Four Ways Family Businesses Can Make Technology Adoption Easier

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KEYWORDS: Information Technology, Family Business, Entrepreneurship.

Family businesses can smooth technology changes by showing practical value, simplifying training, addressing privacy concerns and using outside experts.

Article originally published at NextAvenue.org (https://www.nextavenue.org/) , which has partnered with EIX.org on a series of high quality features about family business and entrepreneurship. Part of the America's Entrepreneurs Special Report

When you're in a family business, it's essential that the generations work seamlessly together. That's especially important when it comes to technology, which is, in essence, the tools and vocabulary of any thriving business.

So if you plan to introduce new business tools to other family members at your company, follow tips for a smooth and successful implementation:

Practicality Sells

Introduce the new tool by digging into the practicality of it. For example, if one of you plans to travel in the next few months, but will still help run the business, a chat tool will make it easy to stay connected and on top of duties.

Writing in the Hubgets' guide, How to Forge Long-Term Communication in Your Company (https://www.hubgets.com/blog/howto-forge-long-term-collaboration/) , the experts at the Hubgets communications platform suggest:

"Team communication solutions help teams operate at the same high levels, no matter if they are located in the same office or on different corners of the world. Constantly communicating with your team members makes things run smoothly, while also reassuring people that you are ready to put in the same work and efforts in working towards a common goal."

This would be your value proposition for introducing a chat tool: Being as productive as possible within your role.

Whenever you want to bring a new product into the business, use this same idea. Find the value and make it clear and concise to any naysayers. By tying the technology back to the business and showing how it will provide value, it will be clear that the new assistance will help everyone achieve their common goal: building a thriving business.

Make it easy for everyone

Digital natives are used to the familiar ways that many tech products work. As users of various digital products for most of their lives, they find it easy to get to know a new product with little instruction.

But for family members who are still new to technology, this learning is not inherent. So, to introduce a new tool into your family business, plan for a learning curve — better yet, make it easy for your family members to learn.

One way to do this: focus on repetition. Rather than teaching terms, get your parents and siblings to repeat the processes so they can learn how to use the tool.

If any family members have visual or auditory limitations, be understanding. They may find some tech tools frustrating. Teach the physical process for using a new tool or accessing an updated database and look for ways everyone can do it.

Deal with any privacy concerns

Some family members may worry that new technology products will lead to an invasion of their online privacy.

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Protect Seniors Online (https://www.protectseniorsonline.com/resources/cybersecurity-best-practices/) offers these tips:

- Make passwords strong. A password generator may make it easier for all family members to create strong passwords. You can even download a password manager that auto-populates the login info on all their pages.
- Add 2-step verification where possible. There are many ways to do this: by identifying a photo, answering a security question or getting a code texted to the user.
- Install security software on family members' browsers and computers.

Bring in an expert

Not only may a voice from outside the business be more effective than you, having one then means it's no longer your job to introduce new tech tactics and tools.

Michael Rollins, of Rose Hall Jamaica (https://rosehall.com/) , an award-winning, family-owned resort property in Montego Bay, Jamaica, explains his firm's experience bringing in an expert: "We partnered with a digital agency to improve our web content and digital PR. This was a foreign concept not only for our family business, but I know many other businesses aren't adept at self-promotion and awareness."

For Rollins and his family, the experts' insights allowed Rose Hall Jamaica to expand even further than their knowledge could have taken them. While they knew they needed to update their website, offsite SEO — a critical element of online marketing — wasn't even on their radar.

Says Rollins: "We had never heard of this type of digital PR and now we are getting our brand and messaging across to targeted publications and sites. In just a few months, the extra awareness and coverage has been worth the investment in this 'new' tool: digital marketing."

(This article is part of America's Entrepreneurs (https://www.nextavenue.org/special-report/americas-entrepreneurs-a-special-report-from-richard-m-schulze-family-foundation/) , a Next Avenue initiative made possible by the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation (https://www.schulzefamilyfoundation.org) and EIX, the Entrepreneur and Innovation Exchange.)

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DOI: