

Libertarian Strategy Gazette

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Organizational Planning for Libertarians

We have received from the Libertarian State Leadership Alliance a long series of articles that were presented at their yearly convention and that propose how Libertarians should advance to build stronger parties. The following is the second part of a presentation by Adam Mayer, Chairman, Libertarian Party of Oregon, proposing how his party had recently advanced and what lessons might be learned from it.

Part 1 of this article is on the web at cmlc.org

We resume the article slightly before the last words we printed in our last issue:

How to make it work

It's important to realize that activists, intellectuals, politicians and administrators can work together, but first individuals need to know where their strengths are. Someone who is a great activist may not make a good politician. Someone who is a great politician may not make a good administrator. Someone who is a great administrator may not make a good intellectual. Someone who is a great intellectual may not make a good activist.

The best thing is to be honest with yourself. If you are currently the state chair and realize that you are not an administrator but more of an intellectual, then you need to look for someone who can do the job better when your term ends. If you are good as an administrator and not a good politician, then don't resign and run for US Senate. If you focus your strengths where they are best suited, then other people in your state will follow your example.

This is also the most difficult aspect of organization, being honest with yourself and trying to motivate people into changing their role in your state Libertarian Movement.

When the organization is small people will wear many hats and take on some or all of the roles. As an organization grows it is hard to have people give up the control that they have held for the past few years. It's important to remember that the state party is not the most important thing; it is just one part of the entire Libertarian Movement.

The best first step is to group people according to their skills and abilities. This can be done simply with as few as two people. One needs to be a person who comes up with big ideas, the other needs to be a person who is good at getting things done. Combining these two styles of thinking will help you accomplish any task you work at.

In 1998 a change occurred in the LPO. Richard Burke was

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How Long is Our Party Platform?

Once again, a wing of our party is emerging proposing that all we have to do to win is to change the platform one way or the other. A standard critique is that our platform is too long. However, Marc Montoni has been kind enough to count the documents and circulate the real numbers:

Republican Party Platform

34,161 words.

186,402 characters

20 pages, 6-point font, 1/3" margins.

Democratic Party Platform

24,324 words.

127,438 characters

17 pages, 6-point font, 1/3" margins.

Libertarian Party Platform

13,723 words.

75,952 characters

7 pages, 6-point font, 1/3" margins.

Our platform is much shorter than theirs.

Electioneering

#3—Laying the Groundwork

From Timothy Crowley on PaLibernet@groups.yahoo.com
Over the years, Tim Crowley has assembled a vast store of strategy articles from various sources. He is now distributing them as a series on the PALibernet mailing list.

Winning campaigns start years before the election date, usually before the candidate even thinks of running for office. The public looks for political leaders who are already successful community or business leaders.

Tamara Clark's Libertarian campaign was taken seriously because she had headed a pro-choice referendum and an anti-business tax initiative. Don Gorman served on his local zoning board and held other appointed offices before being elected to the NH legislature. Your groundwork should include as many similar activities to increase your visibility as possible.

The pre-campaign phase is also the time for research. The place to start is with you, the candidate. Draw up a list of your positive attributes. Then a list of your more negative characteristics. Go to friends and family and ask for their honest evaluation in filling out the list. Spend some time thinking of ways to capitalize on the positives. Spend more time deciding how you will handle the negatives.

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nominated to run as the Libertarian candidate for governor by beating none of the above by two votes, and I was named his campaign manager. Richard is great at coming up with strategy; I am great at covering the small details. By combining our skills we decided that the campaign would run differently than any other statewide campaign before it. The strategy was to travel the entire state promoting the campaign and the Libertarian message. Since there was no structure of how to do this type of campaign, one had to be invented.

Richard came up with the idea of traveling to as many towns throughout the state campaigning the Libertarian message. This is a great campaign strategy mainly since most people outside of the Portland area were not familiar with the Libertarian party or our issues. The task of making it happen was delegated to me as campaign director. To achieve this goal I contacted media outlets in each town that Richard would travel to and set up interviews with TV, radio and newspapers. I contacted local Libertarians throughout the state to set up town hall meetings, press conferences and other public events. I found people to help with position papers and preparation for debates.

