Business Wisdom

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THE BONDS YOU FORM & THE COMPANY YOU KEEP

Creating, Building and Sustaining a Prosperous Business Partnership

by Harvy Simkovits, CMC, President

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Part 1: BEING IN PARTNERSHIP: So What Have You Gotten Yourself Into?

The two best days of your business partnership will be:
1) the day you sign your partnership agreement, and
2) the day you sign the termination of that partnership."

All business partnerships, like in any marriage, can have their highs and lows. Whether they are family or non-family partnerships, these firms can be fraught with business, organizational and legal issues. Personal feelings and family considerations may also contribute to partnership ups and downs. Many a time, what looked as if it would become a promising and productive partnership, can end up fraught with personal angst, interpersonal conflict and organizational uncertainty.

Those times of partner courtship, negotiation, working together, and transitioning in or out, can be made clearer and simpler. Partners need to work to examine, think through and discuss important questions and considerations at each step of their partnership. This "white paper" is both to help you evade the personal pain of poor partnering, and to ensure that partners are continually and effectively engaging each other in their pursuit of a promising and productive future. ***The ultimate goal is to build best possible and most sustainable partnership that offers increasing value to the business and to all partners.***

In many partnerships, there is a predisposition to focus only on immediate, tangible issues - like business financing, job titles/responsibilities, cash flow, ownership/corporate structure and partner remuneration. Yet, if partners (both individually and collectively) could only spend a little more time, at the right time, to think through, effectively address, and not avoid the deeper issues that come up in most partnerships, then would not things go more smoothly down the line?

Some of these important deeper issues (that partners may sometimes think about, yet often do not effectively put on the table for adequate thought and discussion) are:

- Why do I really need a partner? What do I truly want from a partnership arrangement -- what is the value it would provide both to me and the business opportunity I'm pursuing?
- Who is truly the right kind of partner for me? What capabilities and qualifications are most needed from others that I and the business are currently missing? What do I personally want to learn and/or gain from that prospective partner?
- How do we clearly and simply come to terms on partnership investments, responsibilities, contracts, and a work style/ethic that makes sense for everybody concerned? Would our formal and informal arrangements adequately take care of my own personal interests, both now and in the foreseeable future? And, would it also be fair and equitable to all other partners?
- How do we plan to communicate, keep each other informed, stay accountable, resolve disputes, manage money, lead staff, and make reasonable, effective and balanced decisions?
- How would partners address tougher organizational, interpersonal and personal situations that are bound to come up? What might be the legal/financial, business/organizational, and personal/family issues that would test this partnership? And, how do we get through those issues in ways that strengthen the partnership and not weaken or break it?
- In the future, would we need and make room for additional partners (or company mergers or acquisitions) as the business grows and requires more dedicated and secure capabilities or resources? Also, how would we handle folks who want either to come into or to get out of the partnership? How do we legally, financially and organizationally structure our company now so that we can make appropriate room for such "buy in" or "get out" contingencies?
- What is the lasting business legacy that partners (both individually and collectively) want to create, work towards, and leave behind when any of us finally take leave from the business? Especially, how does each partner want to be remembered in having served this company and business?

These are just some of the deeper and more important questions that business partners can ask and address themselves if they want to be sure about their partner choices and partnership decisions. Asking the right questions at the right time, and having an effective process by which to address important partner concerns, could prevent both costly, foreseeable mistakes and much personal stress. Some deeper thought and effective discussion would lead to better partnership decisions as well as unencumbered partners. Consequently, all partners could better devote their energy to the business rather than being consumed by un-clarified or un-addressed partner concerns.

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Food for Thought:

- *What are your biggest hopes for your partnership?*
- *What are your biggest concerns about it, and what could happen if those concerns are not effectively addressed?*
- *What partner concerns are the most important to be address next, if your business and partnership are to move forward towards its full potential and success?*

Part 2: PARTNERSHIP TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS: The Good, Bad and Ugly

Business partnerships are not unlike marriages. Unresolved and festering differences in partnership issues can escalate into verbal clashes, turf battles, even physical outbursts. This especially can happen when partners lack the insight or wherewithal to deal with important partnership matters in an ethical, sensitive and equitable manner. Sometimes, partners can deeply struggle with their counterparts, realizing too late that there are some wrong people in the partnership, or that the partners are avoiding important and deep partnership concerns.

