

# *On Running Your Business Like a Family*

You may have heard people say that they like to run their business like it was their (extended) family. What they are trying to say is that they try to treat every employee as if they were a member of their family. This can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on whether the employee represents a family member who is in the guest house or the dog house.

A business should be run as a business and not a family. Work relationships are the easiest to understand because they are straight forward. Each employees' duties and responsibilities are spelled out, including how they are "suppose" to interact with other employees and management. There are definite lines of duties, responsibility and authority. The rules for family interaction are more fluid and less defined. There are more emotional baggage attached to family relationships. How many families do you know where each family member's duties, responsibilities and roles are clearly spelled out and followed, like in a business? Not many.

Taking care of your employees is one of the ingredients for a successful business. Treating them like family means that you expect them to behave like family members and not as employees. How do you get members of your family to do something for you? Can your business survive if you had to treat your employees the same way?

Running your business like it was part of your extended family means that you are unnecessarily complicating your relationships at work. You are bringing your problems from home and dumping them on your employees at work, so that you are replaying your family relationships with people at work. This leads to more stress, confusing relationships at work and inefficiencies.

If you have been running your business like it was your family, ask yourself

why you are doing it? How have your problems at home infiltrated the workplace? How have your employees responded to your actions? Are you running your business like a business, or are you running it like a charity or family? The choice is yours.

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