

FAMILY BUSINESS 360°

Avoiding the Ditch: Keeping Your Family Business Communication On Track

Mark Wickman – Family Business Counsel
Tina & Lon French – North Lincoln Sanitary Service

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Hayden's Lakefront Grill, Tualatin OR

Background

Difficult conversations are inevitable in family business. How communication is handled among family members can determine the overall effect of these conversations; will the family bond ultimately strengthen, or will there be lasting negative effects on the business? How do we end up “stuck” in communication “ditches” where communication breaks down and relationships suffer, and if we find ourselves there, how do we get back to constructive conversation? In addition to happier family relationships, it makes good financial sense for a family business to strengthen family harmony. According to Ernst & Young, as much as 35% of return on equity can be impacted by family cohesion and branding. This session will explore strategies to help you:

- Recognize sources of tension and diffuse unnecessary conflict before it arises
- Avoid falling into communication ruts that cause relationships to suffer over time
- Use conflict and conversation in constructive ways to strengthen your business and family

Further Reading

How Families Work Together (2010), Mary Whiteside PhD et al., A Family Business Publication, Palgrave Macmillan

Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High (2002), Kerry Patterson et al, McGraw-Hill

The Family Business Teeter Totter: Balancing Those Two Wor(l)ds, Family and Business (2016), Mark Wickman, Family Business Counsel, online: <http://a.co/2UEHXCy>

The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace: Empowering Organizations by Encouraging People (2012), Gary Chapman and Paul White, Northfield Publishing

In Harmony: Family Business Cohesion and Profitability (2014), Carrie Hall and Joe Astrachan PhD, Ernst & Young, Online:
[http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/Family_business_cohesion_and_profitability/\\$FILE/EYFamilybusinesscohesionprofitability.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/Family_business_cohesion_and_profitability/$FILE/EYFamilybusinesscohesionprofitability.pdf)

Austin Family Business Program Resources

Advisor Search listing of experienced family business professionals:
<http://business.oregonstate.edu/familybusinessonline/advisor-search>

Social Media

Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/familybusinessonline>

LinkedIn at: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Austin-Family-Business-Program-5188170>

Audio Podcasts: <http://business.oregonstate.edu/familybusinessonline/podcasts>

Biographies

Mark Wickman – Family Business Counsel

Mark is fortunate to spend his best hours and efforts convening and facilitating conversations with small businesses, families and organizations – helping them have the conversations they know they need to have but avoid. Mark is the author of “Wealth or Well-th? Re-defining Financial Freedom”, and just released his second book, “The Family Business Teeter Totter.” Since the inception of Family Business 360 Mark has been a presenter on a variety of topics family businesses encounter, including mining conflict, the challenges of multiple generations working together, and the high cost of inaction. Mark believes that family businesses create the lion’s share of jobs in our cities and towns, and help weave the threads of communities envisioning thriving futures.

Mark spends most of his working hours with Family Business Counsel (www.yourfbc.com), a DBA of the firm in which he is a partner, Wickman Paterson Corrigan, headquartered in McMinnville. He graduated with a Bachelors and a Masters from Linfield College. Mark and his wife Lyn have been married since 1986 and are the parents of two adult children, Lindsay and Drew. They are committed to the ideals of healthy communication and healthy communities, and continue to be involved with a variety of local, regional and international causes.

Lon and Tina French – North Lincoln Sanitary Service

North Lincoln Sanitary Service is a family owned and operated garbage and recycling business based in Lincoln City. In the 1960s Jack LeBlanc worked for the Lincoln City public works department and was approached by then-owner Harold Olson with the idea of buying the one-truck company. In 1966, Jack acquired the business and grew the company for many years until 1995, when he began transitioning it to the second generation. Jack’s daughter, Tina French, currently owns and manages the business along with her husband Lon. Many other family members continue to work in various departments throughout the company as well. North Lincoln Sanitary Service serves North Lincoln County from Beverly Beach to Rose Lodge. They offer residential and commercial service, mobile storage rentals, shredding of sensitive documents, and pickup of large items.