FAMILY BUSINESS CONSULTATION: OPPORTUNITIES FOR MFTS

Anna Beth Benningfield, Ph.D.

Private Practice, Dallas, Texas

Sean D. Davis, M. S.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

FAMILY BUSINESS CONSULTATION: OPPORTUNITIES FOR MFTS

The message on my voice mail sounded like a routine intake call. *"I got your name from my friend Gary. He said you had worked with his family. I need some help with mine."* He left his name and number. I returned the call between therapy sessions, expecting this man to be a client who would come in for family therapy. But when I talked to him, he told me that he and his brother worked with their father in the family business and that "things are getting pretty bad." When I asked him what he meant, he said that his father was "losing it" all the time and lambasting him and his brother in front of the other employees. "We think it's time for him to retire, but he won't hear of it." Immediately I realized that this family member was asking for help about issues related both to the family business and to family relationships.

Thus began this first author's work in family business consultation. While there was no deliberate strategy implemented to develop this work, talking with families about their businesses and how they influenced and were influenced by family dynamics and relationships had often occurred during therapy sessions. Growing up in a family business environment and working in a therapy practice set up as a family business doubtlessly contributed to familiarity and comfort with this area. However, we believe that well-trained family therapists with no particular personal experience are also well-equipped to work in this area.

The primary requirement for marriage and family therapists to develop a consultation practice with family-owned businesses is interest on the part of the therapist, plus a willingness to explore some new literature and possible training opportunities. We have been fortunate to attend several workshops and summer institutes on family business consulting, participate in a doctoral-level class on consulting with larger systems (primarily family businesses and family dynamics in the workplace), and work on a research team which focuses on family-owned businesses. We have also developed and sponsored presentations for the local business community. Hopefully the suggestions we offer in this chapter can help guide the interested therapist through setting up their own successful consulting practice.

While this chapter is written specifically for marriage and family therapists, other mental health professionals can certainly obtain the education and training necessary to work with families in family-owned businesses. Such education should minimally include coursework in family systems, theories and techniques for working with couples and families, developmental theories for individual and family development, and knowledge of gender and multicultural issues. Additionally, mental health professionals seeking to work with families in family-owned businesses should obtain supervised clinical experience with couples and families before working with family businesses. Although it seems likely that other mental health professionals will already possess expertise in counseling and interviewing skills with individuals and groups, the complexity of couple and family relationships will require investment in additional education and training for any who are seriously interested in family business consultation. Without such training, the consultation experience will probably prove frustrating for the consultant and disappointing for the family.

The potential for developing this area of practice for family therapists or other mental health professionals who obtain the added training described above seems very promising. Approximately 90 percent of all businesses in the U.S. are family-owned (Family Firm Institute, 2001), and one-third of Fortune 500 companies are family-owned (Paul, 1996). Thus, many current clients already seen by family therapists are involved in family-owned businesses. While this observation does not mean that *all* families who own businesses need help with issues related to the business, it seems entirely plausible to us that *many* such families at some point will need the kind of consultation for which family therapists are especially suited.

Only 30 percent of family-owned businesses survive the succession to the second generation, 12 percent survive to the third, and only 3 percent last into a fourth generation (Family Firm Institute, 2001). Family dynamics certainly play an enormous role in the success or failure of this succession, and family business owners are often more than willing to hire the services of a family therapist to help them through this transition. Despite this, many marriage and family therapists (MFT's) do not take advantage of the opportunity to help family businesses through this transition. The purpose of this chapter is to help the MFT or similarly trained mental health professional know how he or she can offer services to this part of the market. First, we will discuss what MFT's can do to help family business owners. Many MFT's fail to take advantage of family business consultation opportunities simply because they do not believe they have the necessary skills to help. After all, where do you start after receiving a phone call like that mentioned at the beginning of our article? We will discuss specific ways an MFT can help family business owners. Second, we will attempt to further clarify the role of an MFT in family business consulting by clarifying what *not* to do. This section will include a discussion of the unique ethical considerations necessary for working with this population. Third, we will discuss the "nuts and bolts" of setting up a family business consultation practice. This section will include information on establishing fees, marketing, special training opportunities, and other necessary practice changes. With clear guidance, this step is easier than many realize – especially if you already are operating in a private practice.

