



SUCCEEDING IN SUCCESSION

A guide to keeping family harmony
through your business transition



BUSINESS FAMILIES FOUNDATION



RBC Wealth Management

There's Wealth in Our Approach.™

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Introduction

You own a business. You've worked hard to get it to where it is today. One day – whether in one year, 10 years, when you pass away, or at some other time – someone else will run this business. If you'd like to decide in advance who that “someone else” will be, you need a succession plan.

If you don't have such a plan, you're not alone. Many business owners don't adequately plan their succession, if at all. There are many reasons for this complacency – from their reluctance to “let go,” to fear of creating family disharmony.

Ironically, the best time to create a succession plan is when you're too busy managing your growing business. Planning a business exit can be emotional – there are often personal and family dynamics that may conflict with a business's well-being. For this and other practical reasons, planning an exit requires an owner to think strategically, preferably with a professional's help.

The purpose of this type of planning is to create a clear exit path that is simple yet effective in meeting personal and business goals while preserving family harmony during what is often an emotional and conflict-triggering process.

No two families are the same and a plan has to address a family's unique situation. While this is true, proper planning strategies make the process significantly more effective.

This report covers many of these strategies that use simple concepts to aide with the understanding of the process. The first issue families struggle



No two families are the same and a plan has to address a family's unique (business) situation.

with most is whether they should pass on the family business to their children. Families will frequently defer making a decision because of the fear of making the wrong decision. Another issue that often causes unnecessary procrastination in succession planning is the fear of conflict. While we generally dislike conflict, some conflict can be healthy if managed – as the saying goes a broken bone is stronger after it heals. This report outlines tools and ideas to manage and/

or avoid unnecessary and damaging conflicts when planning a material change in the family business such as succession. Proper planning of this type takes time, sometimes several years. Protecting business continuity during this critical planning period (often referred to as “contingency planning”) is therefore timely and is addressed in the report. The report concludes with a framework to start your planning and to stay in control of it. ■

To my children or not to my children? . . . That is the question.

Business owners often struggle with the question of whether they should transition their business to their children or whether they should sell it to a third party.

We need to go back to one of the first principles of succession planning: in order for a succession plan to be successful, the plan has to balance the needs and goals of family and business. Many families do not recognize the importance of balance between family and business and as a consequence don't achieve the results they hoped for. For example, it is not uncommon that owners have a strong and natural desire to pass on their business to successive generations. However what families often don't give enough consideration to is the fact that personal business and economic circumstances may not align with this goal. A family transition without such due consideration is the primary reason why statistically speaking, there are few multi-generational family businesses today – hence the proverb “shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves in three generations.”

It is seldom clear cut whether a family should pass on their family business to the next generation. This is where having open and constructive family meetings to discuss not just the future ownership of the family business, but every other important aspect that concerns both family and business. In these meetings, conflicting goals that exist between family and business, and between family members, are discussed and weighed. This ensures that any significant decision that affects the future ownership of the business, on balance meets both family and business goals.

Some families use external facilitators to moderate the meetings with stated objectives in mind including ensuring that these meetings are principally “business-matter” meetings and that extraneous family matters are brought forward in private family meetings.

“... a very rich person should leave his kids enough to do anything but not enough to do nothing...” *Warren Buffet*

It should also be clear that the answer to whether to “keep or sell” is not mutually exclusive. In fact, families can sometimes retain some family ownership while protecting family wealth through a partial sale.

On the issue of future ownership, the story of the Spalding's frequently plays out. Jack and Nancy Spalding (not their real names) are entrepreneurs in the food distribution industry who started contemplating the issue of future ownership when their son, Adam graduated from university and started working in the family business.

Adam's entry to the business was unfortunately during challenging times. Despite investing heavily in marketing, the growth of the business had leveled off. “Competitors are definitely affecting us and to make things worse, I am not sure if I have the energy, the social media savvy, or the financial inclination to continue driving this business,” Jack would lament to friends.

When asked about Adam, Jack would admit that he and Nancy have been struggling with the decision of whether

to keep the business in the family for Adam or to sell it to a third party. They naturally wish for a bright and successful career for Adam but the recent decline of the business highlighted the fact that external factors may have a stronger influence on the decision. The question

of whether they should keep the business or cut their losses by exiting became very acute. The question of whether Adam has the wherewithal to navigate through turbulent times also became relevant. Unfortunately, families faced with such decisions, often revert to a state of indecision which in many ways is not the most ideal thing to do.

The critical point came when the business lost its biggest account. Adam took the loss badly even though it was not entirely his fault. As Nancy would point out, “He has been great at the shop and gets along with everyone but we do worry about him stepping into the family business. The business may have gotten too challenging, even for Adam. We are just not sure if it's the best thing for him.” The question is: how long should Jack and Nancy wait for fortunes to turn before they ultimately make a decision?

