

FIRST TRAINING SESSION FOR FAMILY BUSINESS CONSULTANTS

In November last year 15 delegates from around the country were invited to attend a three-day intensive short learning course, as part of their training to become consultants to family businesses. Sponsored by Old Mutual, founding member of the Family Business Association of Southern Africa (FABASA), this first session was offered as a trial to selected delegates, to gauge overall impressions of the course and measure the effectiveness and value of the course content.

Developed and presented by leading academic specialists from the Family Business Unit at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth (NMMU), the course comprises various modules including family and family dynamics, family business stakeholder dynamics, genograms, management succession, as well as governance.

Course presenters Robin Farrington, Dr Shelley Farrington, Dr Margaret Cullen, and Prof Elmarie Venter each covered modules representing their specific specialisations.

Psychologist Robin Farrington addressed family structures, systems and triangulations. He highlighted the definition of a healthy family unit and explained family

roles, rules as well as the impact of sibling birth order.

Dr Shelley Farrington looked at various roleplayers such as the founder, the mother, the next generation, other family members, inactive shareholders and spouses.

The business side of family business (theory and practice) was covered by Prof Venter and governance issues were explained by Dr Cullen.

As part of the course each delegate has been tasked with a practical assignment that required going out into the field and assisting actual family businesses with their unique challenges. Upon successful completion of this module,



Robin Farrington, Dr Shelley Farrington, Dr Margaret Cullen, and Prof Elmarie Venter

these delegates will become the first ever group to be trained in the country as family business consultants. Once qualified, the delegates will receive FABASA accreditation to render advice and solutions.

The course was well received by delegates. "I never realised just how complex the dynamics within a family business could be," says delegate, Philip Claasen. "Fundamentally, it requires consultants to adopt both a holistic as well as a scientific approach to bring family businesses closer to uncovering solutions to their distinct challenges. This course is a must for those wishing to successfully consult in this arena."

FABASA treasurer and Old Mutual's SMME specialist, André Diederichs, says, "This is a groundbreaking and definitive course covering a wealth of information, one which will lay a solid foundation for the future training of family business consultants."

PART OF OUR MANDATE AT FABASA IS TO SET THE INDUSTRY STANDARD IN FAMILY BUSINESS ADVICE

"This course offers a qualitative approach to an intricate business structure unlike the structure of other SMMEs, and I regard it to be essential learning for anyone operating in this sphere, whether family business owner or consultant.

"One of the underlying objectives of the training is to ensure that family businesses are protected against bogus consultants who masquerade as family business experts. Another objective is to ensure businesses receive the best possible advice from trained and accredited consultants – consultants who understand and appreciate the dynamics of family business.

"Part of our mandate at FABASA is to set the industry standard in family business advice – a form of quality control in terms of the advice and solutions being offered. In this way, a client can insist on FABASA accreditation prior to doing business with a consultant. This will go a long way towards regulating and formalising the advice being dispensed and set it apart from the advice being offered to other SMMEs.

"Family businesses that make use of FABASA's accredited consultants will have the reassurance that their businesses are in the hands of consultants who are qualified to render well-researched and professional advice and solutions."

FABASA will soon announce guidelines, in terms of qualifications required for both junior and senior level family business consultants as well as recommended fee structures, for the different levels of accredited consultants.

Details regarding upcoming training courses for family business consultants in 2011 will be communicated in FABASA's newsletter as well as on the website.


16 FINANCIAL ADVISERS BECOME FABASA-ACCREDITED

To clear up any possible confusion regarding FABASA accreditation – accreditation will be a two-pronged approach: the short learning course offered by NMMU for family business consultants; and the financial examinations for financial advisers. Financial advisers will be authorised to advise family businesses on financial solutions, while family business consultants will give advice on all other aspects of family business.

Nico le Roux, an Old Mutual financial adviser from Port Elizabeth, has become FABASA's first ever accredited financial consultant after he passed his financial examinations with distinction. Subjects for this qualification include modules on business assurance, retirement annuities, umbrella funds as well as a module on family business. Nico specialises in financial planning in both the corporate and private sectors.

Other financial advisers that have since also successfully completed their FABASA examinations are: Mark van Eyssen, Munier Sydow, Abie Grundlingh, Jessica Christie, Kharmen Mathios, Owen Slabbert, Darinka van Zyl, Estelle Webber, Tania Rossouw, Steven Hall, Francois van Niekerk, Paula Garanito Neethling, Anthony Moodley, Morne Potgieter and Leon Rheeder.

Says FABASA secretary, Riana Grobler, "On behalf of the FABASA committee, we would like to congratulate all those financial advisers who have passed their FABASA examinations. You are now appropriately equipped to render professional financial solutions to family businesses and we wish you every success in your endeavours.

Grobler expects at least another 30 financial consultants to complete their FABASA accreditation exams within the foreseeable future. Apart from rendering financial advice to family businesses, once qualified these financial advisers will also play a pivotal role in setting up regional structures for FABASA members. 

FABASA (Family Business Association of South Africa), can be reached on 021 556 4719, visit www.fabasa.co.za or email info@fabasa.co.za