



Answers to Your Most-Pressing Outsourcing Questions - *Sweetie Style!*

If you ever thought you couldn't outsource effectively because

1. You couldn't afford it *&/or*
2. You aren't sure what to outsource *&/or*
3. You don't think you can find the right people *&/or*
4. The idea of managing other people is just plain old overwhelming

....this is perfect quick guide for you.

How This Guide Came to Be

Recently, I asked my subscribers and blog readers to share their challenges and questions in regard to outsourcing. As you probably know, I ***always*** encourage home business owners to contract help for the things they don't know how to do, don't have time to do or just simply don't want to do in their businesses. That leaves them **more time to continue to grow the profitability** of their businesses and to more importantly, **enjoy life**.

You ***can*** do the same.

I don't know about you, but I certainly didn't start a business so I could be chained to my desk 24/7 and have my computer calling me to check on this or that when I should be sleeping . I did it to allow a **more relaxed lifestyle** where I can take the time to enjoy my family and life. Working myself to the bone is not an option.

The fact is, trying to do everything yourself in your business is detrimental to your productivity, your health and your personal life. If you're not outsourcing yet, now's the time and I hope this guide will give you the motivation and know-how to get things going.

...and most importantly, it's not as expensive as you think!

First a Timely Story

Before we get into the nitty-gritty, I wanted to share a little story with you.

This very morning, one of my business partners threw me a curve ball and basically let me know that the promotional materials I had been working on have been rendered useless. This meant I had just **12 days to redo the project and make sure it was totally ready to roll**. Although I felt extreme overwhelm as I read that message through my sleepy eyes first thing in the morning, I knew **I had to make a plan**.

Given that I had a bunch of things on my plate already, this was not something I could do myself and besides, I don't have the graphic expertise or the printing capability to get it done. And when it's crunch time, it is not the best time to try to learn a new skill.

I sent a few quick emails to those I work with to let them know what was happening and could they get my graphic work, layouts and printing done in time. They quickly came back with the answer of YES.

Phew! I knew I could meet my deadline and as soon as I'm done writing this report for you, I am going to send all the necessary details to my contractors and I will meet my deadline.

So, what are the lessons in this story?

1. If I tried to do it myself, I'd be facing sleepless nights until the due date. A person **cannot function properly while burning the candle at both ends**. The key is to focus on the parts of the project that you're skilled at and overseeing everything to ensure that it's done. That's what produces the best finished product.
2. I have key people with whom I work regularly, so they were happy to say they could help me on such short notice. If I didn't have these established connections, it may have been much harder to meet my deadline. That's an important component of outsourcing – **building a team** that will be there when you need them.

I'm Not Alone in This LOOOOOVE of Outsourcing

When I posted the request on my blog for outsourcing questions, I received a lot of great comments from people who were already reaping the benefits of outsourcing. Not only were many of these people doing great things for themselves and their business, but they were also spreading the greatness around and helping people at the same time. That's certainly the "Internet Marketing Sweetie" way of doing things. ☺

Kim wrote:

“After 4 years online I recently started to outsource. I LOVE IT! I am no longer doing the things that I hate. I feel good hiring other WAHMS...keeping it in the family so to speak...

*...I think being more motivated comes from not having to do EVERYTHING yourself. **It frees more time to do the 'work' you love.** I feel less stressed when I accomplish more.”*

Then Michelle wrote:

“My husband and I have six girls, and we home school them. We started a drop shipping business three years ago. We did it all ourselves until winter of last year. We have now out sourced by looking to the home school community. Some items are very heavy so we found a young man to train and to take some of the heavy lifting off us. We also have a young lady (oldest daughter) we are training to enter and pack small orders. It has been a true learning experience for them and us.”

And Ellen says:

*I currently do A LOT of outsourcing, and **am thrilled to free up my time!***

Now let's get to your questions and help you clear those hurdles so you can fall in love with outsourcing too.

