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Dear Client:

Even though he avoids the spotlight, Austinite Jack Martin is recognized worldwide as a thought leader in communications, politics and business. More than any particular failure of pollsters or candidate foibles or the media in the presidential election, he is convinced that “everything you’ve been taught about how Washington works is now up for grabs.” And he makes a compelling case about social media’s power not just in politics, but business as well.

Martin cites President-Elect **Donald Trump**’s success in communicating directly to the American people – **avoiding gatekeepers of info** such as the media, leaders in business and industry, and his own political party. And he has some impressive figures to make his point.

Much has been made of Trump’s Twitter usage. Look at the totals. His follower count on **Twitter was 16.4 million** (Hillary Clinton had 11 million), Trump’s **Facebook followership is 15.7 million** (Clinton 9.7 million). Even allowing for duplicate followers, Martin says Trump’s **total direct reach into the American population could be as high as 29 million people.**

For comparison, viewership on the nightly news on NBC, ABC and CBS is about 7 million *each*. Cable celebrities such as **Anderson Cooper** (1 million nightly) and **Bill O’Reilly** (3 million nightly) command audiences a fraction of Trump’s. Top-rated shows like **Face the Nation** (3.75 million viewers), **Morning Joe** (6.19 million viewers), **CBS This Morning** (3.58 million) and **Good Morning America** (4.74 million). **By sheer numbers, Twitter is doing a better job of connecting Americans to their future president in a direct and unfiltered way than any other channel**, according to Martin.

Want more? Here’s how Martin puts it: “Even taking into account the valuable role the press plays in filtering out unreliable information, it is inarguable that **social media is where our attention – and the influence that comes with it – is moving** ... according to Pew, a full 44% of Americans use Facebook as a news source. That’s about 145 million people just on a single channel **No network or newspaper in history even comes close.**”

These staggering numbers also apply to businesses and, in fact, any organization that communicates with people – even those on a much smaller scale. It’s happening now. It simply took the presidential campaign to put a big, bright light upon it.

The Austin City Council swerved off a path Thursday that some Council watchers thought would have driven the city government toward years of mediocrity (to put it mildly). The City of Austin is a \$3 billion entity. Its CEO is the City Manager. To find a new City Manager, the city staff came up with a list of 642 firms to search for a new City Manager. The list included nurses, secretaries, computer nerd firms, etc. But none of the nation's Top Four search firms was on the list. None! The Council postponed a selection decision this week.

The delay came following heavy criticism of the process. *Texas Monthly* founder and former publisher **Mike Levy** was the first we knew of to raise his voice. He didn't mince words. **"Running want ads! Gimme a break! We will be the laughing stock of large public and private and non-profit sector entities.** Even second tier search firms are going to refuse to fill out (the city's) silly forms."

He continued: "The city staff should not, must not, be involved in this search in any way. This is so easy to fix, do and can be done right and **if this is screwed up we are screwed as a city.** But picking an excellent search firm is everything."

He provided the names of the US's four top firms for such searches: **Heidrick and Struggles ... Spencer Stuart ... Korn Ferry and Russell Reynolds.** "All are national/international – have divisions that do city and state/governmental work and all are highly regarded," he said.

Austinite **Bob Inman**, who was at the forefront of Austin's high tech resurgence beginning in 1983, had a more measured response. (Inman's management experience includes director of the National Security Agency, deputy director of the CIA and chair of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. He is a member of the National Academy of Public Administration.)

Endorsing hiring one of the nation's top four search firms mentioned by Levy, Inman told the *Austin Monitor* **"We ought to be going after the most competent candidate that we can attract, a person who will be managing not just a city, but an electric utility as well as an airport.** And I worry that we are going about this in a way that we will only look at people who have been city managers," not the strong dynamic executive Austin needs."

A frequent Council critic, attorney **Fred Lewis**, echoed Levy and Inman saying **Austin does not need "mediocre assistant city manager candidates from second tier cities.** Austin needs world-class management, which requires a first-class national search firm." Austin is *one of the few cities in the nation* that operates major enterprises such as an airport and electric and water utilities.

