



Inside this Issue



Sales and Marketing

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Do What It Takes to Satisfy Customers

In a recent TAB Board meeting, I mentioned the difficulty I had experienced finding a printer to do a series of brochures on old style news print. Even a printer who at first accepted the job called back and said, "I can only do it on a sheet larger than 8x11." Most members had similar experiences with vendors who couldn't meet their needs. The ensuing discussion brought to light how what used to be a company's distinctive competencies (the ability to customize and "do what it takes" to satisfy the customer) has too often given way to the drive to standardize in the name of efficiency.

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Management and Strategy

An Org Chart for Future Growth

If you have a fast growing company, you may need two organizational charts—one for today and one for where you determine your company should be in two-to-five years. When looking at this "future org chart," ask yourself which corporate management skills you need to grow within your company.

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Operations

Do a Project Premortem to Avoid a Postmortem

An interesting item recently appeared in the Harvard Business Review (HBR) on the concept of a premortem for projects. When a project fails, it's common to look at what went wrong. This may help you avoid future failures, but it doesn't do much for the project that just failed.

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Remember the Telephone?

When a lengthy reply to an email is required, I find it's quicker and easier to simply pick up the phone and call the person. I can communicate much faster verbally than I can type and correct an email response. We sometimes forget about the telephone, which is still the most direct form of communication.

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Featured Facilitator / Business Coach



Marcy Turkington

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What TAB Members Say

Prior to joining TAB, I was beginning to think my business had plateaued. TAB has helped me to develop my strategic planning "muscle" which has led to the implementation of several successful strategies to grow my business. I'm happy to report that TAB has helped me to improve my small business tenfold!

**Mike Greene - President
Greene Moving and Storage, LLC,
Manchester, CT**

By : Terry Newhard, NORWESCAP, Phillipsburg, NJ

Using Cell Phone Cameras to Protect Your Business

We have found that we can resolve customer disputes quickly by having information that is difficult to refute, such as pictures or videos we can email to our customers. One of our drivers has made a habit of using his cell phone to take pictures and videos when he drops off or picks up equipment on job sites. This has proved to be very valuable if the customer is not there to sign for the drop off, or when the equipment is not ready for pickup or is damaged. We are now looking at supplying our other drivers with better cell phones, and making it part of our company procedures to take pictures.

By : Ed Dwyer, C & T Rentals & Sales Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

Truth in Marketing

Client testimonials can be invaluable, but many times they sound contrived (whether or not they are). To add authenticity, we use LinkedIn to solicit and share independent third party testimonials. We simply ask our clients to write a recommendation for our company or a specific attorney on LinkedIn. Then we link to the LinkedIn recommendations from our website.

By : Ronald Cook, Attorney at Law, Smithtown, NY

An Alternative to Non-Competes

Non-compete agreements can be hard to enforce. Another approach, which may offer a viable alternative, is an upfront employment agreement that provides compensation to an employer for business derived from his/her existing customer base. In essence, the departing employee agrees to pay a fee, over time, for taking the customer. This provides compensation to the employer for lost business without restricting the employee's right to earn a living.

By : Frank Arnold, Weaver LLP, San Antonio, TX

Ask Your Employees "What if..."

To bolster employee creativity and improve our business, we hold brainstorming meetings once a month. These gatherings are wide open sessions in which my staff completes the sentence, "Wouldn't it be neat if..." Some of the suggestions are a bit "out there," but a tremendous amount of creativity ensues and great ideas are generated. Of course, even the best ideas need to be vetted, so the next month we meet to weed through the ideas and select which ones we'll pursue.

By : Jim Clement, The Clement Companies, Greenville, NC

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