



Voter Communications: Optimizing Your Messaging & Strategies

Principles for All Strategies

Research informed practices for in-person and digital
communications

Principles for all strategies

Existing research points to key takeaways that you can implement into communications (digital, social, personal, etc.) to help the people you serve get #VoteReady.

Main themes:

- Identity -- “Are you a voter?” “Become a voter,” “I am a voter” etc.
- Issues -- Black Lives Matter, police reform, healthcare, voting rights
- Empowerment -- My vote can change things, I have the power to make change
- Process oriented - How to vote, when, deadlines

Principles for all strategies

- Messages that felt **personal, conversational, and timely** had the biggest impact
- Voters respond best to messages delivered by personal contacts
- Mass emails are not very effective (some studies show zero impact)
- Trusted messengers are key

KEY TAKEAWAY:
WHEN and HOW you say something is MORE important than WHAT you are saying.

Principles for all strategies

People respond best to information that:

- Feels official/governmental
- Gives easy 1-2-3 steps about important info and issues.

Adverse political ads are less effective in motivating people to engage in the electorate. **Similarly, nonpartisan messaging works better than partisan messaging.**

KEY TAKEAWAY:
**“Boring” explainers
works best**

Voting Rights in 2021

In conversations about fraud and suppression, lead with positive, shared values vs. combatting disinformation.

- **Freedom:** Freedom to vote
- **Voices:** Ensuring every voice is heard
- **Inclusive Democracy:** For democracy to work for all of us, it must include us all

Position voters as protagonists who can work together to bring positive change (create a system for easy access to voting) vs. fighting harm (ex: fix our broken systems).

Voting Rights in 2021

Instead of fighting misinformation, pivot towards the positive:

- Avoid the oppositional frame (“fraud,” “security”) and instead pivot to “freedom” focus instead
- Do not repeat claims even to refute. EX: “there is no voter fraud!” That only keeps the talking point alive
- Humanize the electoral process as the product of local people and efforts instead of politicians

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Focus on the positive value statements

Issues matter in 2021

Given the hyper-local politics of public health measures, school curriculum, police accountability, etc. voters have become increasingly focused on the impact of local and state elected officials.

- Focus on the fact that the elected police chief, mayor, etc. plays a bigger role in your life than the President
- Reiterate that elections are run, staffed and executed by people in their neighborhoods
- “Be Vocal, Vote Local”

Generational differences

All generations are excited to vote (based on 2020 research)

- Social pressure messaging (humorous not shameful) is effective for all generations
- Boomers/Gen X — Identity messaging most impactful
- Millennials/Gen Z — Empowerment messaging most impactful
- Gen Z most likely to encourage others to vote/share political views.
- Celebrity voices can boost Gen Z turnout, but have little or no effect other age groups.

In-person communications



The best way to engage voters is face to face, but if you don't use a pledge card, you're missing out.

Why use a Pledge-to-Vote Card?


- **Use as a second ask** If they're already registered - move them another step closer to voting
- **Prompt voters** to think through their plan to cast a ballot
- Collect contact info to **build a list** of voters for GOTV follow up
- **Highlight key dates** and information for staff or volunteers to reference

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Pledge Cards get people closer to actually voting

Pledge Card tip #1 - Use “Commitment” Framing

- Use language like “Pledge to vote” and “I’m voting because ...”
- Emphasize issues of importance to your community and the impact of voting
- Encourage relational organizing



3

Help 3 people vote.

I will help:

FULL NAME

FULL NAME

FULL NAME

Pledge card tip #2 - “Ready to Vote” Plan



1

Make sure I’m registered.

- I am a **new voter** who registered to vote.
- I **have moved** and re-registered to vote.
- I’m **already registered** to vote.

2

Make a plan to vote.

- I will **vote early** at a polling place in my county.
- I will **vote by mail** using an absentee ballot.
- I will vote on **Election Day** at my assigned polling place.

