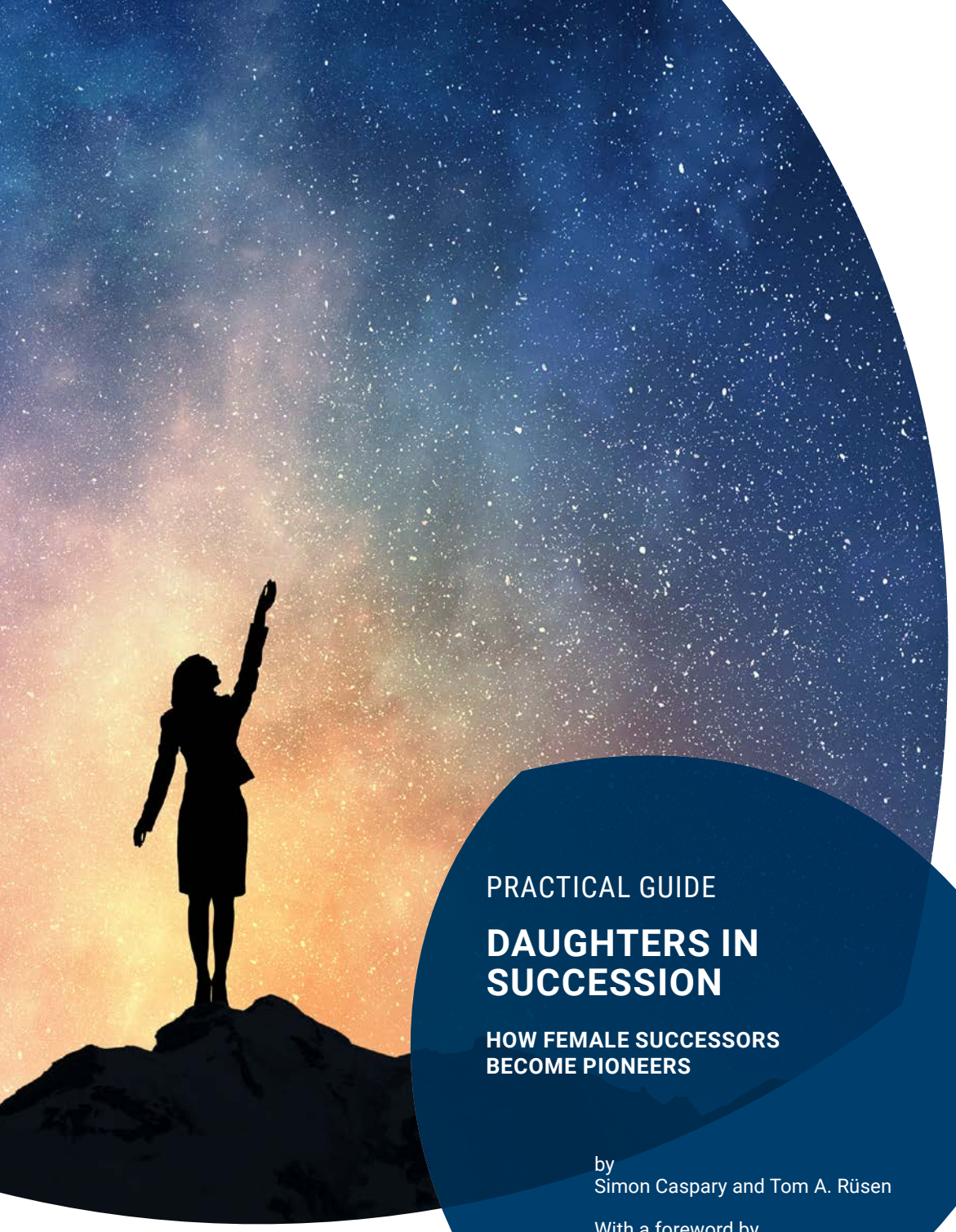

PRACTICAL GUIDE

DAUGHTERS IN SUCCESSION

HOW FEMALE SUCCESSORS BECOME PIONEERS

by
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Please note: Where this practical guide includes references to persons in the masculine, these apply equally to persons of any gender.

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FOREWORD

Family businesses are the backbone of our economy but, more than that, they represent a special set of values – one that combines entrepreneurial thinking with a sense of responsibility and a long-term perspective. The question of how these unique businesses are passed on from one generation to the next is of central importance – not only for the families themselves but also for society as a whole.

Succession is the lifeblood of our economy. Every year, more than half a million companies in Germany are due to undergo this transfer, and around 146,000 successions fail because no suitable successor can be found. This figure is alarming: if we are to secure the future of our economy, we urgently need to forge new paths and, above all, inspire more people to engage with business succession.

Our role models in succession have changed significantly over recent decades. Today, daughters assume leadership responsibilities as a matter of course, yet the path to business succession often presents them with specific challenges – whether from family expectations, the difficulties of balancing family and career, or the subtle influence of traditional role models. Women – and daughters in particular – offer enormous potential but are still often overlooked. That is why visibility, strong role models and encouragement are essential: only if they see diverse, rewarding and adaptable business succession models will more daughters have the confidence to take this path.

I am committed to promoting succession, whether within family businesses or through external takeovers. There are so many fantastic opportunities in Germany for the next generation to take on responsibility, continue a business and create something new. It is time for the outgoing generation – the pioneers – to involve their daughters more consciously in their plans for the future.

This guide makes an important contribution to this goal in the valuable insights it offers. It highlights not only the challenges but, above all, the opportunities presented by female succession. It encourages, inspires and puts daughters in the spotlight they deserve. Above all, it aims to help more women forge their own entrepreneurial path – with the support of their families, entrepreneurial drive and a clear awareness of the power of female succession.

Christina Diem-Puello
Entrepreneur and President of the Association of Women Entrepreneurs in Germany (VdU)

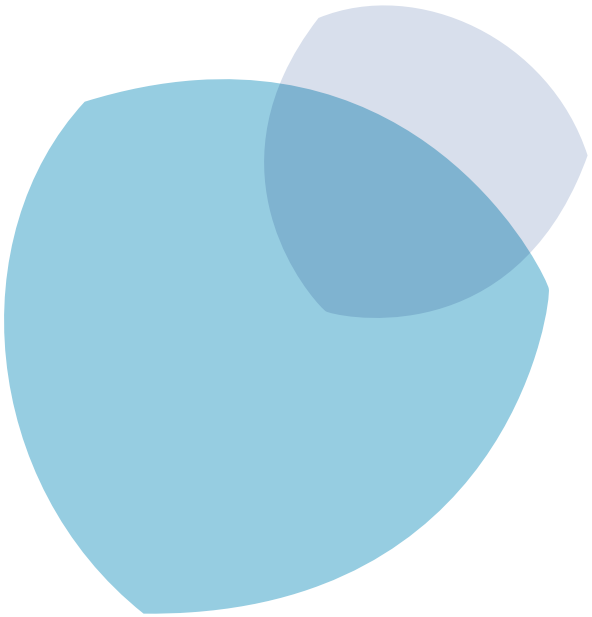
1 | INTRODUCTION: A STROKE OF LUCK, NOT A DESPERATE MEASURE

There appears to be a decline in the willingness to take over a family business. The reasons for this include a growing tendency in society towards individualism, the pursuit of careers more compatible with individual lifestyles, and the fact that many descendants prefer to follow their own path without constant scrutiny. At the same time, the underlying sense of obligation that descendants may once have felt to honour their parents' or ancestors' legacy by continuing their business or life's work is also weakening. Instead, succession is increasingly viewed as just one economic option among many others, and is often preceded by a lengthy decision-making and negotiation process between the parents and their children.[1]

Despite this general perceived decline in willingness to take over within families, more and more daughters are stepping into succession roles. Female succession and female entrepreneurship are also becoming increasingly prominent in public discourse.[2] As a result, female entrepreneurship is no longer viewed in terms of a deviation from societal norms to such an extent. Most notably, the growing media presence of female entrepreneurs is helping to shape and expand society's image of what entrepreneurship can look like.

Nevertheless, considerable scope remains for improvement in practice: the larger the business, the fewer women hold management positions.[3] This trend is confirmed by the AllBright Report, which shows that women make up only 8.3 per cent of management and executive board members in the 100 largest family businesses.[4] In businesses that are 100 per cent family-owned, the proportion of women in management is even lower, at just 4.8 per cent. More broadly, the 2024 survey shows that daughters are significantly underrepresented in so-called "positions of power" and are more commonly found in less influential committee roles, while male family members tend to occupy chairperson positions.[5]

Although succession can be highly demanding for successors of any gender, daughters often face additional challenges. A survey conducted in April 2025, during the 79th WIFU Forum on "Daughters in Succession", illustrates the specific issues encountered by daughters in the succession process (see Fig. 1).



