

The Outsourcing Checklist

What Can a Support Team Do For You?

Ready to outsource but not quite sure where to begin? This checklist isn't comprehensive, as there are many other things you can outsource, but it'll give you ideas and help you think of what else you can have some else help you with.

Remember that outsourcing doesn't have to be an ongoing monthly commitment when you're getting started – you can outsource just one task or a couple of tasks. You may contract with a Virtual Assistant to handle regular tasks, a website or graphics designer every now and then, a weekly housecleaning service, and a bi-weekly grocery delivery service.

You can outsource work projects as well as home responsibilities. And though I do have childcare listed, obviously I don't recommend completely outsourcing that! One of the best things about working at home is being able to spend more quality time with children, but there may be times you need focused work time and bringing in a mother's helper or sitter can be a lifesaver.

Anything that doesn't require YOU can be outsourced!

General Business Management

- ✓ Answer and return phone calls
- ✓ Check your efax faxes
- ✓ Answer email
- ✓ Setup email filters to boost productivity
- ✓ Setup email templates
- ✓ Setup your email signatures
- ✓ Manage email autoresponses and forwarders
- ✓ Manage your schedule/calendar
- ✓ Schedule meetings
- ✓ Remind you of appointments
- ✓ Word processing
- ✓ Convert files to PDF (PDF995 or Open Office)
- ✓ Contact management
- ✓ Create manuals/checklists/systems
- ✓ Bookkeeping and accounting
- ✓ Invoicing tasks
- ✓ Guide you through computer tasks
- ✓ Manage travel arrangements
- ✓ Organize business contacts
- ✓ Research & contact potential joint venture partners
- ✓ Follow up with joint venture opportunities
- ✓ Coordinate other assistants/outsourcer (main business manager)
- ✓ Post jobs on Elance, Guru, Rent-a-Coder

Desktop Publishing

- ✓ Create business cards
- ✓ Create brochures
- ✓ Create mailing labels
- ✓ Upload your designs to the printer (VistaPrint, Overnight Prints, etc)

General Services for Product/Service Sellers

- ✓ Survey your customers
- ✓ Research new product/services
- ✓ Competitor Research

Virtual or Information Products

- ✓ Write or create your product (ghostwriting)
- ✓ Proofread/edit your products
- ✓ Transcribe MP3 calls into PDF format
- ✓ Setup order fulfillment (Vervante, Disk.com)
- ✓ Design your virtual product image
- ✓ Create powerpoint slides/presentations

Physical Products

- ✓ Edit and optimize your product photos
- ✓ Pack and ship orders
- ✓ Product production (whole product or just pieces for you to assemble)

Services

- ✓ Handle customer quotes (from your pricing worksheet)
- ✓ Follow up with customers

Membership Clubs

- ✓ Setup membership site (WishList, AMember, Digital Access Pass)
- ✓ Manage forum/message boards
- ✓ Post new content
- ✓ Send out reminders/updates
- ✓ Handle customer service
- ✓ Send member gifts
- ✓ Contact potential speakers/contributors
- ✓ Coordinate new monthly info/teleclasses

Customer Service

- ✓ Return customer service phone calls/email
- ✓ Enforce your policies (when they handle phone/email)
- ✓ Install support/help desk and manage
- ✓ Survey customers (SurveyMonkey)
- ✓ Send customer thank you notes (Send Out Cards)
- ✓ Contact past customers with sales or special emails
- ✓ Manage customer database

Newsletter/Ezine/Autoresponders

- ✓ Setup a newsletter/ezine (AWeber, Constant Contact)
- ✓ Create a professional template for your newsletter/ezine
- ✓ Send out your newsletter/ezine
- ✓ Write autoresponder messages
- ✓ Setup autoresponder messages
- ✓ List your newsletter/ezine in directories
- ✓ Create print version to mail out

Social Networking

- ✓ Post your promotional tweets/Facebook status/etc
- ✓ Schedule Tweets (Social Oomph or HootSuite)
- ✓ Setup and manage a Facebook Fan Page
- ✓ Setup and manage your blog
- ✓ Setup and manage a Squidoo lens
- ✓ Setup and manage online bookmarking (StumbleUpon)

Online Advertising

- ✓ Help you track sales conversions (install Google Analytics or similar)
- ✓ Research websites that might be a good fit for promotions

Article Marketing

- ✓ Ghostwrite articles
- ✓ Submit your articles to online directories
- ✓ Submit your articles to targeted blogs/sites

Podcast Management

- ✓ Setup your podcast tech details
- ✓ Edit your podcast to add music/canned intro
- ✓ Upload your podcast to your site/podcast site
- ✓ Find guests to speak/interview
- ✓ Submit your podcast to podcast directories

Online Sales

- ✓ Install your shopping cart
- ✓ Customize your shopping cart
- ✓ Stock new products
- ✓ Edit products as needed
- ✓ Setup sales/promotions/coupon codes
- ✓ Edit your photos to optimize them
- ✓ Analyze sales data to determine which promos are working

Affiliate Program

- ✓ Setup your affiliate program
- ✓ Create ad copy, banners, etc for affiliates
- ✓ Recruit affiliates

Website/Blog Management

- ✓ Create your website
- ✓ Install your blog
- ✓ Add new content to your blog/site
- ✓ Manage comments and trackbacks on your blog
- ✓ Install plugins for your blog (Akismet, etc)
- ✓ Help you manage search engine optimization
- ✓ Build links to your site/blog
- ✓ Technical programming
- ✓ Research & contact possible guest bloggers
- ✓ Find content for your blog/site (PLR, Ezine Articles, etc)
- ✓ Research for topics you want to write about
- ✓ Add and manage AdSense spots

Media/Press

- ✓ Create press releases
- ✓ Submit press releases
- ✓ Develop a list of targeted media for your business
- ✓ Create a press room for your website
- ✓ Keep press room updated
- ✓ Research media opportunities
- ✓ Setup Google Alert for your name/business to track media

Around the House

- ✓ Daily/Weekly Cleaning
- ✓ Spring Cleaning
- ✓ Cooking (spouse or older kids, take out, once a month or freezer cooking)
- ✓ Grocery shopping
- ✓ Pet care
- ✓ Childcare
- ✓ Homework/homeschooling help (tutor, video lessons, coop/group lessons, etc)
- ✓ Mail management
- ✓ Bill paying (setup in bank's auto pay)
- ✓ Personal Taxes
- ✓ Sending out monthly cards (birthdays, anniversaries, etc – Send Out Cards)

There are many more tasks you can outsource. Just keep outsourcing on your mind as you go about your day and think about what you're doing that could be done by someone else – either another family member, or a hired helper. Anything that frees up your time and allows you to focus on more financially productive tasks is a good investment!

Now, go brainstorm what you can outsource!

Michelle Shaeffer

<http://www.michelleshaeffer.com>