Below are some stories of challenging partnerships. In reading these stories, think about what these partners could have done differently at the various stages of their partnership. How might they have avoided the personal trials and business tribulations that were experienced?

The Case of the Business Success and Partnership Failure

Henry, Billy and Stella were in an over 20-year, equal-ownership partnership. They had great prospects together, resulting from merging Henry and Billy's computer hardware organization with Stella's software development firm. Early on it was accepted that Henry, the agreed-upon President and visionary for the merged businesses, would have final say on every major company decision. However, this early-established rule in the partnership worked to generate much strife for the partners as time wore on.

Even when Stella and Billy would strongly disagree, Henry would often get his way on matters, or he would just avoid making decisions that he did not like. As the company grew bigger and more complex, much inward angst and outward anger grew in Billy and Stella. They were usually the ones who had to execute Henry's decisions (or sometime non-decisions) through their areas of the organization. Many executive-room arguments would ensue (sometimes even a chair or table would be broken in anger), yet Henry seemed to get his way almost all of the time. Occasionally, to get Henry to address and act on some important business issues, Stella might not talk to Henry for months, avoiding him even on day-to-day matters, until Henry finally came to the table to talk out those important company matters.

The good news of this partnership story was that that Henry, Billy and Stella ended up making many more good decisions than bad, for Henry was savvy about the future opportunities and right direction for the business. Also, the revenue and profit growth of the business effectively worked to bury some of the tension among the three partners. Yet, Billy and Stella often felt that they were at the receiving end of Henry's controlling nature, and had little say (except when Henry allowed) on how things should be for the business overall.

After 20 years of partner angst and anger, the owners hastily sold 75% of the company (half in cash) to a group of investors for about 10 times the company's annual revenue. The good news was that the three owners were now rich beyond their dreams, and no longer had to deal with just each other in making business decisions. Also, they hoped that the new partners would bring greater professionalism and a broader worldly scope to the business, and balance out what was missing among the three founders.

However, the bad news of this story is that the new owners, now with controlling interest in the business, proceeded to immediately downsize Henry, Billy and Stella's company, cutting staff by over a third. They also eventually unseated all the old partners from the executive group, and terminated most of their direct lieutenants -- those that had been loyal many years to the founding partners. Interestingly, the combined company's stock price plunged over 95% in the first year after the sale, and only marginally recovered in the ensuing 5 years.

Fortunately, Henry, Stella and Billy did realize their financial independence and professional dreams from selling the business. Also, they still together have one seat on the company's Board (where, interestingly, they continue to play out their interpersonal dynamics). Yet, because of their inability to work and grow effectively together, they naively grabbed quickly onto what looked like the deal of a lifetime. Their need to end the frustrations among their top-trio cost the company deeply in its current and future prospects, and it took a sizable human toll on the organization.

The Case of Having the Wrong Partner

Stewart, Mary, Paul and Joe formed a 4-way partnership to buy-out the retiring owner of a 25-year going concern. Stewart, a previous employee of the aging previous owner, orchestrated the deal and brought his other three counterparts into the deal. Stewart knew he needed a senior financial person, an operations guy and an engineer to make the company work, and the three he chose fit the order (so he believed).

For the first year, the partnership and business seemed to work. The business was well carried by its long-time reputation and its customer base, which stayed loyal to the company during its time of ownership transition. During that year, the new owners took on leadership in their respective areas, and effectively stood together against an unexpected employee strike. Also, the partnership team came together regularly as an executive group (using the help of outside consultants) to talk about strategic company issues and the general management of the business.

However, into its second year, it became clear that something was amiss. Critical machinery was not working in the factory, and important improvement projects were stalled. It quickly became apparent that Joe, the engineer, was not getting things done well enough in his process-engineering area, causing delays and problems in getting out new products through upgraded factory processes. Mary, the financial person, would regularly get angry with Joe. She even lashed out at him at executive meetings for not having completed his list of engineering improvement projects. Yet Joe always seemed to have a list of reasons why things were not getting done, and the problems would just fester.

The outside consultants were asked to investigate the situation and to work with Joe to help him to better rise to the occasion and accomplish more of his projects. However, within a matter of a couple of months, even they were saying that Joe was an ineffective leader and executer of major factory projects. Joe's ability was limited to his technical knowledge of the company's product and how they were made. Yet, he had no apparent ability to manage projects and get people working together.

