

CHAPTER 4

GOING FOR THE NOMINATION

At this point, you should have tossed a coin, thrown some darts or utilized some other rational means of choosing a political party (if you haven't, may I suggest that you get off your lazy derriere and re-read the preceding chapter). From this point forward, your sole purposes for existence on this orbiting planetary toxic waste dump known affectionately as *Earth* is to pursue your chosen party's presidential nomination. This is a grueling process which can take in excess of six years of intensive work.

I've been told that one of the best ways to get a point across is to find a way to relate it to sports. Americans seem have a strange fascination with the ability to run, jump, or throw a ball, and often find it easier to grasp concepts about business, science, and even sex (i.e. getting to first base, scoring, etc.) if they can somehow relate it to an athletic contest.

YOU WANT *DEMOCRACY*?... Fine...I'M RUNNING FOR KING AND IF YOU *WIMPY* LITTLE *PHILOSOPHERS* WANT TO LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO *DREAM* UP ANY OTHER *BRILLIANT* IDEAS, I SUGGEST YOU *VOTE* FOR ME!



DEMOCRACY'S HUMBLE ORIGINS

Over the years, comparisons have frequently been made between the Presidential Elections and the Olympic Games. Serendipitously, both America and the Olympic Games were born of *the Spirit of '76*; the very first Olympics having been held in the summer of '76 (776 B.C. that is). The Olympics and the concept of Democracy arose in ancient Greece. Today, as we elect our president, this ancient heritage remains very evident, as most of what our politicians have to say is *Greek to me*. In addition, and I don't know if it was by coincidence or design, but both the Olympiad and our presidential elections operate on a four year cycle. None the less, there is, in fact, one extremely significant difference between the two: **The Olympics offer our athletes the opportunity to do what most Presidents can only dream about: kicking the asses of the Rooskies and other assorted evil doers from around the world in direct head to head physical competition.**

For this reason, I personally feel more comfortable with a sports analogy that is just a bit more American than the Olympics. So, I will instead develop a comparison between the presidential nomination process and America's other great national pastime, the baseball season. As in baseball, there are essentially four parts to the election season. They are:

1. The PRE-SEASON- It starts any time after the previous election and continues on up until the primaries. During this stage, you aren't really worried about winning or losing. You are just testing out your stuff to see if your fastball is still there and to determine whether or not you need to develop a change-up, curve ball or screwball.



2. The REGULAR SEASON- (The Primaries and Caucuses) Consider each state's primary to be the equivalent of one regular season game. You shouldn't so much be concerned about winning or losing individual games, as long as the entire season is a success. You do of course, want to try to jump out to an early lead so you need to give Iowa and New Hampshire more focus than you may think such small states actually rate. Still, don't get too cocky about early victories or be too discouraged by early defeats. As that great political pundit Yogi Berra is often quoted as saying, "It ain't over 'till it's over!" (That's what I like best about sports and politics, you can get away with just continuing to recycle those same old, tired, worn out clichés).



3. The PLAYOFFS- (The Convention*) The Party finalists come together for one last round of intensive competition. Just like the baseball playoffs, the conventions are an excuse to whup it up as hundreds of delegates swarm into town to get drunk and raise all kinds of heck. This culminates with them filing into the convention center carrying banners and rooting on their favorite candidate. Finally, when it is all over, one candidate emerges from the wreckage as the Party Champion, the Presidential Nominee. And he advances on to:



4. The WORLD SERIES- (The Presidential Election) The champs of each party go at it to determine who will be the next National Superstar, the President of the United States of America!



If you are already the President or the Vice President, it is easy to launch your campaign. You merely use your current term in office as a sounding board for campaign rhetoric. Try not to let the management of national affairs interfere with your election efforts. (as vice president, that should not be a problem, because it is not like you even have a real job to worry about) I am assuming, however, that most of you readers do not currently hold the title of President or Vice President.

***I know, the winner is already predetermined prior to the convention, but just like a one-sided baseball playoff series, the party officials and media try to hype up the sense of drama.**

For the rest of you, it is essential that you get your pre-season kicked off in top form. Hire yourself a slick, Madison Avenue Marketing Team, in much the same manner as you would for selling automobiles, soft drinks, or mobile devices. Instead of offering goods or services for sale, you are marketing a much more specialized commodity, a president. Personally, I think that it is just a matter of time before a new financial derivative, *Presidential Futures*, is traded on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange right up there with pork bellies.

APPARENTLY MY IDEAS ARE A LITTLE
TOO UNCONVENTIONAL!



