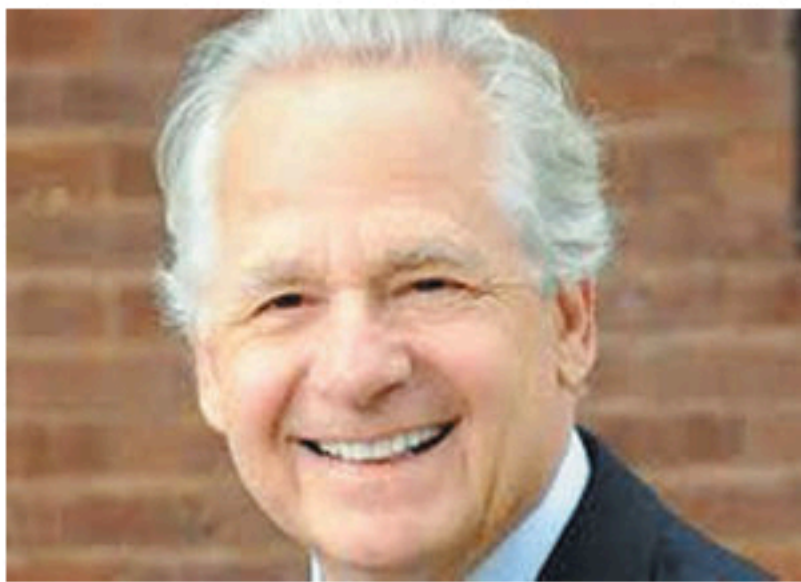


# Back to basics

## ■ Author urges owners to have a vision



Contributed photo

Allen Fishman

Posted: Sunday, November 10, 2013 12:45 am

Darin Moriki - The Garden Island | 0 comments

LIHUE — When Allen Fishman launched The Alternative Board in 1990, he sought to create an objective arena by which small- to mid-sized business owners could collaborate and share advice.

That company, launched four years after he took his electronics company public, is now the world's largest international franchise business system to provide advisory board and executive coaching services to business owners and leaders in six countries, including Ireland, Canada, New Zealand and Germany.

On Thursday, Fishman shared a few tips of his own for nearly 60 business owners and leaders during a forum hosted by the Kauai Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with Leadership Kauai and Kauai Young Professionals.

"Before you do any business plans, you have to do this," Fishman explained. "I'm a great believer in strategic business leadership, but all your strategies and all your plans also need to be based upon one big question: Will your plans help you bring about your personal vision. If any plans, any strategy, if any tactic does not meet or complete a set on your personal vision, it is something that you shouldn't do."

The foundation for any business, Fishman explained, is a solid, comprehensive personal vision statement that maps out personal and business goals.

Moving forward with any business without it, he explained, "is like traveling without knowing where you're going."

This road map, he said, should begin with an initial vision — made before any business was launched — and goals to achieve five to 10 years down the line.

Those plans should also address eight key areas, including financial and material success; work role; work and personal life balance; psychological rewards; family and friends; mental and physical health; semi- or full-retirement; and your business.

"Stretch your dreams so you have something to work toward that is possible to achieve," Fishman said. "A personal vision that is impossible or highly unlikely to attain creates inevitable frustration and probable failure."

Leadership Kauai Executive Director Char Ravelo said that basic, yet essential piece of advice is important for everyone, and not just business leaders, to remember.

"When you're a business owner, you go through these processes ... and often times you get caught up with things happening daily, so it's nice to have someone remind you to go back to your original goals, go back to your focus and ask why you are doing this," Ravelo said. "Distraction is so easy when you have life. If your business is your life, then that's a different story, but still you have to have the balance — it was wonderful to be reminded of that."

Tanya Hughes, who just opened up her party supplies business Party Wonderland LLC in Lihue last week, agreed.

"I did a business plan before we (my husband and I) opened the business, but I think it's really good to be here today and go back to that," Hughes said. "For me, I want to go back to my business plan, look at my mission statement and make sure that is exactly what my mission or plan over the next five to 10 years should be."

But the factor to always keep in mind, Fishman said, is the same thing that motivates most business owners: passion.

"We all know that if you feel passionately about some activity that you're doing, no one has to tell you to work ... you're going to be excited about going to work," Fishman said.

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