

# Empowered

*A monthly online publication published by Thompson Management Consulting, LLC for small business change makers – August 2014*

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## Former Honorary Consul General of Jamaica In Atlanta, The Honorable Vin Martin, Passes Away

*Austin E. Thompson, Jr.*



The value of a man is said to be measured by his deeds, character, integrity, and the legacy he leaves after his departure from this life. How people think of and remember you are characterized by the legacy you leave. The Honorable Vin Martin was the kind of man who, not only represented the Jamaican community with fervent passion as its diplomat, but was a leader who represented the broader Caribbean community. He was born in Trelawny, Jamaica.

The Honorable Vin Martin, known to many simply as Vin, or as I referred to him, Mr. Martin, served the Jamaican community in Atlanta as Honorary Consul from 1997 to April 2013, when he demitted office due to complications from cancer. Mr. Martin was a diplomat, entrepreneur who worked as an Immigration Attorney, friend, brother, uncle, father, and husband. Mr. Martin succumbed to cancer on July 23, 2014 after a long battle with his illness, but remained a symbol of majesty and poise until drawing his final breath. He was known as a man who gave of himself to aid his fellow Jamaicans whenever possible, and without hesitation. I remember speaking with Mr. Martin during the celebrations of Jamaica's 50<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary, and his voice beamed with pride for his country's milestone. Mr. Martin was Chairperson of the Montego Bay Sister City organization, and during this time, there was significant engagement with Jamaica in the areas of healthcare development through missions to provide much needed resources to underserved Jamaicans. He also served as President of the Atlanta Jamaica Association and Chaired the Jamaica 50<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Committee. Vin Martin was a senior diplomat and a member of the revered Consular Corps in Atlanta, who served with dignity and honor along with the Honorable Dr. Edward Layne, Consul General of Barbados, the Honorable Gandy Thomas, Consul General of Haiti, the Honorable Randy Rolle, Consul General of The Bahamas, and other esteemed Consuls from Atlanta's vast international community.

On Friday, August 1, 2014, hundreds of friends, family members, Caribbean community and business leaders, dignitaries, and colleagues packed Springfield Baptist Church in Conyers, GA to bid farewell to Vin Martin. It was an honorable and distinguished service for a gentleman who exuded such a character.



*With*

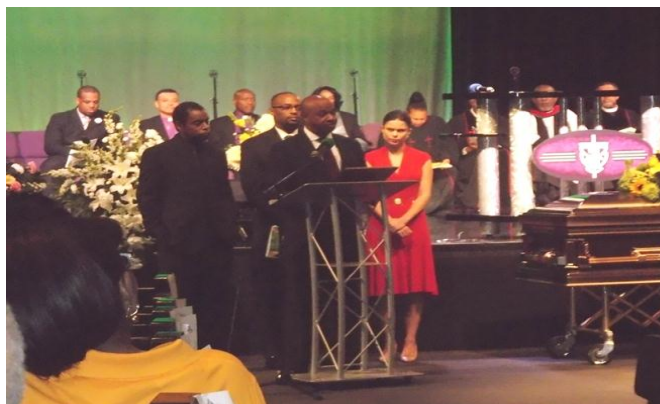
**Austin E. Thompson, Jr.**  
*CEO - Thompson Management Consulting, LLC*

**WATB 1420AM**

[www.watb1420.com](http://www.watb1420.com)

**Saturday, August 9, 2014  
4:00pm - 5:00pm**

**"Effective Management of Your  
Small Business Taxes and Finances"**



*Atlanta City Councilman, Kwanzaa Hall, and representatives of Mayor Kasim Reed's office present a proclamation in Vin Martin's honor*

