and party are *building a brand*.

Building a brand requires consistency, and that the candidate and party are known, trusted, and liked. This is sometimes called “brand equity,” and it’s a powerful concept, because it means that newcomers—including new candidates—can instantly connect with the party; that is, by embracing the brand, newcomers are now a part of the brand, and in turn strengthen the brand with added energy and voting power. As they say, politics is about addition, not subtraction—the more the merrier!

TAKEAWAY: Self-Evaluation of Success – Success matters as much as process when it comes to the electoral process. A party or candidate may have an organized, consistent formula for their brand and outreach, but if it is not producing results—more votes—then they should re-evaluate that formula. We spoke with some parties whose strategies on paper were ideal, but did not produce results, yet the party had not reassessed their strategy.

A strong brand also enables creative minds to find ways to summarize the party, and its candidates, and its platform into memorable sayings and catchy slogans. We call this *messaging*, how the candidates portray the party’s platform and agenda to voters. In the United States, for example, different successful presidents in the 20th century have used such easy-to-remember phrases as “Square Deal,” “New Deal,” and “Fair Deal.” Such sayings and slogans work best, of course, if they are “organic”; that is, if they seem to derive naturally from the vision and agenda of the party.

Setting the Agenda

As we have seen, the agenda is the “how.” That is, it’s the message that your campaign wishes to present to the voters—here’s how we’ll do it.

The agenda must be effectively presented to the voters; this is known as messaging or *setting the agenda*.

Indeed, there’s a simple enough “rule of thumb” in campaigning: *The campaign that sets the agenda is the campaign that wins*. To put that another way, if the “conversation” is about your party’s vision and issues, you’re likely to win. If the voters agree with you that the big problem is X, and that you have a good plan to solve X, then they are likely to give you a chance to solve it.

Of course, the other party probably understands this, too. So, if the other party says that the problem is Y, and that it has a plan to solve Y, and the voters agree with the other party, then *it* is likely to win.

So that’s typically the big question of the campaign debate: Whose vision? Whose issues? This point has been rendered into a sports metaphor: *Your team either has the ball, or the other team has the ball: If you don’t have the ball, you can’t score.*

History demonstrates that the campaigners that succeed in setting the agenda—and messaging the message—will have the stronger edge.

Ten Guidelines for Working with Media

- **Know the news media’s deadlines.** This point is less important in the era of the continuous news cycle, and yet still, common courtesy, as well as common sense, puts limits on the campaign’s communications team’s eagerness to “pitch” stories at all times.
- At the same time, **communicators should be persistent in pitching**, especially if they feel that the reporter has a fact wrong. Campaign communications is not for the shy, or faint of heart!
- If possible, make sure that a **news release is directed to a specific individual** such as a reporter or editor by name, as in “Dear ___.” As they say, the sweetest noise anyone ever hears is the sound of his or her own name.
- **Know how each reporter or editor prefers to get news** and note this on your media list. (Some reporters prefer email, some prefer texts, faxes or in-person drop-offs.)
- **Don’t be a pest** by repeatedly calling, texting, emailing or stopping by the newsroom.
- **Create a media list and use it.** This is a comprehensive list of all the people in the news media in your area. Keep a record of their contact information and make sure to update it regularly.
- If possible, **make your contacts personally**, at least at first. A reporter’s attitude toward a candidate is often colored by the reporter’s relationship, warm, or cold, to the campaign’s “comms” operation.
- Be careful to **share news with all local media, not just your “friends.”** (You always want to reassure everyone that you’ll be a servant to all, and in addition, you never know where some extra friend, or vote, might be lurking!)
- **Develop a positive, trusting relationship with journalists.** Admittedly, this is not easy, but then, nobody said politics was easy!
- **Never lie.**

And here’s an “Eleventh Rule”: **Expect the Unexpected.**

Getting the Message Out – Working with the Media

Setting the agenda is a vital goal, which requires maintaining control of the message, which, in turn, means, working with the media.

The media are the “oxygen” of your campaign—and of the other campaign, too.

In a competitive environment, it’s best to work *with* the media rather than *against* them.

Throughout the campaign, external, unforeseen crises and events will occur. It is absolutely essential to the health and success of the campaign that you maintain message discipline! No matter what the situation, all communication coming from the campaign must be consistent and reinforce the message that you want the voters to hear. It can’t be repeated often enough: *The party that controls the message is the party that usually wins.*

Engaging the Public

The media is not the same as the voting public. The media are a pipeline to the voters, but sometimes, of course, the media can be an obstacle, not an ally. So even as you do your best with the media, always be thinking that the real goal is to reach the public. We can start with, of course, speaking to the public.

Speaking to the Public

Public speaking is a key way to engage with people. It’s not just an obligation, it’s an opportunity. As a result, a good speaker is one who has connected with the audience and leaves listeners with a message they will remember.

By definition, public speaking is an in-person presentation of information. Because most audiences are not able to take notes conveniently, public speaking requires the speaker to be clear, interesting, prepared, personable and, most of all, memorable so when the audience leaves, the speaker’s message leaves with them.

This does not need to be overwhelming. Speech design, for the most part, is quite simple: For most presenters, the *Rule of Three* is a simple but solid blueprint:

- Introduction – tell the audience what you intent to talk about
- Body or Main Points – tell the audience what you want them to know
- Closing – reiterate what you just said in summary

A good speaker is *clear, interesting and memorable*—telling stories whenever possible, making eye contact with as many as possible. Everyone likes to feel that they have made a personal connection with a leader, even if it’s only fleeting—for a person in the audience, the memory of a good moment of connection will last a lot longer than the actual moment.

Being Interviewed

Interviews can be particularly daunting, especially if they are aired live. It is important to prepare for interviews in order to effectively stay on message—that’s part of your plan.

13 Tips for Interviews



Be prepared. If possible, have someone on your team taking notes, or better yet, recording it—this can come in handy in cases of bad reporting.



If necessary—take notes yourself, if not at the time, then do so immediately afterward.



Conduct a mock interview with a trusted colleague in order to obtain constructive feedback.