Outsourcing Increases Your Productivity

Tiffany asked, *“I remember a while back you mentioned somewhere that outsourcing keeps you motivated and productive. Can you explain that a bit more?”*

Yes it's definitely true. I've already given you some indication on how it increases productivity including:

- ❑ It **keeps you focused** on the more profit-producing activities in your business.
- ❑ Having the right help system in place, **keeps you from working yourself into a frenzied Internet marketing lunatic.**

But here's another reason why it motivates me and keeps me productive. I believe that is what Tiffany is referring to in her question.

I work regularly with contractors and they rely on me to provide them with work. For example, I have writers that I work regularly with. They have a contract to provide X number of articles or whatever pieces of content I need them to create. If I was going to do this writing by myself, I'd probably put it off for a while and never make a real plan to stay on top of things. Knowing that my writers are waiting for their assignments, it forces me to really do some planning and keep up with my content creation and distribution.

It's the same with my virtual assistants. They have regular tasks, but I also assign them extra tasks, so they can count on me for steady work and a decent income. **It's hard to procrastinate when people are relying on you.**

Now, don't let me overwhelm you. I know a lot of my readers are just getting started and feel like they can't afford to outsource or want to know how to do it on a budget. If you're in that position, I am not saying you have to bring on a huge team of writers, web designers, graphic designers, virtual assistants and so forth. It took me several years to build a great team...but you do have to start somewhere and that's why...

No More Excuses – You Can't Afford NOT to Outsource

My apologies for the double negative which clearly translates into, "You CAN afford to outsource," and that's the ***plain and simple truth***, even if you don't believe it yet.

When I asked for questions, I received comments like:

"I can see what things might make sense to have someone do for me, however I do not yet have the cash flow sufficient to justify the expense. It seems a bit like the chicken or the egg...what do I do?"

And..

"I agree...totally. I wonder about learning to manage my website on my own. I am a very small home based business."

And...

"I am looking at outsourcing some parts of my business, however I also have the \$\$ issue. How can you go about outsourcing when you can't guarantee a steady income...but you need steady work?"

And...

"Where/how does outsourcing work on a shoestring budget?"

These are totally legitimate questions. If you don't have the cashflow, how can you afford to hire someone?

I think making it happen requires a complete mindset change. We are all running businesses, and it really doesn't matter how small (mine is small – my office is about 10' x 10'!). There are things we need to do to make that business work. There are expenses to pay and there is plenty of work to be done.

As online business owners, we often get stuck in this idea that we can do just about everything for free. I think that's a dangerous way to think of things. Oh yes, an online business can definitely be cheaper to get started, run and grow than a traditional brick and mortar business, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't **make wise investments** to grow our businesses. Whether it's purchasing equipment we need, buying a course or hiring people who can make our businesses run more smoothly – investments should be seen as something that will give us greater return in the future.

Let Me Give You a Few “Outsourcing for Profit” Examples:

1. **Hiring an efficient customer support person:** This means you have happy customers and potential customers who will want to buy more stuff from you. You have more time to focus on business building activities.
2. **Hiring a graphic designer to make a logo or banner from you:** This portrays a professional image that attracts more potential customers and saves you from the hours of learning and months and months of perfecting the art of graphic design.
3. **Hiring a programmer to customize your shopping cart:** You now have an easier and more streamlined shopping process that reduces cart abandonment...turning into more sales for you.
4. **Hiring a bookkeeper who gives you monthly reports:** Now you can stay on top of your business and where it's going, instead of stressing out about those undocumented receipts from 6 months ago.
5. **Hiring a writer to write several articles for you each month:** Now you have lead generating materials to bring in more clients and you didn't even have to break a sweat.

...I won't go on and on because I know that some people reading this are saying, “Yeah, I get what you mean, but I still don't have the money.”

If you **still** don't think you have the money, go through these steps:

1. Write down all your business expenses.
2. Write down all the tasks you do on a daily, monthly and weekly basis. I mean write down EVERYTHING.

Now take a look at those business expenses. Are you paying for advertising that doesn't seem to be producing results? Are you buying ebook after ebook (most of which are still unread) and still aren't sure how to turn a profit in your business? Make some difficult decisions and reallocate some of those wasted funds to get help in your business.

