



JOSEPH HORAK

Sherpa

CONTACT

616.890.6052

joe@drhorak.com

www.sherpa-joe.com

Grand Rapids, MI USA

SKILLS

- Family Business Consulting
- Leadership Assessment and Executive Coaching
- Individual, Couple and Family Therapy
- Business Strategy Development
- Non-profit governance and leadership

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.):

Department of Counseling
Psychology and Counselor
Education

Focus: Counseling and Leadership
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI

PROFILE

Psychologist, educator, and consultant with over four decades of experience at the intersection of clinical practice, leadership development, and family enterprise advising. Known for integrating behavioral science with strategic insight to help multigenerational family businesses navigate succession, governance, interpersonal complexity, and organizational change. Former director of a leading university-based family business institute and international collaborator with institutions such as Lancaster University Management School, and a coach at the Family Enterprise Case Competition with several universities. Trusted by founders, next-gens, and leadership teams for a values-driven, systemic approach that fosters resilience, alignment, and long-term continuity across generations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Horak Family and Psychological Services, P.C. and sherpa-joe.com – Founder

Grand Rapids, MI
1/1995 – Current

- Consulting with family-owned businesses across the USA

**Master of Social Work Degree
(M.S.W.):**

Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

**Master of Theological Studies
Degree (M.T.S.):**

St. John's Provincial Seminary
Plymouth, MI

Bachelor of Arts Degree (B.A.):

University of St. Thomas
St. Paul, MN

LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Licensed Psychologist (State of Michigan)
- Certified Coach: Leadership Circle Profile and Leadership Agility
- Certificate in Business Strategy (Harvard Business School, Executive Education)

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Current President of the International Association of Psychology and Counseling
- In the process of obtaining Czech Citizenship by Descent

- Providing leadership assessment and coaching to business leaders
- Clinical Psychology Practice (with my wife Stephanie Horak, M.A.)

**Lancaster University Management School – Honorary Teaching Fellow –
Entrepreneurship and Strategy**

Lancaster, United Kingdom

2016 – Current

- Collaborated on research projects, coaching students in the Family Enterprise Case Competition
- Served as guest lecturer, providing insights to local entrepreneurs and enhancing academic engagement
- Participated in the Family Enterprise Centre Business Advisory Panel to guide strategic initiatives
- Consulted with the Center for Family Enterprise on revenue growth strategies and direction

**The Family Owned Business Institute – Seidman College of Business –
Grand Valley State University – Director**

Grand Rapids, MI

03/2014 – 06/2016

- Recast the vision and strategy for the institute to resume its status as an international leader
- Created the Scholar in Residence program creating higher impact for Seidman faculty to collaborate with the top international FOB scholars
- Collaborated on original research projects with international scholars

**Seidman School of Business, Grand Valley State University – Adjunct
Faculty**

Grand Rapids, MI

09/2007 – 06/2016

- Taught MGT 437 Family Business

**DWH Associates, LLC – Senior Director: Leadership Development and
Family Business Consultation**

Grand Rapids, MI

08/2012 – 08/2013

- Company Overview: DWH is one of the region's largest business consulting practices
- Working with a team of business consultants working with small to medium-sized distressed companies
- Collaborating in the construction of turnaround plans for distressed family and privately held businesses

Horak & Kuhn, LLC – Advisor

Grand Rapids, MI

05/2002 – 12/2004

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- Provided business and family consultations to family owned businesses and family foundations

Western Michigan University, Downtown Graduate Center – Adjunct Faculty, Marketing Consultant

Grand Rapids, MI

01/2003 – 05/2003

- Taught graduate level marriage and family therapy course
- Provided marketing consultation to the GR satellite

Western Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America – Adjunct Faculty

Holland, MI

02/1996 – 05/1996

- Taught graduate level course in Marriage and Family Therapy

Wayne State University School of Social Work – On-Site Director and Adjunct Faculty

