

# Tips from the Top

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



THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD

*Change Perspective.  
Improve Business.  
Enjoy Life.*



**Marcy Turkington**  
President

Achieve Business Solutions  
The Alternative Board  
NW Jersey & Poconos

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## *Inside this Issue*

- [Welcome to Our Newest Member](#)
- [E-mail Settings](#)
- [Theft Prevention Tips](#)
- [Cutting Hours Rather Than People](#)
- [Workman's Compensation Audits](#)
- [Getting the Extra Mile](#)

## Welcome to Our Newest Member!

Please join us in welcoming our new member to area TABBoards:  
**Pauline Richards, ClubZ In Home Tutoring** provides professional one-on-one tutoring for students of all ages and in all subjects.

[back to top](#) ►

## E-mail Settings

Set up your e-mail software settings so that when you hit send, the email does not go out right away. This way, it will go to our outbox, and it will stay there until you later separately hit your send/receive button. Move on to another task. Your subconscious mind will often remind you of something you forgot to add to the e-mail within a few moments. When this happens, go back and edit the e-mail in the outbox and then send. I started doing this years ago because sometimes the best ideas spring from the subconscious mind.

*Ronald Cook, Law Firm of Ronald Cook, Smithtown, NY*

[back to top](#) ►

## Theft Prevention Tips

With the toughening economic times, watch out for increased theft. One member had an engine manifold stolen from a storage area. Another had a serious internal theft problem with a long-time, trusted employee. Watch for employees running side businesses such as an eBay-type business on company time and with company equipment, products, stamps or other supplies. Further suggestions include:

- Reviewing, revising and publicizing appropriate policies and procedures
- Implementing and/or improving company security of storage (inside and outside)
- Removing temptation wherever possible through better procedures and modeling by owner and supervisory staff

Also, separate accounts receivable and accounts payable and personally review all checks when possible. Additionally:

- Get tough on collections by thorough credit checks up front, strengthening terms on new customers, and where needed, with existing customers.
- Extra effort should be expended up front being sure there is increased understanding by the customers of those terms. On major projects where

- [Don't Lose The Faxed Orders](#)
- [Leadership Lessons from Obama](#)
- [Quick Tips](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)

## Hear How We Help Our Members



Watch Video ▶

## Events

*Upcoming Meetings,  
Online Events &  
Workshops*

**TABBoard Meeting**  
Tuesday, February 3, 2009  
**High Point Solutions**  
Sparta, NJ

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**TABTalks! Blog Talk Radio**  
"Leading in 2009"  
Monday, February 16, 2009

[LEARN MORE](#)

**eSeminar "Next Level Marketing, Boost Your Bottom Line!"**  
Tuesday, February 17, 2009

[REGISTER NOW](#)

**TABBoard Meeting**  
Tuesday, February 24, 2009  
**Budget Home & Office Cleaning**  
Hackettstown, NJ

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[back to top ▶](#)

it's possible, get either a down payment, payment up front or progress payments.

TAB Board 310, Northeastern, WI

[back to top ▶](#)

## Cutting Hours Rather Than People

Instead of cutting people, we cut back hours for multiple people. Tell them it isn't short-term, that there is a minimum time frame on it. For example, I had two administrative people cut out a day each - one takes off Monday and one takes off Friday. I still have full coverage, but have cut my expenses and they understand what is happening. They know that things are slower and would rather keep their job with fewer hours than have no job at all.

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

[back to top ▶](#)

## Workman's Compensation Audits

Do not automatically accept workman's compensation audit calculations without first investigating the underlying assumptions. During a recent audit, I found that an auditor had made a mistake calculating workman's compensation, indicating that there was a payment due. The auditor used the rate for the highest risk category. When I recalculated using the actual number of employees per risk category, the final result indicated a refund due to the business rather than the underpayment.

