

Voter Targeting Using the Q-Method

Mark J. Wattier, Ph.D.

The Q-method is a targeting strategy that is faster, cheaper, and more easily repeated than conventional polling. Mark Wattier describes the technique for eliciting unprompted images from potential voters and using that information to plan a campaign. The method is as much art as it is science—a voter sampling that replaces the questionnaire with objects as varied as image cards and flower vases.

Q-method is one of the latest social scientific research techniques to find its way into campaigns. It provides information, quickly and reliably, on the kinds of images and issue concerns that are significant for a particular constituency. Q-studies are less expensive than public opinion polls and can be afforded by low-budget campaigns.

Jerry Washington has recently started a campaign research firm, Operant Factors, Inc., in Tennessee using Q. The method is taught in the new Master's program in campaign management at Kent State University, which is directed by Murray Fischel (see *CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS*, Spring 1981, p. 57). The purpose of this article is to provide campaigners with an overview of this method. It discusses the basic steps of a Q-study and illustrates several ways to use this method in your campaign.

Dr. Mark J. Wattier is assistant professor of political science at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky. His specialties are voting behavior and research methods. He received the Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Describing Q-method

Q is a tool for psychographic targeting. It provides campaigners with information on the images voters have of candidates' personalities and issue positions. Campaigners can use this information to develop and test different message strategies for different "segments" of the electorate.

Q was developed in 1953 by psychologist William Stephenson, whose works have touched every aspect of human behavior including communication, personality, public opinion, language, and decisionmaking.

Stephenson's Q-method differs from the standard public opinion poll in several ways. In Q, a few individuals rank several stimuli about a candidate's image or issue positions. Q is an *intensive* method. In a public opinion poll, several individuals rate a few stimuli about a candidate's image or issue positions. A poll is an *extensive* method. The focus in Q is on what kinds or types of images people have, while in a poll, the focus is on who has which image and how many people have which image. Q indicates which image categories campaigns should study, while the poll

tells the campaigner the number of individuals within each category. In *Q*, individuals use statements to model their own conceptions, thereby revealing their frame of reference. In the typical poll, individuals respond to the questions designed by a pollster, which tells the campaigner more about the pollster's frame of reference than that of the subject. In *Q*, persons are selected to represent certain categories or variables of interest to the campaigner. They are selected on *purpose* and not at random. In a poll, a sample is selected at *random* to insure that the results will be representative of the population. With *Q*, one does not need a large (and expensive) sample to determine the various image categories or types in the population. This is accomplished with a *small* sample.

Because *Q* is intensive, campaigners can test a wider range of campaign messages than is normally possible with a poll. *Q*'s flexibility is also an advantage. Words, short phrases, or complete sentences are all possible stimuli, as well as pictures, photos, drawings, colors, or taped messages. Because *Q* employs small purposive samples, studies can be conducted quickly, cheaply, and repeatedly. Too often, candidates are sold standard, prepackaged polls that firms use, with minor revisions, for all their political accounts. This practice obviously is not very responsive to new and changing images and circumstances. Because *Q* emphasizes the subject's frame of reference or point of view, *Q*-studies can uncover images that prepackaged polls do not seek to measure.

The basic steps of Q-method

Conducting a *Q*-study is as much art as science. It is certainly easier to have a qualified professional conduct a *Q*-study than to learn the method yourself. If you wish to learn the method, purchase a copy of *Political Subjectivity*, by Steven R. Brown (1980), published by Yale University Press (92A Yale Station, New Haven, Connecticut 06520). If you would prefer professional assistance, contact Dan Nimmo (Department of Political Science, University of Tennessee, 1001 McClung Tower, Knoxville, Tennessee 37916); Bob Savage (Department of Political Science, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701); or Mike Mansfield (Department of Political Science, Baylor University, Waco, Texas 76798). For consultants in other states, contact Steven Brown (Department of Political Science, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44242), who publishes a newsletter (*Operant Subjectivity*) on *Q*-method.