You should direct your market research team to discover what is most on the hearts and minds of the American People. You must learn where the average guy on the street (not to be confused with street people who very rarely vote) stands on the issues. Then prepare a campaign platform which regurgitates these same themes back to the voters in such a manner that it appears that you have created a set of ideas that is truly new and innovative. Ideally, you would be able to stick probes into the brains of all registered voters to find out what it is that they want to hear. For the time being, however, this is both impractical and illegal (unless you are the head of the National Security Agency) so for now, you must use that other tool, the much maligned *public opinion poll*.

Which brings us to **Campaign Principle #2 Present yourself as the only answer to the voter's question: "Who is the candidate that cares about *people like me?*" and play to the people's fantasies.**

Once you determine what the people are looking for in a president, you must select your presidential image type, your ***personal Candidate Brand***, if you will. There are essentially three types to choose from. For lack of a better term, I call them Type I, Type II, and Type III (Hey, the Roman Numerals at least add a touch of distinction).

Type I (The regular Kind of Guy President) *The president next door*, the all around good guy down to earth kind of person.



Teaches Sunday School, coaches little league etc. The most important litmus test: "***The president you want to sit down and have a beer with***" test. The "every man" strategy was first employed by William Henry Harrison. Now it is a staple of the campaign trail. George W. Bush, Gerald Ford are more recent examples of presidents that fit this mold.

Type II (The Father Figure President) *Older and Wiser, the elder statesman/benevolent leader.* Back in the old days, this presidential type would have been a war hero (many of our more modern candidates have figured out that you could get killed doing that-so they tend to avoid military service at all costs). George Washington and Dwight D Eisenhower are the best examples of this presidential arch type.



Type III (The Charmer President). *Handsome, flashy, smooth talking, and witty.* Preferably a bit of a lady's man, *if you know what I mean* (But hopefully most of the extra-marital exploits don't come out until much later in history!) Frequently known just by his initials such as FDR or JFK. Bill Clinton, of course, is a more recent example of the Charmer.



Then there is also ***the Hybrid Superstar Candidate*** who combines elements of each of the three basic image types. During his prime, many contend that Ronald Reagan fit into this category. Candidates of this caliber are few and far between.

At a point about three to six years before the election that you are going to run in, you should begin expressing your “newly formulated” political philosophy to the public. Also just casually mention to reporters that you might consider running for president, if “*the people*” *call you to service*. (you always want to make it clear, that the office is a huge inconvenience and not something that you would ever voluntarily thrust upon yourself. It is merely a cross that you must bear for the sake of your nation). Even though you are a total unknown, the mere mention that you are a possible candidate will cause your name to burst into the national spotlight as reporters and pundits begin to speculate on the surprise faces that will be appearing in the long awaited New Hampshire Primary and Iowa Caucus.

Once you start to get name recognition, you want to convince voters that you are not just well known, but quite popular as well. Ask a group of close friends if they will vote for you if you run. Hopefully you can convince nine out of ten to say yes. You then have word leaked to the press that in a recent straw poll, ninety percent of those surveyed indicated that they would in fact support you in your presidential bid. You are now a star on the rise.

For the next several years, you must continue to remain uncommitted as to whether or not you will actually seek the presidency (cite reasons such as your family or the desire to give your current position the full attention it deserves, or any other bogus excuse that you can generate that will play well with the public). Find ways to run a *shadow campaign*. By that, I mean that you travel around campaigning without actually admitting that you are running. There are various ways to do this. You could have a ghostwriter write a book under your name and then mount a national book tour. You could try to get yourself appointed to head some type of high profile commission or foundation. Ideally, though, you already hold some other elected office such as Senator or Governor. Then you have the luxury of just using the balance of your term in your existing position to travel around the country “*not*” campaigning.



Your name will circulate as the buzz spreads in the newspapers, on TV, and most importantly in cyberspace as to whether or not you will actually run. Finally, in the eleventh hour (a mere year before the election will take place) make the informal announcement to the press that you are going to make the formal announcement next week that you will in fact throw your hat into the presidential race... for the good of the party, and the country, and future of the planet. From this moment on, there is no time to lose; you must appear in public multiple times daily.



GAINING FAVOR WITH THE
PUBLIC OPINION "POLES"

Some commentators say that the campaign process has evolved into something that is completely insane and has rendered our political system totally meaningless. **I emphatically disagree!** The presidency is the most challenging position on the face of the planet, and nothing, *absolutely nothing* can adequately prepare you for the job... but there is one thing that comes close, and that is spending three to six years slugging it out in a campaign. If you have what it takes to run and *survive* a successful campaign, then maybe, just maybe, you also have what it takes to actually serve in the office. For this reason, candidates often erroneously approach a campaign as if it is like going to war. But that is a big mistake. **Campaign principle # 3 Approach your campaign as if you are directing an elaborate, entertaining stage show** (You need not look any further than Ronald Reagan).

... Which segues nicely into the next chapter on Public Appearances.