THE SCOPE OF FAMILY BUSINESS CONSULTATION FOR FAMILY THERAPISTS: WHAT TO DO

Family therapists offering consultation to family-owned businesses often use many of the same theories, techniques and approaches they have used in marital and family therapy. Perhaps the primary difference between consulting and therapy lies in the overall goal of the work. Family business consultants focus not just on how the family functions, but on *how the family business functions* as well. Families don't generally have to spend much time planning for exactly what the family will do after granddad dies, but planning for succession if granddad has run the business for years becomes critical for family-owned businesses in order to prevent disputes and conflicts later on. Likewise, families don't usually negotiate what portion of the family home is owned by the members who live there. However, family members in a family business have to decide how much of the company - whether formally designated as shares of stock or not - belongs to those who work in the business, and whether or not family members who do not work in the business have any claim to profits from the business.

Family therapists have the training necessary to facilitate family meetings, mediate conflicts, help family members to understand both their verbal and non-verbal communication, plan for transitions, and look at other aspects of familial business relationships and structures. Similarly, because family therapists are accustomed to working with family maps and genograms, they are well positioned to assist family-owned businesses in developing a graphic representation of both the historical development and future possibilities of the family business. Such training and skills represent important contributions to the family and to their business.

As with families who come for therapy, consultants may find that the family is in crisis when they first ask for consultation. Just as in families who come for therapy, there will likely be some family members who feel more urgency than others. The first task for the family business consultant, therefore, is to determine who should be included in the consultation process. It is imperative for the consultant to make this decision; otherwise, key participants may be left out of the process. Ordinarily, it is better to be very inclusive at the beginning of the consultation since subgroups can easily be formed or less involved individuals can be excused from later meetings if it seems more useful to do so.

Without the support and involvement of senior members in the family business, the consultation process is probably fatally flawed from the beginning. Not only do senior members know more about the history and development of the business, but they are usually highly invested in continued success. They do not want to see their hard work undone. Additionally, they often have the authority to assure participation by members of the group who may be less than enthusiastic about the consultation process. Often some persuasion may be necessary in order for everyone to understand the importance of full participation by all members of the group. While this may represent the well-known therapeutic phenomenon of *resistance*, it may also be a result of naivete, lack of experience, or procedures unfamiliar to the business. Thus, while family members may realize they need help through the consultation process, it is up to the consultant to define and describe what the process entails and who should participate.

Defining the goals for the consultation is the beginning of agreeing on the process which will be used. For example, if the goal is to help determine who takes over as CEO after dad retires, then exploring the various possibilities in a group meeting may be the logical place to begin. However, if the goal is to improve communication and reduce triangulation, then individual interviews to help determine what interferes with open communication may be helpful. Group tasks may be used to help with team-building or increasing cooperation within the group. Planning for the future of the business may help family members appreciate the commitment of others to the well-being of their joint enterprise. Assigning subgroups within the business the tasks of developing criteria for younger family members' entry into the business, equitable distribution of profits, how salaries and bonuses should be determined, how to value the contributions of members not directly on the payroll, etc. can demonstrate the richness of resources and creativity within the group. Again, the skills of experienced family therapists can help guide such family meetings, including discussion of controversial or conflictual topics, so that the family realizes the breadth and depth of their capacity as a group.

Another function of the consultant may include coaching certain family members about how to handle their particular responsibilities within the business or the family. The daughter who will be assuming leadership from her father may benefit from coaching about what steps she can take to establish herself as his successor in the eyes of others who work for the business. Brothers who inherit the responsibility for running a company after their father dies may profit from coaching about how to negotiate a different compensation scale with their mother who is now majority owner. Coaching often entails either the development of new skills, the acquisition of broader knowledge, or creative analysis of what is already known. Assessing what individuals need in order to help the business be more successful enables the consultant to help guide the process toward a successful outcome.

Many family businesses, like other businesses, have no real description of their purpose, their mission, their *raison d'etre*. Alternatively, they may have one (or several) mission(s) which remain at the unspoken level of understanding, or simple verbal agreement, within the group. Articulating the purpose of the business in writing is an important means of socializing younger family members who enter at a later date. The development of a mission, or purpose statement, is often helpful in establishing an identity for the business as an entity which is part of, yet apart from, the family itself. Such a description is also useful in the creation of a strategic plan for the family's business, one which looks toward the future while building on the past. Since family therapists are accustomed to looking at multiple factors and their influence on family development over the life cycle, helping family-owned businesses with these activities draws on familiar therapeutic functions. Stephen Covey's book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1990) offers a user-friendly guide through formulating personal and business mission statements.

