H.A.N.D.S. Free

How To Outsource Your Entire Business

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Introduction

Welcome to the *H.A.N.D.S. Free Formula™* course!

I'm very excited about your decision to join this course. And that's because –

Outsourcing is one of the quickest ways to grow your business.

Whether you're just starting out or you've been in business for years, outsourcing can help you take your business to the next level!

And this exciting course will show you EXACTLY how to do it using my proven *H.A.N.D.S. Free Formula™*. Take a look:

- **H – <u>H</u>IGHLIGHT Your Needs.** This is where you take a good look at your business and decide what work you need done in various areas, including ghostwriting, copywriting, marketing, customer service and more. You'll be looking at both your short term and long term needs.

- **A – <u>A</u>DVERTISE Jobs.** Once you know what you need, then you can start advertising your jobs in order to attract highly qualified freelancers.

- **N – <u>N</u>ARROW the Field.** If you cast a wide net during the advertising stage (and you should), then your next step is to do your due diligence, which will help you narrow your list of prospective freelancers. Then you can hire the most qualified candidates!

- **D – <u>D</u>ELEGATE and Manage.** In this step of the formula you'll discover how to brief your freelancers so that there are no misunderstandings. Plus you'll find out how to manage them so that the work goes smoothly.

- **S – <u>S</u>ATISFY Freelancers.** Good freelancers are a treasure, which is why you should seek to retain them. In this final step you'll find out how to keep them satisfied so that they're happy to remain on your team!

Here's the best part:

You can outsource to suit your needs and your budget. If you have a big budget and you want to grow your business quickly, then you can outsource most of your regular business tasks.

That frees your time and leaves you to focus on the "high dollar" parts of your business (such as coming up with ideas and certain marketing tasks).

Alternatively, you can start slow and just outsource a few tasks in your business.

> Example: You might hire someone to do some web design this week. Next week you might hire a writer to do some of your content creation.

As your business grows, you can outsource more and more tasks.

You can essentially build a team of outsourcers to take care of virtually every business task.

What do I mean by "virtually every business task?"

Here's a sampling of the type of tasks you can hand over to a competent freelancer:

- **Article writing.** This includes regular articles as well as articles that are optimized for the search engines.

- **Blog posting.** Your freelancer can write your blog posts as well as post them to your blog.

- **Content creation.** Whether you want to create an ebook, audio book or a video, you can hire someone to do it for you.

- **Keyword research.** A freelancer trained in search engine optimization can help you select keywords you'd like to rank well for in the search engines.

- **Copywriting.** A freelance copywriter can boost your conversion rate by creating powerful ads, sales letters, press releases, autoresponder emails and other marketing materials.

- **Videos.** Whether you want to create a video product or a promo video, you can find a freelancer to help you do the job.

- **Web design and graphics.** From full-fledged web design to a simple ebook cover, there are plenty of talented freelancers who can help you create a great site and/or all the graphics you need.

- **Programming.** Need a script installed? No problem. Need a script created? A talented programmer (or team of programmers) can help you turn your vision into reality.

- **Marketing.** You can hire affiliate managers, JV brokers, people to manage your pay per click campaigns, people to manage your publicity campaigns… and just about anything else you can think of.

- **Customer service.** You can hire someone to field all your pre and post-sale inquiries.

Point is, you can outsource just about anything.

But what *should* you outsource?

Read on…

H - <u>H</u>ighlight Your Needs

The first step of the ***H.A.N.D.S. Free Formula™*** is to "Highlight Your Needs" – that is, you need to evaluate your business in order to determine IF you should outsource various "one-off," daily, weekly and ongoing tasks.

Here are the <u>three questions</u> you need to ask yourself that will help you determine whether or not to outsource a particular task…

<u>Question #1</u>: How Much Does It Cost?

If you outsource the right way, then outsourcing becomes an investment rather than an expense. And what's more, you'll often find that it's less expensive to outsource as opposed to doing it yourself.

<u>Here's why</u>: Time is money. Even if it feels like doing a task yourself is "free," that's not true. You're spending time which is just like spending money.

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Example: Let's say your goal is to make $100,000 this year.
And you intend to work 40 hours per week for 50 weeks out of
the year to get your business off the ground. That means your
time is worth $50 an hour to you:

2000 hours X $50 an hour = $100,000 per year
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That's just an example. You can use this formula to determine what one hour of your time is worth to you.

Just take the amount of money you want to make this year and divide it by the number of hours you intend to work. The end result is your hourly worth.

Now figuring out whether to outsource just became easier.

You simply ask: Is it cheaper to outsource or to do it yourself?

> Example: Let's say your time is worth $50 an hour. If a task takes two hours, then that's a $100 task to you. If you can find someone to do it for less than $100, then it makes sense to outsource it.

However, even if it's cheaper for you to do a task, that doesn't mean you should do it. Read on…

Question #2: Are You Good at the Task?

Let's say you can complete a task in two hours ($100 worth of your time), but you can't find a freelancer willing to take on the task for less than $100. Does that mean you should do it yourself?

Not necessarily. If a freelancer can do the task better than you can, then it makes sense to outsource the task… even if on the surface it seems more costly than doing it yourself.

> Tip: One example is copywriter. You may be able to create a sales letter for less cost than hiring a copywriter, but a good copywriter will pay for himself/herself many times over due to a high response rate.

Question #3: Do You Enjoy the Task?

The last factor to take into consideration is whether you enjoy the task.

> Example: If web design is one of your favorite things to do, then perhaps you'll decide not to outsource it (even if a freelancer can do it for less cost).

Point is, you don't necessarily want to outsource all the fun right out of your business!

Action Step: Decide what parts of your business you want to outsource. If you're just starting out, you may consider outsourcing things like web design and writing. As you continue with this course, keep the above three factors in mind as you start making outsourcing decisions.

Then read on to learn about how price factors into your decision…

Why You Shouldn't Shop Around Based on Price Alone

Once you start looking for freelancers, you'll likely notice that prices vary widely.

> `Example`: You may find writers charging anywhere from $2 per 500 word article all the way up to $100 or more for the same article.

There are several reasons for these wide price ranges, *including but not limited to*:

- **The freelancer's experience level.** Freelancers who haven't yet built up a good reputation and a solid portfolio may charge less. However, once they start building their business, then you can expect the good freelancers to raise their prices (and they'll likely be booked well in advance).

- **The quality of work.** This one is obvious: You get what you pay for. Basically, the more skilled the freelancer, the more you can expect to pay.

- **How the freelancer has positioned him or herself in the market.** A freelancer with a good "unique selling position" (USP) may charge more than those of a similar skill level and background. This includes those who specialize, such as a freelance writer who specializes in creating health-related content.

- **Any extras the freelancer provides.** Some freelancers may offer extra services (such as press release distribution) or even quality guarantees. These freelancers may charge more to cover their extra time, revisions, etc.

- **Where the freelancer lives.** Finally, one other factor that affects pricing is where the freelancer lives.

> `Example`: People who live in the UK or US have a higher cost of living than someone living in the Philippines or in India – thus you'll often find the same quality work at lower prices when you outsource to countries with a lower cost of living. However, you won't want to hire

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writers from countries where English isn't the
predominate language. You'll also want to make sure any
freelancer understands you well enough to follow your
instructions.
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Bottom line: Do NOT shop around based on price, because you may be disappointed. You may end up losing money when you hire a better freelancer to re-do the task.

You've learned in fairly general terms about how to find and evaluate freelancers. Now you're going to discover all you need to know about:

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•  Product creation specialists
•  Content writers
•  Copywriters
•  Design and other technical freelancers
•  Marketing and traffic-generation specialists
•  Customer service/virtual assistant specialists
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We'll start with product-creation specialists and writers.

Read on…

What You Need to Know About Product-Creation Specialists

If you're just getting started in business, you're probably only going to start out creating one or two products in the first few months of your business.

That means that while you may not have an ongoing short-term need for these freelancers, you should think about them in the long-term.

That's because you'll probably create multiple products every year – and the number of products you create may grow as your business grows.

No matter what type of product you're creating, there's a freelance specialist who can help you.

In some cases, you may need to hire multiple freelancers to complete the job.

Here's who you need to hire for the most common jobs:

- **Voice-over artists.** If you create audio products or video products, you may need to hire a voice-over artist for the narration (see voices.com).

- **Audio production.** An audio production specialist can help you record and edit your audio. This includes removing background noise, cutting and pasting bits of audio and even adding music, fades and other special effects.

- **Video production.** This person can help you create and edit your video. If you choose a "full service" company, they can help with everything – including audio, video and even hiring actors, if need be. You can also hire those who just edit and polish your finished piece.

- **Software specialists.** These are software architects and programmers who help you turn a software idea into reality. (*You'll learn more about these sorts of technical specialists in later lessons.*)

- **Researchers.** You may hire freelancers who specialize in researching topics (like the topic of your ebook) as well as researchers who scope out the competition (market research).

