

FRANKLY SPEAKING: I asked...

I Asked for Your Advice and You Responded

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In a recent column entitled Truth Telling to Power, I concluded by asking what you felt were the top two things the PC Party must do to regain the confidence of Ontario voters to form the next government.

The responses came swiftly, and in the true spirit of this column, candidly. I was not surprised, and would like to express my appreciation for the constructive advice and many thoughtful comments.

As promised, I will be providing my Caucus colleagues with a compilation of those responses and while I will respect the confidentiality within which that advice was offered, I want to share some of those comments in this column. Following are some of the recurring themes from the many emails in response to my call for advice...

Make policies relevant and distinctive

J.M. ?If the PCs want to distinguish themselves from other parties, then the time has come to propose a Provincial government overhaul. Simply stated, government needs to be run like a business. Those who misappropriate funds (e.g.: gas plant scandal) need to be disciplined or fired.?

S.P. ?There is a weakness in urban policies which explains the lack of seats in the major urban centres.?

M.B. ?People need to be lead and told the truth..... Focus on two or three key planks that (the party) will be able to deliver on.?

B.F. ?I'm a retired civil servant. I believe that Ontario needs a strong conservative government to regain our lost economic status and our common sense decisions.?

T.R. ?Focus on JOBS, create a climate that will help improve the attractiveness of Ontario to businesses. This means: cheaper energy, (no more expensive green energy programs; in fact, kill that thing), lower business taxes, tax incentives for businesses to move and start up in Ontario.?

Communicate more effectively

A.S. ?Good policy is important but it must be effectively and intelligently communicated in such a way that voters feel they are understood and appreciated.?

H.H. ?We need a whole change in the way you and your party communicate with the public. You need the party to talk in layman's language. I know there is no easy answer to complex problems but I think telling people in simple terms unless we make changes the province can go broke. Detroit??

Present a positive vision for Ontario

R.D. ?Present a positive, clear, compelling vision of Ontario under PCs. Don't look back, look forward. Ignore the Liberal record, focus on what PC policies can do for average Joe in Timmins, Toronto, Ottawa, Windsor. Ads should be about a new way forward and include diverse people represented in them. Develop a strong tag line (e.g. The Promise of Ontario).?

D.L. ?Give the public an option. This has never been communicated well to the public. It is anti-Liberal, anti-Liberal, anti-Liberal. What does the PC party stand for? Who knows, all I read about is how bad the Liberals are. Voters are a bit more sophisticated now. Tell us what the Party stands for and what the leader stands for.?

B.G. ?Just tell the voters in plain language what YOU propose to do to undo all the horrendous mistakes the Liberals made in the past 4 years! Just harping on the mistakes will not get you votes as there is not a party around that will not make mistakes. You have to show where you want to go to make things better. Not with clichés but understandable solutions. Do-able solutions.?

A.B. ?There is much to be learned from Ontario's political history. If ever I heard a party say it wanted the best and the brightest for an independent civil service that could speak to power without punishment, I would vote for them. I would vote for them even if they were largely devoid of good policies and ideas at the outset but were willing to act and provide the best government possible, independent of their political roots.?

?Don't be fooled into thinking that being heard is more important than hearing?

This last quote did not come from the many responses to my request for advice. It is advice from Mike Myatt, a leadership advisor to Fortune 500 CEOs and their Boards of Directors. Commonly regarded as one of the world's authorities on leadership, he recently offered this:

?Want to become a better leader? Stop talking and start listening. Being a leader should not be viewed as a license to increase the volume of rhetoric. Rather astute leaders know there is far more to be gained by surrendering the floor than by dominating it... Show me a leader who doesn't recognize the value of listening to others and I'll show you a train-wreck in the making.?

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