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**The Audacity of Smoke (B) [[1]](#footnote-1)**

*Case study scenario for the 2017 Washington Media Scholars Foundation Competition*

It’s almost 10:30 on Sunday morning, October 30, 2011 and you’ve just turned on the television in your Manhattan apartment to watch CBS’s *Face The Nation* on the network’s flagship station WCBS. As soon as you sit down, your cellphone rings.

The program’s featured guest this week is a former corporate client of your boutique New York City advertising and public affairs agency. His name is Herman Cain and he’s recently emerged as a surprise frontrunner for the 2012 Republican presidential nomination. As the former CEO of the Godfather’s Pizza chain, Cain had years ago taken a chance by hiring your young New York City ad agency. When Cain later became CEO of the National Restaurant Association, he retained your firm again for public affairs and crisis counseling. Although Cain is no longer a client of yours, the two of you have have remained friends over the years; only last night, you sent him an email wishing him good luck on his first *Face The Nation* appearance.

Answering your phone, you instantly recognize the voice. “Elizabeth, it’s Herman. I just got out of the Face taping and I want you to honestly tell me what you think after you watch it.[[2]](#footnote-2) I got blindsided by [host] Schieffer and then ambushed again coming out of the studio by some Politico reporter. Liz, I know you’re not exactly a Republican but I was wondering if you’d think about giving an old friend some professional advice. Please call me back after you watch the show and I’ll conference in [Cain campaign manager] Mark Block. Thanks Liz, I’ve got another call coming in.” Herman hangs up. You didn’t get a chance to say anything.

Later that Sunday afternoon, after a couple of long hours on conference calls with Cain, his campaign manager and several top staffers, you realize you’ve volunteered to put together a two month communications plan for your old client. They are looking for a week by week plan that might include -- depending on your judgement – news media initiatives, candidate scheduling, social media programs, paid advertising, and direct voter contact programs. Cain told you he would make up to $5 million available to support your plan of action if necessary, although he would prefer to save as much of those funds as possible for the upcoming 2012 Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary. Cain wants you to present a summary of your proposed plan to him and his advisors in just three days.

**Instructions and Guidance for 2017 WMSF Scholarship Competitors**

Your planning document should consist of a memorandum of not more than eight pages, single or double spaced, which can include tables or diagrams interspersed with your text. You can add up to 7 additional pages of tables or diagrams that you might use in a meeting with Cain and his staff. Assume that Cain and staff will have read your memorandum in advance of the meeting.

Familiarize yourself with the Herman Cain campaign by reading the attached case study “The Audacity of Smoke: The Rise and Fall of the Unorthodox Herman Cain Campaign.” Remember that Liz’s presentation (your presentation) takes place on Wednesday, November 2, 2011. The case study reading will tell you what happens after that date. While that information will give you the benefit of hindsight, your submission should take an authentic perspective based on what Liz could know at the time of her presentation to Cain and his advisors. You may also want to do some of your own research on the state of the presidential campaign at the beginning of November, 2011.

Relevant excerpts from the textbook *Inside Campaigns* are also provided for your guidance:

Chapter 1, “What Campaigns Do” pp. 9-16. Pay particular attention to Figure 1.2.

Chapter 5, “Marketing Maven: Reaching the Campaign’s Target Voter Audiences” pp. 103-119.

Chapter 7, “Spinmeister and Policy Wonk: Navigating the Media Landscape” pp. 155-169.

Also included are data tables showing examples of media vehicles that might reach Cain’s target voter audiences as well as estimated cost-per-thousand impressions (see Chapter 5) in case you decide to include paid advertising as part of your proposed plan. Remember that you can’t use media vehicles that did not exist in 2011 (e.g. Snapchat.). Samples of the charts along with instructions for reading follow in the appendix.

**APPENDIX**

The following two charts are samples of the attached data tables. You should consider using these to help make informed decisions for your client. Table A was produced using Scarborough Research data[[3]](#footnote-3). Note the two data metrics provided show you the horizontal percent and the index score of each respective column’s variable. Notice that adults who always vote in primary elections index at 119 for local evening news viewing. This mean adults who always vote in primaries are 19% more likely than the average U.S. adult to watch local evening news. Conversely, adults who never vote in primaries are 19% less likely than the average U.S. adult to watch local evening news (index = 81). You can also tell that of all local evening news viewers, 29.5% of them sometimes vote in primaries. You quickly understand that if you target all adults over 18 years old, it will cost you $12 per thousand impressions. Simple media math tells you that buying 2 million adult impressions would cost the campaign $24,000. However, if you are targeting adults who always vote in primaries, then that same $24,000 would yield an ‘always vote’ cpm of almost $27 (2 million adults X 45% of always voters that watch local evening news = 900K always vote impressions).



Table B was produced using GfK MRI data. Similar to the previous table, you should also use this to help identify target-audience rich media outlets, should you choose to use paid media or manage a media appearance schedule. Here you can tell that self-identified Democrats are 50% (index = 150) more likely than the average U.S. adult to watch ABC’s World News Now while Republicans are 41% (index = 59) less likely to watch the same program. If you decide to buy a national spot in World News Now to reach Republicans, then the Republican cpm would be nearly $86. However, if you schedule an interview on World News Now, then only about 342,000 of the 2,433,000 impressions delivered will reach Republicans.



1. This scenario including Elizabeth, her agency, and her relationship and interactions with Herman Cain and his campaign are entirely fictional and are presented solely as the basis for the 2017 WMSF college scholarship competition. The accompanying resource materials are excerpted from the college textbook *Inside Politics: Elections Through the Eyes of Political Professionals* published in 2016 by SAGE/CQ Press. These copyrighted materials are used with the permission of the publisher and are for the exclusive use of participants in the 2017 WMSF college scholarship competition. The text excerpts may not be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means without express written permission of the publisher. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. On the air since 1954, *Face The Nation* in the fall of 2011 was a “live-to-tape” 30-minute program that started taping at 10:00 on Sunday mornings at the CBS Washington Bureau downtown on M Street. Most stations in the Eastern Time Zone broadcast the program at 10:30 am after *CBS Sunday Morning*. *Face The Nation* expanded to one hour in mid-2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It is assumed that all WMSF participants are familiar with media terminology and the difference between gross and net dollars. All media planning should be presented in gross dollars. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)