



The Impact of Collaboration on Managing Your Affairs

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When a family addresses their affairs, whether it's a small change or a big decision, they're in search of a quality result. Established families have inherent complexity in their affairs. The tax code, legal system, financial markets and various financial or insurance instruments are inextricably linked. Even if the family changes nothing, their past planning changes with the passing of time.

Let's look at how advisory models traditionally rise to this momentous occasion for families. Historically, advisors in different professional disciplines working with a common family haven't had an intentional model for frequent communication. This article suggests that not only is communication essential, it's no longer enough. In today's world, collaboration is the ideal advisory dynamic for affluent families.

Why is communication between your advisors essential?

A great advisory team has a central goal: to understand the family's vision and carry that vision forward effectively and with integrity. To achieve this, advisors require a common starting point – a confirmation of the client's vision. In order to act on the vision effectively, planning implementation has to be airtight. For any given decision a family makes, three to four advisors may need to touch the implementation to get it right. It would seem difficult to achieve effective implementation without a model for intentional communication.

The difference between communication and collaboration

Communication is essential; however there is a deeper opportunity at hand for families – the opportunity to have a *collaborative* advisory team. Communication is more about the coordination of tasks; one person informing another about their actions. This passing of information back and forth is helpful, yet families can ask for more.

Collaboration, is defined by The American Heritage Dictionary as: *to work together in joint intellectual effort*. Consider the impact of having a truly collaborative advisory team. The team assesses the families' challenges and opportunities and brings the necessary advisory strengths to the table to move the family forward. Advisors sit together at the table and brainstorm on a family's behalf. Ideas are more innovative and more refined. Consensus builds confidence and momentum into the execution phase – for the advisors and the family.

How families can foster collaboration?

Two dynamics must be in play. Collaborative advisors assess their strengths and proactively invite additional talent to the table based on the family's vision and goals. This requires self-confidence and confidence in their relationship with the family.

Families must also play a role. *Insist that your advisors collaborate*. Consider bringing of all your advisors (tax, legal, financial, insurance) together for a social outing. Foster communication and relationship first. Then move into a more formal brainstorming process. Enlist assistance from the group in confirming your vision. Then draft some ground rules around how the professionals can move beyond communication and into collaboration on your behalf.

As always, please feel free to call with any questions regarding this or other important topics.