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Challenging Conventional Campaign Wisdom
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Introduction to Research
This study explores voter efficacy’s effect on voting behavior, the effectiveness of various campaign strategies in increasing that efficacy, and which voter mobilization techniques actually get voters to vote, specifically in the 2012 Election, with data gathered by the American National Election Survey. Traditionally, common wisdom in campaigns is that Face-to-Face contact is the best way to mobilize voters and ensure the highest percentage of people contacted actually came out to vote. While highly personal contact is an effective way to get people to vote, it is not so much so that it should be the only focus of campaigns. When people are contacted about voting, it makes them feel like they are an important part of the process, it reminds them that voting matters, and therefore will increase the amount of people contacted that think that voting makes a difference. As a result of all of these factors, people who are contacted will vote at increased likelihood than people who were not, but the method of contact will matter as much as traditionally thought.

H:1 Voter Efficacy
- Respondents in the American National Election Survey were asked to rate how much they feel that their vote matters.
- There is significant, both in real terms and statistically, increase of respondents that say they voted when they feel their vote matter. This Cross-tabulation shows the relationship between the two means of voter outreach measured in the ANES, Face-to-Face contact, Phone calls, Mail, E-Mail, Text messages, and contact via Social Media. The means of outreach were tested against people who answered that they believed that voting matter greatly.
- Although there is a consistent increase in voters that were contacted that feel that voting matters greatly, the important thing to note on this table is that the lack of statistical significance in the majority of the increases.

Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Was not contacted</th>
<th>Was contacted</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face*</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>0.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone*</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>0.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>0.428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Mail</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Message*</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>0.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media*</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H:2 Voter Outreach and Efficacy
- Face-to-Face contact is theoretically the most effective way to make people feel that their vote is important. As argued by various studies and researchers, the content and quality of interaction matter much more than the type of interaction.
- The effectiveness of E-mail and Social Media outreach, two forms which were predicted, by myself and by most literature, to be the least effective, turned out to be a quite statistically significant means of outreach. This requires further research, as it could be explained in a few ways: Either, because it is so unexpected as a form of voter outreach, it is particularly effective at gaining attention when it is used. It could be because it essentially cost nothing to produce, it can be used to reach and remind voters numerous times, as opposed to more expensive forms, such as Face-to-Face, which may only be able to reach a voter once or twice in an entire election cycle. Its significance could also be a result of confounding factor, such as voters who place themselves in a position where they would be contacted via E-mail or Social Media already have high efficacy and vote regularly.

Findings

H:1 Voter Efficacy
- Voters who don’t think voting matters vote about 13% less than voters who feel their votes matter greatly, which seems logical. Interestingly, voters who fall in the middle, and think voting moderately matters do not vote much more than the lowest group. This makes me think there might be other factors involved here that bridge the gap between the middle and the low.

H:2 Voter outreach and Voting
- The data show that many forms of voter outreach had no statistical impact on voter efficacy, as the increases lacked statistical significance. The Text Messages and Social Media both showed significant increases in voters who answered that voting matters greatly.

H:3 Voter outreach and Voting
- Here we see statistically significant increase in respondents who say they voted when contacted via Mail, at 7.2%, via Email, at 3.5%, via Social Media, at 4% and contact via Phone, at 4.5%. Practically and statistically insignificant increases were shown when respondents were contacted via Text Message And Face-to-Face contact.

Conclusions
- People are so used to contact through electronic means that face-to-face contact is no longer the only way to make people feel that their vote is important. As argued by various studies and researchers, the content and quality of interaction matter much more than the type of interaction.
- The effectiveness of E-mail and Social Media outreach, two forms which were predicted, by myself and by most literature, to be the least effective, turned out to be a quite statistically significant means of outreach. This requires further research, as it could be explained in a few ways: Either, because it is so unexpected as a form of voter outreach, it is particularly effective at gaining attention when it is used. It could be because it essentially cost nothing to produce, it can be used to reach and remind voters numerous times, as opposed to more expensive forms, such as Face-to-Face, which may only be able to reach a voter once or twice in an entire election cycle. Its significance could also be a result of confounding factor, such as voters who place themselves in a position where they would be contacted via E-mail or Social Media already have high efficacy and vote regularly.

In all measures of effectiveness used in this study, Face-to-Face contact failed to show almost any impact on both voter efficacy and behavior. This supports my hypothesis, but a little more strongly than suspected. There might be other factors in my data that explain this, and this irregularity calls for more study. A large amount of studies show much stronger impacts of Face-to-Face contact.