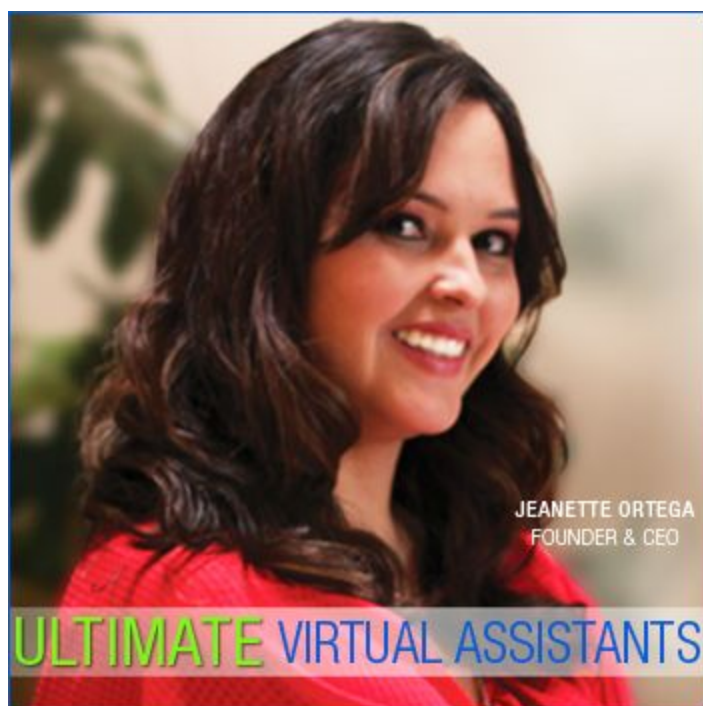


# Step-by-Step Guide: Grow Your Business by Hiring Your Dream Team

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## **Grow Your Business by Hiring your Dream Team**

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# Grow Your Business by Hiring your Dream Team

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# Grow Your Business by Hiring your Dream Team

## Introduction

Building a true “Dream Team” team starts well before the hiring process: It begins the instant you first think “I need help with my online business”. In fact, it may even begin before that: If you are experienced at business planning, you may have planned to grow your business from a single owner enterprise to a full team-based business right from your first daydream.

Your business predecessors often learned from trial and error in hiring and managing teams – and that goes double for online team management, which had to be virtually re-invented from offline principles and practices. Many of the same principles and practices apply – but there are some key differences.

For starters, with a virtual, online team, your key employee or contractor may live in a completely different country. You usually don’t meet face to face, so you can base impressions on body language and personal chemistry. You can get around this to some extent with Skype interviews, especially, if you both have web cams; but you are depending largely on what you read online. This is why it will be extra important to check every reference.

But before we ever get to the interviewing stage, there is one important step to take...

## Step One: Planning Your Dream Team

Before we begin our planning, let’s make sure we’re on the same page. What exactly is a “dream team”?

You will get different answers from different types of businesses in different industries and niches, as well as business owners with different philosophies, but it all boils down to this:

- ★ A “Dream Team” is one that rounds out and complements your own skills and talents, enabling your company to reap real profit while experiencing healthy growth and building your company’s reputation.

In other words, a Dream Team fills in your gaps and makes you and your company stronger and better-rounded.

So knowing exactly **who you need to hire** is your most important first step.

For most small, online businesses, this boils down to answering one question:

- ★ “Will one talented Virtual Assistant do the trick, or do I need to plan for several team members?”

Which leads to another question, if the latter is your answer...

- ★ “Exactly how many is ‘several’?”

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And that depends on you. It depends on how well-formed and realistic your vision is, and what your ambitions might be. It depends on your company mission and goals.



For example, do you see yourself at the head of a fleet of minions, all slaving away over typewriters? If you want to create a copywriting empire, churning out hundreds of modules of Private Label Rights material and sub-contracted client projects monthly, this vision may be surprisingly close to the mark.

On the other hand, if you just need someone to take care of the non-billable tasks – the ones you lose money by performing yourself – your dream team is likely to consist of four or less team members.

As little as one competent Virtual Assistant can make your business blossom and turn into a powerful niche presence to be reckoned with.

