

Section 4: Leading Businesses. Leading Communities.

Synopsis 1

Advocacy - The Chamber is an advocate for its broad and diverse member businesses, creating a climate of growth and success that benefits all.

1. *Program/service name*
Nashville for All of Us

2. *Core Chamber strengths addressed*
Public policy/advocacy — The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce takes positions on key issues that affect the community and region.

3. *Program/project summary*
For two years, Metropolitan Nashville Councilman Eric Crafton led a movement to make English the only allowable language for Metro government. Crafton successfully petitioned for a special election in January 2009 with two charter amendments: English-Only (Amendment One), and Amendment Two, which would have made it easier to add future charter changes to the ballot.

Nashville, which has been named the “Friendliest City in America,” and which is home to 76 companies with some level of foreign investment, has built a national and international reputation as a great place to live and operate a business. The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and other business and community leaders formed the Nashville for All of Us coalition to defeat English-Only and preserve that reputation.

4. *Needs identification*
Nashville for All of Us focused on two key themes in opposition to the proposed legislation: English-Only was not a welcoming message and could hurt Nashville's economy; and English-Only was a waste of taxpayer money.

The Nashville for All of Us coalition engaged Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group to develop a poll to identify the profile of the anti-English-Only voter.

English-Only (Amendment One) started with a 54 percent to 36 percent lead in the initial test. After providing survey respondents with pro and con information about Amendment One, attitudes did not change, with 53 percent saying they would vote yes and 39 percent saying they would vote no. This lack of movement showed that the electorate was essentially set in its position and would be hard to persuade.

Polling showed that the target audience was primarily comprised of younger, college-educated Nashvillians, who tended to be more concerned about how Nashville's national and international reputation as a welcoming, inclusive city would be affected by passage of English-Only.

Section 4, Synopsis 1 (continued)

5. *Program objectives*

Special elections typically mean low voter turnout (the last special election in Nashville drew 55,000, or 15.5 percent of registered voters). It would be imperative to motivate enough like-minded people to go to the polls to defeat the amendments. Messaging around the election tied both amendments together to prevent a scenario where English-Only was defeated once, but kept returning to the ballot. Coalition members focused on identifying and mobilizing voters through persuasive messaging and a consistent campaign look.

The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce reached out to the local business community to expand the coalition and gain support, identifying key volunteer leaders who would serve as the “face” of the campaign to local, national and international media.

6. *Methodology*

The Chamber and coalition partners used research data to demonstrate that passage of both measures would negatively impact Nashville’s business development efforts and reputation. A web site, www.nashvilleforallofus.org, was launched to mobilize voters at the grassroots level. The site included information about both amendments, volunteer opportunities, video messages from community leaders, downloadable materials, news stories, a list of coalition members, and links to social media tools such as Facebook, YouTube and blogs.

See Appendix D: “Why Nashville Should Defeat English-Only” data

See Appendix E: Budget

Section 4, Synopsis 1 (continued)

7. *Communications*

The Nashville for All of Us advertising and PR agency, McNeely Pigott & Fox (MP&F), created a unifying logo, posters, billboards, yard signs, talking points and a basic fact sheet to be used by coalition members. The logo and talking points were used to create six pieces of direct mail to be sent to supporters. Voter lists were purchased, and volunteers called likely voters in key neighborhoods to identify supporters.

MP&F drafted sample scripts for use in a single, 30-second production television advertisement/PSA featuring Nashville Mayor Karl Dean and community and business leaders. The spot was distributed to coalition members, who then posted it to their Web and Facebook pages. Billboards were placed near strategic neighborhoods, and ads were placed online and in local newspapers. The Chamber placed the coalition logo and talking points prominently on its homepage, as well as in a variety of other online communications.

The entire campaign was created, funded and successfully executed in 75 days.

8. *Evaluation*

Though victory was thought to be an unlikely outcome in December, both amendments were soundly defeated on election day, Jan. 22. While a scientific survey predicted English-Only would win 54 percent to 36 percent, it actually lost 57 percent to 43 percent – a 21 percent swing for those who opposed. Amendment Two also was defeated by a margin of 62 percent against and 38 percent in favor. More than 73,000 voters (20.6 percent of registered voters) went to the polls for the special election.

Early voting was a primary focus of the campaign's advertising, direct mail, phone-banking and get-out-the-vote efforts. When results were totaled, nine of the top 10 voting precincts were precincts targeted by Nashville for All of Us, and the "Against" effort was ahead 2-1 – with a more than 4,000-vote advantage. The campaign changed the outcome of the election and solidified Nashville's reputation as a friendly and welcoming city.

See Appendix F: Mayor Dean's post-election speech

See Appendix G: Follow-up news articles