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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
[The Alternative](#)



Winning in The New Normal

For decades, business leaders have operated their companies assuming they could rely on a given level of stability in their assumptions. This is no longer the case in today's environment. The only certainty is that uncertainty abounds. Globalization, tax & regulatory changes, access to information and the ability to tap into resources around the world almost instantaneously has created new models of business. While this certainly opens up new competitive models, it also opens up [a world of opportunity](#).

Marcy Turkington, The Alternative Board of NW Jersey & Poconos

Scheduling Return Calls

To maximize my productivity during the work day, I return calls only at appointed times: 8:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. My voice mail message indicates that these are the times during which I return calls, and customers have told me they like knowing when to expect my call. Of course, if there is an emergency my message also specifies how they can reach me immediately.



Dick Cipoletti
[Email Me](#)

Michael Finkler, Team Restoration, Gowen, MI

Using Resumes as Reminders

We have found it helpful during some employee performance reviews to include the employee's resume in the discussion. The resume can be used as a reminder of the credentials that the employee presented to the employer, and of the expectations that the employer derived from it at the hiring interview. Whenever we have used this method to remind an employee of the high level of skills and experience on their resume, the employee subsequently improved their performance markedly. Overall they have been dependable, highly productive and key staff members ever since.

Andrew Toth, Metex Corp. Ltd., Toronto, ON



Chris Lipper
[Email Me](#)

Shifting Out of Neutral

After all the negative financial and employment news recently, I noticed that much of my staff seemed to be simply taking care of business - essentially stuck in neutral. I thought it would help to get everyone focused on a positive future, so I shared with them the company's Strategic Vision, as well as where we collectively must be to achieve that vision. I pointed out that any normal processes or procedures that might be slowing us down or preventing new clients must be eliminated. Based on the buzz after two meetings, the message has begun to penetrate, but will need further clarification and continued reinforcement.

Scott Nowokunski, Integraphx Inc., Charlotte, NC

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Working Too Many Hours?

As business owners, it's easy to say we want to work fewer hours. But is this really true? Do you know what would fill your time if you worked less? More often than we want to admit, business owners spend time working on evenings and weekends because they've dedicated so much time to the business that they now have no hobbies. Sure, there's always more work to be done, but this will be true whether we work through weekends or not. Ask yourself, "Am I working on Saturday because I absolutely have to, or because I really don't know what else to do with my time?"

If you want to work less, start by finding a hobby you enjoy so much that you will schedule time for it during the week. If this sounds difficult, find a class or join a group (like a choir or dance group) that has a scheduled meeting time. Once you start making time for this outside commitment, you'll realize that your business can get by without you putting in the extra hours.

Debra Fendrich, Pioneer Drama, Denver, CO

Upcoming Events

TABBoard Meetings

Poconos Board

Dellaria & Associates
Delaware Water Gap PA
January 11, 2011

Key Manager Board

Henry P. Thomson Inc
Mendham, NJ
January 18, 2011

Chairmans Board

Ames
Hamburg, NJ
February 1, 2011

2011 Strategies for Success Summit January 27, 2011

9:00 am - 4:30 pm
Lackland Center
Centenary College
Hackettstown, NJ
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Hear How We Help Our Members



Quick Tips

Ask "Why" Five Times

When I am working with an employee to solve a problem, the first question I ask is, "Why is this happening?" After hearing the answer, I ask "Why is that happening?" By digging deeper into the underlying reasons behind a problem, you get to the real source of the issue — and this is where you should focus your problem-solving efforts. (Six Sigma practitioners actually use the "5 Whys" technique to get to the root of a defect but it works in the non-Six Sigma world, too.)

This technique can be used with suppliers to accurately identify the benefits the supplier's products and services will bring. It can also be used with customers to clarify their real needs and expectations. Developing a questioning attitude and using the "5 Whys" produces both a clearer understanding and better results.

Andy Vande Hey, Vande Hey Company, Appleton, WI

Adding Value to Commodities

Paper suppliers sell a commodity. Our supplier, however, has added value by personally delivering paper to us and picking up our used paper for recycling. This service saves us time, and helps us maintain our "green" company image. It's such a valuable offering that we are willing to pay a little more for the paper.

Jim Gans, Image Marketing Enterprises, Chesterfield, MO

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.

Managing the Masters

As a business owner, it is not necessary for you to know everything. The people who work for you should be the masters, or subject matter experts. It is your job to manage them, which includes encouraging their growth and trusting their knowledge and abilities.

Patti Zimmerman
Koffel Associates Inc.
Elkridge, MD

It Works Both Ways

When scheduling an employee performance review, I always ask the employee for their feedback on my performance as well. Not only does it validate their experience and company involvement, it also generates some great ideas for me.

Richard Duggan
Financial Liberty Group
Melville, NY

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