

How Donald Trump Could Actually Be Useful to the Romney Campaign



Over the past couple of years, I believe that Donald Trump has generally done more to hurt the Republican party's chances of retaking the presidency than he's done to help them. From his mainstreaming of the *Birther* movement to his incessant toying with the notion that he might run for the office himself, he's

displayed a level of clownish and self-promotional behavior that the GOP could have certainly done without. Furthermore, public perception was in no way helped by the stream of Republican primary candidates who, for whatever reason, felt the need to meet with *The Donald* behind closed doors and receive his communal blessing.

It's the recollection of such headlines that probably made plenty of people cringe, as I did, when learning that Donald Trump is considering putting together an Anti-Obama super PAC in preparation for the November election. One can only imagine the type of advertisements that would come out of such a project. Something tells me that they would most certainly serve as instant fodder for the mainstream news media and as punchlines for late night comedians. Needless to say, I'm not a fan of the idea, but I doubt it will come to fruition anyway.

With all that being said, I do believe that Donald Trump has something to offer to Mitt Romney's presidential aspirations. No, I'm not joking. My guess is that people within the Romney

campaign agree with me, considering Mitt's personal acceptance of Trump's endorsement back in February, and some joint-campaigning they'll do together starting next week.

Yes, Donald Trump has some value for Romney in this election. His talents just needs to be tapped properly.

As many pundits have pointed out over the last several months, Trump appeals to the non-political, entertainment-oriented demographic that makes up a large portion of the electorate. I'm talking about the people who bypass the national news in favor of reality shows which they watch religiously. I'm talking about the people who care far more about celebrity gossip and daytime *judge* shows than they do about the health of the U.S. economy and geopolitics. These are the very same people who are more likely to vote for candidates based on personalities, gut feelings or whims, rather than on merits. Sadly, they may very well be the most important voting block in our country because they are both sway-able and vast in number.

It's a demographic that Mitt Romney is going to have a hard time courting, because he's running against a man who's a celebrity in his own right: President Obama. After all, Obama won the presidency in the first place based almost entirely on his larger-than-life, magnetic persona. When given the choice between *Captain Charisma* and the respected Vietnam war hero in 2008, that demographic pulled heavily for Obama. Romney will face the same challenge as John McCain did.

That's where Trump comes in.

Despite both Trump and Romney being extremely accomplished businessmen, Trump has been able to achieve an important perception with the public that Mitt Romney has yet to successfully sell: His personal wealth is viewed in an admirable light.

People certainly aren't blind to Trump's barefaced

pompousness, but they also don't begrudge him for his wealth the way President Obama's campaign so desperately wants Americans to begrudge Mitt Romney. For the most part, the common man admires Trump's success, and perhaps is even inspired by him to pave their own path to prosperity. Some of that conception surely comes from the platform of Trump's *Apprentice* television series, but it also comes from the way he handles himself when speaking publicly. He's a seasoned capitalist who speaks in blunt, politically-incorrect terms and makes no apologies for his success. The public doesn't ask him for apologies either, because with him, they *get it*. If Mitt Romney could somehow absorb that gift, I'm sure he would. But that's not going to happen... at least not in the next six months.

Thus, for the entertainment-driven demographic, Trump might just be a good, informal surrogate for the Romney campaign – an *Entertainment Czar* for lack of a better term. It wouldn't be all that dissimilar to how Mike Huckabee used Chuck Norris during his 2008 primary bid – a move that, in my opinion, won Huckabee the Iowa Caucus.

The difference is that Trump has a longer shelf-life than Norris because he's an active public figure. I'd encourage him to go on Leno, Letterman, Kimmel, the network morning shows, and whatever other venues make sense, and let him dress down the president and defend Romney's proposals in the direct, relentless way that only he can. At the very least, the people who normally don't bother with politics (and wouldn't give Romney himself the time of day) will listen to what he has to say. And as long as the Romney campaign doesn't associate itself too closely with Trump, and Trump can refrain from spreading more conspiracy theories, I think the strategy has the potential to peel off a little bit of the superficial portion of the electorate that would otherwise complacently throw their hat back in with President Obama.

The interesting thing about Trump is that the media has a hard

time making other people accountable for his rhetoric because he presents himself as an off-the-cuff, beholden to no one, kind of guy. This would work to Romney's advantage.

Donald Trump's campaign involvement, by no means, would be a game-changer come November. The affect would be marginal. Still, in perhaps the most important election of our lifetime – one that promises to be very tight – all available resources should be utilized. Donald Trump does bring certain endowments to the table. They should not go unused.