A new City Manager will also name a police chief and other key city management staff. So the decision this week to delay hiring a search firm was viewed as a positive step to those hoping the Austin City Council will hire one of the respected Big Four firms. Stay tuned.

Why is Austin the only major growing city in the United States that is losing African Americans? The declining numbers, according to a former mayor, are not only based on percentages of a fast-growing population but also are reflected in actual numbers. This isn't anything new. The trend has been in place for some time. But now, a UT Austin professor has researched this situation and has come up with some answers to the question.

The study focused on East Austin, Austin's historically Black-oriented neighborhood. Interestingly, many African Americans who left Austin's city limits for surrounding suburbs **still come back to East Austin for church on Sundays**, according to research by **Eric Tang**, an associate professor in UT Austin's Department of African and African Diaspora Studies.

So Tang and his team of researchers went beyond the USCensus numbers to ask church leaders to identify those in their congregation who had left Austin, then **interviewed them about why they moved**. They found most of the people wanted to tell their stories. Some findings:

Topping the list, by far, was **Affordability – named by 56%**. The second factor was **Better Schools – named by 24%**. And number three on the list was **Racism and an unwelcoming environment – named by 16%**.

The remaining four: **Higher Quality of life, 11% ... Quieter, 9% ... Overcrowded, 8%** and **Job Opportunities, 7%**. Said Tang: "Our research isn't revelatory, but only an **affirmation of the local knowledge and grounded theory of those who have experienced these issues directly.**"

The researchers *did* draw some conclusions: "African Americans did not choose to leave Austin so much as they were compelled to leave by historical, economic and governmental forces that continued to create inequalities in their lives," noted **Victoria Davis**, writing for the College of Liberal Arts magazine. "**These forces included segregation followed by gentrification, policing, educational disparities and a lack of economic opportunity.**"

Tang said the biggest surprise for him was the number of people who said they would move back to Austin if they could. This included the people who moved north, who gave high marks to their current quality of life outside of Austin, including better food stores, better parks and better access to health care.

But it might not be the same if they move back. The report focuses heavily on gentrification, noting that East Austin (close to midtown/downtown) is now **attractive to new development and new residents**. As a result, it is unaffordable for longtime East Austin African Americans.

Also, the culture is changing dramatically with the new residents. The African Americans complained to the researchers the **new arrivals focused more on walking their dogs than getting to know their neighbors**. They said this has resulted in new residents treating the streets as a dog park. And this has become a sort of unofficial symbol of gentrification.

Ten World War Two veterans – all in their 90s, one is 99 – flew from Austin to Washington DC this week to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor that started WWII. Inspirational and emotional are understatement.

Honor Flight Austin (HFA) is a non-profit organization that flies Austin area WWII vets to visit their Memorial in Washington DC several times a year. **But this was a special journey in many ways. HFA was the only group selected to bring ten vets to their nation's capital for recognition on the milestone 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor (where 2,403 Americans died).** Two of the Austin vets were survivors of the Pearl Harbor attack that President Franklin D. Roosevelt called “a day that will live in infamy” when he asked Congress to declare war on Imperial Japan. How special was it for these vets? Consider:

Led by an honor guard and bagpipe/drum team as they headed to their Southwest Airlines gate at Austin's airport Tuesday, **the flag-carrying veterans in wheel chairs were greeted by cheers, applause and shouts of “thank you for your service.”** The same scene, augmented by high school choral groups singing patriotic songs, was replicated upon landing in Washington, DC.

On the ground, their **police-escorted bus took them to the White House** for a tour of the elaborate Christmas decorations inside the “people's house.” The next morning – December 7th – they were honored by **placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.** And then, they arrived at the WWII Memorial.

There, in addition to the cheers and applause everywhere they went, **the vets were personally greeted by hero/POW Sen. John McCain and VP-elect Mike Pence.** Amid the pomp and circumstance, punctuated by the Navy band, they heard **Elliott (Toby) Roosevelt III** read his great-grandfathers' “day of infamy” speech. And they also placed wreaths at the WWII Memorial. There was more, much more – on a special day for a special group from Austin.

Speaking of wartime survivors, **Dr. Louis Overholster** was reminded of Winston Churchill's words: “Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result.”

Sincerely,



Editor/Publisher