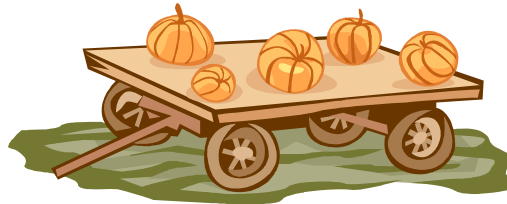


# **C.H.A.L.L.E.N.G.E.S. inc**

**Working with Families in Business**

**[www.challengesinc.com](http://www.challengesinc.com) [info@challengesinc.com](mailto:info@challengesinc.com)**

**1888-273-8307**



## **October 2007 Newsletter**

**“Do not speak ill of one another” – James 4:11**

**Beginning this month, we will share with you what we have found to be the TEN rules for family business survival.**

### **RULE #1 – Communicate As Equals**

**The biggest issue affecting family harmony in most family businesses is the way families communicate with one another. Many times, even as adults, parents communicate with their adult children as if they were still children. The adult children often communicate with their siblings as they did in their childhood. It usually resembles childhood bickering. Adult children also view all communication from their parents as dictatorial. In turn, they will challenge every suggestion. These behaviors lead to parental statements like, “You are too young to understand and you haven’t been in the business long enough” (even though you have worked in the business for 20 years). The children will then offer a rebuttal that sounds something like, “You never let me do what I want to do!” There is an obvious lack of adult communication occurring.**

**What can be done to change this time wasting communication style? Start with your personal commitment to no longer act or react to childhood communication. Then practice the following and encourage your family to do the same. It will not be as easy as it may sound. Communication change will take time, patience and a lot of room for forgiveness. The sheer effort will result in the development of positive interpersonal relationships, better business decisions and more productive meetings.**

- Keep an open mind for new ideas. Do not see suggestions as challenges. Only children see it that way.**
- Avoid dominating conversations and do not let others do it either. This used to be the technique many of us used to defend ourselves as children. It does not fit as an adult.**
- Listen to understand and not necessarily agree. Understanding is not always agreement. Adult communication is always open to**

listening to the whole story without interruption. Adults let others get their point across. Only children interrupt.

- Know when to enlist the help of professionals. There are times when families are just too close to be objective. Adults know when they need help and do not let their ego get in the way of seeking professionals who can help the family or individual family members to meet objectives in the best interest of the family.
- Have regular, scheduled, organized meetings. Do not keep family members “in the dark” when it comes to making the decisions affecting their lives. Be prepared, know the agenda and allow everyone to give input. Hold the meeting in a location that will not foster the parent/child communication format. The house the family grew up in is usually *not* the place to have an adult meeting.
- Success of family communication always begins with each individual setting the example by their attitude, word and action.

Adult communication in a family business is achieved when each family member commits to reducing their personal ego, listens with an open mind, offers their opinion, makes themselves open to the opinions of others, forgives and asks for forgiveness (and not make the same mistakes over and over...) and keeps the love for each family member in mind before any words are spoken.

Try it! You may get to know some people as adults and friends who, up to now, you have only known as family.

Next month we will share the specifics of RULE #2, *Planning in a Family Business*.

*~Visit our website, designed with Family Businesses in mind~*

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