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THE DAILY

Wednesday, October 27, 2010 01:46 PM

Sobel seminar offers tips on staying afloat in sinking economy

By [Martin C. Daks](#)

Tips for maximizing business performance in a tight economy took center stage at CPA firm **Sobel & Co. LLC**'s annual business forum for privately held companies, which ran Tuesday night at the Westminster Hotel, in Livingston.

"Welcome to the new normal, where people just aren't spending money," said **Alan Sobel**, managing member of the Livingston firm. "We're facing a great deal of uncertainty over the economy, but we do know that higher [federal] taxes are ahead."

At times like this, business leaders have to adapt and manage in new ways, he added.

"In great times, you can manage with your gut instincts, and you may still be able to profit," Sobel said. "But you can't do that now ... when you're in an economy like this, it's a great time to learn and implement new management skills."

His themes were reinforced by keynote speaker **Charles H. Green**, founder and CEO of West Orange-based **Trusted Advisor Associates**.

"Many corporate buying decisions are actually made on gut instincts," he said. "Later, executives will rationalize their decisions. You [the seller of goods or services] have to realize that influence is not rational. Instead, it works through reciprocity."

That means doing more listening and less talking, Green said. Instead of focusing on the transaction, he advised shifting the focus to the relationship with the client."

"The best way to sell is to stop trying to sell," Green said. "The best way to close a deal is to stop trying to close the deal."

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