

Success began in the basement. Lana Wilde was challenged with the care giving needs for her parents in Charleston, SC. All the while, she was providing a care giving service in her hometown for friends on a volunteer basis. That's when lightning struck. Why not start a business to address the needs of other adult children tired from caring for their parents in another state. Mountain Home Care set in motion this valuable service from the basement of their home with Lana acting as owner and son Jeremy as sales and marketing manager.

Mountain Home Care is non-medical companion care service provider. It is part of a larger membership organization that provides a business model, training and ongoing support for franchise owners. The mission is to help seniors remain active and independent within the comforts of their own home.

They accomplish this by providing transportation, light housekeeping and meal preparations, daily phone or personal "check-ins", medical reminders, errands, and periodic family reviews. Around the clock care is also a service that Mountain Home Care can provide.

Lana's husband, Jim joined the team as Vice President of Human Resources. He worked in HR for years for large corporations. The youngest son, Jason, an expert in numbers and took on payroll and billing from Lana when he became the CFO.

Even though the comfort of working together can bring on squabble over the "non-issues and dumb stuff" says Lana, the family recognizes each other's talents and "enjoys the privilege and closeness of working together."

Whiteside Estates consists of real estate development, commercial property and retail management. David Young and his siblings grew up between Highlands, NC and West Palm Beach, FL. During their visits in the mountains David's grandparents began buying property in Cashiers and Highlands. In 1989 David, his wife Susie and their four children moved to Highlands permanently to work for the family business. Susie manages the family business, Wits' End Shop while David oversees other real estate interests. One of David's children described his father's job as sleeping on the couch a lot! Unfortunately, he had just hurt his back when the subject came up at school. As anyone in a family owned business knows, the job requires putting out fires. Afterwards, one may need an occasional nap.

Tips for Surviving in an Economic Downturn

In *The Family Business Policies & Procedures Handbook*, family business adviser Francois de Visscher offers some advice on surviving in an economic downturn:

Revise your business plan. Look at your budget projections. The demand for your products and services may fall off. Your receivables may take more time to collect. This will have a negative impact on cash flow and, of course, growth plans. Consider what expenses you can cut or defer.

Nurture the patient capital of your shareholders. Keeping them informed in down times is the surest way to rally their support.

Don't forget to access your company's social capital. Make employees and shareholders, and their networks, part of your solution by giving them incentives (not necessarily monetary) to collect ideas for saving money and pursuing new business.



"During economic slowdowns, many owners just sit, worry and wait to get hit by the recession," de Visscher writes. "Not enough business owners step back, search for ideas and revise their plans. Those who do are more likely to survive."

For practical, step-by-step advice on planning a smooth succession, governing your family company, strategic planning and more, see *The Family Business Policies & Procedures Handbook*. Learn more about the book and see the table of contents here.

Estate Planning

Michael was a single guy living at home with his father and working in the family business.

When he found out he was going to inherit a fortune when his sickly father died, he decided he needed a wife with whom to share his fortune.

One evening at an investment meeting he spotted the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.

Her natural beauty took his breath away. "I may look like just an ordinary man," he said to her, "but in just a few years, my father will die, and I'll inherit 20 million dollars."

Impressed, the woman obtained his business card and three days later, she became his step-mother.

Women are so much better at estate planning than men.

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Generations

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UNC ASHEVILLE
FAMILY BUSINESS FORUM
Achieving success across generations

Upcoming FBF Programs!

Tuesday February 17, 2009

8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Chestnut Ridge Room in the Reuter Center on UNC Asheville campus.

There will be a panel discussion on employee hiring and immigration laws. Speakers include: John Oswald, the Executive Vice President/CEO of Mills Manufacturing and Grant Osborne of McGuire Wood and Bissette Law Firm.

Wednesday March 4, 2009

8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Chestnut Ridge Room in the Reuter Center on UNC Asheville campus.

