



News Briefs

May 2001

Practice Dying Until You Get It Right!

During this March 14 workshop, Bonnie Brown did an excellent job of knocking us off balance. Many, who came to the meeting thinking they had all their t's crossed and i's dotted, went away with a laundry list of items that needed to be reviewed and possibly updated.

Dr. Bonnie Brown, president of Transition Dynamics, Inc., brought her family business experience to bear on three dynamics of family business that must be addressed: 1) entitlement assumptions, 2) resolving conflicts and managing diversity, and 3) the time bombs, land mines and sink holes of shareholder agreements.

Brown used three scenarios to help develop the concepts and tools:

- an increasingly confused, angry, and forgetful founder/leader who damages a customer's property,
- the owner dies suddenly and unexpectedly, and
- the spouse of an heir sues for divorce, surprising the entire family.

With each of these scenarios, we were asked to determine what action needed to be taken immediately, in a week, a month, a quarter, and a year.

The following article is one member's comments about the workshop.

An Eye-Opening Workshop

Joe Verhagen,
president, Larry's Markets Inc.

When I walked into the room that morning [March 14, 2001], I was thinking how we have our succession plans worked out, and we are in good shape, what could Ms. Brown have to say of interest?

I really thought no one had to practice dying. My expectations were that another same old succession planning seminar was going to be presented.

I noticed how few members of the Forum were in the room. In addition, I noticed a lot of sponsor representatives, with a number of UWO students. I felt embarrassment for the Forum by the turnout. There are a number of you I was surprised weren't there. By the time the introductions were finished and Ms. Brown got started on her presentation, the room started getting quieter. She got our attention and kept getting more of it.

I expected something on estate planning or picking the next leader. Instead I got a dose of "what if you die now", then what happens at home, and at work, today, next week, next month, next quarter, and finally next year.

The case studies were very thought provoking and engaging. At the end of the day, I felt that this was the most practical, thought provoking seminar the Forum has put on, ever.

For those of us who haven't put a plan together for the sudden departure of a key employee, or family member, these exercises were worth the annual membership dues. We have lived through the sudden death of a store manager, but we didn't put anything in writing against the next time it might happen. None of us ever expect "it" to happen, to a key employee or family member, let alone ourselves.

We gained an insight into what it will take to prepare our company for such an event. I can only describe such an event as a "major disruption" that can be smoothed somewhat by preplanning. I haven't made every seminar myself this year, but I am glad this wasn't the one I missed.

Welcome!

The Forum is pleased to welcome two new businesses to the Forum: **Sewing System Inc.** and **Marketlink Inc.**

Our newest member is Sewing System Inc. of Ap-



pleton. Sewing System Inc. was founded in 1994 and has two generations active in the business. They produce specialty sewn products. We are pleased to welcome Betty and Lee Kraus and their daughter and son-in-law, Sheryl and Robert Kinney.

We are also pleased to welcome our newest sponsor, **Marketlink Inc.** Marketlink is a full-service marketing communications, public relations, e-marketing and advertising agency based in Kimberly. Marketlink is the exclusive marketing sponsor for the Forum. As a sponsor, Marketlink will be available to provide needed marketing expertise, assistance with Forum policies and programming, and facilitation at programs. And, as all sponsors do, Marketlink has agreed to comply with our non-solicitation policy, which means members may contact them for assistance but they will not solicit your business during any Forum activities.

We look forward to getting better acquainted with, and learning with, Sewing System Inc. and with Marketlink Inc.

5th Annual Dinner

Over 100 members and their guests celebrated the 5th anniversary of the Forum during our annual dinner program.

Members of the planning team, charter members and sponsors were recognized for their contributions to the success of the Forum and its value to family businesses throughout northeastern Wisconsin.

Don Schneider, president of Schneider National, Inc., Green Bay was our dinner speaker. Mr. Schneider provided us insights into his business, his business philosophy, and his role in helping to form governmental policies to benefit his industry and the economy. Following his presentation, Mr. Schneider entertained questions from the members, providing some interesting insight into the ownership and management of his successful business.

Member News

In March, **Leach Company** was awarded the 2000 Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Grand Award for large companies (300-799 employees). Congratulations Fred and all who helped Leach Company earn this prestigious award.

Sadoff and Rudoy Industries was nominated for the 2000 MassMutual Family Business of the Year Award by the Wisconsin Family Business Forum. This award honors family-owned businesses for their business success, positive links between family and

business, multiple generations of involvement, contributions to their communities and industries, and innovative business practices and strategies.

Kim Bassett-Heitzmann introduced the newest member of the Bassett lineage to the Forum at the March 14 workshop. **Chase Bassett-Heitzmann**, born in December, attended the workshop with mother Kim, grandpa Bill, and uncle Jim. Nothing like starting him out with business in his veins at an early age.

Shortly after the workshop, we received the following message from Darcy Lemmers, Zander Press. "I just wanted to let you know that I had a chance to see the true spirit of the Wisconsin Family Business Forum ... when Kim brought her baby after her sitter cancelled on her in the last minute. Normally a 3-month-old baby would be completely unacceptable at a business seminar, but at the WFBF seminar he was more than welcome and really didn't seem to bother anyone. That just goes to show you the commitment to family that all the members have."

Successors Group

On April 25, the Successors met at J.J. Plank to learn about *Positioning, for Your Future...* and to discuss current issues.

If you are the next generation of your family business and want to participate in a group designed specifically for next generation Forum members, the Successors group would be happy to have you join them.

The next meeting of the group will be a social event on May 30th at the Holiday Inn Express, Appleton. See page 3 for upcoming meeting dates.

To get more information about the group, contact Sue Schierstedt at 424-2257.