When you look at the list you created with all of your tasks, imagine if you had a job outside your home and your boss expected you to do all those things. You'd quit on the spot. You would never take a job as the web designer, accountant, administrative assistant, customer support person, janitor...I think you get the point. You own this business – **you should be the MANAGER**. The manager that oversees everything and make sure that it gets done and that the business is profitable.

Of course, it may take some time for you to get to that manager status, especially if you're working on a budget, but start making a plan to do so. Start small, but **do get started**.

Here's My "Getting Started with Outsourcing on a Budget" Plan

When you wrote that list of tasks, you probably found there are a lot of little details you tend to like answering emails, making website corrections, updating catalogs, broadcasting your newsletter, uploading archives, etc. **These are the little tasks that break up our day and make it hard to focus**...and focus is really what you need to break that profit barrier.

Take a serious look at what you can afford. If you have to invest out of savings, sell some items on eBay or whatever it is...raise the funds so you can afford some help, even if it is a couple hours per week.

My advice is to hire a virtual assistant (VA) who can do a variety of administrative type tasks like answering email, loading up your autoresponder and so forth. Most VAs today are proficient with Internet business tasks and do website updates, etc. Some even do some graphic design and programming. Get someone on board that can help you with the tasks you need help with.

VA rates vary greatly. You can expect to pay from \$10 per hour all the way up to \$50 per hour or more. For your purposes where you need general help with various tasks, you can certainly find the help you need between \$10-\$20 per hour.

So the question is – can you afford to set aside \$20-40 per week to help refocus on the things that will build your business? I sure hope so.

Once you do that, you'll find you have less stress, you have more time to work on the marketing of your business and you become more profitable as a result of spending that \$20 or \$40. And once you experience those benefits, you can afford to get more help...but until you clear that clutter of your virtual business and get started somewhere, it's going to be hard to come up for air to breathe.

All right, **no more excuses!** It's time to get started but you may be wondering...

What Can I Outsource?

Well, that's a huge question because there are endless possibilities and every business is different. **I'd like to start by addressing a question posed by Kelle:**

"My question would be what tasks are there (if any) that you would NOT want to outsource?"

Although there are tons of online business owners who feel reluctant to outsource anything, I have met quite a few who want to outsource EVERYTHING **without** having a full understanding of what is being done with their businesses.

I always say that you should have a very good understanding of what your business needs and continue to develop your own marketing skills and knowledge even if you have contractors performing the specific tasks.

Here's what I mean...

Don't hire a copywriter if you don't have some clue about what constitutes good sales copy. You don't have to be a great writer or write any copy yourself, but you have to have an idea of what you want your end result to be and what is appropriate for your target customer.

Don't hire an affiliate manager if you're not sure what you want to get out of your affiliate program. Again, you don't need to be experienced in every aspect of running an affiliate program, but make sure you are knowledgeable about what your affiliate manager is doing and ensuring that it reflects your ultimate goals.

Courtney also posed a really great question:

*"I have always heard to focus on what you do best and try to outsource the rest. With that in mind, I've been looking for people to outsource the more technical aspects of my business, like web design for example. **But I've also read that you should be able to update your own site and handle some of the web management duties just in case you need to make changes immediately.** How can I learn more about what I need to do to be self sufficient in that department, but still benefit from outsourcing?"*

Great advice and maybe she heard it from me. ☺ Always work with a web designer that is happy to let you have access to the site and do the updates you need to do. Some get sticky about this, so **ask before you hire**. You want to be able to correct typos, change promotions and try out new things at a moments notice. Don't let yourself be a slave to a web designer's schedule.

As far as learning how to do it, it depends on what program your designer uses. In most cases, simple website updates are fairly easy to do...no matter what program is used to create the site. You just need to ensure you and your designer have a system in place that will ensure that you don't overwrite each other's work and your designer would probably advice on how she'd like to handle that issue.

So, the quick answer to "What shouldn't you outsource?" would be – **I don't think there's anything you can't outsource, but never outsource blindly**. It all goes back to maintaining overall control or you business, while everyone is rolling up their sleeves and getting dirty for you. Even though they are doing a lot of the work, it is YOU that is ultimately responsible for your success.

