

Outsourcing, Subcontractors and Partnerships

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You're listening to Business Badassery, the audio advice column for your online business. I'm Kirsty Fanton.

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And I'm Amy Posner. We're talking bite sized episodes that solve real world problems with a no holds barred tell it like it is kind of approach. Hey, Amy here, my magnetic north mastermind starts in September, there's still a few seats left. This is where we figure out exactly what's yours to do. We make a plan and we execute on it together. It's worked really amazingly well. I've got six really powerful case studies. I'm happy to share hit me up at Amy at Amy posner.com. We can also set up a time to talk and see if we have a fit. Now here's the business Beth ESRI, you've been waiting for.

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Are you at a point in your business where you are feeling a little bit overwhelmed with how much is on your plate, or perhaps filling at capacity with the amount of work and projects you can take on? If so it might be time to think about outsourcing some bits and pieces or perhaps partnering with someone on your core skills so that you can serve more people at any one time. If this sounds like it might be a good idea or something that's relevant for you, this episode should help because Amy and I share some tips and some key things to think about to make this process run as smoothly and successfully as possible. Live from

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ad Washington.

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We're back in your ear and these crazy women. And here's our question this week, how do you know when it's time to start delegating to others? Outsourcing some bits in my case SEO and or partnering with other copywriters, copywriter question here. So you can take on more work? How much training

and prep should I prepare for as I start these partnerships? Very interesting. There's a lot of pieces to this question. And so I love when I get to read it first because then I just ask you for your take.

2:07

We are very good at passing the buck all the way out the question every week. So my initial thoughts are that I think we have addressed the first part of this question on this podcast before. So in terms of how you know when it's time to start delegating to others, outsourcing and or partnering. So I think you know, the general rule there is when you are at capacity and you can you know you have more enticing work then you can service is that a fair sort of summary pay dog have that? That component?

2:46

Yeah, I think so. But although there's different things like this person mentioned, like outsourcing some bits, in my case, SEO and or partnering with copywriters can take on more work. So I see those as really different things. Right. Like some of that outsourcing. Yes. Good poll, actually, yes. Right. Like, yeah, right, like SEO or admin or web work or, you know, whatever it is, whatever little things that we the myriad of things I should say that we that we all do as business owners. And the other I think is more what they're both when you reach capacity, but it's a different capacity, isn't it?

3:16

Yes, yes, that's right. So I think that when you're outsourcing bits of tasks and skills that you are not expert in or you don't enjoy doing, that's sort of like you're at your capacity for trying to hack away at both things. And you need someone who is an expert, or someone who is actually excited about doing that kind of work. And whereas as you said, the partnership thing is a bit different. I think that's when you're maybe that's more what I was talking about with my initial initial thought, you know, that's when you have more exciting work, then you can service on your own.

3:48

Yeah, yeah, I agree. And I wonder too, because, you know, with the outsourcing the other things like SEO or admin work, do you do it till you get sick of it? Or you? Do you do it until it's no longer? Oh, no. Is it ever profitable for you? Because I mean, I think the idea is, you know, if that you shouldn't do tasks that you can, that are less value than the actual thing that you produce, right? So if I'm charging, you know, \$100 an hour, say, internal, for my work, and I'm doing an admin task that I could outsource for 20 or \$30 an hour, I'm losing \$70 An hour theoretically, right. So do you base it on that and being able to afford it and some people will argue, you know, affording it will make you will enable you to afford it. Right. So thoughts about making that that decision or that call based on my guess and, like so many things, it comes down to time or money.

4:45

Yes. And I have this idea that you know, for most people, initially when you start your business and it's just you so before you hire someone to do sort of the more administrative bits like absolutely, you know, there is a point in time where it is so much more work. If your while to hire someone to do that, because they can do it much more quickly and much more cheaply than you can with your time. But I think at the beginning, it's less about maximizing the time you have for clients as it is about sort of holding on to more of your profit, because I feel like there's a bit of a mental leap that needs to happen there, hey, like, you can actually see the value in paying someone to do it. Whereas I feel like at the beginning, it's more like, Oh, but I want to keep as much of this as much of this money that I'm making from this project as possible. And if that means that, you know, I am not spending five hours a week, like setting up templates, or whatever it might be for my business to run smoothly, you know, then so be it. So I wonder if there's sort of a threshold that you need to get to where you feel as though you're not only busy enough to justify that outsourcing, but you are also profitable enough to do so. Does that resonate at all?

5:52

Yeah, it does. And I think it's a good point. And I also think, I mean, there is some something to be said, for doing it all, because, uh, you know how it all works, right? I mean, you get in there, you get, you know, you get into the nitty gritty, whether you end up doing it well or not, you know, you'll figure it out later. But I think I think it's good to have your hands in everything. And but I think the danger is that it can you can make that, excuse me, at any point in your business, like, oh, yeah, it's only going to take me x or it's not, you know, it's not that big a deal. But at a certain point, you're shooting yourself in the foot, you really are. So I mean, I agree with you. And I think that that's true in the early stages, I think there's merit to doing it yourself. And there's, there's also, you know, I mean, I've always been of the I want to, like keep the most of this that I can add of everything. So, so I get that. And but on the other hand, you have to be really careful, because that's, that can be a losing proposition at some point. And I think, you know, goes beyond the money for people as well, because there's a control issue, right? Especially if you're a solo business owner, like so many of us are, I mean, outsourcing is scary, right? Like, what am I going to trust you to do? And are you going to do it well, and act like and then you go, well, it's just easier to do it myself. But at a certain point, and I think it's good to think about this early on, at a certain point. If you're going to, you know, have any kind of balance in your business and in your life, you're probably going to have to do that. I guess there's some people who won't or don't, but I think for most people, you will. So it's worth sort of anticipating and monitoring yourself just to be Be careful that you don't hold on to things that end up losing you money, because in the end, you know, it's like, no, you're not the only person that can do it, even though you think you are it's a lesson we all learn. Hopefully,

