

Political Profile Tips

1. Remember your PURPOSES:

- ✓ To give voters useful information to make a choice about candidates.
- ✓ To answer: WHO is this person? What makes him or her tick? What kind of elected official will he or she be? WHY is this person running for this office?
- ✓ Your focus statement is going to be: Who is XXX? Why is he/she running for xxx office?
- ✓ To paint a word/image portrait of this person.
- ✓ To explain his or her stands on issues.
- ✓ To help voters hold elected officials accountable.

2. Read EVERYTHING about this person that you can get your hands on.

- ✓ Old news stories/ Letters to the Editor/ Local blogs
- ✓ Campaign material/ Lawn signs

3. Start early to arrange a sit-down interview several days ahead of time.

(Use the time in between to do other reporting with other sources)

4. Talk to MANY sources who are likely to know different aspects of this person.

- ✓ Family
- ✓ Friends (what groups does this person belong to? Church? Rotary?)
- ✓ Co-workers
- ✓ Enemies
- ✓ Party officials

5. Ask the candidate (and some other sources) some of these kinds of questions:

- ✓ What motivates you to run for this office?
- ✓ How would you describe yourself as an elected official (as a Democrat/Republican, as a mayor, as a county legislator)?
- ✓ Was there a special event/moment that made you decide to get into politics? Describe.
- ✓ What are your top three objectives in this office?
- ✓ How should voters hold you accountable to fulfilling those objectives? How will we know that you've done what you said you'd do?
- ✓ Where were you at 22?
- ✓ What experience, talent or education qualifies you for this particular office?

6. If you use an anecdotal lede, choose a symbolic moment or metaphor for the lede – something that SUMMARIZES this person's character/personality/motivations/style.

7. Construct a nut graf summarizing your themes/ Make anchor intro engaging.

8. Summarize BIO info in one place: The Tedious Tidbits paragraph(s)/Track.

9. For the rest of the story, develop each theme in the nut graf. Give each theme its own section.

10. At the end, do a LIST summarizing basic info, stands on issues or major proposals. Do another list of major accomplishments/failures (an assessment of an elected official's record). Post on TV Web site.