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Chapter One: Why Outsource?

Once upon a time, before the internet became popular, starting a business was an expensive proposition.

Anyone who wanted to start a business had only a few choices:

1.) Do everything themselves, from accounting, to logo design, to answering telephones, to advertising, to customer service, to sales and marketing...

or....

2.) Spend a lot of money hiring people. Hiring personnel is the biggest part of most businesses' budgets. Not only do you have to pay salary but you likely

have to pay benefits, including medical insurance, worker's compensation, payroll taxes, vacation pay, etc. For a small start up business owner, this is prohibitively expensive. Not only that, but you would likely be paying people a full time salary, and benefits, when you may only need them part time.

or...

3.) Go to a temporary agency and hire temporary employees.





This way you can have employees work only the exact number of hours that you need them, and you are not paying for benefits, which saves you a huge amount of money.

This sounds ideal, but you would pay a hefty fee to the temporary agency - if you hire someone who would normally earn \$20 an hour you would end up paying the temporary agency around \$40 an hour, and you're not getting twice as much work from the employee.

It would almost make sense to just hire a full time employee. Also, temporary employees vary in quality. There's no guarantee that you

So how has the internet changed things for small business owners? It's changed everything. You can now bypass the expensive temporary agency. You can find any type of

employee that you need online, and you can have them work for you doing just

the tasks that you need done, without having to pay for more than you need. You don't pay them benefits or vacation pay, because they are working for you on a part time basis as a freelancer.

You aren't paying super high agency fees that are tacked on hourly.





Now, if you have just started with your business, you may wonder if you should try to do everything yourself, in order to save money. This is very likely not a good idea. Why? Because no-one is good at everything. You have your areas of strengths and your areas of weakness. It makes sense to

spend your time doing what you are good at and outsource the things that you are less talented at.

Even if you are capable of doing every single thing that your business requires, you will find yourself burned out very quickly, and you will have less energy to give each individual task, if you do everything yourself.





Chapter 2: Deciding What To Outsource

Of course, you want to conserve money when you are just starting out. And, for that matter, there's never any good reason to spend more money than you need to!

You need to take into account your budget, the amount of time and energy that you have, what skills you have, and what you want to accomplish.

Let's say that you are starting a web design business. You are a great, very talented website designer.

You have several happy clients who are letting you showcase their portfolio. You have created a beautiful website that will dazzle prospective clients and you linked to the other websites that you have created.

You need content for your site too - for search engine optimization purposes, the more the better.

If you hate writing, it makes sense to outsource the content creation. You want well written content on your site, and if writing is not your talent, you need to find someone who is good at it.

To get traffic to your site, you will need incoming links. One good way to get that is to have articles written and published in article





directories, with the articles linking to your site - in your case, articles about website design would be perfect.

But if you hate writing and are not an expert at it, that will show in your articles. It makes a lot more sense to outsource it than it does to force yourself to do something that you are not good at.

Or say you have the opposite situation: you are a writer. You want to provide ghostwriting services and article writing services. But you don't have any web design skills.

You could create a free blog, but that looks cheap and unprofessional.

Or you could try to teach yourself to design a website yourself, but unless you have training and years of practice, it is most likely going to look very amateurish and that will turn away potential clients rather than selling them.

Or, you could invest some money, outsource the design, and find that it pays for itself many times over by impressing website visitors and keeping them coming back for more.

As your business grows, you will also find yourself needing assistance to handle the increased workload.





At some point you may even decide that you need a full time employee, or several full time employees.

However, there will be a transitional time when you have more work than you can handle, but you aren't comfortable committing to hiring someone full time - or frankly you just can't afford it.

You may need an accountant, or a virtual assistant to outsource some tasks to. You may need a secretary to answer the phone.

You may need someone to take on some of the workload that you would normally handle if you are getting too many clients. In that case if you are charging the clients a premium and can find someone who needs work and will do it for less, you can get more clients than you yourself could handle, outsource some of the work to a junior associate type, and keep some of the profits.

There are many reasons that it makes sense to have your outsourcing team lined up and ready to step in when you need it.

Next, let's talk about what kind of outsourcing assistance is available - and where to find it!





Chapter 3: Finding Writers

The internet search engines love good content. Lots of good content. If you have a website and you want any visibility at all, you are going to need to fill it up with well written content, and it helps to update your site regularly.

Not everyone loves to write or is good at it, though. And the good news about the internet is that there are writers of every level of talent and experience who are looking for freelance work.

Let's talk about the different types of writers that you may need, and the best place to find them.