The consultants then went back to Stewart with their findings. They recommended that Joe be replaced or moved aside. If Stewart did not act, then the company would face market risks due to a lack of significant product and process development within the factory. Yet, Stewart, being a caring and loyal guy, could not pull the trigger with Joe (and he morally and legally had the deciding say on such matters with his partners). Also, he was bound by a partnership agreement that would make it financially strenuous on the company to oust a partner so early in the partnership's history.

After many attempts to turn Joe around, Stewart did eventually realize he had the wrong player in Joe. Yet, he now did not have the heart or gumption to put Joe (a long-time friend who he pulled away from a previous good job) onto the street. He knew that Joe, being much older, could never replace his old position and current salary.

The other partners continued to complain about Joe. Yet, they knew it was Stewart's problem and decision. Stewart tried everything he could with Joe, from having heart-to-hearts with him, to even embarrassing him in front of the partners. Unfortunately, (after reiterating that he would do his best, or resisting by saying that the problems lay elsewhere) Joe just could not get things to work sufficiently well in his area.

Over time, the company sadly declined in its business revenue and industry reputation (because its products could not keep up with its competition), and eventually had to be sold again. Stewart, in his caring and loyalty to his partner, could not make the hard business decisions that would make the company sustainable. His intentions were honorable; however, it eventually cost him both his partnership and his business.

The Case of the Counter-Dependent Partner

Jerry, this software firm's key inside operations and technical guy, just departed from his partnership with Will, the President, and Rita, the VP of Marketing and Sales. Jerry left in a huff because he and Will no longer saw eye to eye on business matters. With the company struggling financially, Jerry simply decided to up and leave one day and to not return.

In his hurry to find a replacement for Jerry, Will tapped into Mike, a long-time business and personal friend. He trusted Mike, and felt that Mike had the technical and operational skills to keep the company's inside operations going. Mike, in turn, admired Will and Rita, even though he did not always appreciate Will's sometimes "shady style" of leadership and company decision making (which Will just saw as being shrewd in his business dealings). Yet, believing he could add some value to Will and the inside operations of the business, Mike decided to join the partnership. He also put some needed cash resources into that business. Mike felt he had better long-term prospects with Will and Rita than in his current self-employed consulting position.

Many months passed, and Mike was not getting the inside business operations under control. When asked about it by Rita, Mike would always say that Will was making bad sales and product decisions, thereby making the operations and customer-service ends of the business unwieldy. Over time, Rita could tell that Mike and Will were getting more polarized in their thinking. Mike complained fervently about Will's decisions, and even sometimes worked in the background to undermine Will. Eventually, from Mike's perspective, there was very little that Will could do right, and Mike made sure that Will knew about his differing point of view.

Astutely, Rita one day asked Mike a direct question of why he was in the partnership, and what he was hoping to create and build there. Mike struggled with that question and could not give Rita a good answer -- except for saying he could gain greater financial wealth and professional success if Will would only make the right business decisions. At that moment, Rita deduced that Mike, an ethical purist, was really there to act as a conscious or alter-ego for Will. She realized that Mike subconsciously felt it as his duty to keep Will honest and in integrity (which seemed more important to Mike than performing his own job).

Once Rita, and subsequently Will, appreciated that Mike's deep-seated, subconscious purpose was more important to him than getting his own operational areas under control, they then realized that Mike and Will would always remain polarized, and the partnership would never work.

Will and Rita then decided to confront Mike about the partnership. They told him it was not working. Subsequently, they all decided to downsize the business to just a service company, and to give it to Mike as repayment for his investment. Will and Rita then went off to seek other business opportunities for themselves which, as good promoters and sales people, they eventually found.

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For all these business partners, had the right questions been asked and addressed early enough, then better decisions or arrangements could have been made, or bad situations avoided. Bringing important partner issues out in the open sooner could not only have generated a healthier business and the right kind of partner opportunities, but also could have prevented irreparable damage to the partnership. And, in those cases where it is too late to repair the past, then looking for an amicable arrangement to save what is still good and workable about the business may be the best thing to do -- even if it means a physical and legal separation for the partners.

