



## Canada Border Services Agency

### MONEY

Meet Tamelynda Lux, executive director CAFE Southwestern Ontario

# And You Are?: Her agency helps keep multi-generational family businesses alive



By Norman De Bono, The London Free Press  
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Tamelynda Lux, executive director of the Centre for Family Enterprise, stands in the offices at Innovation Works on King Street in London. (CRAIG GLOVER, The London Free Press)

It's an all too common business story.

A couple works tirelessly, struggles and suffers to build a successful business they hand down to their children.

And junior blows it, big time, not having the foundation and life lessons those early years of struggle and learning taught the founders.

Tamelynda Lux is working to break that cycle.

The executive director of the Southwestern Ontario branch of CAFE, Canadian Association of Family Enterprise, her agency offers workshops, seminars, counselling and mentoring to family businesses who want to keep multi-generation businesses alive.

"It's lack of communication and planning," she said of why some family businesses fail.

"If you think of a ball of twine and you tug at it and it gets stuck, CAFE is here to untangle that twine, to help conversations happen and bring clarity to a family."

Saying it is about “connecting” business with those that can help and advise them CAFE offers a series of meetings, workshops, seminars and different programs, all geared to help family business.

“I love entrepreneurship. I am passionate about education and my values include family. When I heard about C AFE which is about entrepreneurship and supporting the family, how could I not be involved,” she said, seated in Innovation Works, the downtown office where she rents space.

It’s little surprise Lux is passionate about family business success, since her roots in entrepreneurship were planted firmly by her mother and grandmother, she said.

“We consider ourselves a business family. All four of us have our own business. When we get together we talk business,” she said of her siblings.

“But my early inspiration were two very important women in my life, my mother and grandmother.”

Her mother, Hannah Lux, was a lab technician at Western and also a realtor, helping infuse her kids with the entrepreneurial spirit.

“My grandmother taught me about the value of family and love and being in service to others. When you combine those early inspirations, CAFE ticks all the boxes,” said Lux.

When her grandparents came to Canada from Germany, her mother was 10 years old and they began their own mushroom-growing business.

“Entrepreneurship is in our blood. I can’t imagine coming to a new country and doing that.”

When Lux was five years old her biological father left the family and her mother had four children under five years old to support.

“This is one of my life lessons: Don’t put all your eggs in one basket, diversity is good. She had to put food on the table, clothed us, gave us shelter, she did what she needed to do,” and that is why her mother took on real estate as well as working at the lab.

Lux has followed in the same path, a serial entrepreneur she now also owns her small business, Lux and Associates, a life transition coaching business where she helps those changing careers, either by fate or by choice, as well as life changes.

“I focus on career and business transition, a change in their life. Maybe they have retired and they want to know what their next step is,” said Lux.

Much of her work and time, however, is taken up by CAFE.

The agency offers personal advisory groups to clients where at least one family member from the business is in the group. Eight to 12 non-competing business members meet monthly for about three hours to support each other.

“I love what CAFE can bring to business, to help them succeed and grow. We need that, Lux says. “If it was not for family business, where would we be? They are the backbone of our economy. When you look at what they do with philanthropy, community engagement it is all about family business. I hold family near and dear.”

Lux began her entrepreneurial career with Word Whiz in 1988, a secretarial office that did typing work.

In 1991 she formed Lux and Associates, focusing then on job search, resume preparation and she also worked at Fanshawe College as a placement co-ordinator offering outplacement training. She worked as program manager at the London Small Business Centre which advises small and start-up businesses.

Lux has also written a book, Wrongful Dismissal, tips and strategies to cope with that career change.

“It was my 50th birthday present to myself. This issue comes up and I write this book in a coaching style,” she said.

She began at CAFE in 2000, becoming executive director about 10 years ago.

At CAFE she is particularly proud of the Future Leaders program, piloted in 2008 with support from the Richard Ivey School of Business, at Western University.

That program offers workshops and seminars to the next generation of business leaders discussing ideas and issues that relate to family business.

“We want to address the family as a whole and serve our next generation, ages 18 to 24, so we came up with those programs.”

It extends over six months, encouraging discussion between family with coaching from CAFE, she adds.

“Its about what conversations you need to have with family and what conversations you need to have with yourself.”

The local chapter has 50 family businesses they advise, from across Southwestern Ontario.

It also offers sessions for non-family leadership, designed for non-family managers in a family business and how they can navigate the blood ties around them.

“They have a unique set of challenges,” said Lux.

As for the future, CAFE is transitioning, merging with the Institute for Family Enterprise in 2017 and a new organization “will emerge” called Family Enterprise Xchange.

“CAFE will grow into FEX, it is exciting as it means it will grow and have brand consistency. There is more value coming for advisers and members,” she said.

CAFE is funded by membership fees, workshop fees and support from business, and has an educational partnership with Ivey.

There are 13 CAFE chapters across Canada.

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## THE STATS

**Age:** 51

**Born:** Hamilton

**Family:** Married to Larry, one daughter.

**Education:** St. Francis Xavier University, Halifax — through Western Continuing Studies — diploma in adult education. Coaches Training Institute

**Work:** Word Whiz, Lux and Associates, Fanshawe College, Small Business Centre as program manager, and she started at CAFE in 2000.

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## EITHER/OR

**Facebook/Instagram/Twitter:** Facebook

**Cat/dog:** neither

**Beer/wine/liquor:** wine

**BlackBerry/iPhone/Android:** iPhone

**Pen/Pencil:** pen

**Bottled/tap water:** reverse osmosis water; not plastic water bottle; not regular tap water

**Coffee/tea:** either

**Summer/winter/spring/fall:** all; preferably spring

**Tims/Starbucks:** either

**Port Stanley/Grand Bend:** neither

**Cinema/Netflix:** Netflix

**Book/eReader:** book

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## THE QUOTE

"This is one of my life lessons, don't put all your eggs in one basket."

*Tamelynda Lux, executive director Southwestern Ontario branch of CAFE*



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