

Executive Summary

R - Collect data on publics; SWOT; environmental scanning

A - Make connections between data; determine what publics to address and their concerns; voter psychology

C - Design a communications plan that addresses the specific publics in a way which allays their concerns

E - Determine our plan's potential for success

Strengths:

Not Frivolous: Rob Ford has made numerous statements pertaining to the appropriate use of Toronto tax dollars. He has coined the phrase "stopping the gravy train," which highlights his zealous stance against high salaries of government officials and misappropriation of funds.

Direct: He speaks directly to the issue and does not make excuses for his passion for improving Toronto.

Weaknesses:

Negative press: This includes but is not restricted to publicized instances of wife assault, refusing to provide a breath sample (Florida), marijuana possession (Florida), verbal abuse of another fan at a Leafs game, and the highly publicized cocaine scandal.

Opportunities:

A new kind of Mayor: As society continues to become increasingly more technologically reliant, Mayor Ford has more chance to interact with citizens and create more positive messages via social networking mediums. A better impression of Mayor Ford in the media will ultimately translate into great votership in his favour.

Threats:

Opposing citizens: Some citizens have no desire to change their opinion of Mayor Ford no matter what he may do.

Opposing political parties: Other politicians, who have established credible platforms for how they speak to the public, have the opportunity to dissuade citizens from supporting Mayor Ford.

STRATEGY: To acknowledge Mayor Ford's shortcomings and areas of contention as determined by Toronto residents, we would organize a charity roast in his name. Selected comedians will each address his flaws in 10-minute acts. This will demonstrate Ford's willingness to deliberately face the opinions of others and subsequently provide commentary on each element through his speech at the end of the event. Dispelling the "elephant(s) in the room" and progressing toward a more understanding and relatable mayor is the ultimate goal.

Transform Rob Ford's weaknesses into strengths and his threats into opportunities:

- People believe that Ford has a crass character. The roast will allow the selected comedians a platform to highlight this impression of Ford but to then translate it into him being focused and simply possessing a low tolerance for nonsense.
- Ford speaks a lot about budget cuts, which lead to job cuts, thus raising unemployment and public dissatisfaction. One of the comedians will address this at the roast but will highlight the fact that Ford is dedicated to keeping his promises and will prove to do what is in the overall best interest of Toronto's citizens.

Appeal to those who did not originally vote for Rob Ford:

- Who are they? E.g., Youth, downtown core, women, LGBT community
- What do these groups want?

Appeal to those supporters who have lost their allegiance:

- Dedication to campaign promises and making cuts. Emphasizing the money that has already been saved.
- Show transparency

OBJECTIVES: Those possessing negative attitudes toward the press and its credibility will likely cast their vote based on their partisan predispositions rather than on contemporary messages, as shown in research by Jonathan McDonald Ladd, an assistant professor of public policy institute at Georgetown University. Ladd calculates that approximately 47 per cent of the increase in partisan voting over the past 35 years is the result of declining

confidence in the institutional press. The goal is to highlight the fact that Rob Ford is aware that at times he has fallen short of what is expected as a leader, but that it has always been his priority as Toronto's mayor to address the issues important to its citizens. Ultimately, the aim is for the City of Toronto and its citizens to move forward from past instances of disappointment and to use aspects of its history as growth and learning points this mayoral campaign of 2014, in order to secure re-election on Monday October 27, 2014. The goal is for voters to concentrate solely on the campaign deliverables. With instances of character assassination by the media out of the way, Ford will have the opportunity to highlight his accomplishments while in public office during public forums. Ultimately leaving the other mayoral candidates with little ammunition beyond what has already been addressed publicly and for a worthy cause. Notably, any attempt to paint the mayor as unfit for re-election based on his personal failings will prove as a distraction from the other candidate's lack of knowledge and experience in managing a booming city; something Mayor Ford has done quite well. Ideally, we are hoping to underline the fact that Mayor Ford gets the job done. The Rob Ford Roast will take place one week before the last mayoral debate, allowing for a significant change in the polls directly based on its reviews.