Dress neatly by choosing tasteful clothing. Wear only simple jewelry and try to avoid busy patterns. If the interview is televised, “camera test” clothing.



Relax. Try not to sweat and worry—or at least not look worried!



Keep control of non-verbal behavior, such as posture and facial expressions—particularly in broadcast interviews.



Don't make things up. Reporters, readers, and viewers can usually spot a lie. If you do not know the answer to a question, do not guess. An adroit politician can say, when confronted with a tough question, “Fortunately, we have experts helping us on this. In the meantime, the people should know that I am fully committed to...”



When you've answered the question, stop talking. It is a strong temptation to keep talking to fill “empty” air, and yet that's when the interviewee often gets in trouble, by rambling.



“Button lines” are a useful concept. That is, after answering a question, have some snappy closing line in mind to give your closing words more authority. After all, it's the last words in answer that people are most likely to remember.



Give examples about real people. People are interested in other people, be it heroes, good examples, bad examples, or people just like themselves.



Speak slowly for emphasis and authority, speak quickly to show knowledge. There's no one right answer in speaking cadence; the best strategy is usually alternation and variety.



If statistics are used, keep them accurate but simple. And remember, people's ability to grasp abstractions, such as numbers, is much less than their ability to grasp concrete images, such as illustrations from nature and human nature.



Always tell the truth.

Of course, live events, rallies, and parades are important for building excitement and momentum. Therefore, campaigns should be mindful of the opportunity presented to them by live appearances, especially by the candidate. Thus, we come to a key concept in modern media-friendly campaigning: The importance of appearances at such events, and the equal importance of “advance.” Advance is the overall term for the logistics, security, and, yes, showmanship that makes an event fun, as well as informative and inspiring. The advance team consists of the personnel needed to transport the candidate, securely, and with dignity, from place to place. Quality advance, combined with quality staging of events, is increasingly a matter of political artistry, and as such, deserves careful consideration. After all, the candidate is, in effect, “competing,” not only with the other candidate(s), but with anything else that might draw away attention.

A final point: Even amidst the heat of the campaign, it’s best to remember that in the opinion of most citizens, politics and elections are not ends in themselves. Most people—including many swing voters—don’t necessarily enjoy political campaigns. They are interested in other things, most obviously, their own lives, families and careers. Candidates, campaigns, and parties will do well to remember to keep the focus, to the extent they can, on the ultimate goal of politics, which is a happier and more prosperous country.

This is more than just a statement of pious civics; it is, in fact, a practical tactic, not only of governing, but also of campaigning. The better candidate has a vision of a better country—and that’s much more appealing than just politics and campaigning.

In fact, a focus on the brighter future is a useful form of discipline for the campaign, so that partisan combat does not cloud the vision for the nation: *the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.*

Earned Media vs. Paid Media

“Paid media” is what it sounds like: advertising (including online advertising), billboards, signs, and so on. As has been said, campaigns are about “message and moments”—what’s the message, and is it said memorably?

“Earned media” is the attention a campaign gets from doing things that are interesting, compelling, and newsworthy. Such newsworthiness starts, of course, with a compelling message—including memorable or catchy phrases. And so once again we come to the point about “message and moments”—what’s the message, and is it said memorably?

In addition, we are reminded of the importance of an effective campaign advance team: Each movement of a candidate, as well as campaign events, represents a potential opportunity for earned media.

Managing Social Media

The biggest change, in terms of engaging the public, over the last decade has been the rise of social media.

Social media has changed the nature of news. Today, tweets, instant reports, and streaming video have combined to reduce the distinction between a journalist and a citizen. Today, anyone can be a “citizen journalist” if he or she wishes to be. And if such citizen journalists capture something on video, it will quickly migrate to the more traditional news media. Thus, candidates must be alert!

With social media at the front and center of politics today, the phrase “all politics is local” is more relevant than ever before. Citizens across the country can connect immediately and directly with elected officials and the issues they are passionate about through social media. Social media allows you to establish a personal connection with constituents.

This amplifies your message, but also means that you should put more emphasis and care into messaging for accuracy to reach a wider audience, knowing that the bigger the audience, the more numerous the fact-checkers!

The upside is, a candidate who is charming, personable, or otherwise appealing will gain from additional exposure.

Dealing with "Fake News"

Another seemingly new phenomenon is "fake news" otherwise called "hoax."

Of course, there has always been false and malicious reporting, even outright hoaxes. So in some sense, "fake news" is nothing new. However, two things are relatively new: first, the heightened technical ability to create a fake, or false, impression, through digital trickery; and second, the willingness, even eagerness, of some candidates and campaigns to hit back with the allegation that a news item is "fake news."

The resulting environment can be extremely challenging for all concerned—for candidates, for the media, and for the public. It's an ancient philosophical question: *What is truth?*

American president Thomas Jefferson optimistically asserted that in a free environment, the truth will win.

All believers in truth should hope that Jefferson was right, and is still right. However, in the political arena, it helps if the truth has allies! That is, allies who will rally to support the truth against attacks from falsehood.

The best ally of the truth, of course, is the personal credibility of the candidate. If he or she has a reputation for truthfulness, that's a kind of armor against attacks from untruthfulness. *Integrity is a candidate's greatest asset, and should be protected by both the candidate and the party, as it is one of the hardest things to gain if lost.*

A second ally of truth is rapid response by the campaign and/or party. The campaign should have a "rapid response" team; that is, fact-checkers who can rush verifying documentation to the public's attention. Typically, such verifying documentation includes precise dates, times, and so on, and is designed to be immediately user-friendly so that reporters, and others, can utilize it.

A third ally might be found in neutral, respected, or objective observers who can, in effect, judge what's true and what's not true. All countries have such figures and institutions, and many of them today have websites. It always helps for a campaign, under attack, to be able to say, "Independent expert ___ vouches for our accuracy and truthfulness."

