

Motivational tips for family businesses

HERE ARE ten suggestions for improving your business from Stefan H. Doering, president of BEST Coaches, a Setauket, N.Y., consultant who advises CEOs and entrepreneurs:

1. Follow your heart. Pay attention to your gut instincts when making decisions concerning you and your company. Your strength and value lie in choosing the right path, regardless of what the family

may be expecting.

2. Work backward. What is your vision for your life? The family company? Work it backward, identifying what has to happen today in order to get there in five years.

3. Tell it like it is. Don't hold back your thoughts when meeting with family management. If you're authentic with family members, they'll trust you for your candor. The art lies in communicating

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without judgment. Hold a family meeting once a month in a non-business setting to discuss life in general as well as the business.

4. Foster good vibrations. Customers, employees and family members respond to those who are balanced, centered and upbeat.

5. Express your gratitude. Acknowledge others for their contributions and commitment. Start by listing three things you appreciate about your family business and tell those involved, with gratitude. Watch the results.

6. Give away the family jewels. You can't receive unless you give. People who hoard family assets are defensive and suspicious. Open yourself up by contributing to others generously and with your heart.

7. Get excited when you fail. Think about the last major success you had with

the family business. Now remember how things were just before that success occurred. More than likely, you were experiencing a major problem or setback. The best lessons often come from the biggest failures.

8. Soar with the geese. A head goose breaks turbulence for the rest of the flock and rotates with the next one in line when it gets tired. Create a "mastermind group" of family business owners and managers patterned after the natural support system of these birds. Use this group to support you in creating exciting and inspiring goals.

9. Go out of your mind. Your beliefs have gotten your company to where it is now—for better or worse. Seek outside mentoring and coaching



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pettiness.

to experience great shifts in results. A "mastermind group" is excellent for this.

10. Love being afraid. Go back to a time when you were nervous about a business decision you had to make. If you were afraid, good! The difference between a coward and a leader is

the direction he or she runs when facing fear. Being a family business leader means going beyond what others are willing to do—playing outside your comfort zone.

Bonus tip: Laugh. Start having fun by asking yourself, "What's funny about this situation?" Transcend pettiness and discover how effortless and enjoyable things become.

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