

# Working As a Team

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## *Processes*

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Decision Making
- ✓ Managing Conflict
- ✓ Working as a Team
- Handling Stress

**M**ulti-generational family businesses might function more smoothly if the people involved in running them thought of themselves as being a team. Learning to work together as a team is another process that can smooth family/business interactions.

A team is two or more individuals who work together toward a common objective. Often a group of people working together can accomplish more than the same people can working by themselves. A team brings to any project a far greater variety of qualities than could possibly be found in one individual. It's because of a team's diversity of talents that a farm business operating as a team will gain a competitive edge.

## *Characteristics of a Well Functioning Team*

- each individual feels independent and is capable of doing his or her job.
- each individual seeks help when necessary.
- each individual is committed to the goals of the group and feels a responsibility towards the whole group.
- each individual is "tuned in" to others and knows when to offer help but resists "rescuing" or "protecting" others.

The challenge for the team leader is to develop, among team members, the skills and attitudes of behaving in an interdependent manner.

### *Tips for team building*

1. Encourage all members to function interdependently so they:
  - are aware when someone else needs help and offer assistance
  - are responsible for finding out how their part fits into the whole process
  - are reliable in meeting deadlines and schedules when others are counting on them

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2. As a group leader you can assist in this process by doing the following:
    - reward group efforts, not just individual successes.
    - recognize individuals who could be “stars” but, in the team’s best interest, put aside their need to shine.
    - communicate your desire for the group to count on each other and you.
  3. Keep communications open in the group.
    - Make use of the communication skills that were discussed earlier in this book.

### *Recognizing Personality Types*

When working in teams, understanding the personal styles of others you’ll be working with will make for better relations. Businesses run smoother when people understand that people’s reactions may differ depending on their personal styles.

People have different ways of approaching the same situation, different ways of interacting with others, different needs and different tolerances. Some people are strongly task oriented while others are more people oriented. Some are very methodical; others are not. Some are extroverts; others are introverts.

Through the years, a number of different methods have been developed to describe and determine different personal styles. The method used in this book to distinguish four different personal styles is one developed by the Consulting Resource Group International, Inc. Their Personal Style Indicator is a self-quiz which helps you determine your predominant style. (See references at the back of this book for address and phone number if you wish to order the Indicator).

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## Personal Styles

### **Behavioural Style – *Action***

(Also called driver or dominate)

You are goal-oriented, disciplined, independent, decisive, and efficient. You favour “bottom-line” thinking and push for results and accomplishments.

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### **Cognitive Style – *Analysis***

(Also called analytical or steady)

You are task-oriented, thorough, logical, precise, serious, and systematic. You prefer working with facts in a methodical and careful manner

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### **Affective Style – *Expression***

(Also called compliant or amiable)

You are people-oriented, cooperative, friendly, supportive, patient, and loyal. You like to be liked and are motivated to work with others in a joint effort. You try to influence others through creative use of speaking, dancing, art or music.

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### **Interpersonal Style – *Harmony***

(Also called inspirational or influencing)

You are idea-oriented, outgoing, enthusiastic, cooperative and persuasive. You like to initiate relationships and motivate others towards goals.

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Most people are a mix of the four personal styles, but tend to have one or two styles that dominate their personality. No style is better than another. People with different personal styles interact in different ways. By understanding your personal style and that of others, you can make your interaction with them smoother.

***Adapting your style***

*Try not to  
pigeonhole people.*

Think about the people with whom you work and try classifying them under the personal style that best describes them. Depending on their personal style, they have different concerns and, therefore, react differently. Remember, personal styles are often a mix of all four types and people may react in different ways in different situations. Try not to pigeonhole people.

Use the chart on page 44 as a guide to help you decide what might be the most effective way to interact with those you work with.

Your family business team may find it helpful to gain a fuller understanding of the different personal styles you each have. A trained facilitator could guide you through a process of identifying your various predominant styles and lead a discussion of what this means to how you interact. A facilitator might choose to use the Consulting Resource Group International, Inc. *Personal Style Indicator* summarized here or another of the several instruments that are available.

