

# Tips from the Top

Leader to leader advice, insights, information



## Customer Service: Engaged Customers – A Sticky Business

Satisfied customers are good, and loyal customers are great, but when it comes to the heart of the matter – repeat business and referrals – Customer Engagement is the greatest predictor of future behavior. And by all accounts engaged customers not only spend more, but are more profitable for a business...

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## Management and Strategy: 10 Reasons to Protect Your Intellectual Property

For a small business, it can be prohibitively expensive to sue someone for violating your patent or trademark. So you might wonder, “If I can’t afford to fully defend my intellectual property, why should I even bother to protect it?” Before taking this chance, consider these 10 reasons to protect your IP...

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## Sales and Marketing: Keeping Up with Google

Many business owners feel frustration trying to improve or maintain their search engine positions. Additionally, as Google continues to better enforce and then penalize websites that violate their Webmaster Guidelines, it is important to know and understand what your search optimizing team is doing with your Website. Some powerful questions include...

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## Human Resources: Creating Situational Interviews

Successful interviewing is critical for identifying capable, motivated candidates. Unfortunately, many business owners are not good interviewers. The traditional interview questions – such as “What are your weaknesses?” or “What would your co-workers say about your performance?” — no longer work. Books on interviewing as well as interview coaching have made the responses to these time-tested questions obvious and predictable. Plus, they fail to provide the



**THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD**  
*The Business Owner's Strategic Advantage*



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**Upcoming  
Events**

**Key Managers  
Board Meeting  
Tues., December 20th**

**Presidents**

needed insights as to how the candidate thinks and behaves...

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## Targeted Tips

### Talking Finance: Two Quick Tips

When it comes to getting rid of old assets, we have found that donating the asset brings a much higher return than selling an asset that is of little value.

In a collection situation, we request at least some good faith money from the customer. This keeps the debt viable and keeps us from having to turn it over to collections.

**By - Al Felice, Rapid Rivet & Fastener Corp., Farmingdale, NY**

### Double Duty Employee Manuals

In our employee manuals we include language about the confidential nature of customer lists and other proprietary business processes. Since the requirements vary between management and employees, we provide a different manual to each group. We also update and re-issue the manuals every year, requiring everyone to sign a memo acknowledging that they have read the manual and agree to abide by the policies. This avoids having a unique confidentiality agreement for every employee.

**By - Shawn Allison, Think Big Solutions, Commerce City, CO**

### Is Your Value Proposition Clear?

Be clear on your company's value proposition. Are you going to offer the lowest price or the best product/service? You can't do both. If you are disappointing customers, review the value proposition being sold to them. Is your sales team writing expectation checks to your clients that your operation/delivery team cannot cash?

**By - Kim Christie, TAB-Certified Facilitator/Coach, Winnipeg, MB**

### Cloud Collaboration

We use a website called Box ([box.net](http://box.net)) to collaborate over the Internet with multiple parties. For example, to cut down on emails between myself and a colleague, I created a simple Excel file and uploaded it to the site. My colleague is able to view my changes online or download the file to his computer, make changes, then upload it again. Because this service is in the "cloud" we can download the latest copy from anywhere. This is a simple solution that reduces our email correspondence and makes it easy to keep track of our communications in one place.

**By - Kevin Brown, Can-Neth Imports Ltd., Abbotsford, BC**

### Affordable Drip Marketing

For inexpensive nurture marketing, my firm uses Infusionsoft ([www.infusionsoft.com](http://www.infusionsoft.com)) and Constant Contact ([www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com)). If you are short on content, you can hire

**Board Meeting**  
Tues., December 27th

**Chairmans**  
**Board Meeting**  
Tues., January 3rd

**2012 Business**  
**Leadership Summit**  
Mon. January 16th

**Key Managers**  
**Board Meeting**  
Tues., January 17th



### Private Appointment

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### What Members Say

#### Chuck Roberts

Ames Corporation  
Hamburg, New Jersey

*"[My] fellow TAB are able to offer an outside perspective, helping me regain the right level of focus and making all the difference."*

writers affordably from a site like Elance ([www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com)). I recommend commissioning several articles to be drafted in advance so you can easily send out periodic emails to prospects, peers, customers and suppliers.

**By - Ronald Cook, Ronald Cook Attorney at Law, Smithtown, NY**

[More Tips](#) 

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The Alternative Board® (TAB) is an exclusive, membership-based organization that helps business owners achieve more – more profitability, productivity, and personal fulfillment – through an unmatched combination of peer to peer insight, private coaching with TAB-certified coaches and TAB proprietary tools, and resources that connect business owners to thousands of their peers around the world.

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