Outsourcing Survival Kit

How To Do More In Less Time

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PREFACE

MY
EARLY DAYS
ON THE NET
(The Untold Story)

A few years ago, I wrote an essay entitled "My Early Days On The Net." With that piece, I wanted to share with my Turbozine newsletter subscribers my initial experiences during the formative years of the Internet, when a new world of wondrous possibilities was slowly unraveling before everyone's eyes.

A lot of enterprising folks back then spent countless sleepless nights thinking about the opportunities that the World Wide Web promised. A global network that would unite people from all walks of life, from diverse cultures, from different orientations and ideologies, all coming together through the use of their computers and phone lines. Many social and economic benefits could surely be derived from what was then a new technology.

I was one of those people who was at awe with the sheer power of the Internet. Ever since I was exposed to it, many ideas started to swirl in my head. And almost immediately, I sprung this newfound inspiration into action.

I surfed as many sites as I could with an archaic browser which oldies called Mosaic, which I think oldies would also remember. I kept track of the website designs and templates which I liked, as well as the presentations that I thought were superbly effective. I studied HTML and started building my own websites, starting with personal ones and eventually advancing to pages that conveyed information about subjects that I was interested in.

It was fun!

But ideas still kept haunting me. With the many channels of communication and interaction that the World Wide Web has opened up, surely there were

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some avenues that would allow people to earn from the comforts of their own homes, so I thought.

My constant immersion in cyberspace made me learn the way things worked. This gave me a good grasp of the needs of the Internet and its constantly multiplying denizens. There were even times when I actually predicted the next innovation that was to be introduced to the online market, such as those simple web building programs as well as some marketing solutions that made online transactions very convenient.

So I began to realize this fact… since I knew what online users needed and I had some general ideas about how these concerns could be answered, but I wasn't doing anything about them and eventually some big company discovers the same solutions and decides to build and market them before I could get my lazy butt off the chair… I was actually losing some earning potential!

That realization, dear friend, was the turning point of my online career, as well as my life.

One lesson that I try to impart to my networking brethrens is to try to guess the evolution of the industry. Try to determine the next logical step and exploit it before anyone else discovers the same thing. The early bird catches the worm, so they say, and the same is true for Internet marketing.

By predicting the needed steps for the progress of Internet marketing, I have come to invent some products that not a few people have described as revolutionary.

Take for example my flagship product, the [JVManager](). Want to know how I came up with it? Well, the concept was born after years of struggling to manage my online business accounts. Things were quite simpler when I was handling a couple of orders per day. But when the order ballooned to the hundreds, and eventually the thousands, 24 hours a day just wasn't enough to process the orders, and the backlog was increasing by the minute! I invented the JVManager to help people like me organize their online businesses, and to this very day, people are thanking me for what they say is "the best tool in Internet marketing."

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Using the same principle, I have invented the One Time Offer, the Dynamic Pricing Generator, the Buy Me A Beer and Buy Me A Product scripts, the TurboResponders, the Special Offer Manager, and a lot more that sometimes, when I encounter them online, I am surprised to remember that they were actually my concepts that were implemented.

I have grouped these tools into a line that I have proudly labeled as TURBO. A seal, if you will, which will assure online users and Internet marketers that what they will be getting are quality products that carry my wholehearted guarantee.

"How do you do it, John?" some of my friends still ask.

"Necessity is the mother of invention," I tell them, "I just try to find what is needed and invent something that will answer such a need."

"You have a beautiful mind," they sometimes say, "and you're in an enviable position too. Imagine, you're getting paid for something you enjoy doing."

Well, I have a confession to make, dear friend.

You see, I indeed enjoy coming up with all sorts of tools to make online business so much easier for you and me. And to a certain degree, I am having the time of my life by doing so.

But it's not all roses with this job.

Most definitely, success comes with a price. The more earning opportunities you decide to take, the more responsibilities will come your way. There will be times when these responsibilities will eat up all the hours of your days and you won't have any to spare for the creative side of your business.

Take my case, for example. I love inventing things. I love reading up on market trends and predicting the next big thing that will catapult this industry to the next level. But I also have a commitment to the TURBO line of products and to the customers who have placed their trust on what I have offered. Surely, I can't leave these responsibilities behind to concentrate on what I love to do.

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There must be a solution to this problem, right? There must be a way that will allow us to have more time for other important matters with regards to our businesses, without having to neglect equally essential aspects of our enterprises.

Well, there is. And you're reading it right now.

This eBook, the first of its kind I believe, will introduce you to the wonderful world of digital outsourcing. After you've finished reading the pages to come, you'll be armed with everything that you need to know about outsourcing your tasks effectively and wisely.

There is one thing that you will most certainly realize in the field of Internet marketing: time is gold. In this industry, time means money. The more time you invest in this trade, the more income you will be able to earn. There will be times when you'll wish that there were more hours in a day. There will be times when you'll dream that you had more bodies to command. There will be times, a lot of them in fact, when you wanted to achieve more than what was physically possible.

Outsourcing is the key to all of these desires.

It is hoped that the coming pages will shed some light on the matter of outsourcing. In this eBook, you will learn the following things:

- What is outsourcing?
- What are the tasks that can effectively be outsourced?
- Is outsourcing the right decision for your business?
- What are the different tactics that can be employed in outsourcing that will guarantee the best value for your buck?
- What are the things you can do to assure that you will have the results you will expect, and possibly more?
- How do you start with outsourcing?
- Where do you look for freelancers and telecommuters?
- What is the proper way of dealing with them?
- What are the potentials of outsourcing that have yet to be fully exploited?
- And most importantly, how can outsourcing work for YOU and YOUR BUSINESS?

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It's going to be an exciting ride, dear friend. Outsourcing can be the answer to the many woes you might have experienced in your online enterprise. This is quite a novel field of study, one where there are but a few resources dedicated to the matter.

Internet marketing is a highly competitive industry. You will need all the edge you can muster. In this game of catch up or be left behind, outsourcing can be a weapon that will skyrocket your operations and leave your competitors to eat your dust.

A good companion volume for this work is the Internet Marketing Cookery, a tome of comprehensive information about every known aspect of Internet Marketing.

Let's discover this new frontier together, shall we?

And in the end, let's sing a song of celebration for the success we're bound to achieve.

Enjoy the ride, dear friend…

Chapter One

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A MATTER
OF TIME
The Value Of Outsourcing

There are only 24 hours in a day.

Let's say that on the average, a person will spend 6 hours sleeping and recharging his mental and physical faculties for the rigors of the coming day. This would leave him with 18 more hours by which he could do what he has to do, right?

But things aren't that simple. Say, 3 out of those remaining 18 hours are spent with the necessary stuff, like taking a bath and other grooming rituals, eating breakfast, lunch, dinner and other incidental snacks, and intermittent rests throughout the day. This would leave us with 15 more hours to spare.

But to allot those 15 hours to work exclusively would be inhumane. Certainly, some time must be spent on our social needs, like talking to or visiting a loved one, spending quality time with friends and family, or merely taking some time off to keep in touch with ourselves, something we all need from time to time. Say, we spend 5 hours doing these things. This would leave us with 10 more hours.

Now 10 hours is enough for a common employee, or even a businessman for that matter.

But not for a successful Internet marketer!

This is a fact that you have probably realized during your experience in Internet marketing: time is gold in this industry. Time means money in this field. The difference between dozens of sales and a poor conversion rate, or the fabulous execution of a business idea and the fatal omission of an integral detail, can all boil down to a matter of seconds that were deprived from you.

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Imagine what more you could do with those few seconds. A more mature deliberation of the choices that were presented perhaps, which might have led to a better decision? Or maybe more time to review a product before it was delivered, hence a better crack at customer satisfaction?

Imagine further if you had a few more hours to spare. You could have spent them on conceptualizing more moneymaking products. Or you could have developed more effective strategies that would have catapulted your business to the next level. Or you could have researched some new markets which you could have exploited for more profit.

Imagine even further if you had actual days saved. You could have branched out to other lucrative fields, created more products that could have raked in more income, devised new and amazing systems that could have built good relationships with your clients.

Or you could have spent that time with your family, playing with your kids, enjoying a vacation at a cozy lakeside cabin where your only worries would have been the efficiency of the lures you had bought from the local angling store.

You could have done a load of things with the time you spent dealing with the intricacies of your business all by yourself!

With each second lost, an opportunity goes down the drain. This is how valuable time is in Internet marketing. Let's face it, as much as other sectors envy this field because we have the luxury of working out of the comforts of our own homes, they know little about the many sacrifices we have to make just to be successful at what we do. We are beholden to no fixed schedule, and with our drive to see our enterprise flourish, we, more often than not, end up spending most of the day cracking our noggins in front of the monitor, processing orders, writing eBooks, special reports and articles for our viral marketing campaigns, inventing new products to offer, processing orders, researching the newest trends, preparing content for our pages, writing entries for our blogs, contacting business partners, studying our website statistics, promoting what we have to offer, and a whole lot of countless other things.

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All of these can be so overwhelming that we are not even left with the opportunity to reassess where we are. Hence, we sometimes forget that we're but one man (or woman,) and we can only do so much.

You're Actually Losing Money In Doing Things By Yourself

The thought of hiring some help may have crossed your mind at some point. However, some consideration stopped you from pursuing such a thought. You may have considered the idea a little expensive. Or perhaps you want a more hands-on approach to things that pertain to your business, a self-imposed quality control so to speak, that you can't easily trust others to do the job that has served you well.