Of course, for every action, there's a reaction, and so for every allegation, there's a counter-allegation—that's politics, so it is best to stick to facts and avoid he said she said which can lead to further polarization. It is best to try to anticipate likely lines of attack, and have factual information at the ready, and to have allies at the ready, too. This is a process of strategic coordination akin to any other question of strategy: *Do we have our allies ready? Do we have a plan for rapid response? Are our communications people ready to deliver quality information to the media? And to social media?*

Managed properly, communications may seem easy and natural to the public. That is, the candidate is telling the truth, and when hit with an accusation of untruthfulness, the candidate's team produces all the verifying documentation needed to prove the truth. And yet as we all know, behind the scenes, teams must work hard to make it look easy!

The 3 R's

When developing your party's message, it helps to remember the 3 R's:

Messages should be *realistic*, *relevant* and *relatable*.



REALISTIC



RELEVANT



RELATABLE

Let's start with *realistic*: a common mistake made by candidates is that they over-promise and under-deliver. This creates frustration and citizens begin to lose faith in their credibility. Thus all the work of the agenda and the platform must be predicated on realism. As they say, *politics is the art of the possible*.

The message must also be *relevant*. Above all, "relevance" is in the eye of the beholder—that is, the eye of the voter. This is why it is important to tailor messages for specific audiences; what resonates with one group may be seen as unfavorable to another group. When developing messages, ask yourself: Do the voters connect with what you're saying? Do they apply it to their own hopes and aspirations? Once again, this is their decision, and it's vital to respect this decision, even as, of course, you are trying to persuade them. There's a saying in consumer marketing: "The customer is always right." And the same applies to voting. A campaign can seek to change a voter's mind, but it must start by respecting the voter's right to reach a judgment. This is where data, data from all sources, comes into play:

Why do the voters think the way they think? The better you understand that question, the more likely it is that you will come up with a message that they find relevant.

Finally, the message must be *relatable*. Theorists and ideologues typically prefer *abstractions*; at the street level, people usually prefer *tangibles*. The political battle over relatability will most likely be won by the party that best connects on tangible issues such as jobs, education, and healthcare. The challenge of *relatability* is not just confined to individuals, of course. It also applies to families, communities, and to the nation as a whole. Once again, real-time data—including face-to-face feedback—is vital.

II. PLANNING THE TRANSITION



Congratulations! You've won the election. Now comes the hard part! As has been said, the period of the transition—from the moment you win until the moment you are sworn into office—is the period between *victory* and *responsibility*.

ADJUSTING TO NON-PARTISANSHIP

The period of time between Election Day and the first day in office is crucial. Most obviously, a transition is a time to make the transition from campaigning to governing; to get people and policy in place.

More subtly, and perhaps just as importantly, a transition is a good time to give partisan politics a rest.

Thus, at the end of a partisan political campaign we come to a useful distinction: between *bipartisanship*, and *non-partisanship*. Bipartisanship is a willingness to work with the other party (in the case of a multiparty system, parties); or, simply, working across party lines. Depending on the election results, a willingness to work with at least some other parties might be a necessity of coalition governance, and yet it's almost always the case that it's advantageous to express a willingness to work, at least somewhat, with all other parties. This helps to uphold the ideal that all parties share a commitment to the common good, and so there is the potential to find common ground on some issues—or, at an absolute minimum, on the importance of a fairly functioning political system. Multi-partisanship does not entail the abandonment of principles, including party principles; it simply means that the parties will at least consider working together on certain issues.

Non-partisanship is different. Non-partisanship is what it sounds like: It is the process of a more non-partisan governing style, in which the soon-to-be-office holder seeks to govern in a way that

transcends, at least perceptually, the importance of parties. Most ordinary people are not that interested in politics, indeed, they often regard politics as divisive. Such people will admire a winning candidate who radiates non-partisan calm and pledges togetherness, unity, and, as might be necessary, healing.

As Thomas Jefferson declared in his first inaugural address, following the bitter election of 1800, "Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle." Jefferson sought to bridge partisan divisions—always an attractive feature in a national leader. So, even if we disagree, we are still all citizens of the same country.

Yes, there will always be politics, and yes, party labels and partisanship will always exist and are useful for accountability. However, the "silent majority" tends to prefer just getting on with life—hopefully, with better governance. The bottom line: An effective leader is always mindful of his or her "base," which tends to be hardcore partisans, and yet at the same time, the leader seeks to enlarge the coalition, beyond the base.

PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITION

In every electoral system, there's at least some "lag time" between winning an election and assuming power. This is the *transition*. Whether the transition lag time is measured in days, weeks, or months, it's still in the best interest of the candidate and the campaign to plan for the transition.

The transition period is critical for developing the infrastructure and relationships needed to take office and onboard efficiently. This is not the time to take a vacation and rest after the campaign, rather this is when the real work begins. During the transition period, a new official should of course focus on *people and policy*, while at the same time, being mindful of the new optics of governing, as opposed to campaigning.

Planning for the transition should occur as early in the campaign process as possible. (There might be laws concerning transitions, and these should be heeded, but it's not likely that there's any sort of law restricting the ability of a campaign to at least think about what might happen if it wins.) Beginning the transition planning process early allows for better decisions about campaign messaging and decisions about prioritizing policies to align, ultimately creating more reachable goals and realistic promises. It is important to consider how, from the outset, the messaging of the candidate and his or her campaign will be converted into realistic objectives for achieving the party's policy goals. This is a point worth dwelling upon: Starting, of course, with the candidate's *vision*, the resulting *agenda* and *platform* can bolster a campaign by allowing the candidate to showcase how he or she will govern.

Governing is different from *campaigning*. It's important for candidates to recognize that once in office they are not only representing the interests of those who voted for them, but also those who did not. They are now responsible to their entire electorate as well as to their party. Ordinary people want an elected official who will be a unifier—and so

if the new team can engender such positive public sentiment taking over from an incumbent during the *transition*, that will make governing easier.

Claiming a Mandate

The winning candidate will have just one chance to make an initial speech, or other public appearance, after his or her victory. So it's best to make a good one! The speech should thank supporters, thank voters, and so on.

And yet at the same time, this first speech provides the candidate with an ideal moment to remind the voters why he or she won. The speech could and should be a distillation of the candidate's vision, agenda, and platform. The speech needn't be a "laundry list," of course, but it should indicate to voters that the candidate knows why he or she was elected, and that the candidate is earnest about keeping campaign promises, with the ultimate goal of making the country better.