Perhaps the greatest value the consultant brings to family businesses is the capacity to remain connected to, but separate and differentiated from a group of individuals in the midst of high anxiety, conflict or emotional distress. All family therapists are familiar with the magnetism of the family's emotional force field which pulls for unresolved personal issues from the therapist's own past. Nowhere is this more profound than in families whose lives are intertwined not only with personal relationships, but also whose economic well-being depends on the success of their abilities to work together. Family business consulting is often more, not less, intense in terms of emotionality and conflict. The family is no longer a source of comfort or renewal when it is also the source of negative feelings and pain. The consultant's ability to help family members communicate respectfully and clearly, to elicit the pain underneath the anger, to understand one another's vulnerabilities, and to promote an atmosphere of healing and valuing of each person allows the family to move forward. Thus, problem-solving about the particular issue(s) which brought the family into consultation in the first place may often depend on addressing and, to the degree possible, resolving of ongoing emotional issues which are interfering with the family's ability to approach other business-related concerns.

Since a full description of all services which a family therapist turned family business consultant is beyond the scope of this article, table 1 is meant simply to exemplify the possibilities an MFT is often uniquely qualified to provide.

Table 1 **Services MFT's can provide family businesses**
1) Role conflicts between family and work 2) Helping a company establish family-friendly policies and incentives 3) Resolving workplace conflicts (between individuals, departments, or any other subsystem) 4) Facilitating family meetings 5) Developing succession plans 6) Relational aspects of estate planning 7) Helping management and employees cope with change 8) Coaching management in leadership skills 9) Assisting in the structured reorganization of the company 10) Developing policies and procedures for integrating younger family members into the business.

Another related and emerging area some family therapists who consult with family businesses have become involved in is in the transfer of wealth from generation to generation. This new domain requires creative application of MFT theory and technique. During the next 5-15 years as the World War II generation passes on, there will be a 12 trillion dollar transfer of wealth – the largest in history (Family Firm Institute, 2001). Many of these families are interested in utilizing the services of an MFT in order to preserve family solidarity during this dispersion. MFT consultants can work collaboratively with the executor(s) of the will or with the family in various capacities before and after the distribution of an estate. Proactive family members often hire the services of an MFT long before their death to help prepare the family for the inheritance and circumvent any problems that may arise during this disbursement.

THE LIMITS OF FAMILY BUSINESS CONSULTATION FOR FAMILY THERAPISTS: WHAT NOT TO DO

There are no statutes, no professional standards, and no clear guidelines developed to guide family therapists in consulting to family businesses. No scope of practice has yet been defined. Therefore, you must use your good judgment and common sense to determine what issues and approaches fall naturally and appropriately within your training and competence, and perhaps more importantly, which do not. We believe that working either as part of a formal team or with close collaboration and referrals to other professionals offers the best model for practice in family business consulting.

Family therapists should not offer legal counsel, accounting advice, computer consultation and other kinds of specialized or technical (and sometimes regulated) knowledge to family businesses any more than they should offer medical instruction or legal information to individuals, couples and families. Further, unless family therapists have additional training in business, they should not independently offer assistance with marketing, business strategies, and any other area requiring a knowledge base outside training. See table 2 for a tentative list of services an MFT family business consultant should not provide without specific additional business training.

As in regular clinical practice, the role of the therapist is to help clients with the *process* around making decisions, not the *content* of the decisions themselves. Sometimes this is best done in family business consulting by referring the family to additional specialists such as a lawyer or accountant. The therapist's job then becomes one of helping the family work through family dynamics as they implement the suggestions given to them by other professionals rather than trying to offer guidance in a realm outside of her or his experience.

Table 2 **Tentative list of services an MFT should *not* provide unless they have specific business training.**
1) Accounting or financial planning advice 2) Legal advice 3) Business strategies 4) Marketing advice 5) Product development 6) Any content area outside of your expertise and training.

At times the family members may understandably request the therapist's assistance in areas outside of consultation expertise. "After all, you *know us* well, better than these other professionals. Why can't we just work this out with you?" The responsibility for maintaining the boundaries around the scope of the therapist's participation in the consultation rests solely with the therapist, *not* with the family. The ability to call in other professionals, or to work with those already involved with the family business, allows the family therapist to focus work with the family within appropriate areas of expertise.

