

How to Save Time and Get Things Done – A Case Study

By Jeanette Barnes, Owner of Old Fashioned Office

As an Online Entrepreneur, the most important things to you are: building your list of subscribers, generating new content, creating new products, networking and creating joint ventures, and continuing your education. However, in order to do this, there are 1001 things that need to be accomplished along the way.

How on earth do you get everything done? There are two ways I see most people running their online businesses handle this: 1) they try to do everything themselves and then get seriously frustrated when they seem to be working 24/7; OR 2) they either hire in-house personnel who must be trained, or they search around to find one person to update their website, another to track their orders, another to send out their newsletters, etc.

Neither way is efficient nor the best use of your time and money. You've probably realized this, but just don't know what to do to remedy the situation. The answer is simple – work with a Virtual Assistant. And better yet – work with a Virtual Assistant company that can manage your projects from start to finish with minimal input and effort on your part.

In case you don't know, Virtual Assistants are similar to an Executive Secretary or an Administrative Assistant. But, the comparison stops there. Many are highly specialized and skilled in their particular niche and work with you using the Internet, email, phone and fax. Most of the time, they are working from home offices and the two of you may never meet face to face.

As an Online Entrepreneur, you need to find someone who understands marketing on the Internet, and what running an online business entails.

Why should you do this? It's extremely vital to the success of your online business! You should work with someone who can manage the projects and tasks necessary so your online business functions properly, doesn't eat up your time and money, and frees you to concentrate on what you do best.

All successful Online Entrepreneurs I know hire people to do the “behind-the-scenes” work for them. They don't want to be bothered with preparing and sending out newsletters, updating web pages, sending out emails to their customers, providing customer support, and sometimes even writing their articles.

They prefer to concentrate on developing products, holding teleseminars, putting together joint ventures, coaching – whatever they're best at. They don't spend their time – which is also money – doing these mundane, every day tasks.

Several years ago, I realized by listening to my clients that there was a real need for someone to provide administrative, marketing, project management and

customer support services. After honing my expertise and putting together a top-notch team, I was able to assist many online business owners just like you. This was the beginning of our Multi-VA model. We've built a personal relationship with each of our clients so we know exactly what they need. We value each client and work with them on an individual basis.

Now that you have the basics, how can working with a Virtual Assistant (or better yet, a Multi-VA company) benefit you and your online business? Let's look at a case study taken from one of our current clients and how using our services has helped them.

As an Online Entrepreneur, you've probably heard of teleseminars, or what are now called Virtual Events. This is one of the easiest, least expensive ways to stay in touch with your customers and attract prospects. Basically, you talk on the phone, have people call in, record the call, and maybe have it transcribed. Voila – you've provided great content and can even turn this into a product.

But, there are many, many steps involved in getting your Virtual Event off the ground!

1. First, you decide when you will be conducting the Event, what the topic will be, if it's going to be a series of calls, and whether you're doing this yourself or going to have a guest speaker or speakers.
2. If you're going to have a guest, you need to coordinate things with them, make sure they have the date, time and call-in number, and send them a reminder a few days beforehand. You might even have to prepare an email your guest can send out to his list. (And imagine all the more work if you have more than one guest speaker!)
3. The next step is to sign up for a teleseminar service to provide a phone line for everyone to call into, along with access to recording, replays, etc.
4. You have to find somebody to edit the audio, upload the audio to an access page, and create a master CD if you're going to provide that.
5. Next, you need to let your customers know about your Virtual Event. This usually requires setting up a web page where they can opt-in, prepare a thank you page with the Event information, an email they will receive after they've opted in, and several email reminders.
6. If you're going to be providing a transcript of the Event, you then have to find someone who is capable of transcribing it correctly and within a reasonable amount of time, have the transcript converted to a PDF file, and uploaded to the download page.
7. If you're going to turn your Virtual Event into a product, you need to find someone who can create the products in your shopping cart, a fulfillment house to produce and fulfill the orders, and then someone to monitor the orders and reply to customers.

This is a lot of work, right? And I haven't even listed every little task involved in each of the steps mentioned above!

Wouldn't you like to just send us an email to let us know when you will be holding your Virtual Event, if you will be having guest speakers, and the dates and times?

Here's what we do for one of our clients. He sends us an email to let us know when the Virtual Event will be and if he will be having guest speakers. He provides us the URL to the guests' websites, and the name and email address of a contact person for each guest. There are about 25 steps that need to be done before, during and after the interview. Does the client need to worry about this?

No, he just shows up on the call! Isn't that sweet?

Because we've prepared a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for everything that is involved in hosting a Virtual Event, everything runs like clockwork. Here's some of what we do for our client once he lets us know he's conducting a Virtual Event.

1. Web pages are updated with pertinent information about the event, the guest speakers if any, and any URLs needed for a bonus that will be offered.
2. A checklist is sent to each guest, as well as emails they can use to send to their list. We also follow up with a reminder to each guest.
3. The customer support team receives information about the guest, when the Virtual Event will take place, and any special offers that will be made during the Event so they can assist customers.
4. The PR Department receives a checklist containing guest information so they can prepare and distribute a press release announcing the Event. Posts are also made to blogs, and other social media networks.
5. The teleseminar service is set up so each session can be recorded and replayed at the appropriate times. The audio link is posted and linked to a download page for the customers.
6. Emails are sent to our client's list several times to let them know about the Event. We also put an announcement in their weekly newsletter.
7. The audio is transcribed, converted to a PDF file, and made available for the customers to download.
8. We gather stats for each session so our client knows exactly how many people listened in.
9. A few weeks after the Event has taken place, the orders for CDs and printed transcripts are downloaded and forwarded to the fulfillment house.

So, what just happened? A Virtual Event was conducted and recorded. Customers received a link to download or listen to the audio, and to download the transcript. Orders were placed and fulfilled. Customers received answered to their questions.

What did the client do? He spent 5 minutes writing us an email about a Virtual Event he'll be conducting!

That's what working with a qualified Virtual Assistant is all about! Instead of taking the time to do all of this yourself – and remember that YOUR time is money – wouldn't you like to be able to only spend 5 minutes writing an email to your Virtual Assistant and then all you have to worry about is showing up and what you're going to say?

Whether you work with Old Fashioned Office or find another service provider, just remember that the best way to run an online business is to find a qualified team who will work with you to help your business succeed!

Jeanette Barnes has been working with Online Entrepreneurs since the fall of 2003. She and her team have the expertise to assist anyone who is running an online business become successful. She not only knows the tools, applications, and software that is essential to online businesses, but uses them on a daily basis. Jeanette and her team are constantly continuing their education by attending Virtual Events, seminars and studying with several of the top Online Entrepreneurs. You can learn more about the solutions Old Fashioned Office provides by visiting www.oldfashionedoffice.com.