By creating this system I had organized the four-part structure of the Libertarian Movement. Activists were involved in scheduling events and getting people to show up. Intellectuals wrote the position papers and speeches. The candidate, Richard, was a politician explaining our message to parts of the state that didn't even know the Libertarian Party existed. He talked about ending the drug war in socially liberal Willamette Valley and talked about eliminating the property tax in the fiscally conservative eastern Oregon.

As the campaign manager, my job was that of the administrator. I worked with Richard to make sure that he was prepared for each event he did during the campaign. I worked with the intellectuals on what papers they were writing and his speeches. I worked with the activists to make sure that the events went off on time, that people were there and that they had all the tools necessary to do their job. As a result it was the best-run statewide campaign in the LPO's history. Since then we have achieved even more success, but this was the starting point.

After the campaign, Richard and myself and people who worked on the campaign, began to run the state party. The plan was to use what worked during the gubernatorial campaign on the state level. Success was achieved because people started to work at what they were best skilled at.

Another example was early in 2004 when the Libertarian Party of Oregon was fighting Measure 30, a ballot measure that would drastically increase income tax. The administrators worked with anti-tax groups and planned a statewide tour to help defeat this ballot measure. The intellectuals wrote literature for the activists to hand out and for the politicians to use when talking to the media. The activists scheduled the events around the state and set up public

meetings. The politicians went to these events around the state and spoke about why the ballot measure is bad for Oregonians.

Later in the year the Libertarian Party of Oregon was fighting Measure 36, a ballot measure that would establish marriage between one man and one woman in the state constitution. The administrators worked with Gay Rights groups on organizing the campaign. The intellectuals wrote editorial pieces and literature. The activists set up phone banks and worked on mailings. The candidates running for public office, including Michael Badnarik when he toured Oregon campaigned against the ballot measure throughout the state.

A political party needs to be aware of what issues are the most important to the public and capitalize on them. If the state economy is doing badly, then your state organization needs to focus on economic issues. If the economy is good, people are not going to be as concerned about government waste and taxes, so the focus can be on social issues. If you push drug legalization when the state legislature is going to raise taxes, your message will be lost and your energy wasted. The same is true if your state is running on a surplus and pushing a state budget cut, instead of focusing on civil liberties. Studies have shown that in good economic times people are concerned with personal freedom issues, and in bad economic times people are concerned with government spending.

This plan does not guarantee success. But working on creating an organized system will make your state party and overall organization much stronger. You need to be aware of what the political climate is in your state and take risks. You should not always go for broke, but you can't sit back and do nothing. Taking a risk is less dangerous if you have a strong organizational foundation. Such an example was in 2002 when Tom Cox ran for governor and was the deciding factor in getting the Democrat candidate elected. The Republican Party was angry and came after us. Two months later we helped defeat Measure 28, an income tax increase, which then made us the enemy of the Democrat Party. The overall result was that we were now respected because we took both parties on. It was a large risk, but we had the organization to back it up.

This is where the role of the administrator is vitally important. Activists will always have an agenda, intellectuals will always have their principal beliefs and politicians will always have their personal issues. As an administrator you need to focus the energy of your state party to take advantage of what issue will get you the most attention at the lowest cost. Once you have that focus, you need to make sure that everything is in place for everyone else to do their jobs. There must be an organized plan that gives tasks to specific people. Having people do their own thing will not accomplish anything. An administrator needs to be a project manager that guides the activists, intellectuals and politicians into working together to accomplish goals.

Conclusion

The best path to success and to minimize infighting is to develop an organized structure that involves all Libertarians. The task is to get people to work at what they are best skilled at. People

who are new to the party or enjoy working towards radical change should work as activists. People who are good at writing and know Libertarian philosophy well should work as intellectuals. People who are good at public speaking and look good in front of a TV camera should work as politicians. People who are detailed minded and organized should work as administrators. We are a small party and there is room for everyone. Make sure people apply their skills where they are best suited.

Elements of a press release

Produced by Libertarian Party headquarters staff for LP State Chairs conference 2005

HEADLINE: Make it big, bold and easy to read. This is the only part of the release that your audience must read. If it grabs them, they'll read the first sentence; if not, it gets thrown into "the round file."

SUBHEAD, or DECK: A subhead is recommended because it gives you another chance to hook the reader; plus it gives you room to elaborate on the main head.

LEAD: The first sentence. It states the point of the release briefly (35-word maximum) and provocatively enough that readers want to continue. Like the lead in a standard news story, if they only read this sentence, they still understand what happened.

