

Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?

(Featuring ABA's On Track ServicesSM)

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Remember our friends the three little pigs? You probably think that after the wolf was nicely disposed of, the story was over. Not so fast... the story does not end there. These particular pigs; Fred, Ron, and Emily, were from a very strong-willed family. After their near-fiasco with one infamous wolf, these pig siblings each opened their own business.

Eldest brother Ron Pig started "So-Fine Swine Manufacturing" five years ago. His company manufactures chimney locks. Sister Emily Pig has been operating "Emily's Entertainment TV for Housebound Hogs" for three years now. Youngest brother Fred Pig opened "Fred's Fabulous Wolf-Detection Radar" just last year. His business is currently growing by leaps and bounds.

Let's eavesdrop on a recent conversation among the Pig siblings over lunch.

Emily asked Fred how his new business was going. Fred practically jumped out of his chair and exclaimed "FANTASTIC! I need three of me to just keep up with sales." Ron said, "I wish I could say the same. My sales are down lately. It's really affecting my cash flow." Fred asked Emily how things were going with her business.

"It's not that sales are slow - I'm just feeling overwhelmed lately," Emily replied. "I would love to customer retention?"

be able to turn to my staff for help once in a while instead of having them always turning to me. Trying to keep my team communicating with each other and moving in the same direction seems to be just that-trying. On one hand, I want my business to grow but, on the other hand, I know I can't do it all myself forever."

The conversation paused, each Pig lost in their own thoughts. Fred was thinking about how such rapid growth should be every business owner's dream-come-true, but it wasn't all a bed of roses. He thought to himself, "Life on the fast track is too hectic. All I really want is to make a few adjustments, gain control of a few things, and improve the quality of my life. I guess I shouldn't complain, though. Poor Ron sounds frazzled. He really needs to get on the right track."

Suddenly a strange expression passed across Fred's face. Both Ron and Emily noticed it, and Emily said, "What's up, brother Pig?"

Fred said, "Although we seem to share some of the same problems, we're each running on a different track. But, ultimately, I think all we each want is to be On Track."

Ron said, "Hey, you're pretty smart for a punk brother. It's obvious your company is running on the 'Fast Track'. But what about me, are you saying I'm on the 'Wrong Track'?" Emily chimed in at this point, "Look at it in a more positive light, Ron, you're trying to get back on the 'Right Track.'"

Fred, who instantly got a big grin on his face, said "I have it all figured out. I've got a Fast Track company, Ron has a Right Track company, and Emily has an Emerging Track company."

"OK, so we're now known as Fast Track Fred, Right Track Ron, and Emerging Track Emily," Emily joked. But what does it really MEAN? How can we take this newly discovered knowledge and use it to help us?

END OF PART ONE

(Go to our website, www.ABAdvisors.com, to see what happened to the siblings-three)

What kind of company do you have? And, like our little pig friend Emily voiced, what does it really MEAN?

Your big, bad wolf doesn't have to be ugly or mean. He can come in the form of such a busy year you can't hire enough good people, or in the constant worry that you have too much on your plate and nobody to delegate to. If you have a plan to get On Track– you don't have to be afraid of the wolf.

It's been said that you begin to solve a problem just by identifying it. Take our quiz below to see what kind of company you are. Then talk to us at ABA to see how we can get you—and keep you—ON TRACK. You have worked hard and, although hard work is always part of the equation, you deserve to regain the feeling of being in control and sleeping well at night (with wolf-less dreams!)
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Check the items below that apply to your business

List A

- Rapid growth (50% per year or higher)
- Poor communications
- Inadequate cash flow
- Growing inefficiencies
- Diminished quality of life

List B

- Capital shortages
- Limited management skills
- Lack of teamwork
- Unclear direction
- Poor management information

List C

- Stagnant or dropping sales
- Poor productivity
- Underperforming profits
- Deteriorating morale
- Low profit margins

If you checked three or more items on list A, you are probably a Fast Track Company. Your main focus needs to be maintaining peak performance during this high-growth period by obtaining critical resources, skill development, and good information systems.

If you checked three or more items on list B, you are probably an Emerging Track Company. Your main focus needs to be gaining the information and tactical management skills to move from the entrepreneurial growth phase to the professional management phase.

If you checked three or more items on list C, you are probably a Right Track Company. Your main focus needs to be improving performance which results in improved sales, credibility, productivity, cash flow, and profits.

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