Developing the Q-sample

Whether you seek professional assistance or learn the method yourself, the first step in a *Q*-study is always the construction of a *Q*-sample. A *Q*-sample is a set of stimuli designed to represent the various aspects of the subject being studied.

In the examples which follow, statements were typed on 3" x 5" cards, one statement per card. Statements can be short phrases or sentences, or they may refer to other stimuli such as taped messages. Pictures, colors, symbols, or anything else that people can judge may be included in a *Q*-sample. The composition of the *Q*-sample depends on what you are trying to study. (Stephenson has had people perform sorts where the sample was composed of physical objects such as different flower vases.)

Q-sample sizes vary from 50 to 150 elements, depending largely on the complexity of the design. The design should cover all possible aspects of the subject. For instance, if you wanted to study candidate images, you would need to specify or define the major dimensions of a candidate's image. You then would generate statements to represent all the major dimensions. For example, you might develop the following statements to represent a candidate's "personal" image (see Nimmo and Savage, 1976, pp. 227-244):

"He has a sense of humor."

"He is a good family man."

"He is a person capable of deep emotion and warmth."

The main concern at this point is in having several statements to represent each dimension. Statements can be generated in various ways: through focus group interviews, through reviews of writings and other literature on the subject, or simply through speculation by an experienced "pro." In short, you want a set of statements or stimuli to represent the possible perceptions of your constituency.

Selecting a P-sample

The *P*-sample is a group of individuals selected to "represent" certain characteristics deemed important by the campaigner. In most instances, the *P*-sample should be composed of individuals with diverse characteristics.

For instance, a campaign must take into account the images of various voting groups, including par-

tisans who support different candidates. This suggests a *P*-sample structured along the following lines:

1. Democrats who support the campaigner's candidate
2. Democrats who support the opponent
3. Republicans who support the campaigner's candidate
4. Republicans who support the opponent

(You could make the design more complex by including independents and undecideds.) By structuring the *P*-sample in this way, the campaigner is testing whether or not partisanship and candidate support affect images or issue concerns.

Ideally, you would need to select from 25 to 30 individuals to represent each of the four categories of this design. Given a *P*-sample of around 100 individuals, you can be relatively confident that all the various images and issue concerns will emerge in the *Q*-sorts. This is why it is important to select individuals with varied characteristics and to select them with some idea of the factors (partisanship and candidate support in this example) that affect their images and issue concerns.

Sorting the statements

After composing the *Q*- and *P*-samples, members of the *P*-sample are asked to model their perceptions of the object under study with the statements of the *Q*-sample. They perform operations, the sorting, to represent their images and issue concerns. (This is why the adjective "operant" is used.)

Sorting usually occurs along a forced-choice continuum from "least characteristic" to "most characteristic" of their perceptions of the object. In the example below on candidate images, individuals sorted 52 statements along the following forced-choice continuum.

| | Least characteristic | | | | Most characteristic | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|----|----|----|---------------------|----|----|----|----|
| Score | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Frequency | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 |

Under this plan, a person could select only four statements that were most characteristic (+4), five that were characteristic but a little less characteristic (+3), and so on, until all 52 statements were sorted into a particular pile. Statements that are

neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic, or are confusing or meaningless to a person, are placed in the 0 category. This forced-choice plan literally forces individuals to select the most salient items of the *Q*-sample.

Because Q emphasizes the subject's frame of reference, Q-studies can uncover images that prepackaged polls do not seek to measure.

Two general sorts are relevant to political campaigns: the "ideal" and the "candidate" sorts. When members of the *P*-sample model their images of the ideal and the various candidates (usually two) in the race, you can determine which candidate is closer to the individual's ideal, a strong indicator of how that person will behave at the polls.

Analyzing the *Q*-sorts

When persons rank the statements in roughly the same way, they share an image or perception of the object. Conversely, if they rank the statements in different ways, they have different images. In *Q*, these results are determined through an examination of the correlations between sorts. The correlations are factor analyzed to identify the various image types, or sorting patterns, present in the data. These tasks, of correlation and factor analysis, usually are performed by computer programs specially designed for *Q*-studies. Two programs are available: *QUANAL* and *CONCOURSE*. *QUANAL* is available from G. Norman Van Tubergen (Odyssey House, Cincinnati Pike-Route 2, Sadieville, Kentucky 40370), and *CONCOURSE* from Alexander Nesterenko and Sharon Wilson (P.O. Box 4356, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104).

