

## Teaching Materials on a Brazilian Family Succession Conflict

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### Abstract

This article studied a negotiation case with teaching notes, focusing on an intra-family business succession conflict of a limestone family business in Brazil, through a multi-party and multi-issue role-play simulation. This case study investigates a succession conflict at a Brazilian limestone extraction company. How the founder pains transferring of control to successors Investigating family dynamics, communication and leadership that can enable an outcome to the conflicts which has plagued the family and its efforts to maintain a sustainable company. Conclusion Key findings emphasized the importance of improving integrative skills, such as understanding the interests of an opponent. In addition, collaborative fact-finding is necessary to ensure that all sides identify and agree on the relevant issues, and develop appropriate responses via problem-solving strategies. An exhaustive collection of case mechanics and instructions are provided. Other implications suggest case copy abilities in different company settings. This study ends with a discussion and future research suggestions.

**Keywords:** *Negotiation, family business succession, Limestone family business, Brazil, Multi-party role-play simulation.*

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### Introduction

Family succession is a complex process that involves transitioning the management and ownership of a business to the next generation. A family business is characterized by the management of more than one generation, with at least one family member in the second generation playing a key role (Bower, 2007). This structure preserves family wealth, intangible assets, and traditions, allowing family members to share a common goal (Hughes Jr., 2004). In Brazil, family businesses have historical roots in the colonial and imperial periods (Dias and Davila, 2018). According to SEBRAE (2018), about 95% of Brazilian companies are family-owned, mainly small companies, responsible for 99% of the national market (BNDES, 2018).

According to Vancil (1987), there are two approaches to this transition: 1. Horse racing: a competitive clash between the heirs, where the winner takes control. 2. Baton

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passing: a planned and coordinated transition, similar to the relay race, where the heirs assume responsibilities at a pre-defined pace. In this study, we used the Four-Type negotiation matrix Dias (2020) proposed. This negotiation may be classified as a Type IV negotiation, as seen in Figure 1, as follows:



**Figure 1. The Four-Type Negotiation Matrix**  
**Source:** Dias, 2020. Reprinted under permission.

The Four-Type negotiation matrix provides a thorough framework for classifying negotiations based on extensive academic research in the discipline (Dias, 2020; Raiffa, 1982; Fisher et al., 1981; Sebenius, 1992; Ury, 2015; Susskind & Field, 1996; Salacuse, 2008; Rinehart & Page, 1992; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). In the next section, we shall delineate the approaches used and examine the limitations intrinsic to the chosen situations. Figure 1 highlights the Type IV bargaining scenario.

## Materials and Methods

In the research, mixed method was adopted in which quantitative and qualitative research methods were used together. The research is descriptive because it reveals the current situation and it is aimed to collect in-depth information in the research.

## Context

Calcário Ltda. was founded in 1986 by a visionary entrepreneur, originally from a humble family and with little formal educational training. Before creating the company, he had already successfully contributed to local development in other initiatives, demonstrating his commitment to collective growth and appreciation of the human being. Today, Calcário Ltda. is a respected and consolidated company, with sales in several Brazilian states, including Tocantins, Minas Gerais, Bahia and the Federal District. Its goal is to run the business sustainably, considering future needs and a holistic view.

