



News Briefs

November 2000

Conflict Resolution in the Family Business

Conflict is a natural expression of our different opinions, ideas, and experiences. Given the added dynamic of family relationships in a family owned business, conflict has the potential to bring family members together and to be a catalyst for business development and growth. On the other hand, it has the potential to split a family and to destroy a business at the same time.

We probably all agree that conflict management and resolution skills are critical for our family members and our employees. But, how many of us have studied and practiced conflict resolution skills and know how to use them effectively? This can be especially difficult in a family situation.

On December 6, Bud Simpson will be leading our program on conflict resolution from the perspective of a student of the subject, a family business owner, and family member. Bud will present state-of-the-art techniques, challenging examples for participants to consider, and a "surprise" component that you won't want to miss.

Most of us know Bud Simpson as Chairman of Marion Body Works Inc., family member, and member of the Forum. You probably know that Bud is an experienced and skillful leader, a student of management issues and techniques, and a thought provoking individual. On December 6, you will also learn that Bud does his homework and thoroughly prepares by filling his program with practical tools and information from the perspective of a founder who wants to successfully resolve conflict and ensure business success.

Family businesses that are interested in Forum membership and have not attended a previous program may attend this program as our guests. Members may register up to four family members and/or managers as part of their membership. Registrations should be directed to Susan Schierstedt and are due by November 29.

Welcome New Members

Three new family business members were welcomed at the October 24 workshop.



- * Leach Company, Oshkosh
- * Van Zeeland Manufacturing Inc., Little Chute
- * Zander Press Inc., Brillion

Each business was introduced and presented with a Wisconsin Family Business Forum member plaque to display in their reception area and a copy of the Member and Sponsor Directory.

Fred Leach, president of Leach Company, introduced his company, its history and its successful implementation of new operational methods that have moved the company forward in great strides. Fred reported joining the Forum so that he can "learn some new and different ideas that he can bring to the business that can help continuously improve Leach Company as a premier professionally managed family business."

Van Zeeland Manufacturing and Zander Press will introduce their businesses in more detail at upcoming programs.

As with all members, these new members were encouraged to participate fully in all the programs and in the peer group meetings.

The Forum is always pleased to add new family owned businesses to its membership. The educational programs are enhanced by the perspectives of a broad spectrum of owners and managers. Members frequently state that the interaction with other family business owners and managers is one of the benefits of Forum membership.

If you know of a family business that would benefit from Forum membership, please contact our office at (920) 424-2257. We would be pleased to provide them Forum information and speak with them about how the Forum can meet their interests and needs.

Peer Group Meetings

The **Successor Generation group** is an exciting next generation group representing 6-8 businesses and about 12 successors. Group members meet monthly to enhance their business knowledge and skills and to learn more about issues and strategies for successful family owned businesses.

The group members encourage other member successors to join the group. Learning from each other and invited experts provides members with multiple perspectives and experiences. Each meeting has focused in considerable depth on a topic of interest to the group as well as an introduction to, and tour of, the host business.

The next meeting of this group is November 8 at Larry's Market in Kaukauna. The meeting hosts — Joe Verhagen and his sister Mary Knapp — will present the topic for the session and provide an introduction and tour of their business. Larry's Markets Inc. owns and operates multiple Piggly Wiggly stores, a Hardware Hank, Taco Bell sites, and convenience stores.

On December 5, the group will meet at H.G. Weber & Co., Inc. in Kiel. David Ludwig, a 4th generation manager and owner, will be the host for this meeting. H.G. Weber is a premier machinery supplier to the flexible packaging industry with customers worldwide.

If you consider yourself a part of the successor generation, please plan on joining the group. Or, if you have questions about the group, contact Susan Schierstedt at (920) 424-2257 or schierss@uwosh.edu. Sue can answer your questions or put you in contact with group members who can tell you about topics they have discussed, issues of importance to the group, the meeting format, etc.

In order to plan for the meeting, we request that you make reservations with Sue at (920) 424-2257 or schierss@uwosh.edu.

Sustaining the Family Business

Marshall Paisner, chairman of ScrubaDub Auto Wash Centers, provided an interesting and informative presentation to over 40 people on October 24 at the Paper Valley Hotel.

Paisner spoke from his personal experience and from interviews he had with successful families who have passed on their businesses for at least three generations. In a well-organized format, he focused on the cultural patterns that were thematic in all the successful transitions. He asked participants to develop answers to some tough questions:

1. How can you resist an offer too good to refuse?
2. How can we teach our children pride in the family business?

3. Should we teach our successors to manage the business the same way we did?
4. Should we give stock of our family business to each of our children?
5. Can conflict be healthy in a family business?

