Political campaigns are not unlike new restaurants: Most of them will fail. Of the more than 100 campaign managers we interviewed for this book, nearly all had lost elections—many more than once. Even the most experienced and successful campaign manager can lose unexpectedly and even spectacularly.

Consider the case of a campaign manager we will call “TW.” For three decades, he managed his candidate—who was both his best client and his best friend—from the New York legislature, to the governor’s mansion, and on to the US Senate. Along the way, TW had worked for other candidates who were nominated for or won the presidency. TW’s skills as a campaign manager had earned him national renown and a very comfortable living. He was the undisputed American political wizard behind the curtain.

Now at the peak of his craft, TW was in Chicago at the Republican Party’s nominating convention. His client of thirty years was the front-runner to win the nomination. TW was so certain of the result that he had sent his candidate out of the country on a preconvention tour of European capitals. The news media and the buzz on the convention floor held that TW’s candidate was assured the nomination. But when the voting finally got underway, TW and his candidate were stunned when they led the first roll call with only 37 percent of the delegates and were forced into a second ballot. The aura of inevitability so carefully cultivated with the media and party leaders began to dissipate, and there was no Plan B. On the third ballot, a dark-horse candidate wrested the nomination from TW’s grasp. The political wizard was no more.

The dark-horse candidate was Abraham Lincoln, and the year was 1860. It was the second national convention for the Republican Party, and Sen. William H. Seward of New York had been expected to emerge with the nomination. Seward’s manager was fellow New Yorker Thurlow Weed, who had earlier worked on the presidential campaigns of William Henry Harrison (1840), Henry Clay (1844), and...
Zachary Taylor (1848), Winfield Scott (1852), and John Charles Fremont (1856) (see Figure 1.1).¹

Weed was a national figure, but even the most successful managers rarely achieve that status. This book is not about celebrity campaign managers and consultants who achieve notoriety on presidential campaigns—although we’ve interviewed a number of those. Instead, we aggregate the insights of a wide swath of people who have run winning and losing races for both parties and at all levels of politics—from the courthouse to the White House.

The managers we heard from share a number of common traits and skills, including the ability to play multiple roles in the pursuit of victory on election day. And, in this book, we examine the many responsibilities, decisions, and experiences that managers can—although don’t always—use to drive the success or failure of campaigns. This is not a how-to handbook but instead the collected insights from scores of political professionals, supplemented with our own knowledge of campaign mechanics and core scholarly findings about the fundamental factors that influence campaigns and elections in America. Through this synthesis, we can gain

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**FIGURE 1.1**

Presidential Balloting at the 1860 Republican National Convention, Chicago, Illinois

**Source:** Data from the Proceedings of the Republican National Convention held in Chicago, May 16, 17, and 18, 1860, https://archive.org/details/proceedingsofre00republala.
not only a greater understanding of what managers do and the array of roles they play but also the workings of the most important mechanism in a democracy—free and fair elections.

A Tale of Two Managers

The science and mechanics of political campaigns have changed since Weed's day. Yet many of Weed's skills remain essential in twenty-first-century electoral politics. For example, compare Weed to President Barack Obama's adviser, David Axelrod, one of today's best-known political strategists.

Before entering politics, both Weed and Axelrod worked in the newspaper business where they learned the degree to which the news media can shape public opinion. During Weed's career, the printed newspaper was king. In his media world, all newspapers were partisan organs like today's Fox News Channel, Drudge Report, MSNBC, or the Huffington Post. With almost no formal schooling, Weed started out as a teenage typesetter and press operator for the *Albany Register* in the state capital. There, he learned the ways of the political machine that ran the state legislature and government offices of New York. Much like today's political bloggers, Weed launched his own *Evening Journal* in 1830, using the paper and his bylined column to first support the Anti-Mason Party, then the Whig Party, before finally joining the newly formed Republican Party in 1856 in opposition to the Southern-dominated Democratic Party.