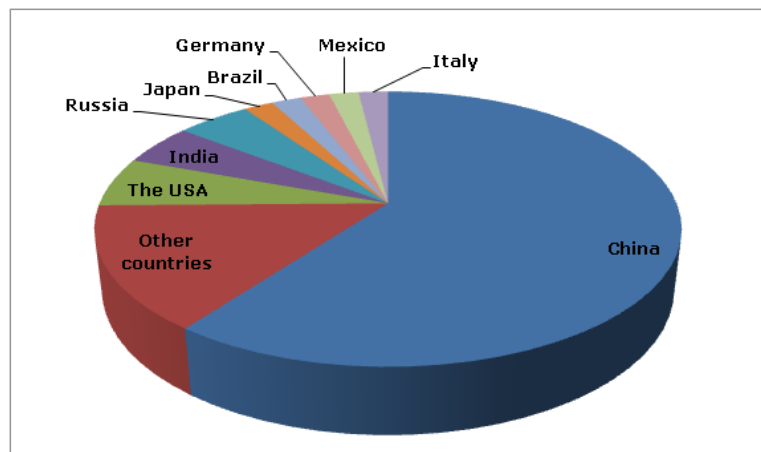


### Limestone applications

Limestone is a sedimentary rock, consisting predominantly of calcium carbonate, due to the structure and/or presence of another compound, calcite and aragonite (CaCO<sub>3</sub>), receive several names and, when subjected to a metamorphism, it is called marble. Limestone has a wide range of applications, in short: (a) it corrects soil acidity; (b) it provides Ca and Mg; (c) reduces toxic effects; (d) improved nutrient availability; (e) increases microbial activity and (f) improves soil physical properties (DNPM, 2018).

### Limestone global market

China is the world's largest producer and consumer of limestone, as illustrated in Figure 2.

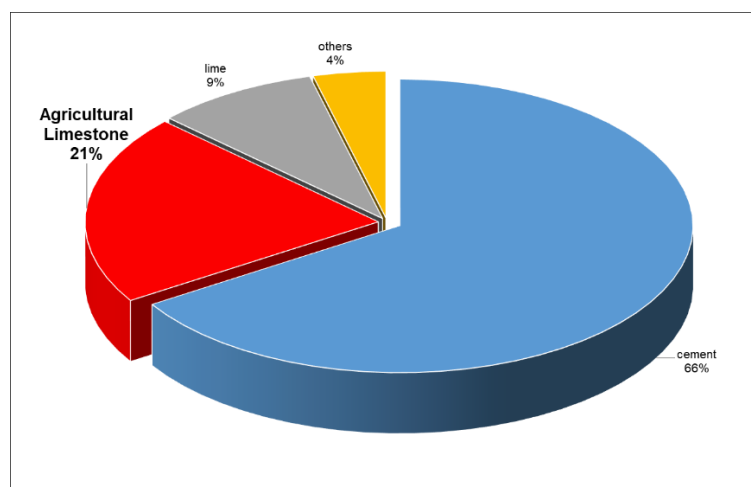


**Figure 2. World's Largest Producers of Limestone**

**Source:** Merchant Research & Consulting (2018) and Dias and Davila, 2018. Reprinted under permission

### Limestone in Brazil

Limestone in Brazil is used for the following purposes: (a) civil construction (66 percent); (b) agricultural limestone (21 percent); (c) lime (9 percent) and (d) other uses (4 percent), as shown in Figure 3, as follows:



**Figure 1 Use of limestone in Brazil**

**Source:** Dias and Davila, 2018. Reprinted under permission.



Almost two-thirds of the limestone produced in Brazil is used in the cement industry, being the second largest use in agriculture.

### The Challenge of Family Succession

In 2008, the company Calcário Ltda. They faced a succession conflict. The founder, still alive, started the process, but the directors and brothers still needed to decide who should lead the company. The commercial director's eldest sister took on the responsibility of restoring family harmony and the company.

Francisco, 78 years old, the company's founder, is a born entrepreneur who only had an elementary education and built an empire together with his wife, Maria, the balance keeper at home. At the same time, Francisco took care of everything in the company; she took care of the couple's four children. The children grew up, studied, and specialized in different backgrounds. Of the four, three sons followed in their father's footsteps and were the potential candidates to succeed him in the control of the companies.

It turns out that, last year, D. Maria died, and Mr. Francisco was very shaken because he was very good at what he did, but he did not have much family treatment. Mr. Francisco decided it was time to retire, to "hang up his boots" and live his life, which had always been very disciplined and rigid. He woke up at four in the morning to exercise and boasted of having an iron health. He had been in daily control of three limestone mines' operations since the foundation of Calcário Ltda. With his children raised, he thought it would be time to pass the baton to themselves. After years of work, the heirs were prepared to take on professional functions. The family education program trained, motivated, and qualified the principals. Therefore, except for one of the youngest sons, three sons were to take operational control of each of the three mines, respectively.

### Conflicts

That is when the conflicts began. Mr. Francisco appeared at each mine to "supervise" the work of each of the children and ended up changing all the orders that had been given for the operation. "These boys do not know anything!" They think they know how to run the business just because they studied! Moreover, Mr. Francisco could not let his children work without interruption. The fights became daily, and the operation was being compromised. There were missed deadlines because the employees were divided: the older ones thought that Mr. Francisco was always right. However, the younger ones agreed with the decisions of the heirs, but no one said anything. As a result, chaos was established until it reached an almost ruptured point.

