

THE LEESBURG GRID

The Leesburg Grid is a way for candidates to assess both their strengths & weaknesses, while also doing the same regarding their opponent(s). In identifying strengths & weaknesses, it helps the candidate prepare messaging to promote the good, while inoculating against the bad in their own campaign. Doing the same regarding their opponent will identify potential attack points and areas of strength in their opponent that should be avoided.

The Leesburg Grid is broken into personal & political aspects of the candidate profile. For example, a candidate may consider church affiliation, community leadership involvement, and a 20-year marriage as personal strengths that should be touted as often and clearly as possible. Conversely, they may consider a messy divorce, bankruptcy, or minor legal issues as negatives that need to have prepared messaging ready to head off an ugly “October surprise.” On the political side, a candidate may consider a solid party primary voting record, monetary support of the county/state party, or engagement in party political campaigns as strengths. Political weaknesses may include social media posts that call into question ideological purity, contributions to questionable candidate campaigns, or prior registration with a rival party.

The focus should always be on how to improve messaging and shape it to best promote a candidate while calling into question the opponent’s ability to serve effectively. No candidate is perfect, and honest assessment of one’s weaknesses is key to successful mitigation strategies. Diligent research of one’s opponent may bring to fore information that will benefit the candidate’s campaign by throwing the opponent off balance. Politics is about obtaining a majority of the electorate’s support; candidates should use every ethical tool at their disposal to do so.

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”

- Sun Tzu, “The Art of War”