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Food for Thought:
Before going on to the next section, think about your partnership and consider the highs and the lows of your partner story:
- *What were your partnership's best moments?*
- *What were its worst moments, and how could those have been circumvented?*
- *What can be done now to build a stronger partnership or to get partners more aligned or better allied?*

Part 3: WHAT'S TO TALK ABOUT? Key Factors to Consider in Any Partnership

"Everything has its right time and its right place."

This section delineates the types of issues that need to be address:
∗Before the consummation of a partnership,
∗All during that partnership,
∗When partners want in or want out of the partnership, and
∗The possible termination of the partnership, or its reconfiguration into some other business entity.
What are included are thought-provoking stories, insightful models, valuable information, practical insights and useful methodologies for dealing with all kinds of relevant and important partnership issues.

As the reader, feel free to skim through this section's models and thinking to find those nuggets of information that will keep your business partnership train on the right track. Some ideas here may actually prevent the derailing of your partnership, allowing you and all your counterparts to climb to higher business elevations. Conversely, you may also find information and exercises here that make you realize that you are on the wrong partnership train with the wrong partner passengers. Hopefully, what you learn here can help you come to terms with either getting on board that partnership train, or perhaps preventing (or disengaging from) a partnership train wreck before it is too late.

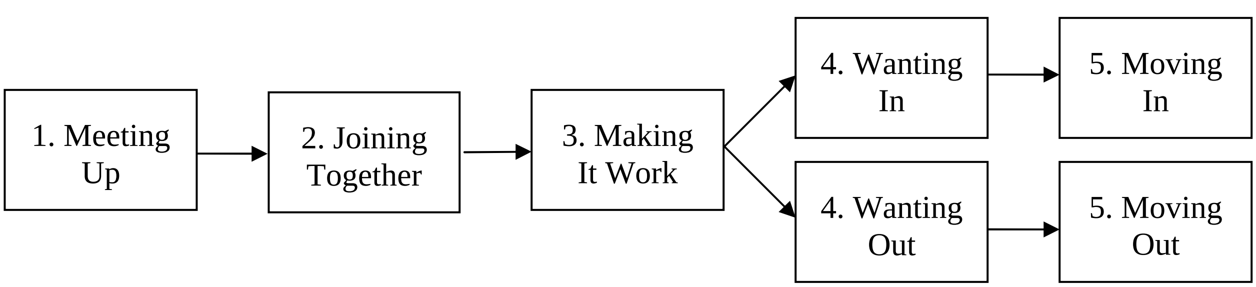
A. Stages of Partnership Evolution:

"To keep the opportunities of the future in front of you,
you must put the concerns of the past behind you."

Here, depicted below, are five distinct yet related stages (or phases) of a business partnership. For each stage, important concerns are described (on the following page) that would be worthwhile to address and gain clarity and agreement among partners.

If important partnership concerns are not addressed early enough, in their rightful stage, then they can fester and accumulate into the next stage. Unfinished concerns, not dealt with from previous stages, can then stand in the way of getting effectively through subsequent phases of partnership. Therefore, it is extremely important to ask the right questions, at the right time, and in the right place (be it in a formal discussion, in written documentation, or in a casual conversation) to generate the right conversations, thinking and agreements. Subsequently, the partnership can move forward with greater understanding, commitment and gusto.

The following chart depicts the important stages of a business partnership. It is described on the next page.



The five distinct, yet connected partnership stages and corresponding concerns are:

1. **Meeting Up -- Define, Find & Court Suitable Partners**

Knowing:

- what kind of partner qualities/qualification you are looking for
- where to look for and find a potential partner
- how to ask key questions that allow you to quickly qualify (size up) a potential partner
- how to attract a suitable person into your current or new business venture
- how to ensure that the potential partner is well serving you, the business opportunity and themselves by joining up with you

This first stage is punctuated by potential partners making a decision to engage in formal partnership talks, and in involving legal council and financial advisors to consummate a deal.

2. **Joining Together -- Visualize a Future Together, and Make a Sound and Sensible Deal**

Knowing how to:

- visualize and articulate a powerful and compelling business vision and mission
- build a viable business strategy as well as an organizational/financial plan
- valuing/evaluating what each partner brings to the business
- negotiate personal and family considerations in forming the partnership
- define expectations (organizational reporting structure, positions/roles, decision-making authority, resource control, work responsibilities and goals)
- come to terms with money issues (cash investment, financial debt and personal remuneration)
- articulate and negotiate a workable partnership agreement (based on both the above consideration as well as potential partner disagreement, disputes, departure, death, disability, or dissolution)

This second stage is complete when a business plan is drawn, company financing is in place, and a formal partnership agreement is consummated.