### 1. Seven questions to ask yourself, before deciding on your team needs:

- a) Where do I see my company, five years down the road? Ten years down the road?
- b) Do I want to sell it eventually or do I always want to be a sole proprietor?
- c) Is my business highly dependent on me and my personality, as well as my unique outlook, experience and skill sets?
- d) Would my business cease to exist if I left it?
- e) Do I ever want to run a large company, or am I happy with a very small organization?
- f) What do my clients need? What do I do if they “want more”?
- g) What’s my budget now? What am I planning for, budget-wise and profit-wise, as my company grows?

Once you have decided on the number of team members you want (a) now (b) further down the road, it’s time to focus on the immediate future.

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2. **How many people are you going to hire or contract immediately?**  
One? Two? More?
- 

3. **Sit down and write out a list of tasks you want these new hires to supervise or perform.**

Some suggestions to get you started:

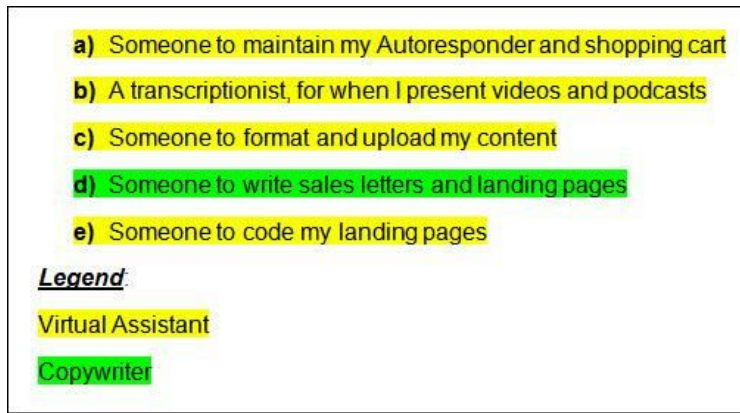
- ★ Content writing
- ★ Content formatting
- ★ Web design and maintenance
- ★ Webinar management (can include transcription)
- ★ Podcasting management (can include transcription)
- ★ Video editor
- ★ Shopping cart and Autoresponder management
- ★ Social media management
- ★ Help Desk management (customer service)
- ★ Advertising management (can include writing ads and metrics)
- ★ Bookkeeping
- ★ General support

4. **Write down all the tasks you *currently* perform. Highlight all the tasks that don't make you money directly.** (Example: Bookkeeping is necessary, but if you spend the entire morning posting and filing receipts, you haven't made a penny; on the other hand, if you spend the entire morning writing a Direct Response ad for your copywriting-business client, you've just made three hundred dollars.)

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5. Study your list and decide how many team members you need right now. (Circle them with pen, change the text to a different color or highlight them in different colors – whatever works for you mentally, when organizing.

Example:



Following this process allows you to perform two valuable functions:

- ★ Determine and clarify the exact tasks you need to outsource or delegate
- ★ Determine how many separate team members you actually need to hire

Of course, this doesn't have to be cast in stone: For example, you may not be able to find a VA who specializes in all of the above at once. On the other hand, you may find a fantastic WordPress expert who can create WordPress landing pages. Based on the above criteria, you could end up with any combination (depending on who is available), such as:

- ★ A VA who copywrites and a web designer
- ★ A VA who handles WordPress, a transcriptionist and a copywriter
- ★ A VA who does all of the above

When you have finally hired your Dream Team, then you can decide who answers to whom: And the more team members you hire, the more likely someone will have to supervise them.

Finally, the last question you need to ask yourself...

6. Do I need a General, Office or Project Manager to supervise all the other new members, or can I fulfill this function myself?

# Grow Your Business by Hiring your Dream Team

## Step Two: Preparing to Hire

Before you ever begin the hiring process, write down a Profile Sheet for each new Team member, detailing specific duties you want them to perform. And be as detailed and specific as possible. Don't just put "write copy" beside "Task # 1"; put down "write 2 eBooks, 4 work sheets, 4 checklists and 10 blog posts per month."

Then write down whether or not you expect the writer to:

- ★ Supply graphics to accompany their written content
- ★ Format copy into HTML or .PDFs

The more specific you are, the better your chances of hiring someone with those exact skills. If you hire a copywriter and assume she'll provide graphics or format your content into "camera-ready" format; then .PDF it for you, you may be in for a rude awakening. A true copywriter often provides only content written in .TXT format.