- **Writers.** You can hire writers to write the content for your videos and audio books. But of course you can also hire writers to create your text products (ebooks, reports, etc).

Of course product-creation writers aren't the only types of writers you need to hire.

Read on to learn about content writers…

What You Need to Know About Content Writers

You just learned about the different types of product-creation specialists you can hire. One big subset of that group are the content writers, who can create ebooks and other text products as well as all the other content you need.

Can one writer handle all your content-writing needs?

Maybe.

But if you find one writer who's well-versed in all the different types of content writing, you may have to pay more.

That's why you may decide to hire different writers to fulfill different writing functions, including:

- **Product-creation writers.** These are the folks who put together your ebooks, reports and perhaps the scripts for your videos and audio books.

      Tip: These writers need to have the ability to do good
      research and put together a large product based on this
      research.

  You can expect to pay more per word to have an ebook created than to have something like an article created.

- **Article and blog writers.** These folks may not have as good research skills as the product creators, but they don't need them if they're just creating short pieces for you. If you just need fodder for the search engines (and you're not worried all that much about quality), you can get articles created for as little as a few dollars per piece.

      Note: If you need high-quality content – such as content
      you put on your blog, submit to article directories or
      send to your list – then you'll need to pay more to hire
      a writer who can engage your audience.

- **PLR rewriters.** PLR stands for private label rights content, which is content that you purchase the rights to modify and use as you please. Because you shouldn't use private label rights content as-is, you may decide to outsource the task of rewriting and modifying this content.

- **Sales copy writers (AKA copywriters).** These are the most expensive writers, simply because you're hiring them to write content that gets a specific response (such as a sale). These writers can create sales letters, classified ads, pay per click ads, press releases and much more. Since this is a specialized type of writing, we'll cover this topic in a separate lesson.

- **Proof readers/editors.** These folks don't actually write your content. Instead, they polish the content to make it shine. Prices vary according to how much work you need done. This ranges from fixing simple spelling and grammar errors all the way to editing and re-arranging text to make it flow better.

Make sense?

Now let's turn our attention to a writing specialty: Copywriting.

Read on…

Copywriting – What do you REALLY Need?

Copywriters are the folks who write sales copy.

This includes:

- Sales letters.
- Squeeze pages / landing pages.
- Autoresponder messages (promotional).
- Pay per click (PPC) ads.
- Author bylines (those ads you put at the bottom of the articles you submit to the article directories).
- Classified ads.
- Display ads.
- Radio and TV ad scripts.
- Promotional flyers.
- Promotional brochures.
- Press releases.
- Lead-generating reports. (While you can certainly hire a regular ghostwriter to create a lead-generating report, if the report has a promotional tone – and you expect it to turn leads into buyers – than you may want to hire a copywriter for the jobs.)
- Affiliate and JV recruitment letters, emails and ads. (For example, the web page you create to get more affiliates.)
- Promotional materials for your affiliates, such as ads, solo emails, promotional reports, etc.
- Product reviews.

If you want content that converts readers into subscribers or buyers, then you need to hire a copywriter for the job.

And as you can see, you'll likely have an ongoing need for copywriters (meaning you can probably give a copywriter a new job on an almost weekly basis).

Note: Once you start shopping around for copywriters, you'll likely notice that these are among the most expensive freelancers. But if you hire a good copywriter, it's an investment, not an expense. That's because a good copywriter can provide a measurable boost to your bottom line.

Now, while some copywriters can create all the types of content listed above, you'll probably need to hire different copywriters for different types of jobs.

That's because some copywriters tend to specialize.

While there are *no hard and fast rules*, here are the specialties you usually see:

- Sales letters, squeeze pages and other landing pages.

- Autoresponder (email) messages.

- Press releases.

- Short ads (such as pay per click or classified ads).

- Lead-generating reports.

Action Step: Determine what types of marketing you intend to do… and thus what types of copywriters you'll need to hire both in the short term and long term.

Then read on to learn about technical freelancers…

How to Build Your Design and Technical Team of Freelancers

Before I start listing the different types of technical freelancers, let me make one note:

Note: It's a good idea to learn how to do basic maintenance on your own website, such as being able to upload a file. Otherwise, you'll be at the mercy of your webmaster every time you need even the simplest of changes to your site.

Example: Let's say you're about to launch a product. You look at the sales letter just an hour before launch, and you realize you've made a mistake. If you don't know how to upload a file, you'll need to get your webmaster to do it… except that you probably won't get a hold of him within an hour, so your site will launch with the mistake.

Now here's the thing: Uploading a file takes but a few seconds. So if you learn this easy task, then you can do it yourself in 10 seconds, rather than waiting hours or even days for someone else to do it.

With that out of the way, let's look at some of your short and long-term technical and design needs…

- **Web design.** This is the person who designs your overall website. This person can do it completely from scratch, or you can hand over a template and ask him or her to modify it.

- **Web maintenance.** This is as simple as uploading files and making changes. If you have a script-heavy site, however, then this person may make sure your database files and scripts are in good working order. And a good technical person will help ensure your server doesn't crash under a heavy load.

- **Graphic design.** Your web designer will likely be able to do some graphics for your site. However, you may hire someone separately to do other graphics, such as ecover designs or banners.

- **Blog design.** This is someone who specializes in creating unique blog designs, such as a unique WordPress theme.

- **Altering blog functionality.** This is someone who can deal with the coding end of a blog to change the way your blog functions.

- **Script installation.** This is someone who simply installs and customizes scripts (such as a forum script).

- **Software and scripts creation.** Whether you're creating these for your personal use (such as a unique ecommerce solution) or you're creating software products to sell, you'll need a script programmer and software architect to complete the jobs.

- **Miscellaneous programmer.** If you intend to sell things like iPhone apps, you'll need a coder to do the job.

As you can see, you'll need some of these freelancers on a weekly basis (such as designers and webmasters/web development), while others you may need a couple times per year.

Action Step: Use the list above to determine your needs.
Then read on to learn about marketing specialists…

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How to Determine Your Marketing Needs

The next group of freelancers you'll want to consider are those that help you carry out your marketing and traffic-generation tasks. We'll get to those in just a moment. But first…

You'll note that some of these tasks (like link-building) are time-consuming and relatively "low dollar" tasks.

That means that the time you put into them does *not* return a big investment, so it's better to outsource the task. This is particularly true if you value your time. (And you should!)

However, some of these tasks are high value tasks.

> Example: Any time you put into finding a joint venture partner and building this relationship will pay off many times in the long run. So while you certainly can use a JV broker to help you establish yourself in a niche, it's also a good idea to do some of the relationship-building on your own.

Now let's take a look at your short-term and long-term needs…

- **SEO and link building.** These folks are responsible for keeping your pages on top of the search engines for niche-relevant words. You can hire a full-service search engine optimization company, or you can hire people to do parts of the process (such as creating SEO content, researching keywords or building your incoming links).

   > Note: This is generally an ongoing task, meaning you'll probably have a monthly contract with your SEO specialist.

- **PPC management.** This primarily refers to AdWords campaigns, but most PPC managers are happy to run other PPC campaigns for you.

- **Publicity (public relations manager).** This is someone who gets your press releases printed and lands you interviews with the media.

- **Affiliate management.** This is someone who builds your team of affiliates, gives them the tools they need to do a good job and keeps them motivated. This person can be paid a flat fee or a percentage of affiliate profits.

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- **Joint venture brokering.** A JV broker takes a cut of the profits for introducing you to "big players" in your niche.

- **Launch manager.** This is the person who helps orchestrate your product launches. Sometimes this includes affiliate and JV partner recruitment, marketing consultations and even advice about technical issues (e.g., server loads).

- **Email manager.** This person manages your email lists, sends regular emails to your subscribers, etc.

- **Content marketing.** These are writers (whom we discussed before). They'll help you create content for article directories, your blog, social media sites, etc.

- **Conversion expert.** This is someone who works with you on all parts of your marketing process to improve your conversion rate.

  > Example: This person can test, track and tweak everything from your sales letters to your ordering process to your marketing campaigns.

- **Viral marketing.** This person helps you create buzz in your niche using tools like viral YouTube videos.

- **Branding specialists.** This is someone who helps you create and deploy your branding strategy.

Action Step: Use the above list to determine your needs.

> Tip: You'll probably want to start with tasks such as PPC and SEO management.

Next up, read on to evaluate your customer-service needs…

What You Need to Know About Customer Service Representatives

This is another aspect of your business where you'll have an ongoing, lifelong need for customer service reps.

