

Establishing an effective communication framework tool

The **Establishing an effective communication framework** tool will help you implement a communication and problem-solving framework, which is crucial to the success of your transfer.

The purposes of this tool are to:

- optimize your communication processes;
- understand the differences between dialogue and discussion;
- set clear communication rules;
- enable you to work better as a team with your close advisors;
- maintain harmony within the family;
- make you aware of the roles of a management or executive committee;
- make you aware of the roles of a family council;
- structure your management/executive committees;
- structure your family council.

Instructions:

1. Carefully read the rules associated with dialogue and discussion and, during your team meetings, share this information with your colleagues.
2. Read the section of this document that presents the structure of a management committee and family council, and become familiar with it.
3. Create a list of people you would like to see on these committees and advise them of your needs and expectations.
4. Present each one with the appropriate communication framework for their role, so that they can become familiar with it.
5. Follow the steps presented in this tool, and use the suggested plans for the various committees in order to follow up on the discussion points and decisions

Note: We recommend weekly management committee meetings and quarterly family council meetings.

Establishing an effective communication framework

Communication based on dialogue and discussion

Dialogue is a free and open exchange on various subjects that requires that participants set aside their own ideas and actively listen to other points of view. It allows individuals to recognize their own ways of thinking.

The rules of dialogue:

- A- Set aside your preconceptions, the sense that you are always right, in order to avoid statements such as: "this is how it is, period"; this type of attitude will automatically put an end to the dialogue.
- B- Each team member must consider the others as allies. Fear, judgement and hierarchy privileges must give way to cohesiveness and common goals in order to create a climate of trust and mutual respect. Everyone should feel like a colleague and a partner, since any concern about being judged by the others will put an end to the dialogue.
- C- A moderator ensures the dialogue remains on track (chosen topics), otherwise the dialogue could turn into a discussion. He must help participants to maintain ownership of the dialogue and its results, to feel accountable, and to see beyond their first impressions. The moderator's role is therefore to ensure that the dialogue moves forward.
- D- Practice your analytical skills. Team members must explore the motives for maintaining their positions, and analyze their first impressions and where they stemmed from. Each person can ask the others: "What makes you say that?" or "Why do you ask that?"

A **discussion** is an exchange or a series of opinions presented and defended. The aim is to identify which opinions are most likely to lead to a decision.

The rules of discussion:

- A- Discussion implies a relatively fierce exchange where each member of the group seeks to have his opinion prevail over all others.
- B- The goal of discussion is action.
- C- The analysis of the situation can reflect various points of view, but only one will translate into action.

Note: A team that wants to master these concepts must know how to go from discussion to dialogue, and vice versa, while zoning in on the differences between the two.

Establishing an effective communication framework

Executive/Management team

Composition:

- Made up of senior managers and department heads

Responsibilities:

- Monitor business activities:
 - sales and marketing;
 - operations;
 - human resources;
 - procurement;
 - finance;
 - other.
- examine the problems identified, the opportunities offered and make decisions on daily operations within the scope of the powers granted to each member of the management team;
- update and follow up on priorities;
- follow up on the set timelines.

How the executive/management committee operates:

1. Determine who will sit on the committee.
2. Call these individuals to a meeting (verbally or in writing), after having set the date, location, time and length of the meeting.
3. Designate a chair and a secretary.
4. Draft an agenda: take note of concerns and topics that the committee members want to discuss.
5. Guide the dialogue and discussions (chair).
6. Take note of the ideas expressed, and prepare the minutes for the next meeting (secretary).
7. Set the date, location, time and length of the next meeting.

Establishing an effective communication framework

STRUCTURE OF THE EXECUTIVE/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (model, for information purposes only)

Chair's name: _____

Secretary's name: _____

Date of the meeting of the executive/management committee: _____

President's concerns:

General manager's concerns:

Concerns of the Manager, Administration & Finance:

Concerns of the Manager, Sales & Production:

Concerns of the Customer Service/Shipping Manager:

Concerns of all members regarding the continuity of the business:

Key points on the development of the business and work organization:

Establishing an effective communication framework

PROBLEM-SOLVING TOOL FOR THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (model, for information purposes only)

Problem statement: _____

Your thoughts and ideas on the topic, and proposed solutions:

Name and position:

Name and position:

Proposed solutions (global):

Decision-making, action plans:

Establishing an effective communication framework

Family council

Purpose:

A venue for structured dialogue where the decisions made concern both the family and the business.

Roles and responsibilities

- ensure the stability of the business;
- establish the family's vision, mission and values with respect to the business;
- maintain harmony within the family;
- establish the family's rules on hiring, compensation and conditions of employment for family members working within the business and for managers;
- set policies regarding the division and ownership of shares;
- determine the phases by which the parent-owners will exit the business;
- prepare the successor(s): training, knowledge transfer, transfer of power and leadership;
- ensure the continuity of the family business;
- establish the methods to help family members in need;
- protect the family estate.

Procedure for family council meetings:

1. The parent-owners identify family members who will sit on the family council.
2. After setting a date, time, length and location for the meeting, they call members (in writing) to the meeting.
3. The members of the family council appoint a chair and secretary, they write their own statutes and operating rules, and specify their objectives and mission.
4. Members of the council draft an agenda that determines the subjects that the participants want to discuss at the meeting.
5. The chair leads the dialogue and discussions according to the agenda.
6. The secretary writes down the ideas and prepares the minutes for the next meeting.
7. At the end of the meeting, the family council sets the date, time, length and location of the next meeting, as well as the subjects to be discussed.
8. At the beginning of the next meeting, the members of the council adopt the minutes and the agenda.

Establishing an effective communication framework

COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE FAMILY COUNCIL (model, for information purposes only)

Chair's name: _____

Secretary's name: _____

Date of the family council meeting: _____

Chair's concerns:

Secretary's concerns:

Participants' concerns:

Concerns of all members regarding the continuity of the business:

Key points on the development of the business and work organization:

Establishing an effective communication framework

DIALOGUE/DISCUSSION EXERCISE (model, for information purposes only)

Problem statement: _____

Your thoughts and ideas on the topic, and proposed solutions:

Name and position:

Name and position:

Proposed solutions (global):

Decision-making, action plans:

