

## President's Corner, Henry D. Landes

**The REAL Bottom Line: Growing People!** Perhaps like you, my development as a child was profoundly and positively impacted by my close contact and involvement in a thriving family business started in 1929 by Grammy and Grandpop, Susan and I. T. Landes. I have fond memories of "hanging around the shop" with my Grandpop, my Dad, my older brothers, and employees . . . observing, learning, no doubt often getting in the way, and sometimes even contributing!

I believe our businesses can be powerful resources (part of the "village") in growing children. From the earliest days of cleaning bathrooms, mowing the company lawns, and sealing envelopes, the family AND the business provide an excellent learning laboratory for our children.

However, I also believe our families have a responsibility to "grow children" or, more accurately, to "grow people" throughout the lifecycle, not just during the early years. Successful businesses also share this strong commitment to "growing people." In the introduction of his book, *Love & Profit: The Art of Caring Leadership*, James Autry asserts, "Work can provide the opportunity for spiritual and personal, as well as financial growth. If it doesn't, then we're wasting far too much of our lives on it." We recommend that business families adopt a *Family Learning Policy* which specifically addresses the family's commitment to personal and professional development throughout the lifecycle.

So HOW do business-owning families grow people—family and non-family members alike? We've developed a simple tool to help families "grow people"; we call it a *Personal & Professional Development Plan*. To be completed annually and reviewed at least quarterly, this one-page worksheet asks EACH family member or employee to:

1. **Credit and acknowledge their accomplishments of the past year.** We believe the best professional and personal growth plans need to build on a solid foundation of past accomplishments.
2. **Commit to work goals** ("no kidding" outcomes/results) to be achieved in the coming year.
3. **Define and commit to specific professional development goals** (skills/experiences/knowledge) which will help meet current and future responsibilities (Steve Covey calls this "sharpening the saw").
4. **Define and commit to specific annual personal goals:** family, marriage, health, recreation.

Last, but perhaps most profound, the PPDP also includes space to define your personal mission/primary aim which really undergirds all growth.

The *Personal & Professional Development Plan* (PPDP) is a powerful tool to be developed in concert with the direct supervisor of each employee. We believe family meetings provide the ideal place for family members to mutually share and support each other's PPDP. In our work with business families, we use the PPDP as the centerpiece for developing the business AND the people which helps both to thrive.

Developing and being accountable to a *Personal & Professional Development Plan* is also a foundational tool for our Leadership Labs, peer groups for family business leaders. If you have interest in learning more about *Personal & Professional Development Plans* or our Leadership Labs, please give Sally a call at 215-723-8413.