

What These Service Providers Want You to Know about **OUTSOURCING**



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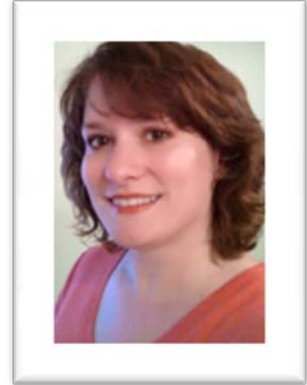
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Tips for Choosing/Working with a Graphic Designer

from Wendy Wood

[GeteDesigns](#)



When you own an online business, you are going to have to work with a graphic designer at some point or another, unless you already have this skill or want to take the time to learn it.

Below you will find the tips you need to make the process of choosing/working with a graphic designer easier.

Finding the Graphic Designer

If you're new to the online world of business you may be at a loss for where you should go to find a graphic designer. Try the tips below.

- ✓ **Ask Around.** The best thing to do is ask some of your acquaintances who have online businesses if they recommend anyone in particular. Often times, you'll find who you're looking for through one of your friends.
- ✓ **Hire a Freelancer.** There are several websites that freelancers (of all types) subscribe to in search of work. You can go to Freelancer.com, Shelancer.com, Elance.com, etc. to post your job.

Have You Found the Right Professional?

- ✓ **Are there References?** The first thing you should do with any potential graphic designer is ask for (and check) their references.
- ✓ **Does She/He Have a Portfolio?** Most qualified graphic designers have a portfolio containing previous work that you can look through.

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The samples in the portfolio should give you a sense of the style of work done by the professional. If you like it, great! If not, continue your search.

- ✓ **Use Google.** Finally, finish researching a potential graphic designer by entering their name in Google. You may be able to find out more information about them by doing this. For example, you may be able to find customer testimonials or more work they've done.

How to Get What You Want

- ✓ **Start Small.** Don't jump right in with a new graphic designer and give him/her a huge project at first. Instead, to ensure the designer will be able to deliver the quality you expect in a timely manner, give him/her a small project to do first.
- ✓ **Get a Signed Confidentiality Agreement.** If you don't want any of your information shared by your designer with anyone else, make sure you have them sign a confidentiality agreement before any work is passed his/her way.
- ✓ **Set a Specific Deadline.** You may think that your designer is going to get right on your project, but freelance designers will naturally work on projects with quick deadlines first. Therefore, make sure you give your graphic designer a specific deadline to ensure your project doesn't keep getting pushed back.
- ✓ **Be Clear About Your Needs.** To ensure you and your graphic designer are both on the same page, you need to be clear about the graphics you will need. For example:
 - Color preferences
 - Sizes that you will need
 - Image formats (such as a .png file for a transparent background)
 - The exact text you'd like to use (many graphic designers are not copywriters, they focus their skills on what they do best – creating graphics.
- ✓ **Discuss Payment Arrangements.** You should always discuss the payment arrangements at the beginning of the project. Be clear as to how much you will be paying for the project and when the payments will be due to ensure there aren't any misunderstandings about this.

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- ✓ **Stay Involved.** Finally, make sure that you are available to answer his/her questions about your project in a timely manner. This will ensure that your project will be done to your satisfactory and meet your deadline. Leave them hanging, and they'll move on to other projects, while yours is sitting collecting dust from unanswered questions he/she may have.

Communicating with Your Graphic Designer

- ✓ **Give Background Information.** In order to get the results you want, you have to provide your designer with some background information about yourself, the company and what your goals for the graphics are. You may also need to let your graphic designer know what types of people you're trying to reach with the graphics they will be creating too.
- ✓ **Get In-Depth.** If you have a vivid picture in your mind about what you want, then give as much detail as you can to your designer. While he/she is a professional, they are not mind readers. Therefore, you need to get in-depth when expressing the vision you have for your graphic needs.

By using the tips that I have provided above you'll be on your way to outsourcing your web graphics in no time, and you'll see that it isn't so scary after all.

Wendy Wood has been working online for over ten years and enjoys every minute of it. She has experimented with a variety of online business models over the decade, but truly enjoys affiliate marketing and creating web graphics and PLR content for other online business owners. In fact, she's been providing quality PLR products and custom web graphics for her clients at <http://GeteDesigns.com> since 2007.