Or maybe you just wanted things to be in their correct order. You wanted things to be done your way. After all, only we can pave our own way to success, and this road is so intimately crafted that you don't want anyone else traversing it.

These are all perfectly valid reasons, of course, but here's a food for thought…

Do you know that you're actually losing some earnings because of your insistence on doing things yourself?

As we've discussed earlier, opportunities are lost every second that you are forced to stay away from other necessities of your business. These opportunities could translate to more earnings for you, if only you had the chance to pursue them. Sadly, with all the demands of having your own business, more so your own online business, these opportunities have become necessary sacrifices for the sustenance of your venture.

But what if there's a way to make things work? What if there exists a method that would allow you to take care of the things you have to do, and to explore the things you want to do?

Well, dear friend, there is a way, and it's called outsourcing.

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What Is Outsourcing?

Outsourcing is defined as a method of hiring an outside service provider to perform specific tasks for you.

Yes, it's like hiring an employee. The difference is, in outsourcing, you will only have to engage the worker's services for the duration of the project instead of having to employ him for a certain amount of time. Additionally, the pay is usually pegged per project instead of the number of hours the worker actually suffers work.

Companies have been outsourcing work for decades. As early as the 1950's, when telephones became an item that was present in most households, established enterprises have been contracting housewives who were looking for some additional income for their families to do particular work that they could carry out from the comfort of their own homes. All they needed were some documents that they'd receive from a package sent by the employer, a telephone line to facilitate communication, and a semblance of supervision. This began what we now call telecommuting.

With the advent of the Internet, telecommuting evolved into a lucrative industry of its own. Today, about 20 million people work from home for an outside employer, and this statistic is for the United States alone. Though there is no concrete study on the matter, it is surmised that around 200 million people worldwide are telecommuting. This can be attributed to the convenience that the World Wide Web has brought to the plate. With the Internet, telecommuters and employers have greater connectivity. Messages can be delivered faster, instructions conveyed on the fly, deliveries done within seconds without the need for physical travel, and payments facilitated with the clicks of a few buttons.

Now, what if I told you that you could harness these people for the greater benefit of your business? Would you believe me?

I understand your concerns at this point. I know the reasons for your hesitancy. You're thinking of either or all of the following things:

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- My business isn't big enough to warrant outsourcing.

- I still don't know how outsourcing can help me.

- I don't know where to start.

- I don't know where to look for freelancers and telecommuters, more so, competent ones who would perform according to my expectations.

- I don't know how to deal with these freelancers and telecommuters if ever I find them.

- I don't know how much I should spend and I'm afraid that I might offer an amount that would leave me feeling ripped off.

We will tackle these things as we go along, and I assure you this, no matter how big or how small your business is, outsourcing will do wonders for your online venture. It all boils down to the matter of time.

Remember this: if you have the time, there is no reason why you would fail.

More than the convenience, more than the ability to increase the bulk of your work, outsourcing will buy you that time, and so much more!

The Benefits Of Outsourcing

There are so many benefits to outsourcing. Here are some of them:

- Outsourcing will save you more time that you can spend focusing on other matters of your business. Often, the operational demands just to sustain our enterprise would consume most of our time. By hiring someone to do the dirty work for us, in a manner of speaking, we will be able to free some time for ourselves to pursue other ideas.

- Outsourcing will allow you to expand your business. If you are afraid of extending the reaches of your enterprise because you might not be able to keep up with the workload, then contracting some of the tasks

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of your current and future businesses would most certainly make the expected demands more bearable. If two heads are better than one, four hands are most definitely better than a pair.

- Outsourcing will allow you to be more competitive. You'll be able to produce more at a faster rate, and you'll be able to drown your competition with the sheer number of quality goods that you're going to churn out.

- Outsourcing, if utilized properly, can boost your income. You won't have to turn down some customers because your workload cannot accommodate them. By contracting out specific jobs pertaining to your business, you'll be able to free up enough time and resources to continue accepting interested parties.

- Outsourcing will help you streamline your business activities. You would be able to meet multiple deadlines. You won't have to worry about the amount of orders coming in. By delegating the work to outside service providers, you will be assured that work will continue even when you're not in front of your PC terminal.

- Outsourcing can help increase the quality of the goods or services you're offering. One party who is forced to suffer so much work will not be able to produce consistent high quality results. By spreading the work, your business will be able to guarantee that the same level of quality can be offered.

- Outsourcing will boost the flexibility of your commercial enterprise. You will not be confined to the common limitations prescribed by existing resources. Outsourcing will supply you with the manpower as well as the time that is needed to adjust your business to changing demands.

- Outsourcing is cheaper than hiring an actual, regular employee. The law mandates that the latter be paid a statutory minimum wage. With outsourcing, however, you'll be able to choose the right person for the job from a global market of freelancers and you can engage their services at lower rates, considering the substantially lower cost of living in other countries.

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- Outsourcing will give you access to professional capabilities. There are some areas of your business where you may not necessarily be the best person for those tasks. Outsourcing will allow you to choose a freelancer whose field of expertise deals with a specific task, and this will result in the improvement of your business.

There are, of course, more benefits that outsourcing can provide. These are just the more popular ones. Outsourcing is a constantly evolving avenue, and the way things have shaped up in recent years, it has become a very viable option for businesses worldwide, whether they are small-scale or well established in their respective markets.

Outsourcing In Today's World

The introduction of high technology that has increased connectivity has not only made a global market of potential clients an actuality, it has also made a global market of potential workforce possible as well. A quick look at the economic landscape today will reveal how much impact outsourcing has brought to the business world.

All the major players in almost every industry have contracted some of their internal services to outside providers worldwide. Companies like IBM, Yahoo, Microsoft, FedEx, among others, have established branches in far-flung countries just to save on labor costs and ease up on their workload. Areas of business that are popularly outsourced include:

- consultancy
- customer care
- payment collection
- technical support
- product support
- accounting
- data entry/encoding
- software development
- writing and translation

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This doesn't mean, however, that small-scale businesses have no tasks to outsource. The truth of the matter is that small-scale industries carry an equal necessity to delegate some chores of their trade. Web design and development, for example, is a popular area that is often contracted out to an outside provider. Copywriting, content writing, press release preparation, and ghostwriting are also popular tasks that are conferred to freelancers and telecommuters.

Other ventures even go as far as hiring online secretaries. The ease of communication these days has made distances quite negligible. Even if your own digital secretary lives a continent away, instructions and supervision can still be facilitated through some modern tools. All that is needed from the online assistant, really, are a PC terminal, a stable internet connection, a phone line, competence in the field, and a commitment to the success of your business.

It all starts with a concept. The execution of the concept, on the other hand, can be delegated to someone else. [Jimmy D. Brown's Products In The Rough](#) will give you some novel ideas on what clicks and what doesn't in Internet marketing.

In the succeeding chapter, we will try to learn if outsourcing is indeed the right choice for your business. Immediately afterwards, we're going to discuss how to actually start in outsourcing certain tasks.

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Chapter Two

DELEGATING DELEGATIONS
Outsourcing Outlined And Some Preliminary Strategies

The first step in outsourcing certain areas of your business, of course, is this:

Determine if outsourcing is right for your needs.

You have to know beforehand that outsourcing is not for everyone. For starters, you will need some form of financial investment to be able to hire the right people for the job. No one will work for free, after all, and there will be times when the people you are eyeing for the job will demand preliminary payment before starting on the project you wish to delegate.

Another is the matter of trust. Delegating a part of your business to relative strangers might cause you some sleepless nights if you are the type who is meticulous about every detail of your business. Freelancers sometimes deliver, and a lot of them even over-deliver. But admittedly, some of them can turn in inferior work. This eBook will teach you how to avoid the lemons in a basket of apples and how to protect yourself from low-quality results, but if the worst-case scenario does happen, you will have wasted time instead of saving some hours, and this wouldn't be good.

Then there is the matter of standards. Some business owners do have an obsessive compulsion to watch over every particular detail of their enterprise. They want things perfect and clean, with nary a trace of a possible flaw. As a result, they end up heavily editing, rewriting, reprogramming, or even remaking the work they have contracted out. The time they would spend for this is equal to, if not greater than, the time they should have saved.

These concerns can be taken care of by choosing the right provider who is worthy of your trust, of course, a matter that we will discuss in later chapters.

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But the most important considerations in deciding if outsourcing is right for your needs are the goals of your business. Would outsourcing help you meet these goals? Some online enterprises are perfectly content with the way things are running and they do not desire any changes to the affairs of their businesses. If you are one of these people, then clearly, dear friend, outsourcing is not for you.

But if you're planning an eventual expansion of your commercial venture, or if you want to accept more orders than what your current limitations permit, or if you want to branch out to other areas or even other industries, then it is recommended that you highly consider outsourcing. Outsourcing can be the key that will unlock all the ideas that you're entertaining in your head. Opportunities, after all, are born in the mind as concepts, and only through action can we transform them into actualities. Outsourcing would most definitely help you when it comes to this.

The Working Outline

If we are to outline the stages of outsourcing, it would look like this:

I. Determine the goals of your business.
II. Determine if outsourcing will help you meet those goals.
III. Know which areas of your business you can outsource.
IV. Prepare the specifics of the project.
V. Find a competent freelancer.
VI. Strike a beneficial deal with the said freelancer.
VII. Delegate the project.
VIII. Check up on the status of the project from time to time.
IX. Delivery of the project.
X. Check if deliverables meet your expectations.
XI. Corrections and/or revisions, if applicable.
XII. Payment and closure of the deal.

