

**SMU Postgraduate Professional Development (PGPD) workshop  
on Understanding Families in Business**

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**ChatGPT for Family Business - DRINKWELL case study**

**Objective:**

To use OpenAI ChatGPT in attempting a family business case study.

**ChatGPT:**

Great! I'm happy to help. Could you please provide more information about the family business case study you would like to explore? This will help me to better understand your needs and provide you with more targeted support.

## CASE:

Founded by Mr. Yeo in 1965, DRINKWELL is a leading Singapore-based family-owned enterprise in the wellness beverage industry. Mr. Yeo and his wife Su Hui have three children, Patrick, Jean, and Jack.

Mr. Yeo and his wife have always been supportive of their children's life choices and they have given them great autonomy to choose their own paths. Patrick, the first-born son is now in his late-40s and had worked closely to Mr. Yeo since graduating with an economics degree.

Over the years of his engagement with the family firm, Patrick looked after many aspects of the business. He has been designated to be the successor. Jean, the second-born daughter is currently in her early-40s. In the early stages of her career, Jean worked for MNCs and she decided to join the family business only a few years ago after completing her EMBA degree. Jack, the youngest son who is in his late 30s does not have any particular interest for the family firm, and he is currently working as an academic.

Since Patrick took over the helm of the organization in the early 2000s, DRINKWELL has gone through a path of steady growth in revenues and service offerings. Starting as a single brand manufacturer of a nutritional drink, through the years, DRINKWELL has managed to reposition itself and expand its offerings which include juices, sports drinks and even Kombucha, the latest health craze to countries in ASEAN and even MEA. Today the company's main revenue stream comes from the highly diversified offerings of drinks across ASEAN. Additionally, through acquisition of key suppliers, DRINKWELL has managed to streamline its operations quite substantially, providing the company a strong competitive edge over its direct competitors.

Patrick's wife, Maria works in DRINKWELL as director of Administration and Finance. Their eldest son of three children is 20-year-old and has started interning in the company during school vacations. Joanne and Jack got married 5 few years ago, and they have a son. Joanne, wife of Jack, works as the director of Purchasing. Jean is divorced from Kelvin Lee with no children.

It is a well-known fact that DRINKWELL's most valuable resource is its people. Many believe that DRINKWELL success could have not been possible if had not been for the strong dedication and hard work of its employees. Amongst many, Matthew Lee is a special case. A good

childhood friend of Mr. Yeo and long-standing DRINKWELL's Chief Operating Officer, Matthew is not a blood relative of Yeo family, but his contribution to the family business has been tremendous. As a gesture of gratitude for his priceless contribution, Mr. Yeo has generously given Matthew some of DRINKWELL shares.

Jean and Jack feel there is a non-equal treatment from their parents. They do not acknowledge Patrick's key contribution to business growth. Conversely, Patrick is not agreeable to equal share distribution. The lack of a proper family governance framework makes both family and business dynamics even more complex.

Mr. Yeo and his wife Su Hui are now in their late 70s. Given the continuous bickering among their children, they fear future struggles among them.

## ChatGPT:

Thank you for sharing the details of the case study. It's clear that DRINKWELL is a successful family-owned enterprise with a rich history and diverse offerings, but there are also some challenges facing the business due to family dynamics and succession planning.

One of the first steps in addressing these challenges is to establish a proper family governance framework that outlines the roles and responsibilities of family members in the business, as well as how key decisions are made. This framework should be developed with input from all family members and stakeholders, and it should be regularly reviewed and updated as needed to reflect changing circumstances and priorities.

Another important consideration is succession planning. While Patrick has been designated as the successor, it's important to ensure that this transition is handled in a way that is fair and transparent to all family members. This may involve developing a clear plan for how shares of the company will be distributed, as well as outlining the roles and responsibilities of all family members in the business.

It's also important to address the concerns of Jean and Jack regarding non-equal treatment and lack of recognition for Patrick's contributions. This may involve developing a more structured approach to performance evaluation and recognition within the company, as well as ensuring that all family members have a clear understanding of how decisions are made and how success is measured.

Ultimately, the key to success for DRINKWELL will be to ensure that both the family and the business are aligned in their goals and priorities, and that all family members are working together towards a common vision for the future of the company. This may involve seeking outside expertise or guidance from family business advisors or consultants who can help to navigate these complex dynamics and find solutions that work for everyone involved.

### Territory 1 Question A:

As patriarch of the family, a director and shareholder in Drinkwell, what would be 79-year-old Mr Yeo's (father of Patrick, Jean and Jack) priorities and challenges for Drinkwell?

