

Research-Based Advice for Family Businesses: Our 10 Best-Read Articles

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FamilyBusiness.org aims to provide family business owners and leaders advice that helps them be more successful. One important source of advice is based on research: rigorous studies that analyze what truly works at family businesses.

Over the past several years we've partnered with scholarly journals where researchers publish high-quality research on family businesses. These lengthy papers undergo a rigorous peer review process before publication. We have formal partnerships with journals – the Journal of Family Business Strategy and Family Business Review. Independently of these partnerships, many individual authors who've published their scholarly articles have collaborated with us to bring their insights to a wider audience.

Below are the 10 most-read research translations in FamilyBusiness.org as of March 19, 2024.

Family Firms: How Much Cash is Enough? (<https://familybusiness.org/content/family-firms-how-much-cash-is-enough>)

Published April 19, 2022

By Yuliya Ponomareva, Autonomous University of Barcelona; Domenico Cambrea, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia; Daniel Pittino, Jonkoping International Business School; and Alessandro Minichilli, Bocconi University

Research illustrated that too much and too little cash can hurt the financial performance of family firms, and there's an optimal level of cash holdings where performance benefits are highest.

All-Time Views: 125,596

When the Family Leaves the Business, Can Their Values Remain?

(<https://familybusiness.org/content/when-the-family-leaves-the-business-can-their-values-remain>)

Published January 13, 2024

By Roy Suddaby, University of Victoria; Wilson Ng, IDRAC Business School; Natalia Vershinina, Audencia Business School; Gideon Markman, Colorado State University; and Matthew Cadbury, University of Hertfordshire.

While Cadbury was acquired by Kraft Foods in 2010, the core values established by its Quaker founding family have prevailed.

All-Time Views: 94,186

How Women Can Make it in the Ultimate Man's World

(<https://familybusiness.org/content/how-women-can-make-it-in-the-ultimate-mans-world>)

Published February 7, 2021

By Sumaya Hashim, Lucia Naldi, and Magdalena Markowska

Jonkoping University

A study in Bahrain reveals how women business owners are transcending societal boundaries. A key strategy: establishing personal and market legitimacy, then getting the attention of influencers.

All-Time Views: 83,722

Better Let Your Brother Do It: Men Are Still Preferred in CEO Successions

(<https://familybusiness.org/content/better-let-your-brother-do-it-men-are-still-preferred-in-ceo-suc>)

Published January 24, 2024

By Jan-Philipp Ahrens, Annegret Hauer, and Katharina Siegert, University of Mannheim; and Melania Riefolo, University of Foggia;

At 800 German firms, 81% chose sons over daughters in succession decisions -- and the presence of first-born sons also made them exclude outside candidates.

All-Time Views: 80,812

Women Can Help Family Firms Innovate – But Socioemotional Factors Matter

(<https://familybusiness.org/content/women-can-help-family-firms-innovate-but-socioemotional-factors>)

Published September 8, 2022

By Jonathan Bauweraerts, University of Mons; Emanuela Rondi, University Degli Studi di Bergamo; Paola Rovelli, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano; Alfredo DeMassis, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano; and Salvatore Sciascia, Cattaneo University.

Even as more women step into leadership roles at family firms, long-held attitudes and practices may prevent the business from realizing all the benefits they can bring.

All-Time Views: 42,539

Women Show Their Strengths When Family Businesses are in Trouble

(<https://familybusiness.org/content/women-show-their-strengths-when-family-businesses-are-in-trouble>)

Published October 17, 2023

By Allan Discua Cruz, Eleanor Hamilton and Sarah Jack, Lancaster University; and Giovanna Campopiano, University of Bergamo.

Even in countries where men dominate, women proved to be innovators in times of crisis, a Honduras study

showed.

All-Time Views: 32,932

Family Emotions Can Drive Business Decisions

(<https://familybusiness.org/content/Family-emotions-can-drive-business-decisions>)

Published June 15, 2022

By Rania Labaki and Fabian Bernhard, EDHEC Business School

Because personal and business dynamics are so closely intertwined, private disagreements and personal histories inevitably spill over into the business.

All-Time Views: 31,618

Unforeseen Crisis Made These Family Businesses Stronger

(<https://familybusiness.org/content/unforeseen-crisis-made-these-family-businesses-stronger>)

Published January 22, 2024

By Rebecca Alguera Kleine, Witten/Herdecke University; Bingbing Ge, Lancaster University Management School; and Alfredo DeMassis, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

The COVID-19 pandemic forced six German family firms to reckon with their identities, positioning and strategies -- and transform themselves for the better.

All-Time Views: 30,113

Succession: Don't Assume Your First-Born is the Anointed One

(<https://familybusiness.org/content/succession-dont-assume-your-first-born-is-the-anointed-one>)

Published April 16, 2021

By Andrea Calabro, IPAG Business School

Companies that appointed a second- or subsequent-born child as their next company leader enjoyed a better return on assets than those who picked the first-born, our research showed.

All-Time Views: 29,736

Will Your In-Laws Help or Hurt Your Family Business?

(<https://familybusiness.org/content/will-you-in-laws-help-or-hurt-your-family-business>)

Published September 14, 2023

By Marco Mismetti, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Emanuela Rondi, Universita degli Studi di Bergamo; and Cristina Bettinelli, University of Bergamo

As the Gucci and royal families show, in-laws can complicate things. Here's how family businesses can benefit from their perspectives and minimize conflict.

All-Time Views: 27,070