

REPORT TO *POLITICS* MAGAZINE

RESULTS OF REED AWARDS POLL



January 15, 2009

Methodology

Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates conducted 475 internet interviews with current subscribers of *Politics Magazine* on January 3-13, 2009. The margin of error is +/- 4.5%.

Summary

The first-ever Reed Awards poll, conducted by Penn, Schoen & Berland, shows political insiders pick both expected winners and some surprises in evaluating the 2008 election and the political season ahead.

Across party lines, politicians give President-elect Obama and his team high marks for a historic campaign. The Obamas and members of the President-elect's team won praise across a variety of categories including Best Political Duo (Barack and Michelle Obama), Best Slogan (Change We Can Believe In), and Best Political Strategist (David Axelrod). These insiders believe President-elect Obama's "honeymoon" will last about six months and suggest a laser-like focus on the economy. Close to 60% of the respondents said they would work in an Obama Administration, many more than the number of Democrats in the poll.

Highlighting President-elect Obama's unique choice of a Secretary of State, Secretary-designate Senator Hillary Clinton also wins praise from our insiders. She is ranked as "Person You Would Most Want on Your Team" and "Cabinet Member Most Likely to Succeed." Her primary spot, "3 A.M.", was selected "Best TV spot" of the campaign.

The challenging Republican season is reflected throughout the poll. Only 17% favor John McCain's "Country First" slogan, while Vice Presidential nominee Governor Sarah Palin and McCain surrogate Senator Joe Lieberman take the top slots for "Best Villain". Showing the effect down-ballot, respondents selected surprise Democratic winners for the top two "Best-Run Senate Campaigns", and believe Obama-leaning demographics of Young voters, African-Americans and First-time voters were the "Interest Groups Which Had the Biggest Impact". By contrast, Evangelicals were seen as most impactful by just 1%.

Turning to those who covered the campaign, respondents are much more divided about who did a good job. Nearly 65% believe the national press exhibited a "clear bias in favor of Barack Obama", but beyond that consensus breaks down. David Gergen wins "Best Pundit" and Bill Kristol was judged "Worst Pundit" – but James Carville comes second in *both* the best and worst categories. Ideological opposites Paul Krugman and George Will tie for Best Columnist, while Bill Kristol and Maureen Down share honors for "Worst Columnist." When it comes to the personalities, about the only thing respondents agree on is Arianna Huffington, a clear winner for "Best Political Blogger."

Looking forward, respondents expect the economy and taxes to dominate the Administration's first 100 days and urge an inclusive, moderate approach. Asked to give the President-elect one piece of advice, respondents focused on bold economic moves and the importance of governing from the center.

The Race for the White House

President-elect Obama and incoming First Lady Michelle Obama are seen as the “Best Political Duo” of the 2008 election with 37% of responses, nearly three times higher than any other selection. Mike Huckabee and celebrity surrogate Chuck Norris (13%) come in second-place, at a virtual tie with President-elect Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden (12%).

Who would you say was the “ Best Political Duo ” of the 2008 election?	All
Barack Obama and Michelle Obama	37
Mike Huckabee and Chuck Norris	13
Barack Obama and Joe Biden	12
Barack Obama and Ted Kennedy	8
John McCain and Sarah Palin	7
Hillary Clinton and Bill Clinton	6
John McCain and Joe the Plumber	5
John McCain and Joe Lieberman	3
Other	4
Don't know	2

President-elect Obama’s “Change We Can Believe In” is selected overwhelmingly as the “Best Slogan” of the 2008 election, with 69% of respondents. John McCain’s “Country First” finishes in a distant second (17%).

Which of the following would you say was the “ Best Slogan ” of the 2008 election?	All
Barack Obama – “Change We Can Believe In”	69
John McCain – “Country First”	17
Other	8
Don't know	5

An large majority of respondents select either David Axelrod (54%) or David Plouffe (22%) – both top aides to the Obama campaign – as the best political strategists of the 2008 election. Expectedly, strategists outside the President-elect’s camp ranked lower.

Who would you say was the “ Best Political Strategist ” of the 2008 election?	All
David Axelrod	54
David Plouffe	22
Others	14
Don't know	11

Hillary Clinton is seen as the person respondents would most want on their team, with 17% of responses. Sarah Palin (15%), Colin Powell (14%), and Michelle Obama 12% are also top choices.

Who would you say was the “Person You Would Most Want on <i>Your</i> Team” of the 2008 election?	All
Hillary Clinton	17
Sarah Palin	15
Colin Powell	14
Michelle Obama	12
Joe Biden	6
Al Gore	5
Elizabeth Edwards	4
Rudy Giuliani	4
Mike Huckabee	4
Cindy McCain	2
Bill Richardson	2
Other	10
Don't know	5

Hillary Clinton’s “3 A.M. Ad” was named the “Best TV Spot” of the 2008 election, selected by 31% of respondents. Barack Obama’s advertisement “The Moment” finished in second-place (24%), with John McCain’s “Celebrity” (11%), Mike Huckabee’s “Chuck Norris Approved” (9%), and Bill Richardson’s “Job Interviews” (7%) sharing third-place honors.

Which of the following political advertisements would you say was the “Best TV spot” of the 2008 election?	All
Hillary Clinton – “3 AM”	31
Barack Obama – “The Moment”	24
John McCain – “Celebrity”	11
Mike Huckabee – “Chuck Norris Approved”	9
Bill Richardson – “Job Interviews”	7
Mitt Romney – “Experience Matters”	3
Republican National Committee – “Storm”	3
Mike Gravel – “Throws a Rock in a Lake”	1
Other	4
Don't know	6

Sarah Palin is seen as the “Best Villain” of the 2008 election, named by 23% of respondents. Joe Lieberman (17%) and John Edwards (16%) split the second-place votes.

Who would you say was the “ Best Villain ” of the 2008 election?	All
Sarah Palin	23
Joe Lieberman	17
John Edwards	16
Michelle Bachmann	7
Rudy Giuliani	6
Ron Paul	5
Elizabeth Dole	4
Barack Obama	4
John McCain	3
Other	12
Don't know	3

About one in three respondents said John McCain’s selection of Sarah Palin as his running mate was the “Most Surprising Event” of the 2008 election season (35%), ahead of Barack Obama’s defeat of Hillary Clinton in the race for the Democratic nomination (18%). There is a virtual tie for third-place between the California gay marriage ban (13%), the October global financial crisis (12%), and the Democratic candidate’s general election victories in Virginia, North Carolina, and Indiana (10%).

In your view, what was the “ Most Surprising Event ” of the 2008 election season?	All
John McCain selects Sarah Palin as his running mate	35
Barack Obama defeats Hillary Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination.	18
Gay marriage ban passes in California.	13
The global financial crisis dominates October headlines.	12
The Democratic candidate for president wins Virginia, North Carolina, and Indiana.	10
Barack Obama wins the presidential election.	5
Senator Ted Stevens nearly wins re-election in Alaska.	3
Other	4

Pundits and Commentary

Most respondents (63%) said that the national media exhibited a clear bias in favor of Barack Obama during the 2008 campaign, while roughly one-quarter said the media fairly represented all the candidates (23%). Few respondents said the media exhibited a clear bias in favor of Hillary Clinton (5%) or John McCain (5%).

Which of the following is closer to your view?	All
In general, the national media exhibited a clear bias in favor of Barack Obama during the 2008 campaign.	63
In general, the national media fairly represented all the candidates in the 2008 campaign, and did not assist any one candidate above the others.	23
In general, the national media exhibited a clear bias in favor of Hillary Clinton during the 2008 campaign.	5
In general, the national media exhibited a clear bias in favor of John McCain during the 2008 campaign.	5
Don't know	4

By a narrow margin, David Gergen (16%) bests James Carville (13%) as the “Best Pundit” of the 2008 election. Mike Murphy (9%), Paul Begala (8%), Bill Kristol (8%), and Peggy Noonan (6%) fall closely behind.

Who would you say was the “Best Pundit” of the 2008 election?	All
David Gergen	16
James Carville	13
Mike Murphy	9
Paul Begala	8
Bill Kristol	8
Peggy Noonan	6
Other	28
Don't know	12

With 15% of responses, Bill Kristol and James Carville are seen as the “Worst Pundits” of the 2008 election. Bill Bennett (11%), Paul Begala (9%), and Peggy Noonan (8%) share a second-place finish.

Who would you say was the “ Worst Pundit ” of the 2008 election?	All
Bill Kristol	15
James Carville	15
Bill Bennett	11
Paul Begala	9
Peggy Noonan	8
Alex Castellanos	5
Other	21
Don't know	16

Paul Krugman (13%) and George Will (12%) share top honors as the “Best Columnists” of the 2008 election. David Broder, David Brooks, Maureen Dowd, Thomas Friedman, and Peggy Noonan are each named by 8%.

Who would you say was the “ Best Columnist ” of the 2008 election?	All
Paul Krugman	13
George Will	12
David Broder	8
David Brooks	8
Maureen Dowd	8
Thomas Friedman	8
Peggy Noonan	8
Bill Kristol	7
Frank Rich	7
Other	10
Don't know	11

Bill Kristol is selected as the “Worst Columnist” of the 2008 election (21%), with a slight margin over Maureen Dowd (18%).