**ChatGPT:**

As the patriarch of the family, a director, and shareholder in Drinkwell, 79-year-old Mr. Yeo's priorities and challenges for the company would be focused on ensuring the continued success and growth of the business, while also maintaining family harmony and unity.

One priority for Mr. Yeo would be to establish a clear and effective family governance framework that addresses issues such as succession planning, share ownership, and decision-making processes. This framework would help to ensure that all family members feel valued and heard, and that there is a fair and transparent process in place for making key business decisions.

Another priority for Mr. Yeo would be to foster a culture of innovation and growth within the company. Drinkwell has already expanded its offerings and streamlined its operations, but there will always be new challenges and opportunities in the market that the company will need to adapt to. Mr. Yeo can encourage and support his family members and other key employees to be creative and forward-thinking in their approach to the business, and to stay up-to-date with trends and developments in the industry.

One challenge that Mr. Yeo may face is navigating the complex family dynamics within the company. With tensions between Patrick, Jean, and Jack, Mr. Yeo may need to act as a mediator and find ways to ensure that all family members feel valued and respected, and that their contributions to the company are recognized and appreciated.

Finally, as a shareholder in the company, Mr. Yeo's challenge will be to balance the interests of the family with the interests of the business. He will need to make decisions that are in the best interests of the company and its shareholders, while also considering the impact of those decisions on his family and their relationship with each other.

### Territory 1 Question B:

As a family member, director, and shareholder in Drinkwell, what would be Patrick's priorities and challenges for the family business?

#### **ChatGPT:**

As a family member, director, and shareholder in DRINKWELL and the designated successor to the family business, Patrick would likely have several priorities and challenges related to the company. Some of these priorities and challenges might include:

**Ensuring the long-term success of the business:** As the designated successor, Patrick's primary responsibility would be to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of DRINKWELL. This would involve developing and implementing strategic plans to expand the company's market share and maintain its competitive edge in the wellness beverage industry.

**Building and maintaining strong relationships with key stakeholders:** As a director and shareholder in the business, Patrick would need to build and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders, including employees, suppliers, customers, and investors. This would involve effective communication, collaboration, and negotiation skills to ensure that everyone's interests are aligned and the company can continue to grow and prosper.

**Managing family dynamics:** Patrick would also need to navigate complex family dynamics, particularly given the ongoing disagreements and tensions among family members. He may need to act as a mediator or facilitator to resolve conflicts and ensure that all family members feel heard and valued.

**Ensuring fair treatment of all family members:** Patrick would need to ensure that all family members who are involved in the business are treated fairly and equitably. This would involve transparent and objective decision-making processes around issues such as share ownership, compensation, and promotions.

Developing a strong succession plan: As the designated successor, Patrick would need to develop a strong succession plan to ensure a smooth transition of leadership when the time comes. This would involve identifying and grooming future leaders within the organization, as well as setting clear expectations and timelines for the handover of responsibilities.

Staying up-to-date with industry trends and best practices: Finally, Patrick would need to stay up-to-date with the latest industry trends and best practices to ensure that DRINKWELL remains innovative and competitive in a rapidly changing market. This would involve ongoing research and analysis, as well as attending conferences and networking events to learn from other industry leaders.

### Territory 1 Question C:

As second daughter in the family, in her early 40s, divorced without children, a shareholder, and director in Drinkwell, what would be Jean's priorities and challenges for the family business?

#### **ChatGPT:**

As a shareholder and director in Drinkwell, Jean's priorities and challenges for the family business would include:

**Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the company:** As a director and shareholder, Jean would want to ensure that the company is positioned for long-term success. This would involve making strategic decisions that align with the company's goals and values.

**Encouraging innovation:** Jean may be keen to promote innovation within the company, to keep up with changing trends in the wellness beverage industry. This could involve investing in research and development, exploring new product lines, and collaborating with other companies or experts in the field.

**Managing relationships with family members:** As a member of the Yeo family, Jean would have to navigate the complex dynamics that come with working in a family business. This could involve managing conflicts between family members, ensuring open communication, and promoting a positive and supportive work environment.

**Fostering strong relationships with employees:** Drinkwell's success is largely due to its dedicated employees, and as a director, Jean would want to ensure that they feel valued and supported. This could involve creating an employee-focused culture, providing training and development opportunities, and promoting work-life balance.

**Managing finances:** As a shareholder, Jean would have an interest in the financial performance of the company. This could involve managing budgets, overseeing financial reporting, and making strategic investments to drive growth and profitability.

Overall, Jean's priorities and challenges would revolve around maintaining a balance between family dynamics, business success, and sustainability.