Typically, you have <u>two types of customer service reps</u>, although the same person (if well trained) can do both jobs, particularly if you don't require your rep to have much technical or sales expertise…

1. Pre-Sale Representatives

These are the people who handle inquiries from prospects. You may want to hire pre-sale reps who have marketing and sales experience. That way, your pre-sale reps can help close sales via email or on the phone. Indeed, you may even have a lead-generating system that requires your reps to close leads over the phone.

Pre-sale reps handle questions about pricing, payments, features and benefits of the product, guarantees and more. Often, you'll find that pre-sale reps field questions that are answered in the sales letter, FAQs or other literature.

As such, you can make it easier for your representatives to do their job by providing detailed, searchable FAQs and knowledge databases on your site as well as "copy and paste" answers that your reps can use for many of the most-asked questions.

2. Post-Sale Reps Representatives

These are people who provide support to existing customers. This may mean fielding questions about tracking numbers, lost passwords and refunds.

If you're selling software or other technical products, your post-sale reps will need to be technically inclined. That's because they'll likely need to deal with installations and other technical problems.

The next question is this:

How many customer service reps do you need?

If you're just getting started, you or one customer service may be able to handle your customer service load in just 30-60 minutes per day. As such, you may need just one part-time customer service rep to field inquiries.

> Tip: If you advertise that you offer a specific customer service response time or during specific hours, then you'll need to hire more reps so that you can fulfill your promises.

However, even a small business will experience a customer inquiry surge.

> Example: If you have a press release that gets picked up by major media, you can expect a surge. Or if you have a product launch coming up, then you'll need to hire more customer service reps to handle the additional customer service load.

Naturally, as your business grows so will your need for more customer service reps. And that means that you can plan on hiring more customer service reps as time goes on.

Quick Recap

The first step of the **H.A.N.D.S. Free Formula™** is "HIGHLIGHT Your Needs", which you've just done.

Now that you know what you need, is time to cast a wide net. Read on…

A – <u>A</u>dvertise Jobs

Now that you have an idea of what you'd like to outsource, it's time for you to seek out competent freelancers to build your outsourcing team. And that's exactly what you'll learn how to do in this section.

Let's start with one of the most common places to find freelancers…

How to Find Freelancers on Freelance Sites

One of the easiest ways to get a whole pool of freelancers to choose from is by posting an advertisement (i.e., your project specifications) on a freelancing site. Here are <u>six of the more popular freelancing sites</u>:

- www.elance.com – This is one of the largest and most-established freelancing sites. You'll likely find a big pool of freelancers from which to choose on this site. However, you're not as likely to find "bargains" on this site, simply because of the fees that the site charges freelancers. Nonetheless, you can find some very high-quality freelancers here.

- www.odesk.com – Another well-established site. This site puts a slight emphasis on freelancers who charge per-hour for their work versus per project. If you're hiring for something like a customer service job, then per hour is fine. Otherwise, if you're hiring a programmer, writer, designer or similar, then it's better if you hire per job so there aren't any surprises.

- www.vworker.com – This site used to be called rentacoder.com. Because of this, vWorker is a good place to find programmers, designers and other technical freelancers.

- www.scriptlance.com – This is one of the older freelancing sites. It also specializes in connecting you with programmers, designers and other coders.

- www.freelancer.com – This is the site formerly known as getafreelancer.com. It's also one of the biggest freelancing marketplaces, so you're sure to get plenty of people bidding on your jobs.

- www.guru.com – Yet another well-established, reputable site. The site gives you the option of searching for freelancers by location (e.g., US freelancers, freelancers from European countries, etc).

If you run a search in Google, you'll undoubtedly find dozens of other freelancing sites.

But for best results, stick to the above well-known sites.

Not only will you find a bigger pool of freelancers – many of them with verifiable feedback ratings, portfolios and references –but you'll also be offered some measure of protection.

That's because these established sites often have their own escrow services, so you can be assured of not losing your money when you hire someone.

How to Post a Project

You should cast a wide net when you start searching for freelancers. As such, you may want to post on multiple freelancing sites to find multiple freelancers to complete

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smaller projects. Then you can continue working long-term with those who do the best work for you.

> Tip: Because I recommend that you cast a wide net, in future lessons you'll discover even more ways to find freelancers. So while freelancing sites are great places to find freelancers, don't limit your search to these sites!

Here's how:

Step 1: Choose the Best Site(s)

You can't go wrong by posting your project on large, general sites like Elance.com. However, if you have specific needs then you may want to focus on sites that cater to those needs.

> Example: If you have the budget to post two programming projects, then you may post one each on scriptlance.com and vworker.com (formerly rentacoder.com), as these are the two places you're likely to find a larger pool of programmers.

Step 2: Decide on Your Budget

Since you don't want to limit your options, don't post too narrow of a budget. Instead, post something like "$250 to $500." That way you'll have a wider variety of people bidding on your job.

> Tip: If you don't know the going rate for your particular job, do some research. The easiest way is by seeing what similar jobs are going for on the freelancing sites. You'll find a range – this is the same range you can use for your job (although if it varies too widely, then ignore the top and bottom of the range and choose something in the middle).

Step 3: Register and Post Your Project

Your next step is to register on the site and then post your project. Here's how:

- **Post in the right category.**
- **Use a descriptive, accurate title.**

> > Example: If you need someone to write an article, then create a title such as: "Article writer with SEO experience." Don't use inaccurate terms like

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copywriter (which refers to someone who writes sales copy, not articles).

- **Offer plenty of details.** Freelancers can't bid on your project if they don't know the details, which is why you should be as descriptive as possible.

    Example: Here is an example worth noting…

    Wanted: An article writer with search engine optimization experience to create a pack of ten 500-word SEO articles on the topic of [list niche topic]. Specific topics include [list the topics here]. Keyword density of 2%.

    Requirements: Native English speaker who writes error-free, spell-checked, engaging content. Experience writing dog-training materials preferred. Ongoing work available for the right person.

- **Toss in a special instruction.** Finally, you may want to insert a special instruction in your advertisement just to be sure that your potential freelancers have the ability to follow simple instructions.

    Example: "Include the phrase 'dog crazy' in your reply or it will be deleted without consideration."

Step 4: Sift Through the Talent Pool

Finally, you need to sift through the bids to find the best freelancer. You'll learn more about how to complete this step later in the course. For now, however, just be aware that you shouldn't shop around based on price… and that you need to research the freelancers to find those with good histories.

Pretty simple, right?

Now let's look at another popular way to find freelancers…

How to Find Freelancers Using Google

You can uncover a huge pool of freelancers simply by entering a few search terms into Google. As usual, don't limit yourself. In this case, that means don't just type in one search phrase. Instead, search multiple related phrases to uncover more results.

> Tip: Don't just look at the main search results. Be sure to also look at the "sponsored results," which appear at the top, bottom and along the right side of the regular search results.

Here then are some terms you can use to search for specific types of freelancers…

Writers

- Freelance writer
- Ghostwriter
- Freelance ghostwriter
- Ebook writer
- Article writer
- PLR rewriter

Copywriters

- Copywriter
- Freelance copywriter
- Sales letter writer
- Ad writer
- Press release writer

Programmers

- Programmer
- Freelance programmer
- Freelance coder
- Freelance script writer
- Script writer
- Software engineer
- Software architect

Web Designers

- Web designer
- Web development
- Freelance web designer
- Freelancer webmaster
- Freelance designer

Graphic Designers

- Graphic designer
- Freelance graphic designer
- Ecover designer
- Banner designer

Customer Service Reps

- Customer service freelance
- Virtual assistant
- Freelance virtual assistant

Marketers and Miscellaneous

- PPC campaign manager
- AdWords manager
- Affiliate manager
- JV broker
- Link building campaign
- Press release submission
- Voice over artist
- Video production company

Tip: Note that you can combine the above search terms with the word "hire" or "find."

Example: "hire virtual assistant" or "find banner designer."

Action Step: Uncover at least half a dozen freelancers using Google or your favorite search engine.

Then read on for yet another popular way to find good help…

How to Use CraigsList.org to Build Your Freelancing Team

CraigList.org is basically a large, free classified advertising site. The great thing about this site is that you can search locally for freelancers.

So if you prefer to have a local freelancer (perhaps one you can meet face to face on occasion), then this is a good place for you to start your freelancer search. (But you don't have to limit yourself to searching locally if you don't want to.)

The second good thing about this site is that you can both browse ads from potential freelancers as well as place your own ads. Here's how to do it…

➔ **Browse Ads**

While you're certainly not limited to browsing ads in your region, it is a good place to start. Simply go to www.craigslist.org and then click on your city or region. Next, you'll want to look under two main categories:

- Services
- Gigs

The subcategories you look under depends, of course, on what type of freelancer you need.

> Example: Look under "services -> write" to find writers.

Alternatively, you can simply search for freelancers by using the terms you learned last time. Stick with the broad terms (like "ghostwriter") to produce the most results.

> Tip: Again, see Day 11 for details on how to evaluate freelancers before you hire them.