The decision of whether to keep or sell the family business is just one of many decisions a succession planning framework addresses. Specifically on this issue, the Spaldings should initiate the following four key assessments:

■ **An assessment of Adam’s desire and aptitude to take over the business.** It is often assumed that children want to participate in the business. This may not be the case and it is therefore one of the first matters to be flushed out. The more difficult step is assessing whether Adam has the aptitude for the business. It’s sometimes impossible for parents to assess their own children, but there are independent firms that can help. As sensitive and emotional as this type of assessment can be, it needs to be done, even at a high level.

■ **An assessment of the future viability of the business.** A top-down approach to this assessment is to start with an assessment of the industry where the business exists and then of the business itself. The assessment should include understanding threats such as future competition and opportunities such as those presented by shifting

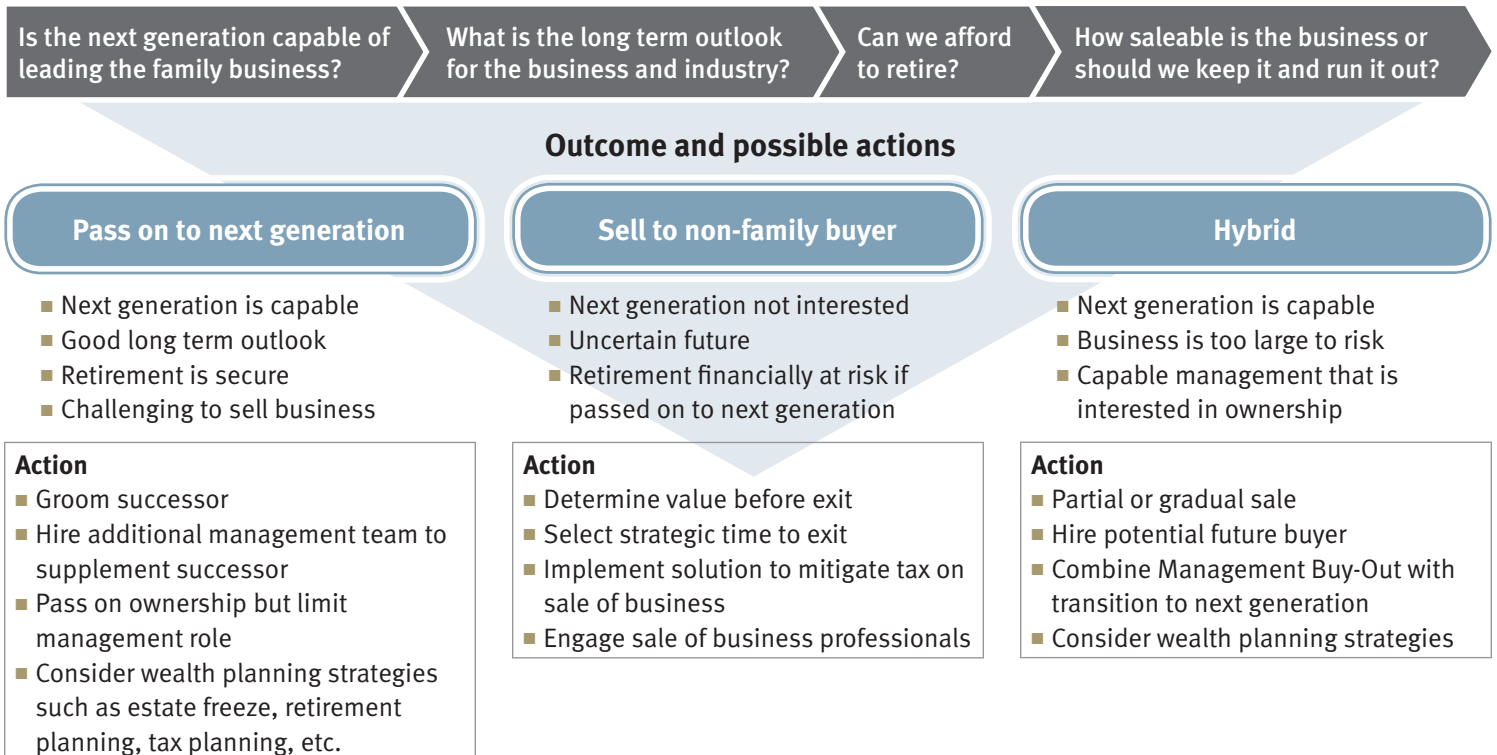
demographics. Armed with a clear understanding of the business landscape, the assessment should turn to the “tools” that the business have or should have to ensure long term viability – that is, what are the company’s strengths and weaknesses? This type of analysis should help Jack and Nancy understand the risks, challenges, and merits of keeping or selling the family business.

■ **A valuation of the business.** A business valuation is a very useful exercise. The valuation not only will help Jack and determine value prior to exit but also puts a financial context to their succession. The latter sheds light on the financial viability of their retirement and how much risk they can afford to take to achieve their retirement goals.

