



# Tips FROM THE Top<sup>®</sup>

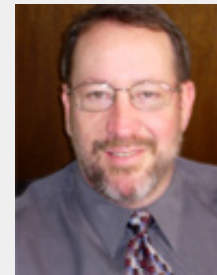
Business insights  
from those at the top  
for those at the top

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**THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD<sup>®</sup>**

*Achieve Success with Peer Advice and Coaching*



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## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### Stan Omland: Combining Personal and Professional Passions for Success



Alexander Graham Bell once said, “When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us.” Stan Omland obviously never heard the second half of the phrase. In 1997, he was president of a large civil engineering firm. When the firm was sold, rather than remain at the new organization, he decided it was time to propel his passion for his work to the next level and open his own company. He hasn’t looked back.

Unlike a lot of engineers, Stan has been able to prioritize and put the business aspects of running his company before engineering, without compromising the quality of the work. This approach has enabled him to successfully grow his organization from an initial staff of 4 to a thriving engineering services firm with 35 employees and billings of more than \$5.5 million. Omland Engineering Associates provides full site development and municipal services to area developers, corporations, and government in Northern New Jersey. Stan says, “Our ability to

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

anticipate all the possible scenarios before things actually happen directly translates into pro-active problem solving for our clients. Our competition operates in a reactive manner, and this edge definitely sets us apart.”

“Recent regulations within the State of New Jersey have and will drastically change the business,” Stan observes. Things were much simpler in 1997. There were fewer environmental regulations and constraints. The smaller staff size was manageable enough that Stan could oversee everything himself. He now entrusts senior managers to help run the company and he is looking to expand the business in two key ways – first by concentrating on the growing trend of Redevelopment (as opposed to New Development) and second, geographically through key acquisitions. “These two measures will ensure long-term growth.” states Stan.

Stan also relies upon his involvement with his TAB board to help him optimize his operations and business growth. Initially, he joined TAB to immediately tap into the objective business advice, ideas and motivation of his fellow Board members. Over the years, however, he has come to realize that the “accountability factor” is much more valuable. Stan sometimes takes action on certain ideas only because he does not want to face the members at the next month’s meeting without having implemented decisions he committed to in front of the group. “I didn’t want to surround myself with ‘Yes Men’ who would merely feed me what they think I want to hear,” Omland comments, “Having to be accountable to the board members has helped me to move my business forward.”

For more information about Omland Engineering Services [CLICK HERE](#) to visit their web site.

## OPERATIONS

### Incentive Plans

We divide our employees into three groups for compensation.

**Group A**—“Bring the Meat.” These employees are the ones who make the company go. We want to keep them for the length of their career. They receive long-term incentive plans, the value of which grows with the company. Our objective is to compensate them at a level that will change their lives.

**Group B**—“Key Managers.” These employees make our operations happen month after month. They have great influence over expenses and profits. They work with individual incentive plans. Each is custom-developed for a specific manager and contains written personal and departmental objectives.

## Center for Closely Held Business Breakfast Roundtable

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

[More Information](#)

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## TAB BOARD MEETINGS & EVENTS

Thursday, February 15, 2007

[CEO Board TAB Meeting](#)

Tuesday, February 20, 2007

[Strategic Board TAB Meeting](#)

Wednesday, February 28, 2007

[President's Board TAB Meeting](#)

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

[Bottom Line Board TAB Meeting](#)

Tuesday, March 27, 2007

[Annual TAB Members' Appreciation Breakfast](#)

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## FACILITATED PEER TRAINING

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

[Facilitated Peer Training Group #1](#)

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

[Facilitated Peer Training Group #4](#)

Wednesday, March 7, 2007

[Facilitated Peer Training Group #3](#)

## QUICK TIPS

**Group C**—“Rank and File.” Their incentive plans are built around increased productivity. We do not grant cost of living or longevity raises. In order to encourage everyone to pull together as a team, we have a company-wide profit goal. If we fail to achieve that target, no one gets an incentive.

*Juan Pablo Cabrera, The Rooster Group, San Antonio, TX*

## STRATEGIC

### Develop Metrics to Monitor Performance

In our business, which is a truck and automobile service center, we are continuously developing and assessing the right metrics to monitor each department’s performance. Due to the labor intensive nature of our business, measuring the “total revenue per billed labor hour” provides a quick, ongoing assessment of the efficiency of our technicians. Another metric, “total revenue per invoice,” adds a dimension for improving customer service as well as labor efficiency.

These calculations are performed monthly, but could be available more frequently if desired. Although we also issue financial statements monthly, we no longer need to wait until the month-end close to know how we are doing. The metrics we’ve adopted allow us to monitor performance quickly and efficiently.

*Dennis Broehm, Accurate Service Center, Appleton, WI*

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Plain English Office Policies

As employers, we are frequently frustrated at our workers’ inability to understand policies that are plainly spelled out in employee manuals. The reality is, when a new employee is unsure of a policy, he or she usually asks the coworker they are most comfortable with. That is likely to be another new or lower-level employee. The answer given has no better than a 50/50 chance of matching your written policy. In our company, we are developing FAQs to go with each section of the policy manual. They are “plain language” answers to such questions as, “Can I wear shorts on a Saturday service call?”

*Randy Smith, Forum Systems Group, San Antonio, TX*

## HUMAN RESOURCES

## Staff Celebrations

As a home builder, we have a staff gathering each time we complete a new show home at the show home location. At this time, we present awards to people for their recent accomplishments. The gatherings are great for team-building and are particularly important for office staff that otherwise do not often get to see our end product and share, to the same degree, in our accomplishments as a company.

*Jim Crossely*

*Crossely Custom Homes Ltd.*

*Calgary, AB*

## Shared Human Resources

### Professional

Many companies only need a fraction of the time of a human resources professional. Four or five companies on a TAB Board could contract with someone to create a full-time job. Each company would pay for its proportionate share of time that it utilizes.

*401 TAB Board Meeting, Central CT*

## Now Available:



Click on the book cover at left to order your copy of the #1 business book best seller\* the **7 Secrets of Great Entrepreneurial**

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

## Excuse Management

Salespeople often offer excuses involving things outside their control as to why they have been unable to meet their quotas. These excuses may or may not be valid, but each one needs to be examined, dealt with and systematically removed. Once the excuses have been taken away, then you can evaluate performance accurately.

*Stuart Tenzer, New Horizons Computer Learning Center, Commack, NY*

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

### HUMAN RESOURCES

## Minimum Wage—A Competitive Tool

While discussing the impact of minimum wage laws, our managers realized they can only help us. We already pay above minimum wage, so our competitors will have to increase prices or decrease their margin to comply with the change. In the meantime, our employees see us as the better company to work for. Regularly examine your wages, not only against your direct competition, but against the other industries in your area.

*Dennis Schulte, DRS Acquisitions, Woodbury, MN*

**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 10 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](http://www.TABBoards.com)**



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