

Tips from the Top

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



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.



Gary Brunson



Debra Rider



This Is No Time To Be Alone

Just because you're the one in charge doesn't mean you always have all the answers. If you've ever wished you could pick the brain of other successful executives in an open exchange of ideas, I have the solution.

The Alternative Board® is the confidential forum where strategies and sensitive business issues can be discussed freely. Each month, you'll meet with other experienced executives in non-competing businesses who bring to the table a variety of different skills and backgrounds.

If you're ready to engage at a high level with business owners who, like you, sit in the decision maker's chair on a daily basis, **The Alternative Board®** may be exactly what you're looking for.

Gain access to key resources such as:

- Advice and Coaching
- Strategic Business Leadership
- Practical Real World Solutions

[Join us](#) for a 90-minute working executive meeting to discuss and demonstrate the TAB process. The lunch or breakfast is complimentary and there is no cost or obligation to attend, *reservations are required*. With TAB, you will achieve greater success.

Hosted by



Two meetings to choose from:

Tuesday, May 19, 2009

Time: 7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

*Continental Breakfast served
beginning at 7:15 AM*

Mutual Bank

4330 Elkhart Road,
Goshen, IN 46526
Phone 574-875-9100

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

*Light Lunch served
beginning at 11:15 AM*

Mutual Bank

4330 Elkhart Road,
Goshen, IN 46526
Phone 574-875-9100

John Kurtze

Dick Wooden



Don Stohler

For more information on TABNCI Facilitators visit our website at www.TABNCI.com

Private Appointment

Learn How Other Area Businesses Develop a Strategic Advantage.

We invite you to request a private meeting to learn how The Alternative Board may be a resource for your business success in a difficult economy.

[REQUEST A MEETING](#)

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Layoffs

When business fluctuates, layoffs can damage morale. We deliberately hire with the intention of doing 12 percent of our production using overtime. When things get temporarily busy, we can increase to 25 percent overtime (10 hours a week) without adding staff. When business slows, we can cut our capacity by 12 percent without cutting anyone.

Jeff Garvens, Acme Holdings, San Antonio, TX

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The Rule of 30

As an architect, my partner and I manage multiple projects from the initial design to completion. Each project operates within a budget and our ability to complete the project at budget is critical to our relationship with clients. After each project closes, we conduct a detailed comparison of the actual cost versus our estimated cost to identify opportunities to improve.

Over time, we have learned that 30 percent of our projects with the greatest variation from the estimate provide the greatest learning. Projects completed at a cost closest to our estimate (the remaining 70 percent), provide limited new insight. By focusing on the 30 percent with the greatest variation, we have accelerated our rate of improvement.

Carl Winnekens, Architects Group Limited, Green Bay, WI

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Payment Collections

Create and send official looking payment coupons—somewhat similar to a car payment coupon booklet—to people who owe you money. This should be used for the clients you KNOW are not in a position to pay off their balance in full anyway. Because of the situation, rather than turning it into an unsolvable dispute, receiving coupon booklet payments is better than writing off the debt. I was surprised to find something so simple to implement actually worked.

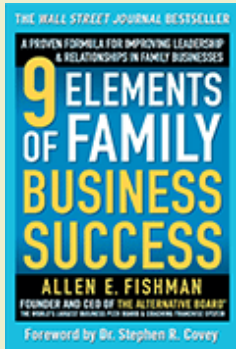
Ronald Cook, Law Firm of Ronald Cook, Smithtown, NY

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Hear How We Help Our Members



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Now Available: Click on the above book cover to order your copy of The Wall Street Journal business book best-seller the *9 Elements of Family Business Success* by Allen E. Fishman, Founder and Chairman of The Alternative Board®.

Insanity = doing the same thing and expecting a different outcome. If you want improvement, BEGIN WITH YOU.

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Improving Your Company

In order to improve your company, you should always be recruiting to replace the bottom 10 percent of your employees. Sometimes a poor performer is personally popular with co-workers, making them distressed about the termination. When that happens, just tell them, "We were sorry to let them go, but their performance wasn't up to our standards and we didn't feel it fair to ask you to work harder just to make up for them". We've never had an employee object after hearing this.

TAB Board 401, San Antonio, TX

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Delegate Responsibilities, Not Work

One of my personal objectives includes delegating more effectively. I recently began to appreciate the distinction between delegating responsibility versus delegating work. When I delegate responsibility, my employee is accepting an on-going obligation to ensure that some business function is efficiently managed and controlled. When I delegate work, the obligation ends when the task is completed.

Andy Meyer, Lake-Aire Auto Service, Oshkosh, WI

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Focus and Resolve

Sometimes all that's needed to resolve a problem is to get one or more of my employees to focus on it. I recently grew tired of constantly having to remind my warehouse crew to promptly take care of our surplus inventory. I got their attention. I went to a sporting goods store and picked up small pistol targets. I began taping a bull's-eye to any piece of excess inventory I passed in the warehouse. No need for dialog or angry words, the bull's-eye gets their attention and gets it done.

Herm Bloom, Home Mattress Centers, Wilmington, DE

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Ask Customers for Hidden Service Issues

To get a more complete view of our performance, we send our customers a comprehensive service survey in the form of a quarterly report card. The report card is designed so that it can be circulated to the key departments within our customers' organizations: sales, purchasing, warehouse and finance. We ask that each department rate our performance, because it helps us understand how to correct problems that might not be visible to our usual contacts. By paying attention to the whole relationship, we keep our company on the list of our customers' "favorite" suppliers.

Grace Schmidt, Life Industries, Charleston, SC

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Quick Tips

Create a Bucket List

Creating a bucket list is a useful exercise to help define goals and provide long-term focus. It's a good idea to review the list on a periodic basis and may also be beneficial to have your spouse create a list to compare the results. The types of items on the bucket list will change over time, depending on a person's stage in life.

TAB Winnipeg Board, Winnipeg, MB

Google What?

I use Google Alerts (www.google.com) to track activity of my clients, prospects or those industries relevant to my business. These snippets of information, emailed to me daily, are an invaluable source of new product, trends, events, etc., which can be used in my sales or marketing conversations.

Deborah Elms, Imprinted Originals, Smithtown, NY

Your Clients' Clients

To better assess your business outlook, try to ascertain how your key clients' clients are doing. If your client's business is holding up, then your prospects are also good. If all your clients have customers whose revenues are falling, you could expect the same for your clients and begin to plan accordingly.

Beth Chase, C3 Consulting, Nashville, TN

Communicating With/Motivating Key Staff

We often mistake what motivates us with what motivates our staff. Ask your staff to let you know specifically what aspect of what they do feels the most rewarding. Utilize this information to acknowledge and help motivate them to a higher level of performance within their job responsibilities.

Leyla Pinarli, One Source Document Management, Inc., Ronkonkoma, NY

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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. During a TAB Board meeting, you receive the benefit of the collective experience of the board members, who offer practical solutions to your problems-not theories.

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

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