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**Goldstein Lieberman
& Company LLC**

*By Phillip E. Goldstein, CPA,
Managing Partner*

The advice I'd give any family business: "Assume nothing." Don't assume a family business will function like a family. It doesn't, and it shouldn't. Put everything in writing and make the rules clear. Go into detail about compensation, ownership shares, duties (yes, even specific job descriptions). Once it's on paper, respect what it says. Don't micromanage. Sweating every detail as a group will lead to bad feelings and bog down forward momentum. Seek outside advice for a reality check and to keep ideas fresh. Nothing helps avoid internal strife better than having external sources. Have a financially sound succession plan. Sort out details for how and when the younger generation takes over. Planning for tomorrow makes things more efficient today.



Klatzkin & Company LLP

*By Frank G. Sweeney, CPA,
Partner, Tax Dept.*

Family businesses should consult with an attorney and a CPA to make sure the business structure is the best fit for their needs. They should make sure that they have signed, written agreements clearly outlining what each partner will be doing for the partnership, the ownership percentage and the amount being invested by each to start the business, as well as provisions for additional capital calls. A succession plan is vital—early planning provides more flexibility and will allow family members to continue working in whatever capacity they choose before and after a transition. Family business owners shouldn't be afraid to ask their professional advisors questions. A phone call could save tax money down the road or keep an issue out of court.

Rick Harrison (left), son of the late Richard Harrison, Sr., inherited the Gold & Silver Pawn Shop from his father. His son, Corey "Big Hoss" Harrison also has a stake in the business.



Levine Jacobs & Co. LLC

*By Michael H. Karu, CPA,
CFF, CGMA, Member*

A significant portion of our practice is with closely held, family businesses, most of which are New Jersey-based. The family dynamic can be extremely difficult, especially between generations. We remind everyone to keep their eyes on the prize; to look forward and to remain focused on the core business. We also insist on proper communication between the family members. Small issues quickly can grow out of proportion. While many family businesses may be small, they need to be run as if they are larger. Hold meetings, not just between the owners, but with key employees; look for industry trends; understand your competition and try to stay ahead of them; and, as the older generation nears retirement, recognize that proper succession planning is necessary.



Mazars USA LLP

*By Paula Ferreira, CPA,
Partner*

First and foremost, the company should define key management positions and responsibilities so that roles are properly established, and personnel are held account-

able. Secondly, the company will need to determine how the business will be financed considering cash flow needs and if subsequent lending will be necessary, as well as identifying the most advantageous source of financing. Finally, a successful family business should be proactive with their finances. This means having the right accounting system. Real-time access to financial information will allow regular reviews and comparisons between management expectations and actual results. It is also important to discuss these results with trusted advisors. Having a strategic and knowledgeable partner to assist and support management will be key to the company's success.



Sobel & Co., LLC

*By Michael LaForge, CPA,
CGMA, Director, Family
Business Practice*

Good to Great was published almost 17 years ago and was hailed as the best management book ever. Its overriding message was simple: Get the right people on the bus. The bus is your family business. The right people may or may not be members of your family. As much as you may want to have your daughter or son driving the bus, it is possible that the continued success of your family business depends on



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