■ **An assessment of the saleability of the business.** Factors beyond owners’

control can sometimes prevent the sale of a business even though keeping the business may not be the preferred alternative. In such cases, the family’s broader objective of maximizing wealth from the business would dictate the decision.

The results of the above assessments will help determine if retaining ownership or selling the family business is prudent. Families should not be boxed into feeling it is an “all or nothing” decision and instead that it is fine to explore combinations of family retention and partial sale of the business. Granted, a partial sale can be more complicated to implement but the outcome can be rewarding. The following is an example how you can use the results of the four key assessments to decide on whether to keep or sell the family business. ■



How do I maintain family harmony and cohesion?

Business owners often think that maintaining family harmony in a family business setting is an important, if not the most important, objective of running a business. In fact, maintaining this harmony is often a significant reason why parents postpone transferring the family business. Parents are often overly sensitive to their children's reactions to the steps towards business transition. A business owner may also be biased by his or her own prejudices of the family members' private goals, desires and objectives.

Harmony and family cohesion comes when the views of all family members, regardless of gender, age, and involvement in the business are considered, respected and are woven into the family's value system. From this value system comes common family goals. Such common vision can only come from regular family communication conducted in family meetings.

Families should adhere to certain principles that will facilitate communication that eventually builds trust:

- Communication must be open and transparent.
- Communication must build respect, trust, and the ability for all family members to share their opinions.
- Communication should be facilitated by a dedicated and competent family leader, whether it be a parent, respected child, or independent facilitator.

Let's face it, every member of the family may have his or her personal agendas depending on his or her circumstances – for instance being involved in the

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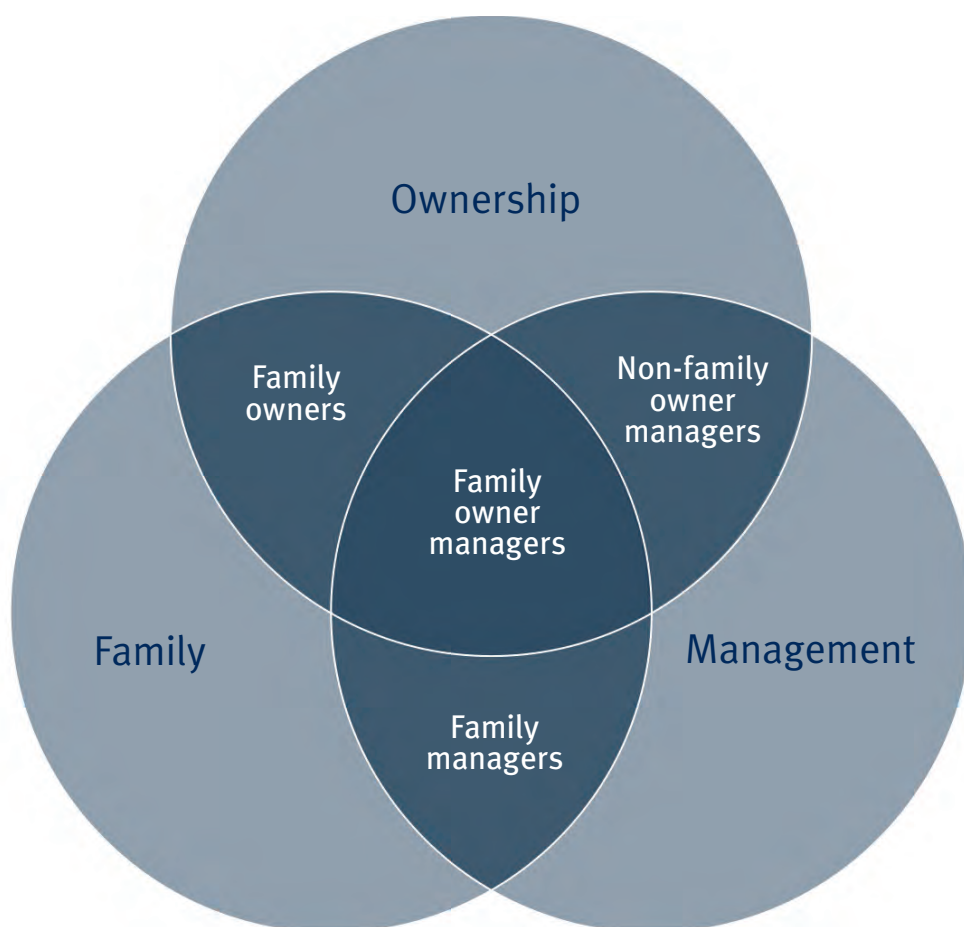
family business creates very different needs than when you were not involved. Likewise, having an ownership stake in the business can change your view on what the family business represents. The following three circle model¹ is a useful tool to map out differences in needs and views.

The three circles represent the three groups family members and non-family

members can fit into. The circles overlap to illustrate that individuals can be part of several groups.

Once mapped, it should become clearer how different needs and views could exist depending on where a family member fits into the structure.