*Cash Cary, FirstOption Staffing, San Antonio, TX*

[back to top ▶](#)

## Getting the Extra Mile

We are proud of the way our associates often go the "extra mile." We never want them to forget how important this is so we provide "Going the Extra Mile" awards in the form of \$50 American Express gift certificates. These awards are triggered by customers, managers or other associates who catch someone in the act of going above and beyond. We like to give them out as quickly as possible. We publicize these and also have annual recognition awards.

*Don Wintz, Run-A-Ton Group, Menham, NJ*

[back to top ▶](#)

## Don't Lose The Faxed Orders

Many of our orders come in via fax. Because of the importance of orders and the need for prompt attention, not to mention the cost of loss, we needed a way to differentiate faxes from the myriad of other paper. Our solution was to color code the fax by using blue colored paper. Now, we can quickly spot and process

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.

## Private Appointment

**Want to know what owners of extraordinary businesses know?** Request a private appointment to meet with Marcy Turkington, to learn how The Alternative Board may be a resource for your business success in 2009. There's no obligation or cost for the private consulting meeting. Simply click below or call Marcy at 973.940.2020.

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[back to top](#) ►



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orders.

*Todd Benz, One Source Technologies, Green Bay, WI*

[back to top](#) ►

## Leadership Lessons from Obama

Regardless [of] your political affiliation, watching the inauguration of Barack Obama one couldn't help but notice this was a man that inspired and enthused many.

Regardless of what the "it" is, Obama has honed his gift of leadership by following some basic tenets:

**Listening (*Really* Listening)** The President understands that leadership requires first and foremost not only listening but comprehending and empathizing with those he is leading.

**Individual Growth & Development** Obama is an intellectual, not for the sake of intellect, but with the passion of wonder and humility of one who knows that the more he learns the less he knows

**Encourage Diversity** Obama brings together opposing positions and opinions in crafting solutions to better address broad needs, and inspire creativity in the solution building process. He knows that the best ideas and solutions can arise from diverse passions when respect is ground rule #1.

**Communicate** The new administration's website is a study in transparency. There is little room for conjecture, speculation or supposition, which in turn means more time devoted to getting things done.

Whether you consider yourself a progressive, conservative, political, apolitical or anti-political, as with other presidents we've chosen to lead us, there are lessons to be learned from number 44 on developing your Leadership Skills.

*Marcy Turkington, The Alternative Board*

[back to top](#) ►

## Quick Tips

### Business Portal

Most business comes through the phone—but most businesses have moved to menu/voicemail driven systems. Think of the last time you called a business and got the automated jingle—did that make you smile? Invest in your front door! Hire, train and reward excellent "phone service" with a live employee.

*John O'Brien, Central Coast Senior Services, Pacific Grove, CA*

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### A Good Excuse to Call

A recent move forced us to purge many old client files. As we had source material

they might want (videos, photos, etc.), it provided a great reason to call and get reacquainted or introduce ourselves to some new players.

*Diane MacWilliams, Quicksilver Associates, Chicago, IL*

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### Recruiting the Right People

When you are in a tight job market it is difficult to find the right people. There are great benefits in making recruiting an ongoing activity and looking at recruiting as maintaining a flowing pipeline. It is much easier to find good talent when you have sustained recruiting than the stop-and-go approach.

*Quentin Baker, BakerRisk, San Antonio, TX*

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### How to Keep Your Goals on Track

After you create your goals, write them down and post them in as many places as possible: your office, your wallet, at home in your bedroom, on your bathroom mirror, on your refrigerator, in your car; set it as the background on your laptop or desktop computer. Also, digitally record yourself speaking your goals and listen to the recording while driving or commuting; keep it on your computer and listen to it in the morning and evening. Finally, ask people to hold you accountable.

*TAB Board 406, Suffolk County, NY*

[back to top](#) >

#### **ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD®**

The Alternative Board® is comprised of members who are business owners, CEOs or presidents who run businesses in non-competing fields. During a TAB Board meeting, you receive the benefit of the collective experience of the board members, who offer practical solutions to your problems-not theories.

**You can learn more about TAB, which has been helping business owners succeed since 1990, by visiting [TheAlternativeBoard.com](http://TheAlternativeBoard.com).**

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