



THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD

**TAB MEMBER
CASE STUDY:
KRISTI DUNHAM**



A Story of Succession

FROM THE MOMENT KRISTI DUNHAM SAT FOR A JOB INTERVIEW at Peak Engineering, she knew it was a special company that valued relationships above all else. But what Kristi didn't realize at the time is that just two decades later she would be leading the business that she so much admired. And TAB would play a key role in her transition.

Kristi Dunham is the President and Co-Owner of Peak Engineering, a Denver structural engineering firm specializing in tilt-up distribution warehouses.

Kristi says that when she interviewed with the company in 2000, she was struck by the founder's family-oriented, relationship-building approach to running an engineering business.

"Our organization has benefitted from a very positive, collaborative foundation laid early on by Peak's original owner," Kristi says. "We have built wonderful, strong relationships with our clients and throughout our entire company, which makes a sometimes stressful job into something very enjoyable."

After the founder retired in 2010, Kristi's colleague and fellow engineer, John Hart, became the majority owner of the firm. Then almost immediately thereafter, he joined a TAB Board.

"John has always been a very talented engineer, but he knew he wanted to up our game from a business standpoint. He is always looking for expertise. So TAB was just the right choice."

Kristi says she had a favorable impression of TAB from the beginning as she watched John implement new successful measuring tools and operational strategies at Peak. "I saw it work."

Flash forward to 2018. The company had grown, and Kristi and another colleague took over minority ownership of the firm. Then a short time later, John announced he was stepping back from the business to deal with some health issues.

While John may not have realized it at the time, all those years on his TAB Board ended out being a



huge asset throughout Peak's leadership transition. So much so, in fact, John recommended Kristi take his seat on the board.

"TAB played such a big part in our succession planning and execution," Kristi says. "There was so much to navigate. The board's deep understanding of our business really helped keep us accountable and make those important but sometimes tough decisions. TAB has been an anchor to help us move through all this."

Kristi says that even though she knew quite a bit about TAB, leading into her first board meeting, she really wasn't sure what to expect.

"I was a little intimidated. But it is such a great group. And having them have that connection with John was huge. They already knew our story."

After that first board meeting Kristi says she felt a sense of relief and even excitement. "Even now," she says, "I really get a sense of rejuvenation from our board meetings."

Kristi says that she feels connection and support from everyone on the board. "I know that they care not just about my business, but about me and my journey too."

As Kristi and her business partner continue to lead and strategically grow this incredible legacy, they are committed to staying true to its roots.

"While we may work in a technical industry, those relationships will always be our driving force."