Outsourcing should be consistent with the goals of our business. Outsourcing isn't meant to make us lazy. On the contrary, it is meant to make us more productive by freeing up enough of our time to focus on other matters of our business.

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Do not outsource a job simply because you're too tired to do it yourself. The rule is that you should take care of every aspect of your business as much as you can. Only when such tasks are detrimental to the growth and progress of your business should you consider outsourcing.

Once you have decided that outsourcing is perfect for your business, it's time to segregate the particular area of your enterprise that you wish to delegate. Write down what you wish to have done. These will serve as the specifics of the project. Here is a guideline that will help you come up with a comprehensive blueprint:

- What is the purpose of the project?
- How is the project supposed to achieve such a purpose?
- Who is the target audience for the project?
- How is the project supposed to benefit the said audience?
- How should the freelancer approach the project?
- How should the project be marketed?

Having these specifications will help you come up with a project description. The project description embodies everything that you expect of the project once it is delivered. Consider the project description as the blueprint that sets the parameters of the project that the freelancer should strictly follow.

There will be projects for which you only have a concept, but you don't have an idea on how to implement it. In which case, you can always discuss the matter with the freelancer. After all, he is being hired for his expertise, and he must have more to say about the matter.

For example, you have an idea about automating a certain part of your business. However, you don't know anything about web development. A freelancer can suggest what should be done through a proposal he can submit for your approval. A proposal is always non-committal, meaning, it does not bind you to a deal with the freelancer. You would have to study the proposal first, and if it suits your liking, then and only then should you approve it.

Payment

Payment is an important consideration for both the outsourcer and the freelancer. A lot of deals break down because of disagreements about the rates that will apply to a project.

Here is the rule:

Always haggle for a lower price.

Remember that a freelancer's rate is not set in stone. It's a service and not a product. It doesn't come with a suggested retail price or SRP. So always negotiate for a lower fee. Here are some tips that will help you get the best price out of any freelancer:

- Always indicate that you're after a long-term deal. This will impress upon the freelancer the importance of winning your project for the chance to win more projects from you in the future. Hence, he will give you a lower price.

- State your budget before anything else. This will compel the freelancer to work around what you're capable of paying, instead of him pegging his rate to what he thinks is the maximum amount that you can afford.

- Give a price and say that it is the going rate that you're used to. Also state that you've had other offers of the same price, if not lower. Just don't peg a price too low. Be reasonable and fair as well. Giving a ridiculously cheap price will make your claim sound unbelievable, and will only insult the freelancer you're dealing with.

After a price has been determined, it is time to agree on a payment scheme. You have the following options to choose from:

1. Pay the full price upon delivery and when you are fully satisfied with the finished product.

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2. Pay 50% of the price upon acceptance of the project and the other 50% upon satisfactory delivery of the final product. The initial 50% will serve as goodwill to assure the freelancer that you intend to keep your side of the bargain.

3. Pay 1/3 of the price upon acceptance of the project, another 1/3 midway through the schedule agreed upon or after partial delivery, and the final 1/3 upon satisfactory delivery of the product.

Of these three options, the second one is the most commonly observed. However, the first one is the most advantageous for you, as it is the safest route to take. Always bat for full payment upon delivery. Some freelancers may not agree to this because of their own fears, which are understandable. Only then should you settle for a 50/50 or a payment in three parts arrangement.

Outsourcing Destinations

The nationality of your prospective freelancer should also be taken into consideration. Not only will this ensure better communication, as communication is very essential in guaranteeing the integrity of your project, but the educational framework of some countries makes them preferred factors for outsourcing needs.

Outsourcing within the continental United States will save your business around 8 to 17% of the normal operating costs, on the average. American freelancers are very much preferred by clients all over the world because of the solid educational system in the country as well as its populace's excellent grasp of the English language. Americans are perfect prospects for programming, consultancy, design, and writing requirements.

The same can be said about freelancers from the United Kingdom, though they tend to charge a slightly higher rate, given the higher cost of living in the country.

Indeed, a country's cost of living is very important in determining the freelancer's asking price. If a country has a lower cost of living, for example, the freelancer will demand an amount that will be enough for his

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sustenance. Freelancers from western countries might not be able to compete with such an amount, since the cost of living in the western hemisphere is significantly higher, and what is a sustainable amount for third world countries might just be the rate per hour for western freelancers.

Would you believe that companies, both big and small, report savings as high as 1,400% by engaging the services of people from countries with a lower cost of living?

This is the reason why India and the Philippines have become popular outsourcing destinations for many established and medium-scaled businesses the world over.

Here's a good example. A collection agency pays an American telecommuter $15 per hour, which is a good enough savings compared to the usual $24 to $35 wage for onsite employees. But if the collection agency establishes a branch in either India or the Philippines, it would only be required to pay an employee around $14 per day.

You might start to think that this is slave labor, but it's not. It just so happens that the cost of living in those countries is very low, and $14 per day is actually considered as an above-average salary grade.

Now, why am I mentioning India and the Philippines specifically?

It's because you will encounter people from these countries, as well as other nations, in the course of looking for a freelancer.

India is a former British colony. It has preserved a British educational system, and the country boasts of world-class experts in information technology and software development. Also, the general population's grasp of the English language is superb, considering that English is not their native language.

The Philippines, on the other hand, is a former American colony. It has a literacy rate of 90%, the highest in Asia. Around 70% of its population finish college and a growing number of this percentage are devoted to software design, programming, and information technology.

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People who deal with these countries have high praise for the work they deliver.

Here's a bonus for you for having purchased this eBook. Add the email address below to your list of contacts:

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The owner of that email address is a good friend of mine. Simply send him your requirements and he will reply within 24 to 48 hours, on weekdays, with the contact details of proven people for the job. He acquires his sources, so you'll be assured that he will refer freelancers who charge very affordable rates. He is not a broker and he will not charge you any fees for his efforts. He's doing this as a favor for me. Just don't forget to tell him that you were referred through this eBook.

In the next chapter, we're going to discuss the rest of the outline for outsourcing some areas of your business.

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Chapter Three

FINDING A FREELANCER

**Factors To Consider In Choosing
An Outside Service Provider**

So you have decided on outsourcing as a viable option for your business. You now know what to expect, as well as the preliminary considerations you have to undertake before delegating a project. Your heart is all set for outsourcing and you already have the project in mind.

It's time to look for the right person for the job.

Essential in outsourcing is the element of trust. This can be quite difficult to guarantee, especially during the first few projects you have them work on. This will eventually work out in time, however, once you have "tested" them for what they are capable of producing.

Choosing the wrong person from the get-go, however, can result in a severe loss in time and resources. Instead of saving some time and effort for a particular work, you might end up doing things yourself, and at a much-delayed schedule at that. Also, there are instances when you won't be able to recoup what you have already paid, or at the very least, a portion of the stated price. This won't be good for your business.

Hence there is a real need to find the perfect person that will carry the ball and run with it. This must be then at the very beginning of the process, as it will spare you some valuable resources.

In this chapter, we're going to discuss the proper way of finding an efficient and trustworthy freelancer for the task you want to outsource, as well as some safety checks you should employ to protect your interests.

Step One: Know The Job You Wish To Delegate

Before you can outsource to a freelancer, you must first know what area of your business needs such particular attention. It should be something you cannot do for yourself, or, if you are capable of doing the task, it must be something that you simply don't have the time for.

As we've mentioned earlier, time is a valuable commodity in business and you should always try your best to maximize the hours you have at hand. These could better be spent on other concerns of your enterprise that could lead to better profitability and an improvement in how your business plays out.

Here are the types of jobs that are commonly contracted out to independent service providers:

- PROGRAMMING. Programming involves skills, proper training, and often, years of experience. Additionally, it often takes time to come up with a script or software. If you want a product that you can sell, but you only have a general idea regarding what it should be about, then hiring a freelance programmer is an option that you should consider.

- WRITING. If you have tried writing before, you know how difficult it is to reduce into writing the thoughts you have in mind. Even veteran writers experience this. Curiously, it is much easier to write about other people's ideas. This is one of the driving principles behind the freelance service called ghostwriting. If you want to create eBooks, special reports, product reviews, product descriptions, press releases, and other written products, and if you don't have the writing prowess or the time to prepare them yourself, then it would be best to find a capable ghostwriter for the job.

- DATA ENCODING. This is perhaps one of the most frustrating chores that we have to endure. Imagine volumes upon volumes of data that you have to transcribe into computer-readable language. Though this is a simple task, the sheer amount of work makes this job a popular choice for contracting out.

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- TRANSLATION. Sometimes, branching out entails having to adapt to certain cultures, and correspondingly, certain languages. If you're offering an eBook for sale, for example, you could reach a wider audience if you had it translated into a variety of languages. Surely, you cannot translate it yourself if you don't know the desired language. For this chore, you would have to find an outside provider who is well-versed with the language of the place where you want your information product to be marketed.

- CONSULTANCY. Not all of us, of course, are well-educated with every matter. There is only so much that self-education can teach us. Often, we must rely on the advice of experts. Consultants are probably one of the first groups of outside service providers in the history of the commercial world. They sell their expertise for the betterment of our endeavors, and we engage their services on the basis of this. Popular areas where consultancy is sought include search engine optimization, financial planning, legal applications, and marketing.

