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For want of a nail, the kingdom was lost

Wise men have always understood the power that could come from having critical information in the right place at the right time. The old Nursery Rhyme, *For Want of a Nail*, expresses our understanding of the importance of the smallest detail in the critical information process.

The ancient Druids who built Stonehenge understood the fine details of predicting eclipses, and the power that came from that knowledge. We didn't understand what they were doing until Gerald S Hawkins used a computer to analyze the ancient heavens and the Stonehenge geometry. Their mastery of the details is staggering.

By the early 1800.s the Rothschild fortunes were already considerable, and their international intelligence organization was unmatched. Napoleon was sweeping across Europe and British war bonds were dropping. Nathan Rothschild realized the stakes and had his agents ready . he knew the outcome at Waterloo several hours before anyone else in London. He started shorting British bonds, driving them to 5% of their face value, then he quietly started buying every bond available. When word of Wellington.s victory reached London the bonds surged back to more than face value. Rothschild.s already vast fortune was multiplied twenty times over in a few hours.

But wise men can forget, especially when they are on a roll. In 1942, as their invasion fleet sailed towards Midway, the Japanese Admirals decided they were doing so well they could call their search planes back early, saving the gas. If they had searched the full pattern they would have seen the three American carriers hiding behind Midway and the war would have gone quite differently. When the Americans dropped out of the clouds the Japanese flight decks were covered with refueling planes, and the world was changed forever. For lack of a nail.

Today there are many wise men involved in political campaigns, and they understand that the critical information is provided by polling. The very wise ones also understand that the nail that a great poll rests on is the sample of voters to contact. **[Be sure your great poll rests on the best sample available, the one from VCS.](#)**

In the political wars, polls play a pivotal role. The polls depend on a good sample. The sample is the nail on which rests the poll, and perhaps the election.

BEST VOTER FILE

VCS has the most complete and reliable national database of registered voters in existence. The file is constantly refreshed with new data; all data is standardized; addresses are vetted by CAS software. VCS has been collecting these files for years; many of our files have data which is no longer available through the election officials; this applies particularly to vote history, but also in some cases birth dates and registration dates. VCS also enhances the files with ethnic coding (based on VCS.s proprietary ethnic dictionary) and with demographic data from the census. VCS addresses the major problems that polling and voter outreach campaigns face today: 1) Having good phone numbers for the largest possible number of voters to maximize your ability to talk with voters and 2)

Having up to date data on who votes by absentee ballot so that you can reach those who vote absentee as well as those who go to the polls on election day. VCS captures phone numbers that voters indicate when they register and supplements that information quarterly with commercial phone number lists. VCS files also include data on whether the voter has asked to be a "permanent absentee" and how frequently and when the voter has actually voted absentee.

VCS is proud of the quality of our database and the fact that we have supplied thousands of samples over the years with virtually no errors. With VCS you can be sure you are calling the right voters.

FASTEST DELIVERY

Generally the results of polls are needed quickly, and a pollster is under constant pressure to deliver fast. Many are startled when we produce their required sample is less than an hour. Even the more complex samples are generally available in a few hours. VCS has an extensive set of database counts online, which you can review immediately in considering your universe; then you can use the VCS online ordering software, weborder, to order your sample online. VCS personnel have extensive experience with polling and polling samples and are always available to help.

ANALYSIS OF YOUR SAMPLE

With the VCS techniques, you will obtain a sample that is generally representative of your selected voters. Even with all these efforts, you may wish to do some weighting. In order to determine weights, it is necessary to understand how your sample compares to your universe on a number of key characteristics. VCS has developed the best set of cross tabs available for sample analysis. Each VCS sample is accompanied by two of these profiles, one of the sample and one of the universe, for side by side comparison. These profiles show characteristics (gender, party, age ranges, etc) cross-tabbed with vote history. Check a pair out at [SampleProfile](#). The profiles can be modified, so if you are interested in different cross-tabs we can provide them.

VOTER SELECTIONS

Many times you want to sample only a portion of the voters. VCS provides extensive selection capability, so if you want to poll married Democratic Jewish women in the Buffalo Media Market who have voted in the last two elections -- no problem. Our online counts give you the size of many voter selections immediate.

SOLID SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

VCS can produce simple nth stratified samples or clustered samples from our superb voter database. Our voter files are maintained in geographic sequence, and most samples are extracted in this sequence. More complex stratifications can be accomplished by sorting the voter file into a different sequence before collecting the sample points or by taking multiple samples based on specific demographics, then merging these samples into a single sample. Clustered samples can be produced in many different ways.

YALE TURNOUT MODELS

You can also obtain a sample based on voter turnout models such as those documented in the work of Dr Donald Green and Dr. Alan Gerber of Yale University. These samples are more complex and require that the model be previously created. VCS creates standard models for some jurisdictions. If you are interested in obtaining a sample based on these models, some assistance from VCS personnel may be necessary.

OVERSAMPLING AND COMPLEX CLUSTERING

Sometimes oversampling is best accomplished by taking larger samples in specific areas that are known to have a population that is difficult to contact. VCS can do this; the oversamples can be presented separately or integrated with the larger sample.

More frequently, clustering is employed to control the oversample. However, due to the distribution of phone numbers in the database, homogeneity may be compromised. People are increasingly difficult to contact by phone. There are many reasons for this including an increasing tendency to unlist phone numbers and the increased use of cell phones. Acquiring and using cell numbers is hampered by laws making the use of such numbers illegal without the permission of the owner. This problem means that the number of voters with good phones on the file is decreasing. This can result in a skewed sample if only those with numbers are considered when skipping through the file, since more voters will be chosen from stable areas or areas that have cleaner address structures.

In order to mitigate this problem, VCS can provide .pure phone clusters.. This means that all voters who meet the other selection criteria are counted when skipping through the file, whether they have a phone on file or not. However, when the clusters are filled, only those with phones are included in the cluster. This preserves the geographic homogeneity of the sample. The idea of .pure clusters. can be extended to gender and party affiliation also. A sample with pure phone, gender and party clusters insures not only geographic homogeneity, but also insures certain numbers of men, women, and Democrats, Republicans, and Others.

WIN THE KINGDOM

[Don't lose the kingdom for lack of a nail, start with a VCS sample!](#)

For want of a nail, the shoe was lost

For want of a shoe, the horse was lost

For want of a horse, the rider was lost

For want of a rider, the battle was lost

For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost

And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

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