QUOTE: First quote should be, well, quotable! Make it clever and interesting. It's not uncommon for me to spend 30 minutes or more thinking about the opening quote and re-writing it several times. It should flow logically from the lead. The quote should also be "self-contained" in the sense that a newspaper could pluck it from the release, and it makes sense on its own. So avoid pronouns and anything else that would make the quote unclear if it's used for this purpose.

NEWS PARAGRAPH: Two or three sentences of factual background information. It puts the release into context and lays the groundwork for the rest of the release. It should provide enough information so the release makes sense without having to consult another source, but without containing extraneous information. This is also your chance to anchor the release in credibility; if the information is sound and well-written, the credibility generated will rub off on the opinion part of the release.

TRANSITION BACK TO MAIN POINT: One or two sentences that turn the reader's attention back to the main point, while laying the groundwork for the argument to come.

ARGUMENT/SUPPORTING INFORMATION: The lead stated an opinion and/or promised more information. Here is where you back up that opinion with facts or deliver on your promise. These paragraphs are the "meat" of the release, and may contain a combination of facts and quotes.

MORE ARGUMENT/SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Most releases make 2 or 3 short arguments. If you make only one, use this space to marshal several pieces of evidence for that argument.

CLOSING QUOTE: Restates the main point. This quote may be similar to the first one but with different language. It should carry some "oomph" to bring a sense of finality to your argument and make the reader remember it.

Stirring Membership Interest

How forethought on presenting your message and organizing cooperation with other groups can give a more effective outreach event. The following is reproduced from the second issue of *Liberty for Massachusetts*, monthly newsletter of Massachusetts libertarian group Liberty for Massachusetts <http://www.libertyformassachusetts.com>, where it was used to stir up membership interest in participating in a specific outreach event. The article read

Libertarian Outreach at Boston Pride

On Saturday, June 11, 2005, Outright Libertarians will have a booth at the Boston Gay Pride Festival on the Boston Common from Noon to 6 p.m.

We already have volunteers from Liberty for Massachusetts, the Pink Pistols, and the Free State Project who will be helping with this outreach event. More volunteers would always be better. If you want to volunteer, please email chair@outrightusa.org.

While the booth will be the typical "Operation Politically Homeless" outreach event, making use of the World's Smallest Political Quiz and ISIL brochures, our main message will be to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered New Englanders that the Libertarian Party is the natural home of the LGBT Community.

Our primary "hook" to interest festival attendees with Libertarianism will be our party's longtime support of full equality under the law for LGBT persons, including marriage equality.

What is the plan of responding to critics? "But doesn't the Libertarian Party oppose government-issued marriage licenses? Why would it support expanding government marriage to an entirely new set of people?"

Then answer is simple. While Libertarians believe that government should be minimized, we also believe that when government is active in an area, it should not discriminate against one person or group of people in favor of others. This is why we oppose "free-speech zones," meant to keep protesters who disagree with the government out of earshot, by banning them from certain areas of government-owned land. This is also why we routinely sue taxpayer-funded entities like the Bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates, for excluding our candidate after using our tax dollars to pay for the events.

Likewise, while Libertarians oppose government-run

schools, you would be hard pressed to find a Libertarian who believes that school segregation should have been allowed to continue, denying “public” school education to African-American children, in order to avoid expanding the number of children in government-run schools.

It’s by the same reasoning that most Libertarians support opening the government institution of marriage to same-sex couples. While we may not like it, the reality of modern America is that the government offers hundreds of privileges to people with government-issued marriage licenses – privileges that cannot be achieved through the private sector, even after spending tens of thousands of dollars in attorney fees.

One example is following the death of a spouse – where same-sex couples face inheritance taxes as well as the reassessment of home value for property taxes when one partner dies, while opposite-sex couples do not have this burden – which is especially onerous to elderly couples on fixed incomes. Another example is government benefits – while same-sex couples are taxed for Social Security just as much as opposite-sex couples, the benefits from that program do not transfer to a surviving spouse, as they do with opposite-sex couples. Most disturbingly, even if we achieve a Libertarian utopia where there is no such thing as a Social Security Administration or death taxes and property taxes, the Constitutional right to marry a non-citizen without worrying about his or her deportation as an illegal alien would still be denied to same-sex couples without marriage equality.