1) Adapted from "Bivalent Attributes of the Family Firm" 1982 by Renato Taguiri and John A. Davis





To illustrate this point, consider the following conversation between a daughter who has wholeheartedly stepped into managing her family's business, ownership of which was left to her and her siblings after her father passed away.

Daughter: I understand why dad chose me to run the business. I showed the most interest in the business and became the most logical choice to lead the family business into the next generation. I have a vision to expand the business through strategic reinvestment of earnings. However I share the business with my brother and sister and I don't believe they would agree with my vision. Besides I would only be partially rewarded for my efforts and risk taking.

Family Advisor: *Why don't you explain to your brother and sister about the benefits of reinvesting in the business? After all, you can't expect the golden hen to continue laying golden eggs if you don't feed it once in awhile!*

Daughter: My brother and sister have different interests and to be honest, I'm sure they are really only interested in receiving as much income as possible from the business.

Family Advisor: *Well, I guess that is understandable, it is after all their legacy too. However, I still believe that they too could benefit from the short term pain of reinvestment in the form of future growth of income and a prolonged source of income from the business.*

Daughter: I wish I had the means to buy their shares and take total control of the business.

Family Advisor: *If you're really serious, speak to your bank but keep in mind this still requires a frank discussion with your family. Have you considered discussing with your family the concept of balancing a reasonable return to shareholders with the retention of sufficient funds to expand the business, albeit in a more conversative fashion? That way, everyone benefits in the long term.*

Daughter: It's a source of never-ending discussions over the merits of reinvestment. I wish I could find some way to formalize the discussions around this.

Family Advisor: *Perhaps it's time to consider setting up better channels of communication and what could be better than setting up regular family meetings. I think it's important that the others understand why family meetings are important, particularly to ensure that everyone shares a common vision for the business and not individual agendas that eventually hurts families.*

The discussion between the daughter and her advisor illustrates the dilemma family businesses face when trying to balance the long term interest of members who are part of management (i.e. family owner manager in the three circle model) with those who aren't involved but who have an ownership stake in the business (i.e. family owners in the model). Although her views seem reasonable, it is also equally important to hear the views of her siblings.

The next conversation illustrates a similar point to the previous conversation but this time from the perspective of the son (brother) who by choice or by circumstances is not involved in the business that is run by his sister.

continued on next page



Family Advisor: *I recently spoke to your sister about her views on the future of the family business. You know, she is very passionate about the business that your parents built. She has very strong views on expansion and wants to reinvest more of the earnings back in the business. Her dilemma is that she doesn't believe you and your other sister share her view.*

Brother: Believe it or not, I'm not opposed to reinvesting back in the business. Don't forget I grew up in the business too and while I'm not involved now, I still have strong emotional ties to it. Why hasn't she ever brought this up to us?

Family Advisor: *I guess she always assumed you were only interested in what could be distributed from the business. I sense you and your sister do not discuss business affairs very often?*

Brother: The only time we discuss business matters is at the year end when my sister briefly presents to us the performance of the business and the proposed distribution to us. Quite frankly, I'd like to know more about what's happening in the business and there have been occasions when I've been frustrated by the lack of information. That said, I don't want to have any issues with my sister and I feel if I insisted on more information, it could strain our relationship.

Family Advisor: *Yes, I think it's important that there should be more transparency. Not only could the lack of transparency breed distrust, it's could also lead to less than optimal decisions. It's also difficult for an advisor like me to advise the family when I don't have all the pieces. I think its time we agree to regular family meetings. There will be formal agendas and if you and the rest agree, I can chair the meetings.*

Brother: I'm glad you are reaching out to us. I don't mind saying that I have enjoyed whatever I've received from the business but I may like to pursue other things in life. I haven't brought this up but perhaps it's time that as a family we lay all our concerns and wishes out. I am a little apprehensive about doing so, but I think it would help if we have an outsider facilitator like you managing the meetings.

The second conversation illustrates that although a family member involved in the business may feel they are working for the rest of the family, a family member outside the business may develop a feeling of exclusion that later could turn to resentment. Developing regular family communication habits is one important way to guard against misunderstanding and distrust that are often seen as part of family businesses. ■

There are certain steps a family can implement to achieve open and trustful communications:

- Bring family members together to consider all possible options and consequences of a particular decision.
- Always keep the door open to unpopular opinions.
- Bring an outside facilitator to initiate and lead the process. This leads to more

efficient and objective discussions.

- Create a commonly agreed upon code of conduct for family meetings that will help keep discussions on lower emotional grounds.

Family meetings are more effective when properly planned with agendas tailored to the family's circumstances. The three common agendas that concern family succession are summarized as follows:



Participation

- What is the prerequisite education and experience to joining the family business?
- When can family members join and is it a privilege or an entitlement?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of each family member in the business?
- How is compensation set for family members?
- How is performance evaluation performed?
- Can and how are family members terminated?

Succession and Ownership

- Who will take over leadership of the business?
- At what point are family members eligible for ownership participation?
- How will ownership transition to the successive generation?
- Is ownership transferred or sold?
- Can the business be divided amongst the next generation?
- What are the exit rules and how is price set?

Governance

- What are the family's guiding principles and are they reflected in our family mission statement?
- Should we have a family participation agreement?
- How often are family meetings and who can call one?
- What should be included in a shareholders' agreement?
- How are conflicts and objections resolved?
- Should we have external members in the board of directors?

A more comprehensive list of family meeting agenda items is set out in Appendix 1.

Contingency planning

Successful businesses succeed not because their owners are lucky to avoid disasters but because they were prepared for unplanned events.

Contingency planning, or planning for the unexpected, is an integral part of business planning and is used to protect business owners from unexpected disastrous events.

Business owners can implement strategic planning for the unexpected. The degree or level of contingency planning is the amount of risk exposure an owner is willing to accept should the unexpected occur.

Some of the key components of a properly structured contingency plan are as follows:

Leadership succession

It is not financially feasible for small or start-up businesses to have adequate leadership ready to take over if the owner isn't able to lead. However, as businesses grow, the ability to reduce leadership concentration increases as well. Grooming your successor(s) and having a broad management team that can eventually function autonomously with minimal input from the owner not only mitigates its operational risk but can also significantly increase the value of the business. Steps should be taken to keep your key employees compensated appropriately and engaged.

Updated Will and estate planning

An owner's Will and estate plan should be up to date and consistent with and support his/her business succession plan. If the owner were to pass away

Death unfortunately is often a tax-triggering event and could put a family in the position of an untimely sale of assets to fund tax liabilities.

prematurely without proper planning and communication, there could be a dispute between the children on who steps into the leadership position.

Life insurance for liquidity protection

Death, unfortunately, is often a tax-triggering event and could put a family in the position of an untimely sale of assets to fund tax liabilities. Life insurance protects against this liquidity call and also ensures that shareholders and estates don't awkwardly continue jointly owning the business. One could also

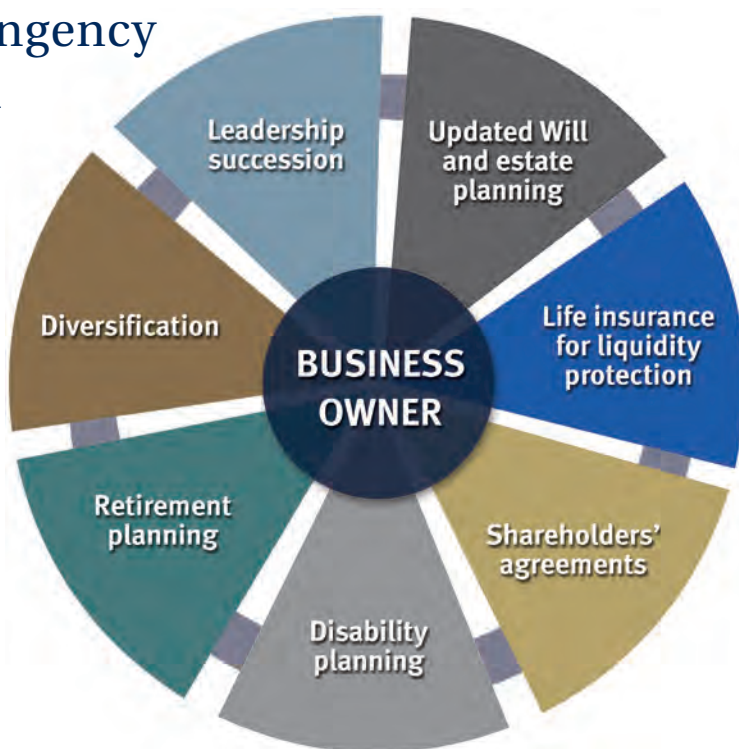
consider estate freeze planning to limit the owner's taxes at death.

Shareholders' agreements

This agreement governs the business relationship between shareholders. Three key areas that the agreement should cover are:

- Voting and other control provisions
- Buy and sell options between shareholders
- The entry of new shareholders, including children, into the business.

Contingency wheel



Disability planning

It's important to create a management team that is aware of the critical functions of the business and who can effectively cover the owner's responsibilities if the owner is disabled or incapacitated. It is also important to have an updated Power of Attorney and appropriate disability and critical illness insurance coverage.

Retirement planning

Protecting the value of the business

ultimately protects the wealth the owner has built in the business. However, the risk exposure represented by the business means that wealth is far from assured in the long term. This risk can be mitigated by a well structured retirement plan. Consider having a written financial plan prepared to start the process.

Diversification

Many business owners have all their wealth tied up in one asset – their business. Unexpected economic or industry

downturns can dramatically impact the owner's wealth and future lifestyle. During good times when the business is growing and is profitable, consider "taking some money off the table" and diversify into other non-business assets (i.e. marketable securities, real estate, life insurance, etc).