### Territory 2 Question A:

As daughter-in-law, Patrick's wife, with children, but not a shareholder, and director of administration and finance in Drinkwell, what would be Maria's priorities and challenges for the family business?

#### **ChatGPT:**

As the director of administration and finance in Drinkwell, Maria's priorities would likely include managing the financial health of the company, ensuring that financial and administrative policies and procedures are in place and being followed, and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the finance and administration departments. As Patrick's wife and the mother of their children, Maria may also be interested in the long-term success and sustainability of the family business. She may have a role in helping to facilitate communication and collaboration between family members, and working to maintain positive family relationships that are critical for the success of a family business.

One of Maria's challenges may be managing any conflicts that arise within the family or between family members and the company. She may also need to navigate any potential conflicts of interest that arise from her dual role as a family member and employee of the business. Additionally, Maria may need to balance her responsibilities to the family business with her responsibilities as a wife and mother to her family.

## Territory 2 Question B:

As daughter-in-law, Jack's wife, with children, but not a shareholder, and director of Purchasing in Drinkwell, what would be Joanne's priorities and challenges for the family business?

**ChatGPT:**

As a daughter-in-law and director of Purchasing in DRINKWELL, Joanne has a unique position in the family business. Her priorities and challenges may include the following:

**Supporting the family:** Joanne may need to navigate the complex family dynamics and maintain positive relationships with all family members, including those who are not directly involved in the business. She may need to be a mediator between family members who have different opinions and priorities.

**Contributing to the success of the business:** As the director of Purchasing, Joanne's main responsibility is to ensure that the company obtains high-quality supplies at the best possible prices. She will need to establish and maintain relationships with suppliers, negotiate contracts, and monitor the quality and availability of supplies. Her role is critical in ensuring that the company can operate efficiently and cost-effectively.

**Staying up-to-date with industry trends:** As the beverage industry is constantly evolving, Joanne will need to stay informed about the latest trends, including consumer preferences, new ingredients, and emerging technologies. She will need to keep her finger on the pulse of the industry and anticipate changes that may affect the business.

**Balancing family and business interests:** Joanne may need to balance the interests of the family with those of the business. She may need to make decisions that are in the best interest of the company, even if they are not in line with the preferences of certain family members. At the same time, she may need to consider the impact of business decisions on the family and ensure that the business remains a sustainable and profitable enterprise for future generations.

Overall, Joanne's priorities and challenges will involve balancing family and business interests, staying informed about industry trends, and contributing to the success of the company as the director of Purchasing. By doing so, she can help to ensure the longevity and success of DRINKWELL for future generations.

### Territory 3 Question:

As a family member and shareholder, but not a director in Drinkwell, what would be Jack's priorities and challenges for the family business?

#### **ChatGPT:**

As a family member and shareholder, Jack's priorities and challenges for the family business may differ from those of his siblings who are more actively involved in the business. Some of his priorities and challenges could include:

**Understanding the business:** As someone who is not directly involved in the day-to-day operations of Drinkwell, Jack may need to take the time to understand the business, its products, and its operations. This will enable him to make informed decisions about the company's future.

**Ensuring fair treatment:** Jack may feel that he is not receiving equal treatment from his parents and siblings, and may need to address this issue in order to ensure that he is treated fairly.

**Maximizing returns:** As a shareholder in Drinkwell, Jack's primary concern may be maximizing the returns on his investment. He may need to work with the other shareholders to develop strategies for increasing profits and growing the business.

**Contributing to the business:** While Jack may not have a specific interest in the family business, he may still want to contribute in some way. He could explore ways to use his skills and expertise to add value to the company, such as through advising on strategy or marketing.

**Maintaining family harmony:** Given the tensions that exist among the siblings, Jack may need to work to maintain family harmony and avoid exacerbating any conflicts that arise. This could involve seeking out ways to improve communication and foster a sense of unity among family members.

#### Territory 4 Question:

As the matriarch of the family, but not a director nor shareholder in Drinkwell, what would be 75-year-old Yeo Su Hui's (mother of Patrick, Jean and Jack) priority and challenges for Drinkwell?

#### **ChatGPT:**

As the matriarch of the family, Yeo Su Hui would likely have several priorities and challenges related to DRINKWELL, even if she is not a director or shareholder in the company. Some of these priorities and challenges might include:

**Ensuring the longevity of the family business:** Yeo Su Hui may be concerned with the long-term success and sustainability of DRINKWELL, particularly given the ongoing family tensions and lack of a clear succession plan. She may want to see the business continue to thrive and grow for future generations of the family.