Know Your Passwords

from Kelly McCausey

[Freshnets Wordpress Design](#)



Over the years, my experiences as a web and graphic designer has taught me one very important thing.

Clients don't know their passwords.

They may think they know them, but they usually don't. I can't tell you how many times I've sat down to work on a project only to find that the logins they've provided aren't correct. You know what a frustration this can be!

So here's quick client checklist I've been using to collect as much information from the client as possible – with reminders along the way that they should test all logins before sending them over.

The best way to collect this information is through a web form – but asking them to reply by email can work too.

Even though we are asking the client to test every login, it is still a good idea for you to test them all upon receipt – just to be sure.

Important Login Information Needed

Client Instructions: Using the following as a template, please reply to this email with all necessary account login information.

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Please TEST every login before sending it to us. It's common over time to have some information change so this is an important step for you.

We need this information in our hands by _____ .

If we start your project and find that one or more of these logins aren't correct, it will delay us and that can have an impact on your completion date.

- Web Hosting Account Login (This is where you would login to pay your hosting bill or contact support.)

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

- Cpanel Login (This is where you would login to look at your actual web files.)

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

- Wordpress Login (This is where you would login to add or edit your content.)

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

- Mailing List Manager Login

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

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Shopping Cart Login

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

Google Account Login

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

Facebook Account Login

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

Twitter Account Login

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

Are there any other accounts that we'll need access to to complete your project? (Ad networks, other social media sites, etc.) Please provide this information here:

_____ Login

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

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_____ Login

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

_____ Login

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

_____ Login

URL:

USER:

PASSWORD:

Kelly McCausey has been creating profits on the internet since 2002. Blogging, podcasting, information products, hosting companies and membership sites – her business is full of variety. It is a constant challenge [read: fun and interesting] to keep up with web trends and market needs.

At [Freshnets](#), she brings her skills and real world experience to every project. When you work with Kelly, you work with excellent writers, artists and coders who she's come to value.

Tips for Working with a Virtual Assistant

from Tishia Lee

[Tishia Saves Time](#)



As an online business owner you'll soon learn that you can't do everything yourself and need to start outsourcing to a Virtual Assistant. The quicker you realize this, the better. Even if you're in the start-up phase of your new business venture, a VA can be a huge benefit to you.

I've been working as a Virtual Assistant since 2006 and while I've been really blessed to have super awesome clients that I love, there have been a few that made me cry, bang my head against my desk...ok you get the picture ;-)

So, what have made those few clients a nightmare to work with?

#1 - They thought I was a mind reader.

#2 - They wouldn't respond back to my communication with them (email, Skype message, phone call, etc) in a timely manner.

3 - They thought I worked 24/7...literally!

So, how can these situations be resolved? Easy, by following the three tips that you will find on the next page...

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#1 – Be Specific. As mentioned above, a VA can't read your mind! Don't send them an email with one sentence about setting up your shopping cart with 100 products and expect them to read between the lines. Give as much detail about the project as possible. If you feel the project is too in depth for an email, schedule a time to talk on the phone.

#2 – Respond in a timely manner. You would think that this one wouldn't need to even be mentioned. But it does. If your VA sends you an email on Monday about a project she's doing, don't wait until Friday to respond back and expect her to work all weekend on that project to get it done. (Yes, I do understand that life happens & things come up and there are times when you can't respond right away. But even in a situation like that, you should take a second to call your VA or send a message letting her know you aren't available to answer her questions). Just as you like to have a quick response, so does your VA.

#3 – Don't expect round the clock service. When hiring a VA, keep in mind time zones. If you're on Pacific Time and your VA is on Eastern, that's a difference of three hours. It may not seem like much but think about it - if you send an email at 3pm your time it will be 6pm her time and she may not be available to answer until the next morning.

Also, keep in mind that your VA more than likely has set business hours and probably doesn't work weekends or after 6pm or 9pm (whatever the case may be). Don't send an email at 3 o'clock Saturday afternoon and be annoyed that the project wasn't completed over the weekend or that you didn't get a response back from them until Monday morning.

Of course, things do come up and there may be special circumstances where you need help at night or on a weekend – most VA's would probably be more than willing to work with you...as long as you work it out before hand.

