

Grow Your Business AND Your Freedom

How Outsourcing Can Rescue You from Overload



This Free Mini-Report Presented Courtesy of Creating Virtual Freedom

Please Visit www.creatingvirtualfreedom.com

For All Your Virtual Assistance Needs

Grow Your Business AND Your Freedom: How Outsourcing Can Rescue You from Overload

- ✓ **Where Will You Be in 6 Months?**
- ✓ **What is Outsourcing?**
- ✓ **Five Benefits of Outsourcing**
- ✓ **Getting Your Business Up & Running with Outsourcing**
- ✓ **Getting Traffic with Outsourcing**
- ✓ **What's Outsourcing Going to Cost Me?**
- ✓ **Can I Afford to Outsource?**
- ✓ **What is a VA and Why Do I Need One?**
- ✓ **Paying Your Assistants**
- ✓ **Finding Good Virtual Assistants**
- ✓ **Don't Outsource Just to Outsource**
- ✓ **Outsourcing Review**

DISCLAIMER: All information is intended for your general knowledge only and is not a substitute for a professional's advice. Use of the tips regarding outsourcing to build your business is at your own risk. We do not suggest or guarantee any income will be made from your own business from what you read in this course. Whether or not you make any income will depend on your own experience, time put in on your business and the amount of effort you put forth to building your own business. We make no warranty, express or implied, regarding your individual results.

By downloading/viewing/reading this ecourse you agree to the terms outlined here. These materials are provided "as is" and without warranty, express or implied, including without limitation the implied warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and non-infringement. In the writing of this ecourse I've made every attempt to verify all content, however I do not assume liability for any errors, inaccuracies, or omissions. I have no responsibility or liability for the content or functionality of the websites to which this ecourse links. You hereby acknowledge that your use of this information is at your own risk and Michelle Shaeffer and Creating Virtual Freedom shall not be liable for any special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages, including lost revenues or profits that may result from the use of these materials or information. All content is for informational and educational purposes only and I am not your lawyer, tax attorney, or other licensed professional. Nothing in this ecourse is intended as legal, financial, or professional advice. Please be aware of the laws that govern business in your locality, county, state, and country.

Where Will You Be in 6 Months?

Imagine for a moment what your business could look like six months down the road from today. It's very possible you'll be faced with one of these two scenarios.

Scenario #1

You've carefully planned your time, your marketing and your business, and suddenly things are taking off. Your inbox is filled with requests for proposals, questions from current clients, and follow up comments from previous customers. No sooner do you finish the work for one client, you barely have time to take a breath before the next one wants all your attention.

Basically, you're spending all your time maintaining your business, and have none left over to build your business. Your well of creativity is running dry and the work at home business you dreamed about has become a dreary chore. You might even find yourself missing your kids' soccer practices and ballet rehearsals to keep up. Worst of all, your income doesn't reflect the great effort you put into your business.

Scenario #2

You're not much ahead of where you are right now. You have plans for an exciting website to take your business online, but you're still trying to figure out how the site builder works. Marketing? You have no idea where to start. Feeling overwhelmed by everything you have to learn, you feel frozen and are going nowhere fast.

Not that you haven't invested a lot of time into your business. You might be working at it 12 hours a day, ignoring your family and the housework, telling yourself it will all be worth it when you're finally done. Trouble is, it doesn't look like you will EVER have everything done.

Grow Your Business AND Your Freedom: How Outsourcing Can Rescue You from Overload

A Simple Solution for Both Scenarios – Outsourcing

Both of these scenarios are realistic possibilities for any new business owner, and the solution is the same for both: outsourcing business tasks to qualified service providers.

Many business owners are reluctant to outsource because they believe they can't afford to pay anyone. But outsourcing gives you more time to create revenue, so you can pay your contractors, and create an income for yourself, too.

As you read through this mini-report you'll find the basics of what outsourcing is and how it works.

What is Outsourcing?