Senator Seward himself said, “Weed is Seward, and Seward is Weed, each approves of what the other says or does.” No candidate today would publicly say such a thing, but trust and mutual dependence between candidate and manager remains essential in politics. Even after the wrenching 1860 defeat in Chicago, Seward reached out to console Weed and sustain their relationship. “You have my unbounded gratitude for this last [campaign], as for the whole life of efforts in my behalf. I wish that I was sure that your sense of disappointment is as light as my own,” Seward wrote in a letter to Weed after their 1860 defeat in Chicago.
After losing the 1860 Republican nomination to Abraham Lincoln, Seward and Weed both became actively involved in Lincoln's general election campaign. Seward went on to serve as Lincoln's secretary of state. Weed also continued to be politically involved. In fact, Lincoln asked for Weed's help in supporting Republicans in the 1862 congressional elections.

Like Weed, Axelrod's first job was at a newspaper. After graduating from the University of Chicago in 1977, Axelrod worked for the *Chicago Tribune*, becoming the paper's youngest political writer before leaving journalism and joining the 1984 Illinois campaign of Democratic candidate Paul Simon, for the US Senate. After starting as communications director, Axelrod eventually was named campaign manager. The underdog Simon went on to upset the popular three-term Republican incumbent, Sen. Charles Percy, in a year when Republican Ronald Reagan carried Illinois and every other state except Minnesota. In the same state where Weed lost his final campaign, Axelrod won his first.

Journalism made Axelrod a better manager and strategist, he says now. “Because so much of what modern campaigns involve is about message and communications, having been a journalist was helpful to me.” He added, “When I was parachuted into campaigns as a reporter, I went in with some presumptions. But to me the job was to get on the ground and really understand what the political terrain was . . . to figure out what people were thinking, what voters were thinking. Those skills were very helpful as a strategist and as a manager.”

Those skills came up short in 1988 when Axelrod, now playing the role of campaign consultant instead of manager, was the chief strategist for Sen. Paul Simon’s, D-IL, campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. Simon’s campaign gained early momentum with a stronger than expected second-place finish in Iowa, the first round of the nomination contest. But, in the next round, Simon lacked the cash to put Axelrod’s television ads on the air in New Hampshire, which includes the expensive Boston media market. Simon came in third in the Granite State behind eventual nominee Gov. Michael Dukakis of neighboring Massachusetts.

Axelrod also lost with his next presidential candidate, Sen. John Edwards, D-NC. It wasn’t until the third try that an Axelrod client made it to the White House. “You have to choose your candidates well . . . But you also have to go in knowing that none of that guarantees victory in a very dynamic process in which so many factors can impact on the outcome,” said Axelrod. “You’re never as smart as you look when you win, and never as dumb as you look when you lose.”

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After President Obama’s 2012 campaign outmaneuvered challenger Mitt Romney, the postelection coverage and conversation was dominated by talk of campaign mechanics and tools like big data analytics, controlled field experiments, and new methods for targeting media. To be sure, campaigns have more and more data at their fingertips, and they have become increasingly sophisticated in the way they analyze those data. Furthermore, the empirical findings and methodological approaches of political scientists have had a profound influence on what campaigns do and how campaigns budgets are shaped. As we will discuss later in the book, this is especially the case when it comes to the science of voter mobilization and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts.17

Still, the campaign managers we’ve talked with remind us that politics and campaigns remain a very personal business. In today’s modern campaigns, after decades of dominance by television advertising and other mass media, personal one-on-one politics has made a comeback. The campaign managers we surveyed were asked to rate the cost effectiveness of various communications methods on a zero-to-ten scale, with ten being the most effective. Direct contact—meaning personal phone calls or door-to-door canvassing by both volunteers and paid workers—was seen as just as effective as broadcast television advertising.18

