

# CONDUCTING BUSINESS MEETINGS

# IDENTIFY SYSTEM OF OPERATION

- It is imperative that you know which system is appropriate in a given situation
- Family system vs. business system
  - It is appropriate to behave as a family on a holiday
  - It is not appropriate to behave as a family at a business meeting

# A CRITICAL DIFFERENCE

- How we define “family”, the priorities, expectations, relationships, and measures of success in a family are, and should, be different than the priorities, expectations, relationships and measures of success in a business

# SCHEDULING MEETINGS

- Determine how often to meet
- Plan for “emergency” meetings
- Set a day of the week & time of day
- Set location - outside of family home (business meeting, not holiday dinner)
- What constitutes a quorum?
- Who must attend?

# WHO FACILITATES THE MEETINGS?

- Everyone take turns
- One person agrees to facilitate all of the meetings
- Outside neutral facilitator

# REVIEW OF GROUND RULES

- Agree upon the authority of the facilitator
- Honest conversation
- Respect each other
- Listen to learn
- Everyone participates (silence is acceptance)
- Speak one at a time (do not interrupt)
- Critique the message, not the messenger
- Trust the process

# LISTEN TO LEARN

- Listen to others to learn what they have to say
- Listen to yourself to learn what you have to say

# DO NOT INTERRUPT

- Do not interrupt others when they are speaking
  - Allow them the opportunity to finish their thought
- Do not interrupt yourself when you are speaking
  - Allow yourself the opportunity to finish your thought



# CRITIQUE THE MESSAGE, NOT THE MESSENGER

- Focus on the content of the message
- Do not focus on the character of the messenger

# TRUST THE PROCESS

- Be persistent
- Use the process to generate a solution or to reach a conclusion

# A PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING

- What criteria will be used?
- Who will make the decision?
- How will decisions be made?
- How will conflicts be resolved?

# DEFINE THE CRITERIA

- A financial perspective?
- A social perspective?
- A legal perspective?
- An emotional perspective?
- A personal perspective?
- A family perspective?
- A community perspective?
- An affect on your personal goals?
- A religious perspective?
- A moral perspective?

# WHO WILL MAKE THE DECISION

- Owner generation and/or successor generation
- On-the-farm family members
- Off-the-farm family members
- Employees
- Non-family members (Advisors)

# HOW TO DECIDE

- Majority vote
- Consensus
- One person
- Collaboration

# OPENING THE MEETING

- Welcome everyone
- Affirm the importance meeting
- Get people focused on the meeting
- Review the ground rules
- Set the or review the agenda
- Record keeping – minutes
- Provide information

# SETTING THE TONE

- Model importance
- Maintain appropriate “pace”
- Create a safe environment
- Keep anyone from “losing face”
- Model active listening
- Identify who is talking to whom
- Encourage participation



# CLOSURE

- Thank people for their work
- Summarize major points identified
- Where do we go from here?
- Who does what?
- Distribute the minutes

# OPTIONS

- It is always necessary to explore at least two options
- Do not create an option that becomes the immediate solution or other options will not be explored.
- Do not reject any option
- Be non-judgmental

# CONSEQUENCES

For each option list the positive and the negative consequences

Pros	Cons
+	-
+	-
+	
+	

# SOLUTION

Select the option that has the most positive and least negative consequences

Pros	Cons
+	-
+	-
+	
+	

# IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- **TIMING** - Delaying a decision may be the same as not making a decision; however, do not be rushed into making a decision.
- **INFORMATION** - There is never the right amount of information. One always wishes that was more information or one feels overwhelmed by the amount of information available.

# IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- **EMOTIONS AND EXPERIENCE** - If you strongly feel that a decision is wrong or if your experience tells you that the decision is a mistake, the decision is wrong for you.
- **DEADLINE** - Set a date certain for making decisions.
- **ACT** - Once the decision has been made, act forcefully and promptly to carry out the decision.

# IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- **HAVE A PLAN** – How will the decision be implemented.
- **TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED** - Do not assume that all parties know their tasks. Follow up, make sure that everyone is carrying out their responsibilities.
- **ALTERNATIVES** – Develop alternatives.
- **DO NOT GIVE UP** - Implementing a decision is often difficult. Be persistent.

**Say  
THANK YOU!**



# SOURCES OF CONFLICT

- Conflicts at or about work
- Conflicts at the meetings
- Family conflicts
- Unresolved conflict

# NEGOTIATION

- To resolve a conflict the parties must come to a mutually agreeable solution
  - Negotiation is the process by which a conflict may be resolved in a mutually agreeable manner
- **A CONFLICT IS A PROBLEM**
  - Problems have solutions
- **SET THE AGENDA**
  - Identify and define the conflict that you are trying to resolve
- **ESTABLISH YOUR GOALS**
  - Know what you want to accomplish or the outcome you want achieve

## ■ KNOW YOUR WANTS AND NEEDS

- There is a difference between what you want and what you need to resolve the conflict

## ■ DO NOT CONFUSE GOALS WITH ISSUES

- Goals are the outcome you want. Issues are differences that arise in negotiations

## ■ KNOW YOUR EMOTIONS

- Emotions drive many of our decisions. Identify your emotions, especially your fears.

## ■ MUTUAL PROTECTION IS BETTER THAN MUTUAL DESTRUCTION

- Find a solution that will benefit all

## ■ SAY “AND” NOT “BUT”

- The word “and” ties people together.... “But” holds people apart.

## ■ RELATIONSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT

- Do not destroy the relationship with those involved in the conflict

## ■ AVOID TRYING TO EXERCISE POWER OR TO CONTROL THE NEGOTIATIONS

- Recognize the needs of the other parties involved in the conflict.

## ■ DO NOT STEREOTYPE

- Recognize people for who they are, not who you think they are.

## ■ DO NOT BARGAIN AGAINST YOURSELF

- Wait for a response

- **KNOW HOW TO BARGAIN**

- What you bargain for is important, but how you bargain for it is more important.

- **IDENTIFY INTERFERENCE**

- Know what it is that interferes with you meeting your needs.

- **SEEK A SETTLEMENT**

- Respond in such a way to meet your needs and goals.

## ■ BE PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE

- Make a proposal
- Take the lead in seeking a solution

## ■ BE FLEXIBLE

- Be willing to “give” in order to “get”

## ■ SYNTHESIZE

- Compromise can be unacceptable to some

## ■ IMPASSE

- Agree to disagree
- Do not be disagreeable

**THANK YOU!**