



# The Time is NOW for your Rising Gen

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## THE FUTURE OF FAMILIES LIES IN THE ACTIONS OF THE NEXT GENERATION.

The FOX Learning Center takes on the formidable responsibility to represent the voice of that next generation. We also feel it is our duty to hold up a mirror to families, have difficult conversations, and speak courageously. We don't just tell families what they want to hear. We provide them feedback that will help them learn and grow. Our focus is multigenerational and multifaceted: increasing family knowledge, creating cohesion, elevating all five forms of family capital, and supporting our families to thrive for generations.

Allow me to speak boldly for a moment as I want to say something provocative. **Your good intentions may be harming the next generation.**

Over decades, my career has connected me with leading, forward-thinking families - families who care to raise responsible children, and stewards of wealth. FOX member families are exactly that way: mindful of their unique situation and focused on doing the right thing. Inevitably, no matter the family origins, size, sophistication, wealth, or generational stage, I hear different versions of this statement from family members when they speak about their rising generation members:

*"It's not their time."*

*"They aren't ready."*

*"They aren't old enough yet."*

*"We don't have roles for them."*

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I assure you, when my daughter is ready to drive, date, or move away from home, I might want to say those same things. I might momentarily wish to keep her protected in the bubble of my care and my home. I would have noble intentions. Yet, what I know to be true is that it's not always best for me to decide for her or overprotect her. My protection could prevent her from making her own mistakes, learning in her own way, carving her own path, surprising me with her successes, and inspiring me with her courage to do things differently. My good intentions could harm her.

"They aren't ready" means "we aren't ready." The rising gen is stepping forward into the unknown. Yet they still raise their hands and show up. Embrace and welcome that interest. It is a perplexing paradox that the most sophisticated families – those with a bias toward action – are often sabotaging engagement rather than seizing the perfect moment.

"It's not their time" may mean, "we will decide when and how we bring them into the family system." Easy as it would be, the rising gen is not lying in wait, ready for the moment to be tapped into family service. They may be more prepared than you know. Or they may not be fully prepared but instead are very curious, interested, and eager to learn. So let them fail forward and learn from resilience-building responsibilities.

Take it from families who waited too long – it's hard to get them to come back in. It is not easy to reignite the flame of engagement. The rising gen is actively living life, building careers, and starting families. If you wait too long, their plate may be full, and they will have established roots elsewhere. Trust me when I say: you would be better off struggling with your own readiness challenges than with the difficulties of simply getting their attention.

In Coventry Edwards-Pitt's book *Raised Healthy, Wealthy & Wise*, she identifies core markers for a successful launch of the next generation, including the ability to overcome setbacks and having a solid sense of self that is not wrapped up in issues related

to wealth. Preventing the rising gen from wealth education or family involvement delays the ability to develop resilience learned through setbacks and can further strain their relationship with the wealth. It undermines them and can be interpreted as a lack of trust.

FOX programs are designed utilizing leading industry expertise and informed by the collective voice of member families. We conduct research with members, study families' journeys, and extract valuable lessons from consulting engagements. We are an industry beacon, guiding, educating, and helping families and their trusted advisors to anticipate what's next. In my role, I have taken on the complex task of advocating for the voice of the rising gen, sharing their hopes, concerns, and struggles. In that service, I reviewed years of collected data from the rising generation, answering this question:

### **My biggest challenge as a member of the rising generation is...**

Below I share direct quotes from rising gen members, which will help you understand the pressures they feel, the interest they hold, and the questions they ask. Comprised of millennials and Gen Z, the rising generation impact is years from being felt or seen. For this curious group, certain themes arise, year over year. In each theme, consider how you would address these comments if your rising gen expressed them:

#### **DESIRE TO BELONG:**

- *"Finding where I belong in the family enterprise."*
- *"How involved do I need to be?"*
- *"The family patriarch was the one in charge, which one of us will that be."*

This message is repeated by the rising gen, expressed in many ways. According to our FOX research, role clarity and understanding expectations are top challenges. The sentiment remains that the rising gen wants both autonomy and belonging. They want to understand the roles available to them and the different paths to get there. Give them options, and choices.