Pledge card tip #3 - Spotlight key info

Use a tearaway style card (most printing shops can do this or you can buy “perforated paper”) or use two separate pieces - one the voter fills out and you keep, and the other the voter takes home.

State-specific info to include:

- Link to check voter registration and find polling places
- Deadline for registering to vote
- Election date, include early voting dates

Voter protection hotline:

Call 1-866-OUR-VOTE

(1-866-687-8683)

**866ourvote.org, see website
for more languages**

Pledge card tip #4 - Connect with voters

- Use your organization's branding to build trust
- Provide translations if you can
- Describe how and when you will send GOTV reminders (by phone call, text message, or mail)
 - Note your capacity, if you say you'll send reminders, do it!
 - You can add consent language to your card as well



Email Address (optional) Dirección de correo electrónico (Opcional)

(_____)

Mobile
Móvil

Home
Casa

Phone Number* (optional) N.º de teléfono* (Opcional)

* I understand & agree that by providing my cell number, I consent to receiving occasional reminders to vote, sometimes using text or prerecorded messages, or an autodialer.

* Comprendo y acepto que al dar mi número de celular, consiento en recibir recordatorios ocasionales para votar, a veces mediante mensajes de texto o pregrabados, o un automarcador.

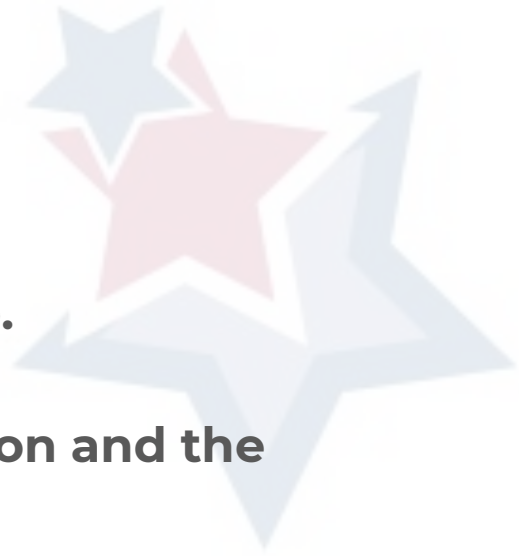
Virtual communications



You have a big digital following. Make sure your message gets through.

Why use Social Media?

- **To meet your audience where they already are.**
- **To act as a direct line between your organization and the community you serve.**
- **To spread the word as trusted messengers in your community!**





Let's get creative!

Tip #1: Use the correct social media sizing

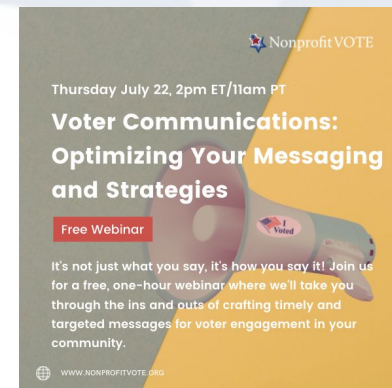
Twitter - 1600 x 900



Instagram - 1090 x 1090



Facebook - 940 x 788



Tip #2: Use high-quality assets

Assets: Components of a graphic. Examples: Images, logos, icons, etc.



High Quality



Low Quality

Resource: [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com) / [Pexel.com](https://pexels.com) - Free images

Tip #3: Channel the 5 w's

5 W's: Who, what, why, when, and where.

Highlight Important information Such as dates, Location, times etc.

Using icons is an effective way to communicate step-by-step actions.

Use a simple background to ensure focus is not taken away from the information.

Use identifiable imagery/ icons

Feature links within posts to point users to more information.

EARLY VOTING

March 2, 2021 - Statewide Special Election

RHODE ISLAND

EARLY VOTING PERIOD: February 10, 2021 - March 1

-  Call your local board of canvassers for voting hours and accessible voting entrance.
-  Preview your ballot at vote.ri.gov.
-  Bring a valid photo ID.
-  Don't forget your mask!

 vote.sos.ri.gov

Tip #4: Keep your style consistent

- **Use no more than two different font styles.**

- Header & Body text.
- You can use different font weights!