Please help send the message to the LGBT community that the Libertarian Party is the rightful home of sexual minorities, and support the efforts of Outright Libertarians to outreach to this community.
...Rob Power, Chair, Outright Libertarians

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Thorough research on the district and electorate should also be started far in advance of the campaign. Drive the perimeter of the district and tour any areas you are not familiar with. Determine the age, ethnic and income breakdown of the voters. Make a list of all the service clubs in the district. What special constituencies and interest groups are there? Who are the leaders, official and unofficial, of these groups? What media are based in or cover your area? Which reporters are more likely to be friendly to Libertarians?

You'll also need to research the law as it relates to your campaign. Make sure you meet the residency requirements, filing fees and any special qualifications for the office. What must you do before legally raising money? When are the reporting dates for financial disclosure reports, and what limits or other restrictions are there on contributions?

Answer the question "why are you running?" You'll need one sentence, 30 second, 2 minute and 10 minute versions of this answer. This answer serves as the theme of your campaign.

Activities should relate to the theme. Make sure your answer is relevant to the voters in your district, not just to you. Pre-

pare a list of everyone you know, have known or should know. You'll need addresses, phone #s and estimates of their incomes. Include family, casual acquaintances, childhood friends, and community and business leaders you have met. List every group you belong to and try to get a membership list

Get quality photos made. You'll need a good head shot to give to the press, and action photos (teaching a class, helping in a charity project, etc.) for your brochure.

Decide how much of your own money you can put into the campaign. Decide this now and stick to it

Other things to do to increase your visibility: In the early phase of the campaign:

Write letters to the editor, and submit some oped pieces. Call in to radio talk shows.

Join as many organizations as you have time to contribute something meaningful to. Get evaluated by an appearance consultant. Find armies and get in front of them. Organize a visible Libertarian presence at gun rights, pro-choice or anti-tax rallies. Join Toastmasters and hone your speaking skills. Study tapes by the Advocates for Self-Government to improve communication abilities.

Prepare a list of all events, fairs and parades in your district. Organize a booth and introduce yourself to the attendees.

Attend all the county and city council meetings in your district and speak out. Also attend the town hall meetings of politicians in your area and speak up. Ask tough questions of those in office.

Find out everything you can about the office you are seeking. Study the budget you will be responsible for once in office.

Lead a referendum, initiative or recall. Publicize illegal actions of an elected official. Georgia LP candidate Larry Bolin generated hundreds of column inches of newspaper coverage by bringing ethics charges against public officials.

Start your own political account - budgeting \$1000 or \$2000 per year. Work for a well-organized campaign for another candidate. Work on a high-visibility charity event. Ideally, be either the fundraiser or the publicity person for the event.

Participate in a Walkathon or similar event where you raise money through sponsors. This both gets you used to asking for money and adds to the list of those people likely to give money to your campaign.

Set up a regular schedule of breakfasts or lunches with reporters and with community movers and shakers. Let them know you are thinking of running and that you want their opinions on issues and on your chances of election. In the early stages, do a lot more listening than talking.

Subscribe to Campaigns and Elections magazine. Attend a campaigning school. Take a class in fundraising. Read several books on running campaigns. Get all the training you can, there's a marathon ahead.

Setting Goals

All campaigns should have firm goals -- tangible goals, which can be quantified as much as possible. "Reaching as many people as I can and telling them the Libertarian message" isn't sufficiently specific for the purpose of goal setting, but one or more of the following may be:

- Number of votes
- Percentage of the total vote
- Number of news stories generated
- Number of new Libertarian Party members
- Inclusion in debates or candidates' forums
- Reaching "balance of power" status in the voting results
- Raising a targeted amount of money

All of these are quantifiable. You'll know for certain whether or not you've reached them by the end of the campaign. And that should give you and your campaign team the motivation to set forth and follow a detailed game plan to achieve them.

Therefore, you should set specific goals down on paper.

How high should your goals be? Not an easy question to answer. Obviously, goals which are either too easy or outrageously difficult are not good. But they should certainly reflect what you hope to gain in this campaign, over and above what was accomplished in the previous election. If the previous Libertarian vote total was 1,000 for the district, then perhaps your goal should be 2,000... or much higher.

What if you fail to achieve some or all of your goals? Who doesn't? Don't hesitate to set ambitious goals at the beginning, and let your supporters know what they are -- then adjust them downwards (or upwards) as the campaign progresses. Even if you do fall short of your goals, what you learned in the process of trying to reach them should be a valuable lesson for you or anyone else who campaigns in the future. But if you don't set goals, there will be no standard by which to measure your achievements, and little solid evidence for application in future campaigns.

Should some of your goals be more important than others? Yes? The goals you adopt -- the number and their priority -- are up to you, but regardless of what you decide they should be, they should serve as guideposts throughout your campaign.

Letters on Libertarian Strategy

Direct and Indirect Costs

This is the first of several letters discussing how libertarians should spend its money. In this letter, I discuss sources of income and the concepts of direct and indirect costs. Direct and indirect costs are fundamental for understanding what

you are doing when you spend money. If you already know about indirect costs, you may find this topic to be a bit familiar, but it is very important for understanding what we ought to do to spend our money.

One of the most fundamental activities of the Libertarian National Committee is raising and spending money.

Where do we get money?

Above all, we are a membership organization, taking dues from members.

- 2) We receive restricted and unrestricted donations.
- 3) We may have other activities, some of which generate income.
- 4) We could make arrangements that would yield permanent, stable income.

For each source of income, there are base expenses:

- 1) Corresponding to membership dues, we have membership costs. We maintain membership records, remind people to renew, provide issues of the newsletter, (for members from UMP states) supply state organizations with their fraction of the dues, etc.
- 2) We receive donations because we do fundraising, including membership recruitment efforts that also ask for donations. Corresponding to the fundraising costs are fundraising expenses. There are telephone calls, letters, donation reminders, etc.
- 3) Other activities also have costs. For example, the Defend Your Privacy website and other websites of the same style cost money or donations in kind of programmer time to deploy. Donated programmer time is a specialist activity, in the sense of "Stand Up for Liberty!". The effort that went, e.g., into Eric Garris's excellent antiwar.org site would not necessarily have been available for other causes.

What sort of costs are there?

Costs are of two sorts. Direct costs are expenses that are obviously directly linked to the activity that the support. For example, when we recruit a member from a UMP state, the money that we send off to that state under the UMP plan is a direct cost. Note that we might have projects that have direct costs but produce no income. I listed above projects that do produce income, but all projects will not produce income.

In addition to direct costs, we also have indirect costs.

What are indirect costs? We have office space, employees and their salary and fringe benefits, administrative staff, etc. These are all real expenses -- money out the door. Look at all of the money that we spend. Some spending is readily assigned to a particular project. Spending that you assign to a specific project is a direct expense. Other spending is difficult to allocate to a particular project. Spending that is not readily assigned to a specific project is readily described as

an indirect expense.

Indirect spending is just as legitimate as direct spending. We draw the distinction between direct and indirect spending because it is too hard to allocate some expenses to specific projects. The decision as to whether particular costs are treated as direct costs, or whether those expenses are counted as indirect costs, is largely arbitrary. One can rationally discuss whether a particular expense should be assigned to a specific project or counted as an indirect expense. By changing how you allocate spending between projects, you can change whether you see a project as being effective or ineffective relative to its costs.

There is one totally ironclad rule in financial analysis. Every cost must be identified either as a direct cost or as an indirect cost. There are no costs that are neither direct nor indirect. Once all costs are identified as being direct or indirect, all indirect costs are assigned to projects in a uniform way. For example, one could divide the indirect costs over the direct costs in a proportionate way by means of an "overhead rate". An "overhead rate" looks like a tax. You say "we have \$50,000 in direct expenses for this project, the overhead rate is 50%, and therefore this project is assigned \$25,000 in overhead charges."

I should emphasize that the overhead rate is a calculated quantity. The process for calculating the overhead rate is to say "We have a total of \$2,000,000 in direct costs, and \$1,000,000 in indirect costs; the overhead rate is the ratio of those two numbers, or 50%". The overhead rate is not a number that you set in advance; it is strictly a number that comes out of the process that automatically assigns every dollar of indirect costs to *some* project. However, one can make some estimates as to what overhead rates are. Typical university overhead rates calculated as noted above are in the range 40-70%. Typical overhead rates for a civil engineering contract or industrial firm are around 150%. You choose your management model, and you can then ask if your numbers look reasonable or not.

There are other ways of dividing indirect costs over projects. Some of them are much less intuitive than the process described above. However, no matter which method you use, an honest budget description identifies every expense as a direct or indirect cost and distributes the indirect costs over the projects and their direct costs.

...George Phillies

