



Media Release

Interest in Family Business Consultants Network off to positive start following launch

Monday August 4, 2014. The Family Business Consultants Network (FBCN) was recently launched by the Victorian Minister for Small Business, the Hon Russell Northe MP. “FBCN has been well received as a fresh and much-needed local adviser initiative for addressing the unique issues and growth aspirations of family owned businesses”, said FBCN chair - Jon Kenfield.

Commenting on the positive feedback received to the FBCN concept, Kenfield noted that a lot of interest has been received from family business owners seeking to know more about the organisation’s services, and from advisers and organisations seeking to join the new network of consultants.

“Family business owners are attracted to FBCN’s approach because they’ve heard so many horror stories about how other family businesses were *‘derailed, or worse’*, by insensitive professional advisers who tried to provide technical solutions in isolation from their human needs, or who promoted an adversarial approach that fed, rather than defused, their problems and conflicts. SME business owners are fiercely practical people who know the value of a dollar, so they’re really looking for practical solutions, rather than glorious battles”, said Kenfield.

“FBCN members sign up as individuals who share a simple philosophy: we put our clients’ interests first. We have very strict guidance standards for service delivery that go beyond being open, constructive and collaborative - every FBCN assignment commences with a detailed analysis of a clients’ real needs, so we can develop a plan that’s entirely focused on satisfying those needs – rather than those of the adviser. This often requires appointing a lead adviser to an assignment to co-ordinate service delivery and the successful achievement of client objectives”.

Currently, FBCN comprises 16 trustworthy service providers, across a wide range of disciplines, who’ve committed to working independently, and with each other, to solve family business issues and challenges:

Ross Anderson, Coaching & Leadership International
David Gibbs, The Bennett Group Pty Ltd, Accountants
David Gillard, Lander & Rogers, Lawyers
Peter Hateley, Foresight Financial Group, Advisers
Robert Hayes, Hamilton Morello, Accountants
Jon Kenfield, The Solutionist Group, Facilitation
Fotini Kypraios, Meerkin & Apel, Lawyers
David Lucas, McDonald Murholme, Lawyers

Justin McCartney, Lawler Draper Dillon, Accountants
David Murdoch, Paxton Bridge Financial Advisers
Alf Priestley, Fitzpatricks Financial Advisers
Dan Simmonds, Lantern Legal Group
Adrian Shaw, Harridge Group Financial Consultants
Peter Szabo, M&K Lawyers
Richard van der Merwe, Fordham Business Advisors
Jo Walters, M&K Lawyers

Although pleased that advisers are interested in joining FBCN, Kenfield stressed that membership is by invitation only as the group has very strict ethical and philosophical standards for service delivery.

Kenfield went on to provide an example of a recent case study:

Justin McCartney of Lawler Draper Dillon accountants received an enquiry from a family with a small consulting business in rural Victoria seeking to tackle succession / business valuation matters. After an initial telephone discussion McCartney realised there were deeper family dynamics issues that needed to be addressed – so he arranged a meeting with the whole family. Kenfield was invited to attend, as McCartney felt that they initially needed a family business facilitator, rather than an accountant, to help them work out their priority issues.

All family members were interviewed and the resulting report recommended that Ross Anderson, of Coaching & Leadership International, should conduct personality profiling for use in family therapy / mediation sessions - before any attempt should be made to resolve any commercial issues. This probably avoided an explosion and subsequent meltdown in the family.

“Every business faces its own unique challenges, and family owned SMEs have more than most. If these aren’t recognised and dealt with appropriately, they can seriously damage both the family and the business. A common affliction for many family businesses is an inability to separate personal and family issues from business issues – allowing each to invade the other – often with catastrophic consequences. FBCN was established to address these issues by combining the best of traditional advisory practice with innovative thinking in family business advisory. The result is world’s best practice, available now to every Australian family business”, concluded Jon Kenfield.

Issued by the Family Business Consultants Network (FBCN) www.fbcn.com.au

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