Representatives from the offices of the Jamaican Governor General and Prime Minister attended to deliver messages from their respective offices, as well as representatives of the Ambassador of Jamaica in Washington, D.C. Atlanta City Councilman, Kwanza Hall, and representatives from the office of Atlanta Mayor, Kasim Reed, read a proclamation in Vin Martin's honor. Rep. Billy Mitchell of the Georgia State Legislature and DeKalb County Commissioner, Larry Johnson, were also in attendance. Atlanta Jamaica Association President, Mr. Alan Stewart, delivered inspiring remarks on behalf of his organization and the Atlanta Jamaican community, and members of the Montego Bay Sister Cities Medical Mission were all front and center to share the passion Vin Martin exemplified in bringing much needed medical supplies, support, and other resources to Jamaica. His sons, Kieron and Cory Martin gave an emotional account of what their father meant to them, especially as they participated in the sport of soccer as young children. Many dignitaries, who were unable to attend, sent messages in honor of the life and work of Vin Martin. There were music, dance performances, soloists singing touching renditions, speeches, praise, and all knowing that the man in whose honor we all gathered watched from above in grand amazement, wondering how he could have positively impacted so many lives in his short time on this Earth. That, indeed, is what Vin Martin did. He touched the hearts and souls of everyone with whom he came into contact, leaving a legacy on which we must carry on the work he commenced.

Vin Martin will surely be missed in the Atlanta community, and fond memories of his infinite contributions will be shared among those whose lives were touched and affected by his genuine soul for an infinite amount of time beyond his passing.

His legacy will forever live in the hearts and minds of the Jamaican community in Atlanta, and we will all be challenged to fill his enormous shoes to give as he gave. We will all be challenged, not just to live vicariously through him, but to emulate his work ethic and passion for serving. We shall forever remember The Honorable Vin Martin, who left us knowing his contributions were made to improve each life he touched. Thank you for your valiant and honorable service, and being a genuine change maker. 🇯🇲

## Going Green With Be Green Lighting

**Austin E. Thompson, Jr.**



*L-R: Mike Boodram, Ted Corbett, Bill Kitts, Rod Freeman, and Sony Leckhai*

Imagine a world with new innovative technology currently in development to reduce the substantial amount of energy we consume in a year, resulting in lower energy costs from implementing this new technology. As population growth and the increase and expansion of businesses continue at an accelerated pace, the increased demand for greater amount of energy will continue to drive up its cost of usage, especially impacting the bottom lines of small business owners. Many businesses are increasing their hours of operation, for which the added cost of energy usage will impede the opportunity to invest in further development of their products and services, and fail to realize any expansion opportunities.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), total electricity consumption used for lighting in residential homes in 2012 totaled 186 billion kWh, and 256 billion kWh for commercial, institutional, and public streets and highway lighting. The U.S. EIA is an agency within the Department of Energy which collects, analyzes and produces statistics for the energy industry and policy making.

Average monthly costs for commercial/industrial lighting usage can range between \$15,000 and \$20,000 and up, contingent on the number of lighting fixtures in a facility and the size of that facility. Most manufacturing facilities run their operations almost on a 24 hour daily cycle, therefore, costs will be extremely higher. The use of incandescent and fluorescent bulbs continues to drive up electricity costs, while adding to the exorbitant overhead expense of maintaining a company's operations.

Be Green Lighting (BGL), an LED light and fixture manufacturing company in Suwanee, GA, has positioned itself to be a major innovator of LED retrofit and lighting technology, which can help businesses realize a cost savings of 50-75% and higher, helping to return those cost savings back to the business to reinvest in developing operations. BGL manufactures light bulbs and fixtures for indoor and outdoor environments, as well as for commercial and industrial applications. BGL assist their clients to "be green" by providing energy cost saving and environmentally friendly solutions. The replacement of high energy and costly lights are made with retrofitted LED technology, while contributing to a cleaner and greener environment. Companies are able to keep their original fixtures, but only replace the incandescent and fluorescent bulbs with those made with BGL LED's. These LED (Light Emitting Diode) bulbs require much less energy to produce light, and on average are rated for 100,000 hours and more. Incandescent lights will average a lifespan of about 1,000 hours. If the fixtures are unable to accept a retrofit LED bulb, the old fixture and ballast will be replaced with a new fixture designed specifically to accept an LED bulb. LED's are tiny light bulbs that are part of a circuit. Unlike incandescent lights, they do not have filaments, which allow the LED's to produce light for a much longer duration without generating high levels of heat. BGL has several lighting products, which will help provide solutions to reduce a company's high energy cost, especially those with large warehouses and manufacturing plants that burn more energy. The lighting technology is used in non-industrial and warehouse environments, such as universities and colleges, schools, office buildings, apartment buildings, and in any environment where LED technology can help save on energy costs.

