

Communication Triangulation

Who you talk to is as important as what you say

Triangulation: when one family member does not communicate directly with a second family member but will communicate with a third family member in hopes that the third family member will filter the message to the second family member. It can also be a form of splitting in which a person plays one family member against another.

This type of communication, though a common human impulse, has many unintended consequences:

- Family members drawn into this type of conflict end up with a negative view of each other.
- The third family member doesn't get important feedback about how others are perceiving him or her.
- The real, underlying issue never gets resolved, the cycle repeats, and others follow the behavior pattern.
- Family members stop being able to work together because of baggage and unresolved conflict.
- Failure to address issues directly and dialogue openly negatively affect the bottom line.

How can a family enterprise avoid communication triangulation?

1. *Be an example with your own communication.* No matter how frustrated you may be with someone, talk directly with them.
2. *Refuse to get drawn into the middle when someone vents to you.* Speak wisdom and send them back to the other person for direct dialogue.
3. *Focus on developing positive communication and conflict resolution skill.*
4. *Seek help.* As a leader of the family enterprise, find a coach to support you and your family in developing healthy communication habits and breaking the communication triangulation cycle.

Only by addressing communication triangulation directly will the cycle end. Families and their enterprises cannot thrive where communication habits undermine trust and credibility. Conflict is inevitable, but how you handle it is not.

Handle the right problem with the right person

SKM Associates LLC

235 Yoder Road
Harleysville, PA 19438

Dr. Steven K. Moyer

Ph: 215.256.5997

E-mail: skmoyer@comcast.net

Aaron M. Moyer

Ph: 215.264.9601

E-mail: Aaron.Moyer@gmail.com