Who would you say was the “Worst Columnist” of the 2008 election?	All
Bill Kristol	21
Maureen Dowd	18
Peggy Noonan	8
Paul Krugman	6
Frank Rich	6
George Will	6
Other	13
Don't know	21

Arianna Huffington was chosen as the “Best Political Blogger” of the 2008 election, named by roughly one in five respondents (21%). Chuck Todd finished in second-place (10%), followed by Nate Silver (8%) in a close third.

Who would you say was the “Best Political Blogger” of the 2008 election?	All
Arianna Huffington	21
Chuck Todd	10
Nate Silver	8
Mark Halperin	6
Ben Smith	5
Other	18
Don't know	31

Broad Trends

Respondents say Democrat Kay Hagan (D-NC) led the “Best-Run Senate Campaign” of the 2008 election (21%). Democrat Mark Warner (D-VA) (16%) and Republican Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) (14%) were also named by significant percentages of respondents.

Which of the following would you say was the “Best-Run Senate Campaign” of the 2008 election?	All
Kay Hagan – North Carolina	21
Mark Warner – Virginia	16
Saxby Chambliss – Georgia	14
Al Franken – Minnesota	8
Susan Collins – Maine	5
Jeanne Shaheen – New Hampshire	5
Mark Begich – Alaska	4
Jeff Merkley – Oregon	4
Mark Udall – Colorado	3
Tom Udall – New Mexico	3
Bruce Lunsford – Kentucky	0
Other	1
Don’t know	16

Respondents selected Mitch Daniels (R-IN) as the “Best-Run Governor’s Campaign” of the 2008 election (16%). Other campaigns of note included Brian Schweitzer (D-MT) (8%), Christine Gregoire (D-WA) (8%), and Beverly Perdue (D-NC) (7%).

Which of the following would you say was the “Best-Run Governor’s Campaign” of the 2008 election?	All
Mitch Daniels – Indiana	16
Brian Schweitzer – Montana	8
Christine Gregoire – Washington	8
Beverly Perdue – North Carolina	7
Jay Nixon – Missouri	6
John Lynch – New Hampshire	3
Jim Douglas – Vermont	3
Jack Markell - Delaware	2
John Hoeven – North Dakota	1
Jon Huntsman, Jr. – Utah	1
Joe Manchin – West Virginia	1
Other	1
Don’t know	44

Young voters are seen as the “interest group which had the biggest impact” during the 2008 election, named by 26% of respondents. African-Americans (24%) and first-time voters (23%) were other highly influential groups.

Which of the following would you say was the “ Interest Group Which Had the Biggest Impact ” during the 2008 election?	All
Young voters	26
African-Americans	24
First-time voters	23
Hispanics	8
Labor unions	7
Mormons	2
Environmentalists	1
Evangelicals	1
Seniors	1
Other	4
Don't know	3

By an overwhelming margin, “the economy” is seen as the issue that most gained in importance during the 2008 election, selected by nearly three in four respondents (73%). Energy issues (7%) and protecting the middle class (6%) make up a distant second-tier.

Which of the following would you say was the “ Issue That Most Gained in Importance ” during the 2008 election?	All
The economy	73
Energy issues	7
Protecting the middle class	6
Healthcare	4
Ethics in government, corruption, campaign finance reform	2
Housing affordability	1
Taxes	1
The environment	1
Other	3
Don't know	1

Looking Ahead

Respondents almost universally see the economy as the most important issue of the “first 100 days,” with 98% of respondents saying it will be “very important” in that period. Tax policy is seen as the second-most important issue, with roughly half (51%) saying it will be very important. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan follow closely behind, with 43% saying it will be very important.

It should be noted also that the Global War on Terror (74%), healthcare (74%), and energy issues (74%) are all described as “important” by significant majorities of respondents. Only the environment is ranked by most respondents as “unimportant” in the first 100 days.

How important do you think this issue will be in the first 100 days?	All	
	Very Impt	Impt / Not Impt
Economy	98	99/0
Tax policy	51	89/11
Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan	43	88/12
The Global War on Terror	29	74/25
Healthcare	26	74/26
Energy issues	19	74/26
Environmental issues	7	43/57

A slim majority of respondents (51%) say that the Obama Administration and the new Congress should NOT extend additional government loans to GM, Chrysler, and/or Ford, compared to 41% who support the loans.

Which of the following is closer to your view?	All
The Obama Administration and the new Congress SHOULD NOT extend additional government loans to GM, Chrysler and/or Ford.	51
The Obama Administration and the new Congress SHOULD extend additional government loans to GM, Chrysler and/or Ford.	41
Don't know	8

Hillary Clinton is seen as the “Best Cabinet Pick” of the Obama Administration, chosen by 25% of respondents. Robert Gates is a close second with 21% of respondents, while Rahm Emanuel is named by 12%.

