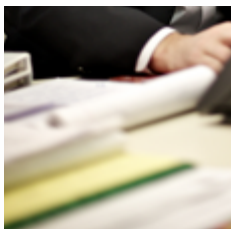




Jeff Wyszynski & Ted Cutler
 Tecton Architects, Inc.
 Hartford, CT
Member Since: 2009

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One of the most difficult challenges small business CEOs must tackle is learning how to work "on" the business instead of "in" it. Whether you are a company founder trying to wear fewer hats, or a valued employee transitioning to C-level management, it's a tough and sometimes emotional path.

Tecton Architects in Hartford, CT specializes in architectural, interior design and master planning services for large corporate and institutional clients in healthcare, academics and research. When the founding partners decided to step down, they tapped Ted Cutler, now CEO, and Jeff Wyszynski, now COO, as the team to lead the organization.

"It was very much like a family business when I took over," Cutler recalls. "There were a lot of friendships and personalities that at times made it difficult to bring operational clarity to the firm." Cutler says they were also lacking a roadmap to guide them through the change in leadership.

In 2009, Cutler joined TAB, which he says was "extremely helpful" during the transition and with putting together a five year strategic plan. In fact, he found the counsel of his TAB coach and fellow Board members so helpful that he recommended Wyszynski join TAB as well.



“The make-up of my board is either people who are being mentored to become CEOs or more on the operations side of the business,” Wyszynski explains. In his case, TAB has helped him learn how to distance himself from hands-on design work. “Projects are like your kids, you don’t want to let go.”

The trick to good mentoring, Wyszynski says, is to involve others from day one. “You have to get the client and the project manager comfortable with one another. Promoting confidence in the team that you’ve elected to take over that relationship is key.”

Adds Cutler, “Most of the challenges we face are people related, aligning expectations and goals.” He cites the one-on-one sessions with his TAB facilitator as a “fantastic resource” for learning why people in business react in the way they do, backed by research.

Involvement in TAB has also helped both become more confident leaders. Says Wyszynski, “It gives me comfort knowing that other people are dealing with similar challenges and also to hear how they have resolved the issues in their own firm.”

Cutler cites a specific example of how his confidence has grown since joining TAB. “Last year, we acquired another firm. For the first time ever, we grew non-organically. I received quite a bit of encouragement and support from the board members to face that challenge. The acquisition has paid off. If I were left alone, I would have found reasons not to do it.”

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About The Alternative Board

The Alternative Board® (TAB) helps forward-thinking business owners grow their businesses, increase profitability and improve their lives by leveraging local business advisory boards, private business coaching and proprietary strategic services.

TAB works with successful business owners who feel that their current practices are not elevating their businesses to the next level. We bring together owners, CEOs and presidents of non-competing companies to meet in a relaxed, confidential setting to give and gain practical, real-world advice on their specific business issues and opportunities.