[1] See Wilmes & Kammerlander (2023), p. 5; Rüsen (2022).
[2] See, for example, AllBright (2024); Kay (2023) and Otten-Pappas & Jäkel-Wurzer (2021).
[3] See Wilmes & Kammerlander (2023); Lorenzen & Block (2022).
[4] See AllBright (2022), p. 5. However, no distinction is made here as to whether the children are daughters; the proportion of women is considered in general terms.
[5] See AllBright (2024), p. 9.

Figure 1: Challenges of female succession[6]

As daughters continue today often to be the first female successor in the family business, their entry into management frequently marks a break with traditional patterns, including primogeniture[7], particularly when they are also the first woman from the business family to take on a top management role, for which no role models yet exist.[8] To be the first female successor represents a shift in tradition, both for the family and the business. It is not uncommon for such successors in senior leadership positions to encounter damaging prejudice against women – from customers, suppliers and sometimes even from long-serving executives. They may also face benevolent sexism[9], be patronised, or even infantilised[10].[11] There are still far too few female role models and too few established norms to make this scenario feel "normal".[12] Until the early 2000s, the idea of daughters taking over a business was more commonly viewed as an "exception" or "stopgap". The reasons historically given for this perspective are summarised in Figure 2.

In the past, the resistance encountered by daughters, or the perception of them as periphery to the long-term continuity of a family business, or merely temporary successors, was often justified in the following ways:

[6] Survey results in response to the question "What topics do I associate with 'daughters in succession'?" collected during the 79th WIFU Forum on Family Businesses, held in April 2025 on the theme of "Daughters in Succession". Events in this format have been organised by the WIFU Foundation regularly since 2009 to shed light on the unique aspects of female succession in family businesses.

[7] Primogeniture refers to an inheritance or succession principle in which male descendants, more distant male relatives, or sons-in-law are given clear precedence over daughters.

[8] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 138.

[9] This refers to denying a woman competence under the guise of care or "chivalry".

[10] This refers to treating women as though they are children or naïve – whether through language, tone, or content. Women may not be trusted with certain responsibilities, or matters are explained to them in an overly simplistic manner. A commonly cited example is "mansplaining", where a woman receives unsolicited explanations because a male counterpart assumes she lacks the ability to grasp the subject matter on her own.

[11] See Wilmes & Kammerlander (2023), pp. 7 ff.

[12] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 138.

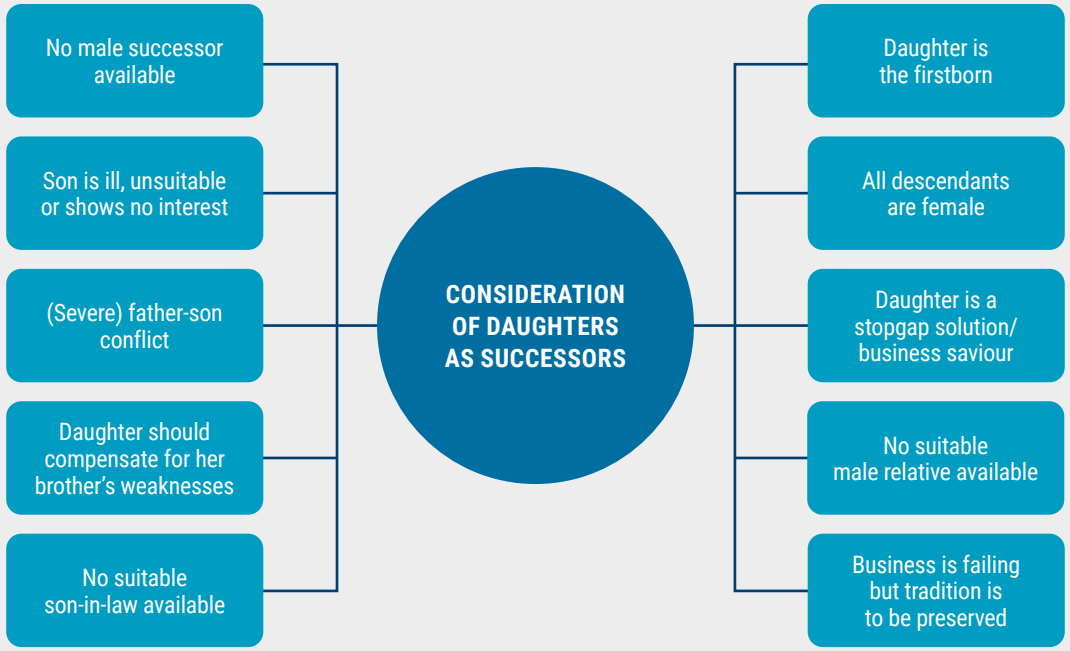


Figure 2: Reasons for considering daughters as successors until the early 2000s[13]

- Women are too risk-averse.
- Women are less physically resilient.
- Women have a social role centred on family and reproduction.
- Women are not interested in succession.
- Women should be protected from unpleasant experiences.
- Women lack leadership skills and competence.
- Women are less readily accepted by employees, customers, or suppliers.
- Women are unable to cope with the double burden of family and career.
- The business operates in an industry that is not typical for women, or the working environment is considered too harsh.

Rational economic arguments – for instance, the claim that women in management positions within family businesses are less successful or perform worse than men according to key performance indicators – are rarely mentioned, even though such criteria should be decisive in a business context.[14] As a result of women's social emancipation and the associated rise in their technical and professional qualifications, the outdated claim that women are less well-educated is no longer tenable. If a daughter has the same – or even better – qualifications, it is no longer possible to justify excluding her from consideration as a successor.[15]

[13] Own representation, based on research, coaching, and consulting conducted by the authors, as well as Otten-Pappas & Jäkel-Wurzer (2021), p. 19; Jäkel-Wurzer & Ott (2014), p. IX; Caspary (2010), p. 120 f.; Haubl & Daser (2006), p. 15.
[14] See Moog & Soost (2015), p. 32; Bundesweite Gründerinnenagentur (2008b), p. 21.
[15] See Haubl & Daser (2006), p. 15.

As a result of these changing social attitudes, automatic benefits of primogeniture and stereotypical role attributions are increasingly questioned. Succession decisions based solely on gender are seen as a waste of potential that could be of great benefit to a family business.[16] In light of the declining willingness to take over family businesses, business families can no longer afford to base such decisions on traditional gender roles. It is therefore legitimate to ask why 50 per cent of the succession potential is being ignored.[17] For the reasons outlined above, succession planning should be guided by individual ability and the principle of equal opportunity, placing competence above gender.[18]

The aim of this practical guide[19] is to provide readers with insights into the unique aspects and challenges that arise in the course of succession by daughters. It also offers daughters the opportunity to engage in practical reflections to help them navigate the ambivalent space between family, business, and ownership responsibility.

REFLECTION I[20]: DAUGHTERS BETWEEN TRADITION AND RENEWAL

- What are your personal motivations for or against succession in the family business?
- How do family expectations and your family's legacy influence your decision for or against succession?
- To what extent do you feel validated – or restricted – in your entrepreneurial role because of your gender?
- How would you assess your own leadership abilities, and what is this assessment based on?
- What stereotypes about women in leadership have you (perhaps unconsciously) internalised?
- How visible are female role models in your family, industry, or wider environment, and how do they influence you?
- Has the possibility of you, as a daughter, taking over the business been openly discussed within your family? If not, what steps could you take to initiate the conversation?
- What experiences have you had with sibling rivalry or gender-based inequality? How do you handle these situations?
- What structures or prejudices – either in the business or the family – would need to be dismantled for you to fully realise your succession ambitions?
- What do you need – professionally, emotionally, or structurally – in order to consciously and independently take on succession?

[16] See Caspary (2010), p. 121.
[17] See Caspary (2010).
[18] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 137.
[19] The insights in this practical guide are based on experiences from the WIFU Forum for Family Businesses "Daughters in Succession", hosted by the WIFU Foundation, as well as from personal counselling and advisory work with female successors.
[20] To maximise the value of the learning process, the questions in this guide should ideally be answered in writing.

