

A close-up photograph of a person's hands and forearms. They are wearing a dark blue suit jacket and a watch with a light-colored dial and a dark strap. The person's hands are clasped together, and they appear to be walking, as suggested by the blurred background and the visible tips of brown leather shoes at the bottom of the frame.

OUTSOURCING SECRETS

**THE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO OUTSOURCING
YOUR BUSINESS SO YOU CAN GAIN MORE TIME**

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Chapter 1 – Advantages of Outsourcing Business Processes	7
Advantages for Your Company	7
Advantages for the Consumer.....	9
Provides Employment Opportunities	9
Disadvantages of Outsourcing	10
How to Know When You Should Outsource	11
Chapter 2 – Identifying the Need for Outsourcing.....	12
How to Identify Projects for Outsourcing	13
Everyday Tasks You Should Consider Outsourcing	13
Things to Consider Before Outsourcing Tasks	22
Chapter 3 – The Best Places to Find Outsourcers	24
Finding Qualified Customers	24
Popular Freelancing Sites	24
Top Tier Outsourcing Advantages.....	27
Chapter 4 – Posting Jobs, Evaluating Candidates, and Hiring Freelancers	28
Create a Clear Job Description	28
Detailing the Job Requirements	29
Determine How Much You Will Pay.....	29
Evaluating the Freelancers	30
Narrowing Down Your Choice	30
Picking the Most Qualified Candidate.....	32

Chapter 5 – How to Avoid an Outsourcing Catastrophe.....35
Rule #135
Rule #2:35
Rule #3:36
Rule #4:36
Rule #5:36

Conclusion38
Smart Outsourcing38

Introduction

Entrepreneurs and small business owners often work more hours than they need to because they try to handle every aspect of their business themselves. However, this can quickly lead to burnout and failure. In business, results matter, and your goal is to produce the best results. The best way to do this is by assembling a team of experts that can help you achieve success.

Unfortunately, many companies are unable to handle every process in their business because of the limitation of its employees. As the owner and leader of your business, it is your job to focus on the strengths of your organization.

If you're the developer or marketing expert in your company, the chances are good that you lack skills in bookkeeping or customer service. This is why outsourcing has become a fast-growing alternative for many small business owners.

Outsourcing is the assigning of various business processes to expert individuals and companies. These professionals handle the business tasks that you've identified as needs. Outsourcing the non-strategic operations of your business allows you to focus on the parts of your business that are most important to you.

Virtual outsourcing is a fast-growing trend where organizations of all sizes outsource business processes to professionals around the world. This is

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referred to as hiring freelancers and is the preferred method for small and mid-sized businesses.

Outsourcing gained its popularity in the mid-80s and has been growing steadily ever since. It was first used by small and new businesses that were struggling to survive in a competitive market.

Today, companies of all sizes have embraced outsourcing to help them complete various business processes. The most common businesses to take advantage of outsourcing are based on the Internet, with many companies relying solely on freelancers to run their companies.

With the growing popularity and recognition that outsourcing is a viable business alternative for today's companies, it is now possible for anyone to start and run a business without having to worry about finding cheap office space or the stringent government regulations and taxes.

Outsourcing is extremely beneficial for business owners because they are afforded the opportunity to focus on growing their business. Most outsourced tasks are handled by part-time freelance workers, allowing you to avoid having to employ full-time staff.

This will enable you to save on numerous benefits like health insurance and paid vacation, giving you the opportunity to reinvest the money saved into your business.

You can hire almost any kind of professional to work as a virtual employee. This includes, designers, bookkeepers, writers, programmers, IT professionals, salespeople, and many more. All you need is a computer

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and the Internet to search, hire, communicate, and work with virtual professionals around the world.

There are several advantages associated with outsourcing particular business processes, especially when it is a well-managed process. However, there are times when outsourcing can backfire and result in business losses.

This is especially true when there are poor contracts and project management resources.

Chapter 1 – Advantages of Outsourcing Business Processes

One of the most important things that you have to consider before talking about the advantages of outsourcing is that it may not be a great option if you are only interested in making massive profits.

You will need to assess whether outsourcing will be a viable option for you or if you need to search out other alternatives for completing the task.

The United States and India are among the leading outsourcing countries in the world. Here are some of the advantages your business can gain by outsourcing some of your business processes.

Advantages for Your Company

One of the most significant advantages of outsourcing your business tasks is that it allows you to start out small, unlike hiring employees, which is a substantial investment. Starting out small becomes an essential way for you to hone your delegation skills.

Outsourcing allows you to delegate mundane tasks that begin to slowly eat away at your valuable time. If you hire employees to complete these tasks, it could end up costing you more than it's worth.

Having freelance, remote workers can help to free up your time so you can focus on the essential aspects of running your business. Outsourcing

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allows you to run your business from anywhere in the world, as long as you have access to the Internet.

It provides you with the opportunity to travel, visit friends, and spend extended weekends out of town without losing the ability to complete essential business projects. When you outsource, you don't have to have an office. This is a considerable advantage of outsourcing.

Outsourcing allows you to quickly access skills for anything that you need. You don't have to spend money or time training new employees and can build a network of freelancers, allowing you to quickly and easily accomplish any task.

Since you can hire individuals who love performing the tasks that you hate, outsourcing can help to reduce your stress. It can also lessen the stress when you lose an employee. Having to go through the hiring process is time-consuming, causing your business to struggle every time you have to replace an employee that has left the company. Freelancers are much easier to replace.

Outsourcing is also a great way to complete temporary or seasonal tasks. You can bring them on for a short amount of time without having to deal with hiring, training, and eventually letting them go when the project is completed.

If you are just starting your business, outsourcing is a great way to get your business up and running. It allows you to pay for specific tasks rather than spending your time and money hiring employees.

Outsourcing your business processes can also save you a ton of money. Not only are you able to pay international rates, as opposed to the rates of your country, but you don't have to worry about health insurance, vacation or sick pay, or any other types of costs that are usually associated with running a business.

Advantages for the Consumer

Outsourcing not only provides benefits for your company but is advantageous for your customers as well. In most instances, when you outsource your business processes, it leads to a lower production cost of the goods and services you offer.

When you spend less on production, you can pass those savings on to the consumer through lower prices on the finished products.

Provides Employment Opportunities

One of the most substantial advantages of outsourcing is the global employment opportunities it provides. Let's assume that a single company outsources various business processes to a few hundred workers located around the world, then thousands of companies outsourcing work could result in millions of people gaining employment.

Employment is one of the most critical issues facing today's world leaders. By outsourcing your business processes to countries with high unemployment rates, you can help to reduce the number of unemployed individuals, resulting in better economic conditions for people around the world.

Disadvantages of Outsourcing

Unfortunately, like with any business task, outsourcing can have its disadvantages. There will be instances when your favorite freelancer is unavailable to help you with an urgent task. Luckily, there are ways you can avoid this issue.

The best option is to have three or more freelancers that you can go to for each area of your business that you are looking to outsource. While finding enough talented freelancers to work with can be time-consuming and stressful, especially when you are working on tight deadlines, with the right planning and networking, you can limit this issue.

You may also have a language barrier to overcome, depending on where you're looking to outsource. This can cause misunderstandings that could be detrimental to your business success.

To avoid this, you need to make sure that you are providing the freelancers with detailed, written instructions along with screenshots or an instructional video to ensure that everything is 100 percent clear.

Remote workers have to be self-motivated and have a tremendous amount of self-discipline, as well as being extremely organized. Since you won't be around to motivate them personally, you have to find freelancers that possess these skills. This can sometimes be difficult to find.

Outsourcing requires you to continually grow your skills as a supervisor so you can manage your freelancers. This doesn't mean that you should be micromanaging them. There is a considerable difference between micromanaging and managing.

You should also expect to spend some time writing emails, making calls, and completing other tasks that are associated with outsourcing. The general rule is that you should spend 20 percent of your time to complete 100 percent of the functions that you are outsourcing.

How to Know When You Should Outsource

This will depend entirely on the task that you want to delegate and the stage of your business. If you are just starting a new business, then outsourcing is your best option about 99 percent of the time.

You will only need to hire an employee once you reach a particular stage in your business. Even then, you may still decide that outsourcing is best.

Chapter 2 – Identifying the Need for Outsourcing

The business outsourcing process starts with knowing that you have a need, maybe sometimes even before you know. You may think that you don't need help, or can't stand the idea of paying someone else to do the work that you can do yourselves.

However, it is essential to think about the long-term success of your business. You need to admit that you will need help from time to time and start putting stop-gaps in place.

The challenge becomes deciding what tasks you should keep in-house, and which ones you should outsource. You want to outsource any business process that is not critical to the daily operations of your company.

If you have a simple business model, this will be easy to accomplish. If your business has a more intricate model, this process will be more time-consuming.

The first thing that you must do is to differentiate the business process into strategic, or core processes and non-strategic, or supporting processes.

It is crucial that you make the right decision at this stage.

How to Identify Projects for Outsourcing

To identify the business processes best suited for outsourcing, you need to make a list of all the processes and tasks that you complete during the course of business. Next, create a two-column table and categorize each task based on their strategic importance.

One of the columns should be labeled as “strategically important,” and the other should be labeled “strategically unimportant.” The tasks that you want to place in the “strategically important” column are those tasks that are related to your business's competitive advantage.

These are tasks that might require giving access to confidential information that is important in completing these tasks. If you decide to outsource any of these tasks you may want to have the freelancer sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement or NDA. T

asks that are placed in the "strategically unimportant" column are those that don't impact your company's competitive advantage and ones that don't require an NDA to be signed.

Everyday Tasks You Should Consider Outsourcing

In today's competitive business world, just about any business process can be outsourced. Here is a list of some of the more common tasks that you should consider outsourcing.

Administrative Tasks

You can outsource many of the administrative tasks of your business to talented freelancers. When you are first starting your business, these are the tasks that you want to outsource quickly so you can begin building your delegation skills and start focusing on the more critical aspects of your business.

1) Virtual Assistant

When you don't have to worry about setting up appointments, car services, reservations, deliveries, managing your blog and social media presence, you suddenly have a lot of free time to focus on more critical aspects of running your business. Outsourcing these tasks to a virtual assistant will free up a considerable chunk of time.

2) Email

One of the most time-consuming things that you will have to do as a business owner is managing your email. When outsourcing your email management, it should include filtering emails, database building, sending event invitations, calendar management, and appointment scheduling.

3) Bookkeeping

Bookkeeping is one of the tasks that many new business owners try to tackle, only to end up in financial trouble. Accounting requires a lot of educational experience, as well as the time to stay up-to-date with the constantly changing tax codes. The day-to-day bookkeeping

tasks that most businesses need are incredibly time-consuming, making it nearly impossible for business owners to devote enough time to grow their business. Outsourcing this task will not only save you time but money as well.

4) Data Entry

Having all of your business information easily organized, accessible, and easy to share will help to boost your productivity. However, this task is extremely time-consuming. Data entry freelancers can not only manage your files but can keep your online presence up-to-date as well, by updating any information that changes over time.

5) Research

Often, when growing your business, it is necessary for you to conduct research. This can include searching for new marketing strategies or writing a book. These tasks will require a ton of research.

Unfortunately, researching can eat away at your valuable time. You should consider outsourcing this task to work on more productive projects.

6) Project Management

When you begin to hire more freelancers and have a lot of outsourcing tasks running, it will become extremely time-consuming to manage and pay everyone. To help free up your time you can hire a project manager to handle the task. This will become extremely useful because they will be interacting with all the freelancers, leaving you the sole task of interacting with the project manager.

Content Creation

These next tasks will fall into the category of content creation. If you are a writer yourself, you may decide to handle these tasks on your own, while outsourcing programming and graphic design tasks to a group of freelancers.

7) Social Media

Your presence on social media can present a huge money generating opportunity for your business, that can grow your brand identity. With the different social media platforms that are available, you have the chance to interact with thousands of potential new customers.

However, creating and posting quality content on a daily basis can be extremely time-consuming. Outsourcing your social media marketing to a company or experience individual is a great way to interact with your potential customers daily without having to spend your time doing it yourself.

8) Article Writing

With the popularity of blogs, the demand for high-quality articles that are loaded with valuable information has seen a dramatic uptick in recent years. The need for high-quality content is endless and includes virtually any subject you can imagine. Visitors want to be provided with real information.

This is something that Google know well and has continually improved their indexing methods to ensure that valuable content will rank higher

on their search engine. Since the demand is so high in this area, you should consider outsourcing this task so that you can tap into this revenue stream.

9) Editing

Editing is an integral part of writing. It is a highly sought-after skill and is often underrated. Editing isn't merely the process of checking for spelling and grammar mistakes but is an entire process designed to make text easier to read.

This can be accomplished through content editing, copy editing, and proofreading. It is essential that you are specific about what types of edits you need to have completed when talking with a freelancer since simple proofreading is a much cheaper task than full edits.

10. Books and eBooks

A popular method for sharing valuable information is eBooks. With the popularity of iBook, Nook, and Kindle, eBooks have become a compelling form of marketing your business.

Experts can write books that not only market your business but provide you with substantial profits as well. This may be the most profitable form of outsourcing within the content writing category.

11. Business Plans

An essential part of any business is the business plan. However, nearly 70 percent of new business owners have failed to develop a business plan before opening their doors.

This could explain why the business failure rate is so high. If you aren't sure where to start or have no desire to sit down and write out your business plan, this is where outsourcing can help.

Freelancers experienced in writing business plans can take on the task and create a blueprint for success that will help you stay on track.

12. Sales Copy

An essential aspect of your long-term success is having your sales copy in perfect shape. However, this can be an expensive and time-consuming task. You may have already tried to write your own sales letter or promotional descriptions, only to be disappointed when you aren't able to see an increase in your sales.

Writing sales copy is a particular skill that not everyone possesses. Experts in writing sales copy know how to incorporate tags lines, provocative headlines, well-defined lists, and compelling call to actions. Sales copy isn't limited to written descriptions but can include advertising scripts and presentations as well.

13. Email Marketing

Email marketing campaigns are extremely powerful for bringing in new clients and increasing sales. Email marketing professionals are experts in setting up email campaigns that produce results. They will write the email, set up an auto-responding system, and target specific consumers.

Programming and Multimedia

As with content creation, if your business specializes in programming and multimedia, you may want to consider handling these tasks on your own and outsourcing the production of content.

14. Website Design

In today's competitive market, if your business doesn't have a website, you're going to be at a considerable disadvantage. Most small business owners know this, which makes it no surprise to them that web design is in such high demand.

Website design is one of the most outsourced tasks in the world. Websites are something that every business needs but only a handful of select individuals have the skills to make it a reality.

15. Kindle Book Submissions

One of the best ways to promote your eBook is to submit it to various websites that provide book reviews and that have a solid base of followers. However, sending your book to 50+ sites can be time-consuming. Outsourcing this task will save you a significant amount of time.

16. Google AdWords Campaigns

You can become a millionaire if you can develop a successful AdWords Campaign. However, learning the process is difficult and can result in a considerable loss of money and time if you aren't an expert in Google

AdWords. Outsourcing this task to a professional certified Google AdWords expert is highly recommended.

17. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO requires a particular skill set. No one knows the exact code that Google uses to index websites, so SEO specialists tend to test different variables. This gives them a unique advantage over others that don't fully understand the intricacies of SEO. You can hire freelancers to place banners, create SEO friendly blog posts, and manage your pay-per-click campaigns to ensure that you get the highest conversion rate.

18. Transcription Services

A great way to engage your readers and potential customers is to have video and audio files available at their disposal. One way you can increase the amount of content you add to your site is to hire a transcriber to write out the information featured in the video or audio file, word for word. This will provide you with a ton of articles to use on your website.

19. Voiceovers

People love audio content. It is highly engaging and full of valuable information. Whether it is accompanied by a video or is an audiobook, it is essential that it sounds professional and is of high-quality. That's why it's best to hire a professional with the right equipment for the purpose and save yourself a ton of time.

20. Graphic Design

Graphic design is another skill that is in high demand. Your business uses graphics for logos, branding, presentations, product descriptions, and even videos. Unless graphic design is in your set of skills, it is highly recommended that you outsource this work.

21. Videos

Studies have determined that videos are 600 percent more engaging than plain text. They are simply too valuable for your business to do without. Videos that your company may need include product demos, reviews, and even entertainment.

Great videos will sell, while poor videos have the potential to scare your customers away. It is essential to work with professionals who can enhance, edit, and film videos so that they are 100 percent ready to be published online.

22. Animation

Another kind of video that you may use in your business is the explainer/whiteboard animation videos. They can explain your business or service in an engaging and entertaining way and are pretty cool looking. They are one of the best tools to use to convert visitors into paying customers.

Combine these animation videos with a professional voiceover, and you have created a sale making machine. However, creating these types of videos can be incredibly time-consuming if you aren't an expert in the field.

23. Mobile Apps

Developing a mobile app for your business is one of the few real opportunities that can lead to you becoming a millionaire. Mobile apps are in extremely high demand right now, and getting your idea for an app developed can be hugely profitable. If you don't have the skills to build a mobile app, outsource the task, like most of the other Internet millionaires.

24. Formatting and Conversion

While you can upload a simple Word document to Amazon, they don't tend to convert very well. Many individuals and businesses are in need of experts who can format and convert books so that they look and work flawlessly on any device. If you don't have the expertise to do this yourself, find a professional to complete the conversion for you.

Things to Consider Before Outsourcing Tasks

Before you begin your search for talented freelancers to outsource your business processes to, there are some things that you need to consider.

When you are looking at freelancers, you want to pay close attention to their native land. While this won't matter for some tasks like data entry and bookkeeping, it could pose a potential problem when outsourcing writing tasks.

Be cautious of new contractors. While there is nothing wrong with occasionally hiring someone that is looking to establish feedback, you will

OUTSOURCING SECRETS

want to speak to them directly before you do. If they aren't willing to talk with you, don't hire them.

Pay attention to a freelancer's job history when you are making your decision. Some of the factors that you will want to consider include customer feedback, reviews, and their most recent jobs.

Consider interviewing potential candidates before you offer them the job. You can hold an oral interview or use emails or Skype to message prospective candidates. Ask them the tough questions and pay careful attention to how they respond.

Start off with a test job. Give the selected candidates a small task to perform before you hire them. This will allow you to check their skill level. Keep in mind that you will have to pay them for the work they complete, but starting off with a small task is better for decreasing your risk.

Chapter 3 – The Best Places to Find Outsourcers

Now that you've determined what business processes you want to outsource, it's time to begin the process of finding qualified outsourcers. This can be a cumbersome task in and of itself if you don't know where to start.

Finding Qualified Customers

There are hundreds of sites on the Internet where you can begin your search for freelance workers. However, it's important to understand that not all outsourcing organizations are created equal.

To help you find the best freelance workers on the most straightforward platforms to use, we've compiled the following list of online companies that are designed to help individuals and businesses find talented professionals to help them with their business processes.

Popular Freelancing Sites

Upwork (<http://upwork.com>)

This is one of the most popular freelancing sites on the Internet and is a great place to find talented freelancers. Getting started on the site is simple.

The easiest way to get the job done is by breaking up the process into three phases:

- 1) before you hire
- 2) hiring
- 3) doing the work.

Before you hire, you want to be sure to fill out your company name, tagline, description, and website address, and upload your company logo. Next, add and verify your payment method. This is important because you can't hire freelancers without it. Next, post the job and choose between hourly or fixed-price.

Fiverr (<http://fiverr.com>)

You can hire practically any freelancers for any work imaginable on Fiverr. Gigs start at \$5, making it a great place to learn the basics of outsourcing. The site allows you to gain experience in choosing a freelancer, hiring them, and leaving feedback.

Fiverr works through what they call gigs. A gig usually costs just \$5. However, you can rarely get quality work for that small dollar amount. There are gig extras that are offered by the more experienced sellers, giving you higher quality work for a fairly reasonable price.

Freelancer.com (<http://freelancer.com>)

Freelancer.com has over one million freelancers to choose from and is a great place to find affordable rates. However, it isn't quite as powerful as Upwork, so you need to screen your candidates carefully.

Freelancer gives you easy access to graphic designers, writers, programmers, and video editors. It serves as a great place to establish a great list of freelancers for all categories.

Guru (<http://guru.com>)

Guru isn't as large as Upwork, but it is growing at an astounding rate. You can find freelancers from all categories on the site. One of the unique features of Guru is the way you list your project.

Based on the description you provide, Guru will send you a list of the top candidates for your listing. This gives you the power to choose which candidates you want to invite to apply for your job.

Guru is a great place for you to build your list of freelancers and is one of the most efficient outsourcing sites on the Internet.

99 Designs (<http://99designs.com>)

99 Designs is a different type of outsourcing site than the sites listed previously. It is what's known as a design contest marketplace. To find freelancers, you need to post a description of your project; then freelancers will submit entries based on your description.

Then you get to choose your favorite. Because you are choosing from multiple designs, there is no risk to you.

PeoplePerHour (<http://peopleperhour.com>)

The primary advantage of PeoplePerHour is the site's simple layout. It works like Fiverr, in that freelancers can post their projects for set fees, and Upwork, where clients can post jobs that freelancers can go through on their own. Another strength of the site is that it supports a large variety of categories.

PeoplePerHour provides the perfect balance of Fiverr and Upwork styles, making it an excellent choice for your outsourcing needs.

Behance (<http://behance.net>)

Behance is a top-tier outsourcing site, which means you will find some of the best freelancers on the web. This, however, means that you will be spending more money on outsourcing.

Top Tier Outsourcing Advantages

Here are some of the benefits of using Behance:

- ✓ By utilizing a powerful explorer tab, you can find the most creative work in the world based on field of expertise, tools, and location.
- ✓ A refreshed activity feed provides you access to a virtual dashboard that tracks creative work of your favorite freelancers.
- ✓ Freelancers can craft beautiful portfolio pages that will show you their level of talent.
- ✓ An entirely new experience for Followers with profile pages and curated collections.

While Behance is more expensive than most of the other outsourcing platforms, you are guaranteed the best freelancers from around the world.

Chapter 4 – Posting Jobs, Evaluating Candidates, and Hiring Freelancers

In your search for outsourcing talent, there are some crucial steps that you should take that will help you have an open mind concerning your ability to choose the right freelancer for the nature of the job.

Create a Clear Job Description

In order for you to determine exactly what you need in a freelancer, you need to first write down all the responsibilities required to complete the job successfully.

You need to be mindful of the setup of your business and where the freelancer will fit in. You need to consider if you will need a task-based freelancer, a full-time freelancer, or a part-time freelancer.

Depending on your business and your needs, you may need to hire several freelancers to complete micro-jobs.

After you've analyzed your needs, you'll be able to create a clear job description that will allow potential applicants with the required skill sets and qualifications to apply for the job.

As you write your job description, include a code word, requiring the applicants to include it in the first line of their application, to ensure they've read through the job description in its entirety.

Detailing the Job Requirements

Many businesses fail to describe the specific requirements of the job because they simply want the project to be completed. They assume that the freelancer already has all the information regarding the requirements of the job. You need to determine precisely what recourses are required that will help make the job successful.

This may be regarding experience needed, internet connections, and skills, as well as personality traits. These are all requirements that you need to determine to ensure a smooth flow of the business process you are outsourcing.

Outlining the specific requirements will allow potential applicants to know whether they are a good fit for the job. Taking this step will also provide you guidance in narrowing down your selection and eventually hiring the right freelancer who has the relevant experience and skills.

Determine How Much You Will Pay

When you are looking to outsource your various business processes, you must know how much you are willing to spend on hiring a freelancer so you can budget how much you will be spending on the work.

Before you hire a freelancer, you should speak with other people who have successfully worked with freelancers to find out how much they usually pay for outsourcing. If you don't know anyone who has worked with freelancers before, you can do some research online to determine an average dollar amount to pay.

Evaluating the Freelancers

Not every freelancer who applies for your job will be qualified. You will likely have a large group of interested candidates that you will have to evaluate before you find the best applicant for your job.

Examining each applicants job history can become extremely time-consuming. To help you streamline this process, here is a simple system to help you quickly eliminate unqualified candidates.

Quickly glance at all the applications and eliminate those that don't:

- Include the code word
- Provide examples of similar projects
- Have a job history on the site
- Have a feedback threshold of 4.0 or better
- Possess the specific skill set that you need

Following this simple process will eliminate a lot of candidates quickly, leaving you with the most qualified candidates.

Narrowing Down Your Choice

After you've eliminated the candidates that aren't qualified, you will probably still have a large pool of freelancers to choose from. Now you will need to begin taking a closer look at the candidates and narrowing down your choices.

The goal here is to identify 3 to 5 qualified freelancers for your outsourced job. During this step, you'll want to carefully look at the following criteria to help you narrow down your search.

The Bid Price – This is when you will want to consider the budget you determined earlier in the process. Pick a range of acceptable bid prices, eliminating any that are above or below this number. Keep in mind that you get what you pay for; lower bids usually indicate you will receive an inadequate level of service from the freelancer.

Companies v. Individuals – Take a look at the language that is used in the bid. If the candidate uses words like "us" or "we," it is a good indication that they are representing a company.

While you don't have to eliminate agencies automatically, you should carefully analyze their work history to determine if it's worth the increase in cost. If they don't provide exceptional service, they should be eliminated from consideration.

Personalization – Many times you will receive bids that include “cut-and-paste” responses that show the candidate didn't thoroughly read the job description. While they may have included the code word at the top of their application, they do so in a way that lacks any personal connection.

You want to look for candidates that are genuinely interested in the job that you posted. They should include comments that show how they are uniquely qualified for the task.

Project Examples – Look at the work samples that are provided in each bid. This can be an image, app, website, or link to an article. Take a close look at these to see if they match your requirements and expectations.

Feedback Ratings – For each candidate, click on the feedback ratings to look at the work they've completed on the website. You might find that while some candidates have high feedback ratings, they may not have any experience with your kind of project. Eliminate any candidate that doesn't show related work experience.

Timeline – Time is money. Even the most qualified freelancers can waste your money if they take forever to complete your project. Every bid you receive will include an expected timeline for completion. Pay attention to this date and eliminate any bids that go beyond the norm.

Applying these simple rules can help you eliminate a large number of candidates. While you may have to repeat this step a couple of times, you'll eventually narrow down the most qualified candidates.

Picking the Most Qualified Candidate

Now that you have narrowed down your choices to a few highly qualified candidates, it's time to determine the best freelancer for the job. Here are five things that you can do to assist you in making the final decision.

1. Create a Small Test

When it comes to completing your project successfully, timeliness and attention to detail are fundamental aspects of a successful project. You

can "test" the handful of freelancers to determine if they have these qualities by providing them a simple test to complete.

At this point, you can give each candidate a small task to see how quickly and accurately they complete it. Here are some ideas for testing your candidates.

- Ask them a question about their bid.
- Ask them to reaffirm their bid price.
- Ask them to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).
- Ask for another sample of their work.

The purpose here is to give each candidate a simple task that takes just a few minutes to complete.

Wait a day or so to see how each one responds. If someone gives you a lot of excuses or delays, it is a reliable indicator that you'll get the same type of service with your project.

2. Run a Small Project

If your project is complicated, you can pay a small fee to each qualified candidate and ask them to complete a small project. Give each one a similar task and see what they come up with. You can ask them to design a simple app, create an icon, or write an article. This is a great way to test the candidates on their actual experience level.

3. Look for Interest in the Project

Take some time to examine each candidate's portfolio. You want to look for personal interest in the market. Hiring a candidate who is passionate about the type of project you are offering helps when it comes to successfully completing the job. When someone has an interest in a market, they tend to work harder to do a good job.

4. Interview the Candidate

You can use Skype (<http://skype.com>) to connect with people around the globe. It's an excellent tool to communicate with and interview freelancers. You can conduct a phone interview, video interview, or text interview with the tool's easy to use interface. If you aren't comfortable using Skype, you can conduct the interview via email.

5. Check References

Most of the freelancers that you work with will have references from previous work they've completed. You should contact these past clients and talk to them about the candidate's previous job performance.

Ask about the quality of their work, their timeliness, communication skills, and attitude toward the project. Don't be afraid to get a lot of feedback about each candidate.

Once you've completed these five steps, you should have narrowed down your choice to the one candidate that is a perfect fit for the job. If you have a good feeling about one of the freelancers, then that is the person you should hire.

Chapter 5 – How to Avoid an Outsourcing Catastrophe

Outsourcing your business tasks isn't always an easy process. Often it can turn into a stressful nightmare where you're dealing with a person who isn't the right fit for the job.

That's why it's crucial to follow these simple rules to avoid an outsourcing catastrophe.

Rule #1: *Hire Slow*

When you take the time to follow a lengthy vetting process, you avoid many of the problems that arise from hiring low-quality freelancers. You can't simply hire an individual based on their bid price and feedback. You have to take the time to challenge the candidates from the beginning to make sure they are right for the job.

Don't be in a rush to pick the first qualified person that bids on your project. Instead, go through the five steps outlined previously and take the time to find the perfect candidate.

Rule #2: *Fire Fast*

On occasion, no matter how much you vet the candidates, you will still end up hiring someone that isn't fit for the job. The first thing to do in this instance is to try and work with the freelancer. However, if they are

continually making excuses or ignoring your corrections, then you need to get rid of them.

The best way to deal with poor freelancers is to get them out of your life quickly. You can use a “three-strike rule” when firing a freelancer. When you get a third excuse or delay, immediately stop the project and try to recoup your investment.

The process of letting a freelancer go can get tricky when money is involved. It is crucial that you understand how disputes work on the different outsourcing websites.

Rule #3: Avoid Threatening Them

The quickest way to make a tense situation worse is to threaten a freelancer with negative feedback. Negative feedback can destroy a freelancer's business, and you should never use it to get what you want. In reality, you should only use it when a freelancer possesses a poor character trait, like lying or stealing.

Rule #4: Protect Your Ideas

There may be times that you'll want to protect an idea, this is especially true when outsourcing a programmer for a mobile app or piece of software. If you're worried about having people spy on your business, then you should have the freelancer sign a Confidentiality Agreement.

Rule #5: Protect Your Sensitive Information

OUTSOURCING SECRETS

When outsourcing to freelance workers, you also want to take the proper precautions to protect your businesses sensitive information. You want to be careful not to divulge any information that can cripple your personal or professional life. While most freelancers are honest, revealing the wrong information can have a disastrous consequence.

You want to make sure you are only providing information to the freelancer that is directly related to the task at hand. When the task is completed, be sure to change the password to those accounts. You also need to be careful about giving away usernames and passwords that are similar to your PayPal account, banking, and finances.

Most of the outsourcing projects that you complete will be done so without a hitch. Use these rules as a guideline to protect yourself from the rare scenarios when something goes wrong.

Be sure to take your time with every new freelancer that you hire and use the tools that are provided by the various freelance sites, and you'll be able to overcome any problem that may arise if you hire the occasional lousy freelancer.

Conclusion

Outsourcing is a great way to build a thriving business. It allows you to free up your time so you can focus on the crucial aspects of running your business.

Outsourcing will enable you to hire talented professionals who can complete projects that surpass the results you could achieve on your own.

When you surround yourself with talented professionals, you can delegate the non-essential tasks and focus on the critical functions that will help you make your business successful.

Smart Outsourcing

Smart outsourcing isn't about finding the least expensive freelancer to complete the job. Instead, it's about being able to locate great talent and making them a virtual part of your daily business operations.

Hiring other people to handle essential tasks can free up your time, allowing you to focus on the critical business activities that generate the bulk of your profits.

Outsourcing can be one of the best moves you will make for your business. All you have to do is analyze what you need and take the time to find the right candidate for the job and establish a strong working relationship with them.

OUTSOURCING SECRETS

Once you've accomplished this, you can begin to focus on making your company stronger and more profitable. Just remember to protect yourself and your business

Soon you'll start to realize that investing a small fraction of your money in hiring talented freelancers will pay off, giving your company higher profits and an outstanding reputation.