

Memo: 6 Myths About Election Campaigns!
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For: Colleagues and peers of Louis Perron
People interested in winning elections
From: Dr. des. Louis Perron

**Perron Campaigns Election Update:
6 Myths About Election Campaigns!**

Myth #1: Create awareness first, then conversion.

Many politicians think that they should create awareness first and then conversion. At the national level, this means the running of entertaining ads while at the local level candidates invent all sorts of activities to produce noise. I think that awareness without conversion can be an unguided missile. A candidate who is making a name for himself is conveying a message anyway in the view of voters. If the campaign does not actively frame that message, the message conveyed is "I want to run". This is not very appealing to voters, hence many politicians simply waste precious funds. Somebody who did this very well was Senator Chiz Escudero prior to his Senate campaign. His pre-campaign lasted for two years but was tied to a cause. In fact, I think he is still reaping the benefits from it now.

Myth #2: Sample size is the most important quality factor for a survey.

Surveys are the most scientific aspect of a campaign. The sample size of a survey is one of many important factors when it comes to judging the quality and reliability of a survey. For a local campaign, it should be a minimum of 500 respondents while for a national campaign it should be a minimum of 1200. This being said, there are plenty of other methodological details to worry about. These include the flow of the questionnaire, the sampling, the selection, briefing and supervision of the interviewers and lastly, the analysis of the data.

Myth #3: Voters don't care about issues.

There is this idea out there that voters don't care about issues but just want to be entertained. Do you remember the 2007 elections? Some of the biggest spenders for TV ads lost their bid for the Senate. They wasted their money on empty motherhood statements and in entertaining. It's not that voters don't care about issues. They care about getting a job, feeding their family and paying tuition fees. Voters don't believe many politicians when they talk about issues. Credibility and believability are key factors. A campaign needs an entire series of measures to make its message believable.

Myth #4; Going around and building alliances are the best ways to prepare a campaign.

There is nothing wrong about going around. But since all the candidates are doing it, it's seldom what will put the winner over the top. The questions are what image to project, what message to communicate while going around and how to follow up with the people met. The people who meet the candidate should hear from the campaign again through an extensive text operation.

As for alliances, I am sceptical about their reliability. Real support does not depend on a celebrated alliance but simply on the expected strength of a politician on Election Day. If a politician A thinks he can beat politician B, A will run against B. If B looks unbeatable, A will forge and honour an alliance with B. I know a Mayor who often says the following: "In politics, it's always good to be feared or needed". Correct!

Myth #5: Elections are a popularity contest.

A popularity contest would mean that voters actually like politicians. In my opinion, very few politicians are really liked. Most are simply preferred options out of two or several possibilities. Voters have become cynical and frustrated with their leaders. The key for a politician is to understand that point and to try to truly connect with voters. I think that this is why many of the Presidential candidates fail at this point in time. Theirs ads do not connect with voters and are not believable.

Myth #6: Test the waters, then decide to run or not before the deadline of filing.

Many politicians are scared to death of losing. So they wait until the very last minute before the deadline of filing to announce their candidacy. They go around, campaign a little and hope that their standing in the surveys will improve. I don't believe in that approach. One doesn't win a competitive election by simply giving it a shot (again, several Presidential candidates come to mind as examples). For me, the correct approach is as follows: get all the information needed to make an informed decision (talk to insiders, take a survey, do a feasibility study), reach a decision, then work for it day and night.

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News about Dr. des. Louis Perron

- The last update, the analysis about the Obama campaign, has been published in newspapers in Japan, the Czech Republic, Switzerland and the USA.
- We now have clients in Germany, Romania and the UK.
- I published a chapter about Philippine elections in the Routledge Handbook of Political Management. It's a rather academic chapter. If you wish to get a free copy of the chapter, kindly email us at (info@perroncampaigns.com)