Kelle also wrote:

*"I've been reluctant to outsource for example one of the main newsletters I send out, where customers have become familiar with my writings. The other task I've been reluctant to outsource is actual customer support. Is there a point where **you wouldn't want to outsource things that may take away the 'personal touch' or 'connection' with customers, such as customer support or a newsletter?**"*

While I absolutely understand the first concern about the newsletter, I'm often surprised when I hear about the concern about customer support and I'd like to address that first because Ellen also echoed Kelle's comments when she wrote:

*"My biggest time-drainer, which I'd like to outsource is customer service. After people buy a product from me, they sometimes write to me with issues. Perhaps they've lost their download link or never received their DVD in the mail. Or, a hundred other things that require individual time and attention. **I'm at a loss as to how to outsource this, because I'd have to train someone how to handle any one of a hundred types of issues... and my customers keep coming up with new issues!** The training would be intensive, and I'd have to **TRUST** this person totally, or my reputation would be ruined... so I'm hesitant to even look for someone else!"*

Well first on Kelle's comment, customer service is personal, but we would be naïve to think we are the only people in our company that can provide efficient customer service. Think of any company you deal with on a regular basis (excluding very small independent businesses, of course). If you have a question, does the owner answer or does he have an efficient staff to take care of things?

As I always love to say, “When is the last time Bill Gates helped you when your Windows kept crashing?!” It just doesn’t happen that way, does it?

Keeping yourself tied to the customer support title is extremely draining. Look at what Ellen wrote above – her customers have all kinds of crazy problems and she’s probably spending much of her day dealing with them. There are ***PLENTY of other people*** who can handle these tasks for you – and with the utmost politeness, professionalism and efficiency.

Let’s look at Ellen’s concerns more closely...

She’s dealing with digital downloads. There are tons of digital product sellers out there and we all deal with those issues. We’re constantly resending the products or helping people who can’t seem to download them. This is really nothing new and there are plenty of VAs and other outsourced customer support people who are again, very capable of doing this for you. They also **become more intuitive as new problems arise** and know how to handle them. As business owners, we are certainly not the only people who can figure out how to help a customer with a new problem...we have to get rid of that idea completely or we’ll be stuck with way too much stuff on our plates.

The first thing Ellen needs to do is **start creating a FAQ**. She should record the questions she receives and the answer she gives. These should be posted in the customer support area of her website and also be given to the new customer support person. Sure, there’s a learning curve when someone new comes on, but if you are continually growing your documentation, it not only saves your customers time to hunt down the answers; it saves you time answering same questions over and over again; AND it makes it easier for a new person to step in and give you hand.

Add to that, what happens if Ellen gets sick or she wants to go on a vacation? I guess she’ll have to bring the laptop to bed and to her next family visit to Disneyland. That’s no fun. ☹

So, let’s go to the deep down issue here and that is the issue of trust. I believe that is the issue for both Kelle, Ellen and many online entrepreneurs.

Side note to Kelle & Ellen: I’m not trying to pick on you here, but **I’m really glad** you asked the questions so many people have. I know others appreciate it too.

If you aren’t sure if you trust someone to your customer support, set up a ticket system where you can monitor all customer support issues. With all the email filtering that goes on (which is a LARGE reason why customers don’t get digital product download information, by the way), **a ticket system is the *most* efficient way to deal with customers** so that they receive the proper service they need.

How many times has an AOL user said to you, “This is THIRD time I’ve emailed you and I have received NO response!!!!”

And then you look at your “Sent Files” in your email program and you can see that you replied all three times. Folks, people are ***just not* getting their emails**. An online ticket system ensures everyone gets the support they need, it allows you to keep tabs on what is happening with all your customers and is a great resource to help you create a customer FAQ from the most common questions you receive.

As far as finding people goes, we’ll be talking about that in the next section. First, let’s go back to Kelle’s concern about outsourcing something as personal as a newsletter.

I don’t think that outsourcing components of your newsletter needs to take away any personal touch and let me explain.