Best Practices Group

Nine individuals from six member businesses met at Miller Masonry on March 6th for the second meeting of the Best Practices Group. The discussion included development of an employee handbook and related issues, federal law related to salaried and hourly employees, and the MSD legislation that was pending at the time.

As part of this meeting, the group developed their objectives:

- focus on bottom-line issues,
- learn about management trends,
- consider how best practices can be made to work in the context of a family business, and
- consider development of resource sharing plans among group members.



On May 1st Fred Leach will host the group for their lunch meeting, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Leach Company. Topics will include — Top Grading (effective hiring practices) presented by Fred and a Non-Family Executive's Look at Family Business Practices presented by Phil Florek of H.G. Weber.

If you would like to participate in this group, please contact Sue Schierstedt, 424-2257. Reservations are required.

Forum Committees

We still have openings for family business members to participate on the Program Committee and the Membership Committee. Each committee meets on a quarterly basis with meetings scheduled well in advance. Meetings range from one to two hours in length.

The Program Committee is responsible for planning programs that members are interested in and for evaluating programs and presenters. It is extremely important to have adequate family business representation on the committee.

The Membership Committee reviews our marketing strategy, identifies prospective members, occasionally contacts prospects, hosts guests at programs, and celebrates new members. Family business representation has been very important in identifying and recruiting new members.

Golf Outing & Dinner



Mascoutin Golf & Supper Club
June 6, 1:45 - 8:00 p.m.

The Second Annual Golf Outing & Dinner will be a 9-hole scramble coordinated by Burk Tower and Vicky Wuest. The scramble will begin at 1:45 p.m. followed by a cash bar at 5:00 p.m. and a cookout at 6:00 p.m. Those who wish to golf additional holes may arrange an earlier tee time.

As it was last year, the golf outing will provide a great opportunity to network with members and sponsors.

Since networking is an important part of the Forum, the Program and Membership Committees have approved inviting guests to the golf outing for member recruitment. Therefore, we are encouraging you to bring prospective members as your guests.

Another addition to this year's outing will be door prizes. We are asking each member to bring one item with your logo as a door prize.

Further details and reservation information will be sent to members and sponsors shortly.

Program Calendar 2000-2001

Date/Time	Topic/Event	Presenter(s)
June 6 1:45 - 8 pm	<i>2nd Annual Golf Outing & Dinner</i>	Mascoutin Golf & Supper Club
June 14 11am – 1pm	<i>Best Practices Group</i>	Kim Bassett-Heitzmann, Bassett Mechanical— host
July 11 1 - 4 pm	<i>Successors Group</i>	Darcy Lemmers, Zander Press— host
Aug 29 1 - 4 pm	<i>Successors Group</i>	Meyer family, Meyer Services—hosts
Sep 5 7—10 am	<i>Managing the Family Business and the Business Family</i>	Mike Ariens Ariens Company
Sep	<i>Successors Group</i>	Dave Morton, Morton Drug Co.—host
Oct 23 7 am - 3 pm	<i>Strengthening & Organizing the Family's Role</i>	Nancy Waichler, Follett Corporation & Family Business Consulting Group
Dec 5	<i>Managing Your Assets — individual, family and business</i>	Sponsors
	<i>2002</i>	
Mar 19 7 - noon	<i>Developing Successors</i>	Drew Mendoza, Family Business Consulting Group
May 3 - 11	<i>Exit Strategies — International Workshop in Greece</i>	
TBA	<i>6th Annual Dinner</i>	
TBA	<i>3rd Annual Golf Outing & Dinner</i>	

For information about our reciprocity program with the Marquette and UW-Madison family business centers and their programs in which members can participate, visit our web site: <http://www.uwosh.edu/wfbf/> in the **Resources** link.

The following sponsor-members continue to contribute their time, professional service, and money to keep the Forum at the forefront of family business forums, worldwide:



First National Bank — Fox Valley has a competitive advantage of developing strong, close customer relationships, especially in the niche of family-owned businesses. Thanks to a dedicated staff, FNB has completed its 113th year of providing financial services to the people and businesses of the Fox Valley with locations in Menasha, Neenah and Oshkosh.



Grant Thornton LLP is an international accounting and management consulting firm with offices throughout the United States and in over 97 countries worldwide. Their mission is to be the leading global organization creating, enhancing, and preserving wealth for entrepreneurial companies and the people who own and run them. Grant Thornton accomplishes this by providing business, tax and financial services that deliver measurable value to their clients.



Marketlink Inc. is a full-service marketing communications, public relations, e-marketing and advertising agency based in the Fox Valley. Marketlink not only provides support for promotion and design, but also manages ongoing marketing programs, advertising placement, event coordination, web site design/maintenance, and public relations campaigns.



McCarty Curry Wydeven Peeters & Haak LLP has been serving the legal needs of large and small family businesses in northeast Wisconsin since 1949. The firm's services include all aspects of business and corporate law, real estate, complex estate planning, commercial and personal litigation, as well as general practice.



Retained Earnings Company/MassMutual—The Blue Chip Company has 144 years of service and recognized excellence in providing family owned businesses with the product tools that allow for the confident construction of estate and business succession plans. The firm brings experience, education, empathy and motivation to clients' quest for financial growth and security. Retained Earnings is acknowledged as the premier provider of pension and investment products, life and health insurances.



University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, College of Business Administration provides undergraduate and graduate education with a wide array of outreach services to benefit economic development in northeast Wisconsin. The faculty and staff of the College are professionals dedicated to being quality teachers, accessible to students; furthering knowledge through research; and serving as valuable resources to the University and community. A key strength of the College is providing professional expertise through personal contact among students, faculty, and members of the community.
