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Donald Trump Hires Pollster as Campaign Strategist, Sources Say

By MAGGIE HABERMAN and ASHLEY PARKER MAY 16, 2016

Donald J. Trump has hired the veteran pollster Tony Fabrizio as a strategist for his campaign, two people briefed on the hiring said on Monday evening. It is the first time that Mr. Trump has had a pollster in that role for a sustained period of time.

Mr. Fabrizio, who recently worked on the presidential campaign of Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky, joined the Trump campaign in recent weeks, according to the people briefed on his hiring, who asked to remain anonymous to speak about a move that had not yet been announced.

Mr. Fabrizio has decades of presidential campaign experience, including working on Bob Dole's campaign in 1996 with Paul Manafort, a senior adviser to Mr. Trump. Mr. Fabrizio also worked on the 2012 presidential campaign of former Gov. Rick Perry of Texas and on Rick Scott's successful campaign for governor of Florida in 2010.

Having a pollster may make it difficult for Mr. Trump to continue a talking point — that he does it all without polls because the news media does them free. Such news polls don't conduct the type of deep targeting that campaign surveys do, and Mr. Trump is entering a new phase, a general election, in which his negative ratings are high.

Mr. Fabrizio did some polling for the campaign in the lead-up to the Indiana primary this month, and informally advised it about some other states in the final weeks before Mr. Trump's remaining opponents pulled out of the race, according to those briefed.

Mr. Fabrizio is not likely to conduct polling directly for the campaign at this point, according to one of the people briefed on his role. He will be working in the coming weeks with the Republican National Committee to help advise it on its turnout models, and he is expected to hold his first meeting with officials at the party committee as soon as this week.

Hope Hicks, a spokeswoman for Mr. Trump, did not respond to an email seeking comment on Monday evening.

Mr. Fabrizio has worked for Mr. Trump on and off over the years, including informally in 2011 when Mr. Trump considered running for president.

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