First, let’s break down the steps you may have to take in publishing your newsletter:

1. Researching and planning what to write about.
2. Writing the text.
3. Creating an HTML version of the text, if applicable.
4. Broadcasting the newsletter in your autoresponder.
5. Posting the issue to your website archives.

Right now, you can outsource #3, #4 and #5 without worry. That is what I have done for a number of publications I’ve run over the years. I got the ideas and the writing done, then someone else took over.

BUT...I’d venture to say you can quite easily outsource #2 as well. You come up with the overall ideas and have someone else run with them, but it doesn’t end there. When you get the finished product back from your writer, YOU review it and ensure that it portrays the image and message you want to get out there. Good writers are capable of taking on your writing style. Still, you can add your own personal touches and then send it to the person who will work on the next step of creating the HTML or broadcasting.

And once you’ve worked with a writer for a while, they can start doing the research and planning. The key is that you’re overseeing all of this, either indefinitely or until you feel confident that they can take this and run with it.

I really believe that **we often take our businesses *too* personally**. Yes, we own them and it’s our reputation on the line, but we do NOT need to perform every little task to ensure our business represents our values and ultimate goals.

Now that we’ve figured out that there is PLENTY you can outsource, let’s talk about finding the right people.

Building Your Outsourcing Team

One of my readers, Frank Johnson wrote:

“People seem so flighty online. They're here to help one minute and gone the next. Training new people is tiresome. How do you deal with it?”

Oh yeah, it happens. It happens in **every single** business. A sales person at the local retail shop don't show up for work one day. The waitress for the busy afternoon shift flakes out and decides she's just not coming into work anymore. It's no different online and as you outsource more, you will be able to recognize those people who will be reliable members of your team. It's all part of a learning curve, but an important part of growing your business...so it's worth doing.

To help prevent disappointments, use these tips:

1. **Ask your Internet marketing colleagues for recommendations of people they have worked with personally.** Ask them what type of work they did, how long they worked for you and if deadlines were an issue.
2. **Talk to you potential contractor and get references.** If you were running a shop in the local mall, certainly you'd interview your potential employees. Get a sense of how they run their business, manage their work and if they have measures in place to ensure work is completed should they fall ill or otherwise temporarily unavailable.
3. **Never pay in full in advance.** Professional companies may ask for a deposit to start work, but they do not ask to be paid in full for service not rendered. I hate to put out a stereotype, but we're speaking frankly here and most of the contractors I've come across who want payment in advance are desperate to earn money and offer their services to get the cash they need. Once they have the cash in hand, they are less motivated to complete the job.
4. **Ensure your expectations are clear and written out before the contractor begins work.** Yes, this means you're going to have to take the time to train and document the important processes in your business. But the good news is, once you've done it once – you can use it over and over again. Then, if someone flakes out on you, you still have the documents to bring someone else in immediately.

Side Note: If the task of creating the training material and documentation seems overwhelming, Outsourcing Sweetie is going to solve a lot of that headache. <http://www.OutsourcingSweetie.com>

5. **Be patient and remember there is a learning curve.** Nobody is going to be perfect right off the bat. Be available to answer questions and ensure your contractor is doing the job just the way you want him to. YOU have just as much responsibility in making this new relationship work as your contractor does.

Let's take a look at some more of the questions I received about hiring the right people or finding the right outsourcing solutions...

John Jaworski asked about product fulfillment. He wanted a company that would deliver more complex orders, instead of just a single item. Allan kindly replied with the following recommendation:

*"I'd like to recommend <http://www.tommynobiscenter.org/>, The Tommey Nobis Center. Tommy was a quarterback for the Atlanta Falcons years ago. Since then he has run this nonprofit business that is especially helpful to people with disabilities. Here in Atlanta he has a complete fulfillment center staffed with great people who live with various physical challenges. They **do fulfillment for customers as large as Home Depot, and as small as "Acme Ventures" down the street.** I suggest you contact them, knowing they'll do an outstanding job and that you'll be contributing to a worthy organization that really helps people."*

Looks like that company fits the bill and they even have the Sweetie touch! There are a lot of companies that offer similar services and a quick search on Google for "product fulfillment service" brings back many results. Just do your research and search for reviews on any company you're considering work with.

