Outsourcing Secrets

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Introduction

Unless you live in a closet, then chances are you have heard of the term outsourcing. More and more independent business owners, Internet marketers and other entrepreneurs are finding outsourcing job roles the key to their continuing success. While some view outsourcing negatively, others consider outsourcing as a possibility for greater productivity, efficiency and competitive success.

When it comes to outsourcing, many secrets can help you gain a competitive advantage over your competition. This book will reveal many secrets you can adopt to ensure successful relationships with independent contractors, or the people you outsource job roles to.

First, let us talk about one secret most people need to know to embark on successful outsourcing relationships. The single most important secret of outsourcing is this: To outsource job roles successfully, you must create a successful team. Your team's goals, objectives and purpose should align with your strategic objectives and mission. Sounds easy right? Think you can now toss this book and outsource successfully? Think again.

Outsourcing is a lot more complicated than simply building a team. While it IS important that you build a strong team of individuals to work with you, outsourcing involves much more than simple team building. So clap yourself on the back. You now know one of the more important secrets there is to know about outsourcing. Now you have to learn more. You have to know how to select and build members of your team, and ensure you align your goals with theirs. When you pick a successful team and align your goals, you are more likely to experience success or gain a competitive advantage in the field.

There is much information currently available on outsourcing. Some is factual and other information is misleading. How do you tell fact from fiction?

The good news is you have come to just the right place to learn everything you need to know to make outsourcing work for you. If you are reading this book then you want to learn tips and tactics for successfully outsourcing work, whether you are a small business owner, large company or individual. You may feel interested in outsourcing book writing or software creation and web design.

This book will prove invaluable to Internet Marketer's interested in saving time by outsourcing certain job roles. Most Internet Marketer's key skill area or area of expertise, is marketing. Thus, they spend 80% of their time performing this key role.

That leaves 20% of their time for other tasks they may not be adept at. This book will also prove valuable for independent business owners, small business owners, individuals and even large businesses interested in outsourcing to help maximize their time and efficiency.

Outsourcing's Good Name

While outsourcing sometimes garners a bad name, realistically speaking outsourcing is one of the smartest steps a business owner can make to help improve their efficiency and the time they spend working. The key is understanding how to create successful relationships with the people you outsource with and work with daily.

Many marketers and other independent entrepreneurs working in modern times are learning to associate outsourcing with multiple benefits, restoring its good name if you will. When outsourcing first popped onto the scene, many business owner's viewed it skeptically. They focused on negative reports of outsourcing experiences gone badly. Many associated outsourcing with poor quality work environments or products.

Today however, outsourcing is gaining a reputation for delivering good quality materials and services at reasonable rates. Outsourcing can help business owners expand their knowledge base and create a winning, efficient and motivated team.

This book will help you understand why outsourcing deserves its good name, and help you learn some essential rules to follow when outsourcing to ensure the best possible experience.

Chapter Summaries

Before diving in, let us review some of the information we plan to cover in this book. This will help you specifically if you are looking for information about a specific outsourcing topic. Feel free to jump ahead, but make sure you read each chapter carefully to get the most out of this guide.

Chapter 1 – How Do You Know It Is Time To Outsource?
This chapter will help define the advantages and disadvantages of outsourcing, and help you decide when the time is right to outsource job roles. You can also use this chapter to help you decide what types of job roles you should outsource to others and those you should not.

Chapter 2 – Overview of Outsourcing
This chapter will provide you with a review of key points when it comes to outsourcing. Important ideas to gain from this chapter include, "You get what you pay for" and tip for selecting competent writers, not those that necessarily bid the lowest. You will also learn how to resolve issues with freelance or contract workers, and what steps you can take to oversee with work of contractors without micromanaging. Other topics covered include ownership of copyrights, and a discussion of the feedback rating system on sites. Are feedback ratings faked? We'll see. Learn more.

Chapter 3 – Writing, Programming, and Other Job Roles
This chapter will focus on outsourcing writing, software and other important job roles. You will learn what to look for when selecting contractors to work on outsourced projects, and how contractor sites including Elance.com and Guru.com can help you outsource easily and safely. You will also learn the steps you must take to protect yourself from copyright violations. Other material covered includes how to ensure a

contractor offers you original material, and not plagiarized material, and what steps you can take if you do find the information you received from a writer is not original.

You will also learn information on selecting the best web programmer to work with you. This chapter will also talk about what to look for in a good contractor, tips for creating nondisclosure and other forms of protection.

Chapter 4 – Outsourcing FAQ

Here you will find answers to your most pressing questions about outsourcing. Be sure to bookmark this page for future reference! We'll also provide you with a brief Outsourcing "do's" and "don'ts" category to ensure your best possible chance for success on your journey toward outsourcing.

Let us now take some time to explore each of these chapters in more detail. Remember, the information presented in this guide will help you make smart choices when outsourcing important job tasks to others.

Chapter 1 – How Do You Know It Is Time To Outsource?

This chapter will help define the advantages and disadvantages of outsourcing, and help you decide when the time is right to outsource job roles. You can also use this chapter to help you decide what types of job roles you should outsource to others, and which you can best handle personally.

Defining Outsourcing

Perhaps you have heard of outsourcing, but are not sure what it is. You may define outsourcing many ways. Typically outsourcing involves buying services, parts or products from external locations or from contract suppliers to help save money or reduce the costs associated with services and product creation.[i]

Why outsource? We all have skills, talents and abilities. Let us say you are an Internet Marketer. Your goal should include maximizing your potential for success and focusing on tasks related to your strong abilities. Why do this? By doing so you are better able to work efficiently and create the most value for what you do.

Anyone that wants to create an efficient business must learn first how to outsource, or delegate tasks to others the help them reach their career, business and financial goals. By delegating tasks to competent professionals, you allow people who are experts in areas you do not have much knowledge in to take over these tasks.

This in turn allows you to work more efficiently on strategic planning and other core roles within your business.

Profit From Your Strengths

The best way to take advantage of your skills, talents and abilities is by delegating tasks you are not good at to others. Why is this? It allows you to focus on the core skills you posses, the ones that will enable you to grow and expand your business.

By working on activities you enjoy doing and delegating work roles you are not as skilled at, you will save time, create a more efficient work team and realize more profits down the road.

What Outsourcing Does For Companies And Individuals

Outsourcing sometimes gets a bad rep. However, outsourcing can be worthwhile to people that use it correctly. Outsourcing allows you to spend time on job roles and duties you know will create substance or added profits for your business. Outsourcing is a wonderful tool for marketers and other professionals who find they feel swamped with the mundane daily tasks associated with running a successful business. Because of this, they no longer have time to focus on what they do best… be it marketing, selling or relationship building.

Job roles commonly outsourced including writing and programming. Think about this for a moment. You do not want to sit down behind a desk spending hours trying to program complex code or design a website if you are a marketer. Fortunately, you can hire talented people to work under you to do so for you. There is a good chance the people you hire WILL enjoy what they are doing too, so you do not have to feel guilty leaving non core business tasks in the hands of competent professionals.

Many people feel confused about what outsourcing is and what it isn't. Fortunately we will help you uncover fact from fiction in this guide, so you understand how simple outsourcing is for business.

Outsourcing is nothing more than delegating tasks to others. By delegating tasks to others, you will find you complete jobs much more efficiently and focus on business strategic planning. This will help you when facing competitors.

Advantages of Outsourcing

There are many advantages of outsourcing. Here is a list of some of the more commonly reported benefits associated with outsourcing:

- You can outsource non-core job tasks inexpensively. This saves time and money.

- You save time and concentrate on core business functions including strategic planning.

- You learn to work more efficiently. Your team of professionals can help you do this.

- You increase the profitability and productivity of your business. By outsourcing you have more people working toward a common goal.

- You can share knowledge with a more diverse group of people, including those on your team, and expand the services and products you offer to consumers.

- You expand your own knowledge base.

Now that we have gone over some of the more commonly well-known advantages of outsourcing, there are also some negatives or disadvantages of outsourcing we should point out. You can offset these disadvantages; we will talk more about this a bit later.

Let us look at some of these disadvantages and learn ways to overcome them.

- **Sometimes outsourcing can lead to low quality work**. However, if you know what to look for when selecting candidates to outsource job roles to, chances are you will receive the best possible work, whether that is writing or programming.

- **Outsourcing sometimes gets a bad rap**. Many people believe it means taking jobs away from traditional employees. This is not the case. Often, independent contractors are people that used to work ordinary jobs, but instead turned their passions into a full-time career. What that means is you can hire someone with a passion for writing, programming or some other job role you are not passionate about to do it for you. In addition, because they ARE passionate and interested in their wok, they are likely to produce better quality material for you.

- **Outsourcing is time-intensive**. This also isn't the case. Thanks to modern technology, many independent contractors now post their profiles and portfolios on reputable sites including Elance.com or Guru.com. You can simply post a project you need outsourced or scroll through a list of reputable sellers and select who you want to fulfill a need without spending hours at a time.

The best way to combat any negatives associated with outsourcing is by doing your homework and becoming educated. Research the individual or company you plan to outsource work to, and make sure you are getting the best quality work for your money. Periodically check in with the people you outsource to, but you should look for people that are self-reliant and do not need much direct supervision. That is the only real way to succeed when outsourcing. Just another little outsourcing secret.

Now, let's talk more about deciding to outsource. The first question that often pops into people's head is, "Do I need to outsource?" Let us consider this question in more detail.

How Do You Know If You Need To Outsource?

If you are an independent business owner or self-employed professional, chances are as your business grows you will need to outsource some tasks. Here are some signs you may need to outsource some job tasks or roles:

- You find you are spending too much time working on mundane and non-core business tasks during the day.

- You find you do not feel motivated to expand your business because you do not have the passion for the tasks you are engaging in.

- You feel overwhelmed with work and do not have any support in place.

- You find you are working late nights and sacrificing quality time with your friends and family just to keep your head above the water.

- You are struggling with important areas including writing or programming because you have little ability or skills in these areas, but know these areas or competencies are vital to the success of your business.

If any of these circumstances apply, it may be time to consider outsourcing a few job roles.

Almost all large companies or small businesses outsource some functions. Most successful Internet marketers and independent business owners do the same. You may not even realize at times you are outsourcing job functions. Do you for example, have someone check your emails for you? Does someone print them out or answer phones? These are all examples of tasks business owners or independent entrepreneurs often

outsource. Managers and entrepreneurs outsource some roles more commonly than others. Work roles most often outsourced include:

- Administrative Tasks.
- Accounting Tasks.
- Writing.
- Programming.
- Data analysis.
- Other non-core tasks.

As you look at this list, you should take some time to create your own list of tasks you can outsource to others. What non-core business tasks can you delegate to others to free up your time for more important endeavors?

Let us look at that last point. Most companies work to outsource "Non-Core" tasks. These include job duties and roles essential for success but not a key ingredient for business or strategic planning. They are not "core" roles, but still necessary for the success and maintenance of a business.

What are some tasks commonly outsourced? Web hosting. Writing of business manuals, newsletters or sales letters. Website creation and maintenance. There are many tasks you can outsource depending on the nature of your business and your strategic objectives.

Checklist For Outsourcing

How do you know if you need to outsource? We already mentioned many of the key signs you may need to outsource. However, it is worth it to go over this list again. This will drive into your mind how important it is to outsource, and help you realize how much time and effort you can save by outsourcing certain job roles.

So let us review those signs again. Here are some common signs you may need to outsource some tasks to competent professionals:

1. You are spending too much time working on mundane or daily business tasks.

2. You are not spending enough time managing or strategic planning for your business.

3. You find you do not have enough time during the day to get all the work done you need to.

4. You find you are lacking the skills necessary to complete some of the core tasks required for your business success.

5. You are not realizing the profits or revenues you would like due to lack of time, experience or knowledge.

Remember, outsourcing can solve many of these problems and help free your time for more important job roles and duties. Let us now pause to talk about some more key considerations and core ideas relevant to outsourcing.

Core Concepts Underlying Outsourcing

Many core concepts and ideas underline outsourcing. Outsourcing is not as simple as simply hiring some contractors to do work for you. In fact, outsourcing is a lot more involved. You have to follow some key rules if you want to outsource in a manner that will create greater efficiency for your business.

Some core concepts underlying outsourcing we will discuss in this section include: (1) Finding the right people to expand your business and improve your efficiency (2)

Building strong relationships with the people you outsource to and (3) Managing your team effectively.

Finding The Right People

When looking for job roles to outsource to others, always keep in mind your supreme goal is creating a team of competent individuals. These individuals should share your goals and vision… whether that goal is expanding your business or providing better service to your customers. The people you work with will either help propel you to success or will lead to your demise. The number one secret of outsourcing is finding competent people to work with. Competent people are people you:

- Feel comfortable with.
- Can build trusting relationships with.
- People who communicate well.
- People you trust with your proprietary information.
- People who are skilled in areas you need help with.

Once you find the right people to work with, your next step will include partnering with them to form solid working relationships.

Building Strong Relationships

You should consider every individual you hire for specific projects part of your team. A team is a group of people that come together to realize a specific purpose. They must have a strong relationship and share a common purpose to help you succeed.

How can you help your team succeed and grow strong? The first step is communicating with your team so you feel confident every member owns key knowledge and feels willing to share knowledge and insights with all other members of the team. A good leader should fully educate the team of project goals, missions, expectations and strategic vision.

You should view all members of your team, whether they are employees or contractors as members of your family. You want them to feel inspired and motivated to help you reach your goals as efficiently as possible. Each member of the team should also recognize how their role impacts the organization or team as a whole, so they understand why their role is important and how their role can benefit everyone.

Managing Your Team

If you plan to outsource any job roles, no matter how small, you have to learn how to manage your team well. A good team is a well-managed team. Does that mean you have to micro manage your team? No. In fact, micromanaging is inappropriate when it comes to outsourcing.

The whole point of outsourcing is creating an environment that allows you to work less, not more. When you outsource, your goal should include hiring competent professionals that can work under you with little direction. You want to hire people that are:

> ➢ Self-Motivated
> ➢ Organized
> ➢ Capable of deciding, and
> ➢ Self-Managed

Naturally you will want to oversee some duties associated with their job roles. You will want to provide them a framework for working in. If for example, you hire a programmer to create a website, you want to provide them an outline of your needs.

The programmer however, should be able to work on his or her own and come up with a project that meets your specifications with little or no extra direction. The contractor should also feel self-motivated and able to set his or her own schedule to make sure they meet their deadlines.

Chapter Summary

Outsourcing is an often-beneficial alternative for Internet marketers and other independent business professionals interested in maximizing their time and efficiency without compromising quality. In this chapter, you learned what outsourcing is and how it can help you maximize efficiency when working on projects or when conducting business. You also learned some important tips for finding good people to work with. This chapter also included some of the advantages associated with outsourcing.

In times of old many business owners and marketers held skeptical views of outsourcing. The real secret behind good outsourcing however, is team building. If you build a strong team of competent professionals to help you complete non-core business tasks, you will find outsourcing rewarding and profitable for all parties involved.

In the next chapter, we will talk more about the advantages of outsourcing by getting more involved in the "how to" process. This chapter will begin with a general outline of outsourcing followed by information on goal setting, creating a team environment, communicating with your team and providing each member of your team with valuable feedback. When you finish this chapter you should feel well prepared to outsource some of the non-core job roles associated with your primary work role.

Chapter 2 – Overview of Outsourcing

In the last chapter we talked about reasons you can hire competent software programmers and other independent contractors to help you work more efficiently. It is often difficult to realize your dreams and help projects blossom or reach their full potential unless you have a team of talented professionals working with you to help encourage your success. Outsourcing non-core job roles can help you focus on the key foundational roles in your business, including networking and strategic planning.

Now it is time to expand on some core ideas introduced in Chapter 1. In the first chapter we touched lightly on outsourcing as a tool you can use to help build a competent and engaging team. You also learned of some of the benefits outsourcing has to offer as a business owner or entrepreneur.

Now it is time to delve a little deeper and learn more about the process of outsourcing. The first step when outsourcing is creating goals. These goals should link to your business objectives, the objectives of a project you are outsourcing and your outsourcing goals and objectives in general (which may include hiring competent professionals to help you run your business more efficiently). How do you create goals?

Your Outsourcing Goals

Before you begin outsourcing tasks, you must first create goals related to your outsourcing objectives. What are your goals? Where do you see your business one, two and five years down-the-line?

Consider your outsourcing team a group of experts that will help you realize your goals. Do you know what your goals are? Many people think they know how to create good goals. Unfortunately the reality is most people do not know how to create good goals. Worse, they simply skip this step when hiring out job roles to others. Here is an outsourcing secret you must not forget. You have to create goals for your outsourcing

team and your business if you want to realize your dreams and remain competitive, whether an Internet marketer or small business retail sales owner. On that note, what are good goals?

Good goals are goals that are specific, attainable, realistic, measurable and tangible. Good goals are well-defined, state a specific purpose, are goals you can easily reach and goals you can measure.

What are some examples of good goals you can adopt related to outsourcing? Here are a few examples:

A. **Goal 1 –** To surround myself with a team of experts to help me reach my strategic business objectives within one year.
B. **Goal 2 –** To expand my business and improve profits by 4% by hiring experts in the following fields: writing, software programming and web design.
C. **Goal 3 –** To communicate my business objectives to my team of outsourced professionals within 1 week of hiring and link my personal goals and objectives with theirs.
D. **Goal 4 –** To ensure every member of my team understands how their work will impact other members of the team and the success of the organization as a whole.

Good goals have many well-defined characteristics. Many successful business owners and entrepreneurs share common goals with one another. Good goals often include characteristics:

- You can measure your progress toward achieving them. For example, did you hire a competent writer able to fulfill your writing needs within a defined time frame?

- They incorporate a specific time frame. For example, do you set goals and dates to complete them so you can track your progress?

- They include an action plan. Once you write down your goals, you must create an action plan for achieving them. This may consist of a series of steps you define for reaching your goals.

- They are measurable. What does this mean? It means you can track whether you reach your goals within the allotted time frame and whether goal attainment resulted in positive or negative outcomes.

Now that you know what good goals are, it is time for you to set some. Spend some time thinking about what tasks you can outsource to others. Then write down a specific goal for each task. That goal may include finding a certain individual to fulfill the goal, or it may involve completing the task within an appointed time frame or budgetary allowance. Your goals may also incorporate creating a team that feels unified and collaborative.

Once you have set good goals, your next step involves creating a committed work environment. Let us now look at some tactics you can adopt to ensure successful performance of each member of your team.

Creating A Committed Work Environment

For outsourcing to work, you must fully engage all members of your outsourced team. This requires you follow certain steps to make sure every team member is working toward a common goal… no matter the goal. If your goal is to launch a new marketing course on the Web, then each member of your team must understand (1) what their roles are (2) how their role impacts others in the team and (3) what the strategic goals and objectives are for the overall project.

Feedback

Feedback is important for all members of a team. You should plan to provide your team feedback periodically to ensure they are staying on task and feel motivated to continue their work roles.

Feedback can be positive or negative, but when provided should always provide targeted, direct and precise information. For example, let's say you hire a writer to ghostwrite a manual you plan to host on your website. Here is an example of two forms of feedback you may offer. Which do you think works best?

1) You did a great job on that book. Thanks!

2) You did a wonderful job breaking down each of the core concepts involved in marketing. Great job revealing the technical aspects of the job precisely, in just two months.

While both forms of feedback are positive, the second message better reveals what aspects of the job they did well. Let us use the same example to explain how negative feedback can be used positively to bring out the best in a member of your team.

1) The work delivered is satisfactory. I didn't like some of the material.

2) I think you did a good job outlining your approach, but the content doesn't match our strategic objectives outlined at the start of the project. The material would benefit from more information and material that clearly defines the strategic objectives we discussed.

In the second comment, you will notice while criticism is obvious, the speaker provides information positively. This helps team members amend their work and deliver a better project the second time around without negative feelings.

Communication

Communication is a vital part of any relationship. Even in the feedback examples provided above, you can easily see how communication plays an important role in relationships.

Communication is a two-way process. It involves (1) the person talking and (2) the listener. People often communicate poorly, and this can lead to substandard work or poor relationships.

Let us use the example again of a marketer hiring a writer to create a sales letter. If the marketer does not clearly define what key elements they expect from the writer, including the tone, style and format of the material, chances are the writer may have difficulty producing exactly what the hiring agent needs.

You should also make a point to periodically check in with people performing tasks you outsource to find out whether they have questions about the projects they are working on for you.

Tips for Improving Team Performance

When you outsource tasks, you create a team environment. Here are some tips you can adopt to assure the best possible outcome for your team:

1. Motivate your team. Even though you are probably working with independent contractors, keep in mind most people benefit and provide their best work when they feel motivated to do so. On first glance you may assume what motivates a member of your team is money. Surprisingly however, most people feel motivated by factors other than money. The contract writer you hire, for example, may love to write. Assigning them an important project and keeping them educated on your strategic objectives may be all that you need to keep your team motivated. Another simple way to motivate your team is by complementing them on a job well done.

2. Provide incentives. Nothing motivates independent contractors to give their best more than performance incentives. You can structure performance incentives in many ways. You can, for example, reward your contract employees with a
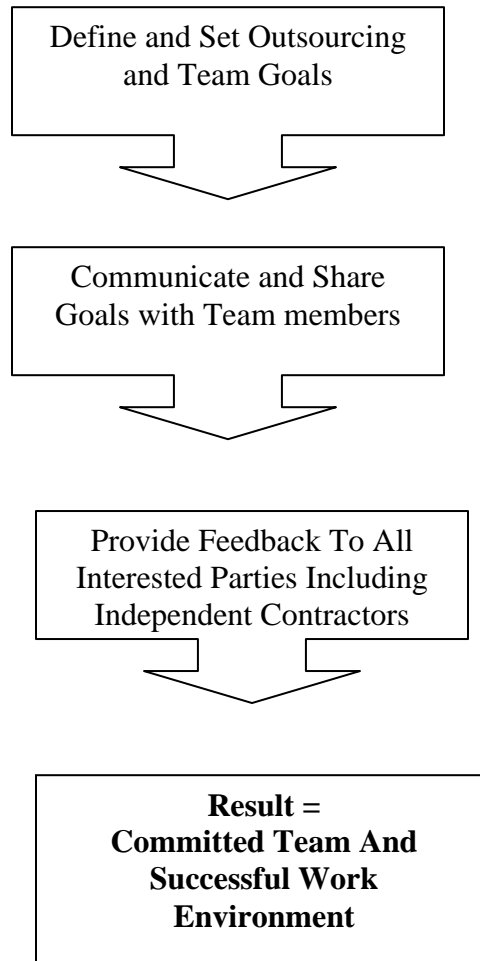
performance bonus if they have worked with you for some time and helped you create a dynamite product. If you find a provider concisely performs above the call of duty, help them remain motivated by creating performance incentives. Performance incentives come in many different forms, and may include:

    a. Bonuses
    b. Profit Sharing, or
    c. Consistent and positive feedback

3. Create an environment where project management becomes key. Without proper project management strategies, your team is likely to fall apart. Each member of your team must have some direction or understand where a project is going before they begin. They should also recognize performance objectives along the course of their project, and should check in with their project manager (you) periodically. This will ensure everyone on the team stays motivated and work within a defined deadline to meet objectives.

4. Make sure every member of the team understands how their contributions will relate to the success of the project as a whole and their personal success. If you have a programmer for example, working to create a successful website and upload material a writer created, let each person know how their work will impact your overall business objectives and strategy. This will help them see how their work fits into the "big" picture and encourage them to work in a more streamlined manner.

Chapter Summary

To outsource successfully you must create a committed work environment. This will involve setting and creating goals and then sharing those goals and your strategies with all members of your team. Here is a simple outline of the outsourcing process or action steps necessary to make outsourcing work well:

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│   Define and Set Outsourcing │
│        and Team Goals        │
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│     Communicate and Share    │
│    Goals with Team members   │
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│     Provide Feedback To All  │
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│       Successful Work        │
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Remember, your team will only work well if you work with them, collaborate with them and communicate important information about your company's aims, objectives and goals.

Chapter 3 – Outsourcing Writing, Programming And Other Job Roles

In the last chapter we talked a bit about outsourcing certain job roles to help you gain a competitive advantage with your business and work as efficiently as possible. There are multiple job roles you can outsource depending on your own talents, skills and abilities. Some roles, including writing and programming are more commonly outsourced because there is a niche pool of qualified people working as independent contractors in these areas.

As you read this guide you may come up with many tasks you can easily delegate to others. Since outsourcing writing is one of the more popular tactics professionals use these days to optimize outsourcing, writing deserves a comprehensive review.

We will also provide a review of other jobs you may outsource including financial roles, software programming and data analysis. Let us talk again about why outsourcing is important and valuable for your company.

Why Outsource At All

Remember, most people think skeptically about outsourcing until they have tried it. This skepticism may come from previous bad experiences or merely from stereotypical information gathered from non-factual sources. Our goal is to provide you with information so you understand how you can make outsourcing work for you and how you can gain a competitive advantage by outsourcing.

Outsourcing provides multiple advantages. Here are some main reasons to outsource: (1) you will learn new ways to work more efficiently (2) you will save money (3) you will realize a higher return on your investment and (4) you can focus more of your time on core job roles, including strategic planning.

We talked a little bit already about the types of job roles individuals often outsource. Let us take a moment to review that list again. Here are some primary roles you can outsource to others:

- Writing
- Finances or Accounting
- Programming or Web Design
- Data Analysis
- Administrative Tasks
- Training
- Sales, and
- Marketing (if this isn't your strong point)

What roles do you plan to outsource in your business?

Exercise

Now that you understand why outsourcing is so important, you have to figure out what tasks you can outsource to others. These tasks should include work roles that are not core business roles. They should involve tasks you are not efficient at, or tasks you do not have time for.

One simple way to do this is to take out a piece of paper and make two columns.

In the first column, write down the tasks you have the most interest in working on. These tasks or roles should include your skills, abilities and interests. They may include strategic planning or marketing.

In the second column, write down the tasks you are less adept at. These will be tasks you can outsource to others. If you need a simple worksheet to do this, check out Appendix I. Here you will find a worksheet where you can write down what roles you plan to fulfill as a business owner or entrepreneur, and what roles you plan to outsource to others.

Now that you know what job roles you might outsource, your next step may be finding good independent contractors to outsource job roles to. The task is much easier than you may think.

Where To Find Contractors

There are many places you can find competent independent contractors willing to offer quality work at reasonable prices. Many online boards, including Elance.com and Guru.com offer skilled contractors at very reasonable fees. Here are some of the best places to find contract workers you can outsource projects to:

- Elance – www.elance.com
- Guru.com – www.guru.com
- Society of Professional Consultants – www.spconsultants.org

Most of the sites listed above charge sellers (aka independent contractors) membership and transaction fees for participating in the site. What that means is you have a stronger chance of finding worthwhile candidates when you work on one of these sites compared to many free sites, where sellers (or contractor's) provide references that may or may not be factual.

What are some other places you can find independent contractors? Ask friends and family members for references. Ask co-workers. You may be surprised to find how many people offer independent contract services. You should mention your need to your network of acquaintances and associates and see what you come up with. If you already

have a website in place, you might even consider putting out an ad or asking interested parties to fill in a small survey to see if their skills, talents and abilities match those you are in need of.

Once you start reviewing job boards and sites like Elance, you have to know how they work to find the best contractors. Let's examine the ins and outs of these job boards.

How Does It Work?

Most contract sites work in the same way. Generally speaking, you can set up an account as a "buyer" (usually this is free, like on sites including Elance). Once you set up an account, you post a project you need outsourced. Let's say for example you need a programmer to design a short and simple website. You can post your project's specs typically at no charge.

Then you have several choices. You can open the bidding and allow independent contractors to bid on your project once posted, or you can review the profiles and portfolios of contractors from the sites database and invite certain contractors to bid on your project.

Many buyers do a combination of both. They peruse the portfolios and profiles of multiple sellers (contractors offering their services) and invite people to bid, but also open up bidding to anyone interested in their project.

Here are some do's and don'ts before selecting a winning bidder:

- **DO check references.** You should always verify an independent contractor's references. Many sites allow service providers to include their credentials and references. Others, including Elance.com use a feedback system. These systems allow you to review feedback about the person bidding on your project so you get a feel for how they delivered work to others.

- **Don't discount a new provider.** Someone that recently posted their profile may not have as long a work history as someone who has registered with a service for several years, but their skills may be superior. How do you know who to select? Ask the people you are considering working with to provide you with samples and references of related work.

- **DO review feedback.** Many sites, including Elance, have a feedback policy. What this does is allow buyers and sellers to rate each other. As a buyer, you can rate the performance a service provider provides. That means when you contract out roles to a person, typically they will offer you the best service possible to gain good feedback from you. This will improve their ranking and ensure they get ongoing work.

- **DO look for a provider with a history of working with reputable clients**. This will clue you in that the service provider probably does a good job and will do the same for you.

- **DO ask for samples.** Then if you have to, check them out for validity. What you want to look out for are service providers that may simply copy and paste or plagiarize material from others.

- **DON'T reward a new contractor your largest project.** Start small so you can get a feel for how the provider works and whether the two of you can establish a reasonable and mutually beneficial working relationship.

- **DO get contact information from the service provider you plan to work with**. Are they available through a legitimate email address? Do they have a website? Can they provide you a phone number and address? You will need this information in case something goes awry. They may ask the same of you.

- **DON'T give up if you work with someone that you find can't meet your needs**. Sometimes it takes a couple of tries before you find your ideal contractor. If you do find someone that works well for you, stick with him or her. When you build loyal relationships, the quality of work you receive improves with time. Why? The service provider gets a better feel for your needs, interests and wants.

Does Feedback REALLY Reveal How Good A Contractor Is?

Many sites, including Elance, allow buyers to leave feedback about a sellers work performance. This is a good way of deciding whether a contractor is honest and will provide you with quality work.

Some questions have arisen of late as to whether service providers or contractors leave their own feedback to improve their rating. Here is what you need to know. Most reputable sites, including Elance, have very strict policies against this. If a writer logs in using a different user name to place positive feedback in their profile, they are banned from working with the board.

However, this does not mean that sometimes a contractor doesn't find a way to "cheat" the system. What you want to do is look for a track record of reputable projects and feedback from buyers that consistently post projects on the board so you can verify the legitimacy of any feedback. Too many reviews from one person may or may not be a warning sign that the feedback is not legitimate.

If you want to be sure you work with an honest contractor, work with a reputable site. Sites including Elance.com and Guru.com have a strong system of checks and balances in place to make sure this happens. Most service providers have to pay fees to join the site and fees on every job

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they win. There is less chance for dishonesty and a stronger likelihood that you will find a competent professional to work with you on your project.

This may not be true of other auction sites that allow service providers or independent contractors to post their profiles free. Many times there is more likelihood that an independent contractor will post false information or provide fake feedback on these sites because there are fewer controls in place to ensure the accuracy and legitimacy of one's services and references.

Now that you know a little more about hiring independent contractors from sites including Elance.com and Guru.com, let's talk more about two specific categories that most marketers and independent business owners outsource job roles to.

Writing

One of the largest non-core business functions outsourced by many independent business owners, including Internet marketers, is writing tasks. Internet marketers often comprise the largest group of business owners that outsource writing tasks to competent professionals. Why? MOST people struggle with writing, unless writing of course, is their profession. You can easily and inexpensively outsource any tasks requiring writers without hassle.

Here are some other great reasons to hire writers to help you with a job role:

- Good writers may provide a fresh perspective.
- Good writers can offer you an outsider's opinion about something you are working on.
- A good writer can provide specialized talent you may not find elsewhere.

When you outsource writing to professionals, you save time and money and can invest your energy in strategic planning or other tasks you do best (like marketing). What are some examples of writing roles you can outsource to others?

- Sales letter writing.
- Web content.
- Article writing.
- General copywriting (including direct mail).
- Email and auto responder writing.
- Book and E-book writing.
- Pamphlet and brochure Writing.
- Newsletter writing.

Some people even consider hiring a team of writers to make sure they get the work they need done quickly, efficiently and effortlessly.

Hiring Honest Workers

The biggest problems you may have when hiring independent contractors from sites, even reputable ones, is making sure they will deliver what is promised in the time frame allocated, and ensuring the work they provide is original.

Far too many individuals and companies are now setting up profiles as service providers then plagiarizing materials, or using the same material repeatedly, basically reselling the work they offer to you without your consent. This can lead to a lot of hassle and trouble over time. Still other people have no experience writing, but set up profiles and elaborate resumes claiming they can write. Writing, like any other profession, is an art that takes time to learn. You cannot simply appoint yourself a writer and expect the best.

How do you overcome this obstacle and make sure you hire a competent writer? There are several ways. The biggest problem associated with hiring independent contractors to

write material is copyright violations and plagiarism. Let us look at each of these elements more specifically.

Copyright Terms

Most Internet marketers and other professionals hire contract writers on a "work for hire" basis. That means they are interested in buying all the rights to a work or most rights. That means the writer can't use the same material and sell it to someone else, or re-use that information for his or her own purposes usually.

What you want to do in an ideal world is have the writer bid on a project and offer you full rights or most of the rights associated to a writing project. Some buyers will offer the writer distribution rights, which means you as the buyer retain all rights to the work, including the right to freely distribute the work under your name and change it, but the writer can distribute the work to help you market it or brand the work.

The term "ghostwriting" refers to hiring independent contractors or writers to write for you for a fee. Typically when you enter a ghostwriting arrangement, you buy all the rights from the ghostwriter. This isn't always the case however, and isn't always the best way to maximize your profits. Some business owners allow the ghostwriter to add their name to the work, so they build their reputation as a writer. While they won't receive any royalties from the sales of the work, their name is associated with it so they gain a reputation for delivering high quality materials.

The types of rights you buy from an independent contractor may vary from person to person. Your goal should include clearly defining what rights you are buying from a writer. You can do this by setting up a contract with the writer so the two of you know exactly what you expect to gain from the project. This will help avoid confusion and unpleasant misunderstandings down-the-line.

Plagiarism

One of the biggest problems buyers have when hiring wirers, even from professional sites, is plagiarism. It is important you protect yourself from copyright violations. Some unethical writers may simply plagiarize or copy work from the web and sell it as their own. You have to be on the lookout for "writers" that knowingly copy work from others or you could have real trouble in the future.

You may think you are getting a quality product for a fair price, only to find later down-the-line that someone else owns the material, or worse your writer plagiarized. This often happens when you hire writers or other independent contractors offering low fees for a work. Remember, when it comes to service providers, you get what you pay for. If someone is offering to provide you with a 100-page guide for just $210, then delivers the guide overnight, you may receive substandard work.

How do you know if the work you are receiving is original? Fortunately there are many places on the web you can check to see if the work you get is original. Here is an example:

- **Copyscape** – http://www.copyscape.com - this site offers you the opportunity to upload your writing or the work provided by a writer and checks it for matches on the web and in publications. You should be able to find out whether the writer plagiarized the entire work from elsewhere. All you have to do is post your material from the Web, and then click go. Copyscape then checks to see if there are repeat works on the Web. Now, keep in mind, you may find a few sentences or phrases that seem reproduced, but that is more likely just chance than plagiarism. A work may be 100% original but still contain some commonly used phrases. What you should look for is entire pages or manuscripts where 50% or more of the material is copied word-for-word.

- **Turnitin** - http://www.turnitin.com/static/home.html - this site focuses mainly on reviewing academic works to ensure their originality, and make sure the writer did not copy them from other sources.

What To Do If You Find A Contractor "Cheated."

If you find the writer or other contractor you work with plagiarized or stole work from elsewhere, you may give the writer the benefit of the doubt. First, tell them you reviewed the work and the results suggested the work may not be original. Ask them if they can cite their resources. There may be a good reason that some of the material appears stolen, when it may be original.

If you can verify the contractor plagiarized, you will have to deal with the contractor immediately. Depending on your goals, you can:

- Demand a refund and leave poor feedback.
- Ask for a rewrite and offer the individual a second chance.
- Let the board you are working with know the writer provides illegitimate services (like Elance, you can contact customer service).

Here is an important point to take away from all this. If you pay a contract provider up-front for a work and then find out the contractor plagiarized much of the work, you may be out of luck. You might not get your money back. Reputable service providers often ask for a 20-50% deposit when working with a client for the first time. This is acceptable practice, and helps build a trusting and rewarding relationship.

Set up a contract and statement of work that outlines your project. This reduces your risk of problems, and outlines what the contractor's responsibilities are, and what events will transpire in the event plagiarism or other deceitful work practices are uncovered.

Now that we know a little more about hiring writers, let us talk a bit more about hiring programmers and software specialists, as this is another commonly outsourced job role most marketers and other professionals need filled.

Software And Programmers

Sites like Elance.com and Guru.com often allow contractors to post profiles for software and web design work as well. Typically, you can use these sites to find exceptional programmers at reasonable rates.

The same terms that apply to finding a good writer on these sites apply to finding a good programmer or designer. There are some key differences and contract considerations you should make note of before signing someone on as a web programmer.

How To Pick The Best Programmer

How do you know who the best programmer is in a sea of other programmers? When looking for an independent contractor to outsource projects too, you may find you waste more time looking for someone competent than anything else. It is important you go about the search process strategically.

If using a job board like Elance.com to find competent providers, you should take some time to browse the seller's profiles. You can usually find the best quality writers on the first few pages. Many job boards also allow you to type in specific criteria so only programmers with the exact skills you are looking for are presented for review.

What are some other ways of choosing the best programmer? A good programmer will:

- Provide you with reputable references.
- Have a portfolio of material you can verify the seller created.
- Answer all questions you have completely and honestly, and
- Competently summarize his or her skills and abilities.

NonDisclosures and Contracts – Protecting Your Software And Coding

It is important when hiring independent contractors to protect the work they provide you. You don't, after all, want someone using the work created for you for someone else and getting paid for it as if it were not already in use.

The same rules that apply for writing often apply to programming. One way you can protect your work is through nondisclosure agreements.

Many refer to a nondisclosure as an "NDA". Other times organizations refers to these documents as confidentiality or privacy agreements. An NDA or privacy agreement is a contract you should require any second or third parties (contractors) working for you to sign. This agreement helps protect the confidential nature of any work they are doing for you, or any proprietary information they gain access to while working for your business.

Nondisclosure agreements are common in the high-tech or BizTech industry, especially as more and more business owners are relying on the Internet and other modern technological innovations to conduct business. Anyone can sign a nondisclosure agreement, including employees, acquaintances or suppliers and sellers a business owner meets with.

An NDA is a good idea if you have a trade secret you want to protect, or information that may provide you with some advantage your competitor doesn't already have or hasn't taken advantage of. In this case an NDA is recommended. Anyone violating the agreement may be subject to harsh penalties.

What are some examples of instances when you might use a nondisclosure agreement? When outsourcing tasks such as programming to independent contractors, you want to make sure they know the law enforces their duty to keep your information secret. You can use an NDA if you have someone working on a new web design for your company or working on uploading confidential information and programs related to your marketing

program or business. Some form of agreement as this should protect anything that is copyrighted information a programmer may work with.

One benefit of having confidentiality agreements in place is it helps build more trusting relationships between employees and independent contractors. While you can set up an oral agreement with employees, it is much easier to enforce something produced in writing.

NDAs also help protect trade secrets including programming designs and ideas that may be vital to your businesses success and profitability in the long run. What are some good examples of statements or sections to include in a confidential agreement to ensure the safety and security of your programming and other trade secrets? Here are just a few examples of information you may want to include in your agreement:

- Outline of all information you want the independent contractor, supplier or seller to keep confidential.

- Any information that is not included as part of the confidentiality agreement (there may be information a third-party is privy to that doesn't have to remain confidential).

- All duties the independent contractor or supplier has in relationship to the writing, programming or other contracted services they plan to provide to you.

- The time the confidentiality agreement remains in effect for. (Some companies create confidentiality agreements to last a lifetime, whereas others stipulate the contractor may not share information about the work they are doing for a short time, often between one and five years.

- Any prohibitions about the contractor or supplier working with other companies on similar or different projects. Some companies allow an independent contractor

to work on separate projects as long as they do not relate to the business owner's primary project in some way.

It is important when creating your confidentiality agreement that you lay out in clear terms what information must remain confidential. Examples of information a company often wants to protect include:

- Proprietary information, such as programming code.
- Information about software material used by the company.
- Information about ideas or principles and processes the company uses to achieve success.
- Information found in company manuals or policies, and
- Accounting or financial information about the company.

If you do decide to outsource writing or programming job roles but are not sure how to write a confidentiality or nondisclosure agreement, fortunately there are many places you can turn to online for advice and examples.

General Tips For Outsourcing

Here are some general tips you should follow when outsourcing, whether outsourcing a writing role, programming role or other role.

1. **First, keep in mind when selecting service providers… you get what you pay for.** That means it doesn't always pay to go with the lowest bidder. You may feel tempted to go with the lowest bid when hiring an independent contractor. Sometimes a good quality provider provides a low bid so they can prove their reputation on a job board. But, this can also be a warning sign the person you are considering does not have a solid background in the field (like writing or programming) or is just starting out.

Pick the lowest bid and chances are you will not get the highest quality for a writing job or programming job. Remember, quality people charge quality prices. Many people working from Elance and Guru reduce their fees so they can compete with ultra-low bids, so keep this in mind. Even if their bid seems a bit high, chances are it is still lower than the market in general may be paying for their talent.

2. **Work to communicate with your contractor freely**. This will help you resolve issues with contractors immediately and ensure all your project goals and targets are met in a timely fashion.

3. **Draft a contract.** A contract will help you outline who owns the final rights or copyright to a project you plan to "farm" out. If you do not set this up ahead of time, you have no way of knowing how your work will be used by the contractor in the future.

4. **Review feedback.** Remember, on most paid sites, typically most feedback must be legitimate. If it looks questionable, ask the provider about it. You can also ask for writing samples and check to see if they are original rather than plagiarized to ensure you are working with competent professionals.

5. **Start small**. When hiring a contractor, assign them a single project. If they do a good job, then chances are they will continue to do so. If, after a small project you find your styles do not match, you can part ways without harsh feelings and find someone else to work with that more closely matches your needs.

6. **Check in often**. When working with a contractor for the first time, make a point to check in with them often. This will allow you to keep on top of any problems they may have and make sure they are completing the work you need within a reasonable time frame. If you do not hear from a new provider when they should check in with you, you may have trouble. You do not want to wait until the day

before your project is due, and then find out your service provider or contractor dropped out of the project.

7. **Ask if the contractor will "farm out" parts of the job**. Some writers for example, hire their own contractors to do some of the writing for them. This can lead to disjointed material or styles of writing that don't match. Sometimes it is much better to work with a single provider to ensure they always deliver consistent quality. Writers that "farm" their work out to others may use substandard contractors they have to hire at really low fees to get the work done, so you may sacrifice quality.

You should also remember to take your time when hiring contractors. You will save a lot of money and time in the long run by choosing wisely the first time around.

Chapter Summary

Regardless of the job role you are outsourcing, it is important you build a strong team of people interested in helping you realize your goals. In fact, creating a team is the one real secret behind successful outsourcers. The first step toward outsourcing job roles is deciding what non-core tasks you can delegate to other competent professionals. Your job then involves reviewing the professional's credentials and making the right match. A good independent contractor will be able to provide you the services you need with little direction.

You can outsource many jobs successfully, including writing and software programming. There are certain precautions you should note when outsourcing jobs so you protect your rights and freedoms and those of the people you are working with. Some things you can do to protect your work include signing contracts, checking all written work for it's authenticity and having service providers sign nondisclosure agreements to protect any proprietary information you offer the client when working together. Remember, when done properly outsourcing is worthwhile for all parties involved.

Chapter 5 – Outsourcing FAQ's

General Outsourcing FAQ's

How much should I pay an independent contractor?

How much you pay someone you outsource a job role to depends on their skills and experience, as well as the complexity of the project you plan to outsource. Often, when you visit job boards and auction sites like Elance.com and Guru.com, you can receive competitive bids from qualified buyers. One step you can take is to find out how much other people are paying for similar projects using these boards. Keep in mind when outsourcing you do not always want to go with the bidder charging the cheapest price. Often price is a reflection of quality. When it comes to many writing and software programming contractors, you get what you pay for.

What is the difference between an employee and an independent contractor?

An employee is someone you hire directly that carries out work roles in a manner you specify. Generally when you hire an employee, you have to withhold income taxes from their earnings and pay social security and Medicare taxes, plus unemployment taxes. An independent contractor is nothing more than a self-employed individual. You do not dictate how they do their job, you simply explain the work you need done and have them do it using their own means.

The relationship between an employee and independent contractor or someone you outsource work to is different. Typically when an employer hires an employee, the employer controls when and where the employee works, what equipment or tools the employee should use to get the work done and how the employee completes work in a specific sequence. When a business owner hires an independent contractor, the contractor decides when and where the work is done and uses his or her own equipment and services to carry out job roles in a named time frame.

What exactly IS outsourcing?

Outsourcing refers to the process of delegating non-core business tasks to independent contractors to carry out certain organizational or project objectives and goals.

What are the reasons an Internet marketer or other professional should outsource? There are many reasons a marketer or other professional may decide to outsource. For one, outsourcing non-core job tasks allows the head of the organization or company to focus on strategic planning and knowledge sharing.

Outsourcing also takes the leader of the company out of the mundane, day-to-day task accomplishment that must transpire to keep business running. Outsourcing can also expand an individual's or group's knowledge base and improve the efficiency with which actions are carried out in the organization.

Here are some other often-mentioned benefits of outsourcing:

- The primary business owner or entrepreneur is able to concentrate on higher order tasks related to planning and growing the business.

- Typically, work performed by contractors is lower cost and thus the business owner realizes more economies of scale.

- When an independent business owner outsourcers projects or job roles, they help introduce new ways of thinking and new knowledge into the company that may improve organizational efficiency.

- There is a potential for greater access in new markets through networking encouraged by outsourcing with global providers.

Trade Secrets, Copyrights and Patents

Can I protect my ideas by law and license them?

Typically you are not able to license an idea unless you are able to prove you have ownership of it, and this may be challenging. A simple way to protect your ideas, design and trade secrets are through copyrights, design patents and trademarks.

What exactly qualifies as a trade secret I can include or protect through an NDA?

A trade secret may include many ingredients, including software design or programming, an innovative web design or formula and even devices and ideas. Trade secrets help protect information and offer business owners a competitive advantage in a globally competitive marketplace. You can protect many things, including the methods you use to survey information, any recipes you may use or inventions you are working to gain a patent on. You can also protect formulas you use to create new products and even ideas you have for books or marketing programs you plan to sell.

How does a trade secret work for programming?

You can't just call the programming or design and information you have a trade secret. You have to make it clear your intent is to keep the information you have private. You may have to keep the information, including your programming or design encoded or locked so only a select group of individuals who sign nondisclosure agreements may access it. The simplest way to protect your information is by creating NDA agreements. Typically when in conflict a court will side with the party that has created and signed the NDA agreement offering much legal protection. If you have a programmer sign an NDA agreement, they cannot work with another company and reveal your trade secrets without reprimand by the law. An infringement suit may follow if this is the case. Trade secrets are typically those the owner can prove are confidential in nature and may provide a competitive advantage over other industry insiders.

How is a copyright different from a patent?

Copyrights protect artistic products including writing, works of art, software and video or music. Typically patents are reserved for design and software, but a copyright and design patent may apply when a company is working with independent contractors that provide writing and software programming services. A patent will also protect a company from an independent contractor that designs a software program then tries to use it for his or her own financial purposes.

Outsourcing Do's and Don'ts

Now that you know everything there is to know about outsourcing job tasks, it's time to start thinking about outsourcing. You can take some time now to create a list of what tasks you can outsource, then start looking for competent professionals to help you outsource your job tasks.

Here is a quick recap of some do's and don'ts.

- Do consider every independent contractor you hire part of your team. Communicate with them often and share with them your vision for success, your mission and aims.
- Do create realistic goals for your business and team members. These goals should be realistic, smart, tangible, measurable and attainable.
- Do hire qualified and talented people you can delegate tasks to without much supervision.
- Do review multiple service provider profiles before selecting the right person to work with your team.
- Don't be afraid to ask for references.
- Do periodically check in with your team to make sure they complete their work on time.
- Do provide feedback to your independent contractors so they continue to provide you the best services possible.

- If you do find someone that consistently performs above the call of duty, find small ways of rewarding or motivating them, as chances are they are in high demand and lot's of people are inquiring about their work.
- Do have independent contractors sign a nondisclosure or confidentiality agreement if they are working with proprietary information or on special designs or programs. This will protect your work and that of your company.
- Do remember the lowest bidder won't always provide the best quality of work.
- Do ensure the work you receive is original and relevant.
- Do make sure you are contracting out enough tasks so you have time to spend on your core abilities and passions, whether they are marketing or strategic planning or some combination of that.

Remember, outsourcing, when done correctly, can be incredibly rewarding and profitable for all parties involved. When you do it right, you will gain a competitive advantage over your competitors and realize significant revenue gains.

Conclusions

Whether an Internet marketer or online business professional, it pays to outsource job roles to others. Thanks to the arrival of modern technology, savvy entrepreneurs and business owners now have multiple opportunities to outsource projects, including writing and software programming projects to others.

While outsourcing sometimes gets a bad name, when done correctly outsourcing may benefit all parties involved. Outsourcing is a simple tool anyone can use to ensure non-core business activities are carried out efficiently. Outsourcing also allows more streamlined business processes.

The biggest secret outsourcing has to offer is it offers companies the ability to create teams and networks of people that are able to share vast knowledge. By outsourcing tasks you are freeing up your time to concentrate on core business development areas. You are also creating an environment where knowledge and information sharing is more likely to lead to the success and well-being of your company.

Here's <u>THE</u> Secret Membership
No One Wants You To Know About

Forget All About Buying $7 Products
Because That's Too Expensive - HUH...!

Join A Club That PURCHASES PLR & MRR Products
For You Every Second Day Thru A "Wish System" So You Decide What We
Buy...

This Membership Has Open Records & Purchases Products For $1400+ <u>Every</u>
Month (**you read that right - fourteen hundred Dollars**) PLUS You Get
PROhosting, 100 Autoresponders, Full Access To JVM2 Fantasos Hosted, More
Memberships And So Much More: <u>See Everything Here</u>

Appendix I

Instructions: Use this worksheet to define your core competencies, then decide what job roles or tasks you can delegate to others or outsource. Once you decide what tasks you can outsource to others, you should prioritize them. This will help you work more efficiently and help you decide how many tasks you need to outsource, and how much extra time you will gain by outsourcing non-core job roles.

When writing down your core competencies, highlight the tasks you want to work on most. So, if you want to spend most of your time on networking, strategic planning or creating new marketing programs, highlight these areas. Then label them in order of their priority, with 1 being the most important task to you and 10 being the least important. You can also do the same with non-core competencies. Once you complete this worksheet, you can also take some time to consider how much it will cost to outsource non-core work tasks.

Worksheet

Your Core Competencies	Non-Core Job Tasks	Priority (High or Low)

Assignment 2

Your assignment after completing this worksheet is to visit Elance.com and look through some of the service provider's portfolios. Create a list of providers you feel might be good at completing some of your non-core job roles. Then go to the job boards and see how much other marketers or business owners are paying on average for projects you may have. Keep in mind that some providers consistently select the lowest bids, but often the work they need is simplistic or may not result in the best possible outcome.

You may notice a group of programmers and writers that consistently bids a reasonable price and gets positive feedback. Chances are they will provide you the same quality work. Your next step? Posting your projects and seeing who bids on them. Now you are well on your way to successful outsourcing!

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[i] Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2006; The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition.