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Tips from the Top

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


July 2010 · Excerpt Edition

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THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD

Change Perspective.
Improve Business.
Enjoy Life.


Passion Matters

Much has been written on how to motivate employees (and whether it is even possible). And yet, the highest performing employees are those who are internally driven. Great leaders know this. They focus employees' individual passions into a collective effort through communicating and supporting a clearly articulated vision. And that vision invariably supports a shared value system.



Consider the following: given the same financial resources, the same products to sell and the same customer base, if you have one set of employees who are passionate about what they are selling and another that aren't - who do you think will have better results over time? [Read more on this subject.](#)

Marcy Turkington, The Alternative Board

About Me



Marcy Turkington
Chief Executive
[The Alternative Board](#)
[NW Jersey&Poconos](#)

[Email Me](#)

Getting the Message Across

I have a number of "back office" employees who sometimes forget that they will often have to respond to customers' questions and issues.

When that time comes, they feel interrupted from the paper-focused task they're doing and their annoyance can easily be perceived by the customer on the telephone.

To avoid this problem, I've added "customer service" to their job descriptions (with the appropriate training) so they now accept the phone calls more willingly and realize that speedy, polite answers are part of what I pay them to do.

Lorri Cochrane, Certified Payroll and Tax Services, Bohemia, NY

Our Facilitators

Greater Subscriptions or Registrations

When I speak to groups or companies, I always try to capture audience feedback through a post-event survey that I hand out after the presentation.



[Dick Cipoletti](#)



This survey also references my company's newsletter and asks for permission to e-mail the newsletter to them.

One tactic that I have discovered that boosts survey response rate and sign-up percentages is to "pre-populate" the first few rows on the sheet. I find people are more willing to give you their information if they see that others have already done so.

Arthur Femenella, Femenella & Associates, Branchburg, NJ

Government Bidding

For the past three years, we have been using American Logistics Information Corporation to aggregate bid solicitations, selecting only those that are of interest to us.

The Alicorp Web site at <http://www.alicorp.com>, color codes RFQs to easily identify items previously supplied by our company and lists purchase history information, including prices and lead times for contracts not won.

Although this is a paid service, we have found it to be much more economical than using internal resources to search through the colossal amount of government RFQs that aren't relevant to the product lines we carry.

In addition to government RFQ filtering, the site also tracks all contracts received and is a single portal for providing mandatory EDI communication for advanced shipping notifications (ASNs), receiving reports (DD250s) and invoicing to the government site (WAWF).

Al Felice, Rapid Rivet & Fastener Corp., Farmingdale, NY



[Chris Lipper](#)



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If the Bank Won't Lend ...

The recession has forced our Board to continually reinforce with our members the need for a well-defined process for collections.

Even the smallest business needs a credit management process that includes credit history checking, establishing credit limits, payment guarantees and adherence to terms with consequences. Reinforcing the concept of not being a bank for your clients is important.

The rule of thumb measurement we go by as a group is, "If the bank won't lend to these clients, why should you?"

Sergio Prusky, InStyle!, St. Louis, MO

Growth Without Overhead

Growth Without Overhead

Making Internet Reading Faster and Easier

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Our favorite link of the month.

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Upcoming Events

Your Company's Future: Transition, Succession & Exit Planning

07.07.10 9 am - Noon
Lake Mohawk Golf Club

Pocono's TABBoard Meeting

07.14.10 8 am - Noon
Satterthwaite & Carhardt, Buckhill Falls, PA

Chairman's TABBoard Meeting

07.16.10 8 am - Noon

President's TABBoard Meeting

07.27.10 9 am - 12:30

[Learn More](#)

We were able to grow 30 percent last year with minimal increases in overhead and we are planning to do the same again in 2010.

How did we do it? By utilizing the same technology that larger companies use, which has enabled us to generate additional sales and be able to deliver them.

For instance, we implemented SAP's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software system. For a company with just 10 people in the U.S., some might consider this to be overkill, but it has allowed us to achieve our production management goals.

You can learn more about SAP ERP by going to their Web site at <http://www.sap.com/solutions/business-suite/erp/index.epx>.

Jerry Su, Teamson Design Corp., Edgewood, NY

Making Internet Reading Faster and Easier

I have found a simple Internet tool called "Readability" that makes reading on the Web more enjoyable by removing the clutter around what you are reading.

It also allows you to customize your settings for newspapers, e-books and novels. You get to select the size of the text and the width of the margins.

Just go to the [Readability site](#), right-click on the badge and select "Add To Favorites." When visiting a Web page worth reading, simply click the link to enable Readability.

Ronald Cook, Ronald Cook Attorney At Law, Smithtown, NY

Effective Dress Codes

My workforce tends to be very creative, which frequently extends to their appearance. To keep our dress code professional and understandable, my rule of thumb is, "If you wore it to the interview when you were hired here, it is probably acceptable." This eliminates all the body jewelry, unusual attire and strange hairstyles that new hires wear after starting the job.

Rene Clawson, Clawson Architects, Maplewood, NJ

ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD®

The Alternative Board® is comprised of members who are Business Owners, CEOs and Presidents who run businesses in noncompeting fields.

The support and real-world advice from one another - and from a

Hear How We Help Our Members



personal TAB business coach-make a bottom line difference. Our TAB Board will give you a distinct edge by helping you create, implement, adjust and stay on track to achieve your personal and professional goals. Considered one of the most valuable and beneficial business advisory organization in the world, The Alternative Board® has been featured in leading business news sources from the Wall Street Journal, Business Week, the Washington Post, and CNN. The The Alternative Board® consistently delivers to small and medium size businesses, essential elements organizations need in today's dynamic business environment to thrive.

You can learn more about TAB, which has been helping business owners succeed since 1990, by visiting www.TheAlternativeBoard.com.

Quick Tip

Do What Counts Most

No matter how effective you are, if you're not working in your unique ability and exemplifying your true strengths, you're not maximizing your value to your company, whether you're an employee or the employer.

Mary Ann Holloway
Comprehensive
Business Consulting &
Training Corp.
Ronkonkoma, NY

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[The Wall Street Journal](http://TheWallStreetJournal)

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