Outsourcing is the act of contracting out business tasks to someone else for completion. Outsourcing is a way for business owners, like you, to:

- Get more done in your business.
- Save time and money.
- And more...

There's a common misconception about outsourcing that needs to be cleared up while we're on the subject. Many think that outsourcing involves sending work to people in other countries who work for pennies and perform the work below standard. That's not what we're talking about here. There are ways to outsource work to those who are professionals in their respective fields and will work to give you above par results – wherever they live.

There are a variety of tasks that you can outsource in your online business and we're going to discuss those later in the course, but for now start thinking about everything you do in your business. Do you handle it all yourself? If so, you're working yourself way too hard. Or as Rich Schefren says "You're working for a lunatic".

Stop spinning your wheels and stop living for your business. If you're feeling overworked and underpaid, then you need to sit down with your boss (yourself) and give yourself a good talking to.

Believe it or not, those who do every single thing in their business are actually stalling their business from growth. It's time to create a lucrative business without working yourself so hard.

Five Benefits of Outsourcing

Here are five of the many benefits of outsourcing in your business:

- You'll get more accomplished.
- You can save time.
- Something we all want -- save money.
- You'll be able to focus on your strengths as a business owner.
- And, most importantly, you'll grow your business.

Now, let's look at each of these benefits a bit more in depth.

Get More Done

First (this one is pretty obvious) by outsourcing you will get more done in your business. Let's face it there are only 24 hours in a day, but when you enlist the help of others you can actually add hours to your day. Yes, we've now figured out how to add more time to your day. (shhh... don't tell your competition!)

Save Time

That brings me to the next benefit of outsourcing. You can save time by outsourcing in your business. You'll not only save time just by getting more done with the help of assistants, but also because you aren't wasting your valuable time learning how to tackle tasks that you don't have to do.

Think about that for a minute, is there something you need to do in your business but you have to take the time to learn how to do it before you can implement it? Instead of spending hours learning something you may only use once or twice in your business, let someone else do it that already knows how.

Grow Your Business AND Your Freedom: How Outsourcing Can Rescue You from Overload

Save Money

Now the next benefit is saving money. Now, you might be wondering how paying someone to do something for you equates to saving money, but trust me it does. In the long run, your time is valuable. Let's say you value your time at \$50 an hour and it will take you 2 hours to complete a task, but you could easily hire someone for \$20 an hour to do the same task in half the time, you've just saved yourself \$30.

Another way that you can save money when outsourcing is by buying less software. For instance, if you outsource your graphics, you no longer need to purchase a high-end graphics program. Outsource your book-keeping and suddenly you don't need to buy Quickbooks or TurboTax.

Stay Focused

The fourth benefit we are going to discuss is focus. By outsourcing tasks in your business, you will be able to then focus on the activities you are best at. Is there one aspect of your business that you excel at? Focus your efforts where they are most beneficial to your business and get help with the other areas.

Grow Your Business

Our final benefit is directly involved in the growth and profitability of your business. If there is an area of your business that you lack strength in or don't enjoy doing you tend to put it off, even if you know it needs to be done. Instead, hire someone who specializes in that area and let their light shine. This will bring more to the table when it comes to your business that might not have been there before they joined your team.

How Does Outsourcing Work?

If you're not sure if outsourcing is right for you, begin by outsourcing one specific task. What is the one item on your to do list that isn't getting done? That might be a good job to outsource to someone else, so you can get back on track.

Once you have decided which task you would like to delegate to someone else, find someone who specializes in the job you need done. You may want to ask other business owners if they can recommend anyone. It's also a good idea to check references, and ask for samples of their previous work.

You can continue by outsourcing just one project at a time. Or you may find that you'd like to outsource on a regular basis and a "virtual assistant" arrangement would work great for you.

Once you learn to outsource some of your business tasks, you'll discover that your business grows faster, makes more money, and leaves you with plenty of time to take the kids to the playground too.

