

BIDDING SYLLABUS

MANAGING CONFLICT IN FAMILY BUSINESS B8579-001 S 23 MGMT

MBA – B Term
Spring 2023

Course Number: EMBA Block Week - B7529-100 SU22 MGMT

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Course TA: TBD

Day and Time: Monday 2:00 pm – 5:15pm

Room Number: Kravis 680

Office Hours: Before class and by appointment

1. Course Description, Objectives, and Approach:

Mixing family dynamics and ownership of shared assets is a potent combination. Working together, families have produced some of the world's greatest business success stories. Unfortunately, others have generated headlines of a very different kind, finding themselves in conflicts that have destroyed assets, relationships, or both. This course is about why those tragic outcomes occur and how they can be mitigated and – ideally – prevented. It's also about the dangers of avoiding conflict, which can bring down a family enterprise just as disastrously as excessive fighting. These conflicts could be about a family business, a family office, a foundation, or a shared family property. Or all of the above.

In this course, students will explore where conflict comes from in family enterprises and how they differ from non-family enterprises. We will discuss why too little conflict can be as much of a problem as too much. We will discuss concrete strategies for managing conflict. And we will focus on crises, which reflect families sitting on the brink of a breakdown: what causes them, how to get out of them, and how to avoid them.

Students who complete the course will gain a conceptual understanding of conflict and learn practical tools for dealing with it. It will be helpful for students whose families have any kind of shared assets or for those interested in investing, advising, or just better understanding how to manage conflict within family enterprises. It will also be relevant for students who own, work in, invest in, or advise enterprises that are often "family-like," such as partnerships and start-ups. Or who are looking for new ways to navigate family relationships.

Through lectures, case studies, student work experiences, and guest speakers, we consider ownership, succession, conflict resolution, family dynamics under stress, compensation, attracting and retaining family and non-family talent, estate planning, and financing the family-owned enterprise.

The course has the following objectives:

- Understand that conflict is a natural and necessary part of life and that what makes it constructive or destructive is how we respond to it
- Appreciate the difference between competition and collaboration strategies
- List and describe the most common sources of conflict in the family business context and how these are different
- Distinguish between position, needs, and interests; the five most common reactions to conflict (styles) and their pros and cons, given the context
- List and apply key conflict strategies to contribute to fruitful solutions in conflict prevention, management, and resolution
- Demonstrate understanding of the roles individuals play in conflicts (self-awareness)
- Develop the ability to shift from being reactive while in conflict, to being more choiceful

a. Required Prerequisites and Connection to the Core

There are no required prerequisites for this course.

2. Teaching Methods and Course Materials:

Most effective learning is built upon a combination of ingredients, such as lectures, outside readings, life cases, diligent preparation for class, active student participation, guest speakers, teamwork, and other resources that will be considered helpful.

In particular, this course is taught by an experienced professional who was raised in an enterprising family and, after extensive education, has worked with family enterprises for about 25 years as a researcher, independent consultant, and non-family executive. Lectures will draw from this experience, with a particular emphasis on real-life cases of family business, as social, emotional, and economic units, having relent yet rigorous theoretical and practical conversations to advance students' learning. Readings will include case studies and excerpts from seminal books and articles from conflict management and resolution literature. Guest speakers will be invited to provide additional context and depth to discussions. Expert from mediation and psychology in family business will present. Class participation is required, and open dialogue about the complexity of issues is expected. Students' critical thinking and analytical skills will be practiced continuously, and their ability to critically apply, evaluate, and integrate new knowledge with prior experience.

b. Textbook and Required Readings:

All readings (book chapters, cases, and readings) will be available through Canvas and/ or through library reserves, and the purchase of the following book is recommended:

- Baumoel, D., & Trippe, B. (2016). *Deconstructing Conflict: Understanding Family Business, Shared Wealth and Power*. (Some chapters)

Additional suggested reading:

- Puiman, Rosalie. *The Mindful Guide to Conflict Resolution: How to Thoughtfully Handle Difficult Situations, Conversations, and Personalities*. Adams Media. 978-0996425605
- Raines, S. S. (2019). *Conflict management for managers: Resolving workplace, client, and policy disputes*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Canary, H., & Canary, D. (2013). *Family conflict: Managing the unexpected*. John Wiley & Sons.

