



Elayne is a true Canadian trailblazer and has been hailed as one of the premier Master Virtual Assistants in Canada. Always one step ahead of the pack; Elayne made the natural transition to Online Marketing Management many years ago when the movement was little more than an abstract idea in the minds of many. Now regarded as an expert in the field, she remains the President of [Executive Assistance Business Solutions Inc.](#) and is the CEO of [OMM Solutions](#) in addition to the creator of [Online Marketing](#)

[Made Simple](#) the Director of both [the Global Alliance of Virtual Assistants](#) and the [Canadian Association of Virtual Assistants](#) and the co-author of [How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business](#) which was used in VA college diploma programs. She is a champion of small businesses in Canada and is the very epitome of the entrepreneurial spirit. Elayne is a gifted businessperson; author, mentor, speaker, and trainer.

Both the [Canadian Association of Virtual Assistants](#) and the [Global Alliance of Virtual Assistants](#) offer a FREE RFP service. We have thousands of members with a wide range of skills and experience.

## Too busy to find the right Virtual Assistant?

Who has time to go through all the proposals and determine which is the RIGHT Virtual Assistant? We offer a screening service where, for a small fee, we will find, interview and screen the candidates for you!

[GAVA VA screening service](#)

[CAVA VA screening service](#)



Today I am going to use the word Team Member. It is important to remember that a Team member can come from anywhere. Many of you know the term Virtual Assistant or Virtual Service provider – but that is not specifically what I will be talking about. A team member is ANYONE who can do anything to help in your business. From your lawyer to your marketer, to your HR coach, to someone who answers the phone for you. There is no way we can all be good at everything. I'm not a lawyer and I'm not an accountant – but I want you to think of these steps when you outsource period.

A team member is someone who does something better than you can – or who frees up your time to do something else – and it is up to you what that relationship looks like.



Let's look at the first section in the handouts.

So now that we've explained what a team member is, and what they do for you - do you see the value that getting the right help brings? If this feel like 'just another expense' then chances are you are not ready to outsource OR you need to focus only on free help (and yes - it exists - we will cover it in a little while)

Letting go of control of any aspect your business can be a frightening thing for any business owner. I get it. I lived it (I have a team of 14) - but delegation does not necessarily mean letting go of control. You still have control over the final product. It is imperative that you remember that. You are business people, and you know how awkward it can feel for your clients in the beginning of your relationships - but you DO reach a place of comfort and trust - and when that occurs - that is when the magic happens and breakthroughs are reached. It is really not all that different here.

One of the steps involved in delegating is having a plan. When you know what YOU want - you can explain it to others. Personally - I have had clients who came to me and said - make a company for me - and then stepped away. I did it and they were very happy with the result - but it is SO much easier when you can tell us your vision. Just like you don't know what you don't know - we can't help or offer suggestions when we don't know the goals of your business.

I use the words job description because it is an easily understood term. Your outsourced team member is NOT an employee, so a formal job description is not necessary, but a roadmap is an essential element to ensure success. And not just for your team member - you have to remember that you hold some responsibilities in this relationship too. If you are 'too busy' to answer the reasonable questions your team member has, or to deliver your part of the project - then the relationship may fail.

**Management Styles.** Be aware of yours so you know what type of person you should be hiring. Are you a micro manager type who needs to keep their fingers in the pie at all times, or are you a 'assign it and forget it' kind of person who assumes it will be done right and walks away. Do you want a team member who 'takes care of you' and is a nurturer or do you need a strong accountability partner in your business - of all of the above? Who you are and who you want to work with is as important a decision as the skill set, the rate, or any other factors you encounter. Often a team member relationship is a long term one so you want to make sure that you're working with the right types of people.



**Do Does it absolutely have to be done this way?**

Some things such as shopping cart automation or affiliate management or bookkeeping income tax submission have a set process and it just has to be done that way. That is fine - that is where something like system design comes into play. You can work together to create a detailed process that anyone can follow.

That way you know for sure it is being done the right way every time. You can still delegate the 'rigid' stuff and have it done properly if you take the time to outline what 'properly means

### **Can there be a little deviation as long as the outcome works for me?**

While some tasks are the same every time you do them – others allow for a more collaborative approach. You may not know how to do it yourself, or you may need to brainstorm before you can 'see' it. In these cases, I usually find that clients who can explain the desired outcome and then monitor it as it grows experience the best success. Allow for two minds to work on the problem you may be surprised that your Team Member can offer a new insight.

