

UW-Madison Family Business Center Celebrates 20 Years of Helping Family Owned Businesses Thrive

Madison, Wis. - What could a golf course, dairy product transportation company, steel manufacturer, chicken processor, and an ambulance service possibly have in common? All are family-owned businesses, and members of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Family Business Center (FBC).

UW-Madison FBC is proud to celebrate 20 years of providing a trusted environment to more than 50 members who improve family harmony and business success through education, networking, peer learning and a supportive community.

"The Family Business Center allows us to meet other family-owned businesses in similar situations and gives us access to different perspectives. It's helped us realize that we don't have all the answers, and that's okay," says John Flesch, executive vice president and treasurer, Gordon Flesch Company, and a member of FBC since its founding. "And it's been a business resource at critical points of transition in our company."

Family-owned businesses face unique challenges, including family dynamics and the emotions tied to them, governance (defining roles and responsibilities, creating policies and procedures), leadership development, and succession planning.

"The Family Business Center has helped me realize that we are not alone in the challenges we face as a family-owned business," says Jessica Blaska-Grady, second generation general manager of The Oaks Golf Course in Cottage Grove, Wis. "When there are bumps in the road, I have a network of people that are willing to help and talk things out."

About the Family Business Center

The UW-Madison Family Business Center offers professional development specifically for family-owned businesses through an annual speaker series with nationally-renowned family business experts; networking breakfast meetings focused on relevant and timely business topics presented by Family Business Center sponsors; and the opportunity to join facilitated peer learning groups. A week-long boot camp for emerging family business leaders is offered once a year and offers an in depth learning experience and skill building in all areas unique to family business ownership and leadership. In addition, our community of member and sponsor enjoy networking socials throughout the year.

The Family Business Center is supported by our dedicated sponsors: Associated Bank; DeWitt Ross & Stevens, S.C.; Smith & Gesteland, LLP; Thompson Investment Management, Inc.; Johnson Bank; Mass Mutual Financial Group/Triumph Wealth Management, LLC; WIPFLi, LLP; and Husch Blackwell.

The UW-Madison Family Business Center is a nonprofit membership organization affiliated with the Wisconsin School of Business.

Family Business Center

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