### DESIRE TO BE HEARD

- *“Having a voice within the family office.”*
- *“Being heard and to develop skills to be a good steward in the future. There is very little encouragement for us to become involved even in small ways.”*

The rising gen may not yet have a seat at the table or a vote, but they would appreciate being heard or engaged in a forum to share ideas. Provide that through your junior boards, a rising gen task force, generational retreats, or next gen meetings. Welcome their voices and steward their participation.

### DESIRE TO LEARN

- *“Developing leadership skills to be an effective steward of wealth and becoming a wealth generator.”*
- *“Understanding the core of the business and having our generation not being too far removed from the actual part of the business that drives this whole engine.”*
- *“Understanding the complexities of investing and account management, engagement among my generation.”*

There is a lot to learn to be an educated and participating rising gen member in a family of wealth. The longer you wait to educate them, the longer it will take them to get up to speed, and the less time they will have. Normalize regular and consistent family learning, focusing on what the rising gen wants to learn and the family expectations.

### DESIRE FOR HARMONY & FAMILY COMMUNICATION

- *“Old-guard power dynamics and lack of open, honest dialogue around transition from older to younger generation.”*
- *“Getting information from older generations.”*
- *“Sibling dynamics for overseeing/managing the family office with some of us in (and others not) the executive committee.”*

It's clear why the number-one requested training topic from the rising gen is Negotiating, Skills, Conflict Resolution, and Consensus Building. They see struggles with previous generations or room for improvement. What are you doing to concentrate on family harmony and communication? Lack of emphasis in these areas is what leads to family breakdown.<sup>1</sup>

Esteemed psychotherapist and New York Times bestselling author Lori Gottlieb wrote in her Atlantic article [“How To Land Your Kid in Therapy”](#) that...

*“Could it be that by protecting our kids from unhappiness as children, we're depriving them of happiness as adults?” “In fact, by trying so hard to provide the perfectly happy childhood, we're just making it harder for our kids to actually grow up. Maybe we parents are the ones who have some growing up to do - and some letting go.”*

Don't live in the land of good intentions. Interestingly enough, the rising gen often cares about the same things as previous generations. They care about family longevity, governance, and wealth stewardship; they want to move into shared decision-making roles and make their mark – when the time is right and when they are prepared. They're sophisticated in their keen awareness of the importance of navigating family dynamics and building family cohesion. There is alignment in knowing what's important. They seek a chance to be involved and implement their new thinking. Edgar Dale's Cone of Learning Model teaches us that we remember 50% of what we see and hear. Model good engagement strategies for the rising gen. Invite them in. Share the pathways for meaningful engagement.

The time to engage the rising generation is now. **Ready or not, here they come.**

<sup>1</sup>Source: Koeberle-Schmid/Koners/Ledl, *Hinter den Kulissen: Firma, Familie, Führung*. KPMG/FIF-Studie, 2016



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Mindy Kalinowski Earley is Chief Learning Officer for Family Office Exchange (FOX). In her role, she fosters integrated learning programs for enterprise families and is responsible for developing the family learning community. She co-chairs the FOX Rising Gen program and serves as an outsourced Chief Learning Officer to FOX members. Mindy is inspired by helping people learn, grow, and discover how they will make personal and productive contributions, using their strengths and talents.

Mindy has held various roles in small and large family offices and has been responsible for creating and stewarding professional learning networks supporting human and intellectual capital. She has designed learning experiences that increase the knowledge base and enhance the life path of individuals while providing personalized support and coaching to help them meet their goals. As a Strong Interest Inventory facilitator with a certificate in Family Business Advising, she enjoys helping families and rising generation members navigate the unique world of family enterprise and family relationships by understanding that responsibility and intention pave a path to personal achievement and satisfaction. She has been featured in the New York Times, Family Business Magazine, Successful Generations podcast and is a regular speaker and facilitator. Mindy lives in Rockford, MI, with her husband, daughter, and Bernedoodle.



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