First of all, you have to realize that in most cases, you get what you pay for. So if you want good quality writing, you need to be willing to pay a decent price for it.

There are many writers from poorer countries who are eager for work, and will work for really miniscule amounts of money - as little as \$3 for a 500 word article.

The quality of these articles is, in most cases, going to be really bad. It is not going to be writing that you would want to showcase on your website or submit to article directories. You would not want your name to be associated with writing at this level.





It is possible that you might want to use articles like this on Made For AdSense sites. Writers who work for this little amount of money congregate at some of the internet marketing forums such as Digital Point, and you can give them a try there.

However, for higher quality writers expect to pay more like 3 to 10 cents a word.

Here are some of the types of writing available to you:

Press Releases

Press releases are a great way to get visibility, backlinks, and traffic to your web-site.

If you are lucky, you may even get a mention in local media, and if your story get picked up by a newspaper or television station that is worth it's weight in gold. It provides an enormous amount of free publicity that has a lot more credibility than

There are many press release distribution sites which will print your press releases for free.

However, press releases need to be written in a very particular style and format. Not every writer knows how to do this. Press releases can not be written like an advertisement or sales page or blog post;





they have to present information in a news style fashion, as if they are an announcement rather than an ad.

If they are not written correctly, the press release sites will reject them and thus, there will be no coverage and no backlinks.

It makes sense to hire writers who specialize in writing press releases, and this can be a little more pricey than hiring traditional writers, but the results will be well worth it.

As with anything else on the internet, buyer beware - make sure that you see samples of what these people can do, ask for testimonials, and pay only a portion up front; not more than 50 percent. If someone insists on the entire payment for an expensive project up front - you may want to consider using someone else's services instead, especially the first time around.

If it's a cheaper service like an article for \$10-\$20, pay for an article and then see how they writer does, before committing to paying a few hundred dollars for a batch of articles.

It's not really fair to ask a writer for a free sample, because they have no way of knowing if you are going to hire them and freelancers don't like to provide work for free.





Some other places to find press releases are on popular freelancing sites like www.elance.com , www.getafreelancer.com, and www.guru.com .

You can join those sites, post a request for any type of project, and get a whole lot of responses right away.

Speaking of projects, let's move on to other types of writing:

Article Writing

Short, 300-500 word articles can be used for many different purposes on the internet.

They can fill up your website with content. They can be submitted to article directories like ezinearticles.com, with links back to your site, which drive traffic. They can be sent out in an autoresponder series to customers or potential customers on your list, giving away valuable information and containing links to your products.

You can find article writers on sites such as the ones that were mentioned above, www.elance.com , www.guru.com , www.getafreelancer.com , etc.

You will find that in most cases you get what you pay for. It's worth paying a little more for quality content, especially if you are using





these articles to try to convince people to buy a product or service from you.

Ebooks

You can order ghostwritten ebooks of any length and can use them for many purposes. They may be used for giveaways to benefit visitors to your website, or you can sell the ebooks at a profit.

For instance if you know how to train dogs really well but aren't a good writer, you could have someone put your thoughts into writing and create an excellent ebook for you, which you can then sell online.

Again, the internet marketing forums that were mentioned above, and the freelance forums, are good places to find ebook writers.

Copywriting

Copywriting is one of the most valued skills out there and it comes at a high price. Copywriting is writing sales copy; it is the writing that determines how well your product or service is going to sell.

Good copywriters know how to write the enticing headlines which will pull in readers, and they know how to write copy which will clearly and compellingly tell the reader "what's in it for them" - rather than talking about a list of a new minivan's features they will





talk about how the new minivan will transport you and your family safely, quickly, and so stylishly nobody will even know you're a soccer mom.

You can find copywriters on all of the previous forums that we had mentioned. Expect to pay anywhere from \$700-\$800 at a bare minimum for a well written sales page. Most copywriters charge \$2500 on up - and if the copy sells tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of product, it's well worth it.

If a copywriter is charging less than that, they are likely to be brand new to the game. That doesn't mean they aren't good, but they would be less experienced.





Chapter Four: Graphic Designers, Website Designers, Etc.

Just about every business these days needs a website, whether they do the majority of their business online or offline.

And it's not enough to just have a website; it needs to be designed in a way that showcases your business and products or services, and encourages customers to take a desired action.

Unless you are really good at website design, you are much better off leaving this job to an expert.

Your website is your branding tool. It is your online representation of you and your business. You can not afford to have it look cheap and amateurish; if you do, your business will look cheap and amateurish.

This does not mean that you should not dictate the look and layout of the site. You certainly should. You should study competitor's websites, you should see what works and what doesn't, what you find appealing and what is done badly.

