



**FOR:** American Bankers Association  
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**SUBJECT:** Proposal: Occupy Wall Street Response

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Leading Democratic party strategists have begun to openly discuss the benefits of embracing the growing and increasingly organized Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement to prevent Republican gains in Congress and the White House next year. We have seen this process of adopting extreme positions and movements to increase base voter turnout, including in the 2005-2006 immigration debate. This would mean more than just short-term political discomfort for Wall Street firms. If vilifying the leading companies of this sector is allowed to become an unchallenged centerpiece of a coordinated Democratic campaign, it has the potential to have very long-lasting political, policy and financial impacts on the companies in the center of the bullseye.

It shouldn't be surprising that the Democratic party or even President Obama's re-election team would campaign against Wall Street in this cycle. However the bigger concern should be that Republicans will no longer defend Wall Street companies – and might start running against them too.

Well-known Wall Street companies stand at the nexus of where OWS protestors and the Tea Party overlap on angered populism. Both the radical left and the radical right are channeling broader frustration about the state of the economy and share a mutual anger over TARP and other perceived bailouts. This combination has the potential to be explosive later in the year when media reports cover the next round of bonuses and contrast it with stories of millions of Americans making do with less this holiday season.

Democratic strategists have identified the OWS movement as a way to tap this populist anger. As an example, the L.A. Times reported that Robby Mook, executive director of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, wrote an email to supporters saying "protestors are assembling in New York and around the country to let billionaires, big oil and big bankers know that we're not going to let the richest 1% force draconian economic policies and massive cuts to crucial programs on Main Street Americans."

They are certainly in the field right now testing messaging options and developing the plans to deploy them in ads, speeches, social media and grassroots communications as early as this year. The focus of those campaign efforts would be to tar the financial services sector – and in particular high-profile Wall Street investment house brands – as being responsible for the economic problems facing the country and middle class Americans. As the Democrat half of the well-known Battleground Survey polling team, Celinda Lake, said: "It has enormous potential."

It may be easy to dismiss OWS as a ragtag group of protestors but they have demonstrated that they should be treated more like an organized competitor who is very nimble and capable of



working the media, coordinating third party support and engaging office holders to do their bidding. To counter that, we have to do the same. Putting the cornerstone elements of a plan in place right now will prepare firms to respond quickly and collectively at the earliest and most influential point when embracing OWS goes from concept planning to execution. The cornerstone elements of a plan include: survey research and message testing, opposition

research, targeted social media monitoring, coalition planning, and advertising creative and placement strategy development.

### **Survey Research**

It will be critical to begin with national polling that has a focus on key voter groups in play in the presidential campaign: women, seniors, suburban voters, GOP and Tea Party both nationally and in targeted states on the front end to inform how the campaign is approached, our messaging and opponent campaign saliency.

Deliverable: Our polling plan would produce a national survey of 1,000 voters to serve as our benchmark and give us a national context for our state-by-state efforts. We would produce additional statewide surveys in at least eight states that are shaping up to be the most important of the 2012 cycle. The most important states in which to consider conducting research include:

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| Florida:      | Swing state with a vulnerable Democrat Senator running for re-election; has the ability to swing Presidential elections. President Obama won here in 2008.   |
| Pennsylvania: | Conservative Democrat Senator running for re-election, but Obama struggles here, especially in the Pennsylvania "T" Counties (i.e., outside of the Philly and Pittsburgh metro areas). President Obama won here in 2008.   |
| Virginia:     | Open U.S. Senate seat, and a true toss-up state, with northern Virginia far more Democratic than the rest of the state. President Obama won this state in 2008.  |
| Wisconsin:    | Open US Senate seat, a toss-up state that has been previously been in the spotlight due to Governor Walker's battle with the public unions. President Obama carried this state in 2008.  |
| Ohio:         | Freshman Senator Sherrod Brown is running for re-election. A swing state in the heartland that has been hit hard by the recession and would have the potential to be a breeding ground for resentment toward financial institutions. President Obama carried Ohio in 2008. |





- North Carolina: Governor Bev Perdue has been struggling in the polls, but this is a state that President Obama is targeting in 2012. He won here in 2008.
- Nevada: This is a lean-Republican state that President Obama carried Nevada in 2008. It is ground zero for the foreclosure crisis.
- New Mexico: An open Senate seat in a pure toss-up state. President Obama carried New Mexico in 2008.

### **Opposition Research**

OWS bears many of the hallmarks of a well-funded effort and media reports have speculated about associations with George Soros and others. It will be vital to understand who is funding it and what their backgrounds and motives are. If we can show they have the same cynical motivation as a political opponent it will undermine their credibility in a profound way. A key strategic goal will ultimately be to show any evidence of fraud on the other side.

Deliverable: Our opposition research work at this stage will produce an analysis of OWS backers and funders, extremist leaders, policy positions, and rhetoric for the development of strategic polling and messaging. The research will also identify opportunities to construct fact-based negative narratives of the OWS for high impact media placement to expose the backers behind this movement.

Specific initial opposition research tactics will include:

- Comprehensive media analysis of OWS and their leaders
- Records search and obtainable open records requests of leaders' histories including civil and criminal information, litigation history, tax liens, bankruptcies, judgments, and other associations
- Associated business and record search including Internal Revenue Service and Federal Election Commission filings, sanctions, regulatory actions, and litigation

### **Targeted Social Media Monitoring**

The transparency of social media platforms offers an excellent opportunity to anticipate future OWS tactics and messaging as well as identify extreme language and ideas that put its most ardent supporters at odds with mainstream Americans. These platforms may not be a place where engaging OWS supporters directly could be successful but with sophisticated monitoring and analytical tactics it could provide exceptional political intelligence.

Deliverable: We will conduct and report on an audit of most active social media platforms used by OWS with the identification of trends in their engagement. This audit will offer analysis of those trends and identify effective reporting tools to develop actionable intelligence that could be rapidly acted on when a campaign becomes fully operational.



### **Coalition Planning**

Individual companies under threat by OWS and its adoption by Democrats likely will not be the best spokespeople for their own cause. A big challenge is to demonstrate that these companies still have political strength and that making them a political target will carry a severe political cost.

Deliverable: We will produce a report identifying traditional and non-traditional allies, intellectual support and politically important economic footprints that could ultimately form the basis of a broad coalition (rather than the narrow D.C. definition of a coalition) who can help carry our messages and organize supporters.

### **Advertising Creative and Placement Strategy**

While it is not yet clear if, when, where and to what extent paid advertising may be necessary, the cost and reach makes it a potential strategic advantage for you in a message war against a grassroots movement like OWS. The key is to use the information identified through the survey research to develop hard-hitting, compelling creative that can move numbers, combat OWS messages and provide cover for political figures who defend the industry. By developing and clearing this creative now it can be ready for immediate deployment immediately as it becomes necessary. A strong placement early in a transition to adopt the OWS movement will send a powerful political signal about the risks of carrying that through.

Deliverable: Three creative concept options based on results of the survey research as well a national/Beltway and state- and district-specific placement plan (including all mediums – TV, print, radio, mail and online) based on political targeting.

### **Pricing**

This initial effort to develop the cornerstone elements of a strategic campaign is achievable within 60 days and would best provide you with a range of effective response options if the move to adopt OWS continues on its current path. The cost of the deliverables identified above is \$850,000.