### **Your place in the mix**

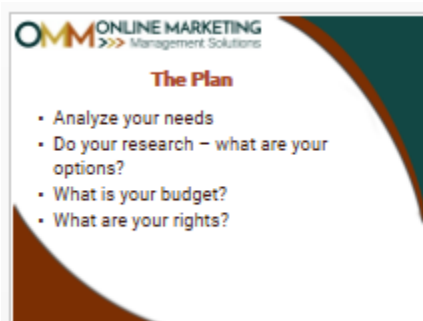
Effective delegation isn't instantaneous; it's a progression that relies on trust, collaboration and respect. Delegating takes time and is not usually a "just do it – then walk away process" You have a responsibility to take an active role in the delegation at first. When you first begin to delegate, you may want to follow along with the work being completed to ensure it's being done correctly and to help your team members overcome challenges.

As time goes on, however, avoid micromanaging the work that you delegate. While it's important to stay in the loop so you can monitor the work and provide feedback for improvements, your goal should be to remain available but invisible, unless you are needed. Your job in the new place of delegation is to be around (but not in the middle) and to share as much information as possible.

### **Change Opportunities**

Your business changes over time, so your delegation needs will also change. On a regular basis, review the responsibilities on your plate, where your time is going, what you wish you had time to tackle, and how your team is managing the work you have already delegated. By making this a regular evaluation process in your small business, you will be able to anticipate needs and be ready to add to your delegation process as soon as you see the changes taking place.

Now saying this – some team members can become such partners, that they do this step for you – but we will go there a bit later...



Let's talk about how to find the right team member for your business.

We now need to:

Analyze your needs

Do a little research?

Determine your budget.

And we are going to talk about your rights as a business owner working with a team member. You DO have rights, you should have expectations and we are going to go into that as well.



What do you do now – but hate doing in your business?

What seems to take forever?

What do you wish could happen magically without your help?

What have you tried to do or implement – but gave up on because it was too hard, or too time consuming, or too...

Now – let's take all of that and condense it into a more manageable chunk – what are the top 5 things you need to delegate?



**Remember** – an outsourced Team Member is NOT an employee. They are an independent business owner, just like you are. They have the option of working with you or not – this is a time to be completely open and honest with you self, and with your potential team member. They get to decide if YOU are a good fit in the same way you have to decide if THEY are.

There are so many different kinds of providers out there – how do you choose the right one? Well, you started off on the right track with evaluating yourself and your needs. By now you should have an idea of what tasks you might want your VA to complete. Now you need to decide what type of VA you need. I classify VA's into a few categories, 'free', offshore, task specific and partner.



Of course there is no such thing as 'free'. Providers that fall into this category are either related to you – or you pay with your time, and I hope everyone here agrees that their time has value.

But as I mentioned earlier – we are all at different stages in our businesses, and if you currently have more time than money to spend on your business – this could be a good option for you.



**Offshore** – if you are on a budget, and have only simple general needs like admin, transcription, calendaring, then likely an offshore VA can suit your needs. Services like [O-Desk](#) Elancer and [Freelancer](#) can hook you up with someone. You still get the opportunity to interview them and make sure their skills match, and often you find someone who can do what you require for a little amount of money. Be prepared however, to spend more time managing them.

I have said that with offshore outsourcing that you need to watch the time zone, and you have to be aware of cultural or work ethic differences – but to be honest – this is always a potential difficulty with any team member you bring on board. That is why the mindset and the interview process is so important to determine before you hire someone.

Usually the least expensive short term option

Long selection and interview process

Time involved in managing them

You need to understand exactly what you want – and you need to be able to communicate it

You need to double check the work

Check the time zone

Potentially cultural or work ethic differences – language barrier!



**Task Specific** – if you have looked at your business and realize – all I need is someone to manage my shopping cart and update my website – then a specialist in that task category is likely to be to your advantage. Find someone who knows all there is to know about what you need done, and can work with minimal supervision. They should be able to do exactly what you need, and may offer suggestions on how to make that task more efficient or how to get better results.

A task specific VA knows a lot, about a specific area, but may lack a broad business background, and you may find yourself looking for another task specific VA as your business needs develop.



**Partner** – A true outsourcing partner likely comes from a business owner’s background with a technical spin and usually offer a wide range of knowledge about multiple areas of business. They often manage a team of Project Managers and various Task Specific VA’s that carry out the requirements of their clients. They take an active role in your business, act as an executive sounding board and offer suggestions for growing and improving your business. They become long term team members who are invested in your

business’s growth.

These are the people you are comfortable talking about your long term goals, and trusting them to create an action plan to deliver them. They are the ones you include in the calls to your business coach as you brainstorm ways to increase your revenue. They are true partners in your business.



Team members usually charge in one of two ways, project, hourly retainer or package pricing. Within the hourly pricing model, traditionally there are two sets of rates – a project rate and a retainer rate. A **project rate** is usually the VA’s highest rate and it is just that – you pay as you go for hours spent on your tasks. A **retainer rate** is usually lower, but it is a guaranteed purchase of hours on a monthly basis. You agree you will purchase 10, 20, 30 – however many hours you need – per month and in turn, the VA

offers you a preferred rate. You know how much your bill will be each month. It can however, be difficult to determine exactly how many hours it will take to complete the tasks you require. I want X, Y, Z, done each month – how many hours do I need to purchase? Now, a good VA can make a realistic guess how long it will take, but it often takes a few months to get it exactly right. With either hourly scenario, you both have to keep track of the hours consumed, and manage your time accordingly.

