

Interview Assessment #6

Name of Professional: Tracy Gamble

Profession: Marketing and Campaign Strategy Consultant

Company: Gamble Media Group

Date of Interview: 11/11/2020

Assessment:

This past week I had the opportunity to interview Tracy Gamble. Mrs. Gamble is a local campaign worker and political strategy consultant for many local elected officials. I had gotten in contact with Mrs. Gamble through a friend of mine who's mom was a campaign treasurer for the 2020 Frisco City Council election and the local runoff elections a few years prior. Mrs. Gamble is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and has been working in political strategy and marketing ever since.

At the beginning of the interview, I asked Mrs. Gamble about how she got her start in the career of marketing as a whole and then how she made her way into political strategy later on. She said that in her early years of college she had no intention of going into marketing and was an English major with a minor in Psychology. She started with marketing through a local real estate company in Austin. She was one of the youngest employees of the company at the time so many of her co-workers assumed she was well versed in the use of email marketing and digital marketing strategies so she was put in charge of constructing all of their digital marketing strategies. However, she had no prior experience in digital marketing or computers, but she took the offer and started to teach herself from that point on. She quickly gained the title of "Website marketing expert" and started to get the attention of many Austin locals. After a few years, she gained a long wrap sheet of projects for different companies. As for getting involved in political marketing, she was called by a Texas senator to produce a website for their Texas scholarship opportunity. I found out here that if a government official needs to produce something that is not directly related to government actions they consider it a personal project and the government does not contribute or assist with it. Once she designed that her name began to pop up for several different elected officials and became a very successful campaign marketer. She also said that her original major and minor really benefited her work because with her psychology background she was very aware of what goes on in people's heads when making decisions and getting invested in different things so that greatly benefited her ability to design efficiently and easily to use website layouts and marketing strategies. Her English degree also helped because she was able to make quick edits and write for those websites.

Another topic I asked her about is how the switch from public races and in-person communications to a predominantly online and indirect form of campaigning has really changed the way local officials run for office. She said that events such as meet and greets and local addresses had to be transferred into a zoom format which caused some issues here and there but overall really saved some of the golden

campaigning time. The switch also resulted in a loss of personal connection between candidates and constituents which really increased the levels of personality candidates had to convey in order to be more well perceived by certain voter demographics. This greatly benefited candidates who had on camera and film experience and caused a disadvantage for those who weren't experienced in that format.

Another topic we touched on during our interview was the difference between working on a campaign with a party affiliated candidate versus a non-affiliated candidate because Frisco elections run on a non-partisan platform. She said that one of the issues with the party-affiliated campaign system is that many voters do not fit within the ideals and thoughts of either party so they are left somewhere in the middle not knowing who to vote for and feeling unrepresented. This causes voters to "settle" for the lesser of two evils instead of voting for someone who they really believe in. However, with a non-partisan platform, voters are forced to pay more attention to the specific policies and ideas of the candidates which makes them get more involved and feel more comfortable about making a decision on who to vote for.

We also talked about how Frisco experienced such an extreme increase in early voter turnout as compared to past years. She said that she believed the pandemic was a contributor to that because it caused people to feel uneasy about mail-in voting so they went to vote early to make sure their votes were counted and to avoid long lines and large groups of people.

This interview really gave me a new perspective on local politics and just the process of running an election/ campaign overall. I really enjoyed getting to learn Mrs. Gamble's career story and her takes on recent phenomena that have been occurring in light of the COVID 19 Pandemic.