One Obama staffer dedicated to person-to-person contact was David Simas, who learned his retail politics as a successful young candidate for the school board and city council in his hometown of Taunton, Massachusetts, south of Boston. Simas made lists of voters, knocked on doors himself, and tried to gauge the mood of the electorate by interacting with voters.19 Newly elected Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick recognized Simas’ political talent and named him deputy chief of staff in 2007. David Axelrod, who served as campaign strategist for Patrick in his 2006 gubernatorial campaign, brought Simas to the White House as a top aide after the 2008 presidential election.20
Presidential aides are often reluctant to leave the comforts of the White House for the rigors of a reelection campaign—but not Simas, who moved to Chicago to run the campaign’s focus group and polling operations. Just as he had in Taunton, Simas would spend hundreds of hours listening to and interacting with voters. What Simas and his team learned was used to target voters in the campaign’s massive database of voters and passed along to thousands of Obama campaign workers and volunteers who made phone calls and knocked on doors.

**Why Campaign Managers Do It**

Most managers and staffers suffer lows between the highs—and only a handful enjoy the high of winning a presidential election. They talk about a world in which the news media loves, then hates; supporters believe, then doubt; and campaign decisions are second-guessed by the press and by everyone else. Candidates are subjected to personal attacks that seem unfair, there’s never enough money, and there’s always a good chance of ending up an unemployed loser. So why do most campaign managers keep coming back for more?

For many, it’s the prospect of the thrill of victory. “I mean, it’s just sickness, we’re all infected with it,” said Joe Abbey, who ran Democrat Ned Lamont’s unsuccessful campaign for governor of Connecticut in 2010. “The rush of a campaign, man,
You’re exhausted, you haven’t eaten real food in months, and you’ve poured your whole
life into a cause and you win. “Win or lose, campaign managers also are rewarded by the
chance to develop an uncommon bond like Seward and Weed shared, almost a codependence,
with a candidate they believe in. In exchange for investing life and career in electing
their candidate, the manager becomes the candidate’s whisperer and keeper. This
bond provides its own sort of high. Campaign managers get a bad rap that
they’re mercenaries. Well, we’re not,” said Martha McKenna, who ran Democrat
Sheila Dixon’s winning 2007 race for mayor of Baltimore. “I think of it as the
most brave and courageous thing to do to put your name on the ballot. And it’s
something that I don’t think I could do. But when you’re the campaign manager
and you’re entrusted with that person’s name and reputation, that comes with
seriousness and a responsibility that’s both important and exhilarating” (see
Box 1.1).

Some campaign managers do it clear-eyed as a career-building investment that
can pay off, with other professional opportunities. There’s always the prospect of a
staff job after a winning campaign. Managers also come into close contact with the
lawyers, businesspeople, and wealthy donors who make up a candidate’s surro-
gate bench or inner circle. Losing a race doesn’t preclude a campaign manager from
making a good impression with these future potential employers or clients. “I can’t
tell you the millionaires that I know that started doing campaigns,” Screven Watson
told us. Watson ran Democrat Rod Smith’s unsuccessful 2006 campaign for gov-
ernor of Florida and was later hired as a lobbyist. “I’m not one of them, not smart
enough, but the people that got involved in the campaign and got identified as a
talent, they got sucked up.”

Campaign managers are the field marshals in America’s ceaseless war for gov-
erning power. Many people understand that elections have significant conse-
quences, but few have any idea of what it takes to win one. Most scholarly work on
the subject has focused on factors that drive how people vote. In the process, some
BOX 1.1  From the Campaign Manager Survey (See Appendix A): The Candidate–Manager Relationship

Like Seward and Weed, and Obama and Axelrod, the right relationship between a candidate and their campaign manager is an important part of electoral success.