- WEB DEVELOPMENT. There is a science behind web design. Though everyone and his mother can make a website these days, it takes a certain eye for details to create a website that is truly captivating, memorable, and most importantly, effective. This is where professional web developers enter the fray.

- GRAPHIC DESIGN. It is said that artistic skills are a talent that a person is born with. Computer-aided graphics are more demanding, as aside from talent, excellent computer skills are required. You either have them or you don't. If you're not blessed with this skill, or if you simply don't have the time for this rather time-consuming job, it would be better to delegate the task to experts.

- HELP DESK. If you need someone to man your business' help desk or technical support facilities, you can outsource this task to someone who has an internet connection and a phone line. These jobs can be done without a hitch and will free you up for other more pressing matters of your online venture.

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- ALL AROUND ASSISTANCE. Believe it or not, you could have your own digital secretary who would be willing to do a variety of tasks for you. Work may range from accounting, typing, transcribing, data encoding, and other similar labor. The best part about hiring this kind of service is that you can always assign almost any kind of work for your digital assistant. You may not be able to see each other like you would a real life secretary. She may not be able to make coffee for you or entertain important guests. But with the advancements in modern day communication, supervision and instructions can be delivered and carried out with efficiency.

These are but some of the areas of your business which you could opt to job out to many freelancers plying their trade all over the World Wide Web. Once you have chosen which job needs to be delegated, it is time to proceed to the next step.

Step Two: Know Where To Find A Freelancer

The Internet is a pretty big place. If you don't know your way around, you could easily get lost in this intricate web of networks.

There are, however, a lot of freelancers ready, able, and willing to take on the tasks you wish to assign. There is always a service provider who is a perfect fit for the job you have in mind, and it's just a matter of picking the right one for what you have in mind.

Here are some of the places where you could find excellent people to whom you could outsource some of the areas of your business:

- Auction sites where you can place your project proposal and freelancers can bid on it. From the bids, you can choose the lowest bidder, or otherwise, the most qualified one whom you think would turn in the highest quality of work possible. There are a lot of sites of this nature, but the most popular ones include www.rentacoder.com , www.elance.com , and www.scriptlance.com . We will tackle each of these sites in detail in the next chapter.

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- College community sites. A lot of students are looking for some extra cash to spend on the fancies of their youth. They will be more than willing to apply what they have learned for your needs. As they have yet to acquire their degrees, hence, have yet to be labeled as professionals, you could acquire their services for reasonable rates. Almost every college or university has community sites of its own, and looking for one shouldn't be a problem. Just feel free to post your project proposal and solicit for interested replies with their accompanying rates and credentials.

- Baby boomer community sites. The youth doesn't have a monopoly on the freelancing industry. More and more retirees are joining the fray! Granted, most senior citizens are not that acquainted with the more technical stuff, but their years of experience still make them great consultants and writers. There are likewise a lot of these communities on the World Wide Web.

- Editorial guilds. These are communities of writers and editors who are looking for extra work. Often, you may find a bargain in these places, and sometimes, you won't even have to pay for their services, for as long as there is an understanding that the work they turn in can be displayed as part of the portfolio they're building.

- Forums. Believe it or not, most forums have a classified ads section where service providers can advertise themselves. Also, some of these forums also have a "Work Needed" category where members can post a job requirement and qualified parties can contact the thread starter for arrangements.

There are other less conventional places where you can find freelancers, of course. Offline advertising is an excellent alternative, for example. By seeking help through a local publication, you may garner a lot of queries from people who just live mere blocks from your place.

The point is that online users are always on the lookout for earning opportunities. Provide an opportunity and market it in the right venue, and for sure, a lot of interested applicants will flock your email for inquiries.

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Again, it's just a matter of choosing the right person for the job, which brings us to the next step…

Step Three: Choosing The Perfect Freelancer

Okay, perhaps "perfect" is too restrictive a word. Surely, an efficiently capable freelancer who will turn in quality work for a reasonable price will be more than welcome for most of us. But how do you know with reasonable certainty that your prospective freelancer is such a worker when you have yet to engage his services?

This is a legitimate concern that should not be ignored. There are instances when outsourcing becomes a bane instead of a boon because of the freelancer's failure to live up to expectations, or worse, his utter lack of credentials that we failed to verify beforehand.

Before we can tackle the factors that will help us choose the right freelancer for the job, we must first discuss the common problems that plague outsourcing endeavors.

- Freelancer submits a work that is different from your concept. This can be traced to lack of proper communication. You have to clearly convey what you want to have done, with full details of what you exactly expect, before asking the freelancer to proceed with the project. Encourage him to ask some questions to clarify any gray areas that he might be confused with. Keep the communication lines open pending the completion of the project.

- Freelancer is not as qualified as he claimed. This is a very common problem indeed, considering the anonymity that pervades the Internet. Though auction sites usually have checks against false claims, other venues will leave you susceptible to them. You should try your best to verify the qualifications of the freelancer before choosing him for the job you wish to delegate.

- Freelancer does not respect the exclusive rights that were demanded by the project. For example, you would ask a service provider to

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build a product for you, with the agreement that you will have full rights for it upon delivery. Later on, you discover that the said freelancer sold the same product to another client. This is a clear breach of trust, but your options, to be frank, would be limited by that time. The best option, really, is to employ some foolproof checks to avoid such an occurrence even before the project is handed out. There is always the danger that you'll engage the services of an unscrupulous freelancer, hence the need to protect yourself for any eventualities.

- Freelancer violates confidentiality agreement. There are times when you want to pass off the creations as yours. You have spent a considerable amount of time and resources in branding yourself, and you would sell more of the same product if you market it as something that you yourself created. But lo and behold, the ghostwriter or ghost programmer eventually takes credit for it. Confidentiality agreements are usually a given when it comes to outsourcing the task of product creation, but you can never be too sure. You must have a clear and binding confidentiality clause in place to protect yourself from this unfortunate possibility.

- Freelancer suddenly disappears in the middle of a project. As a result, you'll be pushed a few steps back on your targeted deadlines, and you'll lose the down payment, if ever you paid such an amount, without having anything in return.

In choosing an outside service provider, you must pay attention to some very important details. Technically speaking, the freelancer will indeed do your bidding for a price stated, but you have your own interests to protect. Choosing a trustworthy freelancer from the get-go will help you avoid all the unwanted complications we have discussed above.

How do you go about choosing the right freelancer? Here are some things you should ascertain about your prospective partner:

- Know the age of the person you are considering for the job. Though some minors are exceptionally gifted when it comes to specific tasks, remember that a contract with a person who has yet to reach legal age isn't exactly binding. You have to protect your interests and this is

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partly achieved by preserving the integrity of the contract. Generally, the legal age in most countries is 18 years.

- Know the freelancer's home country. This is very important, especially for writing assignments in English. Though English is, generally speaking, a universal language, native speakers should always be favored over those who have merely learned English. The reason? Though formal training in English is offered in most schools worldwide, only a person who speaks the language day in and day out will have a good grasp of the intricacies of the vernacular. This preference, however, presents a very interesting dilemma that we will tackle later on.

- Know your prospect's educational history. You wouldn't want to consider a nursing graduate to take care of your programming needs, right? A lot of freelancers actually pretend to be an expert in a field they know so little about. Avoid those who wish to make your project their training opportunity. Go seek a real expert, and one way of assuring this is by checking out their educational background. Request his resume if possible.

- Study the freelancer's portfolio. Every outside service provider should have one, and they should immediately present it upon request. A portfolio includes his past works. Try to determine if what he is capable of doing will be in accordance with your expectations.

- Try to check out recommendations about the freelancer you're considering. If his regular clients are satisfied with his work, there should be some testimonials that are available.

- Choose a freelancer that is willing to bend for your schedule, not the other way around. The purpose of outsourcing a project is to keep a workable schedule, not to delay it. If a freelancer won't be able to work within the reasonable timeframe you give him, then he's not worth it no matter how good he is.

Some outsourcing sites provide some checks that will make it easy for you to verify the qualifications, or non-qualifications, of prospective people for your project.

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If you wish to use channels other than outsourcing sites, you can always request documents that will prove the identities and capabilities of your prospects. Doing so is your right as a consumer, so exercise it.

Step Four: Protect Yourself

Delegating your project to an outside service provider entails a lot of risks because once you have made such a designation, you won't have total control over the creation process. It is important, therefore, that steps be taken to protect the interests of your business against any eventuality.

The way you can do this is by engaging in a contract with the freelancer of your choice.

If you acquire a freelancer from most of the outsourcing websites specializing in such, every winning bid will be treated as a binding contract between you and the service provider. Additionally, you will also have access to arbitration proceedings in case of disagreements regarding how the project is carried out. This will assure you of an objective party who will mediate discussions on the non-observance of certain terms and conditions.

This safety check is not available in other venues, however. If you decide to hire a freelancer from sources other than outsourcing sites, then you'll be on your own.

This shouldn't be taken to mean that you should only consider outsourcing sites. I can tell you, based on experience, that the best freelancers are those you find in other places. Why? Because a freelancer stands to earn more if he doesn't acquire his clients from the aforementioned sites. Outsourcing websites earn their income similar to how a broker earns his income - through commissions for every successful deal. On average, outsourcing sites get 15% of the payment that should accrue for the freelancer.

What does this mean?