**Maintaining family unity:** Yeo Su Hui may also be concerned with maintaining a harmonious relationship among her children and their spouses, as well as any other family members who may be involved in the business. She may want to encourage open communication and collaboration among family members to address any conflicts or tensions that arise.

**Supporting her son Patrick as the designated successor:** While Yeo Su Hui may not have an official role in the business, she may still have a strong interest in seeing her son Patrick succeed as the designated successor. She may want to provide him with emotional support and guidance as he navigates the challenges of running the family business.

**Ensuring fairness and equity for all family members:** Yeo Su Hui may also be concerned with ensuring that all family members are treated fairly and equitably within the business, regardless of their roles or contributions. She may want to encourage open dialogue and transparency around issues related to share ownership, compensation, and decision-making.

Navigating complex family dynamics: Finally, Yeo Su Hui may be facing the challenge of navigating complex family dynamics, including disagreements and tensions among family members. She may want to seek out outside support or guidance, such as from family business advisors or therapists, to help the family work through these issues and find common ground.

### **Territory 5 Question:**

As a non-family member, but a director and shareholder in Drinkwell, what would be 79-year-old Matthew Lee's priority and challenges for Drinkwell?

#### **ChatGPT:**

As a non-family member, but a director and shareholder in Drinkwell, 79-year-old Matthew Lee's priority and challenges for Drinkwell would be to continue to provide his valuable contribution to the company's growth while maintaining a good working relationship with the Yeo family. As the Chief Operating Officer and a major shareholder in the company, Matthew has a fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interests of the company and its shareholders, which includes making strategic decisions that will help the company continue to grow and succeed.

One challenge that Matthew may face is navigating the complex family dynamics within the company. While he has a close relationship with Mr. Yeo and has been given shares as a gesture of gratitude for his contribution, he is not a blood relative of the Yeo family, which may make it more difficult for him to navigate any tensions or conflicts that arise among family members. He may also need to be careful to ensure that his actions and decisions are seen as fair and impartial, given that he is not a member of the family.

Another challenge that Matthew may face is ensuring that Drinkwell remains competitive in an increasingly crowded and competitive marketplace. While the company has been successful in expanding its offerings and streamlining its operations, it will need to continue to innovate and adapt to changing market trends and consumer preferences in order to stay ahead of the competition.

As COO, Matthew will play a key role in overseeing the company's day-to-day operations and making strategic decisions that will help the company continue to grow and thrive.

### Territory 6 Question A:

As a non-family member and non-shareholder, but a young manager in Drinkwell, what would be the manager's priorities and challenges for Drinkwell?

**ChatGPT:**

As a non-family member and non-shareholder, a young manager in DRINKWELL may have the following priorities and challenges:

**Driving business growth:** One of the main priorities of a young manager in DRINKWELL would be to drive business growth. This may involve identifying new market opportunities, developing new products, and expanding the company's reach into new territories.

**Building a strong team:** A young manager may need to build and manage a strong team of employees who are motivated and aligned with the company's goals. This may involve recruiting and training new staff, developing effective communication channels, and implementing performance management systems.

**Navigating the company culture:** As a non-family member, a young manager may need to navigate the company's culture, which may be shaped by family dynamics and traditions. This may involve developing a deep understanding of the company's values and traditions, while also bringing fresh ideas and perspectives that can help to drive innovation and growth.

**Managing stakeholder relationships:** A young manager may need to manage relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and shareholders. This may involve developing effective communication channels, negotiating contracts and agreements, and resolving conflicts in a timely and effective manner.

**Balancing short-term and long-term objectives:** A young manager may need to balance short-term and long-term objectives, ensuring that the company is able to meet its immediate goals while also preparing for future growth and expansion.



Overall, a young manager in DRINKWELL will need to be proactive, innovative, and strategic in order to drive business growth and navigate the complexities of family dynamics and company culture. By doing so, they can help to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of the company for future generations.

## Territory 6 Question B:

As a non-family member and non-shareholder, but an old manager, about to retire in few years, in Drinkwell, what would be the manager's priorities and challenges for Drinkwell?

### **ChatGPT:**

As an old manager about to retire in a few years, a non-family member and non-shareholder in DRINKWELL, may have the following priorities and challenges:

**Succession planning:** One of the main priorities of an old manager about to retire would be to ensure that there is a proper succession plan in place. This may involve identifying potential successors, providing training and development opportunities, and ensuring a smooth transition of leadership.