Who would you say is President-elect Barack Obama’s “Best Cabinet Pick”?	All
Hillary Clinton	25
Robert Gates	21
Rahm Emanuel	12
Tom Daschle	9
Tim Geithner	4
Janet Napolitano	3
Steven Chu	3
Eric Shinseki	3
Eric Holder	2
James Jones	2
Other	10
Don’t know	3

Similarly, Hillary Clinton is also chosen as the “Cabinet Member Most Likely to Succeed” in the Obama Administration (25%). Robert Gates (14%) and Rahm Emanuel (13%) again fill out the top three selections.

Thinking about the Obama Administration after the Inauguration, who would you say is the “Cabinet Member Most Likely to Succeed”?	All
Hillary Clinton	25
Robert Gates	14
Rahm Emanuel	13
Tom Daschle	10
Tim Geithner	3
Eric Holder	3
Steven Chu	3
Ken Salazar	3
Eric Shinseki	3
James Jones	2
Janet Napolitano	2
Lawrence Summers	2
Other	7
Don’t know	7

Most respondents (59%) think the “honeymoon” for President-elect Obama will last six months or less, with another 20% saying it will last one year or more. 19% of respondents ask “what honeymoon?”

Starting from his Inauguration, please indicate on the drop-down menu here how long you think the “honeymoon” will last for President-elect Barack Obama?	All
What honeymoon?	19
One Month or Less	13
One week	1
Two weeks	2
One month	10
Two to Six Months	46
Two months	11
Three months	16
Six months	19
One year	10
More than One Year	10
Two years	4
Four years	3
Eight years	3
Don't know	1

A majority of respondents (58%) say they would agree to work in the incoming administration if asked by President-elect Obama. Roughly one-quarter (23%) would refuse, with close to an equal amount saying “maybe” (17%) or “don't know” (2%).

If President-elect Barack Obama called you today and asked you to work in his administration, what would you say?	All
Yes	58
No	23
Maybe	17
Don't know	2

If you could give President-elect Barack Obama one piece of advice, what would it be? OPEN-END

Cut the gimmicks - focus on solutions and explaining them.

Don't back down or take "no" for an answer when it comes to passing your economic recovery plan and health care reform.

Fight for the big stuff early.

It's the economy, stupid.

Win the war on terror; stabilize Iraq and fix the economy. No pressure, and good luck.

Don't only rely on Democratic Majorities in the House and Senate. Seek moderate approaches.

Don't get bogged down in the details - translate your lofty rhetoric into simple policy goals.

Do what you told us you would do.

Fight the War on Terror & Secure Our Borders. Reduce Taxes, increase jobs, and reduce our dependence on energy.

Be brutally honest.

Hire me!

Continue to stay above the political fray and keep the interest of the American people first.

Be Bold! Take big risks and roll the dice.

Stay true to your values.

Stay the course without becoming like President George W Bush and equating resolve with knowledge.

Do everything you can to get large Republican support for all of your major initiatives. If you can start out adding an extra 50+ votes in the House from Republicans and 6-7 in the Senate, it's going to make the first 100 days+ so much easier.

Go after your most ambitious goals and use your communication skills, including the internet, to enlist public support for them.

Do the right thing Don't run away from being a liberal; take back the word liberal.

In taking on America's challenges, remember to keep our citizens engaged in the process.

Govern from the center and be president for all Americans.

Be as much a centrist as possible

Don't change your decision-making style; trust your gut.

Do not make quick decisions. Hear different viewpoints and let it stew before you decide.

Do everything you can to forge consensus and reduce the gridlock in Congress.

Focus on the economy and remember that the people want a performer not a politician.

Concentrate on the economy, particularly lost jobs and new business opportunities.

Pick good people - listen to their ideas and then make the best decisions.

Use your bully pulpit to mobilize the country and the world to meet its challenges.

Commit to a big initiative for sustainable development at home and abroad.

Pick a good team, but reserve the right to think on your own.

Govern from the center.

Maintain the sense of steadiness and competence. After 8 years of confusion, hidden agendas, and closed doors, the feeling of an administration that is working for the nation is essential.

Get input from a wide variety of expert opinions before rendering your decision on issues of major public policy.

Do what you said you would do – if Congress doesn't act, go to the people.

Show the American people you are confident and in charge.

As a President, stay the same person--with the same values--as you did as a candidate.

Go for an economic stimulus that provides more infrastructure rebuilding and less business tax cuts.