There were never two men in politics who worked together or understood each other better. . . . Neither controlled the other in any objectionable sense. One did not always lead, and the other follow. . . . They were like two brothers with whom nearly all interests are common.28

Thurlow Weed Barnes, grandson of Thurlow Weed, *Memoir of Thurlow Weed* (1932)

[Thurlow Weed] always thinks I am driving everything to the devil. But throughout my public life he has told me to do this or that particular thing, and I have done it. He told me not do that and I have refrained from doing it.29

Senator William H. Seward, R-NY, speaking of Thurlow Weed in 1857

I think it has to be like a sibling relationship. I think you need to know each other well like siblings do, but also siblings aren't afraid to call each other out.30

Adam Bodily, campaign manager, Duane Snow for Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, 2009

A lot of times, your job is just to let them vent when they've had a bad day. . . . But that also means that when I’m getting yelled at [by someone else], they’ve got my back, which leads to trust. So you [need to] have that relationship where you can speak your mind in private.31

James Cauley, campaign manager, Barack Obama for Senate, 2004 (IL)

You know, it’s not about managing the candidate, but it’s about having a kind of partnership. You respect the candidate. You each understand what your roles are. And you respect those boundaries. You’re in constant communication. You understand what decisions you’re going to make, what decisions the candidate will make, and you operate based on those agreements.32

Katie Merrill, campaign manager, Phil Angelides for Governor, 2006 (CA)

You never saw a horse turn around and tell the jockey which way to run. [The] candidate is the horse and the manager is the jockey. And so the manager needs to run the campaign. The candidate obviously has input . . . but at the end of the day, the candidate can’t be digging through the research, can’t be talking to the hierarchical leadership and the grassroots leadership. The manager’s got to do that.33

scholars have concluded that campaigns don’t much matter (see Chapter 2: Political Math: Why Campaigns Matter). Other research has been conducted on the effects of big-ticket campaign tactics such as television advertising and voter mobilization.

Until now, almost no attention has been paid to the unique role of the manager and what it teaches us about elections in America. This book is not intended as a substitute for hands-on experience but as a means to constructively share managers’ experiences and to understand campaigns and elections through the eyes of those who manage them. This book also serves as a window into how campaigns affect who wins and who loses and the struggle for power in modern American democracy. According to Steven Law, manager of Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell’s (R-KY) 1990 campaign and now of American Crossroads, one of the highest spending advertisers in Republican politics today, “You just don’t get campaigns until you work on campaigns.”

**What Campaigns Do**

Based on our conversations with campaign managers, we developed a flowchart model describing what happens in campaigns (see Figure 1.2: What Campaigns Do in Five Questions). This is not an organizational chart describing jobs and personnel. Instead, it is a dynamic model showing what campaigns do on a day-to-day basis, describing key activities, five core questions that drive the campaign, and the tracking loops that campaign managers use to measure their expected performance on election day. These feedback loops are critical to the success of a campaign and are another area in which political campaigns differ from consumer marketing campaigns. The consumer brand manager has the luxury of daily sales data, but the political campaign manager can never be sure of which voters are sold on their candidate and will not see any hard sales numbers until election night.

The questions are ones that virtually every candidate running in a competitive election—whether it’s a presidential or city council race—must ask and answer in order to be successful: (1) “Who do we need?” represents the coalition that the campaign must assemble in order to reach 50.1 percent of the vote (assuming a two-person race). (2) “How do we reach them?” involves the methods available to a campaign to mobilize and persuade their targeted voters with their limited resources. (3) “What do we tell them?” reflects a need on every campaign to drive a clear message about why its candidate deserves a voter’s support and why the opponent would be harmful to the voters’ interests. (4) “How are we doing?” encompasses the feedback loop that helps managers track their progress and adjust the campaign’s tactics and strategy according to how they’re faring. (5) “What are they doing?” sheds light on what the opposing side is doing to target, mobilize, and persuade their own voters and whether or not attacks by the opposition need to be answered; increasingly, nowadays, “What are they doing?” also spurs a conversation
Data analytics and voter research
- Historical voting data.
- Demographic and consumer behavior data.
- Benchmark polling and micro-targeting surveys.
- Enhanced voter file and database.