➔ **Place Your Own Ads**

The second way to find freelancers on CraigsList.com is by placing your own ad. You can do so in the "Jobs" section, the "Services" section or even the "Gigs" section.

Here again you need to create a descriptive ad so that only qualified freelancers answer your ad (which saves you and the freelancer time and money).

Your ad should include:

- **Your budget.** Again, you can use a range such as "$500 to $750," and then let people "bid" on your job. This will attract the most people. Alternatively, you can offer a fixed amount for the job.

- **Complete description of what you need done.** See the ad example I gave you in the freelance site lesson.

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- **Freelancer requirements** (e.g., "local freelancers only").

- **Any special instructions you want to include to help weed out those who can't follow instructions.**

    `Example: "Include the phrase 'parrot speak' in your reply so that I know you've read this ad."`

- **Keywords to attract the most freelancer.** Both your ad title and body of your ad should include multiple keywords.

    `Example: Freelance writer, ghostwriting, ghostwriter, ebook writing, ebook writer, writing job.`

Bottom line: CraigsList.org is a good way to find freelancers. Here's another…

How to Find Freelancers On Business and Marketing Forums

Why business and marketing forums? Simple. Because:

- ➢ **Many freelancers hang out on these sites.** And that means you can research their forum history (e.g., see if they're genuinely helpful, have a good reputation on the forum, etc).

- ➢ **Some of these forums have special sections to match freelancers and employers.** In other words, both you and the freelancers can post and browse ads.

- ➢ **Your business colleagues may be able to offer specific recommendations.** In other words, you can make requesting that fellow forum goers recommend their favorite freelancers. Take careful note of those recommendations from long-time and respected forum members.

Here's where to look:

- www.warriorforum.com – look in the "Warrior for Hire" section first, where you can browse ads or place your own ads. You can also look in the classified and "Warrior Special Offers" section. Start your search here, because this site has many high-quality freelancers frequenting it.

- www.digitalpoint.com marketplace and forums. You'll have to sift through more "chaff" to get to the good freelancers on this site, but you may be able to find a bargain.
- http://marketplace.sitepoint.com – Check the "advertise your services" section, or post your own ad in "looking to hire."

- www.wahm.com/forum/ -- This is a work-at-home mom's (WAHM) site with plenty of women looking for opportunities. You may not find a lot of programmers or highly experienced people here, but you should be able to find virtual assistants and writers.

You can also find freelancers by joining social networking groups on sites like:

- www.facebook.com

- http://econnect.entrepreneur.com/

- www.ning.com

- www.twitter.com

    Tip: Once you join the above sites, look for relevant groups
    by searching for keywords. For example, if you need a writer,
    then search for words like: ghostwriter, freelance writer or
    freelance ghostwriter.

As mentioned above, the bonus of finding a freelancer on a forum is that you can do an extra step in your due diligence process by checking their forum history. Look for:

- **Members who's been on the site for at least six months** (though a year or more is better).

- **Members who behave professionally.** Avoid those who post negatively, get into forum fights, divulge customer information, etc.

- **Potential freelancers who seem to have a good reputation.** For example, do others seem to respect their opinion?

- **Potential freelancers whom other forum members happily recommend.** (Ignore recommendations from forum newcomers or those you don't recognize.)

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Action Step: Browse the above sites and uncover at least half a dozen potential freelancers.

Meanwhile, read on to discover how to find good, reliable freelancers right in your local area…

How to Find Local Freelancers

With the exception of finding freelancers on CraigsList (and specifically searching in your city rather than other regions), you've mainly learned how to find freelancers from around the world.

So now let's turn our attention to finding local freelancers…

If you're the type of person who likes to talk to people one-on-one, then you may prefer to find a local freelancer. Doing so allows you to more easily talk on the phone and even meet on person on occasion.

This is especially beneficial in the following instances:

> **You intend to work long-term with this person**, so you want to build a relationship.

> **You need to have physical meetings**.

>> Example: It may be easier to describe a concept to a graphic artist if you meet in person (as opposed to trying to work via email, chat and webinars).

> **You're hiring this person for a particularly important task, such as managing your marketing campaigns**. Since this person will likely need to be in constant contact with you some days, it may simply be easier to work side by side.

> **The person is working on an hourly basis**. In this case, you may want to set up an office and have the person work in your office.

And so on. Point is, there are benefits to meeting your freelancers.

> Tip: Please note that it's not always possible to meet freelancers, even if they are local. Some freelancers work from home because they don't want to go to work, get dressed for work or deal with

any of the other typical 9-5 routines. Still others may be unable
to meet, perhaps due to disability or some other reason that they
prefer not to travel. In short, don't assume that all local
freelancers are willing and able to meet you in person.

So how do you find these local freelancers? Like this…

➔ Browse the Classified Ads

You should start with your local newspaper and check the classified ads to see if
there are any ads from local freelancers.

If you live in a small town, you may want to check the regional papers (about
as far as you're willing to drive, just in case the freelancer can't come to you).

> Tip: Most classified sections have a "Services" section, a
> "Work Wanted" section, and even a business directory. Those
> are good places to start. Be sure to check the newspaper's
> website, as the ads are searchable online.

➔ Place a Classified Ad

Don't limit yourself to merely searching the classified ads – you can place your
own, too.

You probably won't want to put a long ad in the paper, as that can get
expensive. So use an abbreviated version that gives people an idea of what
you're looking for.

> Example #1: Freelance writer wanted! If you're a creative type
> who can create well-researched, well-written articles for the
> web, call me at [number]. Budget [insert range] per word.

> Example #2: Wanted: Freelance web designer to create five-page
> website. PHP script installation required. Budget [insert
> range]. Call [number] for more details.

➔ Check the Yellow Pages

You probably won't find too many individuals advertising in the Yellow Pages
(i.e., the business section of your telephone book). However, you may find
some bigger firms, especially marketing firms and web development firms.

As such, don't look for bloggers or article writers in the phone book. But do look
for web designers, programmers and marketing managers.

Tip: Check under headings similar to Marketing Services, Web
Services and perhaps Computer Services.

➔ Get on Campus

Local college campuses are full of talented students – and many of them will
work for relatively inexpensively. You can find:

- Researchers, writers and even copywriters in the English,
  journalism and business departments.
- Programmers in the computer sciences department.
- Web designers and graphic artists in the design department.
- Marketers in the business/marketing departments.
- Customer service reps in just about any department, but
  most especially in the tourism and hospitality departments.

And so on.

Basically, there are three ways to find these talented students (keeping in mind
many of them have probably not even considered freelancing before):

1. Post Flyers. Your flyers should detail exactly what you need, which
means you can use the Elance.com ad you created in a previous lesson.
Or if you want to keep it short, then do something like this:

        Now Paying Top Dollar for Writers!

        If you can write a research paper, then creating weekly
        posts for my dog-training blog will be a breeze for you!
        This is fun, exciting work, especially if you love
        writing. So forget about flipping burgers or mopping
        floors – you can earn [range] per word sitting at your
        computer! Call [number] now for more details – and do it
        today, because you can start ASAP!

You can then hang these flyers in the appropriate department as well as
in common areas such as the student union.

> Tip: You can flyers off-campus, too. Try to put them
> where college students frequent, such as pizza places and
> laundromats.

2. Advertise in the Campus Newspaper. You can use the same ad you posted in the local newspaper.

3. Talk to Professors. Finally, you can approach department professors and ask them for recommendations. The professors may even be willing to announce your job opening in their class.

➔ **Network with Colleagues**

Are you a member of your local Chamber of Commerce or other business-oriented group? Or do you know any other business owners in town?

If so, these folks have probably outsourced some tasks, so it doesn't hurt to ask for recommendations.

> Tip: Check the bottom of local business owner's websites,
> as the web designer is often listed. For all other
> services you'll probably need to ask.

Quick Recap

You just learned how to cast a wide net in order to attract as many qualified freelancers as possible. If you used as many of the methods above as possible, then you'll have a big list of prospective freelancers.

The next step is to whittle down this list to the most qualified candidates.

Read on…

N – Narrow the Field

By now you probably have a big list of potential freelancers for different facets of your business.

Now the next step of the **H.A.N.D.S. Free Formula™** is to "NARROW the Field" by doing your due diligence.

We're going to start by talking about this in general, and then you'll learn how to evaluate specific kinds of freelancers.

Here are the <u>first three things</u> you need to check…

1. Check Feedback

If you're hiring from a freelancing site (like elance.com), then you can check your prospective freelancer's feedback rating.

Here's what to look for:

- **Someone with an established history** (at least six months in business, but a year or more is preferable).

- **Someone with a lot of feedback**. You may find people who've been on the site for years, but they only have a few feedback ratings since they use the site so infrequently. Unless you can find other information about these prospective freelancers elsewhere online, it's better to stick with those who've worked with a lot of other people (and have the feedback to prove it).

