

Winning Edge #21– The Skeptic’s Intro to Campaign AI

This is Trevor Bragdon with Commonwealth Partners’ *The Winning Edge*: Tips to help conservatives persuade and win.



If you’ve watched the movie *Frozen* with your kids, you might remember the scene from the beginning where they were cutting ice with saws and hauling it with horses. This wasn’t something Disney dreamed up; in 1870s America, it was real life.

Ice was a big business. Hundreds of ice companies thrived up and down the east coast, cutting ice and storing it in the winter, and delivering it in the summer for ice boxes to provide home refrigeration. At one point, there was no company bigger than Knickerbocker Ice Company. It employed thousands of people who delivered ice and cut it during the winter. But as time progressed, the ice business got more and more cutthroat as this old system was disrupted by technology.

At the same time Knickerbocker Ice was fighting to become the largest ice vendor, another company was founded in York, Pennsylvania, later called the York Manufacturing Company. Unlike its peers fixated on natural ice, York asked a different question: How can we make ice?

It took a long time through innovation, technology, and lots of effort, but York figured it out. By 1917, when many traditional ice companies were going out of business, York was producing half the ice-making machines in the US. But York didn’t stop and kept innovating. They started with ice machines. Then refrigeration, then air conditioning, and then HVAC. York still exists as part of Johnson Controls.

To survive in any market, you need to identify the fundamentals that don’t change, but also quickly adapt to the technologies that are changing. The fundamentals for York were people needed refrigeration, and how they provided it kept evolving with technology.

With campaigns, the fundamentals that don't change are this—the most effective way to win votes is to talk with individual voters. But you are always limited by time.

One way to gain more time to spend with voters is to use tools like ChatGPT to speed up the work. Many things we do on a campaign take time, but are busy work and, frankly, frustrating. Those are perfect jobs for AI. In this Winning Edge episode, we're going to talk about one way to use AI and ChatGPT on your campaign: writing a first draft. It could be a first draft for a speech, email, press release, or social media post.

What it is:

First, what is ChatGPT? ChatGPT is an AI-driven chatbot developed by OpenAI, that uses a Large Language Model (LLM) to understand and generate human-like text responses. So basically, it's good at writing. It is good at engaging in conversations, answering questions, and generating content across various topics.

I like to think of it as a decent intern. Good at some tasks, but like an intern, you always want to double-check its work.

The Workable First Draft

Where ChatGPT shines for candidates is in creating a first draft of a speech, email, press release, or social media post. We have all suffered from staring at a blinking cursor, paralyzed as you try to think of what to write.

ChatGPT can create a workable first draft on most topics, especially if you take the time to refine the result. It will often speed up your writing since you can take that first draft it generates and then start editing it into a final draft in your own voice.

We've created a [short video](#) to show you how to get started with this for your campaign. In it, we show you several ways to get ChatGPT to learn your writing style, create a first draft of several documents, analyze a report, and create social media posts.

The key with ChatGPT is that it's just a tool. It can be helpful to speed up the process. It's not going to replace you, your thinking, or your strategy. But it will let you get the first draft of a speech in 5 to 10 minutes, and then you can spend 25 minutes revising and reworking it. The speech you produce in 30 minutes is likely much better than what you'd get done starting from scratch.

ChatGPT is not magic, you'll want to check it for errors, and don't use it for things you don't know about. But like any tool, it can speed up a lot of tasks and give you more time talking one-on-one with voters. So, take 10 minutes, watch the [video](#), and learn how you can give yourself the winning edge with ChatGPT.