Presentation by Dr. Peter Davis, Ph.D. of UNC Charlotte will be about family business dynamics (i.e., the impact of owner gender and the frequency of family conflict) with humorous interactive scenes depicting different situations by UNC Asheville drama students.

Tuesday May 19, 2009

8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Chestnut Ridge Room at the Reuter Center on UNC Asheville Campus.

Mr. Jim Ethier of Bush Beans will return to the Forum to share the ups and downs of being part of a famous family business. (The Bush Beans dog is unable to make it as he will still be in Florida for the winter.)

From The Director



It's time to take my son and husband to Disney World. Neither has experienced the magic and the day is here. My decision to go to Disney came after attending a "Keys to Excellence" workshop last year provided by Disney Corporation. At the seminar we were told repeatedly that "They are the gold standard in customer service." And they are right, it is the "happiest place on Earth." While I may not be thinking of these particular points while screaming on Space Mountain, they bear repeating for those who need a little "magic" in their day.

1. **Every leader tells a story about what he or she values through his or her actions.** We judge ourselves based on our intentions. Others judge us based on our behavior. As a leader, you are watched more closely by others than you may think. Believe in your brand. Spread the sense of ownership to employees. Leadership impacts employee excellence which influences customer satisfaction which affects your financial results.

2. **Leaders are responsible for creating and communicating their vision to accomplish the company's goal.** By letting your people clearly know what you expect, you will create for them a meaningful purpose, inspire passion, convey your values, and guide decision making. All of these lead to employee excellence which influences customers which affects your financial results.

3. **By celebrating successes as a leader, you create a culture of success.** Recognize employees for customer satisfaction, performance, longevity and other behaviors you value. Treat your team like your customers and have them treat each other with the same respect. This creates a supportive environment for employees and feeds into the chain of success for your business. This cheerful culture allows for customers and employees to interact positively with each other.

4. **Provide consistent little "wows" to your customer for one "BIG WOW!"** Customer satisfaction can be achieved by paying attention to detail. This can be done at a low cost or no cost. My favorite little "wow" by airlines is when the first ticket agent writes down the gate of my connecting flight. What does that cost? Little or no cost to the airlines, huge benefit to me. This point of contact is a positive experience which helps build brand loyalty.

Walt Disney was a visionary in making magic for others. His values were clearly communicated to his cast members (employees) so that customers would see the wonder in the Disney dream and keep coming back. I am anxious to hear about your Disney experience and how you have created a little "wow" for customers or employees. At the end of the day, we just want to succeed in our business and in our family, "It's a small world after all."

Cindy

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Visit our Web site at www.unca.edu/fbf/

Book Review

I have a short attention span. Books over 380 pages intimate me. Small in size and big in concept is the right combination. By sheer chance the perfect book was mailed to me.

The Little Red Book of Family Business by David Bork grabbed my toddler size attention span and held it for the first 30 pages, before nodding off. This is a rare event for me to read past page ten of a new book, especially in the evening.

This book has 28 chapters in 110 pages. It is pocket size so it's easy to hold, but you will need your reading glasses. On these little pages are 280 points relevant to family business. Like picking a flavor of ice cream, it is impossible to choose one favorite point. So here is a sampling.

Attitude

* If you regularly come home and exclaim, "Wow! I had a great day," then go on to discuss why it was so interesting, everyone in your household will develop a positive about what you do. On the other hand, if you regularly come home to grumble, family members might think you are a saint for going there everyday, but they will not see it as a place they want to work.

Business

* Focus on profits, drive the top line and aggressively control costs.

Boundaries

* Failure to define the boundary between family and business is at the root of many family business problems.

Children

* Parents must teach their children useful problem solving skills, then get out of their way and let them use those skills.

Compensation

* If you want family members to receive more than fair market salary, call it the "family factor" but do not call it a bonus for performance, which leads to arrogance and a sense of entitlement.

Competence

* There is no correlation between the family gene pool and competence.

Competition in the Family

* It is best when family members focus their competitive energy on competitors in the marketplace and not on each other.

