

For Immediate Release

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Business Owners Guardedly Optimistic in 2005: Health Care Identified As Number One Concern for Business Owners

According to a recent survey of small and medium-sized business owners, full participation in an economic recovery has eluded many businesses whose owners are guardedly optimistic concerning 2005.

The survey was performed by National Market Measures, a market research firm based in Cleveland, OH, who collaborated with survey sponsor, The Alternative Board® to gather the forecast opinions of small to medium-sized businesses in order to promote awareness of this important audience's perspective. The results show that while business leaders across the United States and Canada experienced growth in 2004, they don't yet feel fully recovered.

Business owners also voiced their concerns over rising health care costs. **Over 65 percent of respondents identified containment of health care costs as the most pressing national issue.** Many small businesses are forced to consider plans to shift responsibility to employees or eliminate company-sponsored health care.

Other insights include a more positive outlook for 2005 profitability from business owners who received regular peer advice or coaching from an organization such as The Alternative Board® and plans of small businesses to hire more full-time staff. The following tables highlight these findings:

	2005 Compared to 2004	2004 Compared to 2003
TAB Members	54.1 % projected an increase of 10 percent or greater in gross revenue	42.3 % reported an increase of 10 percent or greater in gross revenue
NON-TAB Members	42.9 % projected an increase of 10 percent or greater in gross revenue	40 % reported an increase of 10 percent or greater in gross revenue
TAB Members	47.2 % projected an increase of 10 percent or greater in profitability	32.1 % reported an increase of 10 percent or greater in profitability
NON-TAB Members	25.7 % projected an increase of 10 percent or greater in profitability	25.7 % reported an increase of 10 percent or greater in profitability

Small to Medium-Sized Businesses

2005 Compared to 2004	2004 Compared to 2003
50.3 % plan to add full-time employees to their staff	37 % plan to add full-time employees to their staff

Founded by CEO Allen Fishman in 1990, The Alternative Board® is an "invitation only" membership organization providing peer board advisory services and strategic coaching to business owners. Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, TAB facilitates advisory boards in over 100 cities with over 300 TAB Boards® operating each month across the United States, Canada and South America. Since its inception, thousands of businesses have benefited from membership in The Alternative Board®.

The Alternative Board® is featured in the January 2005 *Entrepreneur* magazine Franchise 500. For more information about TAB, visit our website at www.TABBoards.com.