Each of BGL's products is UL 1598C and ETL accredited, which underscores the high quality standard of their products. I recently interviewed Mr. Rod Freeman, Chief Operating Officer of Be Green Lighting, who was most gracious in assisting with this article.

**EMP:** How long has Be Green Lighting been in existence?

**BGL:** Be Green has been in business for 3.5 years

**EMP:** What was the motivation for starting this company?

**BGL:** Noticing the rapid improvement of LED technology and how the product had become the only real viable option for commercial and industrial lighting challenges.

**EMP:** What was important about LED retrofit lights that appealed to you?

**BGL:** The importance of being able to retrofit as oppose to having to purchase a new fixture is that it saves the customer about 40% in cost when comparing the two options. This is a huge advantage for the customer when trying to leverage their cost basis.

**EMP:** How does Be Green differentiate from its competitors, and what gives you a competitive advantage over your competitors?

**BGL:** Be Green differentiates itself from its competitors by being solutions orientated. We carefully listen to our customers and come up with real solutions to help resolve their challenges. As a manufacturer, we bring to the table flexibility in our product offerings. An example of this competitive advantage is our component driven products compared to the industry wide integrated product line. We have the ability in a new fixture setting or a retrofit option to recommend a component driven product which allows for easier and less costly repairs in the event there's a failure to the fixture down the line. These options provide valuable cost savings for the end user over the years.

**EMP:** What drives the Be Green brand?


**BGL:** Our diverse group of professionals along with our affiliate partners provides a turn-key start to finish approach to the entire project process. This method establishes us as an organization of choice to customers which increases the notability of our brand.

**EMP:** How are you positioned in your industry?

**BGL:** We're actually positioned quite well. We're set up to allow our sales channel to operate totally separate from the technical and operations side of the business. Be Green Lighting does not sell directly to the end user. We allow our MRAs, Wholesalers, Distributors, and electrical supply companies to sell and market the products to our customer base. This enables creativity and also allows operations to keep the focus on product innovation and consistency.

**EMP:** Where will Be Green be in 10 years?

**BGL:** In ten years, Be Green Lighting will be a publicly held company trading on the New York Stock Exchange. We also see ourselves as having evolved into an internationally recognized company in the LED industry.

Empowered would like to wish Be Green Lighting much success as it grows to become a major energy solutions company, and targets an IPO in the future. For more information about Be Green Lighting, and to see their energy saving options for your business, please visit them at [www.begreenlighting.com](http://www.begreenlighting.com), and **BE GREEN!** 

## Five Basic Tax Tips for New Businesses

**Bill Hampton**

If you start a business, one key to success is to know about your federal tax obligations. You may need to know not only about income taxes but also about payroll taxes. Here are five basic tax tips that can help get your business off to a good start.

**1. Business Structure.** As you start out, you'll need to [choose the structure of your business](#). Some common types include sole proprietorship, partnership and corporation. You may also choose to be an S corporation or Limited Liability Company. You'll report your business activity using the IRS forms which are right for your business type.

**2. Business Taxes.** There are four general [types of business taxes](#). They are income tax, self-employment tax, employment tax and excise tax. The type of taxes your business pays usually depends on which type of business you choose to set up. You may need to pay your taxes by making estimated tax payments.

