

Campaign Terminology Cheat Sheet

Learning the language of the campaign

“I’m sorry, what did you just say?”

Don’t worry, we’ve all been there.

Campaigns are a whirlwind of activity, and sometimes the jargon seasoned staffers use make it sound like they are speaking a different language.

Navigating this for the first time can be overwhelming. To help demystify the process, we’ve created this Votebuilder and Campaign Jargon Cheat Sheet

We hope that this cheat sheet will be a resource for you as you get started on your campaign’s Votebuilder journey, and can support you your quest to make your campaign efforts more effective and less daunting.

Together, we are going to take a look at general VAN lingo, specific data talk, campaign basics, and more!

Did we miss something? Let us know! Reach out to us at <https://www.nydems.org/action/votebuilder>.

Votebuilder Basics

VAN

Voter Activation Network:
The company that powers
Votebuilder.

The term 'VAN' may still be
used to refer to the system
or its functionalities.

Votebuilder

VoteBuilder is a national
online database
administered by the
Democratic National
Committee (DNC) and
maintained locally by the
State Party.

My Voters (MyV)

The section of Votebuilder
where users can access and
manage detailed voter
records, and can perform
direct voter contact

My Campaign (MyC)

The section of Votebuilder
that allows campaigns to
oversee various campaign
activities, including tracking
volunteer efforts, managing
events, and organizing
outreach strategies.

Voter File

A comprehensive database
of registered voters,
including personal details,
voting history, and
demographic information.

NCOA

The National Change of
Address program is a
service that maintains a
database of address
changes submitted by
individuals moving within
the U.S.

Canvassing Basics

Canvassing

Direct interaction with voters through door-to-door visits or phone calls to gather information, persuade, or mobilize them.

GOTV

Get Out The Vote: Strategies and activities aimed at increasing voter turnout .

Also can reference the final period of time before the election.

Walk Lists

Detailed lists of voter addresses provided to canvassers for door-to-door outreach, including information on previous interactions and voter preferences.

Turf

A specific geographic area assigned to canvassers for door-to-door outreach.

Turf Cutting

The process of dividing a larger area into manageable segments or "turfs" for canvassing purposes.

MiniVAN

The app provides canvassers with detailed voter lists, scripts, and tracking tools to effectively conduct door-to-door outreach and sync the data back to VAN.

Field and Organizing Basics

Field

The grassroots level of campaign operations where direct voter engagement takes place. This includes activities such as canvassing, phone banking, and organizing local events.

Organizing

The process of planning, coordinating, and executing campaign activities at the grassroots level, including recruiting and managing volunteers, organizing events, and implementing outreach strategies.

Organizer

A campaign staff member who oversees field operations, including managing canvassing efforts, coordinating volunteer activities, and organizing local events. Field organizers are responsible for implementing the campaign's field strategy and ensuring that outreach activities are effectively executed.

Canvasser

A volunteer or staff member responsible for conducting door-to-door or phone-based outreach to voters. Canvassers engage in conversations with voters, gather information, and promote the campaign's message.

Field and Organizing Basics

Direct Voter Contact (DVC)

Any form of communication or interaction with voters that occurs directly, rather than through indirect methods like advertisements. This includes activities such as door-to-door canvassing, phone calls, and personal meetings.

Grassroots

Campaign efforts focused on mobilizing ordinary voters and supporters at the local level through community organizing and volunteer work.

Voter Engagement

Efforts to connect with and mobilize voters through various means such as direct contact, events, and digital communication.

Contact Rate

The percentage of targeted voters who are successfully reached during canvassing or phone banking.

Field Plan

A strategy outlining how field operations will be conducted, including canvassing, volunteer management, and event planning.

Data Basics

Data Append/Bulk Upload

The process of updating and adding additional information to existing voter records, such as new contact details or demographic data.

Voter Targeting

Identifying and prioritizing specific groups of voters for outreach based on criteria such as demographics, voting history, and past support.

Database Management

The process of organizing, storing, and maintaining voter data in a database system. This includes ensuring data integrity and security.

Data Analytics

The process of examining and interpreting data to extract useful insights and inform campaign strategies. This includes analyzing voter behavior, engagement metrics, and campaign performance.

Data Hygiene

The practice of maintaining and cleaning voter data to ensure accuracy and remove outdated or incorrect information.