



The Two Stories

A short diagnostic for family businesses

Every family business is really running two stories at once — the business story and the family story. When they pull in the same direction, that's a genuine advantage. When they don't, it's usually where things start to break down.

This isn't a test. There's no pass or fail — just a quick, honest look at where things stand right now. For each pair of statements below, circle the number that feels closest to true for your business (1 = left statement, 4 = right statement, or somewhere in between).

1. Roles & Decisions

How clear is it who decides what?

Roles overlap and shift

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

Roles are clearly defined

Decisions get made informally, in the moment

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

Decisions follow a known process

2. Succession

Is there a plan, or just an assumption?

Succession has never been discussed

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

There's a clear, agreed plan

"Next in line" is assumed, not chosen

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

The right person is chosen on merit

3. Communication

Do family matters stay separate from business ones?

Family tension often spills into work

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

Family and work issues stay separate

Difficult conversations get avoided

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

Difficult conversations happen openly

4. Structure

Is there anything beyond "how we've always done it"?

No outside input on major decisions

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

Independent advice is regularly sought

Little formal record-keeping or process

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

Clear governance and reporting exist

Your Score

Add up your eight numbers for a rough total (out of 32), then find where you land below.

8–16

The stories are pulling apart. Family dynamics are likely shaping business decisions more than anyone would choose. Worth addressing directly, sooner rather than later.

17–24

Some friction, mostly manageable. There are areas of real strength here, alongside a few gaps that are worth closing before they become bigger issues.

25–32

The two stories are well aligned. A strong foundation — the focus now is on protecting it as the business and the family both continue to change.

Wherever you land, the score itself matters less than the conversation it starts. If you'd like to talk through what you've found, get in touch — this is exactly the overlap our coaching and training is built for.