



COMMUNICATING IN FAMILY BUSINESS – AND THE FACILITATOR

Reminders for why we communicate and what we want to achieve!

- **To be understood** - to get something across so that the other person/s knows **exactly what we mean**
- **To understand** the other person/s and to get to know their exact **meaning and intentions**
- **To gain acceptance** for **ourselves** and/or our **ideas**
- To produce **action** - to get the other person/s to understand **what** is expected, when it is needed, **why** it is necessary and sometimes **how** to do it

The Facilitator's Role is to:

- Provide safety - so that all family members can get the individual help they need to successfully manage themselves in difficult discussions - and talk about their difficulties
- Track the process and help the family stay on task - often this can be a challenge when there are strong emotional reactions that make it hard for the family members to stay focussed
- Help contain the conflicts and manage emotions - facilitators need to notice and respond to emotions in family members including those who may not be part of the immediate problem
- Provide reality testing. It is easy to become so involved in the family's "web" and lose perspective

Relationship factors that increase acceptance are:

- Each person is recognised as an individual
- Their unique contributions are acknowledged and valued, even when there may be some disagreement about them
- Each person is willing to listen to others, be patient, attentive and sensitive to deep feelings and hidden truths that may lie beneath the surface of others' words and actions

Remember that every family and every family business exists in a context much larger than is apparent eg. family culture, current developmental cycles and the family business as well as the wider business.

Keep in mind the complex web of interactions, even when you are working with a single individual.

Remember that it is essential to help families change how they respond to one another - situations, and the business rather than just fix the problem. If not, the problem will reappear in another form.

Collaboration involves:

1. Dealing with emotions first
2. Defining everyone in the family's needs not going straight to solutions
3. Inventing multiple options for the mutual gain of everyone
4. Insisting on objective, 'fair' criteria
5. Defining areas of agreement - so that disagreement is considered in the context of much agreement
6. Being soft on the person - but staying "hard on the problem"
7. Standing side by side, all facing the problem together, rather than opposite as adversaries
8. Handling objections as 'and' not 'but'
9. Recognising the influence of people who are not actively negotiating with each other
10. Choosing solutions that recognise the ongoing relationship/s

Reconciliation involves:

Helping families to repair relationships and heal the rifts when the family's livelihood and wellbeing is threatened - moving towards open dialogue and a change in attitudes, communication style and behaviour.

OUR LOCATIONS AND CONTACT DETAILS

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