



Best Practice: Telephone Town Halls Opt-in List

Member: Scott Garrett, NJ-05

How it works:

- ❖ Just prior to the black-out period last year, the Member office can do an automated telephone survey in the district, asking if people would like to opt-in to the Congressman's telephone town hall program. To do this, the Member would go through the telephone town hall company they use who would provide them with the script and the ability to do this.
- ❖ The survey asks constituents which issues they are most interested in discussing in the telephone town hall meetings. The Member typically gives them a list of about nine topics.

The Benefits:

- ❖ Allows Members to communicate with constituents who respond to this survey during black-out periods.
- ❖ The survey is a good thermometer for local issues of importance on constituents' minds, which helps the Member office to better organize their office's communications.

Member Office Contact: Michelle Presson, (202) 226-0444



Best Practice: Telephone Town Hall Meetings

Member: Dan Lungren, CA-03

How it works:

- ❖ Member schedules a time and coordinates calling list with telephone town hall company of choice. Prior to the call, the member must record a series of messages (between three and four) to be played once contact is made.
- ❖ Member must be available to take constituent questions for approximately one to two hours.

The Benefits:

- ❖ Allows Members to directly connect with their constituents on a personal level and gives Members immediate feedback and identification of opinions.
- ❖ Good use of money.
- ❖ Very popular among constituents.
- ❖ Can garner good local press stories showing Members are reaching out to their constituents in a new medium.

Member Office Contact: Brian Kaveney, (202) 225-5716



Best Practice: Website Accessibility to the Blind

Member: George Radanovich, CA-19

How it works:

- ❖ In order for this to work properly, an alternate text-only site needs to be established that is not formatted in tables.
- ❖ When the blind use an audio reader on the internet, they read from left to right. If the site is formatted in tables, like the Member's main website, everything would be garbled.
- ❖ Guidelines to make a website accessible to the blind are available through the World Wide Webs Consortium (W3C) or you can visit Congressman Radanovich's website at <http://www.house.gov/radanovich/>.

The Benefits:

- ❖ Allows blind constituents access to Member's website and information.

Member Office Contact: Sarah Ditrich, (559) 449-2490



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HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE

Best Practice: Promote a Local “Image-Certified” Small Business

Member: Michael Conaway, TX-11

How it works:

- ❖ The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has an education and training program for businesses that educates employers on how to verify that newly hired employees are eligible to work in the United States. Once a business completes the program, they become “IMAGE- certified” (ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers).
- ❖ Members can search the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) database (www.fairus.org) to find an “IMAGE- certified” small business in their district. Member offices can then schedule a time for the member to tour the business’ facility.
- ❖ The press secretary should invite all local press to attend the tour. During the tour, the member can highlight the company’s efforts in preventing the hiring of illegal workers and encourage other businesses in the district to do the same.

The Benefits:

- ❖ By voluntarily participating in the IMAGE (ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers) program, companies can reduce illegal employment and the use of fraudulent identity documents.
- ❖ Demonstrates the Members’ involvement in trying to prevent illegal employment.

Member Office Contact: Anna Koch, (202) 225-3605



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Best Practice: Video Clipping Service

Member: Phil Gingrey, (GA-11)

How it works:

- ❖ Subscription service (FedNet, run by CQ, is one example) allows an office to capture video of a Member's speeches on the House floor
- ❖ The video can be used in a variety of ways:
 - Posted on a Member's website
 - E-mailed to district radio stations for use with news programming (audio from the video clip)
 - Included in e-newsletters and constituent email letter responses
 - Included in press releases
 - Sent to members of the community interested in a particular speech (for example, if a Member delivers a one minute honoring a church's 100th anniversary, the video link could be emailed to the church for distribution to its membership e-mail list)

The Benefits:

- ❖ Allows constituents to watch a Member's speeches on demand and allows radio stations to quickly access audio of a Member speaking before Congress on the latest debates and issues
- ❖ Delivers a Member's message to a broader audience

Member Office Contact: Chris Jackson, (202) 225-2931



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Best Practice: Franked Mail Response Postcard



Member: Virginia Foxx (NC-5)

How it works:

- ❖ Member sends out a franked mail piece to constituents with a brief survey attached that asks for their opinions on issues that are important in the Member's district
- ❖ Constituents who wish to communicate their opinions mail the response card from the franked mail piece back to the Member's office
- ❖ Member office mails a pre-printed postcard to all constituents who sent back a response card thanking each one for their participation in the survey
- ❖ Important: Any mass mailing, such as a thank you postcard, must receive approval from the Franking Commission

The Benefits:

- ❖ The thank you card acknowledges receipt of the response card and communicates to constituents that their opinions are important to the Member
- ❖ Offers a streamlined method of connecting with constituents and communicating a more personal touch with mass mailings

Member Office Contact: Aaron Groen, (202) 225-2071



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Best Practice: Media Breakfast

Member: Vernon J. Ehlers (MI-3)

How it works:

- ❖ The Member meets with political reporters, editors and news directors in the district for a breakfast or lunch meeting to talk on background about issues in Washington and the district
- ❖ Member opens meeting with 10-15 minutes of prepared statements in order to set agenda and project message
- ❖ Q&A session and interviews follow opening remarks
- ❖ Remember: There is no such thing as “off the record” when it comes to dealing with media – always assume that what your boss shares with them may go beyond the room you are in

The Benefits:

- ❖ Face time gives local media the opportunity to establish a more intimate relationship with the Member – which they will appreciate
- ❖ Gives Member a venue to personally share his agenda with media
- ❖ Results in the placement of stories in the news that week and beyond, depending on how open you are to interviews or making part of the event “on the record”

Member Office Contact: Kevan Chapman, (202) 225-3831



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Best Practice: Medicare Part D Outreach Sessions

Member: Lee Terry (NE-02)

How it works:

- ❖ Contact local Health and Human Services SHIP organization (ex: Nebraska agency funded by SHIP is Volunteers Assisting Seniors "VAS") and schedule their volunteers to counsel seniors about their Part D choices during Medicare open season
- ❖ Schedule two events in district office
- ❖ Send out letters to constituents ages 64 and older with information about the Medicare open season and information about counseling sessions in district office
- ❖ Schedule 45-minute appointments based on number of computers available in the district office on specified dates (if appointments are full, assist seniors in finding other Medicare Part D events and presentations in district)
- ❖ Member records PSA. Press Secretary books Member on radio and places event in local newspaper calendar sections

The Benefits:

- ❖ Excellent outreach event
- ❖ Member becomes a resource for information/resources from CMS
- ❖ Generates positive media coverage

Member Office Contact: Karen Davis, (402) 397-9944



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Best Practice: Travel to Iraq / Press Opportunities

Member: Marsha Blackburn (TN-07)

How it works:

- ❖ Weeks before CODEL, Member press secretary contacts staff lead and military escort planning the CODEL. Let DoD and State Dept. assist with your media plans. Contacts: Traci Scott at DoD (703-571-2722); Ed Buckley at State (202-647-0876)
- ❖ Staff should request that Member delegation stay night at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait after leaving Iraq. Camp Arifjan is equipped with a media center that supports live TV interviews with hometown stations (satellite time for these interviews paid for by the DoD; is free hit to hometown stations)
- ❖ From there, Member can do radio shows, host media conference call or do Tele Town Hall meeting “live from the Middle-East”
- ❖ Member should take press secretary’s business cards on CODEL and hand to everyone who takes their picture. Most personnel in Iraq have internet access and can e-mail pictures back home
- ❖ Member office should not disclose details of CODEL to Iraq or Afghanistan until they are safely out of either country

The Benefits:

- ❖ Communicating about Iraq on the same day you were there makes Member more enticing to media outlets

Member Office Contact: Claude Chafin, (202) 225-2811



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Best Practice: Blogger Outreach

Member: John Boehner (OH-8)

How it works:

- ❖ Developing a relationship with sympathetic/friendly bloggers is similar to developing a relationship with reporters -- Member press secretary should check in with them regularly to chat and help them find information. Bloggers like inside information and having a contact within a congressional office
- ❖ All contact with bloggers is done mostly through e-mail (Boehner's office sends them press releases, columns, other press materials but tries to tailor it to each blogger's interests -- economy, immigration, etc...)
- ❖ Member press secretary can also set up a blogger conference call (in June, Boehner held a conference call with 10 conservative bloggers in Ohio that took place, by coincidence, during the height of the fight over earmarks. This worked to their advantage as Boehner was able to effectively message to bloggers the importance of that fight and that the House GOP was standing on principle)

The Benefits:

- ❖ More people are turning to the Internet for information. Blogs provide another outlet for us to deliver our message; they're also an effective outlet for pushing back on misinformation or negative stories. Bonus: Embracing new technology!