2 | CHALLENGES FOR DAUGHTERS IN SUCCESSION

Although many family businesses are characterised by stability and continuity, succession represents for many their Achilles' heel,[21] as it is in this phase that both the business and the family are at their most vulnerable. Existing structures are dismantled and reconfigured, and relationships must be clarified and redefined.[22] These processes inevitably impact the prevailing culture.[23] While the senior generation experiences a change in status, so too do the successors[24] in that they relinquish their former status and assume a new one as managing director or owner. This transition can be especially challenging as they leave behind a familiar way of life to take on a new role that is not yet tangible or initially falls short of their expectations. It is therefore not surprising that the decision to take over the leadership of a business is often considered very carefully by potential successors. It is generally accepted that assuming a management role comes with significant demands, as is typical for any senior position, but what does this responsibility look like when the young managing director of one of the region's largest employers finds themselves under constant public scrutiny? To what extent is there room for personal freedom when choices such as their clothes, their car, or their friends become the subject of public discussion and critique?[25] Before joining the business or deciding to take over, successors should be clear about:

- what they (really) want
- what motivates them to take on the role
- what skills they already possess
- what they still need to develop, and
- what defines a satisfying and successful outcome for them.

However, daughters face specific challenges in terms of aligning their own needs and life plans with the demands of the business. Figure 3, below, outlines a range of business-related topics, along with three areas that are particularly relevant for 'Daughters in Succession'. These three will be explored in more detail below.

Figure 3: Finding compatibility and consistency (own representation)

[21] See Otten-Pappas & Jäkel-Wurzer (2021), p. 4.
[22] See Layher & Wiedemann (2015), p. 60.
[23] See Caspary (2024).
[24] See Haubl & Daser (2006), p. 19.
[25] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022).

2.1 | INFLUENCES ON THE SELF-CONCEPT OF DAUGHTERS

Whether a daughter ultimately decides to take over the family business is not determined at any single specific point in time, but rather through a process that begins at birth. It is, therefore, all the more problematic that succession is often only addressed at the point of the handover itself.[26] Socialisation and upbringing have a significant impact on the self-image and life aspirations of daughters, particularly in relation to their potential role as a future successor. Of particular importance here is the "formative function of the family business"[27] and the role it plays within the family system. This includes how parents introduce their daughters to entrepreneurship, whether and how they involve them in business matters, and the way they manage or speak about the business.[28] Parents act as role models for their daughters, and how they embody entrepreneurial behaviour and nurture their daughters' interest in the business exerts a strong influence.[29]

One reason why daughters may not consider succession is that they are often involved less frequently – or less deeply – in business matters than their brothers. This exclusion deprives them of valuable resources needed for entrepreneurial socialisation.[30]

The family mandate for (non-)succession does not need to be explicitly stated; it can also be perceived implicitly. Parents convey many subtle messages that shape their children's self-image and the role models they internalise. For instance, daughters may sense early on that their parents would prefer someone else to take over the business – perhaps because the daughter is not considered the "right" gender, or because the parents do not believe she is capable of continuing the business. These perceptions can lead to emotional wounds that persist – often unconsciously – into adulthood.[31] This touches on two fundamental systemic principles:

1. **the right to belong, and**
2. **the right to recognition and appreciation**.[32]

Daughters may, therefore, experience exclusion from an early age and may not be acknowledged – or confirmed – as full members of both the family and the business in terms of identity and status. This can lead to inner conflict, insecurity, resistance, and tension during the succession process. Another reason why daughters may not assert their claim to succession lies in a fear of rejection and the associated emotional pain and disappointment – often rooted in experiences from childhood and adolescence. Children are also acutely aware of the dynamics between their parents: if they perceive that the business is the only remaining bond between their parents and that there is little emotional connection otherwise, this can trigger anxiety about the possible breakdown of the family. In response, daughters may suppress or deny their emotional needs when these needs conflict with the primacy of the business, resulting in a pseudo-harmony built on self-denial.[33]

Family history also plays a significant role in shaping daughters' views and decisions, creating the notion of an "ancestral legacy".[34] Daughters inherit not only on a material level but also psychologically and historically: those from families with a long lin-

[26] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 138.
[27] See Caspary (2010), p. 46.
[28] What is decisive here is whether daughters are encouraged – particularly by their fathers – to take over the business, or whether they are "discouraged" from an early age. Remarks by fathers, grandfathers, or uncles such as "business management is a man's job" can plant early seeds of doubt, leading female descendants to conclude, even in childhood, that they are not meant to take over the business.
[29] See Caspary (2024); Caspary (2020).
[30] See Caspary (2010), p. 126.
[31] See Haubl & Daser (2006), p. 34.
[32] See Bischop (2010), pp. 23 ff.
[33] See Haubl & Daser (2006), p. 35.

eage often develop a specific attitude influenced by that lineage towards their own lives. However, tensions, conflicts, or even traumas may also originate in family history.[35] This history can become particularly burdensome if each generation has success stories to boast of, or if previous (male) generations are idealised.[36] Parents' own experiences may also play a role: mothers who were denied professional success or the opportunity to pursue qualifications may unconsciously transfer their unfulfilled aspirations to their daughters, expecting them to achieve the professional success they themselves were denied. Conversely, it is also common for mothers who chose – or were compelled – not to pursue careers in management to expect their daughters to follow the same traditional path. If a daughter decides instead to follow in her father's footsteps, this may lead to conflict with the mother, who may feel personally attacked or that her own life choices are being devalued.[37]

All these dynamics can place enormous pressure on daughters to conform, endure, and perform as they strive to meet the often unconscious expectations placed on them out of love for their parents. This can result in daughters developing a false self-image. They may strive to meet an idealised parental or familial expectation, even attempting to replace the son their parents never had.[38] Researchers Jäkel-Wurzer and Ott describe this phenomenon as a "recognition trap"[39]. In such cases, daughters feel a strong need for the recognition of both their father and mother. If a rift emerges during the succession process or within the business, this recognition can be lost permanently, with the result that daughters may avoid taking necessary or appropriate steps within the business out of fear of losing their parents' love and approval.

Children naturally internalise their parents' worldview, perceiving it as "normal" simply because they were brought up with it. For this reason, reflecting on our own socialisation is a crucial first step in identifying and resolving our own – or inherited – life model or identity, our inner insecurities or unconscious resistance, and this should happen at the latest during the succession process. Conflicts that arise during succession may also be rooted in the childhood or adolescence of the successor.[40] Reflection II, therefore, offers an opportunity to examine our own influences, experiences, and family history.

[34] See Caspary (2023), p. 39.
[35] See Caspary (2023), pp. 38 ff.
[36] Against this backdrop, family and business chronicles must be critically re-examined, as they often focus on the life work of male ancestors while overlooking the contributions of their female counterparts. Closer investigation reveals that in many long-standing, multi-generational family businesses, entrepreneurship would have long since come to an end without the involvement of the wives and widows of male heads of families, many of whom were absent or killed in war. The key entrepreneurial achievement of securing the transition to the next generation, often at a time when the successors were still minors, is frequently overlooked or inadequately acknowledged. As a result, female ancestors receive insufficient recognition in the historical narratives of business families for their role in preserving the transgenerational legacy. In recent years, there has been a growing trend to revise such chronicles – often prompted by younger members of business families – to more accurately reflect the contributions of women in family business histories.
[37] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 138.
[38] See Haubl & Daser (2006), pp. 16/34.
[39] See Jäkel-Wurzer & Ott (2014), p. 11.
[40] See Caspary (2024).

REFLECION II[41]: YOUR OWN SELF-CONCEPT

- Which experiences and influences from your family and the business have particularly shaped you – both positively and negatively? What have you developed or learned as a result?
- Which qualities might you not have developed without those influences or experiences?
- What (unspoken) messages and expectations have shaped your self-image, and where might they clash with your own vision of life? How do you deal with this?
- What role does your womanhood play in the question of succession – in your family's perception, in your own self-image, and in how you relate to role models or gendered expectations? Where have you encountered moments of discouragement?
- What is the "power of stories" conveyed about your female ancestors? How are the founder's wife, grandmothers and other women in the family portrayed within the business context? Where and how are they spoken about?
- How did you experience your parents in relation to the business? What was positive? What was negative? What would you want to do differently – and what would need to happen to make that possible?
- What role does your mother play in your succession decision? Do you feel supported by her? Are you afraid that she may feel that your decision challenges her own life model? Do you sense she has given you a "hidden mission" to put right a past injustice on her behalf?
- Where do you compromise and let others make decisions for you? How does that feel – and how could you change it?
- When you reflect on your family history, what fills you with pride? Is there anything you find burdensome? How do you handle that – and how does it make you feel?

[41] Partially taken from Caspary (2023), pp. 36 ff.

