

ONLINE BUSINESS SYSTEMIZATION



GUIDE 5:

How To Outsource Tasks
Like a Pro

How to Outsource Tasks Like A Pro

Unless you have unlimited funds, chances are you won't be able to hire many full-time employees to handle the various essential functions when you first start your business. As a small online business owner for you to have the same efficiencies as a more massive corporation, you will have to outsource many of the essential functions of your business.

When most people think about outsourcing, they envision a "superstar virtual assistant" who does everything while the owner of the business sits back and relaxes. Unfortunately, this is nowhere near the reality. In reality, no online business can run on autopilot. To be successful, you need to take an active role and be there when it comes to making the crucial decisions.

Outsourcing works best when you have an established framework and documented processes in place that allows anyone to complete the necessary tasks. It's best to hire different people who can handle small aspects of your business, rather than looking for a single person who can do it all. By outsourcing to different people, you gain the following advantages.

- You get the right person because you are hiring for a specific job.
- You save money because you aren't employing full-time employees who get paid even if there is no work to complete.
- You don't encounter a "single point of failure" where your business grinds to a halt if a worker gets sick or quits.
- You won't have to worry if someone is right for the job.

You may think that outsourcing is a huge hassle because you have to deal with multiple people. However, it is a smart business decision, especially when you are a new business owner because each project becomes cost-effective and completed by people who know what they are doing.

Your ultimate strategy in outsourcing is to build a capable team where each member specializes in doing one thing really well. Outsourcing allows you to present a professional image while making sure each of your essential business functions is cost-effective.

Here is a five-step process for locating and hiring a great freelancer. Follow this strategy for every new hire that you make, and you will soon have a team full of talented people who are capable of doing excellent work on every single project.

Step One: Identify Your Outsourcing Task

To be successful, you have to start every project with knowing precisely what you want to accomplish. You will need to know what skills are necessary to complete the task, what outcome you are looking for, and the level of expertise required to be successful.

This is the best way to find and hire the right person for a specific job. Before you write the description of the project, you will need to answer the following questions.

- What is the exact goal of the project?

- What problem will it solve?
- Is it an ongoing project or a one-time solution?
- Have you completed the process yourself?
- Can you describe the mistakes that you made during the process?
- Have you hired a freelancer in the past for this kind of project?
- What did you learn from the experience?

Take the time to complete this exercise and be thorough when answering the questions. This step will help you in identifying any potential problems that might arise between you and the freelancer. Plus, it's an excellent way for you to make sure the project description includes every feature and elements that you need for your freelancer to possess.

Step Two: Write Your Project Description

Most of the freelance websites that you will use implement a bidding system for projects. It's your job to write a detailed description of what you want. Once the project description is posted on the sites, people will be able to place a bid for the project by submitting a cost estimation and information about their level of expertise.

Depending on the project that you post, you could receive anywhere from a handful of bids to dozens of proposals. Trying to filter through the proposals you receive can be a daunting task and one that can quickly overwhelm you. Here are some of the ways that you can begin to evaluate the proposals you receive.

- Price
- Feedback rating

- Prior work experience
- Communication skills
- Work samples

Every freelance website is full of talented freelance workers. The trick to getting their attention is to write a compelling project description. It needs to be written in a way that encourages the top-notch freelancers to respond while subtly discouraging the unqualified freelancers. Including the following seven elements in every job description will ensure that the best freelancers will reply to your post.

Element One: Include a Specific Project Title

Rather than being cute with your project title, it's better to write a short description of the work that you are looking to have completed. For instance, if you need to hire a writer for a 10,000-word social media marketing report, then you should write: "Need Professional Writer for a 10,000-word social media marketing report."

Write the project title, so it focuses on the primary goal. Don't try to gain more attention by writing a catch header. You want people who are interested in this project, not bidding merely because they need the work.

Element Two: List the Required Skills

It's not enough to just post a job description, especially if you want to find the right freelancer for the project. The best way to go about looking for

the right person is to ask for specific experience with the task. In other words, you want to include specific skills that will deter anyone who is a generalist, or those who think they can do an excellent job of bidding on your project.

Instead, you want to attract those freelancers who can demonstrate background and expertise in completing the kind of project you are looking to outsource.