You should figure out color schemes, layout, what to put on the home page, etc.





But a professional website designer is going to do a better job at creating a web-site than someone who is just trying it for the first time.

A professional website designer is also a huge help when you need a sales page created. Website design and copy are equally important.

If your sales page is not designed efficiently to steer customers towards a desired action, you will lose many customers and it is a waste of traffic and effort. Proper design has been shown to greatly influence the percentage of visitors who are converted to customers.

So unless you are an experienced website designer, or graphic designer, you're going to want to give serious consideration to visiting one of the freelancing sites that we have previously mentioned.

As for graphic design, there are numerous ways a graphic designer can help you showcase your business.

Online, and offline, it's a good idea to have a logo design which represents your business. This helps with brand identity so that a customer can glance at your logo design on a product, or a website, that you own, and immediately know that it is yours.





Graphic designers are also helpful for designing company newsletters, flyers, brochures, stationary, etc., that have a consistent brand identity, look, and feel. Some graphic designers can even do website design as well.

Web site designers can also create specific website templates that suit your needs. You may want a static (unchanging) front page of a website, but you may want a company blog off to one side, so you can update your customers, interact with them, and get the search engine optimization benefits of constantly adding fresh content to your site.

However unless you have a large company or one that relies heavily on website design or graphic design services, you don't need the ongoing expense of a designer on your full time payroll.

It is very easy to find good, qualified, affordable freelance web site designers and graphic designers at any of the freelance sites or internet marketing forums that we have listed.





Chapter Five: Coders And Programmers

You may wonder why you would ever need a website coder or programmer if you just have a regular business and are not planning on creating computer programs for people

There are actually a lot of good reasons why you might want to use this kind of service.

For a very affordable price, you can hire someone to create widgets and devices on your website that will engage your customers and give them a reason to come back for more.

Here are some examples: if you have a website that caters to dieters, you could have a little program created that lets dieters enter their weight, create an avatar, and show the avatar losing weight. Or a widget that calculates how much activity an exercise burns off based on weight, sex, age, and level of fitness.

That would encourage customers to come back for more again and again!

For a pregnancy site, you could have a widget which shows the size and development of a woman's baby as her pregnancy progresses.

It generally doesn't cost more than a few hundred dollars to have these types of tools designed for your website, and it gives visitors a reason to come back again and again.





Also, if you are involved in any kind of ecommerce, you can have a coder or programmer design your e-shopping cart system so it suits your business perfectly.

Here's another way that you can use programmers and coders: you may have an idea for a program or application which would sell well, but you may lack the skills to design a program like that yourself.

Once you have been in business for a while, you certainly know what tools you wish you had to make your life easier.

For instance, programs to automate article submission or blog post submission are becoming increasingly popular. The people who sell those programs aren't always the ones who designed them; they simply spotted a need on the market and hired someone to do it for them.

It would be very expensive to have a programmer on your staff full time, but there are programmers and software engineers and software developers all over the world who are eager for work and who can work for you quite affordably.

Again, sites like [rent-a-coder](#), [scriptlance.com](#), [elance](#), and [guru.com](#) are perfect places to find them.





Chapter Six: Virtual Assistants And Customer Service

In any business it's inevitable that customers will have questions or the occasional problem and they will need to talk to someone about it.

If a customer has a question or concern it is vital that it get answered right away. If they don't get an answer about a product, they are likely to leave and buy the product from someone else. The last thing you want to do is alienate a customer who is standing there with credit card in hand, ready to order, who has just a simple question that they need answered.

And if a customer has a problem, that TRULY needs to be addressed immediately. At the very least they need to be able to tell someone about the problem and be assure that their problem is very important and is being worked on immediately.

That's the difference between a mildly annoyed customer and a very angry customer who starts blogging about how rotten your company is and who starts filing disputes all over the place.

However, it's very time consuming being there all of the time to deal with customer service issues.

That's where virtual assistants and outsourced customer support come in.





Customer support service centers can handle tasks for you such as:

- Taking orders
- Providing technical support for people who call with glitches
- Taking messages
- Prioritizing messages and passing along any messages which are clearly urgent
- Handling any support issues necessary, via help desk outsourcing

You can also opt for live online chat for your websites, or live online order takers much better than those automated online order takers.

If you use these types of services make sure that you test them. Have a friend call up the service and pretend to be a client. Have them report back to you about the quality of their experience.

Also call the service yourself and pretend to be a client.

It is very important that you ensure that your potential clients and customers are receiving quality care, if you want them to become repeat customers.