2.2 | SHAPING THE PARTNERSHIP

A stable relationship is an important – and often underestimated – resource for female successors. However, daughters from business-owning families tend to face greater scrutiny when choosing a partner than those from non-entrepreneurial backgrounds. Tensions may arise when the partner the daughter chooses is not one her parents believe is "right" for the business. Nonetheless, many daughters find themselves asking how – or whether – their partner would fit into the family business.[42] They may also doubt whether a partner is truly interested in them as a person, or merely sees them as a "good match" due to their family background. These concerns are often exacerbated when the daughter's own family fuels this line of thinking.[43]

Female successors may also face jealousy from their partners, especially if work commitments lead them to spend considerable time with their father or other family members in the business, if the business is consistently prioritised over personal time, or if business matters dominate private conversations. While this work-life imbalance is a common strain in many relationships, male partners often feel particularly challenged by a reversal of traditional gender expectations. It is important – especially in the period of succession – that the successor (and her partner) recognises that this process requires both time and energy. Just like their male counterparts, female successors must familiarise themselves with the technical aspects, cultural dynamics, and structural organisation of the business, including workflows, responsibilities, and internal processes (see also Fig. 3).[44] Simultaneously, family-related issues and potential conflicts must be addressed and navigated. Especially in the early months, this intense learning and adjustment phase can be overwhelming, making it difficult for the successor to manage the influx of information or to maintain personal balance. This is precisely when a supportive partner is essential – someone who is willing to take a step back and provide the emotional and practical support needed for the successor to grow confidently into her new role. During this phase, there is often little space for private concerns, and a great deal of understanding is required to sustain the relationship under its new pressures.

As in all successions, it is crucial to have an open discussion with your partner in advance about the potential impact the succession may have on your relationship. It is important to clarify both partners' expectations and needs, and to seek mutual understanding – particularly if, at least in the initial phase, more time and energy must be devoted to the business and the business family. Even the issue of which family name to adopt after marriage should be approached with care. It is not uncommon for traditional expectations on the part of the male partner to emerge here: husbands may struggle with the idea of adopting the successor's surname, especially when that name also represents the family business.

In the long term, daughters should establish clear boundaries between their romantic relationships, the dynamics within their parental family, and the family business. In business families, the lines between business and personal life are often blurred. The success of the relationship will therefore depend, in part, on how well the couple can create a protected space for intimacy and personal connection.[45] Partners play a vital role as sources of support, especially when it comes to discussing business-related matters or offering an external perspective in decision-making. It is often beneficial to involve them in these processes. However, there is also a risk that their role as a sparring partner could become dominant – potentially shifting the dynamic of the relationship away from a focus on mutual emotional needs. How female entrepreneurs structure and shape their romantic relationships can therefore have a significant influence on how successfully they manage the balance between leading a business and maintaining a fulfilling family life.[46]

Despite progress in emancipation and gender equality, some partners may still struggle – particularly over the long term – with a reversal of traditional gender roles. This is especially true for daughters who are actively involved in the family business. A partner's ego can be bruised when his wife

[42] See Haubl & Daser (2006), p. 49.
[43] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 138.
[44] See Caspary (2024).
[45] See Haubl & Daser (2006), p. 50.
[46] See Otten-Pappas & Jäkel-Wurzer (2021), p. 33.

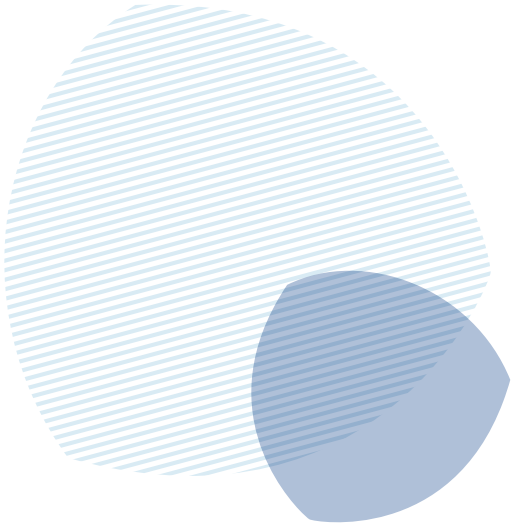
is in the public eye due to her entrepreneurial position. This dynamic can be further complicated by any significant disparity in wealth, particularly as cultural norms still largely position men as the primary earners. The notion that women "marry up"[47] – gaining social status through marriage – remains deeply rooted in (German) society. The idea that men might do the same is not yet widely accepted, nor is there enough cultural precedent to shift public perception. The traditional role of the male as breadwinner and provider remains strongly internalised. In an effort to cope, some men may subconsciously attempt to reassert their dominance by devaluing their partner and her achievements, behaviour, or even her femininity. Experience shows that openly addressing these issues early in the relationship can be helpful. Honest conversations can normalise these challenges and foster a healthier, more balanced dynamic between the partners.

Choosing a partner can also be particularly complex for daughters, as their father often serves – consciously or unconsciously – as a role model and may be projected onto their choice of partner. In some cases, the father, as a successful entrepreneur, becomes a reference figure against which potential partners are measured. While this may appear natural, it carries the risk of fostering a competitive dynamic between the partners – especially when both have entrepreneurial responsibilities but cannot both be given equal priority in the long term. Once children enter the picture, both modern and traditional role expectations tend to emerge, particularly when the question arises of who will take on primary childcare responsibilities. If the male partner decides to put his career on hold for the sake of the children, he may experience a form of "loss of face" – particularly in his own social or professional circles – as this is still not widely seen as a given, nor always respected. Men who assume traditional caregiving roles previously taken on by female family members (such as child-rearing) may even be perceived as "unmanly" by the daughter's family circle (including parents, siblings, or friends) and consequently devalued. This denial of their masculinity can, in turn, place significant strain on the relationship.[48] For this reason, it is vital that before starting a family, partners engage in open discussions about the distribution of responsibilities they foresee, the implications of their respective role models, and their career plans.[49] When issues such as relationship structure, pregnancy, or childcare are not addressed but are instead postponed or neglected, they can become a burden or even a barrier, not just for the family but also for the business. Numerous divorce cases involving female successors known to the authors indicate that a failure to sufficiently clarify these factors in advance contributes significantly to the breakdown of the marriages.

Another key issue – essential if the parties are to avoid endangering the future of the business – is the prenuptial agreement. For partners who do not come from business families, however, such agreements can seem unsettling or difficult to understand. They may even raise doubts about the seriousness of the relationship on the part of the woman. While prenuptial agreements are essential, they are often perceived as unromantic and can quickly cast a shadow over the relationship, presenting emotional and relational challenges. Female successors often face more scrutiny in this respect than their male counterparts, as prenuptial agreements make it especially apparent who holds greater economic power. This dynamic can become even more complex in intercultural relationships – a trend that is increasingly observed as a result of globalisation, with many daughters forming relationships during international studies, internships, or employment abroad. In such cases, the new son-in-law may come from a country with different cultural norms or an entirely different legal understanding of marriage. Here, differences in gender role expectations and the division of responsibilities between men and women must be considered with particular care.[50] When entering an international relationship, it is crucial to clarify which matrimonial law applies to the marriage and whether prenuptial agreements are valid and enforceable in the partner's home country.[51] Another potential "relationship killer" is the so-called exit tax. If the daughter wishes to relocate abroad to live with her partner, she may face substantial tax liabilities, which in extreme cases could threaten the financial stability or even the continued existence of the family business.[52]

[47] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 139.
[48] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 138 f.
[49] See Otten-Pappas & Jäkel-Wurzer (2021), p. 35.
[50] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 140.
[51] For details, see Schreiber & Kögel (2024).
[52] See Rüsen (2022). For more details, see Schreiber & Kögel (2024).

The above clearly demonstrates just how much influence the business can have on the happiness and well-being of a daughter's partner. For this reason, it is crucial to engage in open and honest discussions with the partner at an early stage. Open, respectful communication is key. If these issues are left to resolve themselves or remain unspoken due to fear of the consequences, they will create strain on the successor herself, on the couple's relationship, and, ultimately, on the business itself. Tensions may quietly build over time and then erupt with such intensity that the relationship may not survive.



REFLECTION III: SHAPING THE PARTNERSHIP

- What expectations do you and your partner have regarding the division of roles, careers, and status – and how well are you able to communicate openly and honestly about these issues?
- How do you respond to the possibility that your partner may feel insecure about your status, wealth, or role within the business?
- How can you protect your relationship and establish clear boundaries between business responsibilities and private life? What can you and your partner do together to achieve this?
- What internal or external influences (e.g., from your family of origin) have shaped your choice of partner? How do these influence your desired relationship model? Are they supportive or a hindrance?
- Have you and your partner already discussed prenuptial agreements and legal matters, or do you avoid these topics for fear of conflict? Why? What would it take for you to initiate this conversation?
- Are you prepared to have difficult discussions – about having children, career sacrifices, asset management, or role expectations – before tensions arise? If not, what is holding you back, and what or who could help support you?
- How can you involve your partner in business matters without compromising their role as your life companion?

