

## **Three Pitfalls of Conflict Resolution**

Family businesses deal with challenges that every other business must face on a daily basis. However, unlike non-family run companies, family businesses must also deal with family issues that can make difficult business matters even more complex. For this reason, it's especially important to watch out for the three pitfalls that undermine healthy conflict resolution: lack of trust, low self-esteem, and lack of transparency.

### **Lack of Trust**

Without trust, we are inclined to draw different—and often untrue—inferences from what a person is communicating. A lack of trust leads people to construct their own narratives about a person's motives and intent, which ultimately influences how people react to and behave when conflict hits.

### **Low Self-Esteem**

People with low self-esteem lack confidence and tend to have paranoid beliefs that others are out to undermine them. This perception will always get in the way of solving conflicts. While low self-esteem can't be fixed overnight, actions such as coaching, therapy, mentoring, meditating, and reading can all help improve a person's self-esteem and confidence.

### **Lack of Transparency**

It is important to strive for transparency during any conflict resolution process. Be explicit and clear about challenges and issues, whatever they might be. Transparency can be complicated, especially around difficult-to-discuss issues that might hurt people's feelings. It's a good idea to hire a neutral adviser to act as a mediator when dealing with conflict. Advisers will clearly frame the discussion and keep the conversation on track.

Does your business currently face any of these pitfalls? Have you ever overcome some of these challenges? Remember: strong family businesses are built on a foundation of trust, self-esteem, and transparency – attributes that don't always come easy and usually take time, dedication and attention. But when aligned, they help make for a healthy system of conflict resolution.