

# MOMENTUM

CAREER INSIGHTS FROM FIVE TOP GLOBAL EXECUTIVES

## **Grace Speights,**

Partner, Morgan Lewis & Bockius, LLP in Washington, D.C.

“I focus my practice on counseling and defending clients in connection with employment discrimination claims, primarily those where the claimants are seeking to represent a class of individuals. I like the human side of labor and employment law because it involves individuals and not just company against company.

Unlike a lot of other attorneys who practice law in large corporate law firms, I’m a first-generation professional. I grew up in a poor neighborhood. My mom worked in a factory but understood the value of hard work and good moral character. She has been instrumental in my success, both when I was growing up and even now. She has supported me as I tried to be the supermom/superlawyer.

Having a supportive spouse and supportive law partners has also been a big help. When I came to this firm right out of law school, several partners invested in me, to make sure I was successful. They took time to teach me and to mentor me even though they were just as busy as I am today. That kind of mentoring makes a big difference for anyone.” >>>



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**Deirdre Kenny,**  
Managing Partner, CTPartners in London

"A significant part of my role at CTPartners is to facilitate meaningful communications. That is especially important when communications are between people of different cultures who speak different languages.

It's interesting. Even during my childhood, communication was a focal point. I was born in Naples, Italy, but raised in Brooklyn, New York. My father was a pilot whose job took us around the world, and my mother was a French teacher. So communicating in other languages was emphasized at home, as was a willingness to explore different countries and their cultures. I am grateful to my parents for that.

Of course, communication is not just about having a precise vocabulary. It's about delivering a message, conveying an idea. In our business, it's about making persuasive connections despite cultural and language obstacles. With global searches, we must foster effective communication between the candidate and the company, so that they are building a productive relationship from an early stage. When building a global business, both sides take an even greater leap of faith because they won't have the luxury of constant contact. They won't be able to walk down the hall for a casual conversation. So our efforts to translate and facilitate that communication and connectivity between the candidate and the company are absolutely critical to success."

▲ **Carlos Enrique Moreno, General Manager,**  
Homecenter Stores/Sodimac, Bogotá, Colombia

"Last year we opened five new stores and hired 1,200 people. This year we will hire another 1,500. Growing more than 35% per year for the last seven years creates many challenges. First, there is the challenge to get the right sourcing from different parts of the world. Second, to hire the best people, train them, and help them assimilate into our culture.

Another challenge is to have a focused vision of where we are going. The vision has to motivate and challenge everyone. And we have to do all of that with passion. I want all our people to enjoy what we are doing and feel proud of the positive impact we have in our society.

In any part of the world, especially a developing country, you have a social responsibility to think about the environment, people, human rights, and the quality of products that your company sells. So we participate in the Global Reporting Initiative program, which provides a checklist for each stage of business to see how you are fulfilling your social responsibility. We also buy from companies that work in co-ops or employ people with disadvantages or handicaps. Our country is going through great change and improvement. As a business, we prefer to work with companies that are committed to helping our society continue to change and improve."