2.3 | DAUGHTERS CAUGHT BETWEEN THE ROLES OF BUSINESSWOMAN AND MOTHER

One of the greatest challenges faced by daughters is reconciling motherhood with business leadership. Despite progress in gender equality, many still experience a conflict between taking on an operational leadership role and their desire to have children. They are therefore faced with the fundamental – and entirely legitimate – question of how motherhood can be made compatible with a leadership position.[53] Although traditional gender roles are slowly evolving – with childcare no longer falling solely to women – daughters often find themselves in a double bind where they feel they cannot fully do justice to either role. This results in an "either/or" mindset, when what is truly needed is a "both/and" solution. Driven by high personal expectations, many daughters risk stretching themselves to breaking point: they want to be excellent entrepreneurs and dedicated mothers – even though business tasks could potentially be delegated, and childcare shared or supported. Yet asking for support is something many women still find difficult. Furthermore, in German society in particular, women who seek to combine a career with motherhood are still often labelled as "Rabenmutter" or bad mothers.[54] A daughter may also worry that, after the birth of a child, she will not be able to devote as much time to the business as her predecessor did – or as he, perhaps unconsciously, expects of her.

Unfortunately, daughters sometimes forget that they may also want to have children – a consideration that should be addressed at an early stage. There are documented cases of daughters who, in line with the model of a "good son", took on the succession and continued the business, only to later realise – often abruptly – that they had reached an age where having children was difficult or no longer possible. This realisation can be painful, particularly when it becomes clear that they will not be able to pass the business on to their own children. Daughters must therefore decide for themselves the right time to have children. Should they wait until everything in the business is settled? What happens if their "window of opportunity" closes before the right partner has been found?[55] This situation is particularly critical in succession processes that are turbulent or insufficiently structured; here, there is an increased risk of childlessness or the postponement of desired children.[56] Succession planning for female family members must therefore take a more "holistic" approach and be systematically aligned with family planning. In contrast, this issue tends to place far less pressure on male successors.[57] As Figure 4 (pp. 18/19) illustrates, a development plan for a female successor remains incomplete if it does not account for her potential desire to have children. Although this is a deeply personal life decision, it has a very real impact on the ability to lead a business and should be considered on an equal footing with other steps in any development plan.

Fathers and senior family members are often unaware of potential successors' desire to have children, or the need for this to be compatible with business responsibilities, especially if there have been no female successors in previous generations. Typically, they have no solutions to offer in this regard, meaning that the daughters themselves must raise and address the issue proactively. Interestingly, mothers are rarely helpful allies in such situations. They may perceive their daughters' approach as a rejection of their own life model and

[53] See Jäkel-Wurzer (2023), p. 199.

[54] In an international comparison, it is striking that this term and the attitude behind it are particularly persistent in Germany. While other countries have long since come to terms with working mothers, German women still fight against this moral condemnation. This demonstrates how historical images of women still shape social norms.

[55] See Rüsen (2022).

[56] See Haubl & Daser (2006), p. 51.

[57] From their coaching experience, the authors know how overwhelming it must be for female successors in their twenties to plan not only their education and career but also future children and, if necessary, even discuss this with their partner. A high degree of sensitivity is required when addressing this issue.

feel personally challenged by it. It is not uncommon for female successors to report that their fathers are more understanding than their mothers when it comes to creating a new model that seeks to balance operational leadership in the business with motherhood. In such cases, it is often more helpful to seek support from other female successors who have been through a similar experience, ideally within one's own network.

This situation can also cause conflicting emotions within the senior generation. On the one hand, they want the family line to continue, not least because it helps to secure the next generation of entrepreneurs. On the other hand, their primary focus remains on the business and its operations, and they have set clear expectations regarding their daughter's leadership role and responsibilities. "My daughter doesn't want to establish the branch in Brazil because she wants to have a child? Why can't she leave the child with a nanny?" Or "She's leaving the sales meeting because she needs to breastfeed? Is that really necessary? Doesn't the business come first?"[58] These tensions must be addressed directly by daughters: When am I a good daughter – in your eyes and in mine? Is it when I step into an operational leadership role? When I prioritise raising my children? Or when I try to do both?[59]

By its very nature, a business is often fundamentally family-unfriendly. The challenge for daughters is to change that – to make the business more family-compatible. This applies to male successors too, as their partners are increasingly less willing to accept them working late into the night. However, the issue tends to carry far more weight and significance for daughters.

The good news is that daughters at the helm of a business have the power to shape the structure of its management themselves. The appeal of intra-family succession for daughters often lies in the entrepreneurial freedom it provides – particularly the freedom to organise their everyday working life on their own terms. Family businesses, in particular, offer the opportunity for personal engagement and fulfilment, a close connection to the business, and the ability to directly influence its strategic direction and long-term success.[60] Thanks to their leadership role, female entrepreneurs are in a position to design business structures that enable a meaningful balance between family and professional life, without having to make drastic compromises in either.[61] Successors in family businesses are therefore often better placed to craft a life model that suits them, as self-employment and entrepreneurship offer greater flexibility when it comes to aligning career and family with the family life cycle.[62] Although a family business demands a high level of commitment, daughters have the opportunity to adapt it to their personal circumstances. However, doing so requires them to emancipate themselves from their parents' influence and to critically reflect on and redefine the role models they inherited early on. Since female successors are still often subject to the stereotype of being the "caring mother"[63], it is essential that they reflect on their own expectations – as well as those imposed by society – and consciously define these for themselves.[64]

[58] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 139.
[59] See Rüsen (2022).
[60] See Caspary (2010), p. 18.
[61] See Jäkel-Wurzer et al. (2017), p. 3.
[62] See Caspary (2010), p. 89.
[63] See Otten-Pappas & Jäkel-Wurzer (2021), p. 38.
[64] See Otten-Pappas & Jäkel-Wurzer (2021), p. 38.

Figure 4 presents an example of a development plan for a successor, taken from coaching practice. It demonstrates how the succession process can be structured through the use of alternative scenarios (Plans A, B, and C). This kind of development plan provides the successor with both orientation and a sense of security when considering entry into the family business. It widens the perspective on potential paths, highlights key milestones, and makes visible the dependencies and interrelationships involved. This approach strengthens the successor's ability to realistically assess opportunities