Virtual assistants are also becoming increasingly popular. They can assist you in numerous areas, much as a personal secretary could - but without the full time expense and only when you need them.





Here are some things that a virtual assistant can do for you:

- Find service providers for tasks that you need, such as website designers, writers, etc.
- Submit articles to article directories
- Socially bookmark your articles and blog posts
- Manage your calendar
- Call and make appointments for you
- Research travel arrangements and book the best flights and hotels for you for business trips
- Secretarial duties
- Send thank you cards and gifts to important clients
- Handle email for you - get rid of spam, sort emails, etc.
- Many of the freelancing sites that we have mentioned previously are great places to find virtual assistants who can take care of mundane day to day tasks while you run your business.





Chapter Seven: Outsourcing Seo & Promotion

When you first start out you may find yourself doing a lot of your own self promotion, and you will quickly find out that it is a time consuming task.

Also, many of the methods of promoting yourself take a specific skill set which you may not possess.

But promotion is a task which you simply can't ignore, and you can't afford to skimp on. The most beautifully done website in the world will get you no business at all if people can't find it.

So there are few tasks more important than driving traffic to your website, and the money you spend on getting qualified, interested customers to visit your web-site Here are some things that people could do to promote you:

- Create podcasts about your business
- Create Youtube videos about your business
- Write and send out press releases
- Write articles, hub pages, squidoo lenses, and create other types of written promotion that link back to your site
- Send out mailers to local businesses
- If you can afford it, it's worth a small investment to hire professional voice talent to do your podcasts, and professional videographers to create your Youtube videos.





Search engine optimization is another task that you can hire out. You can have your website reviewed, have an SEO campaign planned out for you, and have your current SEO efforts analyzed and improved on.





Chapter Eight: Freelance Sites And How They Work

We've mentioned freelancing sites in the previous chapters, and now we are going to talk about how they work.



Whether you are a service provider or a freelancer, the first thing that you will have to do in order to be able to use a freelancing site, is to sign up and create a free account.

In many cases you will have to put a small amount in escrow so that the freelance account can verify your information - an amount of around \$10 or so.

The people who are offering their services on the freelance site generally have to pay a small fee for the right to bid on projects, and may pay a small percentage of the project price once they are paid.

Let's look at a typical site, www.elance.com .

If you click on sign in or register, in the upper right hand corner, you will be able to give them your company information. You will also be asked to make a \$10 deposit which will be refunded in





10 days. You can use Paypal, or a credit card, to do this.

This screens out scammers and ensures a much higher quality of participant in the freelance site experience, for both buyers and sellers.

On the front page of elance, you will see lists of professionals by category: As you can see, there are service providers in just about every category that you could need.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web & Programming (31741) Design & Multimedia (22885) Writing & Translation (27055) Admin. Support (25052) Sales & Marketing (6845) Finance & Mgt. (4484) Legal (1171) Engineering & Mfg. (2792) 	<p>Most Active Web & Programming Professionals past 0 days</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p>NIX Solutions Video Chat, Live Support, E-Commerce, Dating Sites</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p>Grey Matter India T... Social Networking PHP ASP.NET Flex VC++</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p>QualityClix RELIABLE Web Design & Development Solutions</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p>smartData Enterprises Software Development & Application Development</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p>Enmex Ltd PHP .NET Social Networking</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p>Magnon Interactive ... Providing Focused Web Solutions</p> </div> </div>
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Elanca Trends

- **20,000+ projects** posted in the last 30 days
- **100,000+ profiles** of providers active on Elance
- **\$100m+ of work done** since 2006

[See more >](#)

Elanca Customers Say

“ I posted a programming project on Elance, worked with a provider and had the program completed in three days. After that, I was hooked on Elance. ”

Mark Fletcher
Founder, Startupper.com

Member since 2003

Recent Media Coverage

[See all >](#)





Now let's say that you want to find a virtual assistant. First, you would click on Admin. Support, in the upper left hand corner.

If you click on the blue link of any of the service professionals, it will take you to a page where you can see a summary of their background and the services that they provide,

You can also see very important feedback information:

Feedback

Last 6 months	Admin Support	All Categories
Feedback:	91% positive	92% positive
Reviews:	11	12
Projects:	70	77
Earnings:	\$14,699	\$16,081
Lifetime Earnings:	\$14,699	\$16,081

- ### Keywords
- Virtual Assistant
 - Telemarketing
 - Web site design
 - mailing list
 - Internet research
 - Personal Assistant
 - Ad Posting
 - web design
 - web research





This shows someone who has one negative review. It's worth glancing at to see what the problem was. However, to be fair, one negative review isn't automatically bad news; some customers can be unhappy no matter what.

