



Tips FROM THE Top[®]

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

Published by The Alternative Board[®]

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MANAGEMENT

Helping the Time Management Issue

I recently had an acquaintance that was looking for a part-time job. I hired him to work two days a week. He performs functions that current employees feel they don't have time for. Once we understand the hours needed to perform the duties, we can transfer the responsibility to a full-time employee with a reasonable expectation set by both of us about what it means to their schedule. My part-timer then moves on to “test drive” the next job.

Randy Smith, FORUM Systems Group, San Antonio, TX

HUMAN RESOURCES

Creative Interview Questions

When you are interviewing, besides asking job specific questions, ask creative questions such as the last three books the candidate has read. These outside the box questions will tell you a lot about a person. Before you do a background check, ask the interviewee what you'll find when you do the background check— this is also telling. Sometimes people start off by saying nothing but will then back down and provide more information about what may come up when you do the background check. Regardless of their answer, make sure you do a background check and behavioral assessments before you hire someone.



THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD[®]

Achieve Success with Peer Advice and Coaching



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Tom Flaherty, Pro Cabinet Solutions & Restoration Floorworks,
Lakewood, CO*

MANAGEMENT

Project Lists

There is no point in creating a project with goals and deadlines unless you appoint a project manager who is responsible for its execution. Management will have a single point of accountability and the smaller projects are excellent training for junior staff.

Quentin Baker, BakerRisk, San Antonio, TX

SALES

All Sales are Final

As a retailer, many of my customers pay via credit card. In the past, occasionally, a customer would pay by credit card and then promptly call their credit card company demanding that the purchase be removed from their bill for no good reason. As retailers know, collecting the payment or retrieving the merchandise can be difficult and time-consuming.

After consulting with my credit card service provider, I discovered that having my service provider automatically print the statement “All sales are final” on the sales receipt blocks the buyer’s attempt to cancel the transaction. Although the buyer has arbitration rights, their attempt to take advantage of the retailer is difficult to defend. Since I implemented this practice, unjustified cancellations have ended. If you are experiencing this same customer behavior, contact your credit card service provider to understand if this option is available to you.

Mary Lynn Socha, Belles of Elegance, DePere, WI

FINANCE

Company Profits

Having a collective understanding of the profit produced from company efforts can be clearly communicated with a sign that shows the number of hours people must work to earn enough profit to cover wasted time, equipment repairs, etc. For example, for every \$10 spent needlessly, our staff must work on average two hours.

Ted Lund, ExTech LLC, Deep River, CT

A FINAL WORD FROM THE TOP

Upcoming Meetings, Online Events & Workshops

**Chairman’s Breakfast —
Ames, Hamburg NJ**

Tuesday, December 2nd, 2008

**Annual TAB Members Strategic
Planning Summit—
Sussex County Community College**

Tuesday, December 9th, 2008

**Informational Open Board Meeting
Augusta & Sparta NJ**

Wednesday, December 10th, 2008

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**Open Webinar: “6 Critical Keys to
Business Success”**

Tuesday, December 16th, 2008

[LEARN MORE](#)

**TABTalks Radio:
“Wowing Your Customers while
Increasing Your Bottom Line!”**

Monday, December 22nd, 2008

QUICK TIPS

Vendor Relationships

Treat all your vendors as if they were clients. Make sure you understand their needs and concerns and work to build a highly-valued relationship with them. You never know when your own requests to a vendor may require special or expedited treatment to meet your needs. A good relationship virtually ensures they will go the extra mile to help you with your own clients.

Rey Carr

Peer Resources

Victoria, BC

“Now What?”

With continued uncertainty in the markets, it's hard to determine how to take action to move your business forward. However, there are some clues that can you better prepare for the coming year and position yourself for new opportunities:

- **Stay Informed** – Keep abreast of what the current administration and the Obama transition team is positioning. Green collar jobs, the auto industry, bringing healthcare into the 21st century and infrastructure are all recurring themes in stimulus discussions.
- **Learn More** – As you stay informed, look for “cross” opportunities – for instance the auto industry, infrastructure and energy independence.
- **Question Your Role** – How can your company support these types of efforts – or support those who will be providing some of the leading services in these programs?
- **Look for Opportunity** – Talk to other business owners about developing alliances, creating win-wins for all. Now is an opportune time to consider partnerships and acquisitions

Staying informed and vigilant will help you to be prepared for the coming times. And while uncertainty can be difficult to manage, it provides great fodder for innovation, in our companies our markets and ourselves.

Marcy Turkington, Achieve Business Solutions with The Alternative Board

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

Open–Door Policy

While it's good to have an open–door policy, it can be a problem if you don't put limits on it. Try telling your employees they can pop in to see you during a certain time slot each day. This serves two purposes— it lets them know your door is open and it allows you to have uninterrupted time to work on important and sensitive matters.

Dan Toner

3-D Bail Bonds

Hartford, CT

Customer Service

Develop a rapport with your customer, use their name frequently, be sincere with your comments and by all means, listen to their underlying concerns. As they explain their key issues, look for opportunities even if it is only to agree with their comments. They will give you your opportunity to determine what they really need!

Mike McHale

Steinbeck C.U.

Carmel, CA

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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