This process of claiming a mandate is key in keeping the political coalition together, even as the new winner seeks to expand the coalition, so as to "grow" the mandate and turn it into a solid road map for governing.

Building a Strategic Plan

Of course, the new government wants to inspire and motivate, but it also needs to enlist and activate—people must know what they are supposed to do. That's where planning comes in, a plan is a map that leads to reaching a specific goal. Plans are a roadmap to the future, and strategic planning is the process used to draw that map.

A strong strategic plan should have three primary components:

First, a strategic philosophy, that is, vision;

Second, a statement of priorities, which can be determined through an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;

Third, at least three wisely chosen strategic goals with an action plan for each;

These should include:

- Team leaders and teams
- Timelines and budgets
- Criteria that measures success



When plans are developed collaboratively, it helps reduce differences of opinion among group members. A strategic plan helps control the present and look ahead to the future instead of just waiting for things to happen. This approach creates value and helps a group move toward positive outcomes. Planning meetings should include party members, staffers, supporters, people who can help financially, and, perhaps, even a constructive critic or two who can offer at least the outlines of an opposing viewpoint. This gives voice to the largest feasible

group, thus preventing the perils of “groupthink.” In addition, a strategy of inclusion gives people a sense of belonging which helps energize them to stay faithful to the project and see it through to the finish line. Although many people may be working on tasks, it’s wise to have one person in charge of the whole project.

We might pause to note that generals have a saying: “No plan survives its first collision with combat.” That is, the changing situation will require instant, and perhaps significant, revision. One military general-turned-democratically elected politician, Dwight Eisenhower, the 34th President of the United States said that *plans* tend to be useless as events unfold. However, he immediately added, *planning is essential*. The exercise of developing a strategy—considering, for instance, goals, budgets, human resources, and, critically, the campaign calendar—is always vital. The mere act of putting together a plan encourages people to think strategically, and enables them to better make changes when new circumstances arise. It is that strategic capacity to think, and to do, that serves a team well. No matter how chaotic or challenging the situation, it always helps to be able to think and organize—and so the more pre-planning, the better.

There are some relatively small things that a new team can plan in advance, with reasonable confidence that it will get the opportunity to show that it is generating results right way.

By composing a strategic plan, and updating or revising it as often as necessary, the newly elected leader will be able to manage his or her new environment with fewer annoyances and distractions—which is to say, more time to devote to unforeseen interruptions! The transition will involve learning how to manage a new role, maneuver within a new system, and will inevitably require adaptability to adjust plans, in order to achieve the long-term goals of governance. Managing a new role will mean different things for executive versus legislative positions; however, both can be framed around two key variables: *personnel* and *policy*.

Managing Expectations

We now come to another key point: *Managing expectations*. In the heat of a campaign, lots of things are said, and even promised. For good reasons and bad, people—both within the campaign and in the electorate as a whole—get the wrong idea about what might be possible, and what could be changed. Sometimes, dishonesty is a cause, but at other times, it's just a matter of emotion and optimism getting ahead of itself. One task of the leader is to define, or redefine, the task ahead. As noted earlier, *politics is the art of the possible*. Even amidst flux and change, it's important for a leader to be a leader. Any new official should have clear goals in mind, plans for achieving those goals, as well as a plan for communicating with the public. Having a strategic plan from the very beginning will help the official to manage expectations, by promising only what is feasible and within the scope of their position. With a plan, people can look ahead and move forward in an organized way and communicate what is realistic so that the expectations of the electorate are achievable.

Planning for the Hundred Days

It only makes sense that attention will be greatest in the early part of a new government—say, the first three months.

In fact, the so-called Hundred Days is a familiar historic benchmark for evaluating the early performance of elected officials and their new government. This time frame allows for the measurement of the incumbent's follow-through on initial promises and commitments, as well as an assessment of the impact on the public mood and morale.

This is why it is important to look ahead to that Hundred Days benchmark during the campaign and use that as a guide to planning. The Hundred Days is an opportunity for the new official to demonstrate what he/she is capable of accomplishing.

TAKEAWAY: Building Credibility through Planning – Creating 100 day plans during the campaign period allows candidates to demonstrate their understanding of office and increase their credibility. It is a good exercise for them to clearly realize the day to day operations of the position they are campaigning for.

Specifically, the transition team might ask: What will the new official do in the first day? The first week? The first month? These points go beyond a speech or the optics of a ceremony—they speak to performance and execution of priorities. Which campaign promises will be kept first? Presumably, the candidate-turned-elected official will be guided by the vision, agenda, and platform put forth in the campaign, but there is always the question of prioritization and the practicalities of implementation. Moreover, sometimes the situation changes, in small ways and big ways. Prioritization is important in order to stay on track with the strategic plan amidst fluctuations and unexpected events. If a campaign goal is judged to be no longer realistic or feasible, the team needs to be prepared to adapt and communicate why this change happened.

The Hundred Days can be viewed as an opportunity for the new team to judge itself: it can be a key metric of the new leader's abilities, both personally and organizationally. If the first Hundred Days are a success, then that's a positive sign for the next hundred days, or thousand days.

The planning process for the Hundred Days can be quite specific, "On Day One we will do X, on Day Two we will do Y, on Day Three we will do Z," and so on. It is possible to outline a process for overseeing and managing activity during the transition. This is yet another valuable form of self-discipline that reduces uncertainty and streamlines the process of taking on a new office.

A Successful Hundred Days

- Get to work to implement your plan;
- Set out a clear timeframe for new legislation;
- Begin planning & budgeting for new investment in key issues;
- List specific ways you will achieve success within one hundred days, outlining action and measures of success for each specific policy.

Many of the skills that make for an effective campaign will also make for effective governance, including the ability to set an agenda, work harmoniously to achieve objectives, and communicate. Whether the personnel in the transition are the same as the campaign, or different, certain technical skills will always be needed. The bottom line is the same: *Get it done!*

TAKING OFFICE

Managing Personnel

No candidate gets far in politics without a campaign team, similarly no official can govern without the help of some staff. Therefore, it's natural that, law and budget permitting, at least some of the campaign team might wish to follow the candidate into government as the candidate transitions into being a governing official. Setting aside questions of law and budget—what is permitted and what isn't—we might pause to consider the upside and downside of such a migration.