The discussion of each question in the small group sessions produced varied perspectives and thought provoking ideas for further consideration.

Workshop participants stated that the workshop was "very informative" and went "beyond just managing to [the] next generation". "It covered a lot of pertinent information" and "caused owners to think about the future".

When asked what they liked best about the workshop, replies included...

- "real life examples".
- "really made you think about some very difficult questions".
- "the interaction [with other owners and the speaker]".
- "statistics and qualities of companies who have successfully gone into future generations".

Following the workshop, Paisner provided his presentation slides for distribution to the workshop participants. All participants should have received a copy of the slides and a compilation of the workshop discussion items for reference when working through these issues with their families.

Largest Wisconsin Family Businesses

Family Business Magazine recently reported on the 100 largest family owned businesses in the United States. Three of them are located in Wisconsin.

Number 36 **S.C. Johnson & Son** Racine

Number 51 **Schneider National** Green Bay

Number 56 **Kohler Company** Kohler

Although many of the top 100 are publicly traded, these three are not.

On April 16, 2001, we will have the pleasure of hearing Don Schneider of Schneider National, as part of our Annual Dinner program.

Forum Directory

We apologize for distributing this year's Directory without the promised photos of family members and participating non-family managers. We will continue to request photos and anticipate completing this project in the next months.

If you haven't provided your photo(s) yet, please send them to Susan Schierstedt at the Forum office as soon as possible.

Issues Related to Transitioning Out of the Family Business

Forum sponsors are planning a January 25, 2001, program about *transitioning out* of the family business. Their objective is to focus the program directly on your specific issues and concerns.

To reach their objective, on October 24 the sponsor panelists asked each workshop participant to provide at least two questions or issues that he or she would like to have addressed in the January program. The recently compiled list of these questions and issues indicate issues related to financial concerns, business operations, control concerns, and the “after” life, after business that is.

The sponsors appreciate your response and would like to encourage members to send any additional items to the attention of Susan Schierstedt for the committee’s use.

We appreciate your help!

Family Forum ListServ

In June we initiated an electronic forum. Linked to the Forum’s web site, it provided an opportunity for members and sponsors to discuss current issues.

By the end of the summer, members were saying that although the forum was a good idea, it wasn’t a convenient medium for their needs.

In November, we are introducing the replacement for the electronic forum. The familyforum mailing list, or ListServ, will provide a forum for the discussion of topics of interest using electronic mail. Email messages sent by you to the familyforum mailing list will be automatically distributed to everyone on the list.

This mechanism has several benefits over the earlier discussion group. First, it is delivered directly to your computer desktop. You won’t have to log on to the system via our web site. Second, it has the potential for quick responses to your questions and concerns. Those who are currently using mailing lists indicate that they often get a response to their questions within a few hours.

The familyforum mailing list will include all of our members and sponsors so the wealth of experience and knowledge will be broad and deep. Each message will identify the sender.

The introductory message explaining how to access the system will be sent to you in early November. If you have any questions or want to add additional business colleagues to the list, contact Sue.

Program Calendar 2000-2001

Date/Time	Topic/Event	Presenter(s)
Sep 27 3 - 6 pm	<i>Defining Corporate Culture for Competitive Advantage</i>	Barbara Gannon, V.P.— Corporate & Marketing Communications, Sargento Foods, Inc.
Oct 24 7 am - 3 pm	<i>Sustaining the Family Business, an Insider’s Guide to Managing Across Generations</i>	Marshall Paisner, Chairman, ScrubaDub Car Wash Centers, Inc.
Dec 6 3 - 6 pm	<i>Conflict Resolution in the Family Business</i>	Bud Simpson, Chairman, Marion Body Works, Inc.
Jan 25 7 - 10 am	<i>Transitioning Out of the Company</i>	Sponsors
Mar 14 7 am - 3 pm	<i>Practice Dying Until You Get It Right!</i>	Bonnie Brown, Transition Dynamics, Inc.
Apr 16 5:30 - 8:00 pm	<i>A Family Heritage Annual Dinner</i>	Don Schneider, President/CEO, Schneider National, Inc.
June 6 Noon - 8 pm	<i>Second Annual Golf Outing</i>	Mascoutin Golf & Supper Club
Oct 23	<i>Strengthening & Organizing the Family’s Role</i>	Nancy Waichler, Follett Corporation

The **International Workshop** subcommittee has been working diligently since September to identify a workshop topic, location, and group travel agent for a Spring 2002 workshop. Watch this spot for details as they become available.

Information about reciprocal programs members may attend is available on our web site.

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The following sponsor-members continue to contribute their time, professional service, and money to keep their 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.



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. 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.