Getting Your Business Up & Running with Outsourcing

One of the most common outsourcing questions asked by those interested in it is “What can I outsource?”

As an online business owner there are a multitude of tasks that can be outsourced and each business is different. Today let’s talk about tasks that get and keep your business “Up & Running” that can easily be outsourced to an assistant.

Here are just a few:

- Website Design & Maintenance
- Graphic Design
- Customer Service
- Content Creation
- Blog Installation
- Newsletter Creation
- Shopping Cart Installation & Set Up

These are only a few of the activities that can be outsourced to someone else so that you can concentrate on other areas of your business. In order to determine which things you might be able to outsource to keep your business running smooth, make a list of the tasks that you do every day that eat up your time.

One of the most popular tasks to outsource is customer service. It can be a very liberating feeling to be able to get away from your business and know that everything is running smoothly. After all, you started your business to live a certain lifestyle, not to feel trapped to your PC every second of every day. So, make that happen.

If you’re just beginning a project make a list of all the jobs that will need to be done in order to launch it and choose from them which things you will choose to do and which you will outsource to someone else.

Outsource Your Traffic Generation

The following are some tasks that are typically outsourced by business owners in order to increase traffic to their websites.

- ✓ Article Writing & Submission
- ✓ Forum & Social Networking Site Posting
- ✓ SEO (Search Engine Optimization)
- ✓ Press Releases Writing & Submission
- ✓ Setting Up a PPC (pay per click) Campaign

All of the above tasks help to generate traffic to your websites. Just because they are traffic getters doesn't mean you have to do them, however. There are contractors who specialize in the tasks above because they enjoy doing them and understand how to make them effective.

Let's take SEO for example. This particular task involves having a lot of knowledge about search engines and how they work. It's a constantly changing field. Because of this, you probably don't have the time to spend studying the latest information, but that doesn't mean that no one else does. There are service providers who make it their business to do just that. So, delegate tasks like this to them and save yourself a lot of time, sweat and heartache.

What methods do you use to generate traffic to your website? Could you save time by outsourcing some of the tasks to someone who does it on a daily basis in order to get the most from your efforts?

What's Outsourcing Going to Cost Me?

When it comes to outsourcing, probably the most asked question is “How much is it going to cost?” While it's impossible to give you an exact amount that getting help in your business will cost, it is possible to give you an idea.

First, know that every single business is different when it comes to the costs associated with outsourcing. Due to the fact that not every business owner will use the same services, need the same amount of help or require the same tasks -- there is no set price for outsourcing.

There are however, generally two types of costs involved with outsourcing and depending on the type of work completed and the level of expertise of your contractors, you may find yourself paying one or maybe even both of the following ways.

Hourly – Many independent contractors and virtual assistants charge an hourly rate for their services.

Set Fee – Normally when you get into things like web design, graphic work, and the more specialized services, many contractors will bill you a set fee for work performed.

As for an actual amount per hour, this too will vary with experience and skill set, but to give you a ballpark idea, you can find virtual assistants who charge from \$20 per hour all the way up to \$85 an hour.

A third type of fee is percentage-based. This can usually be negotiated once you've worked closely with your contractors for a period of time and trust them. Also, you've got to have a successful established business or a proven track record in order to attract a contractor to this type of arrangement.

Can I Afford to Outsource?

If I had a dollar for every time I heard, “But I can’t afford to outsource.” I’d be rich.

My reply to this question is always: “Yes, you can. What you can’t afford to do is NOT outsource or to outsource ineffectively.”

Even if you start out small there are ways you can start to relieve the overload you are feeling from doing everything in your business yourself. There is no magic amount of money or number of tasks or projects one must outsource in order to feel some relief. Even if you only outsource the writing of one article or blog post each month, you’re freeing up your own time.

You have to figure out what takes up the most of your time that is not productive, pass it on to someone else and then focus on tasks that will make you money.

