

2026 GLOBAL SUMMIT WOMEN · JUNE 6, 2026 · ISTANBUL, TURKEY

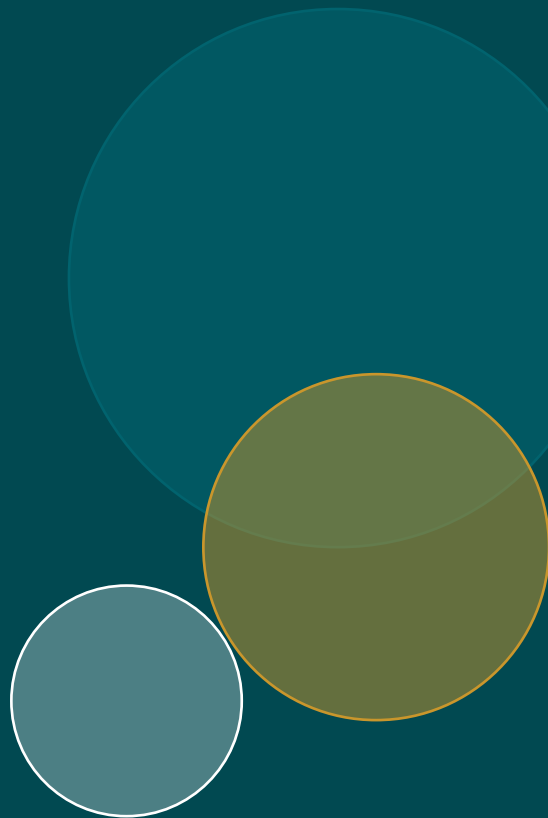
# Governance in Family-Owned Businesses

*Building Structures That Outlast the Founder*

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## Chiou See Anderson

Founder, Elements Third Age Living | Chair, Conpago  
Past President, National Council of Women of Australia



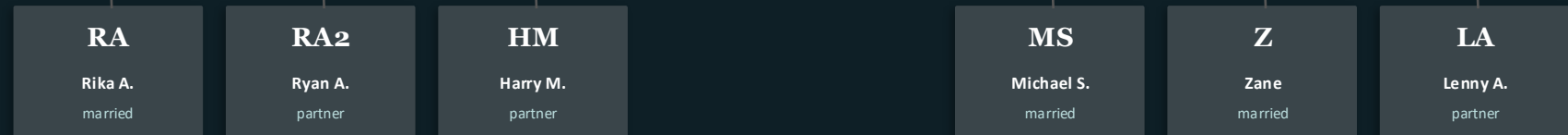
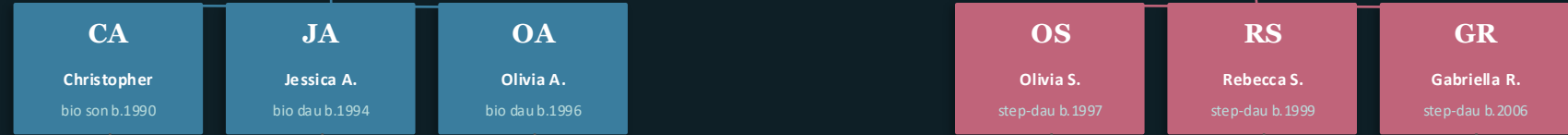
# My Family — A Modern Story

*The Anderson–Rook blended family · 3 generations · 2 marriages · biological, step & partner relationships*

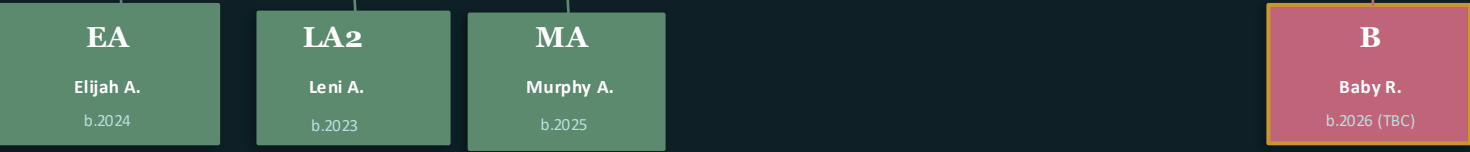
GENERATI  
ON 1



GENERATI  
ON 2



GENERATI  
ON 3



- Chiou See (you)
- Bio children
- Step-children
- Grandchildren
- Partners / spouses / ex

# BLENDING FAMILIES: THE NEW GOVERNANCE FRONTIER

*An emerging complexity that most family business frameworks haven't caught up with yet*

## The emerging reality

- Divorce & remarriage rates are rising globally among business owners
- Blended families bring step-children, half-siblings and new spouses into the ownership picture
- Traditional succession models assume a single bloodline — blended families break that assumption
- Who inherits? Who has a seat at the table? Who qualifies as 'family' in the family employment policy?
- Courts are increasingly resolving what governance documents should have decided