For starters, highly qualified freelancers would rather promote their services through the strength of the reputation they have built for themselves. They

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would rather do their own marketing instead of relying on clients provided by outsourcing sites. They stand to earn more, after all, since they won't have to pay the 15% fee.

Also, you might end up paying more. Bids, at least for those who will really put in some quality work, will be placed at high amounts to cover the site's applicable fees.

Choosing between outsourcing sites and dealing directly with the freelancer can be quite a dilemma. There are advantages and disadvantages for each.

A survival guide for online businessmen who wish to try www.rentacoder.com , www.elance.com , and www.scriptlance.com is included in this eBook. But for now, let's discuss how you can protect yourself if you decide to deal directly with the freelancer.

As we've mentioned earlier, a way to do this is by adding your signatures to a contract. Now, dealing with them through digital means would eliminate the possibility of actual signatures, unless of course the freelancer could send through fax or mail a signed copy, or scan the same and deliver it through email. But time and time again, the following have been accepted as an affirmation of one's intent to honor a digital contract:

- a name typed at the end of an email message;
- a digitized form of a handwritten signature;
- a unique password, code, or personal identification number; or
- a digital signature created through the use of encryption technology.

There are two kinds of contracts that are important in outsourcing. These are:

1. A work for hire contract
2. A non-disclosure agreement

On the next few pages, a standard template for each of these contracts will be provided for you. Print them and use them.

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TEMPLATE 1: WORK FOR HIRE CONTRACT

AN AGREEMENT

This agreement, executed by _____ whose contact details appear below and shall be referred to herein as the EMPLOYER for brevity, and _____ whose contact details also appear below and shall be referred to herein as the EMPLOYEE, hereby witnesseth that:

1. The Employee binds himself to perform work for the Employer on a project with the following specifications:

   (Enter the details of the project here. Include deadline for submission and all matters the freelancer should agree to.)

2. The Employer binds himself to pay the Employee for the work done, once it is satisfactorily delivered, in the total amount of $_____

3. Payment shall be made in three parts. 1/3 of the stipulated amount shall be paid to the Employee upon acceptance of the project. 1/3 shall be paid midway through the project. The remaining 1/3 shall be paid upon final and satisfactory delivery of the project. (Payment scheme can be different from this. It could be 50/50, or 100% upon final delivery. Simply adjust this provision correspondingly.)

4. The Employee binds himself to complete the work to the best of his abilities, to always strive for the highest possible quality with regards to every aspect of the project, and to deliver an original and unique product in compliance with the specifications of the project.

5. The Employee binds himself to transmit all rights to the product to the Employer upon delivery of the product. The Employee cannot retract this designation of rights. The transmittal of rights shall be final and irrevocable.

6. The Employee binds himself to assume full legal responsibilities as well as an obligation to indemnify the Employer in the event that what

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he has delivered would be found to be unoriginal, stolen, plagiarized or otherwise illegal.

7. The Employee binds himself to reimburse the Employer for what the latter has paid in the event that the project will not be completed because of a reason that is not attributable to the Employer.

8. The Employer and the Employee shall be granted the power to rescind this agreement in the event that the other party violates, wittingly or unwittingly, the terms of this document.

9. This agreement shall be deemed as completed upon satisfactory delivery by the Employee and upon full payment by the Employer.

In witness whereof, both parties give their assent to this agreement this _____ day of _____, 2005.

_____

EMPLOYER
(Contact details)

_____

EMPLOYEE
(Contact details)

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TEMPLATE 2: NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (c/o www.bitlaw.com)

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

This Agreement is entered into this __ day of _____, 200__ by and between _____ with offices at _____ (hereinafter "Recipient") and _____, with offices at _____ (hereinafter "Discloser").

WHEREAS Discloser possesses certain ideas and information relating to _____ that is confidential and proprietary to Discloser (hereinafter "Confidential Information"); and

WHEREAS the Recipient is willing to receive disclosure of the Confidential Information pursuant to the terms of this Agreement for the purpose of _____;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration for the mutual undertakings of the Discloser and the Recipient under this Agreement, the parties agree as follows:

1. Disclosure. Discloser agrees to disclose, and Receiver agrees to receive the Confidential Information.

2. Confidentiality.

2.1 No Use. Recipient agrees not to use the Confidential Information in any way, or to manufacture or test any product embodying Confidential Information, except for the purpose set forth above.

2.2 No Disclosure. Recipient agrees to use its best efforts to prevent and protect the Confidential Information, or any part thereof, from disclosure to any person other than Recipient's employees having a need for disclosure in connection with Recipient's authorized use of the Confidential Information.

2.3 Protection of Secrecy. Recipient agrees to take all steps reasonably necessary to protect the secrecy of the Confidential Information, and to prevent the Confidential Information from falling into the public domain or into the possession of unauthorized persons.

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3. Limits on Confidential Information. Confidential Information shall not be deemed proprietary and the Recipient shall have no obligation with respect to such information where the information:

(a) was known to Recipient prior to receiving any of the Confidential Information from Discloser;

(b) has become publicly known through no wrongful act of Recipient;

(c) was received by Recipient without breach of this Agreement from a third party without restriction as to the use and disclosure of the information;

(d) was independently developed by Recipient without use of the Confidential Information; or

(e) was ordered to be publicly released by the requirement of a government agency.

4. Ownership of Confidential Information. Recipient agrees that all Confidential Information shall remain the property of Discloser, and that Discloser may use such Confidential Information for any purpose without obligation to Recipient. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as granting or implying any transfer of rights to Recipient in the Confidential Information, or any patents or other intellectual property protecting or relating to the Confidential Information.

5. Term and Termination. The obligations of this Agreement shall be continuing until the Confidential Information disclosed to Recipient is no longer confidential.

6. Survival of Rights and Obligations. This Agreement shall be binding upon, inure to the benefit of, and be enforceable by (a) Discloser, its successors, and assigns; and (b) Recipient, its successors and assigns.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this agreement effective as of the date first written above.

DISCLOSER   RECIPIENT
(personal details and   (personal details
contact information)   and contact information)

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Step Five: Start Small

The project you will outsource will depend on the needs of your business. But when dealing with a freelancer for the first time, try to come up with a smaller breakdown of the work initially. This will help minimize your losses in the event that the freelancer turns out to be a dud.

If you give the freelancer a large project, and you bind yourself to a contract with him, you will be obliged to pay for the work done, or at the very least, a percentage of the total sum, even if the completed work is of inferior quality.

It is therefore important that you offer a smaller bulk of the work, at least initially. Only when the freelancer proves himself, as a reliable producer should you delegate larger orders. This is a way of protecting your financial investment.

***

Again, it is important to reiterate that freelancers can be hired from outsourcing exchange sites where you will have the luxury to choose from people who bid the fairest rates they can muster, or from other sources which don't have to go through a broker and will take the broker's fee out of the calculation for applicable rates.

Though the principles we have discussed above apply to both cases, bidding sites require additional considerations.

We will discuss these in the next chapter.

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Chapter Four

THE BIDDING SITES SURVIVAL GUIDE
**How To Get The Best Deal Out Of
Rentacoder, Elance, And Scriptlance**

As we have mentioned in previous chapters, there are websites on the World Wide Web that will allow people to bid on the projects you wish to delegate. The most popular of these bidding sites are

www.rentacoder.com

www.elance.com

www.scriptlance.com

If you have worked for, or with, the government or some repossessing institution, you are already familiar with how these bidding sites operate. It's also very similar to eBay. Basically, you just have to post your project and freelancers the world over will get to bid on it.

But instead of awarding your project to the lowest bidder, you have the option to choose among them, despite the amount of their bids. Naturally, you are expected to choose the most qualified bidder who is offering a very reasonable amount.

Bidding can be accommodated for a certain period of your choosing. You can also specify the completion time of your project, so you'll be assured, to a certain degree, that you won't miss any deadlines.

The main concern about these bidding sites is: how can you be sure that the bidders are qualified?

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Each bidding site has their own safety checks that the buyer can take advantage of. Let's take a look at them individually - we will discuss how you can get the best deal out of these outsourcing auctions.

4.1 The Rentacoder Survival Guide

Of all the auction sites dedicated to outsourcing, www.rentacoder.com is probably the most widely used. This site attracts thousand of freelancers from all around the world, and as is usually the case, the more participants there are, the more choices you have for that perfect freelancer to satisfy your requirements.

You will need to have an account with Rentacoder before you can use their facilities. Setting up an account is free, however, and it is not even complicated.

Below are the steps you will need to take to take advantage of Rentacoder's features.

Setting Up An Account

Point your browser to www.rentacoder.com .
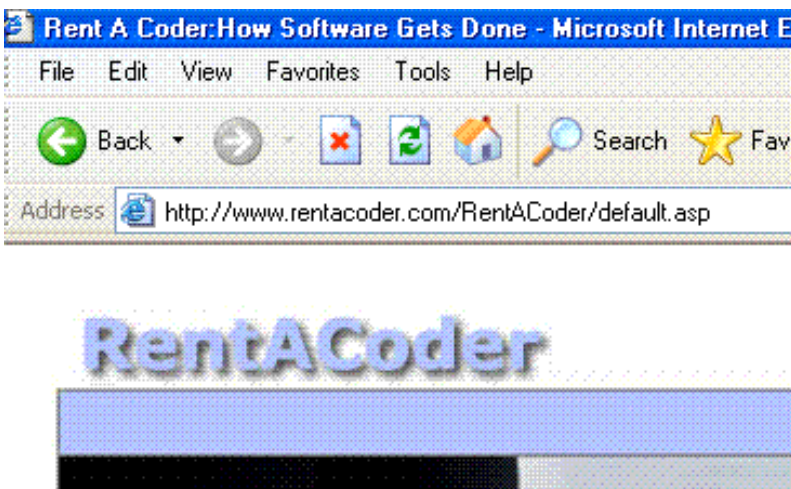
The website makes use of your PC's cookies and has certain issues about logging out. If you're using a computer other than your own, make sure that you turn off the cookies in your browsers.