For example, let's say you need to hire someone to create press releases. Since these kinds of documents are usually written in a formal, third-person format, you wouldn't want to hire someone who only has experience blogging or creating articles. Instead, you want to find someone who has an extensive background creating excellent press releases.

As part of the description, you want to ask for examples of similar projects. The freelancer should attach these to their bid or provide you with a hyperlink where you can check them out and evaluate their work.

Element Three: Eliminating Certain Candidates

When it comes to outsourcing, some people are right for the job, and there are those who aren't. To save yourself a ton of time, it's best to weed out those who aren't right for the job before they place their bid.

The best thing you can do is be clear about what you need from the beginning. This way you won't waste a freelancer's time if you don't think they are a good fit for the job.

For instance, when hiring a writer, you may want to ask for a native English speaker because you want the informal and conversational style that you don't usually get with someone who speaks English as a second language.

Over time you'll start to develop a feel for what you need for your projects. Don't hide your requirements. Instead, post what you need specifically in the initial project description, so you don't end up wasting yours or the freelancer's time.

Element Four: Provide Specific Parameters

It is essential that the description you write for the project are incredibly detailed regarding what is required. You have to include every possible element so those bidding on your project can provide an accurate bid price.

For instance, you might include the following:

- Specific technical skills required to complete the project
- Any programming languages
- Exact word counts for the project
- The niche market for the product
- Description of the target audience
- Example products and websites
- Links to your current product line

- Elements you like about your competition

Providing detailed descriptions of the project and what you need will help to weed out any lazy freelancers. Detailed job descriptions usually ensure that the people who are bidding on the project are confident in their ability to deliver a quality project.

Element Five: Create a Private Description (Optional)

Sometimes the job you are outsourcing requires a certain level of privacy because you don't want to reveal too much about your business. For these situations, you'll write a vague description informing the candidate that you'll explain more in a follow-up description for those candidates that are selected.

From there, you'll have them sign a non-disclosure agreement before you provide them the rest of the details of the project.

Element Six: Include a Statement About Plagiarism

Unfortunately, when you are hiring a writer, plagiarism is something that will have to be taken into consideration. Every once in a while, you'll come across a freelancer who thinks it's okay to use the same content from someone else's website.

To combat this, you need to include a "zero tolerance" policy within the description of your procedure addressing plagiarism. Inform bidders

upfront that you will be checking for plagiarism on every project by running the content through a plagiarism checking site like Copyscape.

Element Seven: Embed a Code Phrase

Paying attention to details is a skill that can't be taught. Either someone understands how vital it is to read instructions thoroughly, or they don't. For those that don't, you don't want them to be involved in your business.

A simple way to test someone's attention to detail is to include a "code phrase" somewhere in your job description. Either at the end of the job description or somewhere in the middle of a long paragraph.

To see who paid attention to the details of your project description and find freelancers who can follow direction, have them submit their bid with the code phrase at the top.

Step Three: Eliminate Unqualified Bids

Depending on the project, you'll often get dozens of bids, which can be incredibly overwhelming. While it's essential for you to examine each one, it will take too much time to go through each candidate's job history.

Here's a simple system that will allow you to eliminate unqualified candidates quickly.

- Eliminate any proposals that look like a template and those that don't answer your questions. Only keep those proposals that provide clear answers to your questions.
- Eliminate any bids that didn't include the code phrase.
- Eliminate any bid that doesn't include examples of similar projects.
- Eliminate candidates that don't have any job history on the site.
- Eliminate any candidates that don't have at least a 4.5 or better feedback threshold.
- Eliminate candidates that don't possess the specific skills that you need.

Surprisingly, you can eliminate many freelancers with these six rules. Notice that cost isn't included on this list. Right now, at this point in the process, it's more important to eliminate freelancers who aren't a good fit for the listed project.

Step Four: Pick 3 to 5 Qualified Candidates

After quickly eliminating unqualified candidates, you'll still have a large pool of freelancers that you will have to sort through. This will require you to go through the list again and disqualify specific candidates. Your goal with this step is to narrow down your choices to 3 to 5 qualified candidates.

This step can be hard because the candidate pool is now filled with excellent freelancers. Now is the time for you to carefully look at each bid and decide which is the most qualified candidate for your project.

To narrow down your choices again, look at the following criteria.

The Bid Price

This is the step in the process when you have to consider cost. When deciding on a candidate, you'll want to pick a range of bid prices that are acceptable to you and eliminate those candidates who are above this number or who fall below the figure.

It is important to remember that you get what you pay for, so you want to be sure to eliminate the low bids because this is usually a good indicator that you will receive poor service.

Companies v. Individuals

Pay close attention to the language of the bid. If the proposal includes words like "we" or "us" then it's a good sign that they are representing a company. While you don't have to eliminate companies and agencies automatically, you need to be careful when analyzing their work history to make sure they are worth the increase in cost.

Personalization

Many of the bids that you receive will be a "cut-and-paste" response that shows the project description wasn't thoroughly read. While the bidder may have included the code phrase, they do so in a generic response that lacks any personality and connection.

While you are going through the bids, you want to look for freelancers who seem like they are genuinely interested in working on the project. You want to look for freelancers who include comments about how they are uniquely qualified to work on your project and who can relate parts of your description to something they've done in the past.

Project Examples

Always look at the freelancer's work examples that they provide with their bid. This can be a link to an article they've written, an app, an image, or a website they designed. You will also get freelancers who attach samples of their work history directly to their bid. Carefully examine these examples to see how they stack up to your expectations.

Past Feedback Ratings

For each remaining bidder, click on their feedback ratings and examine the work they've completed on the freelance website. Even though a freelancer has a high feedback level, doesn't mean that they have experience working on projects similar to yours. Eliminate anyone who doesn't have related work experience.

Timeline

Even the most experienced freelancers can be a waste of money if they can't complete a project on time. Every bid you receive will give you an

expected timeline for completion. Pay close attention to the delivery dates submitted and eliminate any proposals that go beyond the norm.

These few simple rules will allow you to reduce a large pool of candidates. Be prepared to repeat this specific step a few times to find the right candidates to the short-list. Once you have a few qualified freelancers chosen, you can now move forward with selecting the most qualified candidate to complete your project.

Step Five: Pick the Most Qualified Freelancer

This is where you will make your final decision and hire a qualified freelancer to help you complete your project. Each of the candidates you've selected should be fully qualified to work on your project.

Now you have to determine which person is the right fit for the particular task. Here are four things you can do to move forward with making a final decision in selecting a freelancer for the project.

Create a Small Test

Timeliness and attention to detail are crucial when running a business. You can test the qualified applicants for these qualities by having them complete a simple test. Give each of the potential hires a small task to finish to see how quickly and accurately they accomplish it. Here are a few ideas you can use.

- Ask them a question about their bid
- Ask them to reaffirm the bid price
- Ask them to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement
- Ask them to provide you with another sample of their work

The purpose is to give each candidate a simple task that shouldn't take more than a few minutes to complete. Give them a couple of days for them to respond. If a candidate gives you excuses or takes too long to complete the task, it's a good indicator that you'll get the same kind of service on your project.

Run a Small Project

If your project is complicated, you may want to consider offering a small fee to each qualified candidate to complete a little project. The best way to determine each candidate's qualifications is to give each one a similar task and see what they come up with. While this step will cost you a small fee, it is a great way to test the actual level of experience of each candidate.

Look for Interest in the Project

While you are waiting for each candidate to return the small project you assigned them, take some time to look at each of their portfolios to see if they show any interest in the market.

It helps to work with someone who is passionate about the kind of project you're offering, although it is by no means a mandatory requirement. The

freelancer you choose will work a bit harder and be more eager to do an excellent job on the project if they have some interest in the market.

Check References

Most of the freelancers that you have short-listed will have references from previous work they've completed. Contact these former clients and talk with them about the freelancer's job performance. Talk to them about the level of quality, communication, timeliness, and attitude toward the project.

Don't be afraid to try and a lot of feedback about a particular freelancer. This person is someone who has the potential of becoming a crucial part of your online business, so it makes sense to try and get as much information on them as possible.

Following these four action items should help you to find the one candidate that is a perfect fit for your project. At this point, you have to rely on your instincts. If one of the freelancers feel like a better fit than the others, then they are the one that you should hire. After making the final decision, you'll create a contract and begin working with the freelancer on completing the required task.

Finding qualified freelance workers to help you work on the documents you've created will help you build a successful business that is fully systemized. Follow these guidelines to help to choose the best candidates for all your business outsourcing needs.