Last year, at the height of the family conflict, the couple's eldest daughter, Mariana, joined the other children, called her father for a serious conversation, and decided to end the situation. Using all his shrewdness and the teachings he had received in his postgraduate course, he said – Since you do not believe in us, how about listening to experts on the subject? We will call a professional mediator to resolve the conflict. So, the family hired an outside consulting firm to mediate the conflict.

### Methodology

We followed the inductive rationale and interpretivist approach, adopting a descriptive single case study including the business negotiation as the unit of analysis (Yin, 1988).



## Implications and Discussion

This educational material possesses applications and ramifications across numerous fields and subfields of research, including (a) non-governmental organizations (Paradela; Dias, M.; Assis; Oliveira, J.; Fonseca, R. 2019); (b) the automotive industry (Dias, M., Navarro, and Valle, 2013; Dias, M., et al., 2014; Dias, M., et al., 2013); (c) the aerospace manufacturing sector (Dias, M., Teles, and Duzert, 2018; Dias, M. and Duzert, 2018); (d) public agencies (Dias, M. O., 2018); and (e) the copier manufacturing industry (Dias, M., 2012). (e) non-market forces (Dias & Navarro, 2018); (f) retail business (Dias, M., et al., 2015; Dias, M. et al., 2015, 2014); (g) craft beer industries (Dias, M. and Falconi, 2018; Dias, M., 2018); (h) social mediation (Dias, M. & Teles, 2018); (i) governmental business relations (Dias, M. & Navarro, 2017); (j) generational interactions (Aylmer & Dias, M., 2018); (k) e-business negotiation (Dias & Duzert, 2017); (l) streaming video industry, such as Netflix (Dias, M., & Navarro, 2018); (m) mining industry (Dias, M., & Davila, 2018); (n) civil construction (Dias, M., 2016); (o) debt collection negotiations (Dias, M., 2019, 2019b; Dias, M. and Albergarias, 2019).

### Research Limitations

This article is limited to the case study on family business succession in a Brazilian limestone company (Dias & Davila, 2018). Other countries, business segments and types of business are not part of this research and should be appreciated in future studies.

### Future Research

This research analyzed a family business negotiation in Brazil. Subsequent studies may investigate more contexts, cultures, and geographical areas. Future research should focus on strategies to improve agreement over the Four-Types negotiating matrix, specifically examining types I, II, and III negotiations.

### Teaching Notes

This case study presents a real challenge faced by the company Calcário Ltda. that seeks to resolve a succession conflict in the company. Students will analyze conflict, communication, and leadership.

### General Objectives

1. Analyze team dynamics and conflicts.
2. Understand the importance of effective communication.
3. Develop problem-solving skills.
4. Evaluate leadership strategies.

### Methodology

1. Reading the case study.
2. Group discussion.
3. Scenario analysis.
4. Presentation of solutions.

### Application Guide

#### Step 1: Analysis (10 minutes)

1. Divide students into groups of 4-5 students



2. Ask them to analyze the case, identifying:

- Conflicts.
- Miscommunication.
- Leadership challenges.

1. Record the observations.

### **Step 2: Discussion (20 minutes)**

1. Ask each group to present their analyses.

2. Encourage discussions about:

- Causes of conflicts.
- Impact of communication.
- Leadership strategies.

1. Record contributions.

### **Step 3: Solutions (20 minutes)**

1. Ask the groups to propose solutions.

2. Encourage consideration of:

- Improved communication.
- Conflict management.
- Leadership development.

1. Register the proposals.

### **Evaluation**

1. Participation in discussions (20%).

2. Quality of the analyses (30%).

3. Creativity of solutions (30%).

4. Presentation (20%).

### **Additional Resources**

1. Articles on conflict management.

2. Videos on effective leadership.

3. Similar case studies.

### **Duration**

45 min to 1 hour.

### **Target audience**

Students of administration, management, psychology and related fields.

## **Conflict of Interests**

There is no conflict of interest.



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