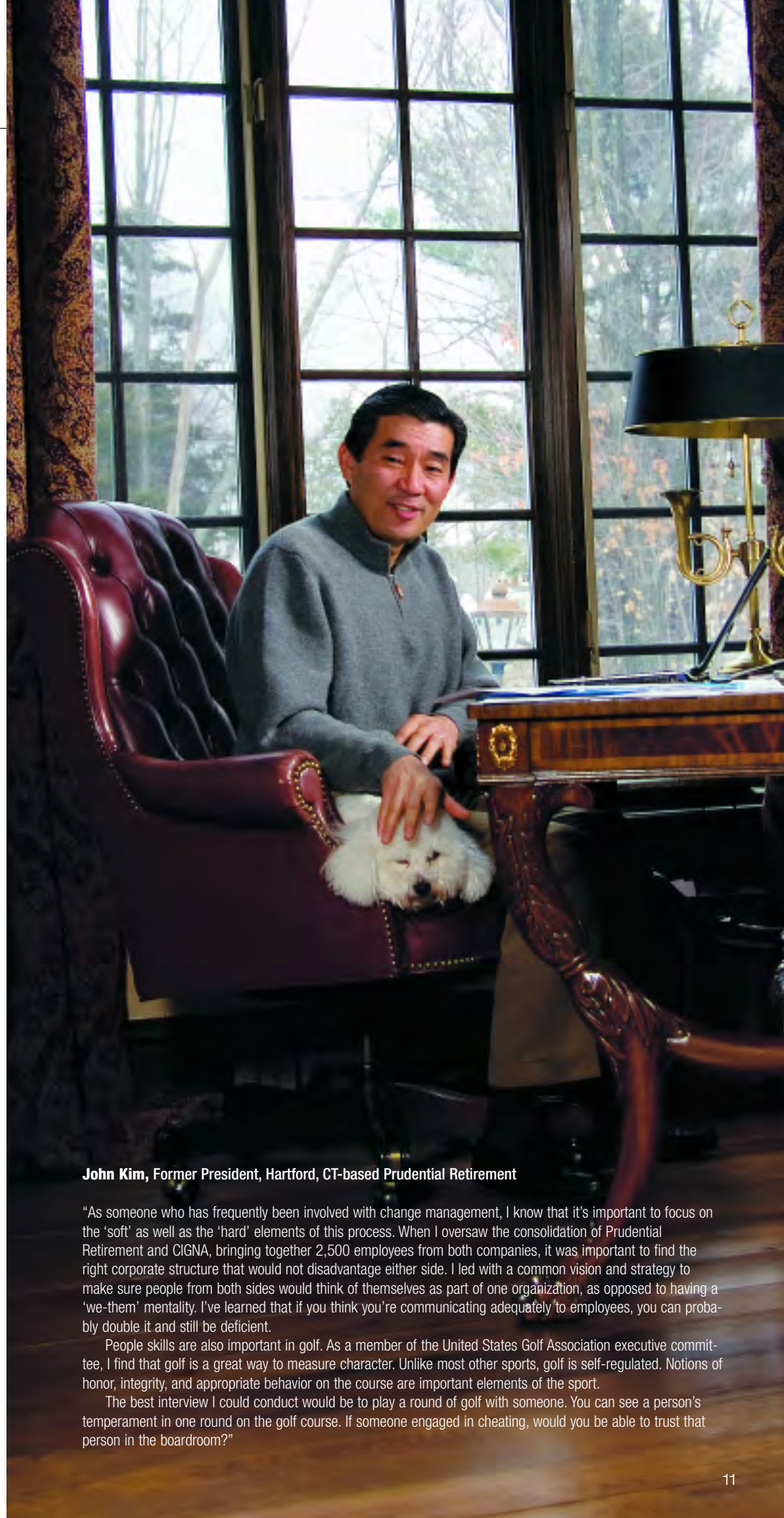


◀ **Marc Lafeuille,**  
President and CEO, Intendis in Berlin

"I love to travel and to learn foreign languages. My father was in the Navy and then in international business, so I was raised in different countries: France, Canada, and Switzerland. As an adult, I have lived and worked in France, Brazil, Argentina, and now Germany. I speak four languages fluently, and I'm starting to learn German, with some difficulty, I must admit.

You can lead a company from wherever you are. Maybe it's the BlackBerry disease, but when I'm away I don't have the impression that I'm away. I feel connected to my company with all these communications means.

My experiences traveling and moving to different countries have given me the ability to perceive what's going on in different situations from an emotional intelligence perspective. For instance, if a meeting is not going well, I try to visualize the perceptions on both sides of the table and understand how the different beliefs influence the team dynamics."



**John Kim, Former President, Hartford, CT-based Prudential Retirement**

"As someone who has frequently been involved with change management, I know that it's important to focus on the 'soft' as well as the 'hard' elements of this process. When I oversaw the consolidation of Prudential Retirement and CIGNA, bringing together 2,500 employees from both companies, it was important to find the right corporate structure that would not disadvantage either side. I led with a common vision and strategy to make sure people from both sides would think of themselves as part of one organization, as opposed to having a 'we-them' mentality. I've learned that if you think you're communicating adequately to employees, you can probably double it and still be deficient.

People skills are also important in golf. As a member of the United States Golf Association executive committee, I find that golf is a great way to measure character. Unlike most other sports, golf is self-regulated. Notions of honor, integrity, and appropriate behavior on the course are important elements of the sport.

The best interview I could conduct would be to play a round of golf with someone. You can see a person's temperament in one round on the golf course. If someone engaged in cheating, would you be able to trust that person in the boardroom?"