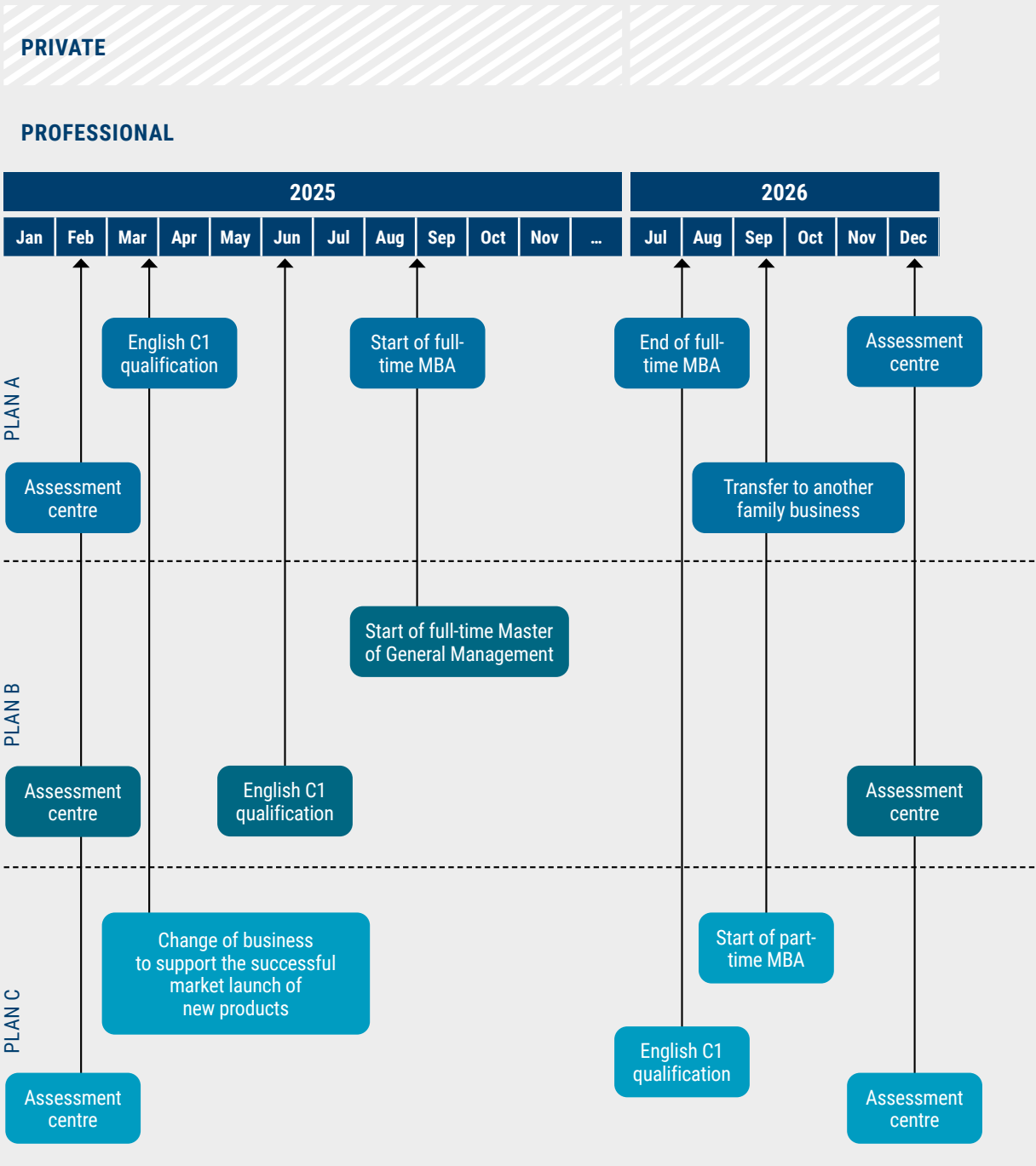
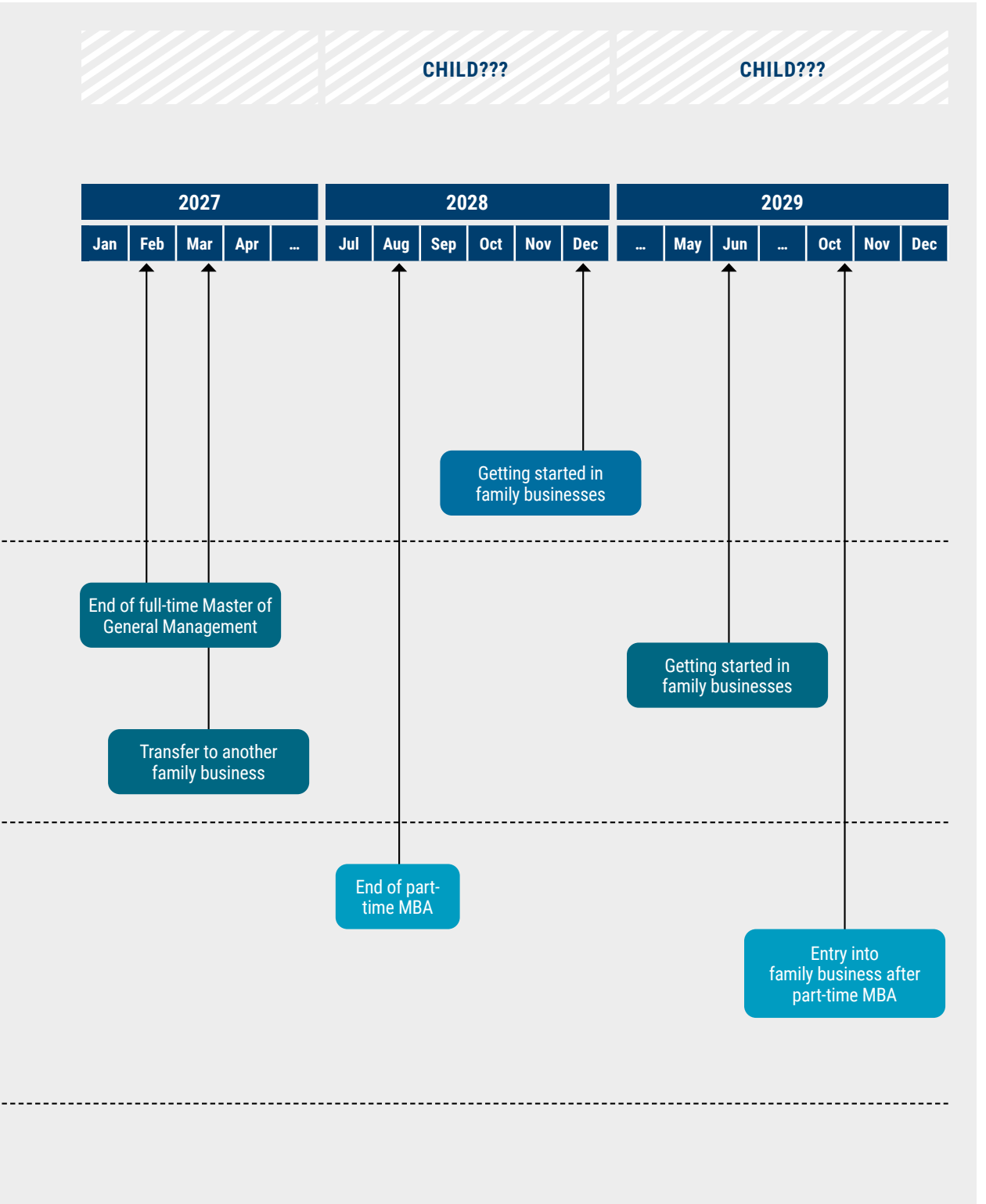


Figure 4: Development plan for a successor in preparation for joining the family business (own illustration)

and risks, and to reflect on them in dialogue with their family or partner. It offers clarity around personal priorities and creates additional room for manoeuvre, ultimately enabling more informed and confident decision-making. For both generations, a development plan of this kind delivers a realistic, structured, and flexible vision for the future. It helps reduce uncertainty while preserving individual freedom of choice, including in relation to the desire to start a family.



Unlike in traditional leadership or role models, female successors should re-evaluate their needs and values in relation to balancing family and business, adapt them individually, and expect the same of their parents, partners, and employees. They should also structure their lives and work according to their own ideas. This may include, for example:

- flexible working time models
- flexible childcare arrangements
- a team-oriented leadership style
- an equal partnership
- a functional management structure
- shared responsibility in both family and business
- leadership with a co-managing director (tandem model)
- cultural development in relation to traditional role models.[65]

Networks also play a vital role when attempting to balance family life and entrepreneurship. These include not only the successor's partner, but also nursery staff, schools, the successor's parents, and other female entrepreneurs.[66] Such support networks inevitably promote a shift in thinking and create an opportunity to challenge and move beyond traditional gender-specific role patterns – including entrenched ideas of how corporate leadership should look – and reshape them in line with contemporary values. Particularly in family businesses, this may involve building structures and a culture that align with new expectations and are, as a result, more appealing to female employees.

REFLECTION IV: DAUGHTERS CAUGHT BETWEEN THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEUR AND MOTHER

- What internal and societal expectations shape your role model or self-image as both a mother and an entrepreneur? How can you prevent yourself from becoming overwhelmed?
- What forms of support (e.g., flexible working models, co-managing directors, nannies, family, partners, external assistance or networks) can you draw upon to balance family life and entrepreneurship? How can you implement this in practical terms? What is needed to make it work?
- How can you establish a new style of leadership and corporate culture that enables compatibility while meeting business demands? Which values and needs matter most to you in your dual role as mother and entrepreneur, and how can you clearly and transparently communicate these to your family, partner, and employees?

[65] See Rüsen (2022); Otten-Pappas & Jäkel-Wurzer (2021), p. 38 f.
[66] See Jäkel-Wurzer & Ott (2014), p. 30; for more details, see Wilmes & Kammerlander (2023).

3 | SUCCESS FACTORS FOR THE SUCCESSION OF DAUGHTERS

During a succession process, female successors may find themselves in situations where they need to assert themselves. Succession has far-reaching consequences – not only for the successor's own family, the business and its employees, but also for suppliers, customers and other stakeholders. This creates a range of demands and expectations, the coordination of which can be very draining and place significant pressure on the successor. Early succession planning is therefore essential to minimise the risks associated with the handover.[67] Precisely because succession is highly individual, off-the-shelf templates and standardised approaches soon reach their limits. Succession in family businesses comes with numerous pitfalls, as entrepreneurial and – above all – family dynamics must be taken into account: "There are traditions, hopes, aversions, desires, demands, fears, talents, role models, indifference and much more that, taken together, determine the success or failure of the succession."[68]

Figure 5 below outlines eight key success factors that daughters, in particular, should take into consideration throughout the succession process. These themes were identified by female entrepreneurs and proved valuable in guiding them through their own successions.