Along with his recommendation, Allan had his own question:

*"Of all the issues home business owners struggle with, finding new customers seems to rank right up there toward #1 -- at least as the business is getting underway. **What kind of services do you recommend that can be outsourced to generate new prospects and customers? Which would you say are the most effective?**"*

I am always reluctant to suggest to anyone that they should hire a general online marketing firm...no offence to anyone who runs one. Some may offer a great service, but in many cases, I find these services are set up by people who spend time on tasks that do little build your business and could actually damage your business.

I remember when I hired such a firm a few years back, the woman who owned the business, simply posted (read: spammed, in some cases) to the Yahoo Groups she belonged to and submitted my site to a bunch of Free for All Links pages. At the time, I didn't know better.

On the other hand, you may find yourself a more professional company, but look carefully at what they want to charge and the actual work they're going to be doing. In many cases, when you break it down, you might be better off defining exactly what you need done and finding the contractors to do what you need.

Whatever you decide, please do your homework and ask questions, so you know **exactly** what's going on with your business.

Some services you might try outsourcing to gain new customers:

- ❑ Keyword research
- ❑ Competitor research
- ❑ Pay-per-click campaign management
- ❑ Banner and text advertising management
- ❑ Advertising copy
- ❑ Sales copy
- ❑ Affiliate recruitment
- ❑ Promotional graphics
- ❑ Press release writing
- ❑ Press release distribution
- ❑ Publicity and securing interviews (whether it's for TV or podcasts and website owners)
- ❑ Postcard or direct mail campaigns
- ❑ Content creation for lead generation
- ❑ Content distribution
- ❑ Promotional video creation
- ❑ Building incoming links
- ❑ Brochure design
- ❑ Split testing and conversion

...just for a few ideas. As far as finding the right service provider, ask your colleagues first. Make sure you have a network of fellow online business owners you can turn to for finding the services you need. **Referrals are the best way to find help for your business.**

Allan asked also which tasks are the most effective and every business' results will vary, of course. For a new business, pay-per-click campaigns can produce almost immediate results. Ensuring your conversion rates continue to rise is also a great way to make the most of the traffic you are already receiving. Start there and invest the profits into more.

Vincent asked:

“I would like to outsource some SEO work to a VA but I am reluctant to find a VA on Elance because they are mainly a freelancer site and there is little or no protection for buyers when things go wrong.

Is there a web site for VAs and buyers to get together? I would prefer to work with a company that manages their staff and provides very good service consistently rather than finding random freelancers on Elance-type sites.”

If you're not familiar with Elance (you can learn more at www.myelanceonline.com), it is a site where hiring parties can post jobs for bidding on by contractors. The hiring party can choose the person they wish to hire. It is a bit tough there and I understand what Vincent is saying. The site is hugely popular and is filled with people who are willing to take pay for jobs they aren't qualified for or can't complete. If you do use a site like that, **always research the feedback of the potential contractor and ask plenty of questions.**

If you're looking for a company that manages their own staff and ensures that everything gets done, definitely have a look at Sylvie Fortin's Workaholics for Hire (see www.hireaworkaholic.com for more info). Sylvie's been at it for a number of years and has developed a professional team of contractors who can do everything from marketing to administrative-type tasks.

Then Jennifer asked a very important question:

“Is it a good idea or an absolutely terrible idea to hire a friend to do part of the work you would be outsourcing anyway?”

I guess it depends on your relationship and how you approach it. I would be absolutely clear with your friend ***before you start*** that you'd love to have them on board and work together, but that this is a working relationship and you don't want to strain your friendship over it. You are running a business and she will need to complete the assigned tasks on time. She should also be aware that if you ever have to let her go, it has nothing to do with your friendship, but purely a business decision only.

If you don't think your friend can handle that, don't hire her. If you're not sure she can handle it, don't hire her. If her family is going to starve if you don't hire her, think twice about getting involved in any long-term plan. Maybe give her a project here or there to ensure that she can handle it. If you think you have a very solid friendship that can be separated from business, go for it.

So now that you're armed with the why you should outsource, what you should outsource and how to connect with good people, let's get organized.

Staying on Top of Everything & Ensuring the Job Gets Done Right

Janice posed an extremely important question and that is:

*“Hi Melissa, I am wondering what is the best way to **organize tasks and track progress on any given task**. My helpers do a variety of jobs for me so at any given time there may be a few going as well as some running tasks such as article creation.*

*I find sometimes it would be nice to have a way to just click something to see what the progress is without always asking. Any recommended software? **I presently use a private forum which works very well but I wonder about security?**”*

If you've tried to manage various tasks via email, you know that it can be quite a mess. Sometimes email disappears in cyberspace or gets misplaced. Or worse yet, you lose track of what you have talked about because there are so many emails flying back and forth. It can get really unmanageable.

A forum system is certainly more efficient than email and allows you to track all discussions on a particular project. It will also notify a user via email (provided it doesn't get lost in cyberspace!) of replies on a topic/project. Problem is, generally it does not reply a user of a new post or project posted.

If you do use a forum, I'd password protect the folder in your cpanel, so nobody can even see the forum without a password. You can also set it up so that people cannot register without approval, so you won't get any new surprise members. I'd also set up all your forums, so that they are only visible to registered users. That should provide you with the basic security you need.

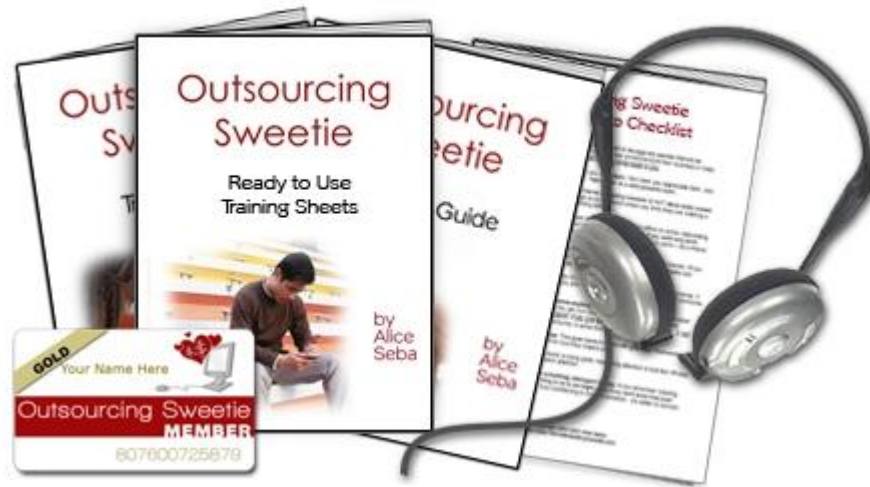
Personally, I have used two systems designed for managing projects. The second is far more sophisticated than the first, but I prefer the first because I can host it on my server.

1. **The first is <http://www.taskspro.com>.** It allows you to set up tasks with priority and due dates. Your contractors can track their time and mark assignments as completed. You can also collaborate, add attachments and so forth. Features are here: <http://crowdfavorite.com/tasks-pro/features/> and you can pay a one-time fee to host your database on your own site.
2. **The second is <http://www.basecampHQ.com>** which is quite a bit more sophisticated which allows for total communication within the system. With TasksPro, I find I am going outside the system frequently to communicate effectively with my contractors. One thing to consider is that Base Camp does not offer installation on your own server and you're looking at a monthly fee with this service.

Either system can certainly do the job you're looking for and make managing tasks and contractors a whole lot easier.

Let's Get Started

Overall, it doesn't matter how you get started, the important thing is that you do it. There may be bumps in the road, but I can help make that even easier because:



Outsourcing Sweetie is Here!

Receive the insider knowledge and help you need to become the MANAGER of your business...PLUS I'll thrown in the tools that will make working with your contractors a near no-brainer.

Get the full scoop at <http://www.OutsourcingSweetie.com>