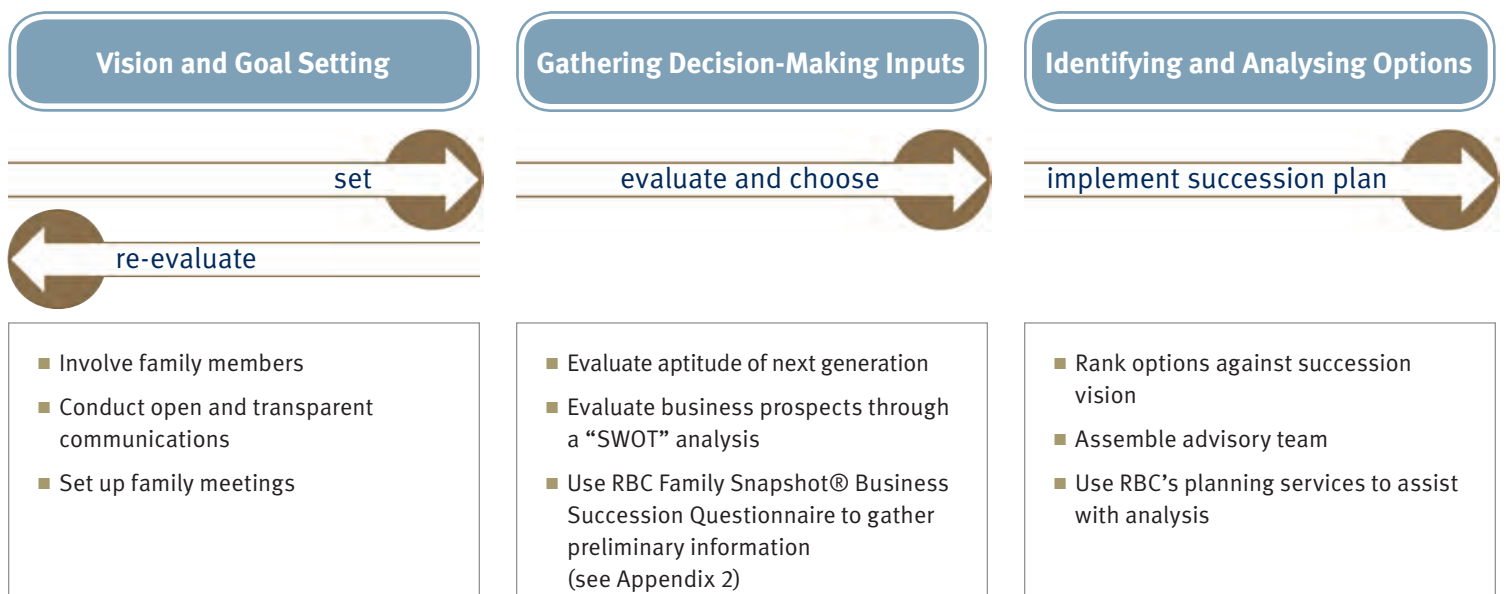
Families should openly discuss these risks and contingencies to be properly prepared. These business issues can become family issues very quickly. ■

How do I start?

We have addressed some of the more common topics that business owners and their families face when contemplating their succession. Ideally, addressing these issues should happen in an organized planning framework. One of the main reasons owners inadequately plan their succession is the absence of this framework to which they can follow and refer to. Starting with a framework ensures that important aspects of family business are properly addressed. It also inspires commitment from the family once they see the big picture of what is planned.

"He who fails to plan is planning to fail." Winston Churchill

The following diagram illustrates a process to start your succession planning.



How do I start? continued from previous page

- The framework breaks out the planning into three distinct yet closely related steps.
- The first step speaks to understanding your goals through inclusive inter-generational discussions, something that has been emphasized throughout this report. Family (business) meetings are an effective medium to conduct these discussions.
- Use clear and defined goals to act as your compass to what you (your family) hope to achieve with the family business. Goals start as general statements and evolve as you better understand your personal, family and business circumstances.
- For gathering preliminary information that is relevant to your planning, the RBC Family Snapshot® Business Succession Planning Questionnaire lists six questions you should ask yourself when contemplating your succession – see Appendix 2. Not only does the questionnaire act as a reference of information you will have to gather for your succession plan, but more importantly, to provoke you to think about your goals.
- We discussed earlier in this report the importance of achieving a balance between family and business goals. Understanding how realistic these goals are is gained through an evaluation of both family and business in terms of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis (the acronym “SWOT” is often used). Included in this report – Appendix 3 – is a checklist of common issues that a SWOT analysis should address.
- The feedback gained from the family and business evaluation should assist you to (i) refine your goals and (ii) identify succession options that you and family could consider.
- We recommend that you use your trusted advisors to evaluate each option based on its merits and risks/disadvantages as it affects the family.
- This process of evaluating each identified succession option is an iterative process between goal setting and choice of succession path. Evaluations should reflect material changes in family and business situations as they occur.
- Do not rush your planning and give yourself plenty of time to plan. Just like you need to create a thorough plan to get into a business, you shouldn’t rush your exit plan. We recommend giving yourself three to five years to plan when and how you’ll exit. You’ll need that time to set your vision and goals, to properly develop important inputs that could influence your succession, and to evaluate and choose your succession path. ■

The difference between a vision and goals

Defining your vision for the future and developing your succession goals are effective ways to ensure your succession plans are achieved. Your succession vision articulates how you see yourself, your family and your business in the future. Your goals are measurable targets towards achieving your vision.