What These Service Providers Want You To Know About Outsourcing

And here are a few more tips to keep in mind when working with a VA:

- ✓ Pay your invoices on time
- ✓ Send an email (or better yet, a card in the mail – yeah snail mail that is!) letting them know you appreciate them and all their hard work
- ✓ Send them referrals
- ✓ Give them a virtual pat on the back – a shout out on Twitter, Facebook, etc.
- ✓ Let them know their suggestions are welcome. If they see something you can improve on, etc let them know you would be willing to hear what they have to say
- ✓ Give them an unexpected bonus or pay raise!

Follow these tips and you can bet that you'll be the perfect client to your VA and one they brag about working with.

Tishia Lee has been running her own business as an internet marketing Virtual Assistant since January 2006. Her specialties are MP3 audio transcription and eBook formatting. To see the other services Tishia offers, check her out on the web at <http://www.tishiasavestime.com>

Successful Writing Outsourcing Ideas for Clients

from Stephanie L. Watson
[I Write Custom Content](#)



Clients need content for all kinds of projects. Oftentimes they do not really realize how much content that really they need. Therefore, these checklists and the information can be used to decide what type of content you need to fulfill your content needs successfully. Additionally, it is important that you know some information about your business such as who your target audience is.

It's near impossible for me to create content when a client does not know who they are creating the content for. I can create whatever they want, but I often feel guilty when I know that the content I am creating is not going to give them the results they want.

When a client lets me know they are not sure what they want I lead them through the following questions.

- ✓ Who is your ideal client or customer?
- ✓ What information does he or she need?
- ✓ How does she or he like to digest information? (PDF, Video, Blogs?)
- ✓ What issues can you solve for your ideal customer or client?
- ✓ What benefits does any one product offer your ideal customer or client?

What These Service Providers Want You To Know About Outsourcing

The answers should be very specific.

Simply answering the questions as specifically as possible can cause a multitude of ideas to flow forth regarding content, information products and services that one can offer to their ideal client.

When assisting with content for a website I give a variety of worksheets but one of them is the content planning worksheet below. The spaces grow as you put more information in to them and sometimes one page or more is submitted per page of content.

Website Content Planning Worksheet

Name of Page	Objective of Page	Supporting Graphics	Number of Words	Keywords to use	Description of content to put there
About Us					
Home Page					
Contact us					

Another type of content that clients often need are information products. I require an outline for each product but this is an overview of brainstorming to come up with products and keep track of them for the client.

What These Service Providers Want You To Know About Outsourcing

Information Product Content Checklist

Product Name	Product Description	Keywords	Formats	Due Date	Projected Budget	Projected Price Point	Done?

Bloggng and Article Marketing

Most of the content I write for clients are blogs and article marketing content. When thinking about blog content, it is important to think in terms of "micro-content" or a very specific point for each blog post. When you realize that to be truly effective you must post at least three to five blog posts a week then getting used to blogging about one topic or point per blog post can be very helpful.

A blog post should not be too long, or too short, but definitely not too long. More than 500 or 600 words is too long for a blog post. If your blog post is that long consider shortening it or ensuring that you're sticking to one point or one topic within the blog post.

The great thing about doing this is that you will be able to talk about the next point in the next blog post, in so doing you will never running out of content ideas for your blogs.

What These Service Providers Want You To Know About Outsourcing

When writing or developing the idea for each blog post, consider the following about your target audience:

- ✓ What is his or her motivation?
- ✓ What are his or her needs?
- ✓ What are his or her desires?
- ✓ What are his or her fears?
- ✓ What does your target audience already know?
- ✓ What are the benefits of your information, product or service to your clients and potential clients?
- ✓ What is your competition doing?

Other considerations are when, how often you want to reach your audience, as well as what format the content will be in. Does your audience prefer to read blogs over other mediums?

Do they want notification of new blogs in their email, by Twitter, on Facebook, or elsewhere? Do they want to be able to read on a mobile device, do they prefer to listen to your blogs? What are your top products or services?

Your blogs should somehow be related to your products and services but not be too sales page like. You will have sales pages for that type of thing. But, your blogs can answer general client questions, educate the client, inform potential clients. This is what I call the four I's.

- Inform
- Instruct
- Interact
- Inspire

What These Service Providers Want You To Know About Outsourcing

Blog Content Planning Checklist

Blog Headline	Main point/ Slant	Keywords	Sub-headings	Graphics	Word Count	Affiliates Resources or other links to include	Call to Action?