Some people will tell you to outsource those things you hate doing in your business. I agree with this to some extent, but not entirely and we’ll talk about that later in this course. But what I do agree with is that if you are doing something that needs to be done in order for your business to grow and it’s taking you forever to do it, when it would take someone else half the time, then yes, absolutely outsource it.

What is a VA and Why Do I Need One?

As a busy mom, you know there are going to be times when you simply won't be able to work. How will you keep your business running smoothly when your kids are sick, or when you take a family vacation? Do you ever wish you could bounce new ideas off someone who understands your business as well as you do... or ask for suggestions when you get stuck in a rut?

You might want to consider working with a Virtual Assistant (VA). A VA who is familiar with your business can keep things running smoothly while you're gone, even if it's only to respond to your emails and let people know your business hasn't gone anywhere.

When you need someone to talk to, a VA can lend an experienced ear. She could be a great sounding board for new ideas and can help you come up with more efficient ways to work.

What is a Virtual Assistant Anyway?

A VA is a service professional you can contract to help you with your business. Some VAs specialize in helping small business owners with general administrative tasks. Others specialize in things like web design, graphic design, ghostwriting, or sending out newsletters. Whatever it is you need done, chances are there is a VA who specializes in that area.

Usually, VAs are trained professionals who have experience in the business world. They are also virtual business owners, so they understand how online businesses work. When you contract a VA, she partners with you to help you build your business. She's usually very motivated to help you succeed, because your success means she is successful too.

Grow Your Business AND Your Freedom: How Outsourcing Can Rescue You from Overload

Most VAs are willing to take on large or small jobs, so even if you only need an hour of help one month, a VA can help you. If you need help on a regular basis, many VAs offer retainer packages to help you keep costs down.

How to Find the Perfect Virtual Assistant for Your Business

If you think you're ready to work with a Virtual Assistant, you can begin your search by asking other online business owners if they can recommend someone. It's nice to find someone who has been referred by someone you trust.

Your online social networks are a good place to find a VA, too. Are any of your Facebook friends or Twitter followers VAs? Try to get to know them, and see if what they do could be a good fit for you.

Another place to find a Virtual Assistant is through a VA Association. Many associations will list VAs and their services, so you can search through their directory and find one that sounds like a good fit for what you need.

When you do find someone that can do the work you need, don't be afraid to ask for references or testimonials about their work. It's important to know you can trust your VA, and that she can do what she says she can. Better to take the time to find out before she starts work, than deal with the headache of learning she can't do the work you assigned her.

Also, be prepared to spend time explaining to your new VA what you want done. Once she understands what you need and how you want it done, you can probably back away and let her handle it with very little guidance from you.

When you decide to partner with a Virtual Assistant, you won't feel so tied down to your home business, and you finally can become the mother and successful business owner you wanted to be.

Paying Your Assistants

Earlier we discussed how your assistants may charge you when you outsource tasks to them. Some choose hourly while others charge a set fee for their services. No matter which way is used, there is still the question of how you actually get the money to them.

Since most of the help you will receive in your business will be conducted via the Internet, the question of how you'll pay for the services is a frequent one. There are a few ways that contractors may require payment from their clients. Here are the most requested ones:

- ✓ PayPal
- ✓ Check or Money Order
- ✓ Credit Card

The majority of assistants with online businesses conduct their billing via the help of PayPal and you'll see that sending payment is as easy as clicking a button in your own PayPal account. They will invoice you via their account and you'll simply click the "Pay" button next to their invoice.

Paypal is usually the preferred method, especially if you hire contractors who live outside your own country.

That's it that's all there is to it. Now, that was easy wasn't it?

Finding Good Virtual Assistants

After the question about being able to afford outsourcing the next most common question about outsourcing is probably “Where can I find someone who is qualified to help me?”

Here are a few places to look for help:

Elance.com, Rentacoder.com, Guru.com – These are sites where you can have freelancers bid on work that you need done.

Google – You can easily search for someone to help you with a specific task or you can even search the words “virtual assistant”. This however is not always the best method.