Aa Aa
Header *Body Text*

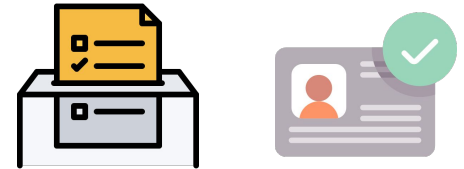
- **Keep your colors complimentary**

- No more than 3 colors, in addition to black and or white.



- **Use similar imagery and icons (if using them)**

- Real imagery is best!
- Using 'Icon Packs'



Resources

- [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) - Free online creative software that gives you access to Thousands Of Templates, Stock Photos, Videos And More.
- [Biteable.com](https://biteable.com) - Free online video maker with animated templates, stock footage, photos, and more.
- [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com) - Crowd-sourced free images and photos.
- [Flaticon.com](https://flaticon.com) - Free editable, high quality icon packs.
- [Coolers.co](https://coolers.co) - Online color palette generator.

**BONUS: Tag us in your
#NationalVoterRegistrationDay promotional Graphics!**





Communicating with partners & volunteers

Learn the art of the mobilization email and boost your
recruitment efforts.

Is Email Still Worth It?



- In a word YES.
- As of 2019, there were over 3 billion email users
- Companies that utilize email well have higher sales
- High sales come at a more efficient rate

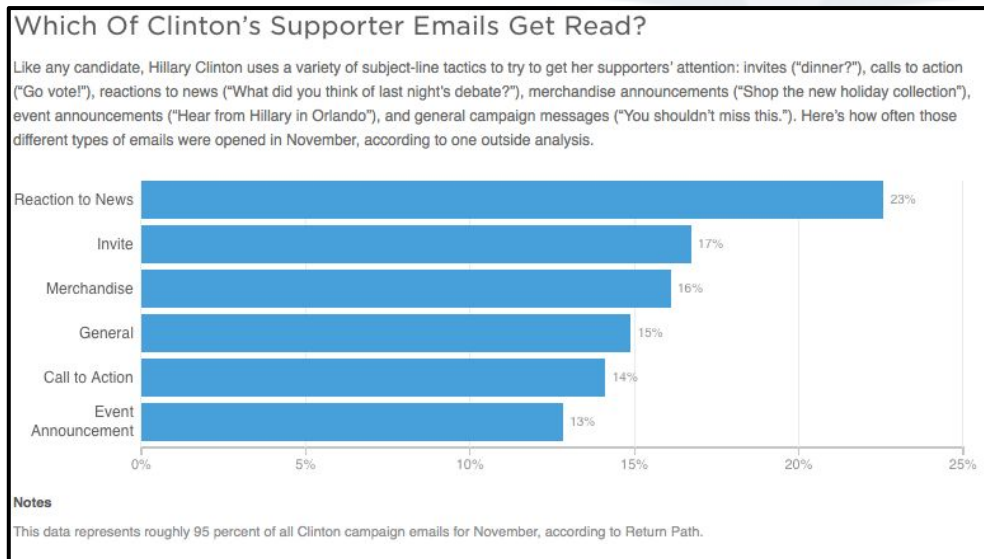


OK, that's sales. But what about organizing?

- In two other words ... STILL YES.
- Huge return on investment (ROI) - although only 1/3 political emails are opened, candidates net MASSIVE fundraising and voter activation benefits



- Data shows that open and engagement rate is successful across different message types, but timely information (Ex: news updates and event invites) appear to be the strongest



Stand Out in the Inbox

- The subject line = the first line of attack
- You only have a few characters before text is truncated: be efficient!
- Creating a sense of urgency (even if things aren't *exactly* urgent) is key
- Keep it human ... but not *too* human

Open Rate: 58.74% ☆ National Voter Regi. 2

[test] here's where we are, Travis


Open Rate: 53.65% ☆ National Voter Regi.

[test] tracking number for your special delivery!