Exploring candidate images

The ability to project a "positive image" is probably the most important ingredient of any campaign. Winners almost always have more attractive images than losers.

Image projection involves the use of symbols to convey an image that voters will find pleasing. This usually means selecting an image that fits the expectations and stereotypes of your electorate. To develop an image strategy, you need information

on the electorate's images of you and your opponent, as well as information on voters' expectations and stereotypes. Q-method can provide this strategic intelligence. Q reveals the *kinds* of images that people have of you and your opponent.

Dan Nimmo and several of his former students, especially Mike Mansfield and Bob Savage, have studied candidate images with Q-method. Nimmo and Savage (1976) discuss a study conducted for Roy Pfautch, president, Civic Service, Inc. This study used Q to identify voters who preferred different campaign styles. "Old" politics voters preferred a style characterized by strong party organizations with personal contact at the grass roots level. "New" politics voters preferred a style characterized by image-making and contact through the mass media. Nimmo and Savage were also able to identify voters who preferred "visual" information, such as photographs and billboards, and those who preferred appeals based upon "issues."

In their larger study, Nimmo and Savage discuss several important points about candidate images. A candidate's image usually contains several dimensions (see below). These images change during campaigns and over several years. Image formation is transactional in character, involving both the qualities that candidates project in their campaigns and the qualities that voters attribute to candidates. People will usually support the candidate who emerges from these transactions closer to their ideal image of a public official.

The limits of image projection

Nimmo and Savage caution candidates that image projection has its limits. Candidates are not free to project "any" image they think will win votes, despite the way many so-called "image consultants" treat this issue. Image projection is limited by the ability of the candidate to articulate the desired image, by the medium selected to transmit the message, and by other factors on the campaign side of the transaction (see Nimmo, 1970). Image projection also is limited by image reception. The perceptual processes of voters distort the projected image. Once voters have stereotyped a candidate, or politicians in general, it is difficult to shift images. Different partisan and social groups also have different stereotypes of the "ideal" public official. Consequently, the image you have decided to project to secure the votes of one group may hurt your chances with another group.

Image dimensions

Nimmo and Savage have identified four basic aspects or dimensions of candidate images. Candidates are perceived as *leaders*, which includes their political experience and abilities. Candidates must demonstrate their qualifications for public office. Candidates are viewed as *partisans*, as supporters of certain groups and interests in the constituency. Voters want to know whether a candidate represents only the special interests or speaks for the entire community. Candidates are judged as *persons*, including their warmth, integrity, strength, family background, and other aspects of their personality. And, finally, candidates are evaluated as *communicators*, including a candidate's style of speech and use of the media. Some candidates can project an attractive image on television while others require "voice-overs" in their commercials and limited television exposure. A candidate's image strategy usually is based on several of these dimensions, although it is possible to base an entire campaign on a single dimension, such as a candidate's experience or personal charm.

Candidate imagery is a complex process. Given its importance in campaigns, sophisticated tools are needed to analyze candidate images. Q-method is ideally suited for this task. A specific example will help you see this use of Q.

An example

The Q-sample for this illustration was taken from Appendix D of *Candidates and Their Images* (pp. 239-244). This 52-statement Q-sample was designed to represent the four dimensions discussed above: leader, partisan, person, and communicator. I asked ten persons to use these statements to model their views of the ideal public official and a person who probably will run for a national office in the near future. These 20 Q-sorts (two sorts by ten persons) were correlated and factor analyzed, resulting in three major patterns (factors). I report the factor loadings in Table 1 below. (Note: The *size* and the *sign* (+ or -) of the loading are important. The larger the positive loading, the more typical the sort is of the pattern. The larger the negative loading, the more the sort is not typical, or is atypical, of the pattern.)