**3. Employer Identification Number.** You [may need to get an EIN](#) for federal tax purposes.

**4. Accounting Method.** An [accounting method](#) is a set of rules that determine when to report income and expenses. Your business must use a consistent method. The two that are most common are the cash method and the accrual method. Under the cash method, you normally report income in the year that you receive it and deduct expenses in the year that you pay them. Under the accrual method, you generally report income in the year that you earn it and deduct expenses in the year that you incur them. This is true even if you receive the income or pay the expenses in a future year.

## Lecture Series and Book Signing Atlanta-Fulton County Library System

### A BRAND New You: Taking Ownership of Your Personal BRAND

Monday, July 14, 2014

6:00pm – 7:30pm

The Kirkwood Branch

11 Kirkwood Road

Atlanta, GA 30317

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

6:30pm – 7:30pm

The Wolf Creek Branch

3100 Enon Road, S.W.

Atlanta, GA 30331

Wednesday, October 8, 2014

6:00pm – 7:30pm

The Fairburn Branch

60 Valley View Drive

Fairburn, GA 30213

### Ordained For Success: Don't Settle for Being Average (Summer 2015)

Tuesday, October 21, 2014

6:30pm – 7:30pm

The Wolf Creek Branch

3100 Enon Road, S.W.

Atlanta, GA 30331

Author and speaker, Austin E. Thompson, Jr. leads a dynamic and thought provoking discussion on building and maintaining a winning personal brand, and shares insight from his soon to be released book.

**For Information: Contact each library location listed  
above or call (404) 587-3949**

**5. Employee Health Care.** The [Small Business Health Care Tax Credit](#) helps small businesses and tax-exempt organizations pay for health care coverage they offer their employees. A small employer is eligible for the credit if it has fewer than 25 employees who work full-time, or a combination of full-time and part-time. Beginning in 2014, the maximum credit is 50 percent of premiums paid for small business employers and 35 percent of premiums paid for small tax-exempt employers, such as charities.

For 2015 and after, employers employing at least a certain number of employees (generally 50 full-time employees or a combination of full-time and part-time employees that is equivalent to 50 full-time employees) will be subject to the [Employer Shared Responsibility provision](#).

Get all the tax basics of [starting a business](#) on IRS.gov at the [Small Business and Self-Employed Tax Center](#).

#### Additional IRS Resources:

- [IRS Tax Calendar for Businesses and Self-Employed](#)
- [Publication 505](#), Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax
- [Publication 334](#), Tax Guide for Small Business
- [Publication 225](#), Farmers Tax guide
- [Publication 535](#), Business Expenses
- [Publication 587](#), Business Use of Your Home
- [Publication 510](#), Excise Taxes
- [Publication 538](#), Accounting Periods and Methods

#### IRS YouTube Videos:

- *Small Business Health Care Tax Credit* – [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [ASL](#)
- *IRS Online Tax Calendar* – [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [ASL](#)
- *Simplified Home Office Deduction* – [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [ASL](#)

#### IRS Podcasts:

- *Small Business Health Care Tax Credit* – [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- *IRS Online Tax Calendar* – [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- *Simplified Home Office Deduction* – [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

## 11<sup>th</sup> Annual National Black Business Month

**August 1 – 31, 2014**

***Honoring Our Nation's  
African-American Businesses***

**<http://www.blackbusinessmonth.com>**

## Entrepreneur Spotlight



### Executive Business Consultants, LLC

Executive Business Consultants, LLC is a tax return preparation, business consulting, and wealth coaching firm based in the Atlanta, Georgia area.

The mission of our tax return preparation division is to successfully and legally reduce your tax liabilities. We continually look for ways to minimize your taxes throughout the year, not just at the end of the year. We go beyond tax compliance and proactively recommend tax saving strategies to maximize your after-tax income.

The mission of our business consulting division is to help entrepreneurs and small business owners start, manage and grow their businesses.

The mission of our wealth coaching division is to provide wealth and credit coaching to individuals, couples, families and groups who want to improve their current financial situation.