Family therapists who have extensive histories with clinical practice may find relationships outside the consultation room with client families much different than those to which they are accustomed. For example, the family may invite, or even expect, the family business consultant to join them for dinner, accompany them to other meetings, or engage in business social events. Some family business consultants have been guests in the homes of client families, and others have received substantial gifts from satisfied clients. Since providing business consultation is different than therapy, such behavior is appropriate and often even expected. Since families in business are used to operating according to the etiquette and protocol of the business world, they will quite naturally expect the same of the consultant. Therapists who are maintaining a clinical practice while also developing a business consultation practice can expect to have complex choices and decisions about how to manage the differing contexts. Again, it is up to the therapist to define and maintain ethical relationships in any context.

SUGGESTIONS FOR GETTING STARTED

Family therapists who transition into consulting with family-owned businesses will need to develop their own business plans for the new practice. Seeking some consultation from a professional with experience in career transitions often proves to be very helpful in setting realistic goals, establishing benchmarks to evaluate progress, identifying tasks associated with each stage of development, etc. Regardless of the business plan, however, there are some questions we encounter regularly. See table 3 for a summary of answers to these questions.

How do I charge for consultation?

Many consultants charge an hourly fee just as therapists do. However, it is also possible to contract for a set amount in exchange for a specified set of services over a specified time period. For example, one consultant negotiated for a set amount to interview principal family members in the company and then facilitated a meeting of the entire family. Another consultant established a daily fee to cover any work done within the eight-hour work day. Expenses are often charged in addition to these fees. For example, travel, meals, and lodging are often reimbursed by the business. The best practice is for the consultant to be crystal clear about the fee structure, including not only how much will be paid for what services, but when payment will be made, and then to finalize the agreement with a written contract. Since the business itself will probably be paying for your services, there will be no need for CPT codes or DSM-IV-TR (2000) diagnoses.

Given that consultation often involves work outside the hours spent with the family (finding information, reading, talking to other professionals involved with the family, seeking out good referral sources), fees for consulting with family businesses are often somewhat higher than those for psychotherapy. Beginning consultants may consider setting an initial fee for the first three to six months of business, and then reevaluating to see whether it seems reasonable and fair. While fees vary by area, experience, and other variables, many family business consultants begin by charging somewhat more per hour for consultation than they do for therapy. Experienced consultants or consultants in wealthier areas of the nation frequently charge much more. Talking with other family business consultants in your area can be very helpful when establishing a fee or making other business-related decisions.

Do I need different business cards, stationery, etc.?

In a word, yes. Using your clinical practice business cards, stationery and forms suggests that you are not differentiating these services from therapy. Moreover, you may be perceived by others as operating outside your scope of practice as a clinical practitioner. It may seem like a potentially unnecessary expense to invest in new business cards, new stationery, new forms, etc., but the truth is you are starting a new business. New businesses require start-up costs and a substantial amount of time and energy. Attempting to find short-cuts may indicate your own lack of investment in this new practice or doubts about the potential for success. Besides, thinking through what you want your new cards and stationery to look like, deciding what forms you need to develop, and creating a brochure or information describing your new business will all prove invaluable in helping you to formulate your own vision of yourself as a consultant to family-owned businesses.

Table 3
Checklist for starting a family business consultation practice

1) Establish a fee by checking with other family business consultants in your area and considering your own level of experience and expertise.
2) Gather new marketing materials such as business cards, stationary, letterhead, etc.
3) Formulate new legal paperwork such as consent forms and contract for services offered.
4) Market your services by networking with other therapists, lawyers, accountants, bankers, and others who work with family business members on a regular basis.
5) Regularly evaluate your performance in light of your goals, altering both if necessary as you gain experience.

Where will I get referrals?

As indicated earlier, the first author began working with family-owned businesses using referrals from her own practice. Thus, it is possible that once your own clients find out you are consulting in this area they will refer others to you. You may even recommend consultation to former clients who call you as their former family therapist if you determine that the concerns presented are primarily family business issues. Whether or not you refer the family to another consultant or see them yourself is an important decision which requires an ethical decision-making process established in advance.

