

## II - CONCLUSION/GOALS

CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing analysis of the problem of perception and the swing States and voters, we have reached the following conclusions:

Voter Perception

1. Although President Ford has demonstrated an ability to cause an increase in his approval rating by the national voters (based on Harris, Gallup and other polls), such a rise has always been relatively modest and temporary. Thus far the President has not shown the capability of causing a sharp increase in his approval rating for a sustained period of time.
2. The President's strongest characteristic is his honesty. He is perceived to be open and direct (e.g., "I pardoned Nixon in the national interest and I would make the same decision today.") Carter is vulnerable because his character is unknown (i.e., is he sincere or devious.)



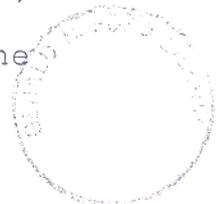
3. By actively campaigning in the traditional sense (e.g., rallies, stump speeches) the President impacts his national standing negatively.\*
4. In general, the voters do not have a firm perception of any specific positive trait of the President. There are, however, some general "feelings" which contribute to the President's approval rating:
  - He is basically non-arrogant and honest.
  - He is safe -- will not make major errors as President.

However, many of our target voters have the following negative perceptions of the President:

- He is weak -- not decisive or in control.
- He is not thought of as being bright.
- He is somewhat identified with the status quo of big, unresponsive government.

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\* Besides the analysis presented previously on the President's traditional campaigning, the following reasons exist for sharply curtailing future campaign travel: (a) The President is perceived as un~~presidential~~ compared to Carter in the campaign mode; (b) when on the stump, the President is very susceptible to errors such as launching into a personal attack on his opponent; (c) for the general election, we can get far greater benefits by allocating our very scarce resources elsewhere e.g., advertising and TV buys for major speeches; and, (d) we need a dramatic change (e.g., to issues, away from conventional campaigning) in order to capture the initiative and put Carter on the defensive.



5. In general, many voters have the following positive perceptions of Carter, based almost entirely on a very soft "awareness" factor:

- He is new -- represents a fresh approach and change.
- He is honest and religious.
- He is a conservative Democrat -- just to the right of center.

In general, the voters do not have a negative impression of Carter, but he has the following weaknesses which could result in a negative opinion by the voters.

- He is vague -- almost arrogant. This raises questions about his honesty and openness.
- He is almost mystical, evangelical.
- He may be joining the Democratic establishment.

6. The President's current White House and campaign organization is not likely to be capable of changing his negative perception among certain target voters and, in fact, continuation of the present staff operation will likely result in an increased negative perception of the President by the voters. Bickering within the Administration contributes to the perception that the President is not in control, thus not a leader.



7. There does not appear to be any alternative way of substantially increasing the President's approval rating, other than by fundamentally changing the voters' perception of him. Until the voters perceive that President Ford has the personal characteristics of a strong, decisive leader, no strategy can be expected to close the Ford-Carter gap.\*

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\* President Ford has overcome one of the most serious challenges any 1976 Presidential candidate must deal with, which is, the perception of arrogance. We believe that many people equate perceptual arrogance with deviousness (probably a "lesson" of Vietnam and Watergate). There is probably nothing President Ford can do between now and the election which would result in the voters perceiving him as arrogant. Of course, the difficulty is that, in striving to appear the opposite of arrogant, the President has also managed to appear undignified, uninspired and mediocre. This "price" which has been paid to avoid the "imperial Presidency" charge has been enormous and, tragically, probably totally unnecessary. There is no way that President Ford (especially in comparison with Nixon or, for that matter, Carter) will ever appear arrogant. Therefore, self-deprecating comments, such as "I am a Ford, not a Lincoln", rather than having any beneficial impact, have, in fact, resulted in a substantial negative result.



