

Estate & Succession Planning for the Family Farm

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Speaker Biography

Davon Cook

Partner

K•COE ISOM

Davon coaches family and closely-held businesses through estate and succession planning issues, setting up ‘right size’ governance, tackling tough conversations, and planning strategically for business growth. She coordinates K•COE ISOM’s peer group network that provides executive education to ag business leaders. That ongoing exposure to a wide variety of ag businesses keeps her informed and involved in the current issues facing our clients.

Davon’s success working with family farms and agribusinesses is attributed to her diverse background and hands-on experience in agricultural settings. She grew up near Lubbock, Texas, on a cotton farm (in which she is still involved as a shareholder) and was involved in her family’s cotton gin. After starting her career in Chicago at ConAgra Foods and McKinsey & Company, Davon returned to Texas to join the cotton gin business.

During those 10 years, Davon developed an understanding of the complexity of managing any small business, particularly one shared with family members. And through her daily interaction with 100+ farmer customers, she gained insight into what makes farmers successful. She understands the variety of skills needed to manage an ag operation, as well as the “softer” side of the equation in helping a family grow the enterprise as a team.

After selling the cotton gin, Davon has continued helping others build strong ag businesses as a co-founder of Ag Progress. Her consulting work also included designing ag investment projects throughout Africa for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. She previously served corporate agribusiness clients as part of The Context Network. This global perspective on the industry brings useful context to production ag operations.

EDUCATION

- MBA, University of Illinois
- Master of Science, agricultural economics, University of Illinois
- Bachelor of Science, agricultural economics, Texas A&M University