Factors 1 and 3 can be characterized as "ideal" images. The ideal sorts by subjects one through six and eight through ten load positively on the first factor. The ideal sorts by subjects one, six, and

seven load positively on the third factor. The second factor can be characterized as the "candidate" image. The candidate sorts for every subject except subject nine load positively on this factor. The most revealing aspect of these loadings, a sign of "image trouble" for the candidate, is the fact that for only one subject (ten) do the ideal and candidate sorts load positively on the same factor. In other words, the candidate does not measure up to the ideals of nine out of the ten subjects.

How might the candidate improve his image among these ten subjects? To answer this question, you need to consider the "content" of the images. In *Q*, this is accomplished by an inspection of the statements that define each factor.

Each subject sorted the statements along a forced-choice continuum (from -4 to +4). They could select four statements that were least characteristic (-4) and four that were most characteristic (+4) of their ideal and the candidate. These eight statements are listed below for each factor.

Factor 1

27. He has the highest degree of honesty, integrity, and intelligence (+4).
1. He is a good administrator (+4).
8. He arrives at decisions through careful consideration and analysis of all available information (+4).
33. He is of high moral character (+4).
10. He is a middle-of-the-roader (-4).
50. His voice, speech patterns, expressions, and cool appearance are more important than the mere words of his speech (-4).
23. He should be elected as a result of his party allegiance because talk is cheap and all candidates promise great things (-4).
51. He is proof that Madison Avenue advertising techniques make television appearances more effective (-4).

Table 1. Factor Loadings for Ideal and Candidate Images

| Subject | Sort ^a | Factor ^b | | |
|---------|-------------------|---------------------|------|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | I | (48) | 01 | (53) |
| 1 | C | -27 | (40) | (-50) |
| 2 | I | (62) | 05 | 25 |
| 2 | C | (-46) | (54) | 24 |
| 3 | I | (50) | -20 | 15 |
| 3 | C | 12 | (53) | -08 |
| 4 | I | (73) | -14 | 22 |
| 4 | C | -09 | (77) | 04 |
| 5 | I | (69) | -20 | 24 |
| 5 | C | -22 | (49) | -08 |
| 6 | I | (49) | 06 | (45) |
| 6 | C | 09 | (70) | 19 |
| 7 | I | 19 | 22 | (61) |
| 7 | C | -10 | (65) | 11 |
| 8 | I | (59) | 18 | -03 |
| 8 | C | -32 | (57) | -28 |
| 9 | I | (78) | -08 | 34 |
| 9 | C | (-55) | 18 | -35 |
| 10 | I | (75) | -14 | 03 |
| 10 | C | (36) | (66) | -24 |

^aI = ideal; C = candidate.

^bDecimals are omitted from factor loadings. Loadings in parentheses are significant at the .01 probability level.

Factor 2

37. He is ambitious (+4).
51. He is proof that Madison Avenue advertising techniques make television appearances more effective (+4).
43. His personal magnetism and physical attractiveness are positive assets (+4).
21. He is able to get things done and this means charming and motivating people (+4).
28. When he is wrong, he admits it (-4).
35. He is natural and sincere and does not appear to be trying to impress people (-4).
26. He does not sling mud at his fellow party members or members of the opposing party whose ideas do not coincide with his own (-4).
31. He has a faith in God and is not afraid to express it (-4)

Factor 3

6. He is concerned with the public as a whole, not a collection of minority and majority groups (+4).
1. He is a good administrator (+4).
7. He is a statesman and a leader who explains to the people as much as possible the reasons behind his actions and proposals (+4).
8. He arrives at decisions through careful consideration and analysis of all available information (+4).
30. He earnestly wants to be liked and respected (-4).
34. He is imaginative, experimental, and hip (-4).
31. He has a faith in God and is not afraid to express it (-4).
10. He is a middle-of-the-roader (-4)

Repairing our candidates' image

Looking at the first two statements of the second factor, you can see that our candidate is "ambitious" (statement 37) and a product of "Madison Avenue advertising techniques" (statement 51). These are obvious liabilities. Our candidate also has his positive points: he gets things done by

motivating people (statement 21) and his appearance is attractive (statement 43).

To correct the flaws in this candidate's image, at least for these ten subjects, you need to consider what voters idealize, what they expect in their public officials. They expect their officials to be good administrators (statement 1, the first and third factors). Along these same lines, they expect their officials to make decisions in a "rational" way (statement 8, the first and third factors). Given these expectations, the candidate would need to launch a campaign that explained his administrative record as well as his style of decisionmaking (statement 7, the third factor).

These voters expect their candidates to possess "high moral character" (statement 33), but those with factor 3 images are not looking for someone to express his "faith" in God (statement 31). And those voters with factor 1 images fear candidates who are, in effect, "all image and no substance" (statements 50 and 51). Our candidate would need to emphasize his honesty and integrity (statement 27) without appearing too slick or polished. Our candidate could avoid his "Madison Avenue" image by revealing some error or mistake (statement 28) that would actually be a revelation of a strength: his honesty.

Reading over the statements you probably can think of other ways to improve our candidate's image. This is the advantage of Q: it captures the complexity of a candidate's image. All campaigns need the kind of information Q can provide.

Developing your standard campaign speech

A candidate must appeal to many different interests in order to win an election. The successful campaign is usually the one with the broadest appeal. A candidate's major speeches must, therefore, contain themes that link the candidate to the major concerns of the constituency.

Candidates may emphasize "narrow" themes when they address *special* segments of their electorate. These speeches normally are pitched to the unique concerns of an interest group. Democrats, for instance, seek the support of labor groups while Republicans court business groups. When candidates speak at formal gatherings of interest groups, they usually know what issues to discuss and what positions to take. If the speech can be limited to the immediate audience, candidates can advance policy positions that normally would be quite con-

troversial if aired before a general audience.

These controlled conditions, however, are not always present or desirable. Reporters often attend these meetings with interest groups and they are always looking for something controversial to publicize about your campaign. If reporters are absent, nothing can prevent some unhappy member of the group from leaking the "juicy details" of your speech to the press—off-the-record, of course.

To correct the flaws in this candidate's image, at least for these ten subjects, you need to consider what voters idealize, what they expect in their public officials.

Many speeches are designed to attract news coverage. Control over the distribution of the speech is sacrificed in order to reach the larger audience of the news media. In this case, the intended audience is a general one, although the speech is delivered before some special interest group. In short, even speeches before interest groups must emphasize "themes" that are pleasing to the larger constituency.

The task assigned to your campaign speechwriter is difficult: *Develop a general speech that would please the most and offend the least.* To accomplish this task, your speechwriter needs to know which issues can *unify* or *divide* your constituency. Campaigns with large budgets approach this problem with a public opinion poll on the "most important problems" in your constituency. This approach has its limits. It is costly, time-consuming, and the information provided is not always usable.

Q-method can be used to develop your "standard" speech. Q-studies reveal what topics, issues, or images are important to the members of the group being studied. Your speechwriter could use this knowledge to write a speech with a unifying appeal. Q-studies also reveal the topics that are in conflict. These themes could be avoided in speeches intended for general audiences. If the distribution of the speech can be controlled, these potentially divisive themes could be emphasized in speeches intended for special interest groups.

John Cragan and Donald Shields (1977), two professors with expertise in speech communication, have suggested a way to use Q to develop a speech with a broad appeal. A Q-sample is com-

posed of statements representing various viewpoints on issues. Individuals then are asked to model their positions. Finally, a speech is developed with statements from the Q-factors. To develop a speech that would "please the most and offend the least," Cragan and Shields recommend selecting "positive" statements, those which characterize each sorting pattern, that are not strongly "negative" statements in any other pattern. In effect, statements are selected that are favored by some segments of the audience and not strongly opposed by other segments. Q-method, in short, can help the speechwriter develop a "consensual" speech, an address that will probably please most everyone without offending anyone. A specific example will help you see this use of Q-method.