Leaving out details like your formatting expectations provides room for disappointment and frustration on both sides.

## Balancing Your Budget

Now that you have a list of positions you want filled and tasks you want to delegate or outsource, it's still not time to look for the perfect personnel to fulfill these mandates.

You need to make sure any hiring you do will bring a good, solid return on your investment – and that you can consistently afford to maintain wages or fees.

Finally, remember that a freelance contractor will most likely be your most cost-effective hiring solution, if yours is a small, online service business. With regular employees, you need to worry about taxes, benefits and government requirements: Outsource contractors take care of their own taxes and needs.

1. Determine the amount you can currently allot to outsourcing or hiring
2. Familiarize yourself with rates for the professionals you have decided you need
3. Determine:
  - ★ How much money per month you can allow each team member
  - ★ Whether or not you'd prefer to pay
    - hourly
    - per project
    - monthly
    - per package
  - ★ How many hours per month you can afford, based on current rates



# Grow Your Business by Hiring your Dream Team

## Step Three: Finding the Right Person

Now comes the moment you have been waiting for: Finding your perfect team members.

If you don't already have someone in mind per position, here is how to ensure that you find and hire the best candidates for the job...

- 1. Find your perfect online employee or contractor... *online*.** Before you start to Google, however, check the social networks you use most. Top contractors should have a visible professional presence there – and how they handle their LinkedIn profile or Facebook Page should tip you off as to their competence and the way they do business.
- 2. Check appropriate online directories such as <http://ivaa.org/submit-rfp/> or [www.VAnetworking.com](http://www.VAnetworking.com).** Familiarize yourself with them all: You may find that one particular directory will work better for your needs than others.

The advantages of agency-type directories? Some amount of screening does go on with the more reputable ones such as those mentioned above. Payments are made in escrow, which means funds are not released to the freelancer until you have acknowledged to the agency your receipt of the work and (in some cases) satisfaction.

This stops you from being ripped off by a fabulous-sounding candidate who asks for all or partial payment up front... then disappears off the face of the planet. It also helps protect you against predators, financial or otherwise – the biggest drawback of using public, unscreened directories such as Craigslist (If you do use a public directory, make sure you set proper security in motion: Don't give out your address or any personal, identifiable information that could be used for security fraud and insist on payment on delivery of at least the first draft or version of a project.

- 3. Look for who you know – both business peers and contractors.** Who do you talk to in your social networks? Business mastermind forums? You don't want to hire your best friend (that rarely ever works) but you probably have become familiar with people in certain fields over the years, even if they are just friends of friends. If you do hire someone you know well or have until now strictly socialized with, be aware that the comfortable dynamic you now enjoy may change – for better or worse – when you enter into an employer/employee or client/contractor relationship.
- 4. Ask for recommendations.** Let your needs be known in a straightforward manner – and finish by asking for recommendations or leads.

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## Step Four: Narrowing Your Choices

Don't stop at just one pick, unless that person promises to be beyond perfection or you know them and have already "clicked": Select several candidates for each position on your team. Once you have found at least three or four likely candidates (or they have contacted you), it is time for you to make more in-depth investigation and inquiries.

- 1. Check the websites of likely candidates.** Look for information on rates – and don't be put off if you see messages like "contact me for a quote": All this tells you is that this contractor has found projects highly variable; in which case flat rates don't work. One tip, however: The more high-level the freelancers and the more complex the services they offer, the more they are likely to insist on you contacting *them* for individual quotes.

Don't be afraid, however, to check out outsource contractors who offer package deals (e.g. "12 Research Hours per Month = "\$277.00"). This usually means the contractor in question is highly organized, well-experienced and is able to create a win-win situation for both you for her own business reputation and pocketbook. You'll get a modest "deal" on price in exchange for booking a set number of hours monthly.