Open Rate: 46.09% ☆ National Voter Regi.

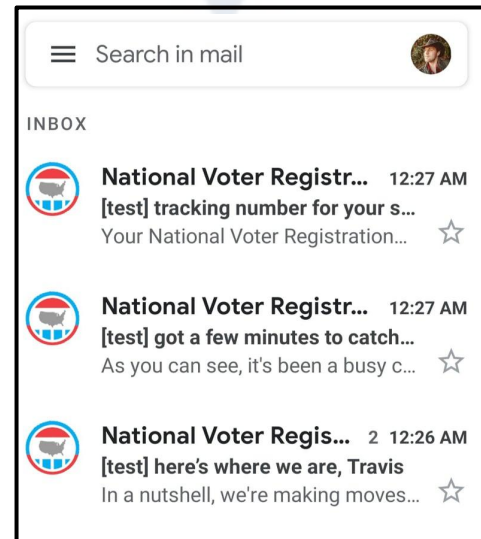
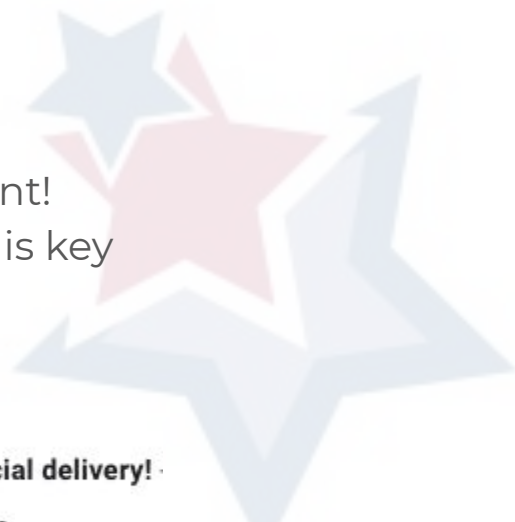
[test] got a few minutes to catch up?

Average Email Marketing Open Rate? 18.0%

- Don't be afraid to do some tests
- Make sure time is on your side - 10 am, 1 pm, 6 pm
- Don't forget about mobile view 

Resource: [Campaign Monitor](#)

Resource: [HubSpot](#)



Now Comes the Hard Part: **READING** the email

- Have one, specific, actionable goal for every email (and make it OBVIOUS)
- Pith is your friend: Data suggests 200 words is ideal - but there are cheats
- Most readers spend less than a minute “scanning email” in an F-shaped pattern.



- Solution? Give them an F-ing reason to keep reading by ...

So, in honor of the entire Apollo 11 crew we're asking you, Travis to **boldly go** where 4500+ partners have gone before: take **one small step** for organizational-kind to sign up as a partner, and make **one GIANT leap** for democracy kind by [joining us on September 28, 2021 for National Voter Registration Day.](#)



**Click to become a
2021 Partner**

Avoiding Big Text Blocks of Death

Not That

Dear MoveOn member,

Greece is all over the news this week—but how come so few people are talking about Wall Street's role in creating the crisis, or what people like us can do to change the outcome?

Let's talk about it—and do something about it.

Read on to see how I see it. Once you've read this, please chip in to help MoveOn launch an emergency global campaign for progress, not austerity.

People seem to forget that the Greek debt crisis—which is becoming a European and even possibly a world economic crisis—grew out of a deal with Goldman Sachs, engineered by Goldman's Lloyd Blankfein.

Several years ago, Blankfein and his Goldman team helped Greece hide the true extent of its debt—and in the process almost doubled it. When the first debt deal was struck in 2001, Greece owed about 600 million euros (\$793 million) more than the 2.8 billion euros it had borrowed. Goldman then cooked up an off-the-books derivative for Greece that disguised the shortfall but increased the government's losses to 5.1 billion euros.

In 2005, the deal was restructured and the 5.1 billion euro debt was locked in. **After that, Goldman and the rest of Wall Street pulled the global economy to its knees—whacking Greece even harder.**

Undoubtedly, Greece suffers from years of corruption and tax avoidance by its wealthy. But Goldman Sachs isn't exactly innocent. It padded its profits by catastrophically leveraging up the global economy with secret, off-balance-sheet debt deals.

Did any of its executives ever go to jail? Of course not. They all got fat bonuses and promotions. Blankfein, now CEO, raked in \$24 million in 2014 alone. **Meanwhile, the people of Greece struggle to buy medicine and food.**

Economists Thomas Piketty and Jeffrey Sachs also have weighed in, writing in *The Nation* that the results of European austerity in Greece have hit the vulnerable the worst—**40 percent of children now live in poverty, infant mortality is sky-rocketing and youth unemployment is close to 50 percent.**¹

Debt restructuring must be part of any solution for economic reforms in Greece. But instead of doing that, the European powers have made eleventh-hour, draconian demands: slash pensions, privatize even more core state functions, and attack unions and workers' collective bargaining rights.²

The U.S. can help make things better (instead of worse, like Goldman Sachs did). **In addition to diplomatic power, the U.S. has voting power in the International Monetary Fund—one of Greece's creditors.**

President Obama and Secretary of the Treasury Jack Lew can use their pulpits and their votes to yield a positive and just outcome. The Greek parliament on Friday approved a new plan that Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras proposed, but so far the European parties aren't offering up the debt restructuring that's needed for a real solution and instead are demanding even more draconian austerity measures from Greece to even keep talking.

That's why I wanted to write you this note, to try and sift through what's going on and ask for your help on a special campaign that's pretty different from what MoveOn's done before.

As you can imagine, MoveOn hadn't budgeted for a big campaign to save Greece and reject global austerity. So I'm speaking up to help MoveOn raise the funds now.

Ready to help launch the campaign?

[Here's the link to donate: Click here to help reject austerity.](#)

This

Speaking of which: While we we're on the subject of webinars, be sure to [RSVP for our upcoming September 9 webinar "Talking to Voters On and Offline."](#) With the help of our guest co-hosts Dr. Alister Martin (Founder, Vot-ER) and Erica Elliot (Regional Organizing Manager, MOVE Texas), we'll take you through the best practices and tips for personal interactions (spoiler alert: on and offline) that drive voter registration success.



We don't recommend this as a method for your voter interactions

Get your swag while it's hot: If your organization is planning to purchase any additional stickers or posters for your National Voter Registration Day event, you'll need to [place your order through our store ASAP!](#) We suggest you do so **NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 7!**

And finally:

No update would be complete without giving you the inside scoop on exactly how many partners make up the current state of our alliance of National Voter Registration Day partners, would it? And as of the afternoon of September 4, 2020, we have a team of (drumroll pleaseeeeeee) 3792 partner organizations ready to take the voter registration fight to September 22 by storm!



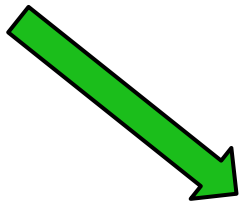
We're proud to call ourselves your voter registration coach

Make it Conversational

Preview Text: testing, testing, testing ...



Human
Stuff



If you're wondering what the "test" was, it was whether or not we could get you to open this email promoting our upcoming webinar on the topic of (you guessed it) **how to promote your National Voter Registration Day event.** Needless to say, we did pretty well ...



But all jokes and faux swagger aside (just this once,) the **effective promotion of National Voter Registration Day events** has always been a high priority topic for our partners and that goes double, triple, and quadruple during a pandemic when everyone's inbox is packed with everything from webinar invitations to COVID-19 conspiracy theories from your most problematic relative(s).

GIFS are Your Friend



Guess what day it is?



If you guessed National Voter Registration Day, you're ABSOLUTELY CORRECT!

Yes, today is the one-day democracy-loving palooza we've been preparing for all year long! Like Santa's elves on Christmas Eve, this is gonna be the busiest day for both us and all of you National Voter Registration Day helpers going BIG out there.

