

JOIN THE EXCLUSIVE NETWORK OF FAMILY BUSINESSES.



Perception is Reality *Is Perception Reality in a Family Business?*

Dr. Jay Desko
Dr. Steven K. Moyer

Webster defines “Perception” as impressions, powers of observation and interpretation.

Perceptions develop as a result of a complex combination of factors including concrete experiences, cultural beliefs, and family and social influences. Perceptions are often treated as “the truth” from those who hold them, even if the perception is inaccurate, therefore making them very powerful. Perceptions can be changed, although not easily, through honest dialogue and changed behaviors.

How important and critical is this for a family member, leader, and manager, to understand?

By growing stronger in the areas of your proficiency and passion, you help the family and the business you are serving to be healthy and effective. Being aware of blind spots helps you to avoid costly and needless mistakes that can harm the family, relationships, and the business. Many times these blind spots are not discussed for fear of creating conflict within the family or the business. We all have areas in our lives where improvement is needed. Without transparency and humility on your part, and honesty and integrity on the part of others who evaluate you, your strengths are likely to fall short of their highest potential and your weaknesses will undoubtedly hinder you.

Without feedback, we never really know how we are doing and we are left to make our own assessment and interpretation. Such ambiguity can create stress and often results in discouragement and pain. Some people overestimate their performances and the appropriateness of their behaviors. Others underestimate how they are doing and wonder if they are failing.

We all have areas of our lives that we are blind to but that others can see. When such areas have the potential or seriously begin to hinder us personally or relationally, and/or have a negative impact on others, we need to consider change.

JOIN THE EXCLUSIVE NETWORK OF FAMILY BUSINESSES.



However, perceptions do have their limitations. Perceptions are simply cognitive pictures that are stored in the brain. Honest input from others can affirm a leader's strengths and gifts and confront a leader's weaknesses and gaps.

There is a way to gain an understanding of perceptions others have of us in our family, business, and organizations. A 360-degree review for feedback has significant value over other types of assessment instruments because it provides the recipient with perceptions from others who have actually observed them in the context of real-life. 360-degree feedback gathers information, anonymously, from several people about an individual's effectiveness in critical relational and business issues. This gives a person the unique opportunity to see themselves through the eyes of others. A 360-degree review will identify areas in which a person is performing above, at, or below the standards of family members, his/her boss, self, and peers.

A leader should reflect upon the feedback and determine if changes are appropriate. Because it is sometimes hard to make sense of conflicting feedback and because evaluators are also often blind to their own weaknesses when providing feedback, Leaders need to utilize the counsel of other wise individuals such as a neutral third party or a coach. With insight and support of a neutral third party, we have seen positive life transitions, promotions, realignment of responsibilities, and enriched lives.



THE NETWORK OF FAMILY BUSINESSES