## What governance must address

### Define 'family'

Explicitly — in writing — who qualifies for employment, ownership and succession rights

### Prenuptial & shareholder agreements

Protect business assets before marriage or partnership changes the ownership map

### Step-child provisions

Deliberate decisions about whether and how step-children participate — not assumptions

### Communication structures

Family councils that include blended members prevent surprise and resentment

### Regular review

Governance documents must be updated when family composition changes

# WHY FAMILY BUSINESSES MATTER

*They outperform — but growth creates governance complexity that can unravel everything*

## 400M

**SMEs worldwide**

*spine of the global economy*

## 90%

**of all businesses**

*are small or medium enterprises*

## 50%

**of global GDP**

*generated by SMEs*

## 1 in 3

**SME owners are women**

*often trusting family in key roles*

*Why family businesses often outperform: long-term horizon · trust · resilience · frugality · talent retention*



### **Informal decisions become risk**

What works at 5 people stops working at 50.  
Verbal agreements become disputes.



### **Family complexity multiplies**

Divorce, remarriage, next-gen entry — each event reshuffles the ownership map.

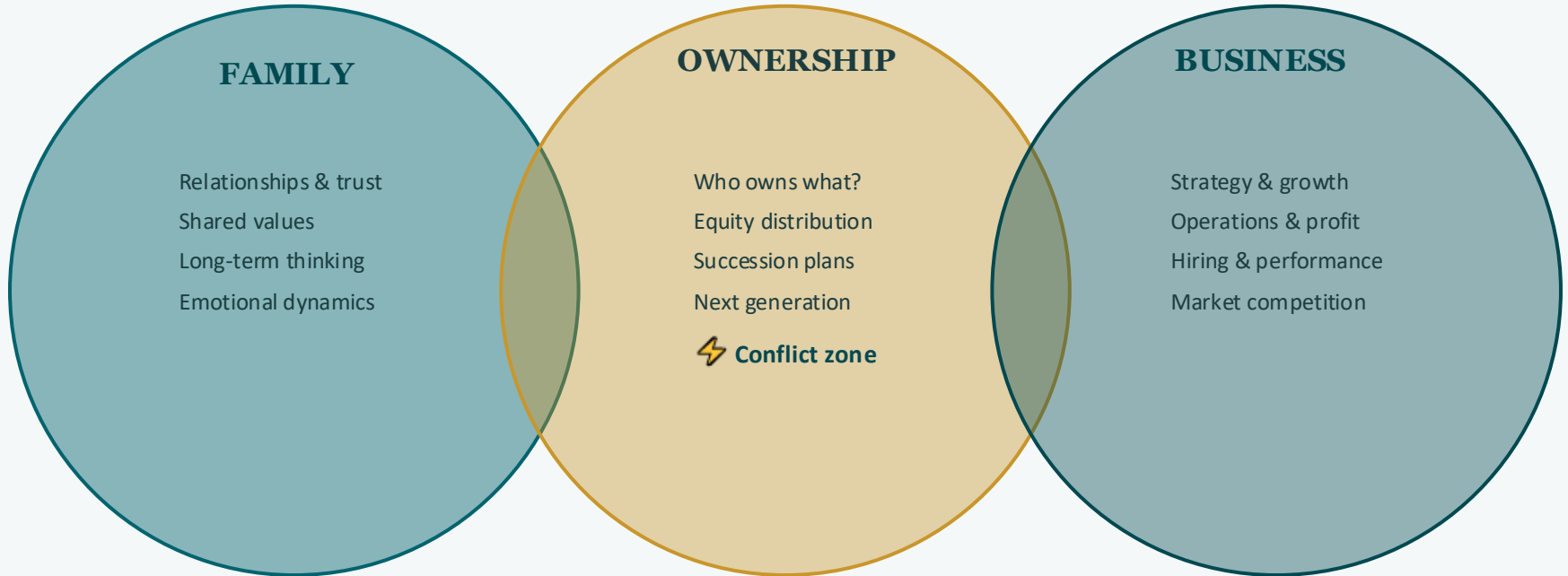


### **Founders avoid hard conversations**

Ownership, pay, succession — left undiscussed until crisis forces the issue.

# THE FAMILY BUSINESS CHALLENGE

*Three overlapping systems — and where they collide*



*Blended families add a fourth dimension — redefining who counts as 'family' in all three systems simultaneously.*

# "Shirtsleeves to Shirtsleeves in Three Generations"

*Why most family wealth — and most family businesses — don't survive the grandchildren*

The same pattern is found across cultures worldwide:

"Rice paddy to rice paddy in three generations" (China) · "From stables to stars to stables" (Ireland)

"Clogs to clogs in three generations" (Lancashire) — the warning is universal.