- **Overall good feedback rating**. Those who do a lot of business will occasionally get complaints, so a handful of complaints in a large sea of overall positive feedback shouldn't be a deal breaker.

2. Check References

Many freelancers who have their own websites post testimonials and references on their websites. Where applicable, check these references by actually emailing the person who gave the reference.

If there are a large number of references, you can just select a random handful to check.

Simply email the person, tell them you saw their reference on the freelancer's website, and ask them if what they said on the site still stands (and if not, ask why not).

3. Check Portfolios

The third item you need to check is the freelancer's portfolio (samples), where applicable. This is especially important if you're hiring a writer, web designer, or graphic artist, as you want to be sure that you like the freelancer's style.

If you're hiring a writer, you'll also want to check if the writer has ever written in your niche before. If you have a "typical" niche (like weight loss), this isn't that big of a deal. However, if you're in a technical or health niche, then you need to make sure the writer has sufficient experience to handle the work.

Next step: Get yourself over to Google and start running searches, including…

➔ Search the Freelancer's Name

You'll want to run a search for the freelancer's name (in quotes) along with any nicknames, usernames or other alternates that you know this person uses.

> Example: Let's say you're searching for "Nathan J. Smith."
>
> To start with, you may search for:
>
> - Nathan J. Smith
> - Nate J. Smith
> - Nathan Smith
> - Nate Smith
> - NJ Smith
> - NJSmith (if, for example, you knew this was his forum username)
> - Nathan Smith Designs (business name)
>
> If you want to narrow your search, you might search for something like:
>
> - Nathan smith web designer.
>
> If you want to search specifically for complaints, you might search for:
>
> - Nathan Smith complaints
> - Nathan Smith scam
> - Nathan Smith designer complaints

And while doing so, keep these three rules in mind:

1. Do make sure the person you find information about really is your freelancer and not someone with the same name.

2. Consider the source (i.e., don't believe everything you read).

3. Look for a pattern of complaints. Again, a tiny handful in a big sea of positives doesn't make too much of a difference. But do look for serious complaints such as fraud allegations or a pattern of complaints.

➔ **Run a Search for Contact Information**

Next, run a search for all known email addresses and telephone numbers.

This search is more reliable because rarely do you find different people who at one point had the same email addresses or telephone numbers.

Again, you're looking for a pattern of complaints.

➔ **Check the Freelancer's Website**

Next, run a search for the freelancer's web link (www.domain.com). Be aware that sometimes domain names are sold, so it's possible the freelancer hasn't owned the domain for long.

> `Tip: Check` archive.org `to see a website's history.`

➔ **Browse the Freelancer's Posting History**

As mentioned before, if you find a freelancer on a forum, then you can check his or her posting history. You can also do this if you find the freelancer on a site like Twitter.com or Facebook.com. Overall, look for someone who conducts him or herself professionally.

Now that you know what to look for in general when evaluating freelancers.

Next up, read on to find out how to evaluate specific types of freelancers…

What to Look for When Hiring Writers and Other Product-Creation Specialists

Below you'll find a checklist you can use to evaluate the various product-creation specialists we talked about in an earlier lesson. Naturally, not all of the following factors apply:

Evaluation Checklist

❍ Do you like the samples in the freelancer's portfolio?

❍ Does the freelancer provide a single service of "full service?"

❍ If the freelancer doesn't provide a full service, can he or she recommend someone to you?
>   Example: Can a video production specialist recommend a reliable voice-over artist?

❍ Are there any "live" samples on the web that you can view?

❍ Does the freelancer provide demos?
>   Example: For software creators or voice-over artists.

❍ Does the freelancer seem to have repeat customers?

❍ Do the freelancer's references check out?

❍ Is the freelancer creative?

❍ Did you complete your due diligence by researching the freelancer's name, email addresses, telephone numbers and website(s)?

❍ What extras does the freelancer provide?
>   Example: Will a video production specialist submit your video around the web?

❍ Does the freelancer have any type of guarantee?

❍ What happens if you need revisions?

❍ What separates this freelancer from similar freelancers offering the same service?

❍ How much does this freelancer charge?

Evaluating Content Writers

Here's a checklist to evaluate your writers…

Evaluation Checklist

❍ Do the writer's references check out?

❍ Did you complete your due diligence by researching the freelancer's name, email addresses, telephone numbers and website(s)?

❍ Is the writer a native English speaker?

❍ Does the write have a good grasp of grammar rules?

❍ Are the samples free or simple errors?

❍ Are the samples in the portfolio well-researched? Are the facts accurate?

❍ Are the samples in the portfolio well-written?

❍ Are the samples engaging, perhaps written in a conversational tone?

❍ Do the samples have a "voice" (versus dry textbook-style writing)?

❍ Does the writer have the ability to write in different styles with different voices?

❍ Can this writer create different types of content_
        Example: SEO articles, ebooks, press releases, etc.

❍ Is the writer able to write creatively (e.g., eye-catching headlines)?

❍ Does this writer have experience in your niche?

❍ Does the writer have any type of guarantee?

❍ What are the terms if you need revisions?

❍ What separates this writer from similar freelancers offering the same service?

○ How much does this writer charge?

Note: Look at "per word" charges versus "per page" charges. That's because different writers have different ideas about how long a page is, so it ranges from 250 to 500 words depending on font type and size. Always use word count so that you know exactly what you're getting and what price.

How to Evaluate Copywriters

When you hire a regular content creator, you're mainly looking to see if they can create well-researched, well-written and engaging content. And while you're looking at these same factors when you hire a copywriter, you're also taking it one step further.

Namely, *you're looking at whether the content converts*.

That is, can it persuade readers to take a specific action, such as buy a product?

In some cases a copywriter can provide you with conversion data. Obviously, this isn't always possible since the product creator isn't always willing to share this data (or at least he isn't willing to let the copywriter share it with the public).

If so, you'll need to look at the verifiable testimonials to see what the copywriter's clients have said about conversion rates. You can also look at the popularity of product (such as on a marketplace like Clickbank.com or Amazon.com) to get a feel for how well the copy converts.

One final note…

Note: Sometimes you'll see copywriters or their clients mention stats like, "This sales letter created $500,000 in sales!" Please note that this really doesn't mean anything. If the letter only converted at 0.5% and the success was due to sending a truckload of traffic to the site, then the copywriter's letter isn't all that impressive.

In other words, stick to looking at "real" statistics such as actual conversion data, where available.

Example: "3% conversion rate on pay per click traffic" or "11% response rate for joint venture partners who mailed their lists."

Here then is a checklist you can use to evaluate copywriters…

<u>Copywriter Checklist</u>

❍ What types of sales copy does the copywriter create (sales letters, classified ads, landing pages, press releases, etc)?

❍ How much does the copywriter charge for:

  Sales letters _____
  Landing pages _____
  Short ads _____
  Press releases _____
  Other content (be specific): _____

❍ Do the copywriter's references check out?

❍ Does the copywriter have a long, established history online and a good reputation?

❍ Has the copywriter worked for any big companies or high-profile individuals?

❍ Are the samples engaging?

❍ Are there any "live" samples online?

❍ Would you buy from the sales letters or ads?

❍ Has the copywriter written materials for your niche before?

❍ Does the copywriter seem to have repeat customers?

❍ Can the copywriter write using different styles and tones? (For example, can he change styles depending on whether he's selling women's purses versus hunting equipment?)

❍ Does the copywriter offer any type of guarantee?
    <u>Note</u>: Most copywriters don't because there are too many variables involved.

❍ Does the copywriter offer any revisions?

◯ Does the copywriter offer any bonuses, such as a free telephone
consultations?

How to Evaluate Designers and Programmers

In just a moment you'll get a checklist that you can use to help you evaluate
designers and programmers. But first, here's a tip…

Tip: There are many talented programmers who charge less because
they live in a part of the world where the cost of living is lower
– yet their quality of work is just the same as others. As such,
this is one instance where you may be able to hire a freelancer in
other parts of the world (such as Romania, India, etc) for less
cost than freelancers from places like the United States, England,
Australia or similar.

A word of warning, however:

While a designer or programmer doesn't need to have the strong language skills that
a writer does, you do need to make sure that you and the freelancer understand each
other well enough to work together.

One way to determine this is by asking questions via email, which helps you evaluate
the freelancer's grasp of your language.

Secondly, be sure to start with small projects to see if you work together well.

How to Evaluate Technical Freelancers

◯ How much does the freelancer charge for your project?

◯ Do the freelancer's references check out?

◯ Did you check the freelancer's portfolio and other samples?

◯ Has the freelancer been in business for at least six months?
◯ Does the freelancer have good feedback ratings on freelancing
sites (like elance.com)?

◯ Did you do your due diligence and research the freelancer's name,
email address, telephone number and website in Google?

