

Starting Race Against Green, Bloomberg Stresses His Business Past

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Michael R. Bloomberg aggressively opened the general election campaign for mayor yesterday, directly criticizing Mark Green, who emerged as the Democratic nominee in Thursday's runoff.

Beginning on the morning television news shows at 6 a.m., Mr. Bloomberg, the Republican nominee, began moving to head off criticism that he has no experience in politics, insisting that any good businessman has learned the art of deal-making.

The billionaire founder and majority owner of Bloomberg L.P., an international communications company, Mr. Bloomberg at one juncture described himself as the Joe Torre or Bobby Valentine of the mayoral contest. "I am a professional manager, he is a rookie," Mr. Bloomberg said on WNBC-TV. "This is not the time to have a Little League manager in there."

He indicated that he was unfazed by opinion polls that show him trailing Mr. Green or by the historic odds against a Republican's

being elected.

In fact, Mr. Bloomberg made a point of shaking hands at a subway stop on the Upper West Side, a neighborhood of liberal Democrats that would seem firmly in the Green camp. And he insisted later at a news conference that the World Trade Center attack had rendered party labels and distinctions irrelevant.

"If we've learned anything in the last four weeks, it is that you cannot have partisan politics," he said at his campaign headquarters on East 56th Street.

Mr. Green emerged from a primary fight that turned bitter in the closing days to declare that he was the candidate who possessed the experience and skill to unify the city and set it back on course. Behind the scenes, he began wooing supporters of Fernando Ferrer, the Bronx borough president, who opposed him in the primary runoff Thursday. Many of Mr. Ferrer's backers, however, made no promises to support Mr.



Andres Mohin/The New York Times

Michael R. Bloomberg said the trade center attack made party labels irrelevant.

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Green.

Mr. Bloomberg got an earnest start at rebutting one of Mr. Green's central themes, that Mr. Bloomberg's business experience does not necessarily qualify him to run the city.

In speeches and interviews through the day, Mr. Bloomberg spoke about his experience in business, insisting that it was Mr. Green who had to explain to voters why his résumé qualified him for the city's top job, not Mr. Bloomberg.

Without mentioning his opponent by name, Mr. Bloomberg indicated that his strategy in defeating Mr. Green, who is the public advocate, would include raising doubts about the substance of Mr. Green's contributions in that job. He suggested that Mr. Green was expert at issuing press releases and filing lawsuits but not at the tasks needed to run the city, particularly during a time of crisis.

"You have got to work with the mayor on a seamless transition, and I don't know how you do that if all you have done is sue him," Mr. Bloomberg said on WCBS-TV. "I don't know how you work with the governor if all you have done is attack him. I don't know how you work with the president if all you have done is criticize him."

Mr. Green used the day as a victory lap, greeting voters, appearing with Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Charles E. Schumer, and putting forth his experience in government as a key selling point to voters anxious about the city's future. Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Schumer both made the point with veiled blows to Mr. Bloomberg's lack of experience in government.

"We need somebody who knows the ins and outs of government," Mr. Schumer said. "We don't need somebody who has on-the-job training. And when you combine his intelligence, his dedication to the people of this city, his knowledge of government and his work ethic, you couldn't come up with a better candidate than Mark Green."

Mrs. Clinton said, "We need a mayor who can hit the ground running."

Mr. Green reiterated his goal to serve as a unifying force for a city often divided along racial and ethnic lines. Surveys of voters as they were



James Estrine/The New York Times

Mark Green, who campaigned at the subway station at 86th Street and Lexington Avenue, said he would reach out to backers of Fernando Ferrer.

Bloomberg says he is 'a professional manager' and Green 'a rookie.'

leaving polling places on Thursday showed whites heavily supporting Mr. Green, Latinos and blacks voting heavily for Mr. Ferrer. The survey data also suggested that Mr. Green depended heavily on predominantly white districts in Manhattan, particularly the more affluent neighborhoods east and west of Central Park.

Despite the divide evident in the exit polls, Mr. Green again cast himself as the candidate to bridge any discord, even as some of Mr. Ferrer's supporters remained bitter over what they perceived as Mr. Green's last-hour, negative, campaigning through television commercials and mailings.

Mr. Green said he would call Mr. Ferrer's supporters — an aide said Mr. Green began the calls on Thursday night — and ask them to back him for the sake of the Democratic Party and the city.

When asked whether he would seek out the Rev. Al Sharpton — who supported Mr. Ferrer but, according to exit polls, put off many white

voters — Mr. Green said he would.

"I seek the support of all Democrats, absolutely including him," Mr. Green said. "I don't have an appointment yet. Look, if I want to be a leader for all, that requires me to meet with and seek the support of leaders. He is unarguably a leader. I may agree or disagree with him on a particular matter but I've always had a good relationship with him. The next mayor should and will."

Mr. Sharpton made no commitment to support Mr. Green and suggested he would consider Mr. Bloomberg as well.

"All I'm telling you is I'm open for dialogue with him or Bloomberg," Mr. Sharpton said. "I'm not asking

for a meeting. But clearly, Mr. Green is going to have to do a lot of healing and talking to even deal with a viable campaign — and if elected a viable way of government."

"Fernando Ferrer was stereotyped," said Roberto Ramirez, a former assemblyman and Bronx Democratic Party chairman who was one of Mr. Ferrer's closest advisers. "And there ought not to be a place in New York City politics for that. He was stereotyped because of his ethnicity. He was stereotyped because of the support he got from Al Sharpton. He was stereotyped because the language used was designed to instill fear in people's hearts."

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