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## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN AN ADVISOR

*By: Joe Ramey, CPA*

Whether it's becoming a business owner, trustee or beneficiary of a trust, or executor of an estate, there comes a time when seeking out a professional advisor is necessary. But where do you even begin to find that right advisor and what should you look for in an advisor? In most situations, for example becoming a trustee or executor or business owner, an advisory team is needed because the specialties of each advisor are unique. There are several common qualities to look for in any advisor that will be on the team.

**Technical Strengths and Credentials** These qualities are fairly straight forward and typically an advisor will display their credentials and area(s) of specialty on their website. When evaluating their technical expertise, look at their speaking engagements and for articles written in the specialty areas that are important to your situation and background. For example, if you just became an executor of an estate, you want to find an attorney that not only focuses on estate and probate, but also speaks on the topic and has authored articles in that area. Lastly, it is also important to note any professional groups or boards in which they participate; this will help in understanding how current they are in what is going on in their specialty.

**Referrals** The best way to start looking for an advisor is by talking with your family and friends who may know or currently have trusted advisors. If your close circles of acquaintances are able to refer someone they work with, then you will have more comfort in knowing how that advisor will work with you. Another good referral source is your own current advisors from other professions. For example, if you are in need of an investment advisor, contact your accountant or attorney and see if they have a recommendation for you.

**Personality** Sometimes the most important quality to evaluate and assess in an advisor is their personality. The most technically sound professional may not be the right fit because of differences in personalities. Always meet face-to-face with a potential advisor and evaluate how they speak with you and how you feel when you talk with them. If you walk away scratching your head trying to figure out what they were talking about, they may not be the right advisor for you.

Here at Zinner & Co., we maintain a vast network of professionals in various fields and are always able to recommend an advisor that will work best with you. Our Exclusive Service Provider Program (ESP) is a group of the "best of the best" advisors in their respected fields, which allows us to deliver a pre-screened list of quality referrals to our clients based on their specific needs.

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