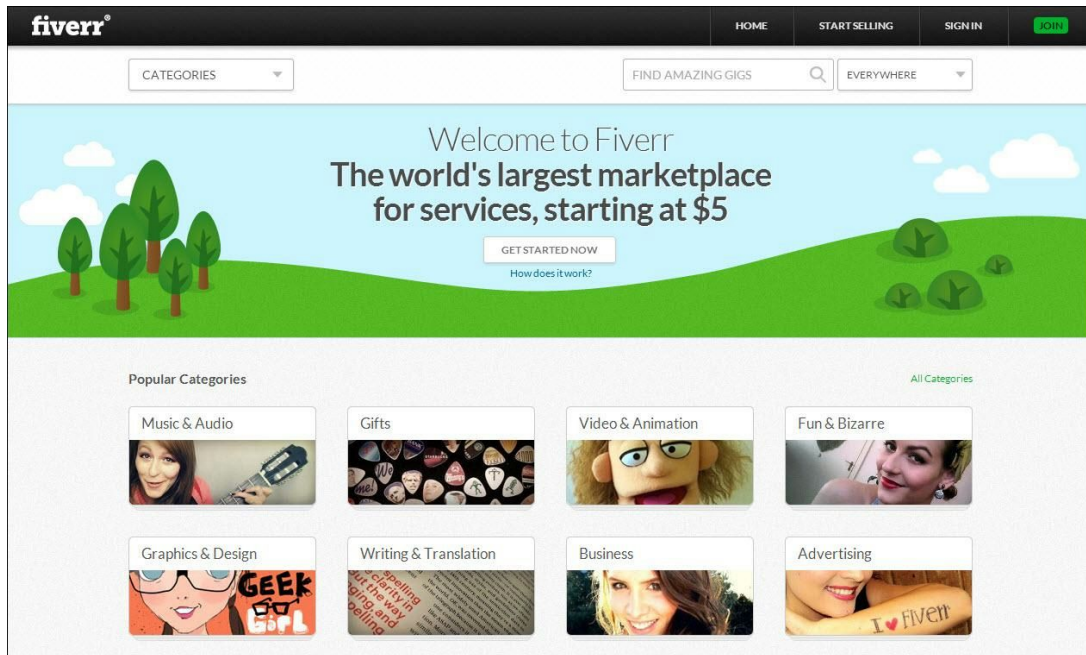
- 2. Match the contractor level to your business level.** This one should be a no-brainer, but people have been known to "go for the best" in the mistaken belief that the hot-whizz-bang contractor is going to run their business for them.

Don't do this. This will annoy the heck out of the contractor when they realize you don't yet know many of the basics – and you'll lose serious money. (That's assuming, of course, that they even agree to take on your project.)

## "Should I Use Freelancers from Fiverr.com?"

No doubt, if you are in an online business, you have heard others rave about "getting cheap labor" from [Fiverr](https://www.fiverr.com). In fact, there are a handful of marketers right now who are basing whole programs on Fiverr labor, while teaching others to do the same.

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Yes, it's marginally less risky than using Craigslist or Kijiji, but there's a right way and a wrong way to successfully use Fiverr.

## The Right Way

- ★ Check the category that looks most promising and the offer that appeals to you most. Look for literate candidates with realistic offers. (E.g. "10 minutes transcription for \$5.00")
- ★ Read all feedback and reviews. Look for the person's website (they are not supposed to post this on Fiverr but (a) some do (b) there is nothing stopping you from searching!)

Also check:

- Their overall Level and Rating
- How long they have been on Fiverr

(Do this by clicking on the anchor text in the small profile in the right-hand sidebar:



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This will open up a page in graph form where you'll be able to assess their performance at a glance.)



The screenshot shows a Fiverr profile for a user named 'lifecoachla'. On the left is a profile picture of a woman with blonde hair wearing a pink jacket. To the right of the picture, the name 'lifecoachla' is displayed in bold. Below the name are five yellow stars, followed by the text 'FROM: UNITED STATES' with a small US flag icon and a 'CONTACT' button. A bio below reads: '~ Alpha Female Life Coach ~ I help women overcome 'playing small syndrome', allow themselves to DREAM BIG, be fabulous and finally reach the next level of success.' In the top right corner of the profile card is a purple circular badge with the number '2' and the word 'LEVEL' below it. At the bottom of the profile card, there are four performance metrics: '100% POSITIVE RATING', '7 Months SINCE JOINING FIVERR', '12 Hrs. RESPONSIVENESS', and 'RECENT DELIVERIES' with a small line graph icon.

