

## **Character Matters**

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Knowledge, skills and competency are all important attributes in a candidate. However, it is character, one's inner compass and moral point of view, which determines the culture of a company.

We have all seen the consequences of highly competent business leaders who lacked integrity. The result is a focus on internal controls and regulatory compliance; these only treat the symptoms. We need to focus on the root cause of the ethical lapses before they occur, which I believe is found in the discussion of character.

It is important to find a candidate that has the competence and character needed to accomplish the company's goals. I think of character and competence as a bicycle. The back wheel and all the spokes have different knowledge, skills and abilities written on them. They are important – the back wheel provides the power to move the bike – but it is the front wheel, one's character, that determines where you will go. Neither wheel is more important than the other. You need them both to ride the bike.

At Kimray, we not only look at the experience of a candidate, but we focus on the character as well. We believe that it is important to invest in a workforce committed to ethics, integrity and character. In order to accomplish this, we start at the beginning: the interview. We ask questions that will give us insight into a candidate's concept of self and their view on character; questions like "Have you ever asked for forgiveness? Explain. What are three character strengths you see within yourself? And what are three character weaknesses? How do you mitigate these weaknesses within your life?" These are not trick questions; we want to have a discussion about how the candidate views the world and what drives them to act the way they do.

The effects of capable business leaders with poor morals can be detrimental to a company's success, so let me challenge my fellow business leaders to invest in growing workforces built on ethics and good character. In the next interview ask your candidate, "Have you ever experienced a loss for doing what is right? Explain." See how they respond and consider how they might add to the culture you're trying to create within your company. After all, character matters.