On the one hand, a proven team is just that—a proven team. If the team is good enough to win an election, it might well be good enough to take other tasks, such as governing. After all, the basics of coordination and communication are applicable to

many human endeavors. And loyalty, of course, is to be respected.

On the other hand, not every good campaign staffer will be a good government staffer. The soon-to-be-incumbent should carefully consider questions of background and temperament in choosing a transition and government staff. Some campaigners, for example, have a hard time putting aside their “bare-knuckle” instincts. So the elected official should carefully consider whether he or she wishes to import that sort of style into the government.

We might add, of course, that requirements of law and transparency are greater in the government. Moreover, media scrutiny tends to rise enormously once a candidate is in office. While it might be easy for a campaign staffer to stay “behind the curtain,” it's much harder for a transition or government staffer to stay out of the public eye.

Yet whether or not staff evolve from the campaign, to the transition, and later to public office, there's no reason why there can't be at least some coordination. After all, it's ideas—vision, agenda, platform—that should, in the end, matter most.

Party politics are successful when the party has a role to play; they are unsuccessful when a new office-holder reduces the party to a prop in a cult of personality.

Post-election, candidates must quickly move from campaigning mode to governing mode, and should ensure that data collected during the campaign be maintained and organized throughout the transition. During this part of the transition, the party can facilitate the appropriate transfer and maintenance of data collected during the campaign, including voter lists, volunteer lists, and fundraising lists. These lists should be housed in a secure location—hacking and other kinds of theft are increasingly sophisticated—utilized for future party or campaign events. One of the main roles of the party is to maintain voter records, and keep data organized so that they can hold candidates accountable, but also to provide them with research and data regarding constituents.

Developing Policy

Policy deliverables should be outlined during the transition to ensure that they stay true to the vision of the party; even as, of course, as they say, *Politics is the art of the possible*.

We can assume that officials, as well as party leaders, will use the time after a victory to analyze the victory, considering such questions as the nature of the coalition that brought the victory about. Such analysis will mean much to the newly elected official's governing and legislative strategy. Yet at the same time, it's important to look ahead to a broader "playing field"—namely, the whole of the nation, and the challenge it faces. Thus, the effective leader will keep faith with his or her supporters, while at the same time reaching out to all citizens. Yes, campaigns can be polarizing, and sometimes passions run hot, but the goal after every election should be for the nation to come together.

And victors should look for ways to join with the people as they launch the next phase in their collective journey. So while generosity of spirit is always a virtue, it's especially valuable in the post-election period. We need not have any illusions about the impact of polarization on a political system, to nonetheless see the value of magnanimity at the end of the process. As Abraham Lincoln said, a good goal is to conquer your enemies by making them your friends.

Handling the Outgoing Office Holders

A key question, of course, is the nature of the outgoing governing staff, if there is one. An incoming executive transition team should be focused on ways to coordinate with incumbent staff in order to maintain records and ensure a smooth handoff of the office. Friction between outgoing and incoming staff can be counterproductive to effective policy making and continuity in development planning, particularly at the municipal level. Although politicians may want to accentuate the contrast between old and new, it is important for staff to prioritize progress over politics especially when

it comes to data transfer and office organization. The transition team should begin interacting with the office prior to the transition—unless there are regulations barring this—in order to serve the purpose of evaluating and identifying issues within the office that will need to be addressed in the first 30 days in order to achieve the plans and long-term goals of the office. It should be made clear that this is the intent of the transition team, and that they are not trying to interfere with or influence the decision making of the sitting leadership.

Working with the Civil Service

In every country, much of the government is "permanent," insofar as it is insulated from partisan change by law and custom. Oftentimes, when a new team comes in, there is suspicion, perhaps even downright hostility. We can't be naive about the reality of such feelings—and they could even be justified. However, an incoming government often does well to assume the best, to hope that the old government will mesh well with the new team, on everything from personnel and office space to budgets and national security. It is in the interests of all citizens to make the transition process as smooth as possible, and good feeling facilitates a good transition, as well as good governance.

III. GOVERNING EFFECTIVELY

ENGAGING THE SYSTEM

Okay, so now you're in office. Perhaps you have a Hundred Day plan ready to go. As we have seen, an effective hundred days can be a great boost, but your time in office will be longer than that. It is time to think about how you will take on new challenges and assess the landscape that you have entered into. As with anything in life, there are more ways to fail than to succeed—so it's a good idea to study the successes!

A good place to start is to think about how to deal with the various social groups that exist in any society and in the government. Before dealing with the public, first an official must understand their role and how to navigate the government and those in it.

Understanding the Role and Responsibility of a Public Servant

Holding public office requires that elected officials carry out three primary functions, and this is true whether in an executive role or legislative one. For an executive, this means serving their constituents, communicating with other levels of government and other agencies, as well as carrying out their mandate in office. A legislator is similar, with three main roles: drafting legislation, oversight of the executive, and representing the interests of their constituents.

In a representative democratic system, the elected official has a primary responsibility to serve citizens whom they represent. As part of this responsibility, the official must make efforts to be accessible to the individual, not only citizens as a group. This is important, as each individual constituent may have requests that differ from others in the community. In addition to serving the individual, and irrespective of whether they were elected in a single mandate district or from a party list, an elected official



Roles of Legislators

- Develop Priorities
- Draft and Enact Legislation
- Utilize Resources Ethically
- Provide Oversight
- Engage Constituents
- Address the Needs of Constituents

Commitment of a Public Servant

As a public servant, your commitment to ethical service is vital to performing your work and supporting your entity's mission with honesty, integrity, impartiality, and in the spirit of service to others.

We can sum this up in three words: Awareness, Engagement, and Accountability

- **Awareness:** Knowing the principles, rules, and laws that define appropriate conduct.
- **Engagement:** Cultivating a culture of asking questions and seeking advice.
- **Accountability:** Acting in ways that reflect the commitment to the public and holding oneself accountable.

must also be available to represent the needs of the community as a whole. This includes civic organizations that represent a variety of issues affecting the citizenry, or private enterprises that have interests within the community.