- The course will include case studies, lectures, readings, videos, and discussions
- **To make it even more relevant to real-life applications, the course will make available assessment tools for students regarding emotional intelligence and conflict styles with certified professionals.**
- Some cases are assigned, which you should read and prepare for the discussion.
- Guest speakers from the world of family business, family mediation, and family psychology will be brought in.
- There is an extensive library of books about conflict management. In session 4 (Course roadmap), I will indicate some additional titles under [SUGGESTED READING FOR THE TOPIC](#), in case students are particularly interested in learning more about the topic. **You are not expected to read the suggested readings for class.** This is to encourage additional research and follow-up on topics of personal interest.

3. Course Requirements and Assignments

a. Expectations and Grading

As the course is based primarily on case studies, you are expected to prepare the cases and readings and be ready to participate in the class discussions. This participation will aid your learning and the learning of your classmates. The cases are based on real companies; these course materials have been chosen to provide insights, not absolute answers. The greater your preparation and participation, the more you will learn.

The grading structure is weighted on this basis as follows:

- **Class Contribution - 35%** - (*Type C assignment*): The class sessions will be highly interactive. We will have conversations about the assigned articles and discuss applications of the material by analyzing actual family business conflict situations. Participation reflects efforts to share thoughts and opinions on the concepts and materials covered in the course. The best contributions are considered to exhibit thoroughness, originality, and creativity. Regularly participating in the conversations, expanding on and augmenting the information in the lectures and articles, AND integrating the information in the lectures and articles with other facets of the class, such as material from previous sessions or current events, will be highly considered.
- **Shifting Paradigm Project - 30%** - (*Type A assignment*): Conflict Management skills require life application. This field project aims at encouraging your knowledge and skills application outside the classroom in settings naturally occurring in family business lives, which will help you foster **integrating problem-solving** in the cognitive and affective domains, which are crucial when dealing with conflict in family business. More information will be shared in Canvas.
- **MiniQuizzes – 10%** (*Type C assignment*)
- **Other Written Assignment - 25%** - (*Type C assignment*)
 - **Key Take-Aways Summary**
 - **Final paper – Compare and contrast the material with the challenges**
See Canvas for more information.

More information will be shared in Canvas.

b. Other expectations:

Confidentiality - This course stimulates the discussion of sensitive and personal topics about individual class members, their family enterprises, and other family businesses. An essential aspect of the learning process is discussing this private information. We define any information or material shared as a part of this class as confidential, whether in the classroom or as a learning activity. This confidential material must not be discussed outside the classroom, except as part of a learning activity, only with class members or an instructor. Each participant agrees to this confidentiality agreement and accepts that any violation of this confidentiality agreement will result (at a minimum) in no grade or credit for the course.

Columbia Core Culture – Students are expected to adhere to CBS Core Culture in this class by being Present, Prepared, and Participating.

