



THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD

## TAB MEMBER CASE STUDY:

**Niche Studios**



# Success by Design: Leveraging the Right Opportunities

### **MIKAEL WEDEMEYER LAUNCHED NICHE STUDIO, A WEB DEVELOPMENT**

and design firm based in Wynnum, Queensland, Australia back when he was in high school. After bringing on future partner Nathan Mussig in 2005, the two men transformed the business from merely operating in survival mode to truly thriving in process-driven success. Along the way, they designed the business of their dreams.

**Mikael Wedemeyer and Nathan Mussig have learned a thing or two about running a business since partnering in Niche Studio more than a decade ago. Business success, they realized, has as much to do with saying no to the wrong opportunities as it does saying yes to the right ones.**

“For us now, it's about being smart and profitable and being able to choose to work with good people rather than feeling pressure to take all the work that we need just to feed the beast,” Mikael said.

Back in the early days, Niche leaned heavily on other companies for things like packaging and printing. Nathan said, “Even five years ago, we required more people to turn around our deliverables. These days, we're able to see everything through ourselves.”

It turns out, success to Mikael and Nathan had little to do with massively scaling their business. What they really wanted was to employ a talented team and work with the customers they enjoy. But the plan still needed to make smart sense, both business-wise and creatively.

**“We just want to do great work and in a sane way,” Mikael says. “And be able to run the company rather than it run us.”**

So about six years ago, the design duo turned to The Alternative Board (TAB) to gain the operational expertise they felt they needed. Each participates on their own monthly TAB Board, yet they find tremendous value in doubling up for joint business coaching sessions. The change in their operations and leadership has been nothing less than remarkable.

**“Thanks to TAB, we approach our business differently now than back when we were running around with our heads chopped off,” Nathan said.**



He continued, “Doing training together and having separate boards has really been beneficial. We both get to share our unique perspectives, individually solve problems, and work with teams other than ourselves.”

**“Pre-TAB, our goal was survival. It was all about surviving and adrenaline and reacting,” Mikael said.**

Since joining TAB, Mikael and Nathan learned that the true secret to success, even for an agile creative firm like theirs, lies in building the right processes that will provide structure and propel their business forward.

“In our board meetings and coaching, we've worked a lot on procedures and processes,” Nathan said. “We've been able to eliminate a lot of surplus work we didn't need to be doing. A lot was cleaned up by adopting a new process or technology. So now we're like, ‘Hey, we just need you to follow this process and we're all good.’”

Mikael said that TAB's Business Builder's Blueprint (BBB) has made a massive difference in developing the company's Vision and Values. While he admitted he was hesitant at first to do vision work because it often felt superficial or generic to him, he and Nathan got the entire team involved and it resulted in something both special and appropriate.

**“Working in the BBB, we really ended up with the Vision and Values that made sense and were meaningful to us. We even included them on our website.”**

As Mikael and Nathan continue their business leadership journeys, what else can they glean from their TAB Boards and coaching?

**Mikael said, “TAB has really refined the way we do things. But there's always more.”**

