The Information Party (.org)

Business Plan

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Who we are:** The Information Party is a web-based political party that crowdsources its party stances through fair and well-researched debate. Through lightly moderated discussions, we will be able to find, represent, and promote the true opinions of the American society, thus creating a more representative and efficient democracy for all. Members will be able to debate stances, evaluate candidates and “draft” new legislation together, anywhere from the national to local government level.

**How we’ll get there:** First, we will build for the online community that will use our platform to debate various contemporary political issues. Members will be able to submit two types of Stances: Ideals and Legislation. Once we reach the critical amount of users necessary to arrive at relatively stable and representative stances, we will unveil the a third “Stance” that can be suggested, a candidate.

Each proposed candidate will have their own page where our platform will objectively measure they’re alignment with the parties stances, and members will be able to discuss their candidacy. We plan to support candidates from other parties – those that show the closest alignment with our crowdsourced political platform who meet our standards on ethics and honesty – with our seal of approval and free campaign resources – all while we are still too small of a movement to realistically elect our own candidates. This is relatively similar to way smaller movements like the Tea Party have operated, with several improvements and nuances.

Given the amount of political discussion and available data on the site, we plan to heavily supplement our donations with cash flow from packaging and selling relevant campaign information to candidates. Not only is this a huge opportunity for financing, but also a great way for candidates understand where their constituents sentiments lie, giving more power back to the members.

**The team:**

Scott Lowe

Tim Crowe

Ben Plum

Rob Solomon

Sid

**Why we’re doing this:** In the 2012 presidential election cycle, 132 individuals were responsible for 60% of the [Super PAC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_action_committee#Super_PACs) funds. In 2010, 0.05% of the population gave $200 or more to any federal candidate. When combined with the fact that candidates and members of Congress spend between 30% and 70% of their time raising money, our current political system is both disproportionately dependant upon and influenced by the wealthiest American citizens.

As Jefferson wrote in [The Federalist 52](http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa52.htm), our federal government *should be dependent on the people alone*. Together, we can use the web to hash out our differences, nominate and elect representatives that truly represent us, and create and implement new legislation that will hopefully get us ever closer to solving the world’s biggest challenges. We hope you’ll join us.

**COMPANY & SERVICE DESCRIPTION**

We’re going to fundamentally change the American political landscape by creating a new political party that connects Members and Candidates through the web. By crowdsourcing our party’s platform, we’ll create an online community where everyone has a voice and everyone’s votes are equal.

Initially, we’ll support candidates from other parties - whose political opinions align with our party’s crowdsourced political platform - to support our beliefs while we don’t have enough members to realistically elect candidates. That will materialize through member submitted, and vetted, Candidate Stances on the site.

Members can submit three types of Stances: Ideals, Candidates, or Legislation. Candidate. Stances may be placeholders for candidates in other parties as mentioned above, or as the party grows, Members will be able to submit other Members as Candidate Stances on the site. Similarly, Legislation Stances may be placeholders for external Legislation written by current politicians, or Members can collaborate through the site to write new pieces of Legislation. Finally, Ideals are Stances that represent abstract ideas, philosophies, or beliefs submitted to the party. Stances will cover regions ranging anywhere from local to national, and Members vote by either endorsing or protesting the Stances in their regions. A Stance that receives enough Endorsements will become Officially Endorsed by The Information Party, and stances that receive enough Protests will become Officially Protested.

Members can join the debate on any Stance by leaving comments or replying to other Members’ comments. Members will upvote the comments that make the best arguments, and we’ll use those upvotes to sort the comments on each Stance. That means the best arguments will rise to the top so newcomers to the debate can easily be brought up to speed with curated content on any given Stance.

Members will receive Reputation points by being engaged with the community: leaving and receiving upvotes on comments, submitting Stances that receive Endorsements, and maintaining a respectful, humble environment. As the party grows, those Members that earn a strong Reputation will be eligible for nomination to officially represent The Information Party in public office. We’ll get them there by crowdsourcing our candidates’ campaigns through the site.

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Service Description

The Information Party is a political party whose platform is developed through crowdsourced discussions online. Members will submit their [Views](#bookmark=id.lncmxvd4z61o) and vote on the Views of others. All current votes are public; however, users can change their votes on Views at any time. If they are compelled to change to a different opinion, past Views will not be stored so that there are never any repercussions for having an open mind.