Navigating the Government

The most obvious point to begin with is that you are now in charge. The new reality of incumbency will open the door to new challenges, and so it will be important to understand how to tackle them and who your allies will be.

And while you are entrusted with power for a set time, you need to understand that the other people in the government will not necessarily operate the way you want them to. The difficulty of changing the way an office or government operates is sometimes a matter of dealing with habit, or tradition. The people who work in the government for a career—the civil service, the police, the military—have their ways, sometimes guided by law, sometimes by habit, sometimes by other factors.

The new government will succeed better if it has a full understanding of these institutional factors. It is important to understand who the other players in the government are, who the influencers are and where to look for allies on different issues.

Despite criticism that tend to drive opposition campaigns, all newly elected officials will have to work within an existing bureaucracy, and thus it is beneficial to approach bureaucracy with positive ideas and points of negotiation rather than a combativeness or criticism. It is important to *balance old political approaches with new governing realities*.

A new official will be full of ideas and plans—this can be an exciting process of renewal, a chance for a fresh start. However, oftentimes new officials may get frustrated as they begin to realize the challenging reality of budget limitations and opposition to ideas. Thus a new official should familiarize themselves with all of the details of office including the basics of floor plans, administrative procedures, and information technology, budgeting,

and legal processes for drafting laws, holding meetings and other duties. Second, a new official should try to engage with veterans who have been in the government for a while and understand the internal dynamics.

Once you are in the government, the biggest factor determining many of your decisions may be who else is there. Though your campaign might have been innovative, you will be sitting in the same office as your predecessor, with the same limits on budget, staffing, and so on. Moreover, the legal system is likely to be more of a factor—what's permitted, what's not permitted. While creativity and innovation are prized, the practical reality is likely to be precedent—the way things have already been done—will guide many of your decisions. A new office holder needs to think carefully about how to use resources and prioritize reforms. It may be best to introduce changes gradually.

Yet at the same time, you *are* the government. So if you don't like something, big or small, you now have the power to at least attempt to change it. It may be an ambitious mission, and the desired change might not happen right away, but it won't happen at all unless you initiate the process.

Depending on the context, size of the office and budget, staffing may be even more widespread requiring an official to set up separate departments such as a policy department, communications department or constituent services department. A policy department would be focused on following through on campaign promises—thinking carefully about converting the ideas of the vision/agenda/platform into tangible results. The policy office will have to work with offices associated with intergovernmental liaison, as well offices assigned to work with constituencies and the public, and should lean on the party for support.

A final note for this section: Making the governmental system work is difficult. If at all possible, officials should look for expertise wherever they can find it, including outside of the new team. It is dangerous not to know the mechanics of how

governing systems operate, as it makes you a target for manipulation. So if you can learn from the mistakes of others—as opposed to making them yourself you will be better off. That might mean consulting with people who have been in this role before. *Be open to the possibility of asking for help in unexpected places.*

Implementing SMART Policies

Above, we considered the Hundred Days idea, even as, of course, we recognized that the incumbent intends to be in office for a lot longer than that.

In order to obtain success while in office, leadership needs to develop strategic plans for implementing policy solutions and achieving their overall vision. Strategic planning to accomplish policy deliverables begins with assessing the current state of things in the office. The transition team should assess what the baseline will be if elected. This means analyzing the policies and potential problems that a candidate will inherit if they are elected to office. By obtaining a clear understanding of where they will start once in office, a candidate can create more realistic plans and goals. This allows them to determine what they can improve and by how much; it also allows them to prioritize policies that are more likely to be successful. Most elected officials will be tasked with

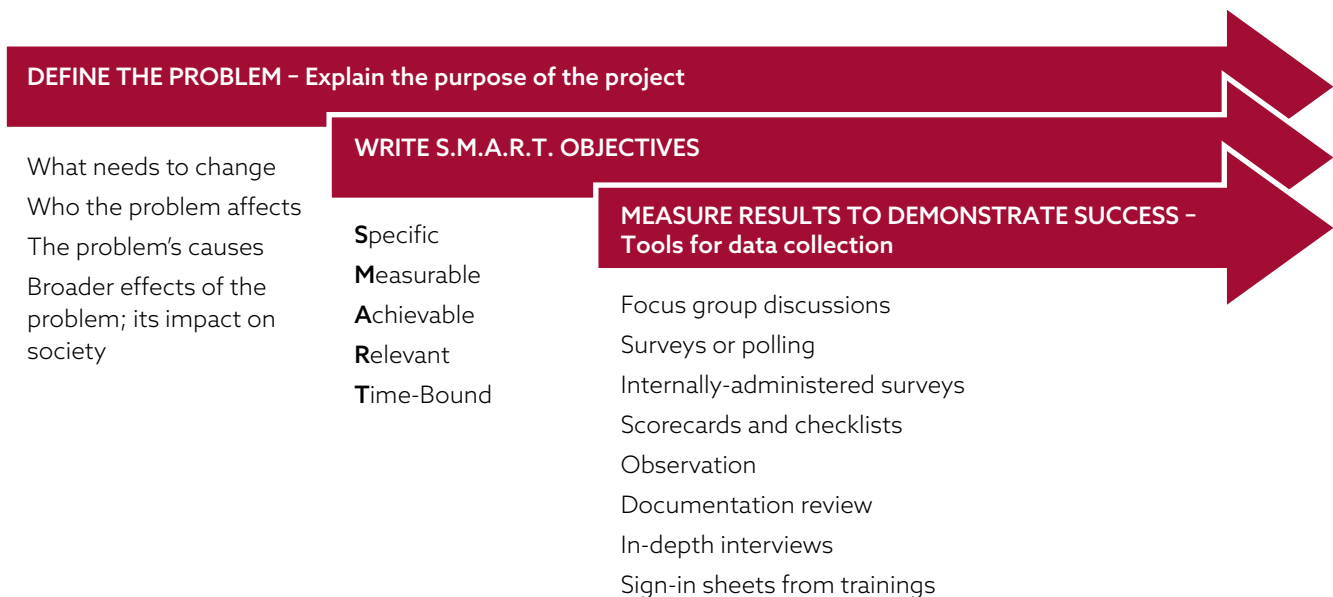
leading specific government projects during their time in office. Many times, these projects will be signature achievements for elected officials.

