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PRESS RELEASE: NEW BOOK ON SUCCESSFUL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Bill Clinton, Gerhard Schröder, Luis Ignazio Lula Da Silva and Joseph Estrada all won using the same campaign strategy, says new book.

[Zurich, Switzerland] - [March 8, 2012] – How can challenger candidates overcome what is often called the incumbency advantage in an election campaign? In a new book, Swiss political scientist and consultant Dr. Louis Perron answers this question by comparing four successful opposition candidates from four totally different countries: Bill Clinton (USA, 1992), Gerhard Schröder (Germany, 1998), Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Brazil, 2002) and Joseph Estrada (Philippines 1998). Despite the fact that the candidates operated in entirely different political systems, the four successful challenger candidates do indeed share a number of strategies regarding the campaign message, positioning, timing, preparation and campaign management. The book entitled *How to Overcome the Power of Incumbency in Election Campaigns* was published by the German publisher Nomos.

In recent years, there has been a sheer explosion of books on election campaigns. Most of them, however, are either strictly academic or limited to one case or one country. For the first time, the new book takes a comparative perspective in an accessible way. It is based on numerous interviews with high-profile political consultants and strategists including James Carville (USA), Joseph Napolitan (USA), Matthias Machnig (Germany), Reli German (Philippines) and Duda Mendonça (Brazil). Ultimately, the book intends to give candidates and campaigners around the world practical advice on the campaign strategies and tactics needed to overcome the power of incumbency.

It is true that incumbent presidents or prime ministers who run for re-election have a series of advantages compared to challenger candidates. They enjoy universal awareness, easy access to the media and the possibility to dominate the agenda. If allowed to run for re-election by law, they are by definition legitimate candidates. How then can challenger candidates overcome what is often called the incumbency advantage? In his new book, Swiss political consultant Dr. Louis Perron answers this question by systematically comparing four successful challengers from four totally different countries

Bill Clinton, Gerhard Schröder, Joseph Estrada and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva were all able to exploit the weakness of their respective incumbents and put them on the defensive. They all had a very coherent and appealing message throughout their campaign or even long before the campaign. They also had an entire communication plan ready and accomplished in order to reach out to centrist swing voters. In this sense, they counterbalanced their call for change by portraying mainstream values and strategically positioning themselves in the political centre.



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The four mentioned challengers all started strategic preparations years prior to the election. This might sound obvious but politicians in reality have plenty of justifications for delaying preparations. They assume that the effect of an early pre-campaign might be forgotten, they are hesitant to spend early money or they are caught up in day-to-day affairs. Not so Clinton, Lula, Schröder and Estrada.

Lastly, the four challengers all had considerable campaign skills. The scientific literature often uses the term “challenger quality” in this respect. This consists of various points such as charisma, popularity, speaking skills, the ability to communicate through mass media and the ability to stay on message. Apart from campaign skills, all four also had key managerial skills, which allowed them to establish important discipline within an often chaotic operation.

For more information about Dr. Louis Perron or *How to Overcome the Power of Incumbency in Election Campaigns* please log on to www.perroncampaigns.com/book.php or www.perroncampaigns.com.

About the author

Dr. Louis Perron is a political scientist and consultant based in Switzerland. During the past years, he has won more than a dozen election campaigns. He has worked in his home country Switzerland as well as in Germany, Great Britain, Romania, Lithuania, Malaysia and the Philippines. Clients include two presidents, a vice president as well as numerous senators, congressmen, governors and big-city mayors.

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