While potential ethical problems are beyond the scope of this work, it should be noted that family therapists who make the transition into consulting with family businesses need to think carefully about how to transition into the new role with previous or existing clients, thereby resigning from their role as therapist for the family. It seems likely that moving back and forth between consultant and therapist will prove problematic in the long run, if not the short run. Therefore, clients themselves must be clear about the transition being made, perhaps participating in the decision along with the therapist/consultant. Appropriate referral can then be made, either to another consultant or to a therapist who would be available for family therapy in the future if needed.

Other referrals will come from your colleagues in clinical practice once they find out you are specializing in this area. (You may want to do some educational presentations to help colleagues differentiate between family therapy and consultation with family businesses.) Many family therapists do not want to work at all with issues related to the business world, including family businesses. They will be pleased to know of a resource in this area. Still others, as indicated above, may refer to you even if they also offer consultation to family businesses because they are remaining in the role as therapist to a family. Establishing a website advertising your services can also be another effective marketing tool for family business consultants.

Other professionals who encounter family businesses with family problems are potential referral sources. Attorneys, accountants, bankers, estate planners and others sometimes find their work stymied by unresolved issues in the family. Letting them know of your expertise in this area offers them a good resource for referral. At the same time, finding out their particular areas of expertise allows you to build your own network of referral sources for the future. Arranging times to stop by their office or take them to lunch is often a nice way to meet other professionals. Another potent method is to offer seminars for groups of accountants, lawyers, etc. Contacting the offices of various law or accounting firms or banks in your area can be a good way to learn of opportunities to present at seminars.

How do I get information and training?

As this specialty area develops in marriage and family therapy, as well as in psychology, social work, and counseling, there will be more opportunities for learning. For now, however, there are few if any sources of information strictly for the family business consultant, much less for an MFT family business consultant. Therefore, when it comes to treatment, it is largely up to the therapist to creatively apply familiar approaches to new contexts. Much information has to be gathered through secondary sources. Some conferences are already featuring presentations and workshops about family business consulting. There will be more journal articles as researchers explore these families. Currently, newspapers and magazines often feature articles about family businesses – either the successes or the ones with problems. Some colleges and universities offer courses or seminars about consulting to family-owned businesses. Also, there are books about business and consulting which, even if not targeted directly at family-owned businesses, are very applicable. Appendix A contains a brief listing of books, magazines, and newspapers which are relevant for family business consulting.

While all of these educational opportunities will certainly be helpful, it is important to remember that, as an MFT, you already possess more than enough knowledge and skills from working with family systems to be able to transfer that knowledge to family business systems. Any training beyond your current MFT skills will likely only refine skills you already have. MFT's, with their systemic training, are uniquely suited for family business consulting and can begin consulting without any special training.

CLINICAL RESULTS

As with marital and family therapy, consultants who work with family-owned businesses will not achieve successful outcomes with every consultation. However, our experience thus far indicates that families who are in business together demonstrate a very high degree of motivation to resolve problems, establish or restore amicable relationships, and preserve family ties. They are thus receptive to the consultation process and want to be successful. Often they rely on the consultant to offer some tools they can use on their own later, or they may engage the consultant to meet with them on a periodic basis to evaluate how things are going and how things might be even better.

Below we provide a few case studies from our practice to help provide a picture of what consulting looks like. Interested readers can find more examples of family business consulting case studies at the publications section of the Family Firm Institute's website (http://www.ffi.org/resource/index.cgi?pageid=1).

In one case, two brothers who owned and operated the family business together were able to create job descriptions for both of their sons who wanted to work for the family business. At first both fathers believed their sons should work for themselves so that they could manage the mentoring process. After considering how such an arrangement might, in fact, put significant strains on family relationships as well as be less productive for the business, the brothers decided that each of their sons should work for his uncle. Job descriptions to be used for performance evaluation purposes at specified intervals throughout the first two years were formed. At the consultant's suggestion, the owners scheduled regular meetings together so that they might have the opportunity to discuss how their sons were doing. Importantly, both brothers affirmed their commitment to successful training of both sons as a means of fostering individual as well as business development. The anxiety about loyalties was then significantly diminished.

In another instance, a daughter who had assumed leadership of her father's company when he was ready to retire found her father questioning her decisions, appearing at the company, conferring with employees, and undermining her authority with customers with whom he had longstanding relationships. After the consultant was involved, father and daughter worked out an agreement wherein father had an assigned physical space at the company where he could still feel connected to the company he had helped build. Also, father and daughter agreed to have regular meetings so that she could consult him about business decisions and customer knowledge and he could offer his opinions and expertise. Building in this physical and structural aspect allowed both father and daughter to move forward with their original plan.

