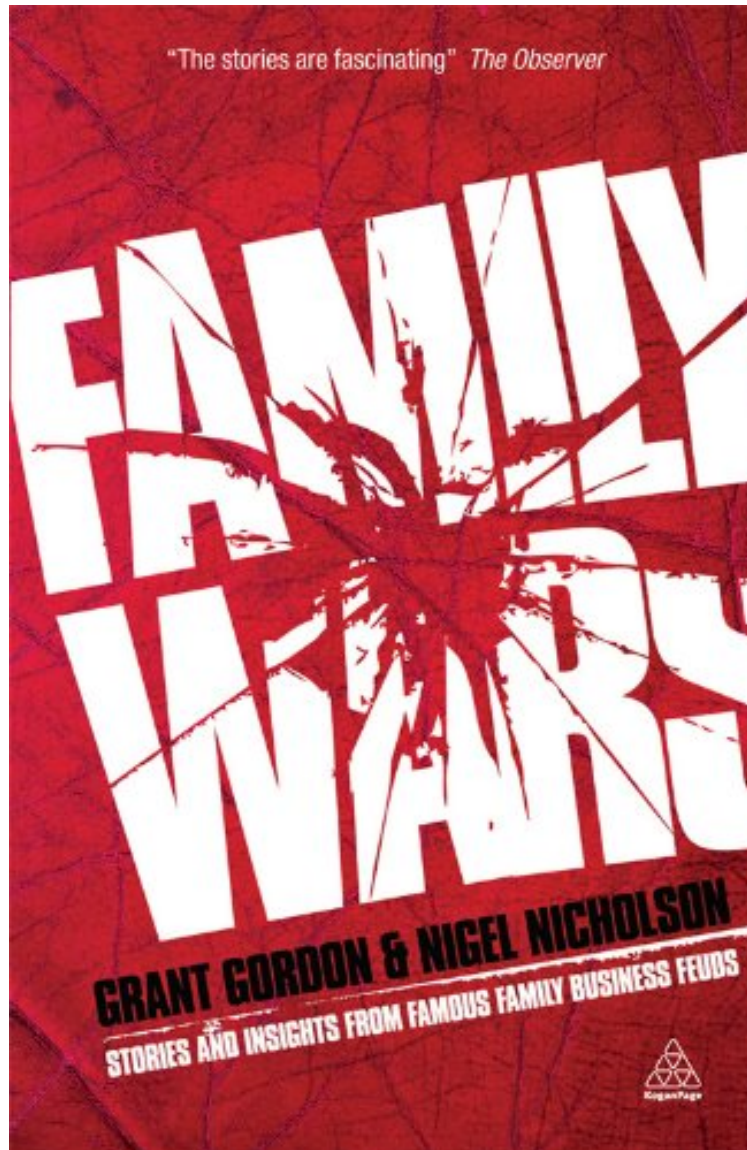


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Family Wars: Stories and Insights from Famous Family Business Feuds

Grant Gordon, Nigel Nicholson
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Grant Gordon, Nigel Nicholson : Family Wars: Stories and Insights from Famous Family Business Feuds

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Family Wars: Stories and Insights from Famous Family Business Feuds:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Terrific book, with one caveat...By Matthew Wesley As an advisor that works with family dynamics in business and legacy contexts, I found the book contained powerful descriptions of

family dynamics, the intersection of those dynamics with the structural aspects of family business (legal, executive and governance) and solid assessments of the most critical factors in play. The book opens with one of the best lay-oriented primers on family dynamics I have seen. What was missing for me were the interventions that would have tied family dynamics theory and practice together with the actual dynamics in the families they profiled. Their excellent primer simply lays there - providing explanatory power but not grounding a more strategic practice that would have potentially made a difference and resulted in more effective structural solutions. For most families I work with, their first impulse is to "escape into organization" by attempting to address emotional issues with structural fixes. They want to reconfigure boards, restructure shareholder agreements and the like. That pattern is replicated over and over through the book. These, I have found, are, in Adam Kahane's parlance, "power solutions to love problems". In my experience, the relational dynamics will undo the structural fixes almost every time. There are, however, interventions that are based on solid family theory that address the family dynamics head on and that, if successful, will result in forms (structures) that the family can make function. To end on a more positive note, I think they nail the fundamental patterns of conflict in family from both relational and issue perspectives.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Family Wars By Eleni This is an excellent account of wars and their outcomes in family firms! Besides some typographical errors it is very well written and very useful to the interested reader. I highly recommend it!

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Good work on the research By Gary Dale Cearley Gallo, Ford, Guinness, IBM, Gucci, Mondavi, Reliance and Addidas... Global brands? Before they were these brands they were family owned companies (or family run in the case of IBM). Authors Grant Gordon and Nigel Nicholson do a fairly decent job in their research of these family business as well as many others. They give summarized histories of the businesses germinating and taking off. They even give genealogical breakdowns of the families in question. But where they really score is that they have been able to analyze these situations on both an organizational behavior level as well as that of a psychological level. The authors are quick to point out in the beginning of this book that there are many advantages to being in a family run business. Decisions are made quicker. Conflicts can often tend to be resolved in a more efficient manner. The businesses are often more profitable and last longer than a "corporate" business, that is, with professional management and not family management. They also point out that family friction can be good for the business in certain instances. But it is the struggle for control that generally unwinds everything. The book itself is written in a very interesting style. It could pass for a professional business book, a university text book or a non-fiction book that is written for pleasure. I have to commend the authors on this - especially since this was a joint effort and not one man doing all of the written production. Throughout Family Wars we see the causes of the inter-family strife and are generally walked through the resolutions - and sometimes there really aren't any. Gordon and Nicholson show us the several models where familial business friction occurs: When the head of the family doesn't want to release control, sibling rivalry, disagreements in company direction, etc. It would seem that no matter what the background, nationality, era, product or business model these same issues tend to manifest themselves in family companies. That in and of itself lends to the mystique of this book.

Many of the world's most successful businesses are family owned. With this comes the threat of family bust-ups, sibling rivalry and petty jealousies. Family Wars takes you behind the scenes on a rollercoaster ride through the ups and downs of some of the biggest family-run companies in the world, showing how family in-fighting has threatened to bring about their downfall. Whether it's the Redstone's courtroom battles or the feud over Henry Ford's reluctance to let go of the reigns, the book reveals the origins, the extent and the final resolution of some of the most famous family feuds in recent history. Names you'll recognize include: the Gallo Family; the Guinness story; the Pathak family; and the Gucci family. An astonishing expose; of the way families do business and how arguments can threaten to blow a business apart, Family Wars also offers valuable advice on how such problems can be contained and solved.

From Booklist The authors, a family business executive and an academic, present case studies of famous family companies, including Koch Industries, Mondavi, IBM, Bata Shoe, The Dart Group, the Redstones, Guinnesses, Pritzkers, and Guccis. The authors provide lessons for understanding the warning signs of family conflicts and contend that the winners are those who recognize the problems early and find a fair resolution. They note that the root cause of family wars usually is the founder, who, while a great builder, can also be a great destroyer. Gordon and Nicholson conclude that the objective in dealing with family wars is to come out of the battle wiser, stronger, and with more discipline. Advice includes the ability to embrace change by recognizing that today's assumptions may not hold for tomorrow, understanding the impact of the evolving values of the surrounding culture, and achieving flexibility through open communication based on strong values and principles. Lessons from this excellent book apply primarily to family companies, although there is thoughtful leadership insight for other managers. --Mary Whaley ""Will inspire readers to institute processes for governance and communication that can prevent a feud from festering."" -- Family Business Magazine