Competitive tracking
- Forward-looking monitoring of ad dollars ordered by opponents and third-party allies.
- Daily advertising placements and creatives from Kantar/CMAG.
- News volume and sentiment.

Media research
- Nielsen, Comscore.
- Scarborough, MRI, Simmons, Rentrak.
- Field experiments.
- Media cost forecasts.

Internal tracking tools
- Tracking of news volume and sentiment, website activity, social media traffic and trends, political elite buzz.
- Tracking polls.
- Voter contact data and analytics.

Fundraising
- Donor relationship management.
- Major donor feedback.
- New/repeat donors and dollars.

Creative research
- Focus and dial groups.
- Field experiments.
- Internet surveys and A/B testing.
- Polling.
- Opposition/counter-opposition research.

Communications channels
- Candidate and surrogate scheduling
- News media
- Traditional advertising
- Digital + social media
- Direct voter contact

Communications strategy and budget

"Who are our targets?"
Define a winning coalition
Target/Retarget Voters

"How do we reach them?"

"What do we tell them?"
Messaging and creative strategy

"How are we doing?"
Internal tracking tools

"What are they doing?"
Competitive tracking

FIGURE 1.2
What Campaigns Do in Five Questions
about the influence of super-PACs (political action committees) (friend and foe) on voters’ views of the candidates and the issues. Taken together, these questions guide the strategic decisions and tactical choices that each campaign manager and their team must make. These five questions structure each campaign’s quest to win the election.

The Targeting and Retargeting of Voters

What will the candidate’s winning coalition look like? This “Who do we need?” question must be the starting point of every campaign. Targeting voters who support a candidate but may or may not vote, as well as targeting likely voters who remain undecided in their choice, remains a central element of any campaign operation. That’s why we put “Who do we need?” at the top of Figure 1.2. Without knowing what a winning coalition looks like, the campaign cannot create a strategy, refine its message, and allocate its finite resources to conduct its campaign activities. When Thurlow Weed was managing William H. Seward’s US Senate campaigns, members of state legislatures—not individual voters—did the electing. Weed could keep a list of all the eligible voters in his coat pocket along with updates on each voter’s concerns, when they were last contacted on Seward’s behalf, and the latest estimate of how they were likely to vote.

Today’s campaign manager also can keep a detailed and updated voter list in his or her pocket, but that list could contain millions of names and be on a mobile device or portable data drive. The growing affordability of computing power and data storage means campaigns can target and track millions of individual voters. They must set aggregate vote goals by precinct and other geography, by party identification, by demographic group, and for other buckets of voters.

Beyond that, today’s sophisticated campaigns start by building a voter file that is maintained, enhanced, and updated in a database management program. Based on voting history, party registration (when available), and other individual information, the campaign can describe its winning coalition voter by voter. The voter database is continually updated with results of phone calls, door knocking visits, and other forms of direct voter contact that can include use of online and social media, volunteering and donating habits, and other one-on-one touch points (see “Internal Tracking” feedback loop in the model). The “human touch” in modern campaigns is very much data assisted.

Axelrod and his team of Obama managers invested millions to build the most sophisticated and dynamic voter database in political history. They also built a culture of data analysis-driven decision making, hiring dozens of data analysts who provided Axelrod and other senior staff the daily intelligence they needed. After Romney “won” the first presidential debate in early October 2012, public opinion polls showed the race tightening with Romney moving ahead in some surveys for the first time. Yet at the Obama headquarters in Chicago, confidence was unshaken. Based on thousands of nightly interviews with samples drawn from their voter database, Obama’s analysts concluded that Romney’s gains were among voters who should have been supporting the Republican in the first place.
Axelrod publicly offered to shave his mustache if Obama lost the election—but only after checking one more time with the campaign’s chief data scientist.