<b>Interacting with Different Personal Styles</b>	
<p><b>Behavioural Style – Action</b></p> <p><b>Want others to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• give them summarized facts</li> <li>• respect their judgements</li> <li>• support them to reach goals</li> <li>• cope with unwanted details</li> <li>• cooperate with them</li> </ul> <p><b>Get most upset when others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are too slow</li> <li>• get in their way</li> <li>• talk too much</li> <li>• try to be in control</li> <li>• waste time</li> </ul> <p><b>Respond best to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct honest confrontations</li> <li>• logical, rational arguments</li> <li>• fair, open competition</li> <li>• an impersonal approach</li> <li>• getting results quickly</li> </ul>	<p><b>Affective Style – Expression</b></p> <p><b>Want others to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• give them opportunity to speak</li> <li>• admire their achievements</li> <li>• be influenced in some ways</li> <li>• take care of details for them</li> <li>• value their opinions</li> </ul> <p><b>Get most upset when others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are too task oriented</li> <li>• confine them to one place</li> <li>• are not interested in them</li> <li>• compete for and win attention</li> <li>• seem judgemental of them</li> </ul> <p><b>Respond best to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being challenged in a kind way</li> <li>• an influencing, sales approach</li> <li>• enjoyable competition</li> <li>• affection and personal contact</li> <li>• having a good time</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cognitive Style - Analysis</b></p> <p><b>Want others to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• give them detailed information</li> <li>• ask for their opinions</li> <li>• not interrupt their work</li> <li>• treat them with respect</li> <li>• do quality work the first time</li> </ul> <p><b>Get most upset when others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• move ahead too quickly</li> <li>• don't give them enough time</li> <li>• are vague in their communications</li> <li>• don't appreciate their efforts</li> <li>• are too personal or emotional</li> </ul> <p><b>Respond best to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• diplomatic, factual challenges</li> <li>• argument based on known facts</li> <li>• freedom from competitive strain</li> <li>• friendliness, not personal contact</li> <li>• doing tasks well and completely</li> </ul>	<p><b>Interpersonal Style – Harmony</b></p> <p><b>Want others to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make them feel they belong</li> <li>• appreciate them for their efforts</li> <li>• be kind, considerate, thoughtful</li> <li>• trust them with important tasks</li> <li>• value them as persons</li> </ul> <p><b>Get most upset when others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• get angry, blow up, or are mean</li> <li>• demand that they be too mobile</li> <li>• take advantage of goodness</li> <li>• are manipulative or unfair</li> <li>• are judgemental of others</li> </ul> <p><b>Respond best to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a gradual approach to challenges</li> <li>• a factual, practical approach</li> <li>• comfortable, friendly times</li> <li>• respecting their boundaries</li> <li>• conventional, established ways</li> </ul>

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### *Management Styles*

The preferred management style of people working in a team can have a profound influence on how well these managers interact. There are two kinds of farm management styles: expanders and conservators.<sup>2</sup>

**Expanders** are characterized by entrepreneurial drive, high energy, vision and high need for control. These people take more risks and often expansion is limited by the amount they can borrow.

**Conservators** exercise a more cautious approach to debt and expansion. Expansion is limited by family members. These people have lower needs for control, work well in a team and are more family oriented.

As a business progresses through its business cycle (see Book One of this series, *How the Family and Business Interact*), the management style may change. For example, it is possible to be an expander when starting the business and a conservator once the business is established and the owner is older.

In multi-generational operations, these two management styles can combine to create four types:

Management Types				
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
Parent/ Management	expander	expander	conservator	conservator
Successor	expander	conservator	expander	conservator

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<sup>2</sup>. Information in this section is drawn from *Intergenerational Transfer of Family Farm Businesses* by Taylor et al.

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These four types of operations may have predictable ways of operating together and outcomes as follows:

**Type 1: Parent Expander-Successor Expander Operation**

- power struggle: need to separate areas of ownership and control
- partnerships do not work well
- power struggle has to be resolved in order for them to work together
- larger, more diversified operations

**Type 2: Parent Expander-Successor Conservator Operation**

- no power struggle because successor doesn't challenge
- some work as a team while others are boss-subordinate operations
- relationships work because successors are easy-going
- successors not satisfied with situation until mechanism to transfer is arranged

**Type 3: Parent Conservator-Successor Expander Operation**

- business expanded and diversified by successor
- parent's fiscal conservatism provides a solid base for expander successor to build from
- parent-offspring more a mentoring relationship

**Type 4: Parent Conservator-Successor Conservator Operation:**

- work together as a team; partnerships work well
- no power struggle; decisions about transfer evolve
- satisfactory working relationships; similar philosophy of farming
- zero to low debt

The management style of the owner and successor will determine whether they can work together easily in a partnership, or if they would be better working alone in separate operations or divisions. Not everyone will clearly fall into one of the four types listed above.