#### We provide the following services:

Tax Return Preparation  
Prior Year Tax Return Preparation  
Tax Consulting  
Business Incorporations  
Business Start-up Packages  
Business Coaching  
Business Consulting  
IRS Employer Identification Number Procurement  
Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) Number Procurement  
Accounting Software Training  
Budgeting  
Wealth Coaching  
Wealth Building Workshops  
Free Pick-up and Drop-off Services

Call us at [404-482-3170](tel:404-482-3170) to schedule a complimentary telephone consultation.

Email us at [info@ExecutiveBusinessConsultantsLLC.com](mailto:info@ExecutiveBusinessConsultantsLLC.com)

Website: [www.ExecutiveBusinessConsultantsLLC.com](http://www.ExecutiveBusinessConsultantsLLC.com)

Like our Facebook page:

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P.S. We have a generous referral program so please share our information with family, friends and business associates.

**Bill Hampton**, CEO

Executive Business Consultants, LLC

PO Box 2754

Stockbridge, GA 30281

Tel: [404-482-3170](tel:404-482-3170)

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# Business Marketplace

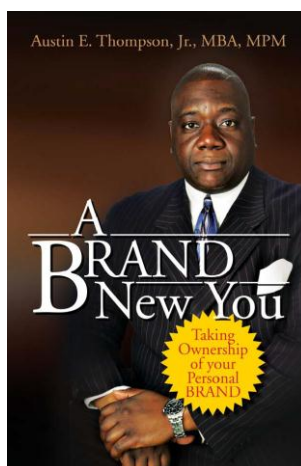
*Have your business advertised in our publication to over 1,500 subscribers. Thompson Management Consulting, LLC promotes small businesses and entrepreneurs, and our subscriber database is growing fast. Be empowered, and invest in your continued success. Visit us at [www.tmconsultingllc.com](http://www.tmconsultingllc.com) and send your comments or questions to [info@tmconsultingllc.com](mailto:info@tmconsultingllc.com)*



Fort Valley State University, a unit of the University System of Georgia, has a clear vision to increase its global sphere of influence under the direction of its newly elected 9<sup>th</sup> President of the university, Dr. Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith. This university is transforming young boys and girls into men and women who are Bold, Amazing, and Prepared to compete in a competitive global environment. For further information, please log on to [www.fvsu.edu](http://www.fvsu.edu)



Celebrating 20 years of business operations as one of Georgia's premier shipping companies, Caribbean International Shipping Services has been an institution in the metro Atlanta area providing consistent and quality service to its customers, and has provided jobs to residents of DeKalb County. Please support our small businesses.



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## Gwinnett Association of Business Entrepreneurs – GABE

Free Networking & Business Meeting

Vendor Tables \$25.00 – Advertise your business

*The Lona Gallery*

176 W. Crogan Street, Lawrenceville, GA 30046

August Meeting Dates: 8/11/14 and 8/25/14 – 6:30pm to 8:00pm

For Information: Carmelita Marcia (404) 509-0690



Please join Austin E. Thompson, Jr., Co-host on the Carib & Company Show's Entrepreneurship and Economic Development segment for a discussion on **"Effective Management of Small Business Taxes and Finances."** We will have Mr. Bill Hampton, CEO, of Executive Business Consultants, LLC joining us in the studio live to discuss steps for small businesses and entrepreneurs in the effective management of their business taxes and finances.

Tune in this Saturday, August 9, 2014 at 4:00pm on 1420AM, or join us online at [www.watb1420.com](http://www.watb1420.com), and click on listen live. Thank you very much for your support, and we look forward to a progressive discussion. We welcome you to call in with questions.

## Seeking Professional Articles

As a newsletter supporting small business and economic development, we seek your valuable professional input and interest in contributing articles in Empowered. If you would like to submit articles and promote yourself, please contact us at [info@tmconsultingllc.com](mailto:info@tmconsultingllc.com). Be a change maker and join the movement of small business owners and entrepreneurs who are making a positive impact in business innovation.