3. **Making It Work -- Effectively Work Together and Grow the Partnership**

Knowing how to:

- keep appropriate boundaries as to what is business and what is personal
- communicate formally and informally so as to stay informed and make sound decisions
- create accountability and maintain commitment to the partnership, the business and oneself
- surface, address and resolve disagreement, or negotiate major disputes
- keep the energy going and synergy alive in the partnership
- plan for and manage personal life contingencies (absence, illness/disability, death, retirement, divorce, etc.)

This third stage continues on until there is a major change in the configuration or structure of the partnership.

4. **Wanting In *or* Wanting Out -- Gracefully Manage Partner Transitions, either In or Out**

Knowing how to:

- continually reassess the needs of each partner and the whole partnership
- talk about, make room for and manage succession
- groom up-and-coming partners, or seek new ones from outside the firm
- plan for and negotiate a partner's departure (either self-initiated or instigated by the partners)

This stage is initiated when there is a desire to change the configuration of the partnership. It is complete when plans and mutual understanding are in place to handle those structural changes.

5. **Moving In *or* Moving On -- Making One's Mark *or* Leaving a Lasting Legacy**

Knowing how to:

- carve out one's place in the partnership, as an incoming partner
- leave a lasting and meaningful contribution and memory, as an outgoing partner
- fill or adjust the firm's capabilities as a result of a partner's departure
- indoctrinate (get-on-board) the new incoming partner
- honor and re-evaluate departure agreements for out-going partners

This stage is complete either when a new partner has been well absorbed into the partnership, or when a departing partner has been fully transitioned out of the partnership.

It is important to consider what stage your business partnership is in and what types of concerns your partners need to deal with. Then, as concerns are addressed, partners move forward with greater alignment in building both the business and the partnership. As we will see in the next section, those concerns can be usefully grouped into a number of specific areas.

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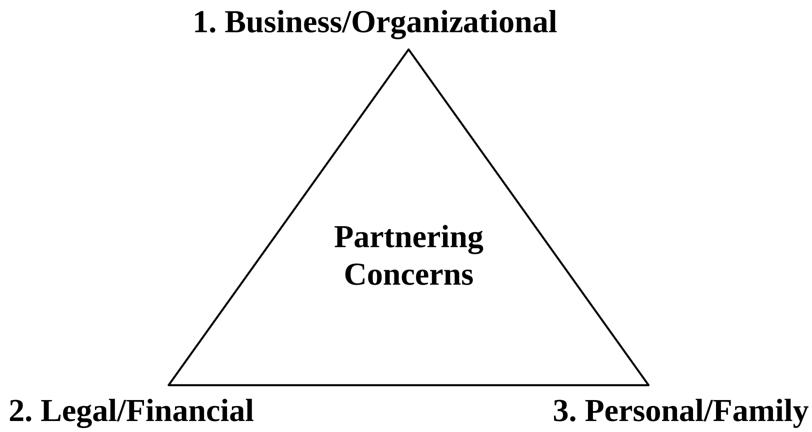
Food for Thought:
Before going to the next section, have another look at the stages of a partnership on the previous page, and consider the following questions:

- *What stage are you in, and which stages have you well completed?*
- *What concerns (in each relevant stage) have you effectively dealt with?*
- *Are there any concerns that have not been addressed or are unfinished in your partner conversations?*
- *What would be the next most important concern(s) for the partners to consider, and why?*
- *What would be the right forum in which to raise and address those concerns? In addition, what would be the best way for you to start the conversation about them?*

B. Partnering Concerns (applicable to each Partnership Stage)**:**

“To win in any game, you need to cover all the angles.”

As depicted below, there are three major categories of partnering concerns that come up in every stage of a partnership. Conversations for clarity and understanding need to take place across these areas to ensure sufficient agreement/alignment among all partners. The greater that alignment, then the stronger will be the commitment from each partner in making both the business grow and partnership work.