The Targets

For the allocation of campaign resources, the States are divided into five categories of priority:

## Priority I - Large Swing States - maximum resources

California	45
Illinois	26
Ohio	25
Michigan	21
New Jersey	17
* New York	41
* Texas	26
* Florida	17
Pennsylvania	27

## Priority II - Swing States - heavy resources

Maryland	10
Tennessee	10
Missouri	12
Wisconsin	11
Washington	9
Kentucky	9
* North Carolina	13
* Virginia	12

\* Unknowns



Priority III A - Republican States - need  
some attention

Indiana	13
Iowa	8
Oklahoma	8
Colorado	7
Maine	4
Montana	4
Alaska	3
Delaware	3

Priority III B - Democratic States - need  
some attention

Connecticut	8
Oregon	6
New Mexico	4
Nevada	3

Priority IV - Safe Republican States - minimal  
resources

Kansas	7
Arizona	6
Nebraska	5
Idaho	4
South Dakota	4
Utah	4
New Hampshire	4
Vermont	3
North Dakota	3
Wyoming	3



Priority V - Safe Democratic States -  
minimal resources\*

Massachusetts	14
Georgia	12
Minnesota	10
Louisiana	10
Alabama	9
South Carolina	8
Mississippi	7
Arkansas	6
** West Virginia	6
Hawaii	4
Rhode Island	4
D.C.	3

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\* Our strategy in these States would be to force Carter to devote resources here to keep his base. We should have one PFC official devoted full time to creating "paper" organizations (Hollywood fronts) in these States. A chairman and press spokesman should pump out releases announcing a plethora of new groups (e.g., Georgians for Ford, Baptists for Ford) and examples of Carter weakness. We should devote very little resources to this effort.

\*\* Unknowns



CAMPAIGN GOALS

From the foregoing analysis, we have identified the following goals (objectives) for the President's campaign.

These goals are broken into three basic parts: first, those necessary to solidify and maintain the President's "base" of strength; second, those necessary to accomplish the incremental swing votes necessary to achieve 270 electoral votes; and, third, those necessary to change the perception our target voters have of Carter.

General Goals for Base of Support

1. Adopt a specific campaign strategy and create a control and management capability in the White House and PFC to conduct a highly disciplined, error-free campaign. Once we have the strategy, we must stick to it.
2. Establish the perception of the President as a leader:
  - honest
  - experienced
  - strong character
  - decisive
  - compassionate
  - perceptive/vision
  - man of action



3. Develop voter understanding of the President's position on the issues -- underscore Carter's vagueness on issues. Demonstrate that the President is substantively a pragmatic conservative whose programs are developed.
4. Unify the GOP after the nomination. Show the President as a winner and get the Party behind us.

Campaign Goals for Swing Vote (Independent and Ticket Splitters)

A. General Goals

1. Cause the swing voter to reevaluate the President. This will take an "attention getter" (such as a good acceptance speech) so that people will reevaluate their assumptions about the President's personal characteristics and once again begin to listen to what he has to say.
2. Develop a major and highly disciplined attack on the perception of Carter. We must close the gap between Carter's perception and his actual weaknesses. He must be seen as:
  - An unknown. A man whose thirst for power dominates. Who doesn't know why he wants the Presidency or what he will do with it.



- Inexperienced
  - Arrogant -- (deceitful)
  - Devious and highly partisan (a function of uncontrolled ambition).
  - As one who uses religion for political purposes; an evangelic.
  - As liberal, well to the left of center and a part of the old-line Democratic majority.
  - Carter's campaign must be linked (in the public's mind) to Nixon's '68 and '72 campaigns -- very slick, media-oriented. A candidate that takes positions based on polls -- not principles.
- B. Independents (Suburban, White Collar, Upper Middle Class from Traditionally Republican Households)
1. Develop positions on specific issues designed to appeal to the voter bloc (such as "quality of life" issue).
  2. Target special advocates program to this group.
  3. Establish personal recognition by the President of this group.



C. Ticket Splitters (Low Suburb, Upper Blue Collar, Upward Mobility, from Traditionally Democratic Households, Conservative on Social Issues, Liberal on Economic Issues)

1. Position the President as strongly concerned with religious and ethnic groups. Demonstrate his concern for the traditional values of family and moral values.
2. Demonstrate the President's concern for the fears of people who have recently helped themselves. Show a strong opposition to government programs which equalize people rather than let people help themselves.
3. Develop an active program of targeting specific issues and programs and attention on ethnic/religious groups (e.g., social issues like crime and education).
4. Portray the President as Presidential and not as a partisan Republican.

Campaign Goals for Changing Perception of Carter

1. Force him to take positions on issues (break up his coalition).
2. Characterize his campaign style as a 1976 version of the Nixon '68 campaign -- a slick show done with mirrors. His is a campaign for power - not principle.



3. Raise doubts about a Carter Presidency.

What are we getting?

4. Show that his "flip flops" on issues demonstrates insincerity, deviousness.

He is not candid and honest.