But before signing up with a freelancer, you would always want to check on their feedback.

Here's another site that features a wide variety of freelancers, www.guru.com .:

As you'll see, they even have landscaping outsource services!

Once you have created an account on these sites, you can contact a freelancer through the site, or you can post a project and wait for people to bid on it.

You will set a length of time for people to bid - say, a week - and then look over the bids, and see who you like best.

You will set a price range for the project, and you should try to provide as much detail as you possibly can about the project to ensure that the freelancers truly have an accurate picture of what it is that you need and they can bid accordingly.

When you look over the bids that you receive, don't automatically go for the lowest price.





Look for the qualifications of the people bidding on the project, and look at their feedback. If they're cheap but not very good or not very experienced, you're not really getting a bargain.

Make sure that they have experience in your specific area.

If they are website designers and you need a wordpress blog designed or configured for your needs, make sure that they have extensive wordpress experience.

It's good to exchange several messages with a service provider before you finally select someone, so that you can make sure that they respond quickly and are easy to reach.

If you send someone a message and they take 24 hours or more to get back to you, that's not a good sign.





Chapter Nine: Outsourcing Issues

Outsourcing is a wonderful way to get necessary tasks done more affordably, and to operate like a big company, even appear like a big company, even if you are a one-person operation.

However, it does have a downside.

You are dealing with strangers on a regular basis, and you don't know them or their morals or work ethic very well when you first start working with them.

You'll never really know them as well as you do the people that work in an office with you, that you see every day.

And as you know, even when you work with people every day there can be misunderstandings, or you may find out that hiring someone was a mistake for any number of reasons.

There are certain steps that you are going to want to take, to make sure that you don't get burned when outsourcing.

First of all, you want to make sure that whoever you hire has testimonials from satisfied customers, and samples of their work.

Yes, testimonials can be faked, but it's a start. If they have NO testimonials that is a concern.





You want to pay a decent fee to the service provider, for a number of reasons. Make sure you know what the price range is for the service that you want, and don't try to pay absolute rock bottom fees.

Your freelancer will do better work, faster, and be more reliable, if they are being paid fairly. Freelancers who are paid too little end up taking on too much work and getting burned out, and the quality of their work will suffer.

And if you pay your freelancer decently they are much more likely to stick around longer, which means you won't have to go search out another freelancer and break them in and spend your precious time getting them up to speed on what you need from them.

Make sure that you and your freelancer agree on a project deadline.

Make sure that your freelancer is easy to get ahold of. If you are paying someone money to do work for you, make sure that you have their telephone number and email address, and exchange some messages with them to make sure that they respond quickly.

Make sure that you get all of the rights to whatever you are purchasing, and that it is all original work.

If you are buying a photograph, make sure that model releases have been signed if applicable, that this is the photographer's





original work, and that it has not been sold elsewhere and will not be sold elsewhere - unless that is okay with you.

If you are paying for articles or an ebook or anything else custom written for you, make sure that they are original articles, ebook, etc. - run them through Copyscape or a similar program. Make sure that the writer understands UP FRONT that you are buying original work written only for you and they are not allowed to reuse or resell it later.

If you want confidentiality, tell the writer that and make sure that they agree, in writing, that they are not to disclose to anyone that they provided writing to you.

If you are hiring someone to write code or create programming for you, make sure that the code is not copy write by someone else.

It is not a bad idea to have an attorney create a standard written contract for you that you can provide to customers, in order to protect yourself.

When you pay a freelancer, you do not want to pay for everything up front. Most freelancers will not work without some kind of down-payment, and this is perfectly fair.





However, to protect yourself, you should work out a payment agreement with the freelancer and pay, say 25 percent up front, and then receive 25 percent of the work for your review.

You should also specify with the freelancer that they will provide a certain number of revisions or changes as needed.

If the freelancer sends you the first portion of the project and the work is not up to par, and they can not provide the necessary changes or revisions, you should be able to sever your relationship with them at that point. They keep the down payment, you move on and find someone who can actually provide what you need.

And you should have that specified in your contract with them.

And if, worst case scenario, they vanish and do not provide the work they were supposed to provide, then you are only out a portion of your money and not all of it.

This does not happen very often, especially if you check their testimonials and samples, and spend some time getting to know them, but it does happen occasionally, and it is better to protect yourself if possible.

However, most of the time you are going to find that your outsourcing experiences will go smoothly, and you will be delighted





to find out how much you can multiply your efforts with a small investment in other people's time and talents.

Good luck.

