

MASTERING THE ONE-ON-ONE



**1. MAKING THE
ASK**



**2. STRUCTURE OF
A ONE-ON-ONE
CONVERSATION**

WHY HAVE ONE-ON-ONES?

One-on-ones are an incredibly valuable tool for your campaign's organizing program. Getting to know your volunteers will not only increase their commitment, but it will also help you understand their strengths, skills, and how they can best support or even lead your team.

This guide will walk you through how to hold connective one-on-ones. We'll go over 1) how to ask someone to sit down with you, and 2) how to have a conversation that will help you determine someone's passions, strengths, and role on your neighborhood team.

MAKING THE ASK

In the months leading up to GOTV, you will be recruiting, developing, and confirming volunteers in leadership roles to run the campaign in their neighborhood. Building these relationships and developing these leaders takes intentionality and persistence. Holding one-on-one meetings is a great first step. Even if you have veteran volunteers who showed up on day one, take the time to get to know them. Ask them to sit down with you for an hour-long meeting (usually over coffee or tea) so you can talk. You will learn something, and they will become invested in the plan to win.

That said, you might be surprised that volunteers don't always come from the most obvious places. A fantastic volunteer isn't always someone with the highest vote propensity score or someone who has volunteered on every single campaign for the last twenty years. Sometimes, your best volunteers need to be cultivated, encouraged, and uncovered. Someone may surprise you. When recruiting volunteer leaders, you shouldn't only think of your immediate goals for phone calls, canvassing packets, and data entry. Imagine other ways that someone can get involved and think creatively about what other needs you have to fill over the long term. That's what one-on-ones are for. The first person to raise her hand isn't always the best person to lead the team. Don't look for the loudest and most eager voice in the room—look for volunteers who demonstrate leadership by moving others to action.

When asking someone to meet with you one-on-one, it's important to be straightforward. Invite someone for a cup of coffee. Get breakfast before the office opens. Ask them to arrive an hour early for call time because you have something important to chat about. Be direct, and don't be afraid to go out on a limb. Feels a little like you're asking someone on a date? Yes, it sort of does. So be specific about *why*. You want to talk to them about the campaign, what we need to accomplish from now until Election Day, and how they can get involved.

The more someone understands the plan and expectations, the more bought in they will be, and the greater their commitment. And don't underestimate the importance of laying out the strategy. It will give them greater autonomy to make decisions in line with your needs when you aren't there to give direction later on.

WHEN TO ASK FOR A ONE-ON-ONE

You should have one-on-one conversations at different points in the campaign to get to know your volunteers, engage leadership, and align on goals and next steps. Generally, we think of three different types of one-on-ones.

1. Introduction

In your first one-on-one, get to know your volunteer and understand his or her interests and motivations. Exchange personal stories and connect on shared values. Then share opportunities for your volunteer prospect to take action with the campaign.

2. Maintenance

Once you have a committed volunteer who has turned out to work with the campaign a few times, carve out time to check in periodically, hear how things are going, debrief milestone events, and reaffirm your volunteer's commitment. This is critical to maintaining your relationship and learning together.

3. Escalation

When a volunteer has demonstrated commitment and leadership, and you have begun to incrementally transfer responsibilities to them, it's time to have an explicit conversation and confirm them in a role (such as Neighborhood Team Leader, Canvass Captain, Data Captain, etc.) In our dating metaphor, this is kind of like the marriage proposal. You should consider holding an escalation one-on-one after someone has successfully hosted a house meeting, launched a canvass/phone bank, or trained over volunteers. Assuming a leadership role is a big ask, so don't rush it.

THE STRUCTURE OF A ONE-ON-ONE

There are five components to a great one-on-one conversation. We recommend practicing these conversations with fellow organizers and staff. Time will fly when you're talking to a volunteer, but you should never lose sight of the goal of your conversation. Keep an agenda in mind, but take time to really listen and connect. In general, it's a good idea to listen twice as much as you talk.

Sample Agenda: Introductory One-on-One Meeting

1. Introduction

- a. Introduce yourself, briefly share your story, and tell them why you're here. Why do you believe in your candidate?
- b. Ask the volunteer to share their story and why they are excited about the candidate.

2. Get the Personal Story / Listen with Purpose

- a. Ask questions to develop a deep understanding of why this volunteer feels connected to the candidate and is interested in volunteering on this campaign.
- b. Don't be afraid to do a lot of listening and to get personal (but not private). Does this person care about healthcare? Why? Does she have a personal story about why healthcare access is important to her? Why it's important to her family?
- c. Ask how this volunteer heard about the candidate and when she decided to get involved. Try to understand where the volunteer's values align with the candidate's and your own.

3. Plan to Win

- a. How do you plan to get your candidate elected?
- b. Review the work that needs to be done between now and Election Day.
- c. Be honest. You have thousands of doors to knock, thousands of calls to make, thousands of text messages to send. You can't do this alone; the campaign needs help.

4. The Ask

- a. Based on your conversation, what is the next action this volunteer can take? Canvass next weekend? Make phone calls? Lead a phone bank? Host a house meeting next week? Be direct and make a SMART ask: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ctionable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-bound.

5. Follow Up

- a. Make a plan to follow up. What's the next step? When will you talk next? How will you communicate (text, call, email, Facebook)? Be specific and clear about your expectations for communication and the best way to stay in touch.

Now you're ready to go out and build relationships! It all comes down to making an authentic connection via a quality conversation with clear next steps.