In the hourly scenarios, you are likely to see this breakdown, Offshore rates range from \$3 - \$20 per hour, Task Specific VA’s rates from \$35-\$45 per hour (although if your needs are highly technical, be prepared to spend more) and for on OBM, you will pay \$45 - \$90 per hour, depending on the level of OBM you choose.

Remember, when you are deciding which type of VA you need, it is partly about price – I get that, but it should mostly be about *value*. If you really need an OBM and you choose an offshore VA simply because of price, there is a possibility you will spend far more than you bargained for because the task could have to be re-done, and more than once. That said, no one says that an OBM is the be all and end all for everyone. Just because they say they are an amazing OBM, it does not mean they actually are, or that they are well qualified to be one. That leads us to the selection process.

**OMM ONLINE MARKETING**  
Management Solutions

**Rates**

- Packages
  - You agree to the tasks to be done each month - and they are done. Period. No tracking of hours for either of you.
  - Packages are usually based on maintenance tasks only (shopping cart updates, web updates, SEO, monthly bookkeeping, newsletter and blog writing etc.)
  - Often creation tasks are priced separately because they are intensely custom

Alternately, some VA's prefer not to charge by the hour, and will simply create **packages** that bundle their most requested, or most used services. You choose between a light package and a full service package, or somewhere in between and trust the job gets done. Period – there is no managing hours on your behalf, and you know exactly what your bill is going to be, regardless of the time it took your VA to complete your tasks.

**OMM ONLINE MARKETING**  
Management Solutions

**Offshore Rates**

- Hourly \$5 - \$25 per hour
- Retainer full time \$500 - \$1500 a month
- Retainer part time (40 hours a month or less) \$200 - 800 per month

In the hourly scenarios, you are likely to see this breakdown, Offshore rates range from \$5-\$25 per hour, Task Specific VA's rates from \$35-\$55 per hour (although if your needs are highly technical, be prepared to spend more) and for a Partner, you will pay \$45 - \$100+ per hour, depending on the level of Team Member you choose.

**OMM ONLINE MARKETING**  
Management Solutions

**Task Specific**

- Hourly \$35- \$55 per hour
- Be prepared to pay more for high skill levels (up to \$90/hr)
- Retainer rates are based on number of hours purchased.
 

|            |                |           |
|------------|----------------|-----------|
| - 10 hours | \$500 a month  | (\$50/hr) |
| - 20 hours | \$960 a month  | (\$48/hr) |
| - 30 hours | \$1440 a month | (\$46/hr) |

### Task Specific

**OMM ONLINE MARKETING**  
Management Solutions

**Partner**

- Hourly \$55- \$125 per hour (depending on the skill level and requested services)
- Retainer rates are based on number of hours purchased.
 

|            |                |           |
|------------|----------------|-----------|
| - 10 hours | \$500 a month  | (\$50/hr) |
| - 20 hours | \$960 a month  | (\$48/hr) |
| - 30 hours | \$1440 a month | (\$46/hr) |

### Partner

### Engaging your Team Member

- Referrals!
- Invest time in your search
- Do they understand you AND your business?
- What are their plans for their business? Do they have the capacity to take on more work as your business grows?
- Will they 'outgrow' you – does it feel like they are taking you on because they want the money – or because they love their work?
- Get a signed contract, and a confidentiality agreement

Keep in mind, the VA is interviewing you as much as you are them. In some cases, a VA may turn down an offer to work with you if they feel you are not an ideal fit for their business. Again, this speaks to the contractor/vendor vs. the employee mindset.

### Your Expectations / Rights

- What hours will your Team member be available?
- What time recording software do they use – and can you request a printout of how they have used your time?
- What technologies do they use – will you be expected to use them as well?
- Are they available for consistent weekly / monthly conversations?
- Are they certified in the service they are offering? What is their training?

#### Summary:

#### Determine your mindset.

If you still look at this as a 'necessary evil' or an expense rather than an investment – maybe you DO need to 'do it yourself' for a while.

Can you delegate? Are you ready?

What is your style?

#### Analyze your needs



What tasks are 'delegatable' and what level of support do you need?

What is your budget? So many of us have champagne taste on a beer drinkers budget – there has to be a balance between what you WANT and what may be realistic

### **Do your research**

Ask your colleagues, ask for referrals.

Look up other providers, compare *value* offered as well as price

### **Know your rights and expectations within the relationship**

Anyone can start a business on their own – but no one succeeds in business alone. You don't have to live in the land of overwhelm. You teach your clients to reach out for help – don't forget that others are here to help you.