



Tips FROM THE Top[®]

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

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MANAGEMENT

“You’re Perfectly Positioned for the Results You’re Getting”

Take more control in 2008 with a Strategic Plan

Lack of planning often leads to lackluster results or failure. Rarely will you find a company that has achieved a high degree of success that at some level did not have the discipline to dedicate time and resources into crafting a strategic plan.

A strategic plan gives your company a clear, actionable course of action that maps a direct route to success. The strategic plan charts your company's success in small, logical, ongoing steps and drives “the big picture.” Designing a plan for success that is broken down into tangible action items makes the process less daunting, and ultimately sets you up for more consistent success in the long run.

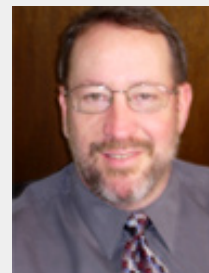
Proven tools and methodologies are just one part of the process.

A successful strategic plan requires:

- Brutal honesty about the current status of your business and staff
- Examination from both outside and inside your business to accurately



THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD[®]
Achieve Success with Peer Advice and Coaching



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assess and develop your plan

- A plan that is broken down into measurable action steps
- Buy-in and participation from managers and employees to successfully execute the plan
- Commitment to an on-going process to continually review and monitor your results

All of our current TAB members are actively working on their goals and plans now. Have you been thinking that you need to start 2008 off right? If so, we'd love to help you grow your business. We welcome the chance to help you get started – it could make all the difference in making the coming year the best in your company's history.

Email us now to get more information.

Bob Zelnick

MANAGEMENT

The Assistant Dilemma

We often struggle with the decision of whether and when to invest in an administrative assistant. A simple time management system can help. Keep track of and record those repetitive tasks that you perform daily, weekly and monthly. This will give you a good start on a job description for the assistant. It will also help you realize how much time you are spending on activities that do not capitalize on your strengths as the CEO.

Sandra Hanlon, S'Hanlon Online Auctions, Wilmington, DE

MARKETING

Put More Lines in The Water

The effectiveness of your marketing program will be impacted by a combination of the content pieces you use, number of prospects targeted and the frequency of your contact with them. If you aren't happy with the results generated, don't just change the content. You may need to expand your prospect list as well as your frequency. It's not always about gaining more prospects as much as sometimes just needing to put more lines in the water.

Marc Rocklin, Rocklin Irving Advertising, Lincolnwood, IL

SALES

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

TAB BOARDS

All Day Strategic Planning Sessions

Wednesday, January 9, 2008

BOTTOM LINE BOARD

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

PRESIDENTS' BOARD

Thursday, January 17, 2008

CEO BOARD

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

STRATEGIC BOARD

Thursday, January 31, 2008

ARTHUR'S BOARD

FACILITATED PEER TRAINING

Thursday, December 20, 2007

FPT Group # 4

Thursday, January 10, 2008

FPT Group # 1

QUICK TIPS

Before You Open The Door

There are certain attributes you just can't train; they have to be present from the beginning. Trust, honesty and reliability must already exist when an employee comes on board. Being able to distinguish between what must come in the door with the applicant and what they can be taught once inside will help with hiring successful employees.

Debriefing the Sales Process

Upon losing a “beauty contest” involving formal proposals with multiple vendors, it is advisable to send a letter to the potential customer thanking them for the opportunity. More importantly, ask for feedback about what your firm could have done better. This will accomplish two things:

1. It lets the customer know that you are still interested in their business and don't harbor any ill feelings about the process (in case the winning vendor does not work out).
2. It gives you quality feedback from the customer's perspective on improving your sales and proposal process.

Bob Sullivan, NAI Sullivan Group, Oklahoma City, OK

MARKETING

Using NetPost For Mailings

The US Post Office provides an online printing service, which is competitive and efficient for the limited mailing list requirements of small business. The service offers letters and postcards of various sizes (black and white or color). Upload your images, text and mailing list in the netpost format. After the final copy has been approved, you then pay and mail out your copies. Learn more at www.usps.com/netpost/.

Dave Huffman, Huffman LeVigne Associates, Westlake, OH

SALES

Battling Negative Rumors

A local competitor started passing a rumor around that our company would soon be going out of business. To counter this rumor, we sent in a secret shopper to check out the details regarding the rumor so we could then correct the misinformation in our discussions with our customers. We sent a mailer to all of our customers announcing our calendar of special events and promotions for the next six months as well as a special discount punch card.

Jeff Gurney, State Beauty Supply, Greeley, CO

MANAGEMENT

Charles Smith

Tally Systems

Ronkonkoma, NY

Working Hard

We all know that our employees are the key to our businesses' success. If you're continually willing to train, coach, teach and guide your employees while also providing a vision for them to attain a better life, they, in turn, will make the commitment and work hard for you and your business. This is what real motivation is all about.

Gene Kobayashi

Kuiada Art Supply

Salinas, CA

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Masters by Allen E. Fishman, Founder and CEO of The Alternative Board®.

**800 CEO Read, Aug. 1st, 2006.*

Public Speaking

When polled on their greatest fear, people always put public speaking at the top of the list. We encourage all of our managers to develop their public speaking skills in order to overcome this dreaded task while also building character and self-confidence. “Learning by doing” is the best way to develop public speaking skills. In addition, there are many tools and resources available to help someone develop public speaking skills.

Andy Ziegler, eBlueprint, Cleveland, OH

The Alternative Board® brings business owners, CEOs and presidents of non-competing businesses together in boards, where members can present challenges and opportunities to the board for seasoned, practical advice from other owners who understand one another's perspective and contribute meaningful solutions. The boards consist of up to 12 members, meeting monthly under the guidance of a TAB-Certified Facilitator. Over 300 TAB Boards are operating each month across the United States, Canada and South America. Since its inception, thousands of businesses have benefited from membership in The Alternative Board®. For more information on The Alternative Board®, visit www.TABBoards.com



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