Your goals should be aligned with and support your vision. For example, your vision might be to reward your employees for their years of support and dedication by ensuring their financial and job security with long term employment. Your goal in support of that vision would be to sell your business to a new owner committed to continuing to treat employees the same way.

Your RBC advisor’s role

RBC works with clients and their independent legal or tax advisors to help achieve objectives and maximize overall wealth. Our specialized financial advice includes estate planning solutions, succession planning from a business and personal perspective, borrowing and credit, cash management, wealth management, investment management, financial planning, personal retirement planning, trustee service, philanthropy and insurance. Please contact your RBC advisor for more information or visit <http://www.rbcwealthmanagement.com/canada.html> for an introduction to an RBC advisor.

Conclusion

Business owners and entrepreneurs are so passionately attached to the business they have created, bought, or inherited that it's hard to envision ever selling it or leaving it in someone else's hands. This report highlights important examples of the challenges that come with the succession planning process, but the glass is half full, not half empty.

While the process may trigger conflict, it can also boost family alignment around common goals. Also, while the dynamics in some families may conflict with their business's well-being, other families can be a great source of strength to their business.

One common concern is how to maintain family harmony during the process. The "soft" (non-technical) aspects account

for two-thirds of the success of a smooth business transition from one generation to the next. The keys include insightful personal reflection and fostering family discussion at an early stage.

The planning process will take time and effort, and involve many stakeholders besides the next generation, but the outcome will eventually be well accepted and a cause for lasting pride.

Deciding whether to pass on the business to the children is another important question. There are actually two aspects that can be passed on: ownership and management. Children may choose to remain responsible and proud owners while talented external managers are selected to run the business. Or the children could own and run the business.

Will transitioning the business to other family members create more value than selling it? Judge by criteria that include not only financial value but also emotional capital and a family legacy. The ability and desire to ask this question is what differentiates family business leaders from entrepreneurs.

The most fundamental question is when and how to start planning the exit from a business. For "when," it's never too early to start the thought process. For "how," this report has outlined a range of options. We have included a framework for open, inclusive communication that starts you along the path towards succession and hopefully sets you, your business, and your family up for success. ■

Family business meeting agendas

Ground rules

- Attendance
- Chair and facilitator of the meetings
- Conduct and communication policies
- Conflict resolution policies
- Confidentiality policies

Family business vision

- Preservation of traditions and family values
- Family Mission Statement
- Family support policies – financial and non-financial

Succession

- Leadership succession
- Ownership succession
- Successor grooming

Family employment policies

- Education and experience requirements
- Family compensation policies
- Work-life balance

Ownership policies

- Criteria
- Prenuptial agreements
- Exit and sale of ownership

Business updates

- Business results and performance trends
- New business ventures and expansion opportunities
- Budgets, including major capital expenditure

Distribution policies

- Entitlement policies
- Minimum and maximum distributions
- Responsible wealth planning

Community responsibilities

- Charity and foundations
- Supporting local community events
- Preservation of good public image
- Social media policies

Contingency planning

- Alternate leadership (and for other key roles)
- Insurance coverage for key management and shareholders
- Business continuity policies

Critical family business agreements

- Drafting and updating of shareholders agreement



Family Snapshot® - Six Key Questions Business Succession Planning Questionnaire

1. How do you own your business?

Company name:	
(a) Legal form of business:	☐ Sole Proprietorship ☐ Corporation ☐ Partnership
(b) Percentage of ownership:	☐ 100% ☐ Between 50% and 100% ☐ 50% ☐ Less than 50%
(c) Ownership shared with:	☐ No one ☐ Spouse ☐ Spouse and other family members ☐ Family members ☐ Non-relatives
(d) If incorporated, shares owned by:	☐ A holding company ☐ A family trust ☐ A more complex structure ☐ Direct personal ownership
(e) Significant influence of other parties	☐ Debt holders ☐ Venture capital ☐ Silent partners ☐ Don't know ☐ None or not applicable

2. Do you know what your business is worth?

(a) Do you have a current business valuation:	☐ Yes ☐ No
(b) Suggested value of your current business:	\$
(c) Are there any non-core assets that may be retained from a sale of the business:	☐ Yes ☐ No
(d) Value of non-core assets that may be retained:	\$
(e) What is the annual profit:	\$

