TO: Del. Jane Lee

FROM: Mayhah Suri, Suri Consultancy

DATE: October 23, 2018

SUBJECT: U.S. Senate Campaign D-Md

Dear Delegate Lee:

Good to meet you last month at the fundraiser. As discussed, I am sending some data insights related to the questions you asked me:

1. Who should you ask for donations?
2. When should you ask them?

To give you and your staff a better sense of how my firm works, I am providing the queries we developed to find answers to your excellent questions. Based on our conversation, it sounded like your staff was casting a huge net to reach donors. This strategy requires time and many man-hours. My firm specializes in analyzing historical campaign donation data to help candidates target their fundraising efforts, saving the campaign time and increasing chances of winning. This way, you and your staff can focus on promoting your vision for Maryland’s future.

Potential Democratic Donors

I looked at the data to understand influential people and groups in Maryland who have donated to Maryland Democratic groups, those who live in Maryland and have donated to Democratic campaigns outside of the state, and to find trends within these broad groups of people, such as occupation and precise location. When you know who has donated generously in the past, your team can avoid asking people who are unlikely to lend their support. This saves time and allows you to allocate more effort on developing and executing the rest of your campaign strategy. I found the top 100 Democratic and non-affiliated donors in Maryland ([Table](https://github.com/mayhahsuri/infoseeking/blob/master/T1.csv) 1):

SELECT marylandcontributions.CMTE\_ID, committee.CMTE\_NM, committee.CMTE\_PTY\_AFFILIATION,

marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_AMT, marylandcontributions.EMPLOYER,

marylandcontributions.OCCUPATION, marylandcontributions.NAME, marylandcontributions.ZIP\_CODE

from marylandcontributions

INNER JOIN committee ON marylandcontributions.CMTE\_ID = committee.CMTE\_ID

WHERE committee.CMTE\_PTY\_AFFILIATION != 'REP' AND marylandcontributions.STATE = 'MD'

ORDER BY marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_AMT DESC

LIMIT 100;

This table includes donation amount, occupation/employer, individual donor name, and donor zip code. This information can not only help your team target who to ask, but can provide basic information about where to canvas, send letters, and hold events based on zip codes.

I also investigated the types of people who donate to Democratic and non-affiliated groups, specifically by occupation ([Table 2](https://github.com/mayhahsuri/infoseeking/blob/master/T2.csv))

SELECT marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_AMT,

marylandcontributions.OCCUPATION, committee.CMTE\_NM, committee.CMTE\_PTY\_AFFILIATION

FROM marylandcontributions

INNER JOIN committee ON marylandcontributions.CMTE\_ID = committee.CMTE\_ID

WHERE committee.CMTE\_PTY\_AFFILIATION = 'DEM'

ORDER BY OCCUPATION DESC;

You’ll find perhaps the typical donors, including the financial services industry and real estate developers, but you’ll also see many teachers, homemakers, nurses, and retired people who donated at relatively high levels. Focusing your outreach efforts on these groups, such as attending association meetings and writing speeches and policy platforms that appeal to their needs may help you garner the support of groups that are often overlooked.

Timing

We also looked at historical donation data to determine when campaigns receive donations. To get a holistic sense of any patterns, I included all donations, regardless of affiliation. However, I did run one query looking at Democratic-affiliated specific contributions specifically. Looking at when to ask a donor or group of voters for support can help get your fundraising efforts started before the other candidates. Voters may become fatigued after weeks or even months of being asked to donate. This information can also help your team decide when not to ask for contributions. It is probable that at certain times of the year, donors are more likely to contribute. Additional information about when campaigns send donation requests would provide helpful context for this data subset, as it would enable an analysis of when contribution requests elicit the most response.

The first view of this data is by transaction *date* ([Table 3](https://github.com/mayhahsuri/infoseeking/blob/master/T3.csv))

SELECT marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_DT, marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_AMT, marylandcontributions.CMTE\_ID,

committee.CMTE\_NM, marylandcontributions.OCCUPATION, committee.CMTE\_PTY\_AFFILIATION

FROM marylandcontributions

INNER JOIN committee ON marylandcontributions.CMTE\_ID = committee.CMTE\_ID

WHERE marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_AMT > 0

ORDER BY marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_DT ASC;

A loose pattern of smaller donations (about $5,000 and below) in the beginning of the year and larger donations as the election date gets closer is discernable.

Next is the same data but from the transaction *amount* view ([Table 4](https://github.com/mayhahsuri/infoseeking/blob/master/T4.csv))

SELECT marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_DT, marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_AMT, marylandcontributions.CMTE\_ID,

committee.CMTE\_NM

FROM marylandcontributions

INNER JOIN committee ON marylandcontributions.CMTE\_ID = committee.CMTE\_ID

WHERE marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_AMT > 0

ORDER BY marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_AMT DESC;

From this view, it is possible to discern patterns of when large, medium, and small donations are made. For example, the two largest donations were made in October, shortly before the election date. This complements the previous query result that donations pick up right before the election. However, it may be more beneficial to your campaign to push for more frequent donations, if perhaps in smaller amounts per transaction, in order to maintain a consistent campaign schedule and strategy.

One last view of these date-based queries is to include party affiliation and occupation in the table ([Table 5](https://github.com/mayhahsuri/infoseeking/blob/master/T5.csv)).

SELECT marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_DT, marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_AMT, marylandcontributions.CMTE\_ID,

committee.CMTE\_NM, marylandcontributions.OCCUPATION, committee.CMTE\_PTY\_AFFILIATION

FROM marylandcontributions

INNER JOIN committee ON marylandcontributions.CMTE\_ID = committee.CMTE\_ID

WHERE marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_AMT > 0

ORDER BY marylandcontributions.TRANSACTION\_DT ASC;

From this table, with the data available, it is hard to determine a pattern between time of donation, party, and occupation. From this view, there does not seem to be an association between occupation and when someone donates. Further statistical analysis will help determine the strength of any association, if one exists.

One potential issue with all of this data is that after all, it is historical. For example, the zip code data was current as of the date of the transaction. Some donors may have moved. If they are within the state, it is possible they are still interested in Maryland politics. If they have moved outside of the state, or even outside of the country, they may be less interested in participating in Maryland politics. In the same vein, companies and PACs may have disbanded, meaning they are no longer viable donors for your campaign. Or, if a group is still intact, new leadership may want to pursue a different political strategy. Using historical data is still useful as it provides context for what has been happening in the state, but it is important to remember that some things may have changed in the intervening years.

I look forward to working with your team further.

Mayhah Suri

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