

Flyer with a story

by Tapani Karvinen

This document is intended for Pirate Party candidates and members who are working with prints, election advertising and/or strategy, to be considered as a guide to flyer advertising.

The guide introduces an useful way to capture attention of receiver of the ad, and lead them to good understanding of the issue with an intriguing yet versatile way – the course of drama.

The 'Old' method, how it is done today and how other political parties do it

On the pedestrian hot-spots there are people dressed in certain party's colours, holding hundreds of identical flyers. Accompanied by a courtesy smile, flyers are handed out to everyone willing to accept one. Some of by-passers take the long route around, some say no politely, some accept the flyer and only very few have actual interest toward it's message.

When the flyer holds similar smiling photo of candidate with exactly same information than the previous one, even accompanied by evenly mediocre slogan, route to next trash bin is short for it. Because expectations of next flyers have already been created and soon confirmed, denial of accepting an flyer from political group comes more and more likely.

Advertisers have become little desperate and they have introduced new catches, such as beer and condoms, but these tend to leave an impression of "circus tricks" being necessary for success. True effect to receiver of message can only be left after the interest of receiving the message have been woken up.

The 'New' method, how it can be done ten times cheaper and more effective

An advertising agent walks in his civilian clothing, an set of about forty folded flyers in her pocket which needs to be distributed this evening. The colours of flyer are only thing referring to party as cover only introduces a question, which if noted, will surely make someone to inspect it closer. She is aware of surroundings and wittingly looks for people and good spots for the flyer with kittenish smirk.

It is advantageous if target belongs clearly to voter profile, or that target is in a receptive state so that agents approach will not interrupt anything. How ever, since the agent can use as much creativity as she wants, she can leave the flyer to be 'found' discreetly; drop it in open bag or pocket, leave it between the wheel of bike (next to lock) or a door.

It is easy to motivate the agent to do this kind of campaign work, it permits use of creativity and intellect to create a subtle encounter, with the flyer itself being the finishing touch. Since the agent can evaluate the target and choose method of encounter, possibility to hit a positive reaction is always present, unlike when sticking to 'Old' method's way of distribution.

Target spot can be ATM, a table in public space, in between fresh newspaper or toilet paper roll, anywhere where somebody will eventually find it is good. For example, a flyer with strong message found at morning can capture attention for whole day. People in office work, students and basicly every smartphone carrying person has possibility to check the included link or find further information between their daily routines.

The rarity of flyer is also considerable factor. Most people are attracted to idea having or belonging to something rare and exquisite. Leaving a flyer to every table of a restaurant will first get attention of angry restaurant owner. Leaving a one flyer with a good catch to a table or even to little more obscure place, it will be reached, read and shown to accompanying people within fifteen minutes without causing any reaction from the workers of establishment.

An interesting flyer is one which keeps person fiddling with it the longest. Familiar to writers, the course of drama – **catch, hold and pay-off** – will lead the reader through the ad's message, first painting the scenery of the viewpoint, then introducing the reason behind argument. This course stimulates both sides of reader's brain, and is effective way to introduce argument new to the reader.

Sensation of reward can be created by giving reader details to 'figure out' within the flyer, which also extends the time spent with it. Interesting flyer will be seen quickly by immediate circle of friends & acquaintances and message's reach multiplies instantly.

Flyer sized as business card when closed tells – just with it's size – that it belongs to wallet, or by least is easy to carry without folding. Of course flyer can be made to be cut, folded like an origami, maybe something to fill out, a game or IQ-test – anything that it's creator has wits to.

Most important things are to catch the attention of reader without telling all of story, build a logical structure through the ad and provide some kind reward to person who holds it, sense of accomplishment, positive experience or just a feeling of owning something rare.

The agents handing out flyers can do their job during their daily routines. Since the work is about finding the targets and not about being "a smiling flyer stand", it allows creativity and cause to freely meet new people. The positive feeling is more likely to be carried out to target than a negative one which is emitted by people doing something that they feel displeasing.

Experiences from the 'New' method

I have ran two small election campaigns according to and to test the instructions of New method. Both times I received positive feedback from the ad, biggest problem being too complicated form of expression. Example flyer was done to build an interest to a point to leave reader dazzled and follow the link for more information. The form and informativeness of message should try to reflect the seeked reaction, and fit to target profile, but not too tight.

