

Measuring the Return on Character

When we hear about unethical executives whose careers and companies have gone down in flames, it's sadly unsurprising. Hubris and greed have a way of catching up with people, who then lose the power and wealth they've so fervently pursued. But is the opposite also true? Do highly principled leaders and their organizations perform especially well?

They do, according to a new study by KRW International, a Minneapolis-based leadership consultancy. The researchers found that CEOs whose employees gave them high marks for character had an average return on assets of 9.35% over a two-year period. That's nearly five times as much as what those with low character ratings had; their ROA averaged only 1.93%.

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