Grand Rapids, MI

03/1994 – 05/1996

- Coordinated the Grand Rapids Satellite of a Post-MSW Certificate in Marriage and Family Therapy
- Hired faculty members, coordinated admissions, registration and marketing
- Taught graduate courses in Marriage and Family Therapy

Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services – Out-Patient Clinician

Zeeland, MI

02/1993 – 01/1995

- Established a new out-patient clinic
- Provided individual, marital, family and group therapy
- Provided individual and group supervision
- Presented psycho-educational programs to community groups

Henry Ford Hospital – Family Therapist

Dearborn, Ann Arbor and Canton, MI

03/1988 – 01/1993

- Provided individual, marital, family and group therapy
- Taught family therapy seminar to M.D. residents, Ph.D. interns, and M.S.W. interns utilizing live supervision
- Clinically supervised M.S.W. and Ph.D. interns
- Served as liaison and consultant to satellite medical staff
- Provided consultation to family owned businesses

Wayne State University, School of Social Work – Adjunct Faculty

Detroit, MI

09/1992 – 12/1992

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- Taught graduate level courses in the Post-MSW Certificate Program in Marriage and Family Therapy
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APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTED POSITIONS

International Association for Psychology and Counseling:
President *2025 – Current*, Board Member, *2022 – Current*

Licensing Board for Psychology (State of Michigan):
Gubernatorial Appointment, Member *01/2012 – 12/2015*

Licensing Board for Marriage and Family Therapy (State of Michigan): Gubernatorial Appointment, Member *02/1999 – 10/2006* Chair *01/2004–10/2006*

Michigan Association for Marriage and Family Therapy:
Treasurer *1993* President-Elect *1994 – 1995* President *1996 – 1997* Past-President *1998*

PUBLICATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Family Business Related Publications/Presentations

Horak, J. J. (2025). Consulting with Family Owned Businesses: A New Frontier for Systems Psychotherapists. Presentation Oxford Institute, International Association of Psychology and Counseling. St. Hilda's College, Oxford University, Oxford, UK.

Horak, J. J. (2019). Resiliency in Family Business: A New Tool for Advisors. *Tharawat Magazine for Family Businesses and Entrepreneurs*. Online and Paper version, Feature article, October.

Hinsch, C., Horak, J. J., & Kotlar, J. (2018). Can Academics Provide Value to Practitioners? The Practitioner Response to Academic Research Output: An Abstract.

In Back to the Future: Using Marketing Basics to Provide Customer Value: Proceedings of the 2017 Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) Annual Conference (pp. 621–627). Springer International Publishing.

Kotler, J. & Horak, J. J. (July 2018). Engaged Scholarship: Bridging the Practice–Research Gap. International Family Enterprise Research Academy, Windesheim University, Zwolle, The Netherlands.

Horak, J. J. (June, 2016). Lancaster University Management School, U. K. Family Enterprise Conference: Panel Member, Research Presentation and Research Poster.

Horak, J. J., Kotlar, J. Hinsch, C. & DeMassis, A. (2016). Engaged Scholarship and Family Business Research. Poster Presentation: Family Enterprise Research Conference, Fundacao Dom Cabral University, Nova Lima, Brazil. (June, 2016).

Horak, J. J. (2015). Plenary Panel Participant: Engaging Stakeholders in Family Business Research Using the Engaged Scholarship Model. Family Firm Institute Annual Conference, London, U.K.

Horak, J. J. (2015). First to Second Generation Succession for Female Owned Enterprises, Great Lakes Women's Business Conference, Novi, MI.

Horak, J. J. & Isley, P. (2015). Family Owned Business in West Michigan. *Seidman Business Review*, Vol. 21, Issue. 1, Article 6.

Horak, J., J. & Lee, R. E. (2011). Resiliency in Family Businesses: Contributions from Family Science. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(9), 7–9.

Horak, J. J., & Lee, R. E. (2011). “Resiliency in family businesses: Contributions from behavioral science.” Refereed poster presentation, Family Enterprise

Research Conference, Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, MI.

