TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE VOTER CONTACT SCRIPTS
(Door and Phone)

There are four basic types of phone bank scripts, each used for a different purpose and at a different time in a campaign.

VOTER ID (IDENTIFICATION) SCRIPT

- A voter ID script is simply to identify whom the person is supporting (a candidate ID) or if they are supporting a particular ballot initiative (a proposition/initiative ID) or what issues are most important to them (an issue ID).

- A voter ID script can combine several of these elements, but it tends to be a very brief script. The goal is to get through as many calls as possible with accurate IDs.

- Voter ID scripts must have a **direct** ask to gauge the voter's level of support for the candidate or issue.

- A voter ID script is usually done early in a campaign and followed by "persuasion" contacts.

- When calling voters (as opposed to knocking on doors) there are two basic types of voter ID calls – one where you identify who you are calling for and one that you do not, what we call a "blind ID." There is no right or wrong approach, although the resulting data is very different. Identified ID calls tend to 'skew' the data by as much as 15-20%; Blind IDs tend to be more accurate but it is also harder to roll into a persuasion conversation if you find an undecided voter.

- If Election Day is less than 6 months away, it is common for the script to be an ID-Persuasion script, which has the ID question and then moves directly to persuasion for the undecideds so as not to miss an opportunity to persuade. However, paid ID calling (even late paid ID calling) is oftentimes simply a straight ID for issues and candidate preference.

PERSUASION SCRIPT

- A persuasion script is usually used when re-contacting an already ID'd undecided voter. For example, you may be contacting a voter who was previously ID'd as undecided on the race and who has health care as their number one issue.

- A persuasion script is usually longer and attempts to engage the voter in a conversation about an issue that is important to them. For example, the voter ID'd as undecided and having health care as their most important issue would get a "persuasion call" about the candidate and health care.

- A persuasion script is usually used after the Voter ID and typically stops within a week before the election.

GOTV (GET OUT THE VOTE) SCRIPT

- A GOTV script is directed to a voter who we already know is supporting the campaign.

- The purpose of a GOTV script is to move the sporadic/infrequent voter to get to the polls and vote – the goal is to provide the motivation, urgency and basic voting information necessary to increase the voter's likelihood of voting.

- Remember: make it local, make it inclusive and positive, and have the voter engage in making a plan how and when they will actually vote.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

- A volunteer recruitment script needs to make the connection between the person's interests and taking some action (volunteering).

- The purpose is to motivate a person to act in their own interest by working with others on the campaign.

- An effective volunteer recruitment script is interactive and engages the potential volunteer in a conversation about what matters to them – a problem that needs to be solved – and instills an urgency that they must act now to address the problem.

- Oftentimes, ID scripts include language to make a volunteer ask if the voter is ID'd as a true supporter of the candidate/campaign.

SAMPLE VOTER ID SCRIPT

Hello, may I please speak with (name of the voter on the list)?

My name is (name of volunteer), and I'm a volunteer walking/calling on behalf of (Candidate Name/ Party Name/Campaign Name). We're surveying voters tonight about the issues that they want candidates to address this election.

> *[If they hesitate or say they are busy – remind them that you have only two questions and it will take less than a minute.]*

What are two issues you are basing your decision on this election?

> *[Take down the answer/issues for future contacts]*

If the election for [X] were held today, who would you vote for?
- John Doe
- Jane Miller
- George Brown

If not supporting your candidate:
Thank you very much for your time, have a good day.

If undecided:
Well I hope you'll consider [Candidate] – she's a working mom who understands what it's like to juggle family and work. Like a lot of folks, she thinks the folks in charge don't seem to get it and have dropped the ball – and she's running to make sure the city listens and that our town is the best that it can be for our families and neighbors. We hope to earn your support.
[Pause to see if there is a response – engage in a conversation if the person is willing. If not…]
Thanks for your time today and we'll be in touch to follow up!

If supporting your candidate strongly: *(they give some indication they are enthusiastically voting)*
That's wonderful – can we count on you to volunteer for us as well?

> **If yes,** *take their information, and ask them if they will volunteer and make sure the campaign gets back to them quickly.*

> **If no,** Thanks so much for your support and your time. Don't forget to vote for [Candidate/Campaign] on [Election Day]. Have a good day.