Each View has a comment thread for both sides of the debate, and users can vote comments up or down so that the strongest arguments rise to the top. These comments will consist of their position and will ideally contain links to informative sources such as videos, news articles, or research studies. Users will earn [Reputation](#bookmark=id.r4c11m990vif) by submitting Views that become [Stances](#bookmark=id.yvlmjmkf4jkb) or comments that the community appreciates so that the most valuable members of the community can easily be identified. Those members will be nominated to become [Moderators](#bookmark=id.pfhbfa5o8qc5) who will ensure quality discussions by using our Moderator Dashboard to suspend troublesome users. Don’t worry, suspensions can be appealed to the broader Moderator community.

When a View receives enough support from the community, it is promoted to become an official Stance.

Content:

* Web technology that enables large groups of people to make decisions democratically.
  + Use it to create a new political party (with donate button)
  + Sell to companies to help them make decisions
* How will our technology enable large groups of people to make decisions democratically?
  + Creates a crowdsourced forum for people to hash decisions out by having their voices heard through submitting views, engaging in the debate through comments,
  + submitting views, leaving comments on views, Endorsing or Protesting views, and upVoting comments
    - Comment system
      * allows users to engage in the debate
      * curates the discussion by ordering the comments based on their upVotes
    - Voting system
      * allows anyone to influence the views that affect them
    - Moderator system
      * to maintain quality of discussions

**TIMELINE**

**MARKET**

**MARKETING PLAN**

Goal: Find the niche market who most feels our pain points

This will be really hard.

[Resources](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mI0hqK__cQxVip2X-W1MlPoR-4XQ48w0i98rqvrbg9E/edit)

* Industry Description and Outlook
* Target Market
  + Size
  + Characteristics
  + Demand considerations
* Distinguishing characteristics
* Pricing and financial considerations
* Competitive analysis
  + Market Share Distribution
  + SWOT Analysis
    - Strengths
      * We will have access to a wealth of opinions and information, submitted directly from impassioned users and members
      * As the founders the website, we will become very well versed in the most popular opinions on some of the most debated issues of our time, making us subject matter experts on nearly all topics
      * Our system for awarding reputation points to members should keep members and users engaged with the site
      * We provide a platform for people to share their opinions not only in-house on the site, but also through social media (Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, etc)
    - Weaknesses
      * Few of us have formal education in political science
      * Few of us are experts in any one professional or political arena
      * Our website is based on opinions, and trusts users to provide links to relevant sources of data to support their arguments - something users may or may not do
      * We rely entirely on users / members to moderate the content of our website **for free** - There is no incentive for them to do the job we want them to do, beyond reputation
    - Opportunities
      * Many young people consider themselves politically moderate and are under-educated on pressing political issues. Our site will ideally provide the best arguments for and against all of the most pressing political topics, so people can make an informed decision
      * We provide active and impassioned youth who are politically oriented a venue to express their thoughts, passions, and concerns
      * There is an absurd amount of money in Washington DC, and we suspect there are hundreds of politicians and would-be politicians who would be willing to pay for mass data that is relevant to their political causes
    - Threats
      * PopVox.com already exists to sell online polling data to politicians
      * There’s technically nothing stopping someone else from adopting a similar model for a crowd-sourced political party and conquesting our idea / user base
  + Target Market Attractiveness to direct and indirect Competitors
  + Barriers to Entry
    - Building a website takes a tremendous amount of time
    - Incorporating as a non-profit
    - Gaining tax-exempt status
    - Becoming an official political party)
    - Evangelizing / Spreading the word about the idea
  + Window of Opportunity to Enter Market
  + Indirect Competition
  + What barriers to market are there (e.g., changing technology, high investment cost, lack of quality personnel)?
    - Political Party Considerations
      * What does it take to become a political party?
    - Must have a functional website
      * Designing and Developing a website is only a start.
        + We will need to maintain it and scale our servers to host it as we gain more traffic.
        + This may require us to hire and pay staff to do this as a job
* Regulatory restrictions

**ORGANIZATION & FOUNDING TEAM**

**FUNDING REQUEST**

TODO

**FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS**

TODO

**GLOSSARY**

**View** - a topic for discussion

**Stance** - a View that has received enough Endorsements or Protests to become a View that the organization as a whole endorses or protests.

**Reputation** - A point system that reflects a user’s positive contributions to the site. [Learn more](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AlWCJFFn6moAdFBGWENhcWVsa3ZMU0xOLUJ1WEN4SkE#gid=0).

**Moderator** - A user who has earned the ability to suspend other users in order to ensure quality discussions on the site. [Learn more](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1od6FxzBv63T5m3C8IGHD2FOK1gniLWZRHn_y11qj7l0/edit).