◯ Is the programmer able to show you live samples and demos?

❍ Is the freelancer willing to accept payments on larger projects (e.g., 25% of the payment for every 25% of the work he completes)?

❍ Do you and the freelancer understand each other and communicate well?

❍ For Programmers: List what languages the programmer can use for coding (e.g., PHP, C+, etc): _____

❍ Does the programmer have experience working on projects of all sizes?

❍ Is the programmer also a software architect, or will you need to hire an architect separately? (Note: This person listens to your software ideas and helps create the "specs" for the project.)

❍ Does the programmer have design experience to create an attractive user interface?

❍ Is the programmer well-versed in usability issues?

❍ Is the programmer well-versed in debugging issues?

❍ For Web Developers: List the freelancer's areas of expertise (e.g., MySQL database management): _____

❍ For Designers: List the designer's areas of expertise (e.g., Design only? Graphics? Minimal coding? Script installation?): _____

How to Evaluate Marketers and Traffic Generation Specialists

Here's a checklist you can use to evaluate the marketing specialists that you're thinking about hiring…

Evaluating Marketing and Traffic Generation Specialists

❍ How much does the freelancer charge?

❍ Will you need this freelancer on a one-time basis or an ongoing basis?

❍ If you need the freelancer on an ongoing basis, what's the retainer charge or monthly fee?

❍ Does the freelancer offer full services or just individual tasks?

❍ Does the freelancer have a good feedback rating on freelance sites (where applicable)?

❍ Do the freelancer's references check out?

❍ Did you run a search for the freelancer's name, email address, telephone number and website in Google?

❍ Has the freelancer done any work for any recognizable companies or "big names" in your niche?

❍ What kind of samples or proof does the freelancer have to show you?

❍ Can the freelancer provide any sort of measurable results?
    Example: A search engine optimization specialist can show you how your web pages are climbing in the search engines.

❍ Does the freelancer offer any sort of guarantee?

❍ Does the freelancer offer any sort of bonuses?

For JV Brokers:

❍ Does this person have a long and established history in the market? In other words, does he have a lot of contacts that he can introduce you to and bring on board?

❍ Does this broker have a good track record recruiting joint venture partners for others in your niche (including product launches)?

For Affiliate and Launch Managers:

❍ Does this person have a lot of contacts in the niche so that he can recruit some "super affiliates" for your affiliate program?

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○ Does this manager have a good track record promoting products? For example, is he known for running successful affiliate contests?

○ Does this person have skills or some knowledge of copywriting?

○ Does this person seem well-organized and able to communicate effectively?

For SEO and Link Builders:

○ Does the freelancer have any history of link spamming or other "black hat" SEO practices? (If so, avoid this person because he could get your site banned from the search engines.)

For Public Relations Specialists:

○ Does this person have verifiable successes, such as press releases printed into newspapers or media interviews that you can check?

○ Does this person work locally, or can he land you national or even international attention?

For Viral Marketing Specialists:

○ Does the specialist have verifiable successes?
        Example: Can you research one of his viral videos on YouTube?

○ Is there any evidence that the freelancer buys views on YouTube? (In other words, is there evidence that he falsely inflates views to make it seem like there's more of a viral effect than there really is? If so, avoid this person.)

How to Evaluate Customer Service Representatives

As usual, I've provided a checklist as well as other tips to help you evaluate your pool of prospective customer service reps.

Please Note: It's extremely important that you take your time and do your due diligence and research carefully for each prospective customer service representative.

That's because this person is going to be the "face" of your business. He'll be the first person a prospect comes in contact with before he makes the buying decision.

This is also the first person that a disgruntled customer will contact – so your representatives need to be calm professionals who are used to dealing with emotional, angry people.

Secondly, your customer service reps may have access to sensitive information, such as passwords, usernames, customer lists and even payment processors. If this is the case with your customer service reps, you need to be sure you're hiring honest and trustworthy people.

> Tip: You may decide to hire locally and have the rep work alongside you in your office. You may also decide to do background checks or other measures, depending on how much sensitive information your reps will have access to.

How to Evaluate Your Customer Service (CS) Reps

○ Do the CS rep's references check out?

○ Does the rep have good feedback ratings on freelancing sites (where applicable)?

○ Did you do your due diligence by researching the CS rep's name, email addresses, telephone numbers, website and other information in Google?

○ Did you check the CS rep's forum and social media posting history? (If you know this person posts on forums, check their post history to make sure this person overall is calm and professional.)

○ Does the rep have any marketing and sales experience (where applicable)?

○ Does the rep have any technical support experience (where applicable)?

○ Does the rep have a strong grasp of the English language?

○ Does the rep have a pleasant speaking voice? (Applicable if he or she will be fielding phone inquiries.)

○ Can the rep type quickly? (Applicable if the rep will be fielding "live chat" inquiries.)

○ Did the rep pass the background check? (Where applicable.)

You've just learned how to evaluate a variety of freelancers. Now it's time to hire. Read on…

How to Hire Freelancers

If you've followed the "due diligence" guidelines in the last two lessons, then you're now able to evaluate any freelancer and make hiring decisions.

Now let's talk about the actual process of hiring someone, starting with the first step…

➔ Screen Multiple People

Some people hire multiple people for the exact same job, simply to be able to compare head-to-head who does the best work. However, that's not necessary.

Instead, you can hire multiple people for similar jobs.

Examples:

• Hire a group of five writers to each create five articles for you (all articles should be in the same general niche for easier comparisons).

• Hire a group of three graphic designers to create an ecover graphic for you.

• Hire three researchers to create a keyword list for you.

You see, even though you've done your due diligence so that you know the prospective freelancer does good work, for some reason the two of you may not work together well.

Perhaps you have troubles communicating your vision to a particular freelancer. Or maybe you just don't like the freelancer's style. It happens and it doesn't make you or the freelancer bad people. It just means the freelancer isn't suited to your particular job.

Tip: If you're happy with the work that all your freelancers produce, great! That way you have multiple backups in case your first-choice freelancer is unavailable the next time you need a project completed.

➔ Sign Legal Agreements

Before you start working on a project with a freelancer, you should sign a legal agreement which lays out the terms and scope of the project. This includes:

- **Payment terms.** This is where you work out how and when the freelancer will be paid.

  > Example: 50% upfront and 50% upon delivery of the completed project, payable via PayPal.

- **Delivery deadlines.** You should certainly list the final deadline here. But on bigger projects you may have other milestone deadlines. Be sure to work these deadlines out with your freelancer, as you're probably not the only client he or she is servicing.

- **Scope of the project.** This is where you list exactly what you're paying the freelancer for.

  > Example: "Research and writing of 5000 word report on the topic of dog training."

- **Independent contractor's role.** Here you state that your freelancer is an independent contractor (not an employee) and is thus responsible for his or her own taxes and for following other applicable laws and regulations.

And any other terms that are important to you or your freelancer (such as what happens if the deadline is missed, what types of revisions are offered, etc). This agreement should protect both you and the freelancer.

Note: Please note that some freelancers have their own contracts which you can read and sign. If not, you'll want to have your lawyer draw up a generic agreement that you can use with all your newly hired freelancers.

➔ Send a Detailed Brief

Your freelancer isn't a mind reader, which means you need to offer a detailed project brief.

> Note: You'll learn more about these briefs in later lessons.

➔ Start Small

Do NOT give a new freelancer a big project. Instead, start with multiple small projects so that you can evaluate his or her work and your working relationship.

Action Step: Contact your lawyer to get a generic agreement drawn up.

Then read on for instructions on how to delegate tasks and manage your freelancers!

D – Delegate and Manage

We're now at the "D" of our **H.A.N.D.S. Free Formula™**: "DELEGATE and Manage". The purpose of this step is to now make it easy for your freelancers to complete the jobs you've assigned them.

Over the next several pages you'll get:

- Sample project briefs/questionnaires for each of the main types of freelancers (writers, marketers, designers, etc). This will help reduce misunderstandings and miscommunications.

- Protocol checklists you can use to make the project run smoothly.

- And in some cases tips for managing different types of projects and freelancers.

Let's start with the product creation specialists…

> Note: Be sure to sign your legal agreements BEFORE you start any project.

Product Creation Specialists

The first thing you need to do is create a brief for your freelancer. This is a document that lays out exactly what you want created.

Here's a sample document that you can fill out (please note that you'll need to tweak this document depending on whether you're hiring a video producer, audio producer or some other product creator)…

Project Questionnaire

Brief description of this product, including niche topic and
format: _____

How long is this product?

What is the purpose of this product? For example, is it a paid
product, a lead generator or something else?

Who is the intended audience? (Here write everything you know about
these people, from age to gender to hobbies and everything else you
know.) _____

What should the intended audience do when they complete the
product? (For example, take action on what they've learned,
purchase a product, etc.)