SAMPLE VOTER ID-PERSUASION SCRIPT

Hi, this is ____(your first name)_____, is _____(first name)____ available?

Hi, I'm a volunteer with (Candidate Name/ Party Name/Campaign Name). We're talking to our neighbors about (Candidate/Campaign). Are you familiar with her?

If yes they familiar,
Are you planning on voting for the (Candidate) in November?
- ***If yes,*** *ask them to volunteer and thank them and say goodbye.*
- ***If no,*** *ask them what their concerns are and try to address them. If still "no" thank them for their time.*

If no, they aren't familiar,
Well, I'm volunteering for [Candidate] because *[insert your reason for supporting the candidate].* It's one of the small, but for me important ways *[Candidate]* listens to our concerns and can make our town better.

What are some thing that you wish could be changed here in town?

[Allow time for the person to respond. Engage them in a conversation if possible. If there is little response, ask the next question.]

Well, *(Candidate)* has been out working hard, talking and listening to folks. And what she's been hearing is that a lot of people think the current city leadership has dropped the ball. *(Candidate)* thinks so, too, and thinks that it's time to try something new. So do I … How about you?

Can *(Candidate)* count on your vote for mayor in November?

> ***If yes,***
> Great! Can we get your email address to keep you informed on the campaign and ask you to volunteer? Thank you again for your time and have a great day/night!

> ***If no,***
> What are your concerns about *[Candidate]*?
> > *[Try to address them if applicable -- if still no, thank them for their time and hang up.]*

> ***If still undecided,***
> Thanks for your time. *[Candidate]* hopes to earn your support. Have a great night!

SAMPLE VOTER GOTV SCRIPT

Hi, is _____(first name)_____ there?

Hi, this is ___(your first name)_____ and I am a local volunteer for *[Candidate/Campaign]*. A few weeks ago you promised to vote and support *(Candidate/Campaign)* on Election Day, November 2nd.

Do you still intend to vote on Tuesday for *(Candidate/Campaign)*

If 'yes' they intend to vote,
> Great! Turnout is predicted to be high but we're hopeful you'll be part of an army of supporters we're mobilizing to win a victory for our town!
>
> Your polling place is at ___(polling location)_____. Do you know where that is?
>
> The campaign will be monitoring polling stations all day to make sure our supporters have a chance to vote. When are you planning to vote? *[Make sure they indicate when they intend to vote and have a plan for voting.]*
>
> Any other questions? *[If yes, answer them. If no, thank them and say good night.]*
>
> Thanks for helping us win a better town!

If 'no' they are not voting,
> Is there are reason?
> *[If concerns over the issue, engage, address the concerns and persuade.]*
>
> ***If there is a lack of enthusiasm about voting,***
> Well, as you know, our opponent doesn't support the kind of change we want to see. It's only going to be people like you and me who can make it happen. The good news is if we all vote on Tuesday – we win.
>
> So your vote's really important – can we count on it?
>
>> *[Allow them to answer the question. If yes – then go to "yes" above. If they want to vote but have an obstacle, help them solve it. If they have given up on voting, re-impress on how vital it is for everyone to vote.]*
>
> Thanks and have a great night!

Wellstone

Hi, is _____ there? This is _____, I'm a volunteer from *[Candidate's]* campaign.

I'm calling tonight to thank you for your support for *(Candidate/Campaign)*. We wouldn't be where we are today without you and hundreds of others like you.

As you know, there's a lot at stake this November. That's why we're taking our message to the streets and talking with our neighbors about electing city leaders who will actually listen to folks like us. Can we count on your help?

If "yes" they can help:
Great!! Our two top priorities right now are contacting voters before the election and then getting them out to vote.

Can you help make calls or door knock a day a week in your area?

If "yes" they'd be interested but they are busy,
> *Ask if they can help out another time.*

If "no" then ask if they can do it one time:
We're also asking if people if they can take Election Day off to help get out the vote – could you do that? *(if not the day, ask if they can take off part of the day).*

> **If "yes"** *– give instructions (see separate sheet)*

> **If "no"** *– remind them that a lot is at stake and ask again if they are sure they can't help out. If "no" again, end call.*

Thanks! Have a great night.