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However, it is clear that two generations of expanders will be likely to experience more conflict than two generations of conservators.



### **What's Your Management Style**

Identify the type of farm manager you are and do the same for the other generations working in your business. Discuss how different management styles affect how you work with other managers in your operation.



## *Stress: Its Sources and How to Handle*

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### *Processes*

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Decision Making
- ✓ Managing Conflict
- ✓ Working as a Team
- ✓ Handling Stress

**F**arming is ranked among the top 10 most stressful occupations. Working with members of your family can add greatly to that stress. Being able to identify the issues that cause stress and learning how to either eliminate or deal with stress are the keys to stress management.

### *Sources of Stress*

The first step in dealing with stress is to identify its source. Sometimes sources of stress cannot be changed. What can be changed is how you react to that stress. Other sources of stress can be altered. The following list identifies some of the sources of stress.

**There are some stressors you can't do much about:**

- weather
- market conditions
- interest rates
- government policies (deregulation, quotas, Free Trade)
- crises: serious illnesses, accidents

Many stressors, however, are within your power to change. The lists below outline some common stressors.

#### **Family Relationship Stressors**

Marital relationship

- relationship and work roles are blurred or overlapped, e.g. your spouse is both your boss and life partner
- decision-making; who decides on what
- living with tight money
- no time for children, grandchildren
- child-rearing differences
- not able to talk
- lack of time together as a couple

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#### In-law relationships

- too much contact; living in the same yard; living in the same house; no space or privacy
- taking sides; interfering in disputes
- being part of a family operation but not feeling part of the family
- not able to talk
- personality differences

#### Intergenerational relationships

- involvement in decision-making
- dividing income among family members (what is fair?)
- having no influence in decisions that affect your work or life
- negative criticism
- work and family roles are blurred (dad as parent; dad as boss)
- sharing of assets and how this can be done fairly
- differing or conflicting goals

#### Work Stressors

- how to transfer the farm and to whom; how to make it fair
- division of labour, management and resources
- too much to do in too little time
- disagreement over expenditures
- financial concerns e.g. inadequate, irregular and unpredictable commodity prices; high costs
- off-farm employment that takes too much time
- poor crops, diseases, equipment breakdown, etc.

#### The Overlap of Family and Work Stressors

- when the needs of family collide with the needs of the farm business
- off-farm employment

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A survey of two-generation farm families was conducted to find out the major problems encountered in farming with family and how family members coped with the situation.<sup>3</sup> The people surveyed were asked to rate potential stressful situations for two-generation farm families on a scale from not stressful to very stressful. The following table shows the average ranking. Number 1 is the most stressful; 22 the least stressful.

As you look at this chart, note the stressors which the older and younger generations rate very differently. These are marked with an asterisk.

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<sup>3</sup>. See Weigel, Daniel J. and Randy R. Weigel (1987) *Keeping Peace On the Farm: Two-generation Farm Families*, Iowa State University Cooperative Extension Service factsheet, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Rankings of stressors in two-generation farm families

Overall rank	Stress	Rank for older generation	Rank for younger generation
1	Living with tight money	1	1
2	Farm taking priority over family	2	3
3	Poor teamwork	3	4
4	Differing time commitments	4	5
5	Not involved in family decisions	5	6
* 6	Not being on own	18	2
* 7	Taking more risks than others	6	13
8	Disagreements over spending	7	9
9	Receive criticism from family	8	11
10	Feeling like labour	10	7
11	Not able to talk	11	10
12	No influence in farm operation	9	16
* 13	Too much contact between family	16	8
14	No written agreement	14	12
15	Influence of other generation	13	14
16	No time for children/grandchildren	12	15
17	Displacing anger to spouse	15	17
18	Neighbours doing better	17	21
19	Not really part of operation	20	19
20	Favouritism to certain members	21	18
21	Childrearing differences	19	20
22	Fear of using economic clout	22	22

\*Note the different rankings of the different generations. The ones with the greatest differences are marked with an asterisk.



### Identifying Sources of Stress

Using the stressors in the list below, rate the stressors in your family business for yourself. Then distribute a blank list to all members of your family - those members working directly in the business, those members not directly involved and all in-laws. Ask each to rate these stressors on a scale of 1 to 5. You may be aware of other sources of stress in your life. Add these to this list. Then compare the results. Note the similarities and the differences. Use this exercise as a springboard for your family to explore ways to cope with stress.

