A Direct Voter Analysis of Shane Schoeller for Greene County Clerk

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The campaign of Shane Schoeller for Greene County Clerk is a campaign that did something unique in the area of Springfield, Missouri. They appealed to and valued the opinions and experiences of young people. This campaign took place during the midterm elections in the autumn of 2014.

Shane Schoeller’s background is important when it comes to his campaign communication. Schoeller is originally from Branson, Missouri. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Southwest Baptist University. He is married to Mendie, and together they have three children (Schoeller, 2014).

Schoeller has a long history of political work. For both U.S. Senators Kit Bond and John Ashcroft, Schoeller worked as a field representative. He also has been a legislative assistant for Senator Roy Blunt during his time as a representative, and as a Chief Administrative Aide to Matt Blunt during his time as Secretary of State (Schoeller, 2014).

Shane Schoeller has also served as an elected official. In 2006, he was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives for the 139th district. After winning reelection in 2008 and 2010, Schoeller declared a run for Missouri Secretary of State for the 2012 race. Although he was not successful, he lost his race by a miniscule 1.5%. He then served as the executive director of the Missouri Republican Party (Schoeller, 2014).

That being said, Shane Schoeller is a veteran to the political campaign procedure. He has both volunteered for and coordinated them. Moreover, he has been the object of the campaign. This gives Schoeller an advantage in the field of campaign communication because of his experience.

**Quality of Campaign Communication**

Campaign communication for the Schoeller campaign was clear and defined. The campaign had two main categories of communication. First on their list was personal communication. The campaign enforced the idea that people are more likely to vote if they have been personally reached out to. This was done through door knocking and phone banking (Schoeller, 2014).

A smart phone application, created by Victory Enterprises, the consulting firm that the campaign hired, was used to strategize walking paths and contact information to make door knocking a simpler and more targeted process. The campaign mainly targeted hard republicans, moderate republicans, and right-leaning undecided voters (Schoeller, 2014).

Phone banking was done using a list created by the Schoeller campaign and official Greene County records. Similar to the door knocking, the phone banks mainly targeted hard republicans, moderate republicans, and right-leaning undecided voters. At first, the phone bank conducted polls for not only the Schoeller campaign, but for other local candidates. The week before the election, they began “Vote for Shane” and “Get out the vote” calls (Myers, 2014).

The second category of communication pursued by the campaign was direct communication. This was composed of social media, direct mailing, and appearances. The campaign team, going for a personal, grass-roots feel, kept the personal social media touch. Schoeller used both his campaign and personal Facebook account to gather supporters with photos, text, and links. Uniquely, both Facebook accounts would share photos from other users directing their support for Shane in addition to volunteer posts. The campaign sent emails both from Shane himself and different names known in the Springfield area, including former Attorney General of the United States John Ashcroft and Danette Proctor, chair of the 7th District Republican Central Committee. In regards to physical mail, direct mail was sent to voters that had not been reached personally (Myers, 2014).

The Schoeller campaign tried to have a representative from the campaign at all republican meetings and events leading up to the election. From picnics, to club meetings, to college events, the campaign was present and accounted for, generally making a statement and networking. This boosted a general camaraderie between voters and Schoeller (Myers, 2014).

**Perceived Strategy**

Because of Shane Schoeller’s name recognition due to his service as House Representative in the 139th District, which is mostly North Springfield, the most intense location of his strategy was in South Springfield. A higher percentage of door knocking, literature dropping, yard signs with the term “Republican” and phone calls were based in the South Springfield area (Myers, 2014).

From the point of view of the author, the Schoeller campaign’s perceived strategy was a “common man” approach. From the appearances to the door knocking, Shane Schoeller was portrayed as your neighbor and friend, the man who wants to be involved in your life and help you out. “Defending your voice, protecting your vote” was the campaign slogan, the vision of your neighbor who wants to make sure your voice gets heard.

The rhetoric matched this vision. Any appearance that the campaign made, there were encouraging remarks, questions about life, and handshakes. Schoeller spoke eloquently but down-to-earth, and never spoke negatively about his opponent, Rusty Aton.

In an interview with the Springfield News-Leader, both Schoeller and Aton were asked a series of questions about their accomplishments and goals for the office. In multiple accounts, Aton speaks out about his “opponent” saying things like, “I am not a career politician like my opponent” and “I do not plan to use this office to provide a needed platform to boost my political career. My opponent has already announced that he plans to use this job to pursue his partisan agenda and future statewide political aspirations” (Herzog, 2014).

Schoeller, on the other hand, in congruence with appearing the neighbor and friend, chose not to speak negatively about his opponent. Nowhere in the article does Schoeller speak negatively about Aton. No doubt part of the campaign strategy, this increased the positive image toward Schoeller.

**Effectiveness Given Outcome**

Shane Schoeller won 65% of the vote in Greene County on November 4, according to the Greene County clerk website with 40,812 votes. Aton trailed behind with 33% or 21,024 votes (Summary Report, 2014).

Given the success, the strategy and communication quality were obviously sufficient. However, according to the campaign, there were a few issues with some of the resources.

The smart phone application created by Victory Enterprises called “Mobile Voter” was faulty. It had outdated information and mistaken addresses. Eventually, the campaign chose to simply create walking lists themselves (Myers, 2014).

In addition, phone banks are a dying breed. With the evolution of cell phones and the number of people canceling their landlines, calling home phones does not provide the results that it used to.

However, the effectiveness of the rest of the efforts proved to be high. The campaign believes that it was so victorious because of the personal communication. “When people know you care about them, that’s when they vote,” said Dave Myers, Shane Schoeller’s campaign manager (Myers, 2014).

Now it is time to do the job. After such a great campaign, expectations are high for Schoeller.

References

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