



Jo McCabe

Mr. Handyman
Manassas, VA

Member Since: 2010

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You might assume that Jo McCabe, co-owner of Mr. Handyman 2010 Franchisee of the Year, serving Prince William and southern Fairfax counties in Virginia, has a background in home repairs. In reality, McCabe cut her teeth in aircraft maintenance for the Navy before spending eight years in physical security, overseeing the Navy’s northeast region and eventually managing 1500 people.

Upon leaving the service, McCabe decided to put her management experience and MBA to use and become a business owner. She wanted a proven system, so she investigated a host of franchise options. The Mr. Handyman opportunity presented itself in 2008. Now with six employees, McCabe’s company provides major and minor repairs, maintenance and improvements for both homes and businesses.

Unfortunately, it was tough going the first two years. “We bought it right before the economy tanked,” McCabe says. In addition, there were other surprises such as having to replace the business’s computers. “You think when you’re buying an existing business that the customer base and equipment will be there, but that’s not always the case.”

Although 2009 was “terrible,” McCabe managed to increase revenues by 46 percent in 2010. Her secret? “TAB has helped my business grow significantly by encouraging me to take a step back and identify the basics I need to master,” she explains. “Business



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is like sports – the teams that master the basics and continue to use them are the ones that make it to the championships.”

In McCabe’s case, the basics she needed to master included learning marketing tactics to attract new business, and landing repeat business. Her TAB facilitator helped her devise a detailed action plan that led to the 46 percent increase in sales. “I’m the type of person who sets goals and makes lists,” McCabe says. “But I definitely wouldn’t have achieved my goals for 2010 if it hadn’t been for my TAB facilitator asking ‘What are you going to do to get there?’”

Even more important, McCabe’s facilitator and fellow TAB Board members kept her accountable for making progress toward her goal. In fact, the idea of being held accountable was one thing that drew her to TAB. “With my background as an engineer and in the military, I like structure. TAB has structure when it comes to setting goals, monitoring metrics and staying accountable.”

McCabe also appreciates the mentoring she receives and provides during TAB Board sessions. “The more you open up to others and allow others to help you, the more advice they can give and the more help they can be,” she believes.

“There is no silver bullet to becoming successful,” McCabe continues. “You just have to stay focused on your goals and work at mastering the basics, which is where TAB can be a big help.”

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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.