1. Business/Organizational Concerns

Business/Organizational concerns have to do with issues like:

* creating business strategies and organizational plans, as well as deciding on how those are communicated, executed, reviewed and updated
* deciding partners’ positions (roles/responsibilities) and desired performance expectations within the business
* creating formal and informal meeting forums/agendas for partner communication, coordination and collaboration
* deciding how business and management information is handled (who has privy to what information)
* evaluating and rewarding partner contributions to the business
* employing education and training needed for partners to keep up with the growth of the business and partnership
* deliberating on the kind of management/leadership/culture that is to be built and exhibited in the organization
* engaging the right outside advisors for both the business and the partnership

2. Legal/Financial Concerns

Legal/Financial concerns have to do with issues like:

* handling of money investments into the business, how financial assets will be used, how cash-flow will be managed and how profits will be distributed
* managing and mitigating partner contingencies/risks/protections (death, divorce, disability, disputes, departure, etc.)
* making formal legal agreements and examining tax considerations in the creation/incorporation, ongoing operation, and eventual disposition of the business and partnership (from perspective of both the whole business and the individual partners)

3. Personal/Family Concerns

Personal/family concerns have to do with issues like:

* balancing the demands, expectations and pressures the business will put onto your personal and family life
* how close partners get on a personal level, and how freely partners are able to share and deal with personal/family issues in the context of the partnership
* engaging, involving or bringing family members into the business and partnership

Food for Thought: *What are your least and greatest concerns for your partnership, and why?*

C. The Partnership Matrix

"Knowing where you are at is half the battle in getting to where you want to go."

When the three areas of partnering concern are mapped against the five stages of partnership, the following business-partnership matrix ensues. In each cell, related key partner concerns are provided.

Stage: / Concern:	1. **Meeting Up**	2. **Joining Together**	3. **Making It Work**	4. **Wanting In or Out**	5. **Moving In or On**
1. Business/ Organizational:	* Determining how partners will add value to the business * Finding/attracting the right partner * Envisioning a compelling, viable and sustainable business future	* Crafting the business strategy & execution plan * Defining roles, authority, responsibilities, accountability, and remuneration * Engaging capable advisors	* Communicating day-to-day * Conducting partner meetings and conferences * Managing differences and resolving disagreements * Evaluating partner contributions	* Reassessing the needs of the business and partnership * Laying the groundwork for incoming and outgoing partners * Grooming up-and-coming successors	* Filling the gaps of the outgoing while making room for the incoming * Adjusting remaining partners' roles and responsibilities
2. Legal/ Financial:	* Assessing, valuing and negotiating the various assets each party brings to the business	* Instituting partner agreements * Determining legal structure * Making the money deal/arrangements	* Dealing with shareholder accountability * Managing partner contingencies and risks	* Negotiating the in or out deal * Managing disputes and working out arrangements	* Fulfilling and honoring partner departure and on-boarding agreements
3. Personal/ Family:	* Clarifying partner interests/desires * Assessing style compatibility and skill complementation	* Clarifying work and family expectations * Establishing norms for family engagement	* Mixing/separating what is personal and what is business * Staying motivated and committed * Managing family involvement in the business	* Managing personal/life transitions with wanting in or wanting out of the partnership	* Determining what partners bring/take with them, and what they want to leave behind

The best way to think about and use this matrix is to:

1. Consider the current **partnership stage** (across the top row) that your partnership is in.
2. Go down the related column to determine what **partner concerns** (in the left-hand column) that your partnership needs to be addressing in the particular stage it is in.
3. Go back and examine the previous stages (every column to the left of your current partnership stage) and determine if there are any concerns that the partnership needs to address in order to fully complete that stage.

Addendum: Family vs. Non-Family Partnerships

Family-business partnerships, be they sibling partnerships, cousin consortiums or inter-generational in nature, add an additional layer of complexity to partnerships. In those cases, partners have a connected family history, which may have good or bad implication for them in their business. On the positive side, family partnerships can breed great trust, loyalty and commitment from partners. Also, employees may be seen and treated as extended family. On the negative side, unfinished psychological issues in the family's history can get played out over and over again in the business, thus distracting partners from paying rightful attention to the growth, prosperity and continuity of the business.