That said, we're just sending along a handful of key reminders before all of the day's funtivities get ahead of us:



Make the headlines: If you haven't already, send out the media materials about your event(s) to local reporters using these [sample media alerts](#) and [press releases](#) before 9:30 am in your time zone.

Post it: Crack open our [Social Media Toolkit](#) to access all of our ready-made gifs, short videos, images, and more to keep the National Voter Registration Day message at full volume all day long!



Become a 2021 Partner

SIGN YOUR ORGANIZATION UP TODAY!



Become a
Partner

Get
Registered

Get
#VoteReady

Host an
Event

Who We Are Resources



Empowering
Ending Den
Celebrating 100
League of Wo
and Women Voting in 2020

**National Voter Registration Day 2021 is
September 28!**

How can we help you
register to vote?

be the change
VOTE



Put it into practice

Embrace/Replace Language

All words and phrases have their meanings and intentions shift as times change which means communicators need to review their language -- even language that has been widely accepted and understood previously -- to ensure it isn't actually working against your best intentions.

To this end, a couple of studies ("Freedom to Vote" and "Race Class Narrative Action") we found have not only highlighted key words and phrases to readdress but also HOW you express these ideas and to WHOM requires another careful look.

**VOTING
RIGHTS
LAB**

aso.com
munications
ANAT SHENKER OSORIO COMMUNICATIONS


The Leadership
Conference
Education Fund


DECLARATION FOR
AMERICAN
DEMOCRACY


Common
Cause

**BRENNAN
CENTER**
FOR JUSTICE
NYU LAW

**END CITIZENS UNITED
— ACTION FUND —**


LET AMERICA VOTE
— ACTION FUND —

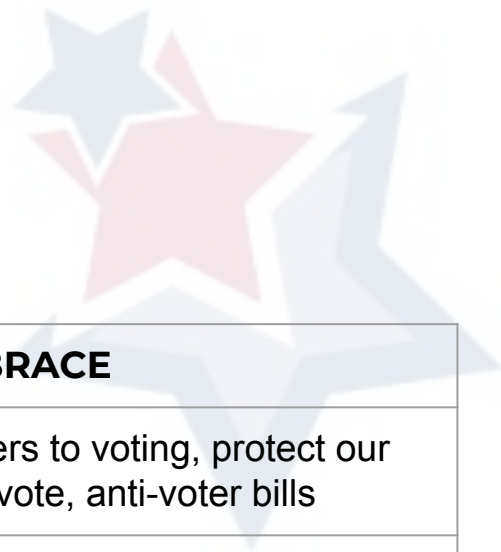
RACE CLASS
NARRATIVE ACTION

Replace/Embrace Language

Let's start with the words: The “Freedom to Vote” research suggests a list of words/phrases we should embrace over the ones they replace. As mentioned earlier, often times the need to embrace new words is because the old ones play into negative narratives that can obfuscate and confuse your goal.

REPLACE	EMBRACE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voting rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Freedom to vote; Cast our ballots freely
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fix our democracy/broken system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fair representation, Make the promise of democracy real for everyone
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligible citizens, eligible Americans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Citizens, Americans *registration exception

Replace/Embrace Language



REPLACE	EMBRACE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voter suppression, fight voter suppression, obstacles to voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliberate barriers to voting, protect our freedom to vote, anti-voter bills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Election security, election integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe and accessible elections for all, transparent processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vote absentee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vote by mail

Replace/Embrace Exercise

Tell Us: How could these tweets be better written to avoid playing into negative narratives?



Nonprofit VOTE  @NpVOTE · Jul 21

Join our fight to keep democracy safe! Every day we see more state legislatures passing laws that encourage voter suppression against eligible voters. Do what you can to make a change!



Replace/Embrace Exercise

Tell Us: How could these tweets be better written to avoid playing into negative narratives?



Nonprofit VOTE  @NpVOTE · Jul 21

As we saw during the 2020 race, many citizens are worried about election integrity. Ensure the community you serve that absentee voting is safe and secure and that millions did so last year.