The process of project development is similar to that of strategic planning, in that a proposal should contribute to a broader vision, but should also have concrete objectives. Writing these objectives is sometimes difficult as officials may not have enough data to develop achievable objectives that are clear on implementation. Thus officials should focus on creating SMART objectives which are: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

Working With Your Party

In representative government, you're not going to get far without a steady degree of support. In political terms, this is your base—the people who are always with you—at least you hope!

Parties are a peaceful way of giving citizens a voice. They are what political scientists call a "mediating institution"; that is, they serve as a mediator between the citizenry, on the one hand, and the government, on the other. To be sure, in a free and pluralistic society, there will be many mediating institutions—civic, religious, regional—but a political party exists to focus on politics, specifically, elective politics, and then, in addition, on governance.



The party can typically help with relationship-building and visibility-increasing.

For a successful candidate, most likely, a political party is the same as his or her political base. The party supports the vision/agenda/platform that you ran on. To be sure, not everyone within the party will fully agree on every aspect of what the party stands for—that's human nature. However, it's best when the party achieves a degree of unity and cohesion that enables it to function as an advocate for what it believes; that's the value of internal party communication.

The party should have permanent ideas and interests transcending any one individual. This is why it is so valuable to have an articulated party platform, supplemented by current data. These beliefs and principles ideally existed long before you came into politics and should exist long after you leave.

For reasons of sheer self-interest, as well as good governance, it is best if the new leader pays close attention to the platform on which they were elected and maintains close ties to the party for support and networking. *Parties support candidates to get elected and should continue to provide support to them as office holders.* They can do this by providing network connections, policy research, regional data, and facilitating citizen connections. By the same token, officials should maintain close ties to the party, providing support and mentorship to new leaders and staff, and by pushing the party's agenda through legislative action. The goal is for the party to support you during your time in office and vice versa. Continued interaction with the party—in private meetings, public rallies, social media communication, and everything else—is good insurance you will always have activists and supporters.

The heart of an enduring relationship will likely be on policy: Is the new government keeping faith with the vision/agenda/platform? Do party activists and experts feel that they have adequate input? And will the relationship between the party and its candidates endure even when a specific candidate is no longer on the scene—as happens to everyone?

In this emphasis on vision/agenda/platform, we see a key goal for a party. Namely, the creation of some sort of "policy unit" to help keep track of promises, both made and kept.

The government, and the party will do well to secure its base *and* to seek more supporters. Politics is about addition, not subtraction, once newcomers are interested in a party, there's always the opportunity to engage them more deeply in the party's beliefs. Parties can continue outreach efforts to maintain a connection with constituents and communicate effectively with them outside of the election cycle.

Building a Coalition

As you look beyond your own party for more support, you will meet other citizens who might not be interested, for whatever reason, in joining your party, but might nonetheless be interested in working together on an issue or issues.

Now we come to the matter of *building a coalition*. Coalitions, of course, can be of all kinds; there can be coalitions of parties, coalitions of citizens' groups, and coalitions within the government itself.

Yet coalitions anywhere typically form because of commonality of interest—coalition members are all in favor of the same thing, or against the same thing.

If everyone in the coalition feels that he or she has something to gain from being a member—and a realistic chance of realizing that gain—then it is a strong coalition.

Building a coalition is a lot like building a party. It might start with vision, that is, a shared vision. The shared vision should be written down, so that everybody can know exactly what is, and is not, agreed to. Then, the vision can be shaped into an agenda, or perhaps even as a formal platform.

As a coalition matures, it takes on more functions of communication, engagement, and advocacy.

There is strength in numbers. It's a simple enough point: it's better to be in the majority than in the minority.

Building a Successful Coalition

Find common ground – a coalition should always focus on common ground, points with which all partners agree.

Set a clear objective – the goal or objective of the coalition should be to produce tangible results. Finding common ground on one or two issues can help set objectives.

Equitable benefit – in order for individual members to be motivated, all members need to believe they will ultimately derive benefit from the coalition.

Avoid disagreements – members of the coalition will not always agree on all issues. Some topics and issues should be off-limits to discussion if they will cause disagreements.

Be ready to negotiate – the coalition must be willing to negotiate on lesser priorities in order to achieve the larger goal.

Develop trust and cooperation – there must be a sense of trust for members to cooperate.

Convey mutual respect – each partner must respect the needs, interests, and value of the other partners.

Create defined roles – all partners in the coalition should have clearly defined and distinct roles. Individual partners should understand not only their role, but the roles of the other partners as well.

Providing Oversight

Oversight is a key concept in honest, effective, accountable government. Oversight is based on a simple enough idea: Everyone, and everything, in public life should be subject to scrutiny and accountability. Transparency, including routine reporting requirements, is the best single bulwark against corruption and abuse. As the American Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis said of the value of the public's right to know, "Sunlight is the best disinfectant," that is, public awareness protects the public.

We should pause to assert that oversight is simply one form of accountability. Free elections, of course, are another form of accountability. Yet history proves that oversight in the time in between elections is vital, too. As we have learned, it's should never be tempting for incumbents—whether elected or part of the civil service—to abuse their power and thus jeopardize the well-being of the political system and of the nation as a whole.

So that's why an oversight mechanism is a good idea, keeping watch over elected officials and others in government. We should note immediately that proper oversight does *not* mean petty harassment and gratuitous snooping; instead, it means putting a system in place that allows for the routine monitoring of day-to-day government activities, including the proper behavior of public officials. By "proper behavior," we mean such matters as honest accounting for public expenditures, as well as personal behavior that violates the public trust.

Of course, nothing about governmental oversight is meant to supersede the normal jurisdiction of law; oversight is simply an additional layer of responsibility for government officials, as well as an additional layer of protection for the public interest.