Recommendations – Ask mentors, partners, and others in your line of work who they recommend.

Word of Mouth – As you’re talking with other like-minded business owners, take note when they talk about service providers they’ve used in their own business. If someone has had a bad experience with a company, it’s almost certain you’re going to hear about it and you can make a mental note to not contact them.

Websites & Freelance Directories – There are several websites online that list service providers via directories or forums. Take the time to search places like Shelancers.com to find the perfect person for the jobs that you need done.

Of course, we think Creating Virtual Freedom is a great place to find a reliable, competent virtual assistant. ☺ www.creatingvirtualfreedom.com

Don't Outsource Just to Outsource

Remember a few days ago when I told you that I didn't completely agree with those who say that you should outsource everything that you hate doing? Well today we're going to talk about why that is. We'll also cover the cases when you shouldn't outsource.

Yes, I know that sounds a bit contradictory when I told you that you can't afford to not outsource, but let me explain.

It seems that everyone is talking about outsourcing these days, but that doesn't mean that you should jump on the outsourcing bandwagon just for the sake of saying that you have assistants.

When you start considering outsourcing in your business, just as with anything else you do, you can't just wing it. You must have a plan of action and outsource for effectiveness.

For instance, if there is something in your business that isn't making you money and you give it to an assistant to complete knowing that there are no real benefits to doing it, then maybe it's not the right thing to be outsourcing.

Instead, evaluate your business. Maybe that particular task or project needs to be canned altogether. If so, don't outsource it just to keep from doing it -- hoping that someday it will make money for you.

On the flipside of that, if you've got a money-maker on your hands but don't have the time to devote to it for it to make the money, definitely get some help with it. There's nothing worse than sitting idle on a money-machine that you can't make money with due to inactivity.

Another common mistake that I see people make is to outsource a task that could be automated instead.

Grow Your Business AND Your Freedom: How Outsourcing Can Rescue You from Overload

For instance, if you've got a high traffic blog that gets lots of spam comments, don't hire a VA to delete them for you on a daily or weekly basis. Hire a VA to install Akismet and other spam fighting tools so that the spam is taken care of by an automated system.

If you sell virtual products such as downloadable patterns, teleseminars, or ebooks, you need a way to deliver those products. Don't pay an assistant to send out an email with a file attachment for every order! A good virtual assistant will know how to setup a system for you so that your virtual products are automatically delivered when a customer makes a purchase. Set it up once and it will run on it's own.

So, the rule: Don't Outsource Just for the Sake of Outsourcing. Have a plan.

Outsourcing Review

We've come to the end of our Outsourcing course and you've learned the basics to get you started with outsourcing successfully.

What Outsourcing Really Is – A means to getting more done and growing your business without overworking yourself.

Benefits - There are a huge number of reasons outsourcing makes sense and the benefits of doing it efficiently are endless in terms of business growth.

What Types of Tasks to Outsource – From getting started to traffic generating tasks, you're now armed with a list of things you can get help with.

Costs & Paying Your Assistants – Every business is different; therefore costs and how you pay your help will also be different. Find the ones that fit best with your business, your budget, and your personality.

Types of Outsourcing – You can choose to hire a VA (virtual assistant) who will work with you on an ongoing basis, or hire temporary one-time or per project assistants or professionals to assist you.

Don't Just Do It – Outsourcing should be done with a plan in mind and clear benefits outlined before hand. You left the “all the cool kids are doing it” thought process in high school – and that's where it should stay, especially when it comes to business and outsourcing.

Grow Your Business AND Your Freedom: How Outsourcing Can Rescue You from Overload

Thank you for downloading this mini report. I hope you've found it helpful. When you're ready to get started, we'd love to work with you. Please visit www.creatingvirtualfreedom.com today to find out how we can help you grow your business and your freedom!

Michelle Shaeffer

Project Manager

[Creating Virtual Freedom](http://www.creatingvirtualfreedom.com)