During parliamentary elections 2011, I was located in Portugal and therefore could not take part locally to campaign at the streets. Other methods to reach people included a blog on a news site, facebook and personal website, but I consider all of these as secondary and their role as support to flyer campaign. The URL behind the flyer directs to personal website, where reader had instant access to my facebook, blog and blog feed of Pirate Party Finland.

The results show that at least 8% of distributed flyers brought a vote. I assume that number of people led to my website by the flyer is much higher, and as counterbalance, politically provoking cover of the flyer brought some votes from people not really interested about politics even without looking up further information. In normal evaluation process of voter, all information available online about the candidate becomes important.

I do not have numbers from other candidate's flyer campaigns, but I do not believe that 'Old' method brings even half-a-percent of feedback. Admittedly it is quite hard to evaluate effect and impact of the 'New' method, but cost-efficiency per reached person is multiple compared to 'Old' method. I hope to hear about further experiences to continue update this document.

Two-thousand units of this ad was printed for the campaign and about 1700 of them was dealt. The design of flyer and advertising strategy was lead by candidate from Portugal, not being able to campaign himself at the area. Atleast every tenth of handed out flyers gained a vote in election.

Case-example, candidate flyer, parliamentary elections Finland 2011

When closed, size of a business card. When opened, size of a post card. The cover introduces an hook and the course of drama - catch, hold & pay-off - is created with each fold towards the content inside.



1. Catch / Hook (cover when flyer is closed) ▲ asking, indicating, provoking, attention catcher.

First glance to flyer gives out only an question, argument, wish or image that fits political trends, ideological views or cultural cohesion that supposed target group holds, nothing more.



My physical flyer

4. Back cover URL for further information. ▼



2. Hold / Lead in (cover opened) Deepens or expands the opening with images or information, introduction to the matter. ▼

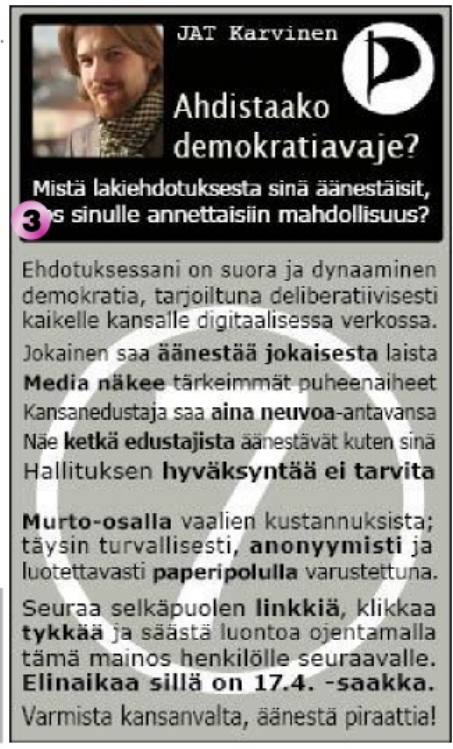


2 Translates as "Let's finish it together!"



3. Pay-off / The cake (inside of open flyer) ▶

Subject matter, full info dressed appropriately.



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How to break form and make a package for Pirate Party's election needs.

Described method is just a blueprint of the flyer, and when key-points of it are understood, it still leaves plenty room for individual design. Together creations of ad-teams stack as whole set of distinct business card -sized flyers, which open to various sizes and tell different story.

For example a flyer which lists candidates, can be given out as business card sized booklet, where each candidate has their own page and reader can detach ones according to needs.

Clusters within Pirate Party can create their own flyers, whether they are for artist's rights, direct democracy or youth organisations to spread their message. Any candidate can bring in their own flyer, while party submits those that speak about the history and current situation of Pirate Party in Europe, explain technical problems of 'controlling the internet' and so on.

When tied as a package with a elastic band (maybe Pirate-brand hairband) the package will tell several supporting viewpoints to PiraCore issues, in various levels of thinking and ways that different people will find the ones most touching or closest to them. Package's content is continuously updateable and re-printable according to needs of the day, target or the district.

Package of flyers might be harder to distribute individually, so a flash mob -type of solution could be seeked out – maybe accompanied by team to produce video content online, ads or such. Printing costs can be split accordingly and distributing done by crowd sourcing.

A cheap and efficient way to pack multiple messages so it will not be bypassed easily.

Any question and comments will be answered. Submit your flyer project by email for my comments or get in touch in IRC. If you found this guide useful, support by liking my website, being my friend in facebook or donating, all much appreciated.

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