Constitutions, Conditions, Contracts

* Convert the strong oral traditions of the family business into written, binding agreements.

Succession

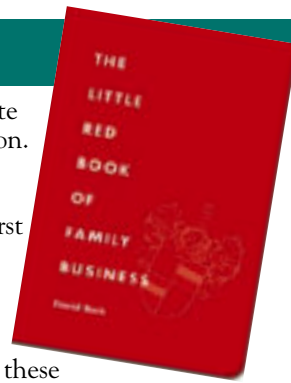
* Successors must learn to watch the money. Failure of successors to really understand the financial aspects of keeping the business fiscally sound is a common cause of failure in family businesses.

Transfer of Control

* If the transfer of control doesn't happen by the time the founder is 65 or 70, then it isn't going to happen. That is Okay only if the founder makes that clear.

Some other chapters address: Spouses, Sibling Relationships, Governance, and Selling the Family Business.

This is a great resource for the top drawer of your desk. Like a calendar with a thought for the day, *The Little Red Book of Family Business* will spark clarity and perspective just when you need it.



Dear Dad,

I know you have concerns about the leadership of the business when you retire. It isn't easy to follow in the footsteps of a highly successful father. You are a hero, not only to your employees, but also to the community, and to your children. In some ways, I fear we cannot live up to your accomplishments.

We (the family in the business) are not sure who is in control. You never really sat us down and explained officially who will be in charge. You want us to start running things, but you make all the decisions. We are not sure if you even want to retire.

I know it must be hard to trust us kids with your company. We don't always get along with each other but it is time we begin making the decisions . . . good or bad. The employees need to be our

responsibility, the P&L needs to be our responsibility, and the direction of the company needs to be our responsibility. The employees and customers need to know that WE are calling the shots so they do not run to you every time we do something they do not like. If you keep changing the rules behind us, how will we ever become the leaders you want us to be?

We must do things differently for two reasons. First, these are different times. New technology, new business systems, and new ways of doing things must be part of who this company is.

Second, we are different people. While we need help, we are afraid to ask for it because you'll think we are incompetent or make the decision for us. Also, we are your children but we are distinct individuals who approach problems differently.

We do not want to work 60-80 hours a week. You did that, and we missed having a father at home. You were always working. We recognize that we have the opportunity to spend more time with our family because of the sacrifices you, Mom, and Granddad made to build this business in to the success it is today.

There is too much uncertainty about this transition. We want to be fair to all family members and ourselves too. There are not only our careers and economic security, but your legacy, and the livelihood for our employees to think about.

Help us work this out, Dad.

Love, Your Kids

Reprinted with permission from the First Quarter 2002 Family Business Institute Newsletter.

Dear Children,

I know you don't believe this, but I really would like to retire and see you take over the company my father founded and grow it to the next level. Why, you ask, don't I just get out of the way?

First, I have concerns about how you are going to get along. You sometimes squabble like you are in the fifth grade. How are you ever going to be able to make difficult business decisions?

Also, I have concerns about your lack of leadership. It seems as though you avoid responsibility and do not make decisions quickly enough. When I am gone, who is going to make the hard decisions and keep things in line? I know you are trying, but I

would never have done [substitute some lame-brained move here.]

I am not sure if I agree with the new ways of doing things. All this technology seems so impersonal, and all these "investments" do not seem to be paying off. I do not know how you expect to build this company if you are not willing to work 60- 80 hours a week!

I need to stay to get all this straightened out before I can leave. I need to get things in order so you can run it. I hate to leave the business to anyone if it isn't

in top condition. If the business was sold, then what would I have accomplished with all my years of sacrificing? What about all the loyal employees and customers? I feel responsible for their futures, too.

How do I decide who should run the company? I do not want to see my children fighting or my grandchildren suffer in any way. How can things be fair? These are tough questions and I just can't leave with all these things in the air.

Love, Your Father

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so who's
gonna run
your business?