- ★ Commission one small project to see how they perform. If deadlines are met and work is top quality, try a few more projects. If delivery is consistent, ask if they would be available for regular monthly projects. Offer them a fair rate (consider the Fiverr gig a “sample” of what they can do – and indeed, that is what new but competent online contractors use it to provide).
- ★ Interview them as you would any other contractor. And specify whether or not you want a “work for hire” arrangement, where you own copyright exclusively; or they can retain copyright.
- ★ Agree on a trial period. After it is over, raise your rate (if that was part of your agreement) and send them a contract (even if it is a “by the month” contract).

### The Wrong Way:

- ★ Find a contractor on Fiverr. Look for the most humongous, unrealistic amount of work offered for \$5.00 (e.g. “I will design your entire website and set up your shopping cart for \$5.00”)
- ★ Book a large amount of work. Don't check the reviews. Don't use common sense to evaluate whether or not they are offering an unrealistic amount of work for \$5. Instead, be greedy and expect them to work for ever for \$5 per project – and thank you for it.
- ★ Be very, very surprised when they lose heart or drop you like a hot potato, when clients doing it the Right Way come along.

Sounds pretty ridiculous and unethical when you look at using Fiverr “The Wrong Way”, doesn't it?

In other words, if something is too good to be true, you can bet it is. Either the contractor is a complete amateur who has no idea what he or she is getting into or someone is out to scam you –

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which is okay, because if you are using this approach, you would be totally out to use that contractor and wring every last drop of work out of her like a dish cloth.

You will get the most out of Fiverr if you treat it as a “sample”. Results can be hit-and-miss. People can sound great but turn out to be lemons... or they can provide you with a sloppy job, work they don't own the copyright to or other horror scenarios.

That being said, some great starts have been made on Fiverr – for both new contractors and new online business owners alike.

### Step Five: Interviewing Your Choices

Now it's time to interview your new team members. Some suggestions:

1. **Send questionnaires.** These allow you to really think about what you want your potential hire to know and what you want to ask. They're a good “introduction” to both of you.

If you both communicate better in person or by telephone, however – for example, if you are hiring a videographer – adjust your initial communication to your mutual learning styles and preferences.

- ★ Meet in person, if you discover you live within driving distance of each other
- ★ Talk or Skype strictly by telephone initially
- ★ Skype each other via web cam, if you're both comfortable with that

2. **Don't make a decision on the spot.** Instead, thank your candidate for her time, reassure her that you have really enjoyed getting to hear about her talents and business, and let her know exactly when she can expect to next hear from you.  
If you are anxious about “losing” her if you don't engage her immediately, try her out with a small project or project component.

3. **Do realize that online contractors will almost certainly have more than one client.** (Otherwise, you could find yourself legally called “an employer”!)  
Ask during the initial interview how much time they can offer you per month, should you decide you need them on a regular basis.

4. **Do have more than one interview.** In fact, the more you are able to talk to them, the better. If you're comfortable in doing this, ask to connect to them on mutual social networks.

5. **Encourage your candidate to ask detailed questions** – and in turn, be specific about what your projects or duties for you would entail.

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6. **Let your candidate know how to contact you.** And if you hire her, do agree on a trial period, at first.

### Hiring Order:

If you are planning to have more than one contractor as part of your dream team, consider your hiring order.

Don't hire a project manager, for example, until you have something for her to sink her teeth into – either complex projects, with multiple departments or suppliers at the client end, or multiple sub-contractors of your own for her to manage.

Start out with someone you can easily communicate with and supervise yourself, even if you're planning to add more team members. That way, you have the option of getting the bugs ironed out and perfecting communication and processes between the two of you before you add more people to the mix.

At this point you will be well prepared – and well on your way – to setting up your Dream Team! Keep lines of communication open, remember that your contractors are ordinary people who want to succeed, just like you... and always remember to thank and appreciate them.

After all, they're the ones willing to help you take your business to the next level, so be sure to return the favor with timely recommendations and a dream working relationship.

Make your dreams come true!

To Your Successful Online Business!!

~Jeanette