



Tips FROM THE Top[®]

Business insights
from those at the top
for those at the top

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THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD[®]

Achieve Success with Peer Advice and Coaching



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SALES

Closing Technique Affects Retention

When you obtain business correctly, you retain business long-term. We've found that treating customers respectfully in our closing process is the first stage of a long-term retention strategy. We've learned that customers who are pressured into buying feel rushed or don't have the opportunity to ask important questions. As a result, they are more likely to suffer buyer's remorse later and are less likely to be committed to future purchases. It takes discipline to struggle through a long closing process with a cautious prospect, but it pays off in the long run. Design your sales process to create clients who are well-educated about your product or service and fully understand your value proposition. They're more likely to stay engaged with your firm and not jump to a competitor.

James Suddeth, First Carolina Insurance, North Charleston, SC

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Business to Business Strategic Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Business to Consumer Strategic Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Make a List of Providers that Help Your Business

I have compiled a list of trusted home services providers whose services complement my cleaning business. I hand them out to my customers for them to use. I have used these companies before and know that other customers highly recommend them. Providing this list of trusted service providers has helped me retain customers by adding a benefit they don't expect.

Paul Ilg, Steamin P's Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning, Bartlett, IL

FINANCE

Job or Business?

How much money do you have invested in your business? Is it making you a reasonable return? Ideally, you should attempt to make 15 percent annually on money you have invested. If you are not making money on your money, what you really have is a job, not a business.

*Cameron Inglis, Germinate Inc., Winnipeg, MB,
and
Steven Moon, King's Septic & Portable Toilet Service Inc.,
Grosse Isle, MB*

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Connecting with Your Customers

One of my commitments this year is to spend more time interacting with my customers to encourage loyalty, referrals and increased business from them. Because I'm on the road a lot, I've made a habit of calling at least one customer each day between appointments just to ask if they're happy with our service and if there is anything I can do for them. This recently resulted in a sizable order that I wouldn't otherwise have gotten.

John Horger, High Performance Systems, Walled Lake, MI

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Core Values Defense

We recently had an employee miss an important issue for a client. The associate in charge was defensive, quoting a number of factors where the client had missed deadlines or submitted incomplete documentation. We reviewed a copy of our core values. Our commitment to integrity means we don't try to use the client's error to mitigate our own. Moreover, I realized they deserved an apology directly from me.

Nancy Vaughan, Armstrong Vaughan & Associate, San Antonio, TX

NJAWBO Business Boot Camp

Centenary College

Schedule an executive coaching session, or attend one of our two workshops on "**24 Sales Traps and How to Avoid Them**" or "**Understanding and Leveraging Your Unique Leadership Styles**" (which includes a free DISC profiles assessment).

Saturday, April 28, 2007

[More Info](#)

CEO/Executive Informational Meetings

Want to know what owners of extraordinary businesses know?

Then join us for a 90-minute executive informational meeting sponsored by Achieve Business Solutions and hosted by East Stroudsburg University. Breakfast or lunch will be served and there is no obligation or cost for attending. The Executive Meetings below will be held at two convenient times:

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

Centenary College
Hackettstown, NJ

[More Info](#)

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

Noble Bank
Sparta, NJ

[More Info](#)

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Location To Be Announced

[More Info](#)

QUICK TIPS

FINANCE

Expense and Income Control

It is rarely true that poor profitability can be cured by controlling one large-expense item. Keep a close watch on the myriad of small-expense items that routinely appear each month. Because these items are often overlooked as "routine," they can add up to a significant expense more rapidly than you may think.

Joanne Bushaw, Monterey Peninsula Court Reporters, Inc., Monterey, CA

MANAGEMENT

Know Your Role

The most important thing for an owner to do is to write their own job description and then do it! Value your time appropriately.

Kim Christie, TAB-Certified Facilitator, Winnipeg, MB

The Alternative Board® brings business owners, CEOs and presidents of non-competing businesses together in boards, where members can present challenges and opportunities to the board for seasoned, practical advice from other owners who understand one another's perspective and contribute meaningful solutions. The boards consist of up to 10 members, meeting monthly under the guidance of a TAB-Certified Facilitator. Over 300 TAB Boards are operating each month across the United States, Canada and South America. Since its inception, thousands of businesses have benefited from membership in The Alternative Board®. For more information on The Alternative Board®, visit www.TABBoards.com

Execution is Key

As a sales-driven organization, we like to set our sights on big objectives. It is thrilling when one of the sales force "slays a dragon." We have found, however, that being able to absorb this new business into existing operations is equally important. A dead dragon isn't nearly as thrilling when the meat is rotting in the sun.

Brad Elmhurst

Direct Hit Data, Inc.

San Antonio, TX

Reducing Costs With Uniforms

While looking at ways to reduce costs, we explored the leasing of uniforms for our field representatives. We were able to lease them at \$3 per week, which saved us the cost of purchase and trying to get them back. The standardization of the look made our customers feel secure in who our service representatives were.

Jon Rosenberg

Inter County Mechanical

Bohemia, NY

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