Figure 5: Success factors for female succession (own illustration)

[67] See also the "Witten Phase Model of Succession" (Groth et al., 2020).
[68] See Rüsen & Nadler (2022), p. 138.

Table 1 lists the core issues for each success factor.

SUCCESS FACTOR	TOPICS
Personal attitude and self-image	➔ Develop self-confidence, courage and perseverance. ➔ Maintain curiosity, openness, and a willingness to learn. ➔ Recognise and make use of your own strengths. ➔ Follow your own path and make your own decisions. ➔ Stay true to yourself and invest in your personal development. ➔ Allow yourself to make mistakes and learn from them (embrace a culture of learning from error). ➔ Define and stand up for your own values, goals, and life plans. ➔ Make a conscious and independent decision about your career path rather than acting simply out of a sense of duty. ➔ Actively drive your personal growth (e.g., through coaching, seminars, or hands-on experience). ➔ Give yourself the time to grow into your new role.
Cooperation with the senior generation (SenGen) and distribution of roles	➔ Communicate with your parents on an equal footing. ➔ Take on clear and defined responsibilities. ➔ Structure the succession through a time-limited tandem model[69] with a clearly defined division of roles and an explicit exit strategy for the senior generation (SenGen). ➔ Establish binding role definitions and responsibilities between yourself and the SenGen. ➔ Step out of the subordinate role and meet the SenGen as an entrepreneur in your own right. ➔ Define the role of the SenGen in the post-succession phase. ➔ Present a united front externally; implement systematic, bilateral feedback discussions to reflect critically and constructively on the cooperation (external moderation may be useful). ➔ Separate family and business matters by scheduling regular senior-junior meetings – both in the business and in private settings. ➔ Set clear boundaries for the SenGen's involvement in the business, in line with the agreed handover strategy. ➔ Resolve conflicts respectfully, understanding the emotional attachment of the SenGen (here, too, it may help to involve a mutually trusted moderator). ➔ Support the SenGen in “learning to let go”[70] and discuss meaningful post-handover roles, such as an advisory function.

[69] The duration of the tandem period, i.e., the time that the transferor and transferee spend together in the business, is crucial in shaping the transfer of responsibility. During this time, knowledge and networks are transferred from the transferor to the successor, and preparations are made for the outgoing executive's departure and the transfer of shares (see Otten-Pappas & Jäkel-Wurzer, 2021, p. 22).

[70] Outgoing leaders may experience grief during the handover process. If they are unable to let go, this has a significant impact on the success of the handover. See Caspary, Rüsen & Kleve (2025) for more information.

SUCCESS FACTOR	TOPICS
Handover and succession process	➔ Plan the succession process early and in a structured manner, defining clear responsibilities and milestones. ➔ Set a realistic timetable for the handover and define the end of the tandem phase. ➔ Formalise the succession/handover with watertight contracts; ensure that the transfer of responsibility is clearly defined with agreed milestones. ➔ Agree sibling arrangements (e.g., division of roles, waivers). ➔ Proactively seek and maintain contact with other successors, mentors, and industry peers. ➔ Take inspiration from others but pursue your own path, remaining open to new perspectives. ➔ Make clear family agreements regarding shares, responsibilities, and expectations. ➔ Clarify shareholding arrangements early to secure majorities. ➔ Define shared rules and decision-making processes with siblings, especially when responsibilities are shared; outline a clear conflict resolution strategy (see next success factor). ➔ Align family interests with business goals to avoid tension. ➔ Document binding succession and exit arrangements in writing. ➔ Avoid prolonged transitional phases where you are seen as the successor but lack full authority or shareholding. ➔ Establish contingency plans and clear guidelines, including for tandem or sibling models. ➔ Ensure that contracts are professionally drafted, ideally involving neutral third parties. ➔ Conduct a handover ceremony, e.g., a firm celebration where the senior generation is formally thanked and you introduce yourself in your new role and set out your vision, leaving no doubt that you are now the central figure.
Communication and conflict resolution in family and business	➔ Communicate openly with all parties involved. ➔ Show empathy and practise perspective-taking. ➔ Encourage a culture of open dialogue, even in the face of differing views. ➔ Establish a constructive debate culture and address conflicts early. ➔ Approach disputes objectively and constructively while protecting relationships (“tough on the issue, soft on the person”). ➔ Set out a defined process for handling dissent and ensure clear conflict-management protocols to preserve decision-making capacity.[71] ➔ Develop a culture of appreciative dialogue and formalise agreements; build your communication skills early on. ➔ Take responsibility and demonstrate trust. ➔ Bring in an external facilitator for particularly difficult conversations.

[71] For more details, see v. Schlippe & Rüsen (2024).

SUCCESS FACTOR	TOPICS
Leadership and corporate culture	➔ Actively involve employees and communicate openly. ➔ Establish a modern and consistent leadership style that suits you and reflects your needs. ➔ Set a strategic direction and pursue it with clear goals. ➔ Nurture values and promote a vibrant corporate culture of openness, creativity, and a willingness to learn. ➔ Implement change with sensitivity and respect for existing cultural foundations. ➔ Clarify roles, tasks, and responsibilities. ➔ Strengthen employee involvement and decentralised decision-making structures. ➔ Further develop governance structures in line with your vision; it is worth including female voices (if not already represented) who support your new (feminine) perspective on corporate governance and leadership. ➔ Learn to delegate. ➔ Find a balance between tradition and innovation.
Professional qualifications	➔ Gain professional experience outside the family business. ➔ Use further education opportunities to support both personal and professional growth. ➔ Participate in external training programmes or complete a traineeship to develop practical skills; ensure you remain "employable" – this will allow you to leave the family business if collaboration with the senior generation fails. ➔ Develop a detailed understanding of different areas of the business. ➔ Broaden your industry knowledge and leadership competencies. ➔ Learn from others through leadership tandems, coaching, mentoring, or peer exchanges. ➔ Engage external specialists or managers if internal expertise is lacking.
Networks, exchange and role models	➔ Build and maintain strong networks, but be selective; avoid excessively time-consuming honorary roles. ➔ Exchange ideas with other female successors and entrepreneurs. ➔ Take part in networking opportunities such as family days or industry meetups. ➔ Use successful female entrepreneurs as role models for your personal development; reach out and ask them to mentor you – they are usually more than happy to support.

SUCCESS FACTOR	TOPICS
Balancing family and business	➔ Create tailored childcare solutions, such as an in-house nursery or professional support. ➔ Seek help from your partner, parents, or professionals to better balance family and career. ➔ Communicate openly about your family aspirations, particularly regarding children and family planning. ➔ View motherhood as a valuable and enriching part of your life – not a hindrance. ➔ Design flexible childcare models that support the integration of family and career. ➔ Set clear agreements on family-related matters to avoid misunderstandings. ➔ Foster an equal partnership to share responsibilities fairly and ensure a balanced role distribution. ➔ Prioritise personal life decisions over purely professional expectations. ➔ Plan your family's future at an early stage and develop adaptable solutions. ➔ Arrange support both within the business and in your private life.

Table 1: Success factors for female succession[72]

As Table 1 illustrates, succession not only sparks processes of change within the business but also inevitably impacts the family, ownership structures and the successor herself. However, in the context of succession, one principle stands out: "Management can be learnt; but it also *must* be learnt."[73] Successors can – and must – learn their "craft". Of course, individuals bring their own unique talents, but no one becomes a good manager or leader purely by virtue of gender or birth. The main focus should be on acquiring the necessary skills and tailoring the succession process to the specific dynamics of the business family.[74]

The final reflection, Reflection V, invites you to reflect on the success factors outlined in Table 1 and associated topics, and to assess them in terms of your own situation. Particularly during the succession process, it is crucial to critically and honestly evaluate your areas of focus in order to determine the next steps and actions. Reflection V can serve as a guide in this respect. Each success factor is accompanied by examples to support understanding.

[72] Own representation, based on own experience and Wilmes & Kammerlander (2023); Jäkel-Wurzer & Ott (2014); Bundesweite Gründerinnenagentur (2008a/b); Haubl & Daser (2006).
[73] Malik (2015), p. 52.
[74] See Malik (2015), pp. 51 ff.