Member Office Contact: Jessica R. Towhey, (202) 225-6205



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Best Practice: Budget Media Tour

Member: Jeb Hensarling (TX-05)

How it works:

- ❖ District staff identifies locations for events. Press secretary notifies media of the events with an advisory
- ❖ Member travels district covering all media markets to explain the budget in common language, including anecdotes, and how it will impact constituents (anecdotes, visual aids and charts are especially useful in helping constituents understand how a \$3 trillion budget will impact them)
- ❖ Follow up events with press releases, 499s and e-newsletters

The Benefits:

- ❖ Good media exposure for the Member
- ❖ Reminds constituents that the Member is working for them to ensure accountability in federal spending
- ❖ Illustrates Member's commitment to fiscal responsibility

Member Office Contact: David Ward, (202) 225-3484



KAY GRANGER, VICE CHAIR
HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE

Best Practice: Issue-based Coalition

Member: Marsha W. Blackburn (TN-07)

How it works:

- ❖ Member Staff identifies key constituent groups and issues most important in Member's district. Each Coalition is based on a particular profession or issue-based interest (ex: Agriculture, Small Business Owners, Healthcare Professionals and Energy Providers). Blackburn has 19 Coalition groups
- ❖ Member office assembles each group of Coalition members to serve as an informal advisory board to Member. Participants include leaders in their profession, community or organization. Coalition members chosen in non-partisan manner -- attention given to geographical balance, level of expertise, respective circles of influence and willingness to participate. Coalition size: 20-30 members
- ❖ Each Coalition has a 20-30 minute conference call with Member 2-3 times annually. These occur in response to current legislation or timeliness of an issue, not a preset schedule. Time is always allotted for questions and comments. E-mails are sent out periodically on pertinent legislation or news of interest to a particular Coalition. Once per Congress an informal "Thank You Coffee" is held by the Member to meet Coalition Members in person, discuss current issues and thank them for their participation

The Benefits:

- ❖ Expands network of "key contacts" and "opinion leaders." Provides "non-political" network of well respected surrogates throughout District who have a high level of expertise that will provide a constant flow of new information, primarily from the private sector

Member Office Contact: Steve Allbrooks, (615) 591-5161



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Best Practice: Kick-Off to the New Year Press Conference

Member: Rep. Joe Wilson, (SC-02)

How it works:

- ❖ Hold press conferences at district office(s) and/or locations around the district to announce the Member's goals and legislative priorities for upcoming year as well as recap previous year's successes
- ❖ District and DC office staff coordinate event(s) to help garner local press coverage and notify local community leaders who may want to attend
- ❖ Provide handouts and visual aids to cite important themes the Member plans to highlight

The Benefits:

- ❖ Great opportunity to notify constituents of your plans and goals for the upcoming session

Member Office Contact: Ryan Murphy, (202) 225-2452



KAY GRANGER, VICE CHAIR
HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE

Best Practice: Organize a press conference to highlight Democrats' inaction on the AMT (or other issue); warn taxpayers of delays in refunds

Member: Phil English (PA-03)

How it works:

- ❖ Set up a press conference at a local IRS or CPA office. Invite a CPA or family depending on their tax refund to participate in the press event
- ❖ Have Member kick off the event and discuss the Democrats' inaction on the AMT and the burden it will place on taxpayers, such as delayed refunds
- ❖ Messaging for the press event can be political or informative, depending on the dynamics of the district. Invite local media to cover the event
- ❖ To further saturate the message, members can coordinate a franked mailed piece, op-ed or e-newsletter around the time of the press conference

The Benefits:

- ❖ Provides a strong earned media opportunity for Member
- ❖ Highlights the philosophical differences between Republicans and Democrats on taxes. Further highlights the Democrats' "Do Nothing Congress"

Member Office Contact: Julia Wanzco, (202) 225-5406