

How to create a digital precinct captain program

The candidate with the strongest base wins.

The way campaigns run is constantly evolving, but one thing remains constant: *the candidate with the strongest base almost always wins.*

To get to the strongest base, you need to spread your message, recruit influentials, raise money, and get people to take online actions that support your cause.

Early voter engagement starts with good data, but the problem with the data ownership model of the past is that it only applies to the voter ID – not anything that happens after the ID takes place. In today's world, basic contact info, vote history, support level are only a tiny fraction of what defines the relationship between the campaign and the voter.

Has the voter ever donated money? Volunteered? Come to an event? Signed a petition? Tweeted? Do you even know?

Knowing the answers to these questions requires your website functions and your database to communicate directly, in real time. This is where NationBuilder comes in. Your [website](#), your [database](#), your [communications tools](#), and your [finance tools](#) are all part of one system, and work fluidly together. Finally, your online space can be connected to your physical canvassing.

A good way to take charge of your digital space is to appoint [digital precinct captains](#), who can listen to what your base is saying, what their needs are, and how they want to interact with your party. These leaders will listen and engage with your supporters, and can help you build a leadership-rich base long before election day. **Here we'll cover the 4 basic steps for setting up a team of effective digital precinct captains.**

1. Collect better contact information in your database

Don't just collect field contact information like phone numbers and home addresses. Digital IDs like email addresses, Twitter handles, Facebook names, and LinkedIn accounts are key to getting to know a 360° view of a person. Uploading an email address into your database, automatically triggers NationBuilder Match. Named ["Innovative Product of the Year" by Campaigns and Elections Magazine](#), Match pulls in any social media information (bios, locations, handles, and more) that is linked to that same email account. This way, a simple name and email turns into an actual person whom you can get to know.

A day in the life of a digital precinct captain:

9:00 am Fill in a profile and get my own recruiter link.

9:30 am Log into control panel and view profiles of everyone I'm in charge of engaging. Take extra note of those already in my social network.

12:00 pm Receive campaign prompt to focus on for that day. Contact the list of people assigned to me, send them to the prompt of the day. Log contacts.

2:00 pm Combined with full database engagement data.

2. Collaborate & Share: Give precinct captains access to all relationship data

Collaboration and sharing data is the name of the game. Keeping data siloed and only giving certain information to your volunteers keeps people in the dark, and can lead to confusion and duplication of efforts. NationBuilder lets you give everyone a specific [permission set](#), so they can see all the data, but only amend some of it.

NationBuilder's people tab allows you to see social information and complete contact history for every supporter record in your database. Plus, if you append emails to your voter file, NationBuilder Match will directly link voter records to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Klout accounts for the voter. This way, instead of spamming voters with blast emails, you'll be able to directly canvass them online. Better yet, no matter how you contact them, the results will be saved directly in your database—no data entry required.

Once you've done that, you can sync critical actions of digital engagement – like small dollar contributions and willingness to volunteer – to the voter record, too, and let your captains design a workflow around the actions people take.

3. Design an advanced permission structure that goes beyond "all of the people in the precinct"

The difference between just canvassing and truly organizing is scale – if you empower your volunteers to become local leaders, your reach increases exponentially. NationBuilder makes this easy with customizable permission sets and the ability for all users to log in through your campaign's website. You can grant access to as many control panel users as you'd like, and then assign different precinct captains responsibility for organizing voters and other volunteers in their areas, only letting them see the voters they need to see.

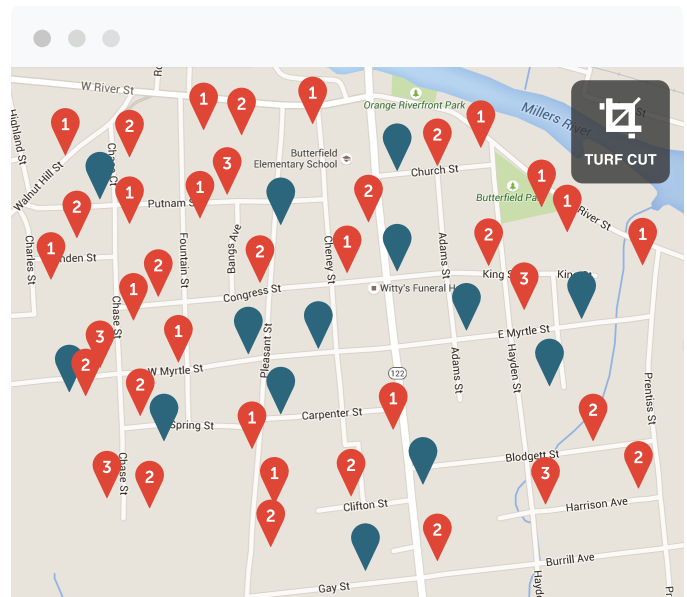
You can also make your digital captains point people for recruited individuals, so that they become in charge of this relationship directly.

4. Record online engagements the same way you'd record a phone call or a door knock

Too many campaigns view their website and social media as totally separate from their field campaign—and it's a big mistake. Your website is a powerful tool for identifying supporters and learning what they care about. Take advantage of NationBuilder's surveys, petition pages, [sign up pages](#), and other action page types. They'll allow you to capture useful data and will automatically prompt your supporters to share their activity on social media, thereby broadening your reach.

What's more, every person who takes an action on your site will be prompted to share using a [recruiter link](#), which is unique to them. So, when Bob shares a page on Facebook and Jen signs up to your site, Bob will be marked as Jen's recruiter. This can help you get an intimate look at the relationship that exist within your base.

NationBuilder also captures people who interact with you on Twitter (including followers) and people who like your posts on Facebook. **Merge those records with your voter file**, and suddenly you have a valuable new channel for reaching potential supporters who might not respond to a phone call or an email. Best of all, you can see how they're connected with other people in your database – check out the “network” tab – giving you a deeper understanding of your community as it grows.



LEARN MORE

nationbuilder.com/features

SEE A DEMO

nationbuilder.com/workshops

START A TRIAL

nationbuilder.com