

Lost your election? Here's help to assure success next time.

As you total up the votes and have your superintendent/mayor or city manager sign personalized notes to all the volunteers that helped with the campaign, you need to evaluate both the information and advocacy campaigns. You need to analyze what worked, what didn't work, what you need to do differently next time and develop the plan of action for communication and community involvement between now and the next election.

Here's a check list to follow for doing your evaluation:

- ◆ **Compile a complete election record by organizing all election material into an election file or notebook for review and your historical records. In this file include:**
 - All of the data from your original election survey as well as any post election survey results.
 - Every piece of material that was developed for the election — information and advocacy — from both the district and building levels.
 - Any feedback that volunteer callers received that could help improve your total PR program in the year ahead.
 - Copies of any scripts, videos or other materials developed for the campaign.
 - A CD with all bond information you have in word or pdf files or that was posted on a Web site.
 - All newspaper clippings that related to your election, including letters to the editor and advertisements.
 - Copies of all news releases, newsletters, memos and other materials developed at the district or building/department level.
 - Copies of any materials that were developed by groups who opposed the election.
 - A summary written by the election coordinator or liaison, including his/her impressions of the election. Make sure the summary notes what worked, what didn't work and what should be included or excluded from another campaign.
 - Reports or summaries from election committee members and building principals with their evaluations of the election and suggestions for future elections.

- ◆ **Compile a political analysis of the election precinct by precinct, showing:**
 - The total “yes” and “no” votes,
 - The percentage of “yes” votes to the total votes cast in the precinct,
 - The percentage of “yes” votes cast in each precinct as related to the total “yes” votes cast in the election, and
 - The percentage of “yes” votes cast in each precinct as related to the number of potential “yes” votes the campaign identified in that precinct.
 - Summarize what the study of the election vote shows, precinct by precinct. If the margin of victory is low and the “no” vote in the community has continued to grow over the past several years, carefully analyze and take steps to increase your odds in the next election. If the data reveal problems with certain age groups or in certain parts of your district, develop a carefully targeted plan to address these specific concerns.

- ◆ **Compose your election summary statement so that it gives you an historical reference point.**
 - Ask yourself: What has this particular election shown about community support and identification of problem areas to address and publics to involve? This summary is a blueprint for your public relations plan of action. It will help you identify areas for emphasis in the months ahead to build the support we'll need in the next election.

- Make a separate summary report of the negative concerns identified during the election process. We'll use those to develop plans to address these concerns from a building-level viewpoint as well as for the district as a whole. Now is the time to address your "*no*" voters' concerns and to start efforts to build trust through public engagement and involvement.