
Phone Banking Basics

I'm nervous about calling people. I haven't done this before.

Totally understandable. Honestly, the best way to get past this is to just do it. After about four or five calls you'll feel like a pro!

Think about these things:

- Be yourself. Tell them you are a volunteer. Be conversational and friendly.
- If you are calling your neighborhood mention that you live in the neighborhood.
- Most people are actually pretty polite. Say goodbye if they're not. People who do not want to speak with you will usually hang up way before you do. Hang up immediately on anyone who is abusive.
- Most people who will never agree with you will tell you. Thank them for their time and move on to someone who matters -like an undecided voter!

I'm not sure how to begin.

Republicans tend to use robo calls or paid telemarketers because they have unlimited pots of money. You, being a real live regular person will diffuse a lot of tension by saying “I'm (your name) and I'm a volunteer from (your city). I'm calling neighbors because I feel so strongly about the upcoming election.”

If you are making voter identification calls (which way does a voter lean...) or **Get Out The Vote** calls (please go vote now), your job is easy –ask them the questions from the script, thank them and move on to the next call.

If you are making persuasion calls and get an undecided (or a soft Republican) let them talk a little first. They may mention an issue you are familiar with. Take notes so you can come back to these issues later. As you practice you'll sound less scripted and more folksy.

Don't: Ask if you can ask them some questions. It's too easy for them to answer “No”.

Do: Ask questions that require a response other than yes or no.

Ask the phone bank coordinator who their best phone banker is and ask to sit next to them. You'll pick up all sorts of good things to say.

I worry that I do not know enough about all the issues.

Hey, welcome to the club, Sport! Remember, it's perfectly fine to say you don't really know.

The good news is that **talking about values is far easier and far more effective than talking about facts**. With apologies to Tip O'Neill, **all politics is moral**. Morality is simply about what's **right and wrong**. Re-frame the issues in terms of our values of right and wrong and **never repeat conservative messages or use their codewords**. (Learn more about Framing at ConnectionsLab.org)

Ask what issues the voter thinks are important –maybe they'll mention one you know. If you can't get the person to open up, talk about something you really care about and understand. You have strong convictions –you know why you are voting right? Use that enthusiasm. Talk about **why** you care using values and emotions and tell true stories that illuminate our values on an issue.

What if I get a Tea Partier? Will they yell at me?

You're talking to a neighbor, not Alex Jones, so probably not. Most hard righties will brush you off politely. Thank them for their time and get off the phone. If they are abusive, just hang up. Note: the old conventional wisdom was to ignore Republicans (we'll never get 'em) and strong Democrats (already got 'em). This thinking is changing as some Republicans are jumping off the GOP/Trump crazy train.

With strong Democrats, don't spend all day agreeing with each other and "admiring the problem" –there are undecideds to find!

OK, I found an undecided. How do I get them to turn the corner?

Sounds hard, eh? Well use some sales.

Any good salesperson draws out of the customer every concern they have before pitching the product –if you do not know what your customer needs, how can you sell them something!? Ask undecideds or soft Republicans what they care about. Look for the **moral basis** of both the conservative side (so you don't speak it) and our side (so you do).