

Electoral upheaval, steady message



**Philip
Dine**

November's presidential election was a shocker in many ways, as were the two primary contests that preceded it. The two earlier elections were wildly surprising in their own ways—with a political novice defeating veteran governors and legislators in the Republican primary, and a little-known senator from a small state giving the clear favorite all she could handle on the Democratic side.

And the presidential race produced results unpredicted by the polls or by those who make a living forecasting such things. That was true both as far as the overall electoral count and also the way various industrial states voted.

The reassuring news from our standpoint is that, as President Rolando often says, we are a politically diverse union and we're stronger because of that diversity.

We are fortunate in another way as well. Our communications effort long has been a broad-based one, with a non-partisan appeal that extends well beyond any particular ideology or party.

That is a key reason why our message has found a home in media outlets of all political stripes, has resonated among politicians rural and urban, and has so effectively changed the public discussion. And while the recent political results will add urgency to our communications effort, they will not change our fundamental message.

As many political observers have noted, the recent election was less about partisan politics or ideology than it was an outcry from working-class voters in the Heartland and elsewhere who feel neglected and even disdained by the elites—whether in Washington, on Wall Street, in the media or in the corner suites.

Whatever one thinks of the validity of that salvo, we were certainly not the target. We, and our employer, are the very antithesis of elitism. On the contrary, we are the people's delivery network, performing a vital service for all Americans regardless of income or location and for businesses large and small—as spelled out in the Constitution.

The Constitution. Think about how often that term was heard in the campaign, with both parties referring to it in innumerable ways. What we do is, plain and simple, enshrined in our nation's founding document.

Or the economy, with the talk about economic growth and jobs and business expansion. We are a large part of the economy, we are the cornerstone of a \$1.3 trillion national mailing

industry that employs 7.5 million Americans, and we perform a critical service for businesses in every corner of the country. In fact, we provide Americans and their businesses with the industrial world's most-affordable delivery network—without a dime of taxpayer money.

Or veterans. At few times in American history has there been a greater recognition of the debt we owe those who have defended this nation, or a greater need for jobs worthy of their prior service. We offer that—and we do so to a greater extent than any other single entity in the country.

Or security. National security and security within our communities were a major part of the campaign, and we play a role in both—whether through the Cities' Readiness Initiative or the daily actions of letter carriers on their routes to protect the neighborhoods and the families we serve.

Or bringing us together. Both parties spoke, albeit in differing words, about the need to come together, to rekindle the American spirit, to unite a divided population. That, of course, is what we are all about. We anchor communities and we unify this vast nation; we have been doing so since before the country was formally established and we do so today as much as ever.

It may not have been mentioned much during the campaign, but after such a raucous and heated election few would deny the need to heal the wounds, to care for each other, to serve our country—to, in essence, foster a sense of togetherness that can overcome political divides. Who does that more than letter carriers—who feed the hungry, who every day save lives and show devotion to our fellow Americans in countless ways?

There will be challenges in the weeks and months ahead, as there always are, but if we—if you—continue to get our message out and inform the public and its representatives as you have been doing, communications will remain a key source of our strength and our success going forward, however the political winds may blow.

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