



The Analyst Institute conducts randomized controlled experiments to determine what works and what does not in voter contact and communication strategies. For more information please visit www.analystinstitute.org

Valuable volunteers and diehard door knockers:

We wanted to let you in on the *whys* behind the phrases in your GOTV scripts.

Why THIS Script?

You might not be aware of it, but scientists have been testing what works and what doesn't when contacting voters for over 10 years. Through randomized controlled experiments, similar to pharmaceutical trials, dozens of organizations have measured the impact of phone calls and door knocks as well as uncovered messages that actually motivate voters to cast a ballot.

The scripts you are using are based on findings from these tests.

Your Phone Banks and Canvasses Work!

Extensive testing has shown that canvasses and phone banks increase turnout *when they leverage certain principles*. These principles have been incorporated into your script and are listed below. Races are often won by only a few points. So, while no single tactic wins an election, using these techniques can help push that margin in your favor:

- ✓ Phone calls can make a person 4% more likely to vote
- ✓ Face-to-face canvassing can make a person 7% more likely to vote

... but only when using the following best practices.

What to do to Create the Most Votes:

Your help is integral for winning elections. We have included the following phrases in your script because we know from randomized experiments that they work for increasing turnout. Talking to voters without using these phrases will have less impact and possibly none at all.

- ✓ Walk voters through when and how they will get to the polls, and where they will be coming from. Developing an Election Day plan with a voter can *double the impact of your call*.
- ✓ Get a hard commitment to vote: Ask, "Can we count on your vote on Election Day?"
- ✓ Emphasize *high* turnout: Say, "Lots of people in your area will be voting, but it is going to be close and we really need your vote." Hearing that there is *low* expected turnout can actually *reduce* motivation to vote.
- ✓ Say, "We are calling *people who vote* about...." instead of, "We are calling people about...." Reminding your contact that they are a voter will make them more likely to act like one.
- ✓ Inform voters that you are local, from their neighborhood, or "calling from Main Street."
- ✓ Thank contacts for having voted in previous elections and say, "We hope to thank you again for voting this November."



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Sample GOTV Script

Hello, is [VOTER NAME] there?

Hi! This is [CALLER NAME] calling from [LOCAL STREET, TOWN, PHONE BANK LOCATION, COUNTY, STATE].

Official records show that you voted in the last election and we are calling voters like you to say, thank you.

Thank you for being a voter! (pause)

Since you are the kind of person who votes and cares about the community, we wanted to remind you about the election on Nov 6th. [INSERT PERSONALIZED ELECTION SENTENCE].

Can we count on your vote on Nov. 6th?

Great! We are calling people in [COMMUNITY NAME] and it looks like a lot of people will be voting this year. It is an exciting race, but it's going to be close and your vote can make the difference.

I have that your polling place is at [POLLING PLACE]. Is that close enough to walk? Or will you drive or take the bus? (pause)

On Election Day, your polling place is open from [XX AM TO YY PM]. Do you know when you might go to vote? In the morning, afternoon, evening? (pause) So do you think you'll head to the polling place from your home, work, or somewhere else?

Great! Again, thank you for being a good citizen who votes, and for your promise to vote this year.

We hope to be able to thank you again for voting on Tuesday, November 6th.

Key elements:

- ✓ Localness of caller
- ✓ Voting is public record
- ✓ Identity labeling
- ✓ Voting is positive
- ✓ Commitment to vote
- ✓ High turnout
- ✓ Agency
- ✓ Plan making
- ✓ Thank you for voting
- ✓ Hope to thank you again



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GOTV Checklist

This checklist reflects the results of hundreds of randomized controlled experiments conducted over the past ten years. Every insight described below is supported by substantial experimental evidence from behavioral science, as well as experiments demonstrating its relevance to Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) efforts. The standard for inclusion on this list is high. For more information on the research underlying these findings, or for more information on testing and best practices, please contact experiments@analystinstitute.org.

Who to Target:

- ✓ Target moderate and low probability voters. Target individuals whose vote history shows them to be "on the cusp" of voting for a given election (e.g., < 70 on the Catalist National Turnout Model).
- ✓ Target households with more than one likely supporter or voter. As much as half of the mobilizing impact you have on your target is likely to "spill over" to other members of the household.

What to Say:

- ✓ Remind targets that voting records are public. Make voters aware that others can see their vote history to trigger the psychology of social accountability. For example, "We see you voted last year. Thank you!"
- ✓ Talk voters through a voting plan. Ask voters when they will vote, how they will get to the polls, and where they will be coming from to develop a voting plan.
- ✓ Remind voters of their previous commitment to vote. Remind voters of their recent pledge to vote to trigger a personal drive to be consistent with past commitments.
- ✓ Emphasize high expected turnout in a given election. Emphasize that voter turnout will be high rather than low. People tend to behave as they think others will.
- ✓ Emphasize that you are local. If possible, tell voters you are contacting them from a local organization. Calls from the "Los Angeles Action Org" are better in that area than calls from the "National Action Org."
- ✓ Highlight "voter identity". Tell target you are calling because he/she is the "kind of person who votes." Identity assertions like this are more impactful than saying "we are calling people."

Tactics that Work:

- ✓ Use door hangers. Maximize your canvassers' impact by giving them materials to leave when the voter is not home. Ten door hangers can be as effective as one personal contact.
- ✓ Assign canvassers who are similar to your door-to-door targets. If possible and legal, match canvassers to the demographic of your targets, especially when targeting youth. Assign canvassers to their own communities.
- ✓ Send self-addressed pledge reminder cards. Have each voter write his/her address on the front of a pledge postcard when possible. Mail back the signed pledge card just before Election Day.
- ✓ Use GOTV text messages. Send GOTV text messages in the days before Election Day.

Tactics that Don't Work:

- ✗ Don't use GOTV robo-calls. Robo-calls have not proven effective, regardless of whether they are from celebrities, in Spanish, from membership organizations, or have political endorsements.
- ✗ Don't buy emails for GOTV. GOTV emails do not increase turnout, regardless of whether they are from celebrities, college administrators, or membership organizations.
- ✗ Don't use standard GOTV mail. Traditional, glossy mail is not cost-effective for GOTV. However, handwritten mail and mail that leverages findings from behavioral science, such as social accountability, can increase turnout. Mail used for persuasion can also be effective.
- ✗ Don't use rushed, short, live GOTV calls. Rushed live calls with no interaction have trivial impact.

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