

5 Tips for Outsourcing Work Online

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Outsourcing used to be the exclusive domain of big businesses. However, with the advent of online outsourcing sites, there is no reason why small businesses, or even [solo entrepreneurs](#), can't reap the benefits of having a worldwide workforce at their fingertips.

Delegating tasks to independent contractors can be a smart way to free up both your time and your money. Some of the most popular places to find freelance workers include these websites:

Although some sites originally specialized in a particular type of outsourcing -- vWorker began its existence as RentaCoder -- virtually all of them now provide access to workers representing a diverse field of skills. From bookkeepers to copywriters to graphic designers, you can find these freelance professions and more at outsourcing sites.

Before jumping in, make sure you follow these rules of the road.

5 Tips for Successful Outsourcing

1. Be willing to make an initial time commitment

In the long run, outsourcing should save you time and money, but at the start, you may need to put in some hours finding the right workers. Each outsourcing site has its own flavor and its own pool of talent. Spend some time exploring the websites, and spread a few small projects among them to get a feel for whether each site fits your needs. Keep in mind that freelance workers come from a variety of skill backgrounds. You may have to test-drive several candidates before finding the right person for the job.

2. Know what work projects are worth outsourcing

If you run a design company, it probably isn't the best idea to outsource all your design work. You want to be able to fully control most work related to the core mission of your business. However, other services such as data entry, [email management](#) or Web copy creation may all be good candidates to entrust to outside workers.

3. Carefully craft your proposal

A complete, detailed proposal is most likely to get you quality bids from freelance workers. To reduce the number of irrelevant bids you may receive, be sure you clearly spell out the job timeframe, budget and any other requirements.

4. Choose wisely and start small

Again, you are accessing a large pool of writers from various backgrounds. Carefully review portfolios and resumes. In addition, contact potential candidates through the sites' messaging systems to determine their style of communication. This is particularly important when considering overseas providers who may not be native English speakers. When you are ready to select a candidate, start with a couple of small tasks before handing over significant duties to the worker.

5. Put everything in writing

Finally, make sure you have written terms of work in place before starting a project. Clearly spell out the deliverables, deadline and payment terms. If the site you are using offers an escrow service, use that as added protection in case you have any disputes.

Managed carefully, outsourcing work to freelancers can provide important flexibility to budget-conscious

businesses.