

# *HIRING FOR CHARACTER*

---

*CHARACTER + COMPETENCE = CONSISTENCY*

*Brian Butler, Director of HR, City of Tuscaloosa*

# The way we are hiring isn't working!



According to a recent study by Leadership IQ:

- **46%** of hired employees will fail within 18 months while only **19%** of hires will become successful in their new role.
- The challenge is clear: Hire better, hire right – the *first* time.

# Traditional Hiring Mindsets



- Competency-based hiring
- IQ-based hiring
- Hiring for the right “fit”

*It's time to step back, take a breath, and really think about **what we want** in a new hire.*

# More from the Leadership IQ Study



Hiring managers spend too much time focusing on a person's *competence* and too little time assessing an applicant's:

- motivation
- coachability
- emotional intelligence.

*These qualities are, in essence, the **true character** of the person.*

# Who would you choose?



An applicant with a high level of competence and a low level of character?

*or*

An applicant with a **moderate** level of competence and a high level of character?

# Be careful!



Don't fall into the trap of thinking attitude is character.

- Attitude is often just a **reflection** of a person's character.
- It's a limited trait of a person and usually is poorly measured as being either "good" or "bad."
- Besides, almost everyone shows up at an interview with a wonderfully positive attitude.
- **Attitude can be faked**, and this is especially true in an interview.

# So, what's the answer?



Many successful Fortune 500 CEOs and human resource practitioners responsible for hiring people as well as researchers who study human motivation and performance have concluded the following:

- *The truest and most effective form of hiring is a relentless focus on hiring for character.*

# So, what's the answer?



Hiring a person with the right competence level is important.

But we hiring managers must put special emphasis on *understanding a person's true character*.

Hiring for **character** and **competence** together is the key to hiring better and hiring right.



# The C3 Concept:

## A Formula for Hiring and Developing People



If you want to have long-term, *consistent*, and high performance results - achieved in the right way - you *must* have both *character* and *competence*.

# The C3 Concept:

## A Formula for Hiring and Developing People



The C3 formula explains why so many hires fail:

- There are many who have a high level of **competence** (C2) and get hired.
- Yet, according to many surveys, the reason people derail or get fired is due to **character** (C1) issues that include dishonesty, inability to get along with others, poor work quality, refusing to adapt to change, and tardiness or absenteeism.

# The **C3** Concept:

## A Formula for Hiring and Developing People



**C1 Character** describes the mental model used to determine one's actions.

- In organizations, it includes the cultural norms and values that guide its decisionmaking.
- To hire the right people, you must determine the **character** strengths you want new hires to display.

# The **C3** Concept:

## A Formula for Hiring and Developing People



**C2 Competence** describes the knowledge and ability needed to do something well measured against a common standard.

- It is the ability to solve technical problems.
- To hire the right people, you must also determine the **competency** strengths you want new hires to hold.

# The C3 Concept:

## A Formula for Hiring and Developing People



**C3 CONSISTENCY**

**C3 Consistency** is the ability to produce the same results over an extended time, which increases trust.

- This requires a culture of **character** and **competence**.
- Hiring for both **character** and **competence** will help you create a workforce of employees, managers, and leaders who are getting results the right way and **consistently** over a long period of time.

# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



Issue/Problem: Tardiness/Late to work or meetings

Character Quality: Punctuality

Character Definition: Showing esteem for others by doing the right things at the right time.

# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



Issue/Problem:

Inattentiveness. Missing important information.

Character Quality:

Attentiveness

Character Definition:

Showing the worth of a person/task by giving my undivided attention.

# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



Issue/Problem: Resisting change or the ideas of others.

Character Quality: Flexibility

Character Definition: Willingness to change ideas/plans without getting upset.



# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



Issue/Problem: Incomplete or poor work.

Character Quality: Diligence

Character Definition: Investing all my energy to complete the tasks assigned to me.

# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



Issue/Problem: Poor customer service. Poor attitude/energy at work.

Character Quality: Enthusiasm

Character Definition: Expressing joy in each task as I give it my best effort.

# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



Issue/Problem: Lack of follow-through. Not dependable.

Character Quality: Dependability

Character Definition: Fulfilling what I consented to do, even if it means unexpected sacrifice.

# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



Issue/Problem: Ego-driven or selfish behaviors.  
Treating others poorly.

Character Quality: Humility

Character Definition: Acknowledging that achievement results from the investment of others in my life.

# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



**Issue/Problem:** Cutting corners. Sub-par work product. Poor quality.

**Character Quality:** Thoroughness

**Character Definition:** Knowing what factors will diminish the effectiveness of my work/words, if neglected.

# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



Issue/Problem:

Poor communication.

Character Quality:

Persuasiveness

Character Definition:

Understanding others so I can effectively communicate with them.

# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



Issue/Problem:	Lack of initiative, drive, or work ethic.
Character Quality:	Initiative
Character Definition:	Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it.

# Workplace Issues/Problems and the Character Qualities They Reflect



**Issue/Problem:** Not getting along with others.  
Handling conflict poorly.

**Character Quality:** Sensitivity

**Character Definition:** Using my senses to perceive the true attitudes/emotions of others.



# Character & Success



Did you ever think of punctuality, sensitivity, humility, or flexibility as personal traits that reflect **character**?

Many people haven't made this connection.

Yet, these are qualities that greatly affect the success of the person and ultimately the organization.

# How do you measure character?



**Character** is no longer an arbitrary concept.

A person's **character** can be measured by observing a person's behaviors and by getting a better understanding of how they have behaved in certain situations in the past.

Using the **character** quality definitions helps managers better understand what to look for and how to assess candidates during an interview.

# How to Hire for Character & Competence



## Pre-Step: Develop a Character-Based Job Application

- Sample Form (pp. 11-13)

# How to Hire for Character & Competence

**Step 1: Identify the Character Qualities** you desire in a new hire.

- Using a list of character qualities, determine the top 4 that are non-negotiable for the job.
- Of course, we want to find people who display all qualities.
- However, for the purposes of preparing for an interview and making a decision on a person's level of character, focus on the 4 most important qualities for the job.
- **Sample Interview Process Form p. 15**

# How to Hire for Character & Competence



**Step 2: Identify the Competencies** (skills, knowledge, know-how) necessary for the employee who will fill the job.

Think about how both **character** and **competence** work together in a way that will help the new employee become successful.

For example, if the job will require a great deal of collaboration to manage the creation and production of a new product, you need to focus on the pairing of the **character** quality of persuasiveness with the **competency** of project management.

# How to Hire for Character & Competence

**Step 3: Create an Interview Plan** that utilizes questions that assess the demonstration of character qualities in a candidate's behavior.

For example, if a hiring manager has identified "Diligence" as a **character** quality of importance, the following questions could be asked:

- *Tell about a time you were assigned a task you absolutely dreaded. What did you do?*
- *Give me an example of a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.*
- *Share an instance when you were in charge of a project. How did fulfill your responsibility?*

**Sample Interview Questions (pp. 16-28)**

# How to Hire for Character & Competence

**Step 3: Create an Interview Plan** that utilizes questions that assess the demonstration of character qualities in a candidate's behavior.

Notice that you are not using the word diligence or defining the quality for them. Rather, you are asking the questions and looking for evidence to support their diligence – *Investing all my energy to complete the task assigned to me.*

A candidate you would rate high on diligence would likely be someone who talks about:

- setting a goal
- creating an action plan
- determining priorities
- overcoming adversity
- asking for input from a mentor in order to make good decisions.

# How to Hire for Character & Competence

**Step 4: Use a Character Rating System** to appraise each candidate in the interview.

By using a rating system, you keep your measurements of each candidate organized and, as much as possible, guard against bias.

The rating system doesn't have to be complex. It could be a simple four-point system: 1- Marginal, 2- Competent, 3- Above Average, 4- Excellent.

- Competence Scoring Form p. 10
- Character Scoring Form p. 31



# Why is this important?



It's no secret the hiring process is a critical component to ensuring your organization has the right people to meet your goals.

Creating a hiring process that places emphasis on hiring people based on high **character** and high **competence** can put you in rare company and pave the way for lower turnover, higher-performance, a healthier culture, and success as an organization.

# Hiring for Character Toolkit



*[www.strataleadership.com](http://www.strataleadership.com)*