



DEMOCRACY FOR DUMMIES

ACT Media Guide

Campaigns are won at home – in the hometown newspaper and the hometown television station. As long as you’re creating an event, don’t miss the opportunity to spread your message of ACTion to local citizens.

It’s easy, its fun, and you’ll make a difference – just follow the three steps in this guide, and you’ll be famous.

1. Send out a press release a few days before your event.

Include a short description of the event and a contact person, and why the local press will be interested. Be short and to the point. What, when, and where – and who -- are the most important details.

Most press releases have the language “For Immediate Release”, the Date, and a contact name at the top of the page. They should also have a short, catchy headline.

Here’s a press release North Carolina might have sent out last month:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Date: MAY 8th, 2004****Contact: Debby Goldberg (phone number, email)***Grassroots activists get out the vote in Raleigh, North Carolina*

On May 8th, over 30 grassroots volunteers in an all-volunteer operation are meeting under the capital dome to hit the streets and register voters. It's an unprecedented grassroots-driven voter mobilization drive – there are no paid canvassers, no paid staff, but lots of energy.

The last election was decided by a third of a million votes, but Debby Goldberg and her cohorts are focused on the 1,000,000 Democrats who didn't vote in 2000. "It isn't going to happen if we don't try," Debby said.

Debby, a volunteer, is also the volunteer organizer for ACT (America Coming Together), the largest grassroots mobilization effort in history. She says the volunteers are from all backgrounds, and driven by a sense that this election is different.

WHO: America Coming Together grassroots volunteers

WHAT: Voter Mobilization Drive

WHEN: Saturday, May 8th

WHERE: Krogers, (address)

2. Call reporters to follow up after you send the press release, and then call again the day of the event. Just like in voter mobilization, its **ALL ABOUT REPEAT CONTACT**. They may have missed your release, or not taken it seriously – a phone call from a local committed activist can make all the difference.

List reporters' names and numbers here, and your notes on the calls:

Name _____ Notes:	Paper/Station _____	_____-_____ Number
Name _____ Notes:	Paper/Station _____	_____-_____ Number
Name _____ Notes:	Paper/Station _____	_____-_____ Number
Name _____ Notes:	Paper/Station _____	_____-_____ Number
Name _____ Notes:	Paper/Station _____	_____-_____ Number
Name _____ Notes:	Paper/Station _____	_____-_____ Number

3. Close the loop.

If reporters come to the event, welcome them and make them feel at home. Introduce yourself and identify one or two other people they might want to talk to. Don't feel like you have to be formal – tell your personal story about why you are there. People are most interested in the human angle.

Make sure you get any reporter's name and number. After the event, call any reporters who were there to follow up, and send a follow up press release,

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including some quotes from people who were there. Here's a sample press release NYC ACT might have sent out last month:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Date: MAY 8th, 2004****Contact: Matt Tomey (phone, email)***Grassroots activists swarm Manhattan and Brooklyn with "AURA's"*

Using a new technique they call "AURAS," (Agile Urban Registration Action Services) New York grassroots activists swarmed the city streets on Saturday – in search of new voters. Over 30 people gathered to register nearly 200 new New York voters. Instead of traditional door-to-door, teams of two canvassed people on the street, with big grins and clipboards.

"The response was incredible," said Jessica Falker, "one woman hugged me for asking her to register – she was already registered, but now she's registered to volunteer, too!" Some people met resistance, also: "I had people in Brooklyn asking me why it made a difference," the event organizer said, "but that's just the beginning of a great conversation, as far as I'm concerned.

The event was created by volunteers who came together through ACT, America Coming Together, and completely volunteer-created and driven. The 30 people had so much fun that they're planning on coming back next month for even bigger swarms on June 12th.

WHO: America Coming Together grassroots volunteers

WHAT: Voter Mobilization Drive

WHEN: Saturday, May 8th

WHERE: Throughout New York City and Brooklyn