In August 1980, just before the general presidential election campaign, I designed a Q-sample to represent the issue positions of the two major party candidates, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. Fifty-four statements were developed ranging across several major policy areas: energy, inflation, economic development, government regulation, environmental protection, world affairs, defense, congressional-executive relations, and domestic politics. Statements were taken from the candidates' party platforms and their acceptance speeches at the national conventions.

I then asked six Democrats and six Republicans to use these 54 statements to model their views of the *ideal* public official. These 12 Q-sorts were correlated and factor analyzed, and three major patterns (factors) emerged. The statements were sorted along a forced-choice continuum from "least characteristic" (-5) to "most characteristic" (+5) of the ideal. Each person could place only two statements in the most characteristic (+5) category and three in the next most characteristic (+4) category. I report below the five most characteristic statements for each of the three factors. These are the most important issues or topics for some segment of the audience (the 12 subjects). In parentheses after each statement, I indicate the continuum values (-5 to +5) for the first, second, and third factors.

Factor 1

18. To insure peace, he wants to improve our relations with allies and developing nations and build up our military strength. He wants to keep peace in the Middle East and limit the arms race with the Soviet Union (+5, -5, +3).

34. He wants to restore economic growth, create more jobs, and increase our productivity. He thinks this will take people with better ideas, people with savings to invest in those ideas, and workers to implement them (+5, +2, +3).
2. To reduce our dependence on foreign oil, he supports the search for new energy sources, new oil production, conservation of existing resources, and cooperation with our allies (+4, +1, +5).
25. He wants a future for America that is secure, just, and peaceful (+4, +2, +3).
1. Conservation of energy and increased use of renewable energy sources like solar energy and synthetic fuels are key parts of his energy policy (+4, -2, +2).

Factor 2

46. He says that war comes when the forces of freedom are weak. He thinks our defense is at its lowest ebb in a generation and we must restore our military strength (0, +5, -3).
45. He believes in restoring our strength to play a more active role in the world and defend our vital interests. He would remove governmental restraints on individual initiative (-2, +5, -1).
48. He favors an increase in defense spending to close the gap with the Soviets. He wants military superiority and will spend to achieve it (-5, +4, -3).
53. He thinks government often harms our basic values: Abortions hurt families. Welfare keeps people from working. Busing destroys neighborhoods. Taxes limit freedom (-1, +4, 0).
52. He wants to renew the American spirit and sense of purpose. He would restore faith in the future. He believes nothing is impossible and thinks we can improve our circumstances (+3, +4, +3).

Factor 3

2. To reduce our dependence on foreign oil, he supports the search for new energy sources, new oil production, conservation of existing resources, and cooperation with our allies (+4, +1, +5).
16. He believes we can thrive in a changing

world if we remain true to our values and use our power to promote world peace (-3, +3, +5).

17. He would use American power to make the world more secure. He bases his foreign policy on moral objectives and American ideals. He would defend human rights around the world (-4, +1, +4).
29. He says our dependence on foreign oil could be relieved by more energy sources, more efficient automobiles, and more domestic oil and natural gas (+2, +2, +4).
28. He thinks conservation of energy is important; but conservation alone is not enough. He believes America must produce more energy (+2, -2, +4).

As you can see, certain issue statements receive positive scores in each of the factors; other statements receive negative scores in at least one other factor. This is where Q tells your speechwriter which issues are unifying and which ones are divisive. For example, statement 34 in the first factor is ranked positively in each of the factors. This is the kind of statement that "pleases" everyone in the audience to some extent. Statement 18, also in the first factor, would alienate some while pleasing others: It is ranked positively in the first factor (+5) but negatively in the second (-5). You need to avoid this kind of statement in a speech before a general audience, or risk losing votes.

Words, short phrases, or complete sentences are all possible stimuli, as well as pictures, photos, drawings, colors, or taped messages.