Special instructions (includes formatting instructions, "tone,"
etc): _____

Delivery deadline (include milestone deadlines, where applicable):
_____

Agreed-upon price for this project: _____

Now here's the checklist you can give to your product-creation specialists to make sure he or she completes the job as assigned…

Protocol Checklist

❍ Did you do market research to create a competitive product?

❍ Did you ask questions about the brief before proceeding?

❍ Did you show [your name] an outline before proceeding?

❍ Did you show [your name] a first draft?

○ Did you proof your work to help ensure it's free or errors?

○ Did you polish the final piece so that it's top quality?

○ Did you remove extraneous noises? (For video and audio.)

○ Did you check that the product works properly? Please check that it also works on multiple platforms (where applicable).

○ Did you keep the product within the agreed-upon specifications?

○ Did you inform [your name] about any possible delays?

○ Did you inform [your name] about any possible complications?

○ Are you keeping in contact with [your name] on a regular basis with updates? {Note: please email me at [your name] on a [daily/weekly/twice weekly] basis with updates.}

○ Did you convert the product to the requested format?

○ Did you distribute the product as requested?

Here's a questionnaire and checklist to help you and your writers communicate with one another so that you can better manage the project…

Project Questionnaire

Brief description of this product, including niche topic and format: _____

How long is this product? (Be sure to use word count rather than pages so that there are no misunderstandings.)

What is the purpose of this product? For example, is it a paid product, a lead generator, traffic-generation content (like an SEO article) or something else?

Who is the intended audience? (Here write everything you know about these people, from age to gender to hobbies and everything else you know. Be sure to also mention the nationality of this audience so that the writer can adjust jargon, spelling and even tone to match the audience.) _____

What should the intended audience do when they complete the product? (For example, take action on what they've learned, purchase a product, etc.)

How should this product be written? (Examples: What kind of style and tone? Should the writer try to mimic your style… or is a generic style ok?)

_____

Delivery deadline (include milestone deadlines, where applicable):
_____

Agreed-upon price for this project: _____

Now here's the checklist you can give to your product-creation specialists to make sure he or she completes the job as assigned…

Protocol Checklist

❍ Did you do market research to create a competitive product?

❍ Did you ask questions about the brief before proceeding?

❍ Did you show [your name] an outline before proceeding? Please be sure to note on your outline which topics you're emphasizing, if any.

❍ Did you show [your name] a first draft?
   Note: For longer projects you may want to have your writers show you a sample, such as the first 3000 words, just to make sure you're on the same page… so to speak.

❍ Did you proof your work to help ensure that it's free or errors?

❍ Did you polish the final piece so that it's top quality?
❍ Did you spend extra time creating eye-catching chapter titles, headlines, etc?

❍ Did you do your keyword research? (Where applicable – for SEO content.)

❍ Did you double check the keyword density (where applicable)? The keyword density should be [X%].

❍ Did you incorporate LSA guidelines, such as using synonyms? (Where applicable – this is for SEO content.)

❍ Did you keep the product within the agreed-upon specifications?

❍ Did you inform [your name] about any possible delays?

❍ Did you inform [your name] about any possible complications?

❍ Are you keeping in contact with [your name] on a regular basis with updates? {Note: please email me at [your name] on a [daily/weekly/twice weekly] basis with updates.}

❍ Did you convert the product to the requested format?

❍ Did you distribute the product as requested?

Copywriters

In this section you'll find the tools you need to work with your copywriters, starting with the project brief…

Tip: While I am providing a complete copywriting questionnaire in this lesson, please note that most copywriters have their own project questionnaire that they'll ask you to fill out.

Copywriting Project Questionnaire

Project

❍ What type of sales copy is needed?

❍ What do you want the prospects to do after they've read the sales copy?

❍ Agreed-upon price: _____

❍ Delivery deadlines (including any milestones): _____

Target Market

❍ Who is the intended audience? _____

❍ List what you know about this market:

- Age:
- Gender:
- Income:
- Education level:
- Where they live:
- Hobbies:
- Hopes:
- Fears:
- Problems:
- What type of solution they're seeking:
- Any jargon they use?

❍ Where will the traffic come from? (For example, joint venture partners, press releases and pay per click advertising.)

Product

❍ What is the product?

      <u>Note</u>: Be sure to give the copywriter full access to the product.

❍ What is the name of the product?

❍ What problem does it solve? What does it do for the target market?

❍ List all the features and associated benefits of the product, starting with the biggest benefits:

      Features …………………………………… Benefits
      1.
      2.
      3.
      4.
      5.
      (and so on)

❍ Who are the competitors? (List specific products and links.)

❍ What makes this product unique or different from the competitor products? What is this product's unique selling position (USP)?

Offer

❍ Price:

❍ Guarantee:

○ Any bonuses:

○ Any terms:

○ Scarcity/Sense of urgency?

○ List anything else the copywriter should know about the product, the audience and the offer: _____

○ Describe your branding strategy: _____

Next up, there's the checklist you can give to your copywriters to help them complete the task…

Copywriter Checklist

○ Did you review the questionnaire / brief?

○ Did you get access to the product from [your name] or [product creator's name]?

○ Did you ask questions to clarify the questionnaire/brief?

○ Did you research and profile the target market?

○ Have you researched the niche competitors?

○ What makes this product unique/different than the competitors?

○ What is the product's biggest benefit?

○ Did you add in bonus headlines and other elements for testing purposes?
○ Did you format the copy?

○ Have you kept [your name] informed about your progress? {Note: Please email me at [contact info] every [time period] to let me know how you're progressing.]

○ Have you notified [your name] of any potential delays, problems or other complications?

○ Did you show [your name] a first draft?

❍ Did you incorporate [your business name's] brand when drafting the copy?

Technical Projects and Freelancers

As usual, in the coming pages there's a questionnaire you can fill out to give to your freelancers and a checklist they can use to complete the task. Please note that Not all questions will apply to all projects.

Project Questionnaire / Brief

Designers

❍ What is the project?

❍ What is the purpose of this item? (e.g., a graphical header designed to attract attention)

❍ What is the agreed-upon price?

❍ What is your brand/logo (to incorporate into design):

❍ Describe what you want done in as much detail as possible. Be specific:

❍ Describe the colors:

❍ Any specific images you'd like used?

❍ What "feeling" do you want the site/design/graphics to convey?

❍ Provide links to similar samples you like:

Programmers

Note: for best results, you should get a software architect to help you create your project brief, as this is just a rough outline)…

❍ What is the project?

❍ What is the purpose of this script/software?

❍ Is this software that runs on a computer or on a website?

❍ What platform? (e.g., Windows PC… or a Linux server)

❍ Any preferences for language?

❍ Describe in as much detail as possible exactly what this software should do:

❍ Describe what the user interface should look like (design wise):

❍ Describe the functions of the user interface (e.g., what options/buttons should appear):

❍ Provide links to demos or other samples that show how you'd like your software/script to look and behave:

Now here's the checklist you can give to your freelancer to help them complete the work…

Freelancer Checklist

❍ Did you read the brief?

❍ Did you clarify any questions/doubts before proceeding?

❍ Do you understand all aspects of the software/design?

❍ Did you establish a deadline?

❍ Did you inform [your name] of any delays or complications?

❍ Have you been keeping in contact with [your name]? Please contact me at [contact info] at least [time period] with progress reports.

❍ Did you complete the project using the preferred platform/language?

❍ Did you turn over all source files?

> For Designers:

> ❍ Did you incorporate the branding/logo?

○ Did you offer multiple concepts?

<u>For Programmers</u>:

○ Did you offer a "rough sketch" of the user interface?

○ Did you show [your name] an early concept of the program?

○ Did you test and de-bug the program?

Marketing Specialists

Once you've started hiring competent freelancers to deal with the marketing and traffic-generation aspects of your business, you'll need a good way to communicate with them.

As usual, the tools in this lesson (your project questionnaire/brief and the freelancer's checklist) will help make your projects go more smoothly.

<u>Project Questionnaire</u>

○ Describe the work you need done in as much detail as possible:

○ What are your goals and expected results? (Note: Your freelancer will tell you if your goals or expectations are unreasonable. If so, together you can draw up more reasonable goals.)

○ Is this a one-time task or an ongoing project?

○ If it's ongoing, how often will you need additional work? (Weekly, monthly, etc.)

<u>For SEO and PPC Managers</u>:

○ Provide a list of keywords or give instructions on what types of keywords you want to rank for in the search engines.

<u>For Link Builders</u>:

○ Give complete instructions on what types of links you want and how many (e.g., blog commenting links, links from article directories, reciprocal links such as those from blogrolls, etc).

<u>For Conversion Experts</u>:

❍ Discuss your current conversion rate data. Include notes on where this traffic comes from.

