



SINE INSTITUTE
of POLICY & POLITICS

Reimagining Political Leadership: *Step 3.* *Recasting the “Pitch” to Young Americans*

Step 3: Recasting the Appeal to Young Americans

One of the innovative methodological techniques we employed in this project involved testing eight (8) short audio clips of hypothetical candidates making appeals based on different values and leadership styles.

- The most successful “pitches” emphasize integrity and putting the needs of others over self-interest, being candid and authentic even if it means making mistakes, being inclusive and valuing all voices, and demonstrating genuine compassion.
- More traditional appeals that focus exclusively on being decisive, firm and having political experience are lower rated.
- After listening to these various appeals, young Americans say the qualities they most prioritize are leaders who focus on people and country, are good listeners, caring and honest.

A summary of the eight short audio appeals we tested, each emphasizing different values and leadership styles.

- Each audio clip used an androgynous, neutral voice (AI generated), accompanied by verbatim closed-captioning.
- Respondents did not see the labels (all caps in table), they just heard/read the statements.

COMPETENCE	COMPASSION	INTEGRITY	AUTHENTICITY
<p>"I'm running to work hard and get the job done for the American people. I have real-world experience and a track record of delivering results. If we stay focused and determined, we can solve even our most complex challenges."</p>	<p>"I'm running because I care about people. Good leaders are compassionate, active listeners. I want to make people's lives better by truly understanding your concerns and focusing on what we have in common as human beings."</p>	<p>"I'm running because we need honest leaders with integrity who will serve others, not themselves. I'll always do what's right for the people I'm elected to represent, whether you voted for me or not."</p>	<p>"I'm running because we need leaders who are willing to tell hard truths and be real with people. I won't just say what you want to hear. I'll give you my honest opinion, even if it's unpopular and if I make a mistake, I'll own up to it."</p>
IDEALISM	INCLUSIVE	DECISIVE	COMPROMISE/UNITY
<p>"I'm running because I want to be part of building a brighter future. We can accomplish anything if we put our minds to it. We're facing a lot of tough problems, but I believe we can find solutions and achieve our potential."</p>	<p>"I'm running to make sure our government serves everyone equally. Every voice matters. America works best when it works for all, with no one left out or left behind."</p>	<p>"My vision for America is clear and it won't waiver. I am running because America deserves a strong leader who will protect our country and enforce our basic rules and values."</p>	<p>"I'm running to end the disunity and division tearing us apart. Bringing people together will require compromise. But there is more that unites us than divides us. We're all in this together, and we will rise or fall together."</p>

Consistent with their criticism that political leaders are unethical and focused on their own self interest, young Americans are looking for integrity, but also emphasize authenticity, inclusivity and compassion.