4. Course Roadmap:

	TOPIC	REQUIRED PRE-READINGS / SPEAKERS
01 M 03.20	DEFINITIONS AND FOUNDATION CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deutsch, M. (2014). Cooperation, competition, and conflict. Ch. 1 - The Handbook of Conflict Resolution. Coleman, P. T., Deutsch, M., & Marcus, E. C. (Eds.). (2014). <i>The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice</i>. John Wiley & Sons. Mayer, Bernard S.. The Conflict Paradox (Ch1). Wiley. In class simulation
02 M 03.27	CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN FAMILY ENTERPRISE: WHY AND HOW IS IT DIFFERENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davis, John. "How three circles changed the way we understand family business." Cambridge Institute for Family Enterprise(2018). 🌐 Coleman, P. T. (2003). Characteristics of protracted, intractable conflict: Toward the development of a meta-framework-I. <i>Peace and Conflict: Journal of peace psychology</i>, 9(1), 1-37 Kubiček, A., & Machek, O. (2020). Intrafamily conflicts in Family businesses: a systematic review of the literature and agenda for future research. <i>Family Business Review</i>, 33(2), 194-227. Case Discussion
03 M 04.03	THE MYTH OF FAMILY CONSENSUS AND HARMONY: A DEEPER DIVE INTO FAMILY DYNAMICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayer, Bernard S. The Conflict Paradox Ch.1. Wiley. Sillars, A. L., Pett, R. C., Canary, D. J., & Vangelisti, A. L. (2021). Conflict and relational quality in families. In <i>The Routledge handbook of family communication</i> (pp. 312-329). Routledge. Koerner, A., (2006), Family Conflict Communication. Oetzel, J. G., & Ting-Toomey, S. (2006). <i>The Sage handbook of conflict communication: Integrating theory, research, and practice</i>. Sage Publications. Case Discussion SPEAKER
04 M 04.10	CRITICAL SKILLS TO MANAGE CONFLICT: UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF AND OTHERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict Management Style Emotional Intelligence Assessment Thompson, L., Nadler, J., & Lount Jr, R. B. (2000). Judgmental biases in conflict resolution and how to overcome them. <i>The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and Practice</i>, 255-276 Lindner, E. G. (2006). Emotion and conflict: Why it is important to understand how emotions affect conflict and how conflict affects emotions. <i>The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and Practice</i>, 283-306. Behavioral Evasive and Invasive Red Flags SPEAKER
05 M 04.17	PREVENT, RESOLVE, CONTAIN CONFLICT IN FAMILY BUSINESS (I/II)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict Prevention in Family Business Interest-oriented Dispute Resolution System Integrating Problem-Solving and Decision-Making in Conflict Resolution Case Discussion
06 M 04.24	PREVENT, RESOLVE, CONTAIN CONFLICT IN FAMILY BUSINESS (I/II)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult conversations Regaining trust Reconciliation SPEAKER

PLEASE CONSULT CANVAS FOR UPDATED AND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT PREPARATION WORK FOR EACH CLASS and IN THE ASSIGNMENTS SESSION

GUEST SPEAKERS: TBC

5. Additional Requirements

a. Attendance Policy

Students are required to attend each class. Students should reach out to the instructor or TA regarding excused absences (for religious observances, personal, medical, and family emergencies, military service; court appearances such as jury duty). Unexcused absences will affect your course grade.

Students who miss **more than 33%** of the classes (unexcused absences) **will receive a P** for the course grade.

Students who miss **more than 50%** of their classes (unexcused absences) **will receive an F** for the course grade.

b. Poll Everywhere

This course may use PollEverywhere as a tool to increase in-class student engagement. PollEverywhere may also be used to confirm student attendance and participation records. Students who have concerns regarding whether their responses have been recorded should contact the instructor.

If a student is not present in the classroom at the time of a poll (due to absences or other reasons), the poll should not be answered. Responding to a poll when not present in the classroom is a violation of the Honor Code.

c. Inclusion, Accommodations, and Support for Students

At Columbia Business School, we believe that diversity strengthens any community or business model and brings it greater success. Columbia Business School is committed to providing all students with the equal opportunity to thrive in the classroom by providing a learning, living, and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bias on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or ability.

Columbia Business School will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact Columbia University's Office of Disability Services for information about registration. Students seeking accommodation in the classroom may obtain information on the services offered by Columbia University's Office of Disability Services online at www.health.columbia.edu/docs/services/ods/index.html or by contacting (212) 854-2388.

Columbia Business School is committed to maintaining a safe environment for students, staff, and faculty. Because of this commitment and because of federal and state regulations, we must advise you that if you tell any of your instructors about sexual harassment or gender-based misconduct involving a member of the campus community, your instructor is required to report this information to a Title IX Coordinator. They will treat this information as private but will need to follow up with you and possibly look into the matter. Counseling and Psychological Services, the Office of the University Chaplain, and the Ombuds Office for Gender-Based Misconduct are confidential resources for students, staff, and faculty. "Gender-based misconduct" includes sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and gender-based harassment. For more information, see <http://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/gender-based-misconduct-policy-students>.