<u>For Affiliate Managers, Launch Managers and JV Brokers</u>:

❍ Be sure to list full expectations.
> <u>Example</u>: Do you just want the manager to recruit – or are they also in charge of creating marketing materials for affiliates? Will they be doing any testing and tracking?

Now here's the checklist you can give to your freelancer…

<u>Freelancer Checklist</u>

❍ Did you read and understand the brief?

❍ Did you ask questions before starting?

❍ Did you inform [name] of any possible delays or complications?

❍ Have you kept in regular contact with [name]? Please contact [name] at [contact information] at least [time period] with a progress report.

<u>For SEO and PPC Managers</u>:

❍ Did you get the list of keyword from [name]? –OR—Did you check with [name] to be sure you both agreed on the list of keywords?

❍ <u>For PPC</u>: What is [name's] daily budget?

❍ Were you able to secure introductory coupons through AdWords and other PPC search engines?

❍ Did you ask [name] if he/she wanted ads to appear on the AdWords content network?

<u>For JV, Affiliate and Launch Managers</u>

❍ Have you recruited at least [number] of partners?

○ Did you start early enough to create a launch event?

○ Did you build anticipation for prospects?

○ Have you captured prospect name/email during launch event?

○ Have you given the partners enough marketing tools?

○ Have you offered extra incentives such as affiliate contests or tiered commissions?

○ Have you shared the launch data with [name]?

○ Are you in touch with the technical team regarding server load issues?

Customer Service Representatives

In this section you'll find two checklists: One for you to help you train your reps, and one for your reps to use to do their jobs.

Training Your Reps

○ Have you created a knowledge base and/or FAQ (frequently asked questions) to lessen your reps' workload?

○ Do you use a Help Desk to make it easier for your reps to organize and keep track of inquiries? (In other words, don't rely on email alone.)

○ Have you created "copy and paste" answers for your reps to use to answer common questions?

○ Have you given your reps access to all the tools they need? (This may include access to usernames and passwords to help customers with password recovery, access to the product to field pre-sale questions, access to the payment processor to process refunds, etc.)

○ Have you given your representatives written guidelines on how to handle common customer service issues?
　　　　Example: What to do when someone requests a refund that's just past the guarantee period.

❍ Have you trained your reps on your mission and branding so that they can incorporate your brand concept into their correspondence?

❍ Have you given your reps a company policies document? (E.G., terms of service, privacy policy, guarantee policy, etc.) This also includes guidelines such as how quickly they need to answer support inquiries.

❍ Have you hired more reps to handle expected surges?
    Example: When you have a product launch?

❍ Have you informed your existing reps of expected customer service inquiry surges?

❍ Have you trained your technical reps how to install and customize your software or other product?

❍ Have you trained your marketing reps on the features and benefits of your product?

❍ Have you hired a customer service manager to manage the team? (Applicable once your team grows to several people. This person can hire, train and manage other customer service reps.)

❍ Have you given your most-accessible email address, Skype information, cell phone or other contact information in case of urgent questions?

❍ Have you given your reps contact information for other people on your team they may need to talk to, such as your technical team?

Now here is the customer service checklist…

Customer Service Checklist

❍ Have you reviewed the knowledge base and FAQs?

❍ Have you reviewed the "copy and paste" answers to common questions?

❍ Have you reviewed the company branding and mission statement?

❍ Have you reviewed the company policies document?

❍ Have you reviewed the product?

❍ Where applicable, have you tried the product yourself? (Especially important for technical reps who need to know exactly how to install software and how to make it function optimally.)

❍ Do you have a list of names and contact information for other staff, such as the technical team?
<u>Example</u>: In case of server problems.

❍ When in doubt, please contact [your name] at [insert your quickest, most accessible contact information] so that I can tell you my preferred means of handling a specific issue.

Quick Recap

As you just learned, one of the keys to working well with your freelancers is to have good communication between you.

The checklists and protocols you received in this section will help you communicate better with your freelancers so that you get better results.

You're likely to find that some of your freelancers produce excellent results for you – so much that you want these freelancers to do every task.

That's why the final step is to learn how to keep your freelancers satisfied and happy so that they remain on your team.

Read on…

S – <u>S</u>atisfy Freelancers

Over the last several pages you've learned how to "HIGHLIGHT Your Needs", "ADVERTISE Jobs", "NARROW the Field", and "DELEGATE and Manage".

Now it's time for the final step: "SATISFY Your Freelancers."

Chances are, you put a lot of work into finding the right freelancers. You did your due diligence and took time to show them how you like specific jobs to be completed. And that's why you don't want to do this task very often.

That is, you don't want your freelancers to quit and move on. Instead, you want to keep them motivated and happy to work for you.

Here's how to do exactly that…

➔ Offer Praise

Your freelancers are just like anyone else. And that means that words of praise can go a long way in keeping them happy and motivating them to do a good job.

Point is, don't make the mistake of only talking to your freelancers when they've done something wrong and/or when you need to offer criticism.

Instead, recognize a job well done. Tell them what you liked about their work.

Be generous with your praise and verbal rewards. Doing so makes for a more pleasant work environment and boosts morale.

> Tip: Naturally, you will need to offer criticism from time to time. If you're dealing with a freelancer who overall does good work for you, then use the "bookend" method when being critical. This means you offer a word of praise, then tell your freelancer about the work that needs improvement and then offer another word of praise.

➔ Provide Bonuses

From time to time you may want to motivate your good freelancers with unexpected monetary bonuses. Some employers traditionally offer yearly bonuses (usually at the end of the year). However, it usually works best if you offer bonuses all throughout the year… specifically on projects for which your freelancer has done an exceptionally good job.

> Note: Be sure to tell your freelancer exactly why you're providing the bonus.

➔ Make it Easy for Your Freelancers to Do Their Jobs

http://www.nicheology.com

Finally, you can create a more pleasant work environment by making it easy for your freelancers to do their jobs. Here's how:

- **Be accessible.**

Don't act like it's a bother when your freelancer contacts you with questions… otherwise, the next time your freelancer may not do it (and you won't get the results you hoped for). Instead, encourage questions and answer them promptly. Give your freelancers an email address or other contact information that you check frequently.

- **Provide written instructions and other documentation.**

You may prefer to talk to a freelancer on the phone because it's quicker. However, you should still follow up with written instructions. That way a freelancer can always reference your written instructions, which helps reduce misunderstandings, forgotten tasks, etc.

Secondly, you'll also want to provide written "manuals" and documentation for common tasks that you can use to train your freelancers.

> Example: You create documentation that details how to access your blog and publish a post.
>
> Tip #1: You may even have your existing team help you create this documentation, since the experienced staff will know the best and most sufficient ways to handle these tasks. Providing detailed documentation to new hires makes it easier for them to learn their tasks.
>
> Tip #2: In addition to written documentation, you may offer videos. This is particularly useful if you're demonstrating how to use software, such as your Help Desk software or your preferred keyword tool.

- **Create process maps.**

Another tool you can use to help train your staff is a process map, mind map or decision map. This shows your staff how to carry out specific tasks and in what order they should complete the process.

You can also create "decision trees" that help your staff deal with specific issues.

> Example: You can create a map or decision tree that helps your customer service rep troubleshoot a software problem.

- **Compile contact-information lists.**

Finally, you'll want to provide contact information for all team members that need to speak to each other.

This saves you time because you don't have to be a "middle man."

Instead, the team members can speak directly with each other rather than going through you.

> Example: Your researcher and ghostwriter will want to be in contact to exchange information. Your product creator and copywriter should be in contact, especially if you're trying to create a product and get some of the marketing materials created simultaneously.

Conclusion

And there you have it – you now know how to find, evaluate, hire, train, manage and motivate your freelancers using the *H.A.N.D.S. Free Formula™*!

Let's recap the steps:

- **HIGHLIGHT Your Needs.** Here's where you determined your short-term, long-term and ongoing needs for a variety of freelancers, including writers, programmers, designers and more!

- **ADVERTISE Jobs.** This is where you learned a variety of ways to find competent freelancers, both locally and around the world.

- **NARROW the Field.** In this step you learned how to find the right freelancers for the job by doing your due diligence.

- **DELEGATE and Manage**. In this step you learned how to brief, communicate with and manage your freelancers.

- **SATISFY Freelancers.** Finally, in this last step you discovered how to reward and motivate your freelancers as means of retaining them.

If you haven't already done so, **your next step is to <u>take action</u>**.

If you're just starting out, you may outsource a smaller number of jobs. In particular, focus on those jobs you can't do (like web design or graphic design) or those "low value" jobs that are simply cheaper to outsource (such as article writing).

**As your business grows, you can increase
the amount of tasks you outsource.**

Eventually you can outsource virtually everything… which leaves you to spend your days coming up with product ideas and marketing strategies!

Point is, **if you want to enjoy more free time in the near future, you need to start outsourcing today**. ☺