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Feature: SouthGroup Insurance Services

Guest Column: Spencer Houldin,
Chairman Big I of America

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AGENT EDITION

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SMALL TOWN APPROACH TO BIG BUSINESS

SouthGroup Insurance's Managing Principal, Russell Martin, in front of the Leflore County Courthouse in Greenwood, Miss.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR CLIENTS WILL MOVE THE COMMUNITY FORWARD

The insurance industry has changed dramatically in the last decade. From underwriting on paper to doing everything electronically—it's been a whirlwind. Russell Martin, SouthGroup Insurance's Managing Principal in Greenwood, Miss., thinks these changes

are exciting and fun, but believes a small town approach to business will never change.

Martin received a Bachelor of Business Administration with an emphasis in finance from Mississippi State. After college, he worked for a mobile communications company in



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Small Town Approach to Big Business

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Jackson, Miss., for four years until a friend from Greenwood reached out to him about a producer position. “It was the best move I ever made,” said Martin. He has been with the company for over 25 years.

SouthGroup Insurance is a large full-service, multi-branch agency with local services supported by a central office in Jackson. Martin’s branch is one of 23 locations in Mississippi. “I’m a small town guy, and I truly believe that SouthGroup’s business approach and community efforts go hand in hand,” said Martin.



Bob Patterson, Producer; Russell Martin, Managing Principal; and Scott Wynne, Producer

By working with the client in an advisory role, we are able to formulate plans for each client to avoid, prevent, reduce, segregate, or eliminate risk not only from an insurance standpoint, but for their entire business.

The company encourages all employees to be involved in the community. Each year for the past 9 years, SouthGroup has put on a 5k run called “Make A Difference” to raise donations for the Children’s Hospital in Mississippi. They have raised over \$250,000 to date. Over 100 SouthGroup employees are involved and up to 800 people participate in the race. LUBA Workers’ Comp has been a proud sponsor of the event for the past 8 years. “We want what’s best for our local community because our

clients are considered family to us,” said Martin. Martin and his colleagues also participate in local Chambers of Commerce and are heavily involved in volunteer work. “If you aren’t involved, your community will not move forward. That’s why we’ve pushed hard to promote a culture of volunteerism and being active leaders in the areas we serve.”

When it comes to business, for Martin and his team, they aren’t just insurance agents, but trusted advisors. “By working with the client in an advisory role, we are able to formulate plans for each client to avoid, prevent, reduce, segregate, or eliminate risk not only from an insurance standpoint, but for their entire business,” said Martin.

By implementing a new standard of service and providing customized resources and consulting services to their customers, they have seen great success in the past 10 years. “A lot of the small businesses here do not have

access to human resource services, so it’s an added value we are happy to provide. It has helped a lot of businesses here tremendously.”

Being able to go the extra mile for their clients means a lot to Martin and his team. Once when a client called concerned because he only had a 30-day window to develop a safety manual for his employees, Martin offered to help. The client didn’t have the time or resources to complete the project within the time frame, but Martin knew what to do. “I told him that wasn’t going to be a problem and that we would help,” he said. Within two hours, they were able to get an English and Spanish manual out for his employees. “We take great pride in being able to provide resources and access to programs all in-house.”

Offering a trusted, quality service and partnership is what Martin and his team strives to do every day. They have instilled in their company’s core values an obligation to their insurers to provide

them with the best insurance options, at the best pricing, with the best benefits SouthGroup has to offer. And it has paid off tremendously.

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Scott and LUBA have proven to our insureds that they genuinely care about them and the safety of their employees.

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A great relationship with insurance carriers allows them to provide that high level of service. “My clients trust me to bring them quality carriers that would be the most effective and beneficial to their situation.” The great partnership he

shares with LUBA Workers’ Comp has had a large impact. “When it comes to a workers’ comp partner, they have been phenomenal. Our loss control consultant, Scott Anderson, is the best I’ve dealt with in the business. He has worked with our clients and helped them turn their accounts around. Most insureds are focused on profits, not safety. However, Scott came in and has really changed their mindset. Scott and LUBA have proven to our insureds that they genuinely care about them and the safety of their employees.”

Community service, quality partnerships, and being a trusted advisor has shaped Martin professionally, but he owes a lot of his success to what has shaped his personal life—his wife and son. “We’re a small town family doing what we can to have the best life. My son works in agriculture locally and I, like him, feel rewarded daily as we see the results of our hard work benefiting the community we live in.” 🌱