REFLECTION V: SURVEY OF THE STATUS QUO AND DERIVATION OF NEXT STEPS				
My success factors/topics	**What is going well?**	**What is not going so well?**	**What needs to be done? ***	**Concrete first steps for implementation ****
Personal attitude and self-image	• I have clear values and make decisions based on them. • I am curious and open to new things.	• I sometimes doubt myself, especially in difficult situations. • I am afraid of not meeting expectations.	• Talk to a coach/adviser about uncertainties and reflect on them. • Learn to deal with self-doubt constructively. • Focus on what I have already achieved.	• Start a success journal (daily reflection on strengths and achievements). • Arrange a coaching session. • Set a fixed weekly appointment for self-reflection.
Cooperation with the senior generation (SenGen) and distribution of roles	• Maintain good personal relationships with representatives of the senior generation (e.g., father, uncle, etc.). • Share a common goal: securing the long-term future of the business.	• Responsibilities are unclear. • The senior generation often interferes in day-to-day decisions. • There is no clearly defined exit strategy.	• Set out roles and responsibilities in writing. • Hold an open discussion about expectations and boundaries.	• Plan a joint workshop with external moderation. • Draft an initial written outline of the division of roles.
Handover and succession process	• The timeframe for the handover is essentially set. • Initial areas of responsibility have been assigned.	• Concrete milestones are missing. • Progress remains difficult to measure.	• Develop a schedule with defined phases and clear transfers of responsibility.	• Draft a joint handover plan. • Review this at the next meeting with the senior generation.
Communication and conflict resolution	• There is openness to dialogue with the senior generation and employees. • There is a willingness to address issues.	• When it comes to sensitive topics (e.g., digitalisation, new investments), the senior generation is defensive or emotional.	• Establish communication spaces where differing viewpoints can be discussed.	• Introduce monthly structured reflection meetings with the senior generation. • Develop discussion guidelines.

* So that what is going well continues to go well and what is not going so well improves.
** e.g., quick wins

My success factors/topics	What is going well?	What is not going so well?	What needs to be done? *	Concrete first steps for implementation **
Leadership and corporate culture	• Initial initiatives (e.g., Q&A sessions with employees, introduction of 360° feedback) were well received.	• Some employees are uncertain about my leadership role.	• Proactively shape my leadership role. • Align behaviour with personal values. • Demonstrate and promote transparent communication.	• Develop a set of values and share it with the team/business. • Provide brief updates on the status of the succession.
Professional qualifications	• Relevant leadership experience and expertise from external professional roles are available.	• Some specific knowledge of internal processes is still lacking.	• Secure the experience and knowledge of key personnel in a targeted way. • Familiarise myself with internal processes.	• Arrange internal mentorship in key areas. • Keep a learning journal.
Networks, exchange, and role models	• A mentor with experience in a comparable succession situation provides support.	• So far, there has been a lack of exchange with other successors.	• Build a peer network for reflection and inspiration.	• Reach out to successors within my own circle of acquaintances. • Register for the WIFU Forum "Daughters in Succession".
Balancing family and business	• Task-sharing within the partnership works well. • Joint decision-making is established.	• During intense periods, I lack time for retreat and regeneration.	• Consciously integrate and protect time slots for self-care.	• Establish one fixed, family-free evening per week for myself.

FURTHER REFLECTION QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU:

- What is currently holding you back, and what might change if you were to let go or free yourself from it?
- Where in your development process would you like to have more decision-making power, and what would be a bold next step towards achieving this?
- Where would you like more clarity or new rules in your collaboration (e.g., with the senior generation, your family, or colleagues)?
- How openly do you communicate about what is truly important to you?
- What motivates you to persevere, even when things become challenging?

4 | CONCLUSION: DAUGHTERS CAUGHT BETWEEN TRADITION, EMANCIPATION AND CREATIVITY

Succession within families is undergoing fundamental change: whereas it was formerly often taken for granted that the eldest male descendant would take over the business, both structural conditions and societal expectations are now shifting. Against this backdrop, daughters are increasingly coming into focus as potential successors, bringing their own perspectives, challenges and potential. More and more daughters are making a conscious and self-determined choice to take over the family business – not out of a sense of obligation, but out of conviction.

Despite these positive developments, female successors still represent a break with tradition. There remains a lack of female role models, established routines, or a family and business culture that naturally integrates female successors. Traditional expectations, such as primogeniture – often still deeply embedded in cultural norms – continue to exert a subtle influence and may create significant obstacles. It is therefore essential for business families to question established structures and base their succession decisions on individuals' competence, potential, and motivation rather than gender or birth order.

A daughter's willingness to take over the family business is heavily shaped by her early socialisation. Even in childhood, parents and close relatives frequently – albeit unconsciously – send messages about role expectations and the legitimacy of succession. These signals can have a lasting impact on a daughter's self-image and perceived agency. A lack of recognition or a subtle exclusion can leave emotional scars that later affect her willingness to succeed and the process of succession.

Partners can be vital sources of support during this process, but often bring their own challenges and may conflict with the family business's strong influence. Family expectations, the partner's traditional role views, and the overlap between personal and professional spheres may all create tension. For this reason, early and open communication between partners is essential to clarify expectations and protect the relationship.

Additionally, daughters must often grapple with the dual responsibility of business leadership and motherhood. Striving to meet both sets of expectations can lead to emotional overload and self-doubt. At the same time, being an entrepreneur offers a unique opportunity to shape the business's management structure to suit personal aspirations and life circumstances. Achieving this, however, requires the establishment of more family-friendly management structures and a business culture that genuinely supports work-life compatibility.

Finally, the handover between the senior generation and the successor is a critical moment. Sustainable succession can only succeed if clear roles and responsibilities are defined, and the daughter is recognised as an equal decision-maker. This also requires the senior generation to be willing to relinquish responsibility. Mutual respect, open communication and, where needed, external facilitation form the foundations for a successful and enduring transition.

Ultimately, the opportunities around female succession reflect broader societal developments, including growing gender equality, the decline of traditional role expectations, and the rise of individualisation and self-actualisation. Family businesses that embrace these changes early, welcome new perspectives, and adapt their structures accordingly will benefit in the long term. Not only can they unlock the full potential of their next-generation successors, but they also strengthen the future resilience and innovative capacity of both their business and their family. If this guide contributes to the effective succession of daughters in family businesses, then the authors' aim will have been achieved.

5 | SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

This practical guide is a translation of the German practical guide from 2025 and does not seek to represent the international literature on this subject.

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The non-profit WIFU Foundation, founded in 2009, is committed to promoting not only Research and teaching, but in particular practice transfer in the field of family entrepreneurship. Our most important supporters include around 80 family businesses from German-speaking countries. The focus of our activities is the acquisition, communication and dissemination of high-quality and current issue-related knowledge on family businesses and business families.

Our funds are primarily used to establish and maintain chairs, to support research projects and to award scholarships to young scientists. One focus of our funding is to support the work of the Witten Institute for Family Business (WIFU), based at Witten/Herdecke University, with its three research and teaching areas of business administration, law and psychology/sociology. The WIFU has been making a significant contribution to the cross-generational sustainability of family businesses in the field of research and teaching for more than 25 years.

Another focus of our work is the organisation and execution of congresses and other events on family entrepreneurship-related topics. Practice-oriented knowledge and skills to promote succession in the management of family businesses within the business family are conveyed in working groups, training courses and other formats. Our events are characterised by a protected framework which provides room for an intimate and open exchange. A comprehensive and active public relations work for research results in the field of family entrepreneurship completes the range of tasks of the WIFU Foundation.

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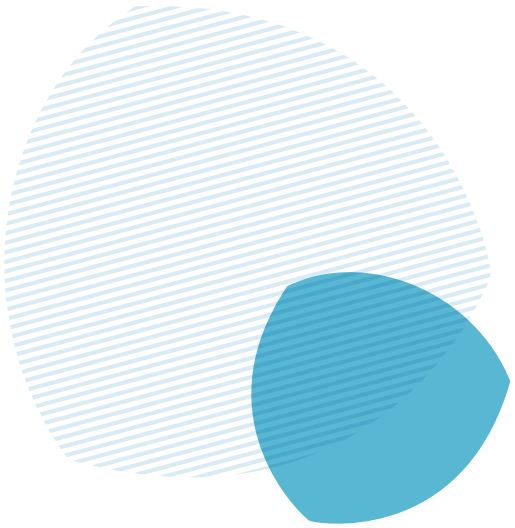
The WIFU Foundation will be happy to put you in touch with the authors if you have any questions or would like to discuss the issues raised in this guide further. Please send all enquiries by email to: editor@wifu.de



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