

State GOP postmortem says party relied too heavily on consultants, failed to engage grassroots

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The state GOP overpaid for services in 2018 and was overly reliant on consultants as it essentially outsourced management of the party to Gov. Scott Walker's campaign, according to a postmortem conducted on last year's losses.

The 15-page report — which U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, described as “brutally honest” — covered a series of shortcomings in 2018, from the party's organization down to staffers who were described as “unhelpful, unresponsive, even rude.”

The report said staff who “fell short of expectations” are no longer with the party mainly due to the contraction that occurs every election cycle and consultants not providing needed services have been let go. But they weren't identified by name in the report, and a party spokesman declined to do so.

The report said the overreliance on consultants, some of whom “had few, if any, discernible job responsibilities or expectations of deliverables,” was among drivers of the party's current debt. It added that relying on consultants prevented the party “from building our farm team of future staff and young party leaders.”

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A handful of consultants, the report said, were paid close to a half-million dollars. While some performed “valuable and necessary functions,” others had “few, if any, discernible job responsibilities or expectations of deliverables.”

New state Chair Andrew Hitt last month gave WisPolitics.com a preview of the

report, noting it showed the party focused too much on advertising at the expense of engaging the grassroots.

The full report adds detail to that conclusion, while touching on other shortcomings.

That includes a growing gender gap within the party and among voters, noting that “Republicans are losing with women.” It said it was impossible to make “a straight-faced argument” that the party had done enough to appeal to a portion of the electorate which it notes represents approximately 52 percent of the vote.

The state GOP structure and major campaigns, the report said, lacked a female presence in leadership positions, a stark contrast to successful Republican legislative campaign committees that the report notes “have had women in top leadership roles for nearly a decade.”

The report also called for more minority outreach, and noted the party has two staffers who focus primarily on Hispanic and African American communities.

“We need to go into more areas,” the report said. “We will be teaming up with the RNC to continue to improve our efforts and develop best practices.”

Read the [report](#).