

The Challenges of Communication in a Family Enterprise  
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**Key Resources:**

*These are my top five resources – they provide context, insight and vision – you will have to do the heavy work of applying them within the unique culture of your family and business.*

Radical Candor, Kim Scott

Traction, Gino Wickman

The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit, Stephen Covey

Love and Respect, Emerson Eggerichs

Five Love Languages, Gary D. Chapman

**Big Challenges:**

The intersection of the three circles of family, ownership, and employment.

Developing clarity around whether fairness or equality drives your decision making.

Creating a process to determine whether or not your organization will be professionalized.

Managing and leveraging developmental stage differences in the family.

Overcoming unproductive habits, cultural norms, and power struggles.

Discerning when to hang on and when to let go.

Accepting and working with differences in communication styles.

**Big Jobs that Require Effective Communication:**

Develop clarity and specificity about the future.

Develop clarity about roles, business diversification, and risk management.

Creating a culture that embraces transparency, information sharing, and uses conflict/disagreement productively.

Maintaining focus and knowing which ball to chase.

**Consider:**

Seeking outside coaching and perspective (professional coaches, successful family business leaders, etc.)

Allocating time and talent to developing processes, structure, and habits that yield better communication and team alignment.

Questions to ponder:

What is the purpose of the following two organizations?

*Our family:*

*Our business:*

What goal(s) drive our decisions relative to the following?

*Who works in the business?*

*Who has ownership in the business?*

How do the concepts of fair and equal play out in our family and in our business?

Score the following from 1 to 10 (one = poor; ten = awesome)

*Communication relative to family matters:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Communication relative to business matters:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Communication between generations:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Communications with employees:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Does anyone else agree with you on these scores? How do you know?*

What are our communication strengths?

What are our communication weaknesses?

What are the outcomes when our communications strengths are driving the process?

What are the outcomes when our communication weaknesses are in charge?

What can we do to enhance our communication performance?