Another type of content I write often are articles for article marketing. Article marketing are articles that are used to help get backlinks to your website, blog, sales page or other content. Article marketing is a little different than blogging due to the fact that you cannot always have a call to action. You must read the rules of each place you wish to use your content. Some places do not mind if your information is original, some do.

Some places let you put links within your text others do not. Read the rules and follow them so you are not banned. Your call to action might be in your author's box, or in your profile, rather than in your blog post. Your articles have to be more generic and general and not include direct reference to your product or services.

What These Service Providers Want You To Know About Outsourcing

Article Marketing Planning Checklist

Article Headline	Main point/ Slant	Secondary points	Keywords	Sub- headings	Graphics	Word Count	Affiliates Resources or other links to include	Call to Action?

Cost of outsourcing writing

You can find writers at almost any level but like with most things, you get what you pay for. You can pay from 1 dollar and on up for articles and blog posts. If you want well-written content that is well-researched it is important to contract with a writer who has experience with the kind of writing that you need.

Try hiring them to write just one article on a topic related to your needs to ensure that their writing style fits your needs. Do not expect perfection, but do expect a level of expertise based on what you are paying. Consider how long it might take you to write the article you want and pay a fair wage.

If you know certain aspects about your style that the writer should know, tell them. For instance, if you normally prefer that writers conjugate, tell them so. This is really important when you hire someone with a college degree because they are trained not to conjugate, so it might be something they need to know. Telling them this upfront will go far in helping you like the contact that the writer produces.

What These Service Providers Want You To Know About Outsourcing

Provide information to the writer about the title, the subject, the focus of the blog or article including the slant of the article. If you want someone to write about, for instance, soy products, it is important for the writer to know if you're pro or con for soy products. If the writer does not know, they will write it based on their own ideas or beliefs instead of yours.

In addition, be specific to your writer about the format you'd like to receive the work in. If you want it in Word 97 or Open Office Format if you don't tell them, they will submit the articles or blogs in whatever format they want to. Many people don't care, but what if you don't have the newest Word which provides a Docx format, you won't be able to open them.

So if it matters, do let them know. In terms of font, it is best to specific single spaced, New Times Roman sized 12 as this is standard. It would not be fair to tell them font sized 9 and only pay by the page, just like it would be unfair for the writer to charge by the page and for the writer to submit double spaced font 20 to you.

There are writers who will write for about any price so you need to decide:

- ✓ **Your own values** -- If you have no issues with hiring outside of your own country then go for it. You can go to O'Desk, Elance, Guru.com and other places and post your project and get bids from all over the world.
- ✓ **Your budget** -- Know what you can afford to pay before you search that way you aren't wasting your time or the writer's time bidding on a project. Post the budget, and be up front about your expectations.
- ✓ **Your standards** -- Decide based on your values and your budget what your standards are. If you're okay with editing what is written for you, then you can probably pay someone with less experience less money, but you will then need to spend time on editing.

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By deciding in advance what you can afford to pay, and what you can reasonably put up with in terms of quality, then you will know what to do to find a writer that fits your criteria. A great way to get discounts from good writers is to join various clubs and organizations online because many will give discounts to each other that aren't given to others. For instance, I give deep discounts to other Solo Masterminds members that are not offered to the general public. I also give volume discounts to established clients who pay on time, as well as incentives to clients who refer to me other buying customers.

When you find a writer who delivers what you need, offer them plenty of business, and pay on time, and you'll develop a long term relationship that will only get better. This is especially true if you also offer the writer feedback. Service providers who write for a living really want to please their clients, and they cannot please their clients if they get no feedback, only negative feedback, or if the client expects instantaneous delivery of services when they are slow to provide needed information.

Provide your side of the information in a timely manner so that your writer can provide your results in a timely manner. If you have any questions about my writing services, or just want to talk to me please do not hesitate to contact me for more information.