If addressed and dealt with sensitively, fairly and equitably, family-business partnerships can be as (if not more) successful as non-family partnerships. The trick is to recognize when a family issue stands in the way of moving the business forward, and then to deal with that issue with care and objectivity.

Create and Sustain Your Partnership Success

Do not let partnering issues and challenges get in the way of achieving your partnership potential and success.

Business Wisdom *has had 20 years of experience in dealing with business partnerships, both in family and non-family situations. Thus we know the ups, downs, ins and outs of leading and growing these forms of businesses.*

Business Wisdom *assists business partners to think more deeply and completely about their actions in achieving their partnering aspirations and desired business results. We are quick at teasing apart the complexity in your partnership world, creating awareness about new opportunities and possibilities, as well as mitigating any challenging situations. And, we come up with the simplest and easiest actions you can take to make a meaningful and lasting difference both in your business and for all partners.*

At ***Business Wisdom****, we love to see all business partners win, be their best, and achieve their personal and professional aspirations; and, to do all that in the service of a compelling, meaningful and worthwhile vision for themselves and the total organization.*

Unlike most other business resources, ***Business Wisdom*** *has a unique ability to quickly get to the heart of almost any partnership matter. We then figure out how best to move things in the right direction for all the partners and the business.*

Business Wisdom *is affiliated with capable legal, financial planning, risk management, business valuation and company financing professionals who can provide an integrated approach to achieving greater partnership success.*

Feel free to contact Harvy Simkovits, MS, CMC, at Business Wisdom at Harvy@Business-Wisdom.com, or at 781-862-3983. Also, see our website (www.Business-Wisdom.com) for more information and resources for business growth, prosperity and continuity.

The Roles Business Wisdom Can Play for Your Partnership

Partner Meeting/Retreat Facilitator - working with you to design and deliver powerful and effective meetings or retreats that get all partners better aligned and working with greater collaboration towards mutually-beneficial outcomes for both the business and the partnership.

Partner Mediation - Creating the right partner conversations to get differing or opposing partners to see eye-to-eye on important and delicate matters.

Partner Coach - Working with individual partners to help them be their best in the worthwhile service of the partnership and business.

Partner Education - Providing quality and timely skills training on how to build and manage effective relationships - be it with customers, employees or other partners.

Partnership Strategist/Advisor - Analyzing the direction of your partnership and the strategy of your business, and providing sound recommendations for improved business and partnership performance.

What Some Business Partners Have Said about Business Wisdom

"I have met few individuals in the course of my professional life who embody the integrity, sensibility and keen intelligence of Harvy Simkovits. Our partners' retreat produced qualitative and quantitative results which gave us a roadmap and a foundation for our firm to build on."

Gordon Leebosh, Managing Partner, Lippman Leebosh April

"Harvy has improved communication among company owners, coordination among organization functions, and the effectiveness of our management and partnership team. He continues to greatly improve my effectiveness as owner and executive of my growing and ever more complex business."

Stan Zack, VP and Principal, STS Systems

"You have constantly amazed me both with the range of your expertise and your knowledge. You have a shrewd and unique business savvy."

Maya Balle, President, Balle Arts International

"Thank you for being a guiding light, helping us to transform our company from a struggling, growing practice to a legacy business."

Gayle Knight Colman, Managing Partner, Colman-Knight Advisory Group

"Thank you for helping our partners develop sound business and marketing strategies that will launch us into the new millennium"

Mike Kaminski, President, Premier Company

"Your advice and process in assisting us to evaluate our possible business directions, and then to help us make consensual decisions about them, was invaluable. You made a significant impact in making our partnership and business stronger."

John Towner, Managing Partner, Business Technologies

"Harvy has opened up new possibilities for our business."

Steve Korolnek, CEO, Consolidated Bottle of Canada

"While we have worked with other consultants, Harvy stands out. He quickly got to the root of the issues and offered rational and doable approaches..."

Joyce Gavenda, VP, Summit Strategies

"You have worked with us to make our organization more customer-focused, increasingly internally organized, and better managed overall. With your insight, we now have positioned ourselves to realize more fully the next level of our business growth and profitability."

Denny Engstrom, President & Bill Engstrom, VP, Brooks Interiors

"I feel that the over one-year invested in regular planning, training and coaching with Harvy as being essential to our current overall organizational efficiency and partner success."

Ken Totushek, President, Rex-Cut Products