



# Tips FROM THE Top<sup>®</sup>

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

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## A WORD FROM THE TOP

### Planning & Doing

The best companies are those that excel at execution. The Evergreen Study funded by Harvard Business Review, found that every company that was a top performer knew that getting things done was critical to their success. Doing things the most effective, efficient and best way possible is good for you, your employees, your customers and the marketplace. And – having great operational processes instantly increases the value of your company! Operational excellence means planning your work, working that plan and measuring your success.

## MARKETING

### Prospect for Prospectors

When trying to improve the efficiency of your marketing efforts, ask yourself where most of your new customer referrals come from and look for patterns. Strong referral groups are your centers of influence and have the proven ability to create new leads for you. Instead of cold calling or mass marketing directly to prospects, enable these centers of influence to do your prospecting by giving them information and materials to help spread the word about the value you provide. Most of your marketing should be spent “prospecting for more prospectors.”

*Glenn Sutherland, Sutherland Financial Advisors, Charleston, SC*



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## WHITE PAPER

**Planning** a strategic direction for your business is no longer a luxury; it is **essential** to maximizing its **success**.

Learn valuable techniques and tactics that will help you lead your company more effectively and profitably. **Download our white paper on Strategic Business Leadership<sup>®</sup>.**

## OPERATIONS

### Quoting Profits in Pennies

One way to have your employees understand the financials of the business without fully disclosing what the company makes is to display on a table in front of them the number of pennies per sales dollar that reach the company's bottom line. I do this every year in our annual kickoff meeting in January and it really shows how much it takes to run a business and how much we all need to be efficient and productive to impact the number of pennies we all feel in our pockets.

*George Hall, Questron, Inc., Elkridge, MD*

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Sick Time Versus Personal Time Off

So that employees don't have to call in sick when they aren't, we give personal time off. Just say that you are taking a personal time off day. To reward those who don't use all of their personal time off days, at the end of the year, we pay time and a half for those days not used.

*Chris Wohlbrandt, Midwest Title, Naples, FL*

## OPERATIONS

### Using Job Costing As a Key to Profitability for Services

Too many service companies don't understand their true costs for different jobs. Without accurate job cost data, how can you choose the most profitable customers and job types? Take the time to actually measure, track, and record direct labor and materials used on every job, and then allocate indirect materials and overheads proportionately. Once you've built a history of different job types and the relative costs and margins, you can make more informed choices about the best kind of customers and jobs for your business.

*Charleston TAB Board 401, Charleston, SC*

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Put a Deadline on Help Wanted Ads

Encourage prospective interviewees to act immediately by putting a deadline on help wanted ads. This will speed up the interview process and get your employees in place sooner.

*Geoff Besko, Securis Inc., Winnipeg, MB*

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### TABBoard 410 Meeting (members only)

**Tuesday, March 4, 2008**

### CEO eSeminar Series – Creating High Performance Teams

Join us for this exciting workshop to learn the tools & techniques used to recruit, hire and manage top performing organizations. Advance reservations are required, all materials are included.

[Learn more and register.](#)

**Tuesday, March 18, 2008  
4:00 PM - 5:15 PM**

### TABBoard 411 Meeting (members only)

**Wednesday, March 19, 2008**

## Keeping the Emotion Out of Letting People Go

If you know you will have to lay people off in the future, set benchmarks ahead of time so you know “when” you will have to let someone go, and it isn't an angry decision.

*Bill Schwartzkopf, Sage Consulting, Denver, CO*

**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](http://www.TABBoards.com)**

## Experience TAB!

Join area business owners and executives for an interactive, confidential think tank with the Alternative Board, the areas #1 Peer Advisory membership organization.

[Learn more and register.](#)

**Tuesday, March 25, 2008**

## QUICK TIPS

### Networking Tip

When networking with new acquaintances, I deliberately avoid handing out cards, saying I neglected to bring enough. Using this as my reason, I make sure I collect the card of the party I'm speaking with and always follow up.

*Fran Cassidy*

*AXA Advisors*

*Melville, NY*

### Keep Insurance Costs Down

Make sure you do not overstate your capabilities on your Web site. There was an instance where a company claimed they were manufacturers on their Web site when in fact they were wholesale distributors; their worker's comp carrier saw this and raised their rates.

*Laura Frodell*

*Master Wire & Cable, Inc.*

*Bohemia, NY*

## A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

We want our operating procedures to be as clear as possible. We're finding that including photographs to show the right way versus the wrong way can save a lot of writing, and often communicates more clearly than simple words.

*Bob Kleszics*

*Harvest Market*

*Hockessin, DE*

### LINKS OF INTEREST

**Tips from the Top are now available in a searchable online format to registered AchieveNextLevel users**, allowing readers to now search for best practices in hiring, marketing, growing and leading their companies

To access the free resource portion of the website, you must **register first**. Once you are logged in, simply **Click here**, or go to My Community (from the right hand side of the screen) and then My Documents and you can view the Archive of Tips from the Top.



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