

"Elder Mediation" – 4th International Symposium 2011

## Generational Change in a Family-Run SME "Appreciation is Key"



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### Abstract:

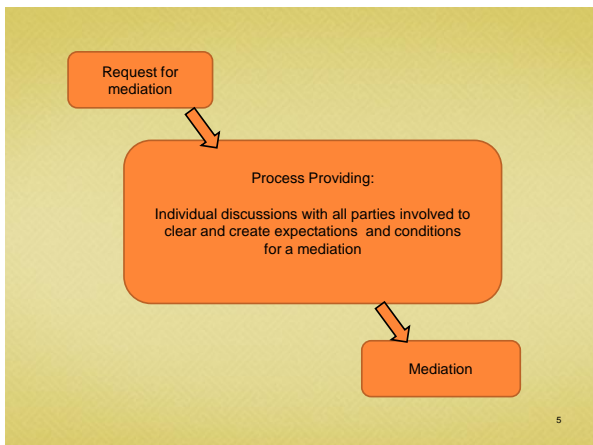
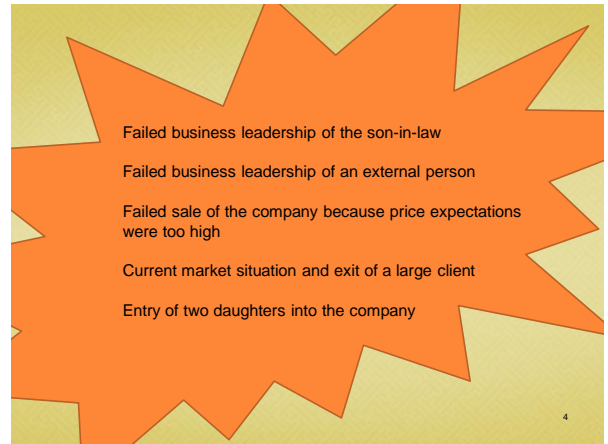
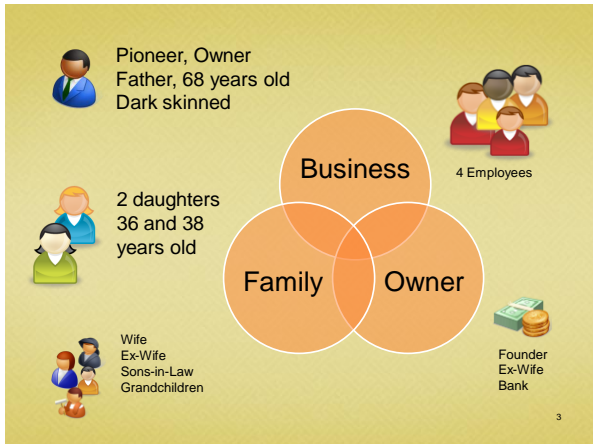
The meaning and impacts of missing or existing mutual appreciation are explained using generational change in a small family-run SME to illustrate the complex "family/owner/business" system.

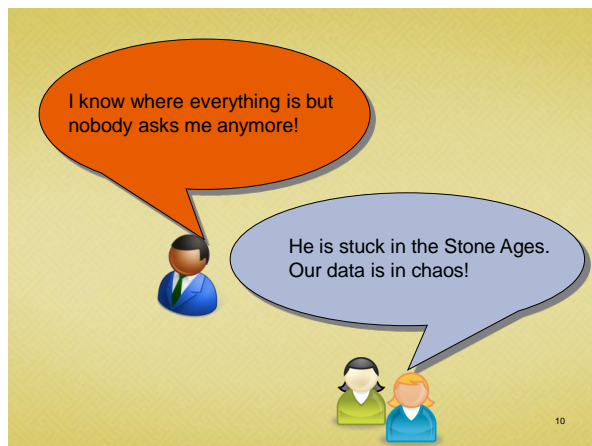
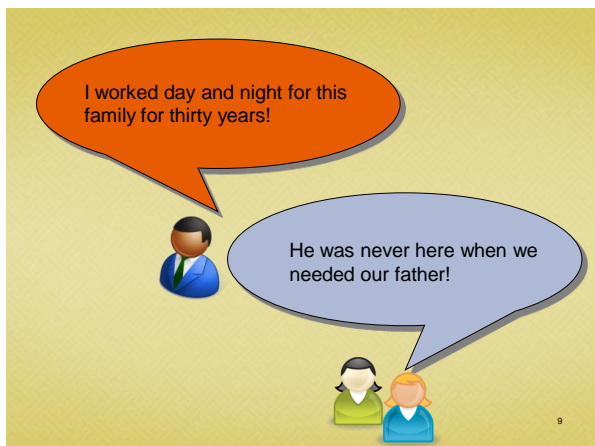
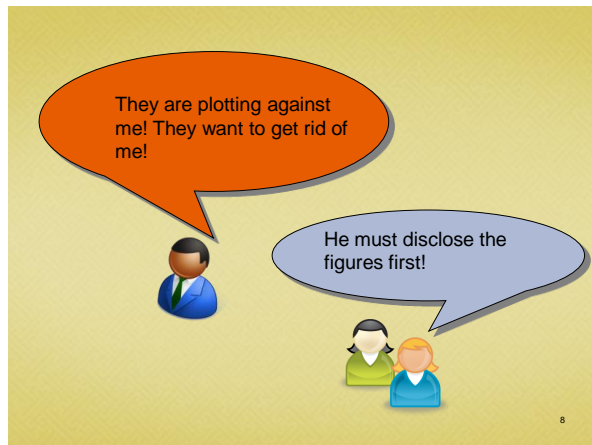
After a failed sale of the business and two wrong selections for the future management, all members of the family (ostensibly) agree to a mediation in order to avoid further massive escalations and to find solutions for all parties.

The combination of individual life events, future life plans, a multinational family culture, ambiguously arranged ownership structures and the company's current market situation results in a highly complex situation.

The presentation focuses on the statements of the main parties involved that were made prior to the mediation process: those of the father/boss/patron/pioneer and those of his two daughters, who already work in the business and who want to or are required to take up succession.

2





Appreciation as a key and as a precondition for speaking about generational change



Acknowledgement of achievements, missed opportunities, forgiveness, letting go, integrating

13

Statements of appreciation from the individual mediator conversations with the father and daughters



14

Yes, he has done a lot for us!  
He grew a business out of nothing!  
He was the only dark skinned foreigner in town; that was very difficult for him then!  
It wasn't always easy with our mother either!



15

My daughters are competent!  
They are well educated!  
I trust them to take over!  
Yes, I also wasn't there very often!



16

**What have these statements effected?**

- ✓ Relaxation in everyday business and private life
- ✓ Readiness to work on solutions and engage in the mediation
- ✓ More tolerance in the handling of mistakes and break downs
- ✓ Individual direct appreciative statements between the father and the daughters

17

**What are the next steps?**

Initiation of the mediation process on what is still a thin basis of appreciation, and interest in a good solution for both generations, together with financial experts, mediative lawyer, trustee.



18

## Insights from this process

- It is **always** initially about relationships and only then about the matter at hand
- Good results aren't possible without at least partial processing of the past
- The intimacy of the family story must be warranted
- Appreciation of achievements and events is a central key for creating the future
- Time, patience and listening, listening, listening are essential
- It is worth paying a lot of attention to Process Providing

19



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20