

The Hotline

CONSULTANT CANDIDS

CONSULTANT CANDIDS: Scouting The Political Terrain

Thursday, Aug. 21, 2008

Dan Judy is an analyst with Ayres, McHenry & Assoc. He has worked on a variety of political, non-profit, and corporate projects since joining the firm in early '01, focusing mainly on transportation and the environment. A proud Univ. of GA alum, Dan has thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail from ME to GA, completed two marathons, and reached the summit of WA's 14,410-ft Mt. Rainier. And today, he is our Consultant Candid:

What was your first job?

Stocking the dairy department of the Roswell, GA Winn Dixie. Whoever said "Don't cry over spilled milk" never spilled 20 gallons of it on a supermarket floor.

What is your proudest moment professionally?

I don't know if I have a single moment, but we've done some good work to help the Boy Scouts, an organization that had a huge impact on my life growing up. I'm also proud of the work we've done to help The Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Land preserve natural areas across the Southeast.

If you could be in any other line of work, what would it be?

Some sort of wilderness guide or ranger. More realistically, probably a high school history teacher.

What campaign (past, present or future) would you most like to be a part of?

I'd love to see Bobby Jindal get Louisiana turned around and then run to succeed John McCain in 2016. Also, as a child of the 80s, it would have been a blast to work on the Schwarzenegger campaign.

What firm/individual who does your kind of work for the other party do you respect the most, and why?

My favorite Democratic consultant is Jim Duffy; it's always fun to work with him. Aside from being really good at what he does, he also knows a lot about SEC football! On the polling side, Dave Beattie and Bryan Dooley at Hamilton Campaigns are great guys who do great work.

Negative campaigning -- good or bad?

To directly answer the question: Good. So long as the information is accurate, and presented with a deft touch, there's nothing wrong with telling the voters why they shouldn't vote for the other guy. That being said, voters need a reason to vote for your guy, so an overly negative campaign can do more harm than good. It's really important to find the right balance between positive and negative (or, as we like to say, "contrast") ads.

What one event in a candidate's past would pose the biggest problem in a campaign?

Any sort of criminal activity or corruption (if the candidate holds public office). Just about anything can be (and has been) overcome, though. Marion Barry, I'm looking at you.

What is the ideal number of clients to have at one time?

There's no magic number, but I'd say not so many that you can't maintain personal contact with each one, and get them everything they need in a timely manner. Campaigns move quickly, and you don't want to be in a position where you're two weeks from election day and can't get a candidate his numbers on time.

What is your favorite restaurant to meet clients?

Any one of the hundred restaurants within 5 blocks of my office in Old Town. So long as it's casual, I'm not picky.

Where is your happy place?

On top of a mountain or somewhere deep in the wilderness. In the Fall, surrounded by my fellow DC Dawgs watching college football!

What is the first section of the newspaper you read?

A quick glance at the major headlines, and then on to the sports page! (All

online, of course).

If you could only watch one news show, what would it be?

I don't watch much TV news, but my dad is addicted to Brit Hume's show, which is the best one going.

We're ending this feature with a question posed by the last interviewee. This is from Brad Lawrence of Message & Media: Will you retire doing this or is there another career waiting?

Impossible to say! This is a great job with great people in a field that is always interesting. But I'm way too far from retirement to lock myself in!

Please pose a question for the next interviewee.

If Obama loses, is there anyone who can stand in Hillary's way in 2012?