Horak, J. J. (2008). "Creating Highly Successful Family Owned Businesses." Presentation to graduate students in the Marriage and Family Therapy and M.B.A. programs at Seton Hill University, Pittsburgh, PA.

Brown, N. A., Orosz, J. J., Horak, J. J. & Kuhn, G. M. (2004). Organizing a Family Philanthropy. Nonprofit Good Practice Guide, The Johnson Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership at Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, MI.

Horak, J. J. & Kuhn, G. M. (2004). Consulting to Family Owned Businesses: A new area for family therapists. Michigan Monitor (February).

Horak, J. J. & Kuhn, G. M. (2004). "Succession planning in Family Owned Businesses: The founder's psychological makeup that threatens transfer of ownership." Presentation for Small Business Seminar Showcase; Lake Michigan College and Four Flags Chamber of Commerce: Niles, MI.

Horak, J. J. & Kuhn, G. M. (2004). "Working with narcissistic and conversely shamed based male family business leaders." Presentation at Michigan Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, East Lansing, MI.

Psychology Related Publications/Presentations

Horak, J. J. & Brutus, R. (2024). Reframing the discourse on race: Increasing harmony by moving beyond critical social justice theory. Plenary Presentation: International Association of Psychology and Counseling. New Orleans, LA.

Horak, J. J. & Brutus, R. (2024). Reframing the discourse on race: Increasing harmony by moving beyond critical social justice theory. Presentation: Oxford Institute,

International Association of Psychology and Counseling.
St. Hilda's College, Oxford University, Oxford, UK.

Horak, J. J. (2023). Moving beyond critical social justice theory. Hope for a brighter future. Presentaton. Scotland Institute, International Association of Psychology and Counseling. University of Edingburgh, Edingburgh, Scotland, UK.

Horak, J. J. (2023). "IAPC Origins and Aspirations." International Association of Psychology and Counseling. Freeport, Grand Bahamas, The Bahamas.

Weiser, M. E., Horak, J. J. & Monroe, D. (2008). Beyond shame: A dialogic narrative of comic correction. *Journal of Advanced Composition* 27(3), 563–90.

Horak, Joseph J., and Elizabeth Weiser, (2010). "Gather us in: A UST legacy of civil discourse." *Spotlight*, Journal of the College of Arts and Sciences, University of St. Thomas, Fall.

Horak, J. J. (2010). Can a marriage and family therapist think like an entrepreneur? *Family Therapy Magazine*. November/December.

Reviewer: (2008) with Wayne Denton, M.D. Ph.D. providing input representing AAMFT for the American Psychiatric Association's Revision of the Guidelines for the Assessment and Treatment of Major Depression and Bipolar Disorder for the DSM-V.

Horak, J. J. (2006). I am not worthy: Shame and spirituality. In K. B. Helmeke & C. F. Sori (Eds.), *The therapist's notebook for integrating spirituality in counseling: Homework handouts, and activities for use in psychotherapy*, New York: Haworth Press.

Horak, J. J. (2006). Deconstructing God in relation to the reconstruction of self. In K. B. Helmeke & C. F. Sori (Eds.), *The therapist's notebook for integrating spirituality in counseling: Homework, handouts and activities for use in psychotherapy*, New York: Haworth

Press.

Horak, J. J. (2003) In a post-Prozac world has therapy become passé? In a culture that abounds with quick fixes for a variety of health issues, can a pill replace psychotherapy? *Family Therapy Magazine* 2(2), 12–15.

Horak, J. J. & Bischof, G. H. (2002). “Managing multiple relationships in medical settings.” Poster session. AAMFT Annual Conference, Cincinnati, OH.

Horak, J. J. (1999). Relational diagnosis in family therapy. *Family Therapy News* 30(4), 1, 6–8.

Horak, J. J. (1997). The intimacy debate. *Family Therapy News* 28(4), 2, 21–23.

Horak, J. J. (2002). Factors predicting distress at marital therapy onset. Dissertation, Western Michigan University.

Horak, J. J. (2000). “For Richer, For Poorer: The Economic Value of Therapy.” Plenary Panel Participant, AAMFT Annual Conference, Denver, CO.

Horak, J. J. & Hovestadt, A. J. (2002). Guest Lecture: “Systemic Family Assessment” Russian Academy of Sciences, The Institute for Psychology, Moscow, Russia.

Horak, J. J., Lee, R. E., Shickell, C. R. & Molett, M. T. (2006). “Avoiding Unethical Decision Making.” Ethics Committee presentation at the annual AAMFT Conference, Austin, TX.

Campbell, S., Horak, J. J., Lee, R. E., Shickell, C. R. (2005). “Ethics Case Study.” Ethics Committee presentation at the annual AAMFT Conference, Kansas City, MO.

Pais, S., Campbell, S., Horak, J. J., Lee, R. E. (2004). “Ethics Case Study.” Ethics Committee presentation at the annual AAMFT Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Horak, J. J. (1995). “Legislative Issues and Third-Party

Reimbursement of LMFT's," AAMFT Leadership Institute, Herndon, VA.

Horak, J. J. & George, A. (1987). "Interpreting the Two-Family Dance: Counter-transference in Family Therapy," NASW National Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Horak, J. J. & VanSoest, D. (1983). "Self-Determination and Justice in the Classroom: A Rogerian Approach to Education," National Conference of Social Work Education (NCSWE), Fort Worth, TX.

AWARDS

Mentor of The Year: The Earl A. Siterlet Memorial Award: Thermal-Tec/Michigan Inc.

Outstanding Alumnus Award – Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology – Western Michigan University

Professional Practice Award – American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Awarded to members who make significant contributions in regard to leadership and access for MFTs within the healthcare delivery system

All-University Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award – Western Michigan University

TESTIMONIALS

Dr. Horak has worked with us in a consultative manner for the last several years. His insight, professionalism, support, and leadership have been paramount in helping our family business not only grow, but move in the direction of strength and clarity. Dr. Joe is friendly, easy to work with, approachable,

brilliant, and always willing to listen to the issues and find solutions that work. We find that many employees that come to work with us state that having Dr. Joe as part of our organization is one of the biggest benefits we offer. He works with our innovation team forming new ideas and approaches that allow us to be current and constantly evolving. He brings with him years of experiences from the educational sector to family run businesses across the globe. Any family run business that is lucky enough to utilize the skills and expertise that Dr. Joe brings will not only surpass their counterparts but will move into areas that they never dreamed possible. We cannot thank him enough for his leadership and guidance and look forward to continuing to work with him now and into the future.

Linda Blanchard, President ThermalTec Roofing, Cedar Springs, MI.

Working with Joe has been truly transformative for both me and our family business. He's helped me grow into a leadership role that aligns with both my strengths and the unique needs of our business. Through his guidance, I've gained the skills—and the confidence—to navigate tough conversations with family members, which has made a real difference in how we work together. Joe has been instrumental in helping us function as a stronger, more unified team. His sessions have given me the clarity and courage to lead through uncertainty, and I'm incredibly grateful for the impact he's had on our journey.

Gabe Starkey, President, Fox Products Corporation, South Whitley, IN

Joe has helped open my eyes to both growing the company and making it easier to lead, ideas that are typically in conflict with each other. I have shifted away from needing to control outcomes and towards leading processes that build up our team. Admittedly, I still try to control too much but I can recognize it sooner and can adjust faster now. The company has grown and the process has put some conflict on the table that we've been able to work through in a much healthier way than we would have been able to prior to working with Joe. For the first time in my career, I can see a path to sustainable

growth that doesn't have to burn me or my leadership team out. The coaching has not only made our team better leaders, but it has made us better people.

Joe has an uncanny ability to walk people through difficult conversations with both empathy and candor. He weaves his personal story, background and training into his coaching. He is relatable, and genuinely cares about those he works and walks with.

Jacob Manthei, President, Aster Brands, Petoskey, MI

Other testimonials are on www.sherpa-joe.com and other references are available upon request.