Stephanie has been working from home providing services remotely since the mid 90's. She has worked as a Virtual Assistant, Community Manager, Website Designer, Affiliate Marketer and other online positions. Stephanie provides content development, management and support for her clients. If it's content related, she does it. Find her on the web at <http://www.iwritecustomcontent.com> She is featured in the book [*Online Marketing Success Stories by Rene' V. Richards published in 2006*](#). Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and a Master of Science in Interactive Technology from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

How To Properly Outsource Tech Work Without Driving Yourself (And Your Techie) Up The Wall

from Lynette Chandler

[Tech Based Marketing](#)



As business owners, you aren't supposed to do it all by yourself. Least of all, figure out all the back end tech of your websites yourself. Thing is, many do - why? There could be a lot of reasons but I think, you may hold off outsourcing technical work because of horror stories you may have heard from others or you may have some pre-conceived ideas how all of that is supposed to work.

This is unfortunate because you should be busy working on your business not in the nitty gritty technical programming stuff that could take you a year to learn let alone master. Below, are three of the most common myths and complaints and how you can get past them so you can move your project along and be on your way to growing your business.

#1 - "I don't know how to explain it in tech speak. How can I ever make someone understand what I want?"

Good news. You don't have to. In fact, don't try 'talking tech' or using terms that you have no idea what they mean. Instead, share your vision. Explain in the same way that you would to a friend what you ultimately want to achieve and the steps people have to take to get there if any, but with more detailed information.

What These Service Providers Want You To Know About Outsourcing

Show, don't tell. One of the best things that you can do for both you and your tech person is show. If there is a site that is already doing what you want, fire up a program like Jing and record what you like, don't like, what you want to change or add as you move through that site.

Don't worry about giving too much information or what is relevant or not to the project. Let the developer decide what is relevant. If it is important to you, mention it. This is one place where too much information is a good thing. Not enough information is bad.

#2 - "I don't trust others with access information to my sites"

This is a legitimate fear. Like all fears, it is something you have to get past. Are there bad guys out there? Absolutely. However in our experience outsourcing to others as well as a service provider, you'd run a higher risk of having your website hacked than a developer locking you out or installing malicious bugs.

Besides, there are a few things you could always do like changing the passwords, or creating a secondary account for them and delete it when the project is closed. It may not be super high tech nor fool proof but truly, most good developers just want to put in a good day's work, get paid well, get paid on time and move on.

#3 - "I gave a guy a project. He returned something so far off course it is not funny"

While this can happen to any project I think it is easier to run into this issue with tech projects because often clients aren't aware of the many decisions a developer has to make on the client's behalf as they go along. Not all of these warrant client consults because it would take the project forever to finish.

What These Service Providers Want You To Know About Outsourcing

The solution is to schedule regular check-ins. Together, agree on a few milestones where you can take a peek at the progress.

The best thing is to schedule a live call where both of you can be looking at the site together to hash out any misconceptions and uncertainty at each milestone. Keep in mind the project is far from finished so in the early milestone check-ins it might seem like it is off course.

It is OK to remind, clarify and redirect because once you see a prototype, you may notice things you may not have thought of or the developer may have questions that could help shape the final product.

Pipe up if you see something that doesn't look right. A good developer will be patient enough to let you know if that is still in the works or something they didn't fully understand. If you don't, you will have no way of knowing.

#4 - "The developer is now asking for more money after we agreed on the price"

Ah! The proverbial project creep.

Communication is so key. Remember we talked about how it is never too much information? This is one reason you need to voice every little thing that is important to you. No matter how silly it sounds. That one small thing could be a linchpin that may cost lots of money to change.

Also, make sure the developer asks questions in return.

In all our years of service, almost every job, even in the smallest tasks, we ask questions. Sometimes it is because we know something the client doesn't and want to lead them to it, at other times it is to clarify the job. I'd be very concerned if they didn't ask questions.

What These Service Providers Want You To Know About Outsourcing

Questions and an ample supply of information help determine the scope of the project.

Having said that, be a good client. When changing gears or shuffling things around mid-way ask if this is within the scope of the project or will require work and resources the developer did not budget into the original quote.

Understand and accept that things that are nice to have often cost more. So focus on the must haves for the project to be functional. Everything else can be added to or expanded on later.

For years, Lynette Chandler has been the technical manager for successful Internet Marketers because she knows technology, gets marketing and is good at fusing the two together. Lynette regularly sends out an email advisory with new information, tips, techniques and ways to leverage technology in your marketing or other areas of business. Visit <http://techbasedmarketing.com/news> to start receiving this valuable memo.