Oversight is designed to fulfill a number of purposes:

1. **Ensure that laws are faithfully executed in accordance with the intent that the legislature had in their development**
2. **Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations**
3. **Evaluate the success or failure of programs**
4. **Prevent executive encroachment on legislative power**
5. **Investigate poor administration, waste, dishonesty, and fraud**
6. **Assess Agency/Officials' ability to carry out objectives**
7. **Review and determine federal financial priorities**
8. **Protect individual rights and liberties**

Methods for Successful Oversight

Build a Working Relationship with the Executive Branch

Communicate to Agencies/Ministries on Behalf of Constituents

Coordinate Colleagues and Experts to Monitor Efficiency and Productive of Agencies/Ministries

Conduct Public Hearings to Hold Agencies/Ministries Accountable

Develop Legislative Solutions

Within the government, oversight can come in two main forms, which we can describe as “internal monitoring” and “checking and balancing.”

First, internal monitoring is what it sounds like: A given agency has a system in place to detect violations of codes and laws. This internal monitoring can be as simple as a system of regular reports, supplemented by regular audits. Or it can be as elaborate as the creation of an office of an inspector general with investigative powers.

Second, as for checking and balancing, that’s the ability of one branch of government to keep watch over another branch of government—for example, the legislature keeping watch on the judiciary, and vice versa.

In any accountable political system—and democracy is all about accountability—it’s a good idea to have systems of transparency and accountability in place. Thus, oversight.

TAKEAWAY: Oversight does not mean overthrow - The point of oversight is that it is *non-partisan*, not about elections at all. That is, oversight should be seen as a neutral exercise in encouraging good government; oversight does not mean “overthrow”! Any use of oversight powers to seek to simply remove the incumbents from power in the guise of “accountability” is an attack on another key form of accountability, namely, the right of the voters to choose their leaders.

ENGAGING THE CITIZENRY

The proper goal of politics is the well-being of the people. All the skills, strategies, and tactics that have been outlined above will be tested by the issues and challenges that are certain to come your way.

You now have a duty to your region, and to all its people, even the people who didn’t vote for you.

We have come to perhaps the most important concept in this document: *The feedback loop between the government and the citizenry*. The government should stay in touch with the people, and the state should stay in touch with the government. If they do, they will both be better off—a win-win.

This is why, throughout this document, the importance of engagement—or put simply, *listening*—has been emphasized. It’s simply axiomatic that no one person, or group, has all the answers. Yes, a candidate and a party can have a vision, but even the strongest vision is subject to adjustment according to circumstance. People, articulating their views, are the best source of input, positive or negative.

This should take the form of a careful, and continuous, process of learning, specifically, *two-way learning*.

It is inevitable that the government will confront challenges and even make mistakes. It’s also possible that the political, economic, or strategic environment will change. That is why it is helpful to have a mechanism in place that quickly identifies those problems, or challenges. If a political leader can hear about a problem, perhaps that problem can be solved. A key virtue in government is the ability, and the willingness to *listen*.

Effective constituent outreach will strengthen the feedback loop between government and constituents.



There’s nothing wrong with public-opinion polling and social-media monitoring; they are good tools for tracking the public pulse. However, to really know what’s going on, nothing can replace actually meeting people in person, looking them in the eye and making them feel heard.

Such activity might look a bit like campaigning, and perhaps it is. After all, people are the same, before the election and after. The difference is on the other side of the feedback-loop equation: the candidate is now the elected official, so it’s the burden of the elected official to not lose touch with the people.

Of course, the leader will have other things to do; most obviously, the duty of governing. And yet if the leader can’t get out and meet the people as often he or she might like, then the task should be entrusted to trusted advisers or staff—those who can reliably report what was seen and heard.

In addition, it’s understood that leaders will be interacting with different constituencies, who have different interests. The most successful leaders thus communicate with different audiences in different ways, targeting messages to people’s different realities.

For example, a public official may attend a public celebration, give an interview to a local radio station, or may visit constituents at their homes. The diagram below—starting broadly with community events, and ending with one-on-one activities—shows a helpful way of thinking about how to reach out to citizens. There are also a variety of tools available to help make communication easier, both for people to provide input to their representatives and for politicians to tell the people in their districts about the projects they have been working on during their time in office.



Some legislators distribute items including their contact information, such as calendars and other printed materials—often called “leave behinds”—so citizens know how to contact the representative.

Utilizing community events, such as an important social occasion, or a town hall meeting, is important to cultivating and maintaining ties to the people whom an incumbent official represents. In addition, it is important for an elected official to maintain close ties with voters who have supported his or her party—even as they reach out to other voters, too. As we have observed, democratic politics is about addition, not subtraction! Using party structures to

reach out to constituents offers several advantages, including tapping into existing social networks and experience in organizing events, sharing experiences, learning from other party members, and coordinating messages between levels of the party structure. Party structures also enable elected officials to reach the grassroots level more systematically, considering the limited time, funds or resources they may have available.

TAKEAWAY: It is important to remember that officials leading specific projects should advocate for their projects and communicate their accomplishments through a public relations strategy.

CONCLUSION

The campaign period is intense and exciting, but after winning an election is when the real hard work begins. After working so hard to campaign, many candidates and their teams are tempted to take a ‘break’ or go on vacation, but this is actually when they should be the most focused on the goals of governing. The transition period between election and inauguration is a critical period for planning, and preparing, and clarifying what the official will do in office so that they can hit the ground running on day one. Managing their time as well as the expectations of their staff, constituents and counterparts in government is a complex and taxing job, thus preparation is key. This curriculum outlines the key areas that parties, elected officials and staff should clearly understand in order to improve governance, and consequently improve trust with constituencies and build more cohesive and lasting parties. IRI has an entire library of resources that can supplement this curriculum and training series. As the party uses this curriculum, our hope is that they will consult with IRI on how to implement this and other supplementary skills trainings to prepare candidates for governing. A list of these additional resources is included below:

- One-Stop Shops
- Local Economic Development Engine
- Government in Your Community
- Alliance Roundtables
- Citizen Manuals
- Collaborative Public Policy
- Live Media Shows
- Office of Transparency
- One-Stop Shop
- Participatory Budgeting
- Public Rendering of Accounts
- Town Halls



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