**Messaging and Creative Strategy**

In twenty-first-century American politics, campaigns—for public office or to influence public policy—are often won and lost at the margins by the side that does the best job of developing, testing, and delivering the most compelling messages possible to their targeted voters. Every campaign needs a narrative arc, both about its own candidate and her positions on the issues, and about the opposing side. What traits, experiences, or positions does the candidate possess that appeal to the target voters? How would the candidate improve these voters’ lives, and how would the other side affect voters’ lives in a negative way? Getting back to the campaign-as-marketing operation analogy, campaigns need to test what sort of branding (in the form of logos and other graphics) and look and feel (for its events) it should have.

All of this occurs through a creative testing process (“What do we tell them?”) that involves the manager overseeing a team of advertising consultants, pollsters, graphic artists, and often the candidate and the candidate’s family. This process yields the messages that the campaign uses to appeal to its targeted voters. While the overarching message is typically held constant and ideally doesn’t change much (think Obama’s 2008 “hope and change” message), the campaign can tailor messages to discreet audiences based on their distinct concerns and particular political passions.

**Communications Strategy and Budget**

This is the “war room” side of the communications operation—the constant grind of media and social media outreach, the rapid response operation, event planning, etc. It’s also the purse string side of the operation.

Advertising is typically the single biggest expense of any campaign. Many campaigns deploy a mix of television, radio, and digital along with direct mail. Print advertising is rarely used anymore, though in races in prohibitively expensive media markets, campaigns may forgo TV and invest more heavily in the other forms of advertising.

Opposition research—essentially, a book on the exploitable weaknesses of one’s opponent—also falls under this category. The first target for any opposition researcher is the researcher’s own candidate. The vastness of the Internet makes this process both easier and tougher: It’s easier to conduct extensive research on one’s own candidate and identify any potential issues that might be thrown at a candidate. However, one can never be sure she has found everything. Once one has achieved as much certainty as possible, the researcher sets his or her sights on the candidate’s opponents.

**Fundraising**

With advertising typically being the single biggest expense of any campaign, managers can feel at times as though the fundraisers basically exist to pay for advertising.
It’s actually a more reciprocal relationship (see the “Donor Development” loop in
the model). Advertising, particularly on TV, can be a shorthand way of telling
potential big donors that your candidate is “real” or viable.

At the same time, not all advertising is aimed at persuasion; digital advertising
has become an effective way to raise smaller contributions because online ads can
link through to fundraising forms that appear alongside information, even videos,
about the candidate. As critical as those massive contributions from big donors are
for building a substantial financial foundation for a campaign, the smaller contribu-
tions become the fuel that keeps the campaign going. Small donors can be
solicited over and over again before they reach the fundraising cap; small-dollar
donors tend to view their contributions as an investment and are more likely to
help in other ways, either financially or by volunteering to knock on doors or
make phone calls.

Media coverage of the candidate also tends to boost fundraising—and not
just when the news is good. Savvy campaign communicators can turn bad news
into effective fundraising pitches, especially over the Internet for the kind of
small-dollar contributions that are relatively easy for a candidate’s faithful
to give.

The Roles and Goals of a Campaign Manager

Campaigns are one of the most consistent growth industries in the American econ-
omy, with the most recent fundraising and spending totals smashing all records and
dwarfing what was conceivable only a few years ago. The total cost of congressional
and presidential races combined approached $7 billion in 2012 (see Figure 1.3), and
spending will surely exceed that amount in 2016.35

Meanwhile, more and more media outlets obsessively cover how much money
is being raised and spent, and they minutely track all of the activities that com-
prise modern campaigning. While the flowchart model (Figure 1.3) captures the
dynamism of a campaign’s inner-workings, the following chart (Figure 1.4) offers
a succinct take of the core activities that appear on any campaign manager’s
to-do list.

