

What's your take on political campaign strategies?

Only in America! For better or worse, American political campaigns for President start ramping up two years before the election takes place. Now you'd think that if one year were spent seeking the most qualified candidates to be found in the entire country, another year would be more than sufficient for the candidates to sort out and implement their political campaign strategies.

However, that's not how it works. Beginning two years prior to the actual voting date, well-heeled people already prominent in political circles begin by announcing their candidacy. Following the announcement, rounds of fund-raising parties are held to build up the coffers of the candidates, who essentially nominated themselves. Independents and unknown people, while potentially superbly qualified, don't stand a chance. Why? No one will give them money. "Who's he?"

Political campaign strategies seem to first rely on name and face recognition. This seems to fly in the face of our basic American values. When we apply for a job, the employer generally doesn't know or recognize us. The employer is looking for the best qualified person for the position, not a household name. So why doesn't this fairness and diligence extend to the highest office in America?

So, on to step two. When the candidates have gathered sufficient funds to launch their campaigns, they seem to put a metaphorical wet finger up to the breeze to gauge the American sentiment. What are the big issues? What does the public really get riled up about? Last year, Iraq was large in the mind of the public, as was senior medical care. The Katrina disaster, so representative of the crumbling infrastructure, was already fading as a kitchen table topic. So the candidates went with what resonated with the public and formulated their initial political campaign strategies.

In the previous Presidential election, negative political campaign strategies became a big no-no with the public. So this season's political campaign strategies avoid such shenanigans like the plague. Discontented voters won't vote for the person with negativity.

However unfortunate, it does seem that political campaign strategies are formulated to please the greatest number of voters. Truth and conviction often take a back seat to expediency.

To be fair, some candidates do stand on truth and their solid convictions, much to their detriment. Political campaign strategies live and die on the turn of a phrase or the number of television ads placed. Somehow, this doesn't seem to be

the best approach to elect a President worth his or her salt.

This year, Iraq has begun to fade from the public's mind for lack of television exposure. Now, we hear a more generalized call for change, which forms a loosely defined catch-all box for the current political campaign strategies. What's an ordinary voter to think?