To Serif Or Not To Serif, Is That Even A Question?

In fact, it is and it lends heavily to the discussion of the importance of font usage in political strategy. At election time, our televisions and radios, our computers and phones, newspapers and magazines—those ever important channels of public interaction and impression are so inundated with the stuff of political campaigns that seemingly minor but highly influential details go unnoticed.

A well-researched design team knows the importance of those details, such as the influence a particular font can make on the entire persona of a political campaign.

Unschooled receivers of messages from political campaigns might not be able to articulate how the details of a campaign affect them; but the untrained eye still receives vital information. It knows if what it sees is appealing, clean, and fresh, or ugly, disturbing, and worse.

It registers the information rapidly even when it doesn't quite know what it's seeing. A well-thought out logo can change the course of a campaign.

While you and your team are planning every step of the campaign, the voters are taking in your messages, your branding, your logo, and they are unconsciously reacting, positively or negatively.

The printed mail piece is absolutely critical to the election process. In the midst of the ever widening digital age in which print is often considered obsolete, quite the opposite has become reality for political campaigns. With people getting less and less mail; less junk mail, notes, cards and letters, more attention is being paid to the mail a person actually takes out of their mailbox.

The old theory still holds true: the goal of the designer is to catch the eye and attention of the readers before they can toss the product into their recycling bin, and that's not always an easy undertaking. Having designers who are cultivated in putting together eye-catching designs and layouts that keep the reader focused, engaged, and ultimately captivated is key to the success of your political mail campaign.

 "It's so easy to lose the attention of readers," says Amy Rita, award winning lead designer for American Strategies, "My job is to land your message. To make sure readers keep their eyes on the

piece, lead them to your message, and lock them in on it. I know fonts. I live fonts. I dream about fonts. I know what readers love and I know what they hate. I know what's hot and what can kill your message in a heart beat. I research endlessly. A seasoned designer cannot walk down a street without analyzing every sign or banner she sees. We live in a world overrun by fonts. Many of us started out in the day when there was only a handful to choose and now there are millions of them. The key is knowing how to use them and to use them strategically."

Baskerville is reliable. Futura is strength. Cabin Condensed is perfection. Cooper is dreadful. Papyrus is maddening. Comic Sans should never be used by anyone over the age of six, and six-year olds are starting to get tired of it. If your target audience is seniors, any font size under 15-16 points will go straight to the recycling bin, and they can't get enough of serif fonts. There's something of the old and trusted familiar book than a san serif computer screen. Get it?

The best political designers know the psychology hiding behind politics and fonts. If you are choosing a political firm to guide your campaign, it just makes good sense to choose one that considers every aspect of your campaign.