3. What happens if there is an unexpected tragedy?

(a) Is there anyone who could immediately step in to manage the business to ensure continuity:	☐ Not yet decided ☐ Spouse ☐ Partner ☐ Key employee ☐ Family member ☐ Other ☐ Not at this time
(b) Are financial resources in place to ensure continuity (i.e. key person insurance):	☐ Yes ☐ I am not sure ☐ No
(c) How much disability insurance do you currently have (annual amount):	\$
(d) How much critical illness insurance do you currently have (annual amount):	\$
(e) Does your current Will ensure that your business is left to those that you choose:	☐ Yes ☐ I am not sure ☐ No ☐ I don't have a Will
(f) Do you have a shareholders' agreement:	☐ Yes ☐ I am not sure ☐ No ☐ Not applicable
(g) How much corporate owned life insurance do you have:	\$

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Family Snapshot® - Six Key Questions Business Succession Planning Questionnaire

4. Have you considered your exit options?

(a) Timing of planned business transition:	☐ Within 1 year ☐ Within 5 years ☐ Within 10 years	☐ After 10 years ☐ Not yet decided
(b) Who would you expect your business to transition to:	☐ Your spouse ☐ Your family ☐ Your partner ☐ Management	☐ A key employee ☐ A third party ☐ Wind down ☐ Not yet decided
(c) Do you plan to stay involved in the business after transition:	☐ Yes – temporarily ☐ Yes – ongoing	☐ No ☐ Not yet decided
(d) How much do you want to receive for your business:	☐ Full value ☐ Gift to family members ☐ Less than full value but enough to fund my retirement ☐ I am not sure	
(e) Would you provide Vendor Takeback (VTB) Financing to the purchaser:	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ I am not sure
(f) How much VTB financing would you consider:	\$	

5. What Planning have you done in relations to the transition of your business?

(a) Which Professionals have been involved to date in your business transition planning: (tick as many as apply from the list)	☐ Accountant ☐ Lawyer ☐ Management Team ☐ Business Valuator ☐ Business Broker ☐ Business Mentor ☐ Family Business Facilitator ☐ RBC Commercial Account Manager ☐ RBC Private Banker ☐ RBC DS Investment Advisor	
(b) Are you comfortable that your professionals have explored all options to create a plan that maximizes the potential of your business and meets your personal needs:	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ I am not sure
(c) Have you frozen the value of your ownership shares through an estate freeze:	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ I am not sure
(d) If you have done a freeze, what is the value of your freeze shares:	\$	
(e) Does your business qualify and do you have available room for the \$800,000 capital gains exemption for a share sale:	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ I am not sure
(f) If you still have available room for the capital gains exemption, how much room is available:	\$	
(g) Would you prefer to sell the assets of your business or the shares of your business:	☐ Assets ☐ Whichever produces the most after tax	☐ Shares
(h) How soon could your potential successor step in and assume responsibility:	☐ Within 1 year ☐ Within 5 years ☐ Within 10 years	☐ After 10 years ☐ Not yet decided

6. What does your retirement look like?

(a) Do you have a plan that includes a variety of activities to keep you busy:	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ I am not sure
(b) Do you plan to devote time to working for causes that you believe in:	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ I am not sure
(c) Do you have a financial plan:	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ I am not sure
(d) Would you consider relocating outside of Canada in the future:	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ I am not sure

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Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis

A useful tool to gauge your business' future viability is a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats ("SWOT") analysis.

Strengths and weaknesses are internal analysis whereas opportunities and threats are external factors. The internal analysis addresses the question, "how good are we?" and the external analysis addresses the question, "can we survive out there?" Sometimes identifying strengths and weaknesses could lead to identifying opportunities and threats.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive checklist of areas to address but only critical areas that could have important implications on your succession planning.

Internal factors

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Established and respected reputation 2. Young, driven and reasonably experienced management 3. Exclusive access to critical supplies 4. Savvy marketing team 5. "Sticky" and returning customer base 6. Strong internal systems 7. Contracts, licences and patents that limit competition 8. Strong "R&D" culture 9. Accreditations 10. Strong financial position	1. Dependence on owners or key staff 2. Concentration in customer and supplier base 3. Concentration in product base 4. Poor leadership in terms of unfocused and distracted management team 5. History of legal and other disputes 6. Obsolete (old) production facilities 7. Poor working capital management (high inventory and slow collections) 8. Obsolete product range 9. Poor relationship with employees/union 10. Distance to market

External factors

Opportunities	Threats
1. New technology 2. New geographical markets 3. New product lines 4. Complacent competitors 5. First to market 6. Shifting demographics that prompt stronger demand 7. Lower trade barriers in target markets 8. Expansion through acquisitions 9. New source of affordable funding 10. Natural events that create new demand	1. Rising domestic and foreign competition 2. Changing (adverse) government policies 3. Rising cost of supplies 4. Fast pace of technological changes 5. Changes in exchange rate 6. Industry with low barrier to entry 7. Changes in customer trends and depleting demand 8. Volatile commodity prices 9. Season and weather effect 10. Economic downturns



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(10/2014)