



INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that over 70% (in our part of the world, perhaps over 95%) of family businesses fail to continue to the next generation. This situation has been attributed largely to the lack of or unwillingness to plan for succession.

In their findings, Fager and McKinney in their 2007 *Family Business Planning* book in turn attributed this lack of or unwillingness to plan for succession to the following common reasons, amongst others:

- **Good Times High syndrome**
We assume that good times will last forever in our businesses and fail to plan for or put structures in place to deal with hard times.
- **Immortality Complex**
We assume, albeit with fatal error, that we will always be there. These assumptions find expressions in such common clichés as 'Sickness is not my portion', 'Death is not my portion', etc.
- **Fear of feud between employee and family**
This fear of causing 'bad blood' between loyal employees and family prevents us from developing clear cut succession plan for business continuity.

- **Difficulty leaving the business**

Fear of redundancy prevents us from introducing family to the business early. We are continually bugged by concern like 'What will I do when I'm not running this place anymore?'

- **Lack of faith in successor**

We, sometimes express uncertainty in the capacity and competence of family members. We ask ourselves from time to time 'Can he/she do it?'

SOME PRACTICAL WAYS TO ENSURE BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Some practical ways of ensuring business continuity are as follows:

- **Formalisation/Registration of Business:**
Formalization/registration gives your business statutory flavour and protection. The business brand becomes exclusive to you and is protected by law against passing-off or any other form of violation by any persons or other brands.
- **Putting a System in Place:** Develop work manuals and staff handbook as quick and easy references for guide on how to handle particular tasks.
- Introducing family members to operational aspects of business early.
- Sharing business vision with family members.
- Believing in successors; praying with and for them.
- Investing in capacity building for successors in industry requirements, operational techniques, managerial skills together with appreciation of modern technology and ICT.
- Creating time for positive mentoring and helping successors through the period of internship, constructively encouraging them when they make their mistakes while showing them how to avoid such mistakes in the future.

- Receptivity to suggestions on alternative approaches to doing business including business expansion and diversification.

- Moving with God every step of the way.

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