

FAMILY BUSINESS



Harmonious relationships can make or break it

DIANNA JACOBSEN talks about the challenges experienced when “family” and “business” collide! It is all a matter of having the right framework!

It is often challenging to live and work with the same people. We all have different personalities, different ways of interpreting the world around us, and different styles of management and communication.

WORLDVIEW

What is common, however, is the erroneous presumption that we should all see the world the same way, and that other people should think the same way as we do. Sadly, this often leads to damaged relationships within families, which could be avoided with some facilitation and guidance.

DAMAGE CONTROL

Whether you are working within a family business, or working within a team, heed these tips for mitigating the differences, and minimising the damage:

1. Seek some understanding of the various styles in which we humans interpret, translate, and convey information. There are several methodologies for this, such as Myers Briggs Type Indicators (MTBI), the DISC profiling system, and many more. Overall, these systems show how people think differently. Some think in ‘detail’, and others in ‘big picture’. Once you’ve recognised how someone thinks, you can delegate tasks accordingly, and set expectations congruently.
2. Recognise whether you, and others, are predominantly an Introvert or an Extrovert. We all have aspects of both, but we all have dominance one way or the other. Introverts tend to retreat to a quiet place, to recharge,

whilst extroverts seek company and action to recharge. Conversely, being around others is draining for introverts, whilst being alone is draining for extroverts. Knowing where you and your teammates sit on this scale is beneficial when allocating tasks and roles, such as back-office or front desk.

3. People interpret and convey information differently, via auditory, visual, or kinaesthetic means. This can make a huge difference to communication styles. In school we are often taught in a linear, written format, but if someone is more ‘hands-on’, they will have better comprehension and retention from a more kinaesthetic style, such as a diagram or model. More people are visual than auditory, so to speak an instruction list will have less success than to write a list, e.g. on a whiteboard.
4. We all have left and right hemispheres of the brain, and most people have one side which is more prevalent, impacting on the way people think and act. This affects whether people are more analytical and pragmatic, or make emotionally-based decisions. Neither is better or worse, but there will be roles in which one or the other is preferable, and get better results.

5. Prior experiences lead to our belief systems, referred to as our ‘conditioning’. This is not set in concrete, as our neural pathways can be changed, but it tends to be our default setting, unless we become aware of our beliefs and choose to change some aspect. Until then, we function on auto-pilot when any trigger points arise, and most people don’t realise that they

are doing so, as it is programmed into their sub-conscious.

6. The skillsets and passions of the people in your team are a key driver in where their energy and focus are directed. Whilst we all have some tasks we don’t enjoy, if roles and responsibilities within your team can incorporate the favoured aspects of your staff, much better results arise, for much less effort, than if you have to force or coerce people to engage and co-operate.

This is not a comprehensive list of points to consider, given the unique anomalies among various families and team-members. However, they are a starting point for anyone experiencing frustration in their working (or home) environment, and all the more so if it happens to be with your family members.

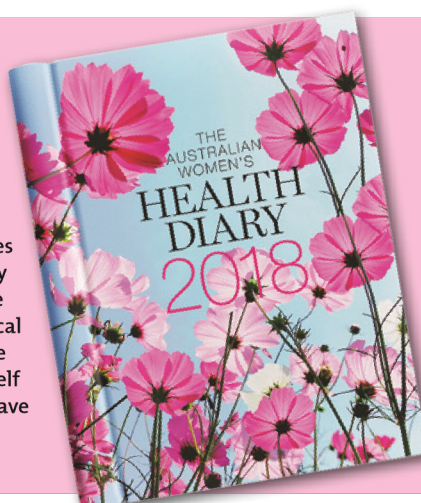
SUMMARY

There is no right or wrong style of thinking and communicating; it is about finding what works best for various team-members and personalities, and structuring their job roles accordingly wherever possible. Doing tasks, they enjoy gives people energy and fulfilment, whereas doing chores they don’t enjoy will greatly reduce engagement and drive, and cause people to feel drained and tired. ■

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