**Knowledge transfer:** Another priority would be to ensure that there is a proper knowledge transfer process in place, so that critical institutional knowledge and expertise is not lost when the manager retires. This may involve developing training programs, creating knowledge management systems, and mentoring younger staff members.

**Maintaining relationships:** An old manager may have built up important relationships with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders over the years. It would be important to ensure that these relationships are maintained, even after the manager retires, in order to ensure continuity and consistency.

**Succession planning for key suppliers:** Just as it is important to have a succession plan in place for leadership roles within the company, it is also important to have a plan in place for key suppliers. This may involve identifying backup suppliers, developing contingency plans, and maintaining strong relationships with existing suppliers.

**Ensuring a smooth transition:** An old manager would need to work closely with their successor and other stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition. This may involve documenting processes and procedures, providing training and support to the successor, and communicating effectively with all stakeholders.

Overall, an old manager about to retire in a few years in DRINKWELL would need to focus on ensuring a smooth transition of leadership and knowledge, while also maintaining important relationships and ensuring continuity of critical processes and procedures. By doing so, they can help to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of the company for future generations.

### Territory 7 Question A:

As a non-family member, non-manager but a 80-year-old shareholder in Drinkwell, what would be his expectation for Drinkwell?

**ChatGPT:**

As an 80-year-old shareholder in Drinkwell, the individual's expectation for the company would likely be to continue to generate consistent and stable returns on their investment. He may also be interested in the company's growth prospects and future plans, as well as the management team's ability to effectively execute those plans.

As a long-term shareholder, the individual may also place a high value on the company's reputation and ethical standards, and expect the company to continue operating in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Additionally, he may be interested in the company's dividend policy and whether the company plans to distribute profits to its shareholders or reinvest them for growth.

Overall, his expectation would be for Drinkwell to continue to be a profitable and reputable company that delivers long-term value to its shareholders.

### **Territory 7 Question B:**

As a non-family member, non-manager but a 100-year-old shareholder (with no descendants) in Drinkwell, what would be his expectation for Drinkwell?

**ChatGPT:**

As a 100-year-old shareholder in Drinkwell with no descendants, the individual's expectations for the company may differ from those of a younger shareholder.

He may be primarily interested in the preservation of his wealth and the long-term stability of their investment.

Given his advanced age and lack of heirs, he may also have an interest in the company's succession planning and management continuity, to ensure that his investment will continue to be managed effectively and profitably even after they are no longer able to oversee it themselves.

In addition, he may have a desire for Drinkwell to maintain a strong reputation and ethical practices, as this could contribute to the long-term sustainability of the company and the value of their investment.

Overall, his expectations would likely revolve around the protection and preservation of his investment, as well as the continued success and stability of the company in the long-term.

### Territory 7 Question C:

As a non-family member, non-manager but a 30-year-old shareholder in Drinkwell, what would be his expectation for Drinkwell?

**ChatGPT:**

As a 30-year-old shareholder in Drinkwell, the individual's expectation for the company would likely be to deliver consistent and strong returns on their investment over the long-term. He may also be interested in the company's growth prospects and future plans, as well as the management team's ability to effectively execute those plans.

Additionally, as a younger investor, the individual may place a higher value on Drinkwell's social and environmental impact, and may expect the company to operate in a responsible and sustainable manner. He may also be interested in the company's efforts to innovate and adapt to changing market trends and consumer preferences.

Overall, his expectation would be for Drinkwell to be a profitable and reputable company that delivers long-term value to its shareholders while also being socially and environmentally responsible. He may also expect transparency and open communication from the company regarding its financial performance and strategic initiatives.

## **REMARKS:**

*Dr Jodean Zhang Yong Quan:*

*“The current GPT is simply an assistant or tool to assist rational and logical decision making only. It is subjective to quality of input entry, rules and considerations. The only cool thing now is its ability to accept justified knowledge input, self-learn, recall previous experiences and improve in its quality of suggestions or opinions. Like human it can still be fallible. But it would be fascinating and scary if it has an appetite to self-learn, innovate, self-repair and self-improvement & upgrade automatically at an enormous speed”.*

### **General:**

ChatGPT is a language model that has been trained to provide text-based responses to user inputs. Its primary purpose is to generate human-like responses to user queries and engage in conversations, without storing or archiving them. As a result, the conversation history cannot be downloaded from the interface.

Additionally, the conversation generated by ChatGPT is based on the user's inputs and the model's responses, which may not always be accurate or reliable. Therefore, it is recommended that users do not rely solely on ChatGPT's responses for important or sensitive information.

ChatGPT Mar 23 Version. Free Research Preview. ChatGPT may produce inaccurate information about people, places, or facts.