In another case, a female manager was referred for personal coaching related to concern about complaints from her supervisees and excessive turnover in her office. Initially guarded and apprehensive about talking with a consultant, once the client realized that the goal was to facilitate her success and increase her skills in handling difficult supervisory challenges, she became an enthusiastic participant in the process. During the course of five coaching sessions she designed and implemented new systems for feedback and evaluation in the office, and the family referral source indicated satisfaction with the process.

CONCLUSION

In summary, working with families who also work together in their businesses offers marital and family therapists and other similarly trained professionals unique opportunities to apply their training and skill sets. Making the transition from family therapist to family business consultant requires some knowledge, to be sure, but far more important is the therapist's own appreciation for the challenges of adding this new layer of complexity to family relationships and a commitment to creative use of self in new roles while exploring this expanding frontier.

Systemic training makes MFT's uniquely qualified to offer consulting services to family businesses. Such consulting offers many tangible and intangible rewards. First, we have found a great deal of emotional satisfaction in being able to help families continue their businesses. We know of several instances in which an MFT family business consultant has helped save businesses from bankruptcy by facilitating resolution of family difficulties. Seeing this happen is immensely satisfying. Second, a family business consultant typically works with relatively healthy people who are highly motivated to change. Many MFTs – especially those who have worked with difficult populations for some time – report immense satisfaction in being able to work with highly motivated people who make changes readily. Third, family business consultants enjoy a diversity of experience. One week can be spent doing interviews, the following week can be spent compiling those interviews, and the next week can be spent implementing strategies based on those interviews. There always seem to be new things happening. Finally, another advantage is increased pay and decreased hassle in collecting that pay. Since most fees are paid directly from the business, MFT's do not have to worry about traditional hindrances to income such as insurance or non-paying clients. A reasonable starting hourly wage for a family business consultant can be more than double (and frequently much more) what the same therapist charges for one hour of therapy.

For a competent MFT, the largest hindrance to becoming a family business consultant is likely his or her fear of the unknown. We have found that this fear disappears quickly after a few successful experiences as a family business consultant. Hopefully the suggestions in this chapter can help reduce the anxiety around starting a new career as a family business consultant and help ensure that the first experiences in this field are good! Please feel free to contact either of us at the following address if you have questions or would like further information:

Anna Beth Benningfield, PhD
Former Director, Business Consultation Partnership
Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Program
Family Therapy Center
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061
Private Practice, Dallas, TX 75240
972-661-3565
annabeth@direcway.com

Sean D. Davis, M. S.
Doctoral Candidate
Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Program
Family Therapy Center
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061
540-231-7201
seandavis@byu.edu

REFERENCES

American Psychiatric Association: *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,* Fourth Edition, Text Revision. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Association, 2000.

Covey, S. R. (1990). *The seven habits of highly effective people: Restoring the character ethic.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Family Firm Institute (2001). *Seeking counsel for your family business.* Retrieved December 8, 2003 from http://www.entrepreneur.com/Your_Business/YB_SegArticle/0,4621,295160,00.html.

Paul, J. (1996, November) *Family Business Consulting.* Institute conducted at the conference of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Toronto, Canada.

APPENDIX A

REFERENCES FOR USE IN FAMILY BUSINESS CONSULTING

The following list is far from comprehensive; instead, it offers a small sample of resources for the family business consultant.

Magazines

Family business magazine is one of the predominant magazines devoted to family business issues, including consulting. Their website is familybusinessmagazine.com

Newspapers

The business sections of many large newspapers such as the New York Times and Washington Post as well as smaller newspapers publish articles related to family business consulting.

Books

Aronoff, C. E., McClure, S. L., & Ward, J. L. (2003). *Family business succession: The final test of greatness.* Marietta, GA: Family Enterprise Publishers.

Collins, J. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap…and others don't.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Hilburt-Davis, J, & Dyer, G. W. (2002). *Consulting to family businesses: A practical guide to contracting, assessment, and implementation.* New York: John Wiley.

Lansberg, I. (1999). *Succeeding generations: Realizing the dream of families in business.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.

Websites

The Family Firm Institute offers a wealth of information for consultants and family business owners. Their website is: http://fobi.gvsu.edu/fobi/about.cfm or http://www.ffi.org