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At the bottom part of the homepage, there is an option that requires you to log in. Click on this so that you'll be redirected to another page where you will have the option to create a new account.
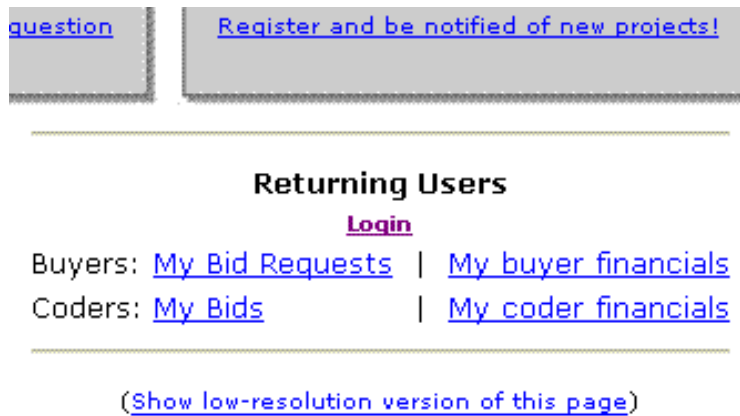
You will be prompted to enter certain details, like your email address, your choice of password, as well as the username you want to use. After verifying the account you created, you can log in by going back to the main page.

You will have to focus on the section for "Buyers," as can be seen in the illustration above.

To post a bid, click on "My Bid Requests" and you'll be taken to another screen.

Posting A Bid

Posting a bid at Rentacoder is easy and it's free. You are under no obligation to select from the bids you receive; however, a non-action on a project you offer will reflect on your Buyer Score later on. Not that this is a big deal, but if you're the type who wishes to maintain a clean record, then you should commit to choosing a bidder for the auction you post.

You should be at the "My Bid Requests" page by now. On the left side of the screen, you will notice a vertical menu bar. Click on "Request Bids."

Fill out the details of the project you wish to outsource. Select "Open Auction" when asked about the type of auction you want to pursue. This is because you don't know the freelancers yet.

Eventually, you'll get to build relationships with the freelancers you'll be able to work with, and you can try the other auction types. But for now, we'll stick with "Open Auction" to attract the attention of all the freelancers who would be interested in your project.

On the next page, you will be asked for a description of your project. Remember what we talked about regarding your specifications? Try to include everything here so that the freelancer will be well instructed about your expectations.

Additionally, there will be a security template provided, which aims to protect the integrity of the deliverables. Do not forget that you can edit this template. You can also add other stipulations which you feel are needed and that are fair.

Lastly, you will be asked to specify the platform where your project will be used. This is essential for ordering software, but with writing assignments, indicating any platform will suffice as they are usually delivered in .txt format which is readable in any operating system.

By clicking "Next," you'll be brought to another page where you can state the deadline for the completion of your project, as well as your budget for the project. If you have no idea about the price range, simply indicate "open for fair suggestions." Also, in this area, you will be able to specify the duration of the bidding process.

The next page will merely ask you to verify the details you have provided. After you have done this, you can go back to the main page of www.rentacoder.com and click on "My Buyer Financials." This will bring you to a control panel where you can monitor the bids that are made on your project. You will also be notified via email whenever a bid is placed.
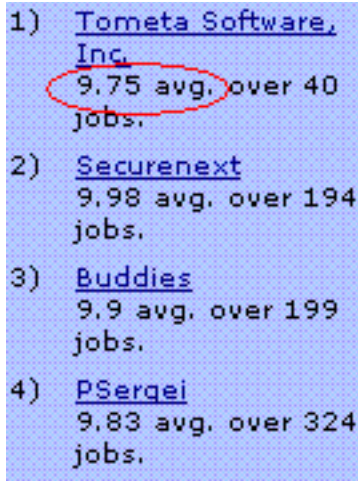
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Accepting A Bid From A Coder

Accepting a bid from the many, many bids that you're sure to garner is the easy part. Choosing the right freelancer, however, can be a challenging task.

Your control panel will give you access to the details of the bids that you have received. These will include the amount they are willing to work for, as well as their messages on how to complete your project. Occasionally, you will receive some questions about the specifics you have given.

Now comes the trickier part.

How will you know who is the most qualified for your project?

You will notice that each bidder's username is accompanied by a corresponding score. This reflects the satisfaction rating of buyers who have hired his services before. The higher the bidder's score is, the better his track record. Ideally, you want a bidder with a high score, just to be sure that your project is in good hands. But this isn't the only consideration. Neglecting those who have no applicable scores because they're new might make you miss out on some promising talent.

If you click on the bidder's username, you will be directed to a page where that bidder's resume and portfolio can be found. Additionally, the bidder's areas of expertise will be stated therein.

But that's not all. This page will also contain the bidder's detailed history with Rentacoder transactions, as well as testimonials and/or negative remarks from the people he has dealt with.

These things should be considered before you consider the price they bade on your project. The common mistake in auction sites like Rentacoder is that some people choose a low price and expect excellent products.

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Though there are times when your expectations will be more than met with a ridiculous bargain of a bid, this is more because of luck than anything else. Generally: You Get What You Pay For.

So price should be a secondary consideration to the credibility and reliability that a freelancer has proven in his past dealings. Taking your chances on a freelancer who is new to Rentacoder will require more due diligence on your part.

You can communicate with the bidders, of course, via Rentacoder's own private messaging system. Here you can ask them about the details of their plans, and they can ask you their questions about the projects. Keeping the communication lines open will ensure that your wishes will be met by the bidder you choose.

1/13/2005 7:00:50 PM	Judi Edgington (RAC)	Tampa, United States (see local date/time)	None	4	$177.00 View Reply View or Accept

Once you have chosen a bidder whom you feel is the most qualified for your project, simply click on "View or Accept" to engage the services of the freelancer.

Placing Escrow Payment

Once a bidder is chosen, Rentacoder will ask you to pay through your credit card, Paypal account, or mail check the amount that you and the said bidder have agreed upon. Rentacoder will then put this payment under escrow. This is to assure that payment is available for the freelancer once the project is completed.

If by some chance, the project is not completed, you can negotiate for a partial or full refund of what you have paid. Usually, a full refund is given, unless the winning bidder has delivered partial work and the rest was discontinued or there were faults that he was not responsible for. In which case, a proportionate amount of the funds under escrow will be paid to the freelancer and the rest will be refunded to you.

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Work Is Undertaken By The Freelancer

Once your payment has been placed under escrow, the freelancer will be instructed to start on your project. During this period, you are encouraged to communicate with the freelancer either by sending him a message through Rentacoder's built-in messaging system, or by emailing him directly. Communication is essential to ensuring that the project will proceed strictly according to your specifications and expectations.

It is highly recommended, however, especially when you're dealing with a freelancer for the very first time, that you use Rentacoder's messaging system. This will guarantee that all the correspondence between you and the freelancer will be archived for reference in the event that the said freelancer would renege on his obligations and you would demand a refund. The message history between you and the freelancer is the most solid proof that can be presented in arbitration proceedings in the case of unfortunate disagreements.

If the work entails an amount higher than $150, Rentacoder requires the freelancer to report the progress of the project to you on a weekly basis. You can ask for a more regular report, of course, and even if the project cost is less then $150, you can always require the freelancer to comply with your reporting schedule through the specifications you are allowed to give.

All you have to do is wait for the completion and delivery of the project, either in parts or in full.

Reviewing The Deliverables

Delivery will be made through Rentacoder's website. It will be stored in their servers for you to download. You will be notified through email when your order is delivered by the freelancer.

You will be given an ample amount of time to review the deliverables. If you are satisfied with them, and if they perfectly meet your expectations, then you can authorize the release of your payment held in escrow and the contract with the freelancer will be deemed as completed.

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If you are not satisfied with what was delivered because they did not meet your expectations, you can ask the freelancer to make some modifications, and in certain cases, actual revisions of the work.

Remember, however, that disputes may arise as a result of the latter, so it is important that you communicate all correspondences through Rentacoder's official channels.

Arbitration

There is always that risk of a disagreement between the employer and the freelancer. Usually, this has something to do with the freelancer's unacceptable non-compliance with some of the items in the specifications. To quickly resolve such disputes, Rentacoder has included an arbitration system that guarantees a fair mediation between the parties in conflict.

The basis of the mediation is the recorded correspondence between the employer and the freelancer that is hosted in Rentacoder's system. This is why it is very important that all liaisons with the freelancer are made using Rentacoder's built-in messaging system.

Final Steps

Once you're satisfied with what was delivered, you can authorize Rentacoder to release payment for the freelancer. You will thereafter be required to rate his performance, and he will be asked to rate your conduct as a buyer. As a matter of good will, if you're satisfied with the freelancer's work, do not give him a rating below a 9.

Upon submission of your rating, the deal shall be considered closed.

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4.2 The Elance Survival Guide
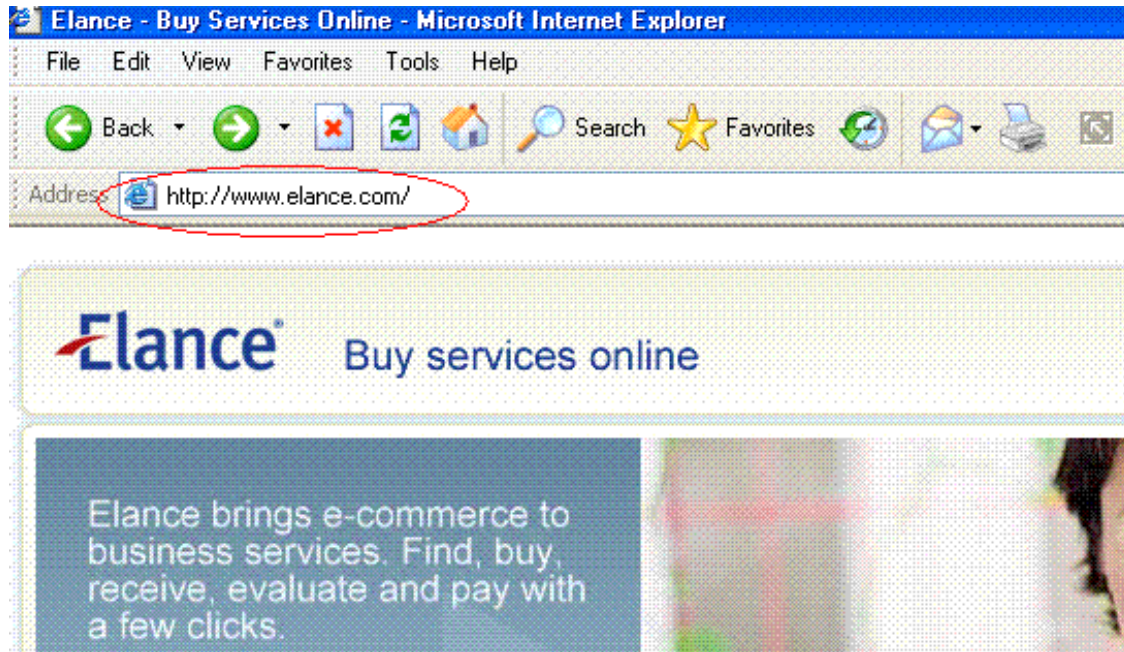
The outsourcing site www.elance.com works very similarly to Rentacoder. The most substantial difference, however, is the quality of freelancers that ply their trade here.

Whereas in Rentacoder, any person, from any part of the world, can join as a freelancer because of the free subscription, Elance verifies the commitment and professionalism of its freelancers by actually asking them to pay for their membership so that they may access certain features that will help guide prospective buyers.

As a person looking to outsource a project, Elance's setup can be viewed in two distinct ways:

A. Elance offers the best assurance that you will get the best freelancers, as their qualifications, portfolio, and scholastic history can be verified.

B. The competence and qualifications of the freelancers can be guaranteed, but at what price? They will be asked to pay for their membership to the site so that they are able to display the sellable

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qualities of their craft, but this expense on their part will be passed onto the bids they will make on your project. You must prepare yourself to experience some pretty high bids if you limit your project to verifiable freelancers.

Of course, you will have the option to keep your bid project open for freelancers with free accounts. Their history may not be verifiable, but you are sure to garner lower bids.

As your outsourcing experience grows, you will come to realize that verified accounts don't necessarily guarantee the highest quality of deliverables, and unverified accounts don't automatically mean poor work. There are occasional surprises of very low bids from novice freelancers producing premium work.

Creating an Elance account and placing a project for bidding is very much the same as with Rentacoder, so instead of discussing the specifics, we will discuss how Elance fares compared to other outsourcing exchange websites. Let's take a look at the pros and cons of Elance:

Pros:

- As we've mentioned above, Elance, in general, attracts more competent freelancers.

- You can choose to exclusively invite "Select" freelancers. Elance guarantees their reliability and professionalism. You will be charged for such an option.

- If you do not choose to hire Select freelancers, you won't be charged for your use of Elance's system.

Cons:

- You will get higher bids compared to Rentacoder sellers.

- You will be charged a flat fee of $25 if you choose to invite Select freelancers. This is relatively burdensome, compared to Rentacoder,

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which passes off a 15% fee on what is due for the freelancers instead of the buyers.

- You will need a credit card to be able to invite Select freelancers. You will have to deposit the $25 fee in advance.

- Elance only offers their arbitration system for buyers who choose to invite Select freelancers.

- Elance doesn't have the comprehensive buyer protection system found at Rentacoder.

If you are amenable to the foregoing, then Elance is worth the shot. Here are some things you have to keep in mind to make the most out of your Elance experience:

1. Give a clear definition of the parameters and the schedule of your project. Remember, this is what your bidders will use as a guide to come up with the amount they will offer. And if the service of a bidder is accepted, your specifications are what will guide him in completing the project.

2. Study the qualifications and the competence of a freelancer as much as you would a regular employee. The project you will assign involves financial investment as well, and it would be best to know beforehand that your money is being spent wisely and not carelessly.

3. Make sure that the expertise of the freelancer will fit the demands of the project. The more experience the freelancer has with projects similar to what you wish to designate, the better the chances are that he will meet your expectations.

4. Price shouldn't be your primary consideration. Often, you really get what you pay for.

5. Try to secure a sample before engaging the services of a freelancer. The sample can be something custom-made for your request, or something that the freelancer has done in the past.

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6. Be wary of awarding big projects to untested freelancers. As much as possible, start small. Once the freelancer proves himself to be a good catch, then, and only then, should you give him a larger bulk of work.

7. Before awarding the project, make sure that both of you agree that full rights to the deliverables shall belong to you and you alone. The worst thing that can happen is that you pay the freelancer for the work done and later on discover that you have to pay him royalties for the use of that work.

8. Negotiate for after-delivery support. This is essential for programming and other highly technical work that you have outsourced because you know little about the field.

9. Make sure that the payment scheme is clearly defined. Some freelancers demand a payment scheme beneficial for them and continually press you to pay them whenever they are in need. This can be avoided by agreeing on the payment scheduling before allowing the freelancer to begin working on the project.

10. Put everything in writing. Make things as formal and as clear as possible to avoid any confusion and abuse later on.

Though clearly lacking the thorough features of, arguably, its more famous counterpart, Rentacoder, Elance does have its own merits. The interface is much easier to use, something that can't be said about Rentacoder's (here's an interesting anecdote: around 15% of the accounts at Rentacoder are quite dormant because the control menu isn't really user-friendly and people easily get confused about how to use the system).

Additionally, Elance is a better choice for smaller projects, for as long as you don't use their Select Marketplace (where you will be charged $25.) It won't cost you a cent to post a project and you will garner more bids. In Rentacoder, because of the rather steep 15% fee, freelancers usually shy away from projects below $30. You will still get some bids, yes, but not enough of them to really consider a fair number of options.

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4.3 The Scriptlance Survival Guide
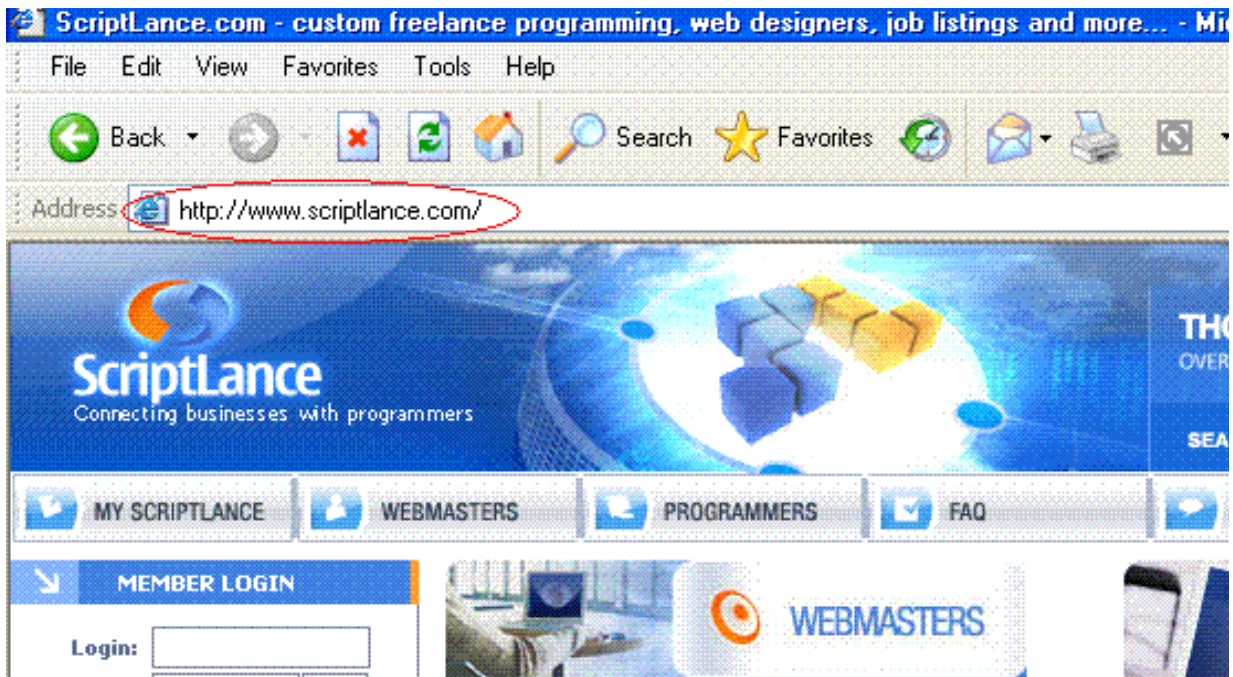
Scriptlance is an outsourcing exchange website that aims to offer the best things that Rentacoder and Elance have to offer. Though not as comprehensive as Rentacoder, Scriptlance possesses a more convenient processing system. Though its interface is not as intuitive as Elance's, Scriptlance uses a menu that is straightforward and easily navigable.

Let's take a closer look at what makes Scriptlance the unique option that it is.

Pros:

- Transactions are easy to process. Once you have created an account, you just have to deposit at least $5 into your account. You will have to make sure that your account never reaches zero, however.

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- You will be charged a flat rate of $5 for each completed project, regardless of the amount involved for the latter. This is the cheapest among the three main bidding sites if we don't count Elance's free marketplace for non-Select freelancers.

- Scriptlance has its own economy system. You can be a buyer and a seller at the same time, using the same account. And since you'll be using the same fund source, there is no need to keep transferring your funds from one place to another.

- Payment transactions from your account to the freelancer will be processed free of charge.

Cons:

- There are no buyer protection measures.

- Does not attract as many freelancers as the other two bidding sites

- If your account balance reaches zero, your account will be frozen.

The control panel will require some time getting used to, but once you master the features present, you'll be able to easily post projects left and right. The interface, though not as user-friendly as Elance's, is not as confusingly comprehensive as Rentacoder's, so it is a refreshing balance between its two counterparts.

Once your project is posted and bids are garnered, you can check the profile of your bidders to view their online portfolio. There is no ranking system here. Rather, Scriptlance uses a message board to check on the recommendations of satisfied users.

The same message board is also utilized to communicate with the freelancers through private messaging. This is quite useless, as your correspondence through the internal messaging system will not help in any potential dispute as Scriptlance does not have any buyer protection measures in place.

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In A Nutshell…

The purpose of outsourcing and looking for freelancers from the bidding sites we have discussed above can be summarized into the following points:

- Be able to do more.
- Be able to save time.
- Be able to save money.

In dealing with freelancers from any of the aforementioned websites, please keep these points in mind. Use them as a checklist to determine if a deal is favorable for you and your business.

For example, you post a project and you receive some bids. You study the credentials and portfolios of the bidders, hoping to find a match with what you need.

In the process, you have to ask yourself the following questions based on the points we have enumerated:

- Will hiring this freelancer boost the output of my business?
- Will hiring this freelancer give me more time to attend to the other demands of my business and my life?
- Will I save more money compared to other options?

If the questions are answered positively, then you can safely say that you have a good deal. All you will have to do is seal the deal and wait for the rewards that your business will reap as a result.

It is quite clear from our discussion in this chapter that Rentacoder is the best choice for you. This view is shared by countless Internet marketers. Rentacoder may have its flaws, but with a buyer protection system and an arbitration resort, this is an option that is undeniably the friendliest for your enterprise.

But since Rentacoder is the acknowledged leader in outsourcing exchange, a lot of freelancers flock to its pages looking for work. With a higher number comes a higher risk. 10% of 100 is different from 10% of 1,000, after all. There will be a corresponding increase of under-qualified freelancers who

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will bid for your projects. This makes it doubly essential for you to exhaust utmost diligence in choosing the most qualified person for the job.

With all that we have discussed in this eBook, such a task should come easy. Just always remember to protect yourself. Your business' interests should never be compromised. The purpose of outsourcing is to make your business setup more efficient and not the other way around.

[Anna Marie Stewart's Forget The Hype](#) is a good supplemental resource that will teach you how to see through the hyperboles of online deals and determine the many aspects of Internet marketing. I highly recommend it.

Also, Simon [Hodgkinson's One Month Marketer](#) is an excellent crash course about the industry. The knowledge you will gain from this eBook will make you foolproof against unscrupulous parties.

Lastly, [Jimmy D. Brown's Internet Business Basics](#) will round up your needed lessons regarding online commerce. It is a very fun read as well. Jimmy Brown is one witty fellow!

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Conclusion

TIME IS TICKING…

Outsourcing In Retrospect

So, should you or should you not outsource some of the tasks of your business?

This is a question that only you can answer, my friend, as not all businesses are built alike. If you wish to have a more hands-on approach for your enterprise, then outsourcing may not be for you. You might just end up redoing the work that you paid for, which we really can't consider as a step in the right direction.

But if you want to accomplish more with the time given, and in effect, increase your profit correspondingly, then you should seriously consider delegating some tasks to outside service providers. Two heads are always better than one, as they say, and four hands are always better than two.

Just make sure that those heads and hands are perfectly qualified for the job, lest they pull you down to their level of mediocrity.

A good friend of mine, Paul Kleinmeulman, who has made a very good name for himself in the field of private rights publishing and marketing, shared some interesting thoughts about outsourcing.

Paul, you see, is a man of adventure. He loves experiencing new things and discovering the finer aspects of life. Earlier in his online career, Paul found it difficult to reserve some time for the things he would rather do. Internet marketing can be a very demanding endeavor, and if you want to make the most from it, you will have to invest a lot of your time.

A lot!

Paul is also a winner. He doesn't give up easily, if at all. He always believed that his online business could accomplish more, regardless of the very limited time that is given.

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Today, Paul operates one of the biggest private label rights marketing firms in the industry. His secret?

"Outsourcing helped my business grow ten fold," he said. "It's definitely worth every penny."

Paul knows what he's talking about. He's been churning out information products left and right, on a very regular basis, which is what is expected from the stature of his business. Paul's Private Rights, after all, is one of the industry leaders in information products distribution with accompanying private label rights.

Paul is one of the power buyers at Rentacoder. He's had a lot of experiences with freelancers. He's also had his shares of ups and downs with freelancing. But at the end of the day, the risks are worth taking.

"I wouldn't have a business or a life if I didn't outsource," Paul proclaims.

Indeed, outsourcing has changed the way some businesses are run. Some of us simply don't have the time to do everything that we want to do, and often, we don't even have the time to do everything we have to do.

Outsourcing fixes this and provides for us the time we need to attend to the other demands of our business and our lives, and to attend to the things we want to explore. Who knows - those new things may mean more income for us, right? And we wouldn't have discovered them were it not for the time that outsourcing afforded us.

There are some online businessmen who are beaming with ideas, but sadly, no human being is blessed with everything. He may have a great concept that would make online commerce doubly efficient, but he lacks the programming skills to bring such a concept into reality. Or he may have profound expertise in a certain field, but English is not his primary language and he is incapable of writing an eBook about the information he wishes to share.

Outsourcing is the solution to this as well. Someone else is always better at certain things, so why not hire that person to do the job for us?

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Immediately, we see that outsourcing provides us with a boost that can only mean great things for our business:

- the luxury of time and
- the needed skills to effectively complete a certain task.

Are there alternatives to outsourcing?

Aside from doing the tasks yourself, a couple of alternatives come to mind.

First are ready-made products with private label rights, much like what my good friend Paul is marketing. If you wish to outsource the creation of information products, perhaps it would be more prudent to first check out the available products online which come with their own private label rights. Private label rights allow you to alter, change, and add to these products. You can even place your name as the author in certain instances. If an information product with private label rights is offered, and you feel that it is perfect for your needs, then grab it as soon as you can. This would be a more affordable way of getting the job done.

You could check out the [Best Seller Ebook](), which is a collection of hot-selling properties, most of them with their own private label rights. I have purchased these items as well as their rights for you, and I believe they would benefit you as well. The possibilities are literally endless, as you would have almost $8,000 worth of information products at your disposal!

Another alternative to outsourcing are total solutions packages. These are membership sites that, basically, try to give you everything that your business would ever need. These can range from web hosting, autoresponder service subscription, content, information products to sell, and the like. Almost every aspect of a successful online business is covered, and if you manage to find a total solutions package perfect for your needs, it is possible that you'd have little need for outsourcing.

Humility aside, one of the most praised total solutions package is [TurboMembership.com](). Truly, it is much like a business-in-a-box. Just open the box and you'll get everything that you could possibly need, and want, for a smooth sailing, high-earning Internet enterprise. Additionally, TurboMembership.com is totally committed to providing new, never-before-

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published information products each and every month. And yes, private label rights are included.

That's not all. If you're considering hiring a telecommuter to serve as your online assistant, perhaps this will make you rethink your position. TurboMembership.com comes with award-winning digital assistant programs that make online commercial transactions and account management very easy. At the heart of this is the [JVManager](#) , which is included in the said membership, or can be purchased separately. The JVManager is like having your own digital secretary, and more!

In Internet marketing, there is always more than one way to skin a cat. If other methods would work better for your business, then by all means, pursue them instead.

But if you feel that outsourcing is the best course to take for your enterprise, you have been informed of everything that you need to know about this field through the pages that you have read.

Like a sorcerer in days of yore, you could expertly conjure up some enchantments in your cauldron of outsourcing wisdom and weave for your business a delightful and rewarding world of new promises of success.

Just like that.

Just like magic.

Yours truly,

John Delavera & {--your-full-name--}

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