## G1

### The Founder

Builds the business through  
hard work, sacrifice and vision.

Hunger drives everything.

## G2

### The Builder

Grows up watching the struggle.

Respects what was built.

Expands with care.

## G3

### The Inheritor

Inherits wealth, not struggle.

Takes it for granted.

Without governance,  
often loses it all.

***Governance is the antidote — it encodes the founder's discipline into the institution, not just the individual.***

# WHAT TYPE OF FAMILY BUSINESS ARE YOU?

*Poutziouris's 4-lane model — knowing your lane shapes your governance priorities*

HIGH GROWTH APPETITE ↑

↓ LOW GROWTH APPETITE

CLOSE CULTURE

25%

## SURVIVORS & PROFITEERS

High growth ambition but hold control tightly.

Often plateau. Conflict between growth and family control is the key governance tension.

OPEN CULTURE

15%

## GROWTH STARS

High ambition + open to outside capital & talent.

The 15% who achieve sustained multi-generational growth. Governance is professional and deliberate.

→ CONTROL

OPEN →

CLOSE CULTURE

50%

## DYNASTS & LIFESTYLE

Low growth appetite + family control dominant.

The majority of family SMEs. Governance risk: succession crisis when founder can no longer continue.

OPEN CULTURE

10%

## EXITEERS

Low growth appetite but open to market.

Building to sell, or already in decline. Governance priority: protecting value for exit.

*Source: Poutziouris, Cambridge Judge Business School · Which lane are you in? Knowing this shapes which governance tools matter most for you.*

# FAMILY FIRST OR BUSINESS FIRST?

*The tension every family business must consciously choose to manage*

*Most conflicts in family businesses trace back to one unresolved question: when family needs and business needs clash — which wins?*

## FAMILY FIRST

### Bloodline & birth order

Eldest child leads — regardless of capability

### Equal pay & shares

All family members rewarded equally

### Nepotism

Loyalty to family above merit

### Emotion over policy

Decisions made on relationships, not rules

### In-laws & step-family

Roles defined by relationship, not role

### Tradition (90:10)

90% tradition, 10% adaptation

VS

## BUSINESS FIRST

### Meritocracy

Best person leads — family or not

### Market pay

Compensation set by role and market rate

### Professionalism

Qualified people in the right jobs

### Governance & rules

Decisions made by policy and process

### Defined family policy

Who can work here, on what terms — written down

### Innovation (60:30:10)

60% core, 30% growth, 10% new ventures

***Neither extreme works. The goal is a conscious, written balance — protecting the family and the business.***

# 5 GOVERNANCE ESSENTIALS

*What must be in place — written down, agreed upon, and regularly reviewed*

01

## Ownership Structure

Who owns what — shares, assets, property. Document it before conflict arises. Update it when family composition changes.

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02

## Decision-Making Rules

Who has authority for which decisions? Separate major strategic decisions from day-to-day operations.

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03

## Family Employment & Pay Policy

How are family members hired, evaluated and paid? Apply market rates and meritocracy — including for spouses and step-children.

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04

## Succession Planning

Leadership and ownership succession. Who is being prepared? Is the next generation ready — and which next generation?

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05

## Family Governance Forum + Independent Advisors

Regular family councils prevent conflict. Independent directors or advisory boards bring objectivity the family cannot.

# A FOUNDER'S JOURNEY — LESSONS FROM THE CARE ECONOMY

*Building, governing, innovating — and knowing when to pass the baton*

**Care businesses carry a dual obligation:** commercial sustainability and **human dignity**. Governance isn't bureaucracy — it's what protects both when the founder steps back. Digital platforms like Conpago show how family enterprises can innovate while staying true to purpose.

2003

Sold her home to finance the land at Springwood, Brisbane

2010

Elements @ Springwood opens — 123 villas, pioneering design

2019

Investor & Chair Conpago — digital platform for the care economy

2022

Acquired Con Noi Carindale — second Elements village

2025

Successful harvest: sold both villages to another family business

**Board roles:** Conpago (Chair) · Heather Senior Care · Princess Alexandra Hospital Research Foundation

**Advocacy:** National Council of Women of Australia (Past President) · International Council of Women (Past Assist Treasurer) · G20 Women 20 (W20) (Head Australian Delegation)

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

*What every family business leader should walk away with today*



Write it down — governance only works when documented and agreed by all family members. Update it when family composition changes.

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Separate roles — being family, owner and manager are three different jobs. Blended families make this even more critical.

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Have the uncomfortable conversations — ownership, internal loans, pay, succession, and who counts as 'family' are too important to avoid.

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Prepare the next generation — but clarify which next generation. Succession is a process, not a single event.

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The question is no longer whether family businesses can grow — but whether they can grow without losing their values.

***"You've succeeded when you are succeeded."***