

CONNECTING WITH THE
YOUTH VOTE | Institute Of
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Greg McNeilly | DeVos for Governor (2006)

CONNECTING WITH THE YOUTH VOTE



3 Quick areas to review from the Michigan experience:

- What happened in 2006.
- Big Picture – strategies to help connect with the youth vote.
- Little Picture – examples of tactics to implement in connecting with the youth vote.

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□ WHAT HAPPENED - 2006:

▣ In Michigan:

- 416,995 18-30 y/o voters.
 - Note: 912,000 65+ voters also voted.
- 10.83% of total turnout.
- 45% DeVos, 48% Granholm (Source: DeVos exit polling).
 - Note: This is +11% over the average GOP gubernatorial candidate in the 2006 elections, where youth voted 55% Democrat, 35% Republican (Source: National Pool National Exit Poll, 11/06).

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□ BIG PICTURE:

▣ Be where they be.

- Have a regular online presence in all forms:
 - Web pages
 - Podcasts
 - Vlogs
 - Blogs
 - E-mail
 - Rss-feeds
 - Social networking sites (Myspace.com, Facebook.com, etc.).
- Youth dominated entertainment (radio, cable and TV).

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- ▣ Message with them where they are, but don't try and talk in their language.
 - Youth voters respect **authenticity** first and foremost. Be real. Chances are your candidate is old. Don't fake being what you're not.
 - But do talk about what youth voters care about – chances are, minus Social Security reform, they're the same issues everyone else cares about (the war, jobs, education).

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- ▣ Engage them like any coalition.
 - The more attention (a.k.a. resources: time, people and money) that you devote, the greater an impact you'll have.
 - Make a plan and have a budget.
 - Have a youth voter coordinator.
 - Be on campus.
 - Train, empower and let'em loose. Peer-to-peer generated contact beats paid.
 - Give them a voice!
 - 2001 Study:
 - Youth-to-youth canvassing contact, increased impact 8-10%.
 - Youth-to-youth phone bank contact, increased impact 3-5%.
 - Targeted generic direct mail, neutral impact.

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- ▣ Engage them like any coalition – (Continued):
 - But don't neglect paid media: web-ads, radio, TV, and direct-mail.
 - Summary of coalition engagement:
 - Plan
 - Voter Registration (Dorm Storming).
 - Mobilization & Engagement: getting them hooked on the campaign.
 - Getting-out-the-Vote (and with college students, then mobilizing them for 72-hour pushes).

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□ LITTLE PICTURE:

▣ Example: VLOGS (Video logs).

- Do them often (weekly).
- Do them cheap.
- Do them real.
- Do them with humor and fun (a.k.a., keep it real!).

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- ▣ Example: Social Networking a new place to be.
 - That's where the youth vote is, be there or you'll miss them.
- ▣ Example: Engagement 2.0.
 - Web contests:
 - iPod/Trio contest for user web ad in support of campaign
 - Voter Registration drive contests
 - Door-to-door & phone bank contests
 - Fundraising contests, user-based fundraising pages, etc.
 - Inter-active games/exchanges:
 - Loosely edited blogs.
 - Michigan Jeopardy.

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- Example: SMS (text messaging)
 - Opportunities for SMS:
 - Fundraising (currently capped at \$9.95 per user).
 - Action Alerts:
 - Radio call-ins.
 - Vote in online surveys.
 - Check your e-mail or the WWW page.
 - Event turnout alerts.
 - Streaming video messages – vlogs to the phone.

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