But, stepping back for a moment from the campaign’s activities, we must ask
some hard questions about the nature of modern elections: Do they matter? Is most
of the money raised and spent squandered on useless activities? Do any of the
activities referred to in Figure 1.4 have a measurable impact on determining losers
and winners? Some political scientists who study campaigns have argued that cam-
paign activities have minimal to zero effect on the ultimate election results. In other
words, they say that all of the money raised and spent, and all of the enormous
effort expended on electioneering, tend to cancel each other out. They also argue
that the fundamentals of the campaign—indicators such as the gross domestic
product, presidential approval ratings, the partisan distribution of a given state or
district—are the biggest drivers that determine election results.
FIGURE 1.4
What Do Campaigns Do?

- Raise Money
- Hire Lawyers
- Conduct Research on the Electorate
- Research Opponent
- Research Yourself
- Develop Messages
- Create Messages
- Target Messages
- Deliver Messages—Air, Ground, Free, Paid
- Gain and Avoid Advantages

FIGURE 1.3
Costs of Campaigns

But let’s frame the “so-what” issue in a different light: If campaigns are typically humming with activity (raising funds, researching opponents, targeting voters), what does it all add up to? Do campaigns matter? If campaigns do matter, how do they matter? Why should we study campaigns? Why do campaigns? Why do accomplished women and men devote so much time, sweat, and money to activities that perhaps at best have a meager effect on electing candidates to office?

This is no idle theoretical debate. As you will find in Chapter 2 and elsewhere in this book, campaigns matter—and in particularly crucial ways that depend on the political climate, the nature of the electorate, and other variables, some of them under the campaign’s control. Our 100-plus interviews with America’s foremost campaign managers yield some insights into how and why campaigns make a difference at the electoral margins and show that pundits are prone to overplaying the effects of campaigns, while the majority of political scientists tend to underestimate the effects of campaigns.

Looked at another way, all campaign managers need to answer the five questions featured in the workflow campaign model (Figure 1.2) and how well a campaign is able to answer these questions can be, and often is, determined on election day: Who do we need? How do we reach them? What do we tell them? How are we doing? What are they doing? These core questions, deceptively simple-sounding, are actually rather complicated. They frame the roles that ultimately all campaign managers must fill in order to be effective at their jobs. In addition, campaign managers not only have to answer these questions but these questions are interdependent, and managers must wear multiple hats as they structure their campaigns in order to put their candidates in a position to win their elections.

Campaign managers have to play a series of roles so that they can answer these questions and run their campaigns effectively. Ultimately, the campaign manager is responsible for the smooth and synchronized functioning of the workflow and performance of any campaign. While a manager’s particular experiences might make him or her an expert in a certain part of the process, most managers are generalists who can wear many different hats. In their conversations with us, they have described an array of roles they’ve had to play that may be more varied and complex than the expectations for the average CEO of a Fortune 500 company. We’ve grouped these roles into the ten buckets (see Figure 1.5) that correspond to the chapters in this book.

These ten “hats” that any successful campaign manager must wear will guide us as we explore how campaigns function and how they can affect the outcome of elections. Managers that excel in these roles and ask and effectively answer the five questions do not guarantee that their candidate will triumph, of course. But they can give their campaigns the kind of organization, messaging, strategic direction, and steadiness that in modern American politics is necessary to compete in some of the hardest contests our society knows, contests with tens of millions of dollars as well as issues of war, peace, the economy, and civic society often riding on the outcome.
FIGURE 1.5
What Campaign Managers Do: Ten Key Roles the Campaign Manager Must Play

Notes

2. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Thurlow Weed.”
9. Ibid.


13. Ibid.


16. Ibid.

17. For example, see, Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber. Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

18. See the Campaign Manager Survey Questionnaire Library in Appendix A.


21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.


24. M. McKenna, personal communication, October 26, 2011.

25. Ibid.


27. Ibid.


29. Ibid.

30. A. Bodily, personal communication, September 30, 2011.


32. K. Merrill, personal communication, September 15, 2011.


34. S. Law, personal communication, September 29, 2011.