AUDIENCE: Consider the role of anxiety in voters' choice and how this will affect Ford's re-election campaign. Scholarly research shows that citizens' anxiety levels indirectly influence them to more thoroughly search for and process political information. Voting is becoming less about the party and more about the people. People will not vote for Ford simply because he's taking a certain stance, but they will consider how he portrays himself and how that will affect his campaign. Currently, it seems voters have lost confidence in Mayor Ford; 47 per cent of the Toronto population used to support him, but that number has now decreased to a mere 27 per cent.

PLANS AND TACTICS:

- Develop an active social media presence which provides interactive and transparent communication with Mayor Rob Ford
- Actively make appearances before the roast in order to generate interest, especially throughout the downtown core and in youth organizations
- Ian Edward, Board Chair of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Toronto will address attendees to thank the mayor for organizing the event to support the youth of our community
- A small selection of young people from different Boys and Girls Clubs throughout the City of Toronto will address the attendees about the role the Boys and Girls Club plays in their lives

The Rob Ford roast is a charity event, with funds going to the Boys and Girls Club of Toronto. Tickets will be sold for \$150 and media will be invited to document the event and to pose questions to attendees in order to gauge the impact of the experience.

Media training is important in order to prepare Mayor Rob Ford for any questions presented by the media after the event. It will also aid in keeping him poised amid the large amount of criticism present throughout the evening. We have verified with Adrienne Batra—Ford's former press secretary—that the Mayor, as a public official, is not currently provided with media training. The following criteria comprise the proposed media training:

1. Know beforehand what you want to say; have a clear goal with a *key message* to communicate.
2. Be prepared for anything—think on your feet. You must be able to read between the lines and predict all eventualities; one critical error can have a huge impact.
3. Nothing is ever “off the record”—you will be held responsible for *everything* you say, *wherever* you say it.
4. Keep your language simple. Plain talk is best; focus on a simple message and *one thought at a time*. Think about your message as you say it; this will naturally engage your audience.
5. Don't forget your body language; remember, actions speak louder than words. Make eye contact with your audience and interviewers; this also allows you to read their reactions and demonstrates confidence.

BUDGET AND RESTRAINTS: As this is a charity event, we will seek sponsorship from various organizations to assist with the costs of catering, seating, microphones and other attributions for this event. Ultimately, the entire initiative, including venue, press releases, payment of onsite workers, and all logistics, will not exceed \$15,000. Sponsorship and endorsements from members of the community will demonstrate favour towards Mayor Ford

and this important initiative. This will also prove as a fiscally responsible decision, using the least amount of the campaign budget as possible.

The media portrays Ford as belligerent and unrepentant, working against his anti-waste, anti-tax crusader image. Our main issue is having his message accurately represented in existing coverage. We know that some media outlets will provide better coverage. The Toronto Sun usually depicts Ford in a favourable light; however, there are many other outlets that are hostile and some that are indifferent to Ford's issues—including the CBC, the Toronto Star and Toronto's Pink Triangle Press. These particular outlets will be approached differently when seeking coverage on this issue. Our main challenge here is ensuring that coverage of Ford is positive or, in the very least, fair and balanced rather than twisting it as pre-campaigning.

RESULTS: Initial interest to the event will be determined by the amount of tickets sold. Media scanning after the event will determine the roast's effectiveness, as we will be able to analyze the tone and key messages used. The commencement of the City of Toronto mayoral campaign will allow us to accurately determine through election polls and anonymous online media polls, i.e. "Do you feel that Mayor Rob Ford should be re-elected? -Yes or No", if the Mayor has an increased chance to secure another year in public office. CP24 is very well known for having these sort polls on their website.

An opinion poll from the attendees will be conducted to gauge their sentiments after the event. We will also monitor social media conversation with #RobFordRoast. Mayor Ford's behaviour thereafter must be circumspect, forcing the public to concentrate on his mayoral platform. His financial, economic, environmental and social promises to the City of Toronto will become the main focus. As the roast will take place approximately one week prior to the final debate, we will have the opportunity to analyze if there is a shift in personal attacks toward Mayor Ford from the other candidates.

References (Voter Psychology and Electoral Behaviour)

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