



# Tips FROM THE Top<sup>®</sup>

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

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## STRATEGY

### Just Three Important Things

It is true that you build success on the three foundations of skill, systems and attitude. However, the three most important points in the foundation are attitude, attitude and attitude. Every year businesses spend millions of dollars on skills training and new systems to make employees more efficient. But, no matter how much training and systems you add, an employee with a poor attitude will not improve. Next time you plan to send someone for a \$1,000 training course, first buy them a \$20 book on the topic. If they don't read the book, it's a cinch they will get little from the training.

*Phil Linden, Linden's Propane, LaGrange, OH*

## MOTIVATION



**THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD<sup>®</sup>**

*Achieve Success with Peer Advice and Coaching*



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## QUICK TIPS

## Are Your Employees Participating in Your Staff Meetings?

Do you feel like you are talking to a wall during your staff meetings? If so, you aren't alone. Many business leaders have difficulty getting employees to participate. By giving employees a sense of purpose and ownership, you can get them involved in your staff meetings and improve the company's performance.

By developing key performance indicators (KPIs) that are operational, as well as financial, you will give your employees more "skin in the game." KPIs are results that can be measured, or at least updated, on a weekly basis (during a staff meeting). They should include financial metrics such as revenue forecasts and expenses, but also specific operational or even behavioral measurements that your employees have control over, and thus, you can hold them accountable.

Develop KPIs that will fund employee compensation, such as bonuses. Discussing the various key performance indicators and the impacts they have on the company in your weekly staff meetings are a great way to get your employees involved and thinking like business owners.

*Blair Koch, TAB-Certified Facilitator, Denver, CO*

### MOTIVATION

## Employee Rewards

Consider an alternative to the traditional types of employee rewards, such as cash bonuses, paid time off and gift certificates. Instead, solicit merchandise, gift cards and coupons from your local merchants. The merchants benefit by increasing their opportunity for future sales and expanding "goodwill." You, the employer, benefit by offering non-traditional rewards and perhaps save part of the cost of a reward system.

*Gary Allietta, Bromley Financial Group, Grand Rapids, MI*

### STRATEGY

## Knowing Your Customers' Issues

### Praising Employees

Being a high "D" on the DISC behavioral assessment, it is difficult to remember to give praise to my employees. I set a goal each day to praise or compliment five people by starting each day with five pens on the left side of my computer. When I praise or compliment an employee, I move one of these pens to the right side of my computer with the goal to move all five to the right side by the close of the day.

*Chris Wohlbrandt*

*Midwest Title*

*Naples, FL*

### Obtaining Supplier Discounts or Extended Terms

If you know the quarter and fiscal year-ends of your suppliers, you can contact them just prior to the end of those periods and, in many cases, they will give extended terms or deep discounts on new purchases.

*Norine Carlson Webber*

*Alpha Source Inc.*

*Milwaukee, WI*

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I am sure you have nagging concerns that keep you awake at night, or at least you think about first-thing in the morning. I believe it is important we know what those issues are for our customer. To do this, we need to become students of their business, which includes reading the trade journals, newsletters and periodicals they read. Furthermore, we need to become active members of their trade associations. That does not mean you just send your membership dues in annually, but go to the meetings, volunteer for committees and dig deep into what is going on. You will also begin to learn their language, knowing what is important to your customer, and learning their language will enable you to be a better provider of your product and service.

*Mark Thelen, Landmark Landscapes, Atlanta, GA*

## SALES

### Trade Shows

When my company participates in a trade show, I arrive at least an hour-and-a-half before the opening of the show. This early arrival allows me to have time to obtain leads from the attendees, to visit the booths that I will not be able to see while I am manning my booth, and to have the opportunity to change the location of my booth should it be undesirable.

*Stephen Levin, Weblin Design, New York, NY*

## SALES

### Unanswered Calls

Having trouble getting a sales prospect to call you back? Call their cell phone, but do not leave a message. Then they will call you to find out who called and did not leave a message!

*Arthur Milgrim, Oak Valley Farms, Voorhees, NJ*

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