Cragan and Shields (1977) recommend that a speechwriter using Q select only those statements ranked very positively in each factor that are not ranked very negatively in any other factor. Following this advice, a speechwriter would select the following six statements:

25. He wants a future for America that is secure, just and peaceful (+4, +2, +3).
52. He wants to renew the American spirit and sense of purpose. He would restore faith in the future. He believes nothing is impossible and thinks we can improve our circumstances (+3, +4, +3).

34. He wants to restore economic growth, create more jobs, and increase our productivity. He thinks this will take people with better ideas, people with savings to invest in those ideas, and workers to implement them (+5, +2, +3).
2. To reduce our dependence on foreign oil, he supports the search for new energy sources, new oil production, conservation of existing resources, and cooperation with our allies (+4, +1, +5).
29. He says our dependence on foreign oil could be relieved by more energy sources, more efficient automobiles, and more domestic oil and natural gas (+2, +2, +4).
53. He thinks government often harms our basic values: Abortions hurt families. Welfare keeps people from working. Busing destroys neighborhoods. Taxes limit freedom (-1, +4, 0).

Your research director or consultant could forward this list of statements to your campaign manager who would, in turn, pass it along to a speechwriter. At this point, the candidate or manager could add or delete certain statements, depending on the overall campaign strategy and the audience. Presented with this information, a qualified speechwriter might turn out something like the "computer speech" presented below.

A computer-generated speech

Our campaign pursues a partnership with you. We share a mission for America: a future secure, just, and peaceful.

... members of the P-sample are asked to model their perceptions of the object under study with the statements of the Q-sample.

Partners have common goals. You and I believe in America. You know we can overcome difficulties of this time and improve our circumstances. I share your spirit, your American sense of purpose.

My part of our partnership is to help govern our country in a way that helps you forge your future: a future full of opportunity for American men and women working to restore our great land to its full promise.

Together, we can restore economic growth, productivity and prosperity in America. We can create new jobs. You and other Americans will make this possible. We need your ideas. We need people with savings to invest in ideas. We need good workers to implement ideas.

The American people and their land have prospered together, and will prosper again.

We can reduce our dependence on foreign oil by searching for new energy sources, producing new oil, conserving existing resources, and cooperating with our allies.

If the speech can be limited to the immediate audience, candidates can advance policy positions that normally would be quite controversial if aired before a general audience.

Together, as partners in the present for the future, we can develop more energy sources, more efficient automobiles, and more domestic oil and gas.

Americans as partners: better ideas, better investments, better workers.

Better government is my part of our partnership for a more secure, just, and peaceful future. Government has the ability to harm our values. Abortions hurt families. Welfare keeps some people from working. Busing destroys our neighborhoods. Taxes limit our freedom. I will work—with your backing—to improve government. Government should not be harmful. Government should strengthen our families; government should help us do work that satisfies us and makes our country productive. We want our government to protect our neighborhoods and our nation from too much dependence or too much conflict with the rest of the world.

Our campaign pursues a partnership with you. Our mission: an America back to her best—and better. We can do this together!

A few final tips on Q-speeches

You first have to determine what kind of speech you want to develop. Do you want to develop your "standard" speech or several speeches each on a specific topic? This choice affects the development of the Q-sample. For the standard speech, statements are selected to represent the entire range

of possible issues. For a topical speech, statements are developed to represent different aspects of the same general issue (see Cragan and Shields, 1977).

Is the audience a special interest group or a general audience with varied interests? As suggested above, the nature of the audience affects which statements are used in the speech. Unifying or consensual statements are appropriate for general audiences. Divisive or conflictual statements are used in speeches for special interest groups who agree with your candidate's position, especially when circulation of the speech can be controlled.

... the first step in a Q-study is always the construction of a Q-sample.

A Q-sample is a set of stimuli designed to represent the various aspects of the subject being studied.

To have useful information, you have to be careful in the selection of individuals to perform the Q-sorts. Here the choice is between constituency "members" and constituency "experts." For the local races, you should always use members of key voting blocks in the P-sample. People should be selected from the various partisan and social groups. For state and national races, you may wish to use constituency "experts," people who supposedly know the views of the electorate. For a national race, this would mean, at the very least, having someone from each of the 50 states perform a Q-sort for the state. That is, the expert on Texas would sort statements along a continuum from least to most characteristic of the issue positions of Texans. For statewide races, an expert in each county could perform a sort, as could precinct experts in each large city. Wherever and whenever possible, however, the preferred P-sample is one composed of constituency members from the key voting blocs.

