

Family Business: Barriers To Leadership Success

By Ronald P. Smyser

Client question: “What are the barriers affecting my leadership impact?”

Answer:

The following leadership behaviors, often observed in family businesses but also present in all types of businesses, are major contributors to personal leadership failure and business decay:

- (1) Undefined or unexpressed Vision, Values and Priorities
- (2) Absence of a well prepared, straightforward business plan
- (3) Ineffective leadership delegation skills and practices
- (4) Use of rewards to create happiness, versus incentives to foster commitment, motivation, and productivity
- (5) Inadequate development programs or leadership succession plans
- (6) Too much “doing” ... not enough thinking, planning and communicating
- (7) Insufficient funding or liquid assets to meet current or future needs
- (8) Narcissism:
 - Reigning as “King” or “Queen”
 - Dictating, rather than leading
 - Touting personal and family successes without merit or need
 - Disrespecting others: lateness, cancellations, abusive comments, etc.
 - Taking credit, placing blame
 - Chastising others in public
 - Making quick, shallow decisions that are susceptible to change
 - Setting unnecessarily difficult priorities and timelines ... for others
 - Raising the bar for others but not for “us”
- (9) Greed:
 - Misusing business resources for personal activities
 - Spending assets created by founders or previous leaders
 - Unearned, extravagant lifestyles, inflating costs for the business
 - Looting the business
- (10) Lack of leadership Integrity:
 - Making promises that are not kept
 - Changing decisions or direction, frequently or unnecessarily
 - Saying one thing ... doing something else
- (11) Nepotism:
 - Diversion of business focus and resources to personal or family needs

- Less-than-qualified family members or employees in protected elevated positions or compensation levels
- (12) Setting lower performance standards for family members or selected employees than for others
 - (13) Rivalry between family members or employees
 - (14) Jealousy and mistrust ... versus motivation
 - (15) Inconsistency
 - (16) Lack of accountability
 - (17) Insufficient commitment to the success of the business
 - (18) Diversion versus focus
 - (19) Mixing family or employee disputes with the activities of the business
 - (20) Favoritism

Are any of the above leadership behavioral barriers present in your business? If so, why?

Starting now, eradicate these nasties and enhance your success and the success of your business.

What are you waiting for?

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Source: Spinnaker Leadership Associates, Inc.

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