Source of Stress	not stressful	slightly stressful	fairly stressful	quite stressful	very stressful
Living with tight money	1	2	3	4	5
Farm taking priority over family	1	2	3	4	5
Poor teamwork	1	2	3	4	5
Differing time commitments	1	2	3	4	5
Not involved in family decisions	1	2	3	4	5
Not being on own	1	2	3	4	5
Taking more risks than others	1	2	3	4	5
Disagreements over spending	1	2	3	4	5
Receive criticism from family	1	2	3	4	5
Feeling like labour	1	2	3	4	5
Not able to talk	1	2	3	4	5
No influence in farm operation	1	2	3	4	5
Too much contact between family	1	2	3	4	5
No written agreement	1	2	3	4	5
Influence of other generation	1	2	3	4	5
No time for children/grandchildren	1	2	3	4	5
Displacing anger to spouse	1	2	3	4	5
Neighbours doing better	1	2	3	4	5
Not really part of operation	1	2	3	4	5
Favouritism to certain members	1	2	3	4	5
Childrearing differences	1	2	3	4	5
Fear of using economic clout	1	2	3	4	5

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## *Dealing with Stress*

A certain amount of stress is good for us. It keeps our mind working well. It's when we have too much stress that problems arise. There are two key ways to deal with stress: eliminate the stressors and, if this isn't possible, develop mechanisms to cope with stress.

### ***Eliminate stressors***

As noted in the previous section on sources of stress, much of the stress in family businesses arises from unsatisfactory interaction with other people. The inability to talk with each other or handle conflict well and the sense of not being involved in decisions are all examples of "people interactions" that don't work well. Effective methods for dealing with these problems have been discussed in this book: communicating well, resolving conflict constructively, making group decisions, and working well as a team. To eliminate some of the stressors in your life, try the following:

*Recognize that conflict is normal, inevitable and will not go away if ignored.*

- **Keep communication open.** Good communication requires a mutual respect for each other's opinion and an ability to listen with an open ear. Practice using active listening skills, "I" messages and open-ended questions. The effort required is worth it. If communication breaks down, the business and the family could be in jeopardy.
- **Practice family decision-making.** Articulate goals for the farm and the family. Have regular meetings so that important issues can be discussed and decided on as a group. People are more likely to be committed to decisions they have helped make. Realize that all decisions in life, even business ones, involve feelings. Talk about these feelings openly.
- **Use constructive conflict resolution skills.** Recognize that conflict is normal, inevitable and will not go away if ignored.
- **Work together as a team.** Remember that a group working toward a common goal can accomplish more than those same people working as individuals.

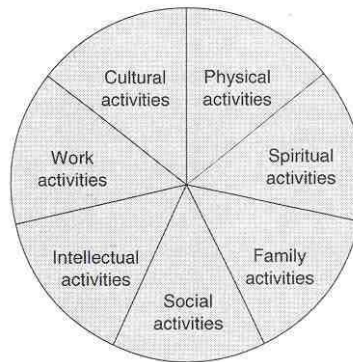
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*Pulling away from stressful situations and seeking balance is better than pouring all our energy into dealing with the situation.*

**Mechanisms to cope with stress**

Some of the stress in our lives comes from sources we cannot control. The weather, market fluctuations, government regulations, accidents or serious illnesses are stressors over which we have no control. Stress can have negative effects on the body. There are, however, techniques that can minimize the effects of stress.

People who are most resilient to stress seem to be those who live a balanced life. Our lives have many aspects and having a balance amongst these aspects is important. We all need the following in our lives, ideally in equal proportions: physical activities, spiritual activities, family activities, social activities, intellectual activities, work activities, and cultural activities. The temptation, when faced with a particular stressful situation, is to pour all our energy into dealing with it, but in fact pulling away from it and seeking balance may be a better strategy.



**This wheel depicts the balance people need in their lives**

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Different people have different ways of reacting to and dealing with stress. We need to respect how others handle stress. Some people may yell at the cows; others may get moody and quiet. Stress comes out in many different ways including irritability, fatigue, depression and inefficiency. We can deal only with our own stress; we can't manage other people's stress.

Ways to reduce stress include the following:

- get regular physical exercise; keep yourself healthy
- practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation
- develop and maintain close, trusted relationships with people with whom you can discuss personal matters
- take time to relax and have fun
- have spiritual beliefs
- escape for awhile; take time to get away from the business
- give in occasionally
- do something for others; try volunteering in your community
- set realistic goals; don't make impossible demands on yourself; look at priorities
- develop and maintain a positive attitude toward living and working. Happy people handle stress better.