Finally, a campaign is an exercise in manipulation. Q can help a campaign manipulate an audience. It should never be used to manipulate a candidate into making a speech that runs counter to his or her basic commitments.

Developing questions for polls

Well-financed campaigns will normally conduct a public opinion poll. The costs of these surveys are

skyrocketing. It is, therefore, important to know *what* to look for in terms of voter images and issue concerns. Q can help the campaign here.

As mentioned in the introduction, Q tells you the *kinds* of images and issues that are significant to your constituency. A public opinion poll indicates *how many* people have which image or issue concern. Q tells the campaigner what categories to study while the poll tells the number of people within each category.

The key statements that define and distinguish each Q-factor can be placed in a survey questionnaire. For example, you could place the following statements in your survey and ask people to agree or disagree with them.

51. He is proof that Madison Avenue advertising techniques make television appearances more effective.
27. He has the highest degree of honesty, integrity, and intelligence.

If people agree with statement 27 and disagree with statement 51, this would indicate that their images are similar to the first type (factor) discussed above. If they disagree with statement 27 and agree with statement 51, this would represent the second image type (factor). Your pollster could then add up the various response patterns and tell you the distribution of these image types in your electorate. In short, Q allows you to classify people into categories that are meaningful to them rather than categories that are important to your pollster.

Reaching a consensus on campaign strategy

When candidates and their managers begin to plan campaign strategy, they usually have a "brainstorming" (or bull) session with their closest associates. The general purpose of these meetings is to identify the candidate's major strengths and weaknesses and determine which qualities to emphasize in the campaign. You could design a Q-study to help the participants reach a consensus by following these steps.

1. After the session, ask each person to list five positive and five negative traits of the candidate.
2. Gather these "statements" together and use them to build a Q-sample.

3. Then ask each participant to perform Q-sorts on the qualities the candidate should project in general and for various target groups.
4. Analyze the results to determine areas of agreement as well as disagreement.
5. Submit a report to the candidate and key advisors for their comments.
6. Incorporate the major findings into the overall strategy if a consensus can be reached.

Many campaigns fail simply because they never agree on strategy. Egos are bruised and enthusiasm wanes when internal struggles are not resolved, especially on something as important as strategy. A Q-study like the one described above could at least identify problem spots. This would be a way to get the issues out on the table without directly confronting anyone. This approach could also identify "honest" disagreements and possibly start dialogues that would result in some consensus on strategy.

Pretesting your campaign messages

Campaigns are pitched at various images and issue concerns, which Q can help you identify. You could expose individuals with different images to your campaign ads, commercials, and major speeches in order to pretest their effects.

Having conducted several Q-studies to develop your campaign messages, you could select individuals from these studies who had different images. For example, suppose you wanted to tone down our candidate's "Madison Avenue" image. Looking at the factor loadings in Table 1, you can see that subjects four and six have the highest loadings: that is, their sorts (images) are more characteristic of the pattern. You could have these two subjects perform sorts before and after a campaign commercial in which the candidate openly and candidly admits making a mistake. An examination of the pre- and post-sorts would reveal the effect of the commercial. In short, why run commercials that do not produce the desired effects? Q could help you pull the ones that fail to produce the desired effects. Similar "experiments" could be designed to test your print ads and speeches.

Conclusion

This article has introduced Q-method and discussed several possible uses of Q in your campaign. Q can provide the kind of information you need to plan your image campaign. It can also help you develop speeches that are pleasing to all and offensive to none. It can suggest information to gather in your public opinion poll, as well as help your organization reach a consensus on strategy and pretest your campaign messages. Q offers many exciting opportunities for the candidate who needs reliable information for a reasonable price. ★

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—Mark J. Wattier

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