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# Tips from the Top

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


Aug. 2010 · Excerpt Edition

EVENT CALENDAR

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THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD

Change Perspective.  
Improve Business.  
Enjoy Life.


*Touted as 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, CNN and many others.*

*The essential and critical counsel and value The Alternative Board® consistently delivers to small and medium size businesses, and the immediate impact it brings to its clients organizations is an essential element for any organization that intends to thrive.*

## About Me



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

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## Defining Your Legacy

Your company's future is a legacy to the work you've done and the business you've built. To leave a lasting legacy requires focus and planning. By evaluating key questions now, you'll be better able to determine who, how and when the reins will be turned over. Consider the following:

- Will my kids want to run the business and, do they have what it takes?
- Can my employees or partners step up if I'm no longer here? (And, can I trust them)?
- Who else may want to buy my business? Competitors? Suppliers? Customers? Outside investors?

Once you've begun the evaluation of who, build your advisory team to develop the best plan you can to keep your legacy alive. To see a comprehensive list of questions from our recent event "Defining Your Company's Future," [visit our blog](#).

Marcy Turkington, Achieve Business Solutions with The Alternative Board

## Our Facilitators

## Employee Procedures

When creating an employee handbook, one of the things we



[Dick Cipoletti](#)



[Chris Lipper](#)



### *Inside this Issue*

Defining Your Legacy

Employee Procedures

Managing Sick Time

Sticky Core Message

Fun and Valuable

include is a worksheet after each section that allows our employees the opportunity to comment and make suggestions on how to make the procedure work better for them or make it more clear. Then, when we are ready to update the manual, we have a ready list of all the suggestions for improvement.

Anthony Baldino, JPG Electric Main & Construction Corp., Ronkonkoma, NY

## Managing Sick Time

Every company should have a sick-time policy that is administered equitably, and employees should take sick time seriously. One of the important components of an overall sick time policy is to insist that employees actually talk to a manager when calling in sick. Voicemails, emails, text messages and leaving a message with a junior employee are not acceptable ways of communicating absence due to sickness. Insisting that employees call in and speak with a manager helps to reduce sick time abuse. Besides increasing respect for the sick time policy, this also contributes to operational continuity.

Brian Gilligan, Utility Solutions Corp., Toronto, ON

## Sticky Core Message

You can help your employees prioritize and make decisions by having a simple core message for your business that acts as a pass/no pass filter. As Dan and Chip Heath explain in "Made to Stick," when Southwest Airlines was confronted with the "do we serve a meal to our customers?" question, the answer was obvious when they viewed the question in light of their core message: THE low cost airline. Finding a "sticky" core message — one your employees can easily understand and remember — will help them make the right decisions for your business.

Diego Prusky, InStyle Digital Marketing, St. Louis, MO

## Fun and Valuable Hosted Events

As our board has focused on increased marketing efforts this year, some of our members have turned to hosting events for both clients and prospects to generate brand awareness and lead generation. Several key points we have developed as a group include:

- Sponsored and hosted events should provide fun and value to attendees.
- Introduce clients to others in the company.
- Prepare your employees with a consistent message and

## Hosted Events

### Enforcing Non-compete Agreements

### The Power of the Sliding Scale

### Printers and Copiers Have Memories

### New Member Welcome



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## Upcoming Events

#### Chairman's Board Meeting

08.3.10 8 am - Noon  
[TM Brennan Inc.](#)  
[Hamburg NJ](#)

#### Pocono's Board Meeting

08.11.10 8 am - Noon  
[Rising Phoenix Martial Arts Academy.](#)  
[Sciota PA](#)

#### President's Board Meeting

08.24.10 9 am - 12:30  
[First Hope Bank.](#)  
[Blairstown NJ](#)

stress that they are ambassadors of your brand.

- Teach employees to network with attendees effectively using the FORE method (family, occupation, recreation, education).
- Follow up with attendees post event. Include a personal message from employees they spoke with and incorporate details of the conversation.

Overall, events can increase customer satisfaction and strengthen customer relationships, while having the added benefit of increasing employee morale.

Genelle Brakefield, Ekon Benefits, St. Louis, MO

## Enforcing Non-compete Agreements

We all know how difficult it can be to enforce a non-compete agreement if a former employee is potentially going to violate it. You can, however, take certain steps to discourage them. Have your lawyer send the former employee a letter with a copy of the signed non-compete agreement. The letter should remind the employee what is stated in the non-compete. This is very non-threatening, but makes a point with the person. Another option is to present or review the non-compete during the employee's exit interview or termination meeting. If you choose this route, ideally you will want your lawyer there to hand it to the employee.

Tom Schmidt, Greenwood Advisors, Aurora, CO

## The Power of the Sliding Scale

Companies often ask questions like, "How should we price X?" or "How would you compensate this employee?" For some reason, business owners seem to feel they need a "fixed" solution when it comes to pricing, compensation and the like. However, establishing milestones (dates and performance levels), you can use a sliding scale (or a range) for pricing your products and services, commissions, partner agreements and for compensating your employees.

How powerful is a sliding scale? Of our eight board meeting topics today, we were able to solve three of them using the sliding scale/performance method.

Diane Smith, Smith & Associates P.C., Lakewood, CO

## Printers and Copiers Have Memories

[Email](#) us to learn more about upcoming public events, experience a board meeting or schedule a private, consultation.

## Hear How We Help Our Members



## Quick Tips

### Offer More Options

When presenting your client with product or service options, consider competing with yourself. Present your client with your two standard products and create a third option of a product/feature set that is way outside their need or budget. Given two options, clients will usually choose the cheaper option. Given three options, clients are more likely to choose the middle-priced option, which may increase your revenue.

James Brennan  
VirtualCDO, Inc.  
Great River, NY

### Prospecting with

Not only does your computer have a hard drive, but so does your printer! The memory in your printer saves everything you have ever printed, copied, faxed, or scanned. When the memory is full, the drive automatically erases the oldest information but keeps the rest. So, when selling, donating, or just getting rid of a printer, clear the hard drive just as you would with a computer to avoid private information becoming public.

James Warner, QSkilled Staffing, Alto, MI

Here is some information everyone needs to know. Copiers have hard drives that store a copy of everything that has ever been copied on them. Many businesses don't realize this when they get rid of old copiers. You can watch this investigative report from CBS News to learn more. <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6412572n&tag=related:photovideo>

Steve Wells, CTS Services, Beltsville, MD

## Welcome New Members!

Please join us in welcoming our newest member, **Vicky Brennan of Tweed, located in Sparta, New Jersey!** Whether you're feeling elegant, trendy, sassy, chic, graceful or whimsical, Tweed offers a wide array of unique gifts, home accessories, and accent pieces that help to make your home your home. The store offers complimentary gift wrapping, and exceptional service.

[Find us on Facebook](#) 

### 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. The support and real-world advice from one another-and from your 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.

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

## Service

After working with a new client, I'll make two follow up calls that are service-related. The third call I make is a request for a referral. I point out that since so much of our efforts go toward service, we're not always focused on our marketing and would appreciate the compliment of a referral.

Rick Duggan  
Financial Liberty Group,  
Inc.  
Melville, NY

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