

Foreword

As I read *Talent Mindset*, I experienced a replay of many discoveries made while working with Stacy as my coach. My business is in its fourth generation of family leadership. I knew my great grandfather who came to the office to witness the company's progress until his death in his nineties. His quirks and passions are still imprinted on the business, 75 years after he created it. With Stacy's help, my team is aspiring to leverage the good things that are born from this evolution, namely trust, stewardship and integrity. At the same time, we see that we must bring out the latent boldness and ambition that are often subdued or abandoned in lieu of safety and conservatism, things that served the business well through challenges and change.

Having a business in your blood, the challenge can be in feeling worthy of big aspirations like deliberate growth, performance and talent that are thought to be found only in larger, more recognizable firms. The draw of *Talent Mindset* is that it speaks to an immensely under-served audience—the owners of middle-market businesses, who are often overlooked by the legions of business authors who seek to reach a larger audience by touting the successes or failures of mega corporations. Our unsung battles are more unique, complex and seemingly microscopic at times.

Middle-market businesses are anything but generic. They are, in fact, organic. Therefore, knowingly or not, we lead with an organic sense of leadership that is closer to the source of value-creation and deserves a different

approach. We don't need to, and indeed we should not, compare ourselves to mega corporations. We haven't traded entrepreneurialism for bureaucracy. Our leadership is based on personal choices, not a corporate formula. Talent Mindset is about reviving business owners' belief in themselves. It awakens us. And when applied, it empowers us.

Talent Mindset is a framework that is flexible, yet strictly values-based and, as such, is a real innovation. Having arrived in a position of leadership somewhat by virtue of genetics, leaders of family businesses are humble about their influence on the enterprise. Stacy's mantra of enhancing self-awareness, instilling a philosophy, implementing a sound system and ultimately building a strong bench are things we can all do. Stacy prods us to realize that we can be and must be great.

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