



TAB Helps Guide Transitioning and New Owners to Keep **MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR FIRM THRIVING**

M.S. JACOBS AND ASSOCIATES, BASED IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, is a leading sales representative firm specializing in the sales of industrial instrumentation and controls. From its original focus on the steel industry after its inception in 1945, M.S. Jacobs has expanded to serve virtually all major markets from power generation and chemical processing to oil and gas production, water and waste water treatment and nuclear power generation.

MOST RECENTLY **THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE**

in ownership in M.S. Jacobs and Associates. In December 2016, second-generation owner E.J. Sigety sold the company to Chris Kamzalow and his wife Jennifer. Chris now serves as President/Owner, while E.J. agreed to stay on board through 2017 as CEO.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF BECOMING A NEW OWNER

Chris and E.J. are both enthusiastic TAB Members, with insightful comments on how their membership experience has contributed to their success as leaders, and to the success of M.S. Jacobs.

As a former outside sales engineer for M.S. Jacobs, Chris says, "I'm frankly new to the challenge of being a business owner. I became a TAB Member when E.J. asked me to join the Junior Executive Board as a way to further my education and see things from the management side of the business."

Working closely with his TAB Board and Facilitator, Chris outlined a quarter-by-quarter transition plan at the start of 2017. Action steps of the plan included:

- Inform all M.S. Jacobs employees and suppliers of the change in ownership.
- Work one-on-one with E.J. to learn more about what he does as an owner.
- Begin reviewing in-house reports on the company's financial side.
- Take on more of the supplier reporting from E.J.
- Hire a new sales engineer, finish out the financials for the year and set quotas for 2018.

"To date," Chris says, "we've been on track with the transition plan and our Facilitator helps us focus on that plan with our monthly meetings."

E.J., as a second-generation owner, faced challenges of his own when his father died, "leaving a huge void in having a sounding board and a second opinion on key business decisions."

Fortunately, he says, "Getting multiple opinions from other Board Members was not only extremely helpful in the decision-making process, but gave me the confidence that I was making the right decision for my business. The experience also made me realize that all owners face similar challenges and that I wasn't alone."

Asked about other issues where TAB Membership has helped, E.J. points to the high costs of health insurance for employees.

"Hearing from other owners on my Board about their approaches to health care helped me make the best choice for our company and our employees," he says.

HEARING HOW OTHER BUSINESS LEADERS FACE CHALLENGES

What would Chris and E.J. say to other CEOs and business owners considering membership in TAB?

"TAB is a great organization for talking about your challenges and hearing about how other business owners have faced those challenges," Chris says. "Getting a different perspective is always helpful, and I think most business leaders can learn a great deal from the experience."

E.J. agrees. "Join! It's a great way to interface with other business owners on a level playing field and to openly discuss critical issues and receive insightful feedback, both positive and negative."