7:46

yes, absolutely. And I'm also if it's relevant, I'm in the spot, I need to make a hire again, in the next sort of month, month, or four or five weeks in my business, I think because I, we both shared a VA who

actually stopped working as a VA while I was off on mat leave, and I deliberately didn't keep her on board for my mat leave, because I was really trying to minimize costs in my business while I wasn't actively making money. So I've come back from MATLAB, I've been back for what, like five months now. And I've been sort of taking it slow. But I'm at the stage now room, getting more things up and running in my business. And I've realized that I'm spending way too much of the time I have on tasks that could be much better performed by someone else. So just as you know, a little normalization that, you know, while it can typically be a sticking point at the beginning of your business, I think there are also other times where it can come up. So knowing okay, you know, this is silly. Now I really, you know, people far better off actually letting go of their things, and letting someone else take charge of that. So I can focus on this. You know, it's a point that I think you can get to time and time again and for different tasks within your business.

8:54

Yeah, I think that's really true. I mean, it's funny, because it's sort of like everything repeats itself just at a different level, or, you know, it has more screw up or more or more profit, but yes, I think you're, I think you're right, and that's, I think that's true with with with a lot of the bits of our business. So okay, so outsourcing some bits. And this is interesting, like, in my case, SEO. Interesting because Well, I think I know leave that for a second and look at the second part of this. Or the second part of this question is Endor partnering with copywriters so you can take on more work and we said, okay, that's when you hit a different capacity. So let's talk about that a little bit. And I think let's focus on this this last part, which I don't think is something we've ever taken on, although we've talked about this topic some and that is how much training and prep should I prepare for as I start this sort of these partnerships, which is a really good question. But to the partnering with other copywriters so you can take on more work. I mean, I think you pretty much answered it earlier. I think that that critical moment is when there's more coming in than you can handle yourself. I mean, it's Very, it's funny because you can think well, okay, like when it first happens, you're like, Well, it's a fluke. But what but it keeps happening, right? Because Because at first you're like, Well, you don't have enough work, you'd have enough work, then you have enough work. And then like more and more and more comes in. And my feeling has always been, you know, you work so hard to make that happen. So when it comes in, you do want to capitalize on the on the opportunity it represents. So you have to think about, you know, how that's going to work for you. And this person sounds like what they're thinking about then is partnering with other copywriters, so they can take on more work, which we've talked about on here before as well. So anything really more that we should say about that Kirsty? Or?

10:38

Oh, I'm pretty sure I've made this comment before, but just in case it bears saying, again, I think it's also important in this situation, to not only consider the timing of when you should look to partner with or hire subcontractors to help you with your project load, but also to consider the shift in your work that that will represent. Because I think, you know, in this situation, copy chiefting is quite a different role to copywriting. You know, how much will you enjoy managing someone in that process? How well will you partner with someone else? How will you manage timelines, all those sorts of things? Because I think,

you know, and it might be hard to answer these questions before you do it. But it may, I think it's just important to have in the back of your mind that, you know, hiring a Sabi or partnering with someone may not be the solution you're looking for, because you find that it just doesn't make your workdays any more enjoyable. And perhaps, you know, the other option there, if you realize, okay, that isn't the way forward, because now I just hate my work. And you know, I'm spending more time managing people than actually doing the thing. I think the other solution there can be okay, well, maybe what I do is I simply raise my rates to reflect the fact that I'm now a much more scarce resource, and can only take on, you know, half of the projects that lead in my inbox. So just a side note, just in case it's relevant. But apart from that, no, no more thoughts. I think you should cover that off. Well,

12:10

yeah. And just to underscore your point about scarcity, it's a really valid point. And it's not one that we talk about a lot, right, but, but yes, you have become more desirable and less available. And so, you know, that's, that's a natural, that's a natural inflection point threat to raise raise. And I just say one other thing. The other way to look at that, too, is, you know, you can, you can have people do parts of the project that you don't enjoy doing, if there are parts of that project. So it can be an opportunity to work with somebody who loves the thing you hate, and vice versa. And you know, you ended up creating a better product. And we've talked before, about, you know, choosing partners and finding people and that's, you know, it's tricky, but but it can be a really worthwhile journey, I think

12:56

people will often think that, you know, hiring, like in this case, a copy, copy, copy, you know, if you're willing to partner with them on projects, means that they will do the bulk of the copywriting. But perhaps what you need to hire in order for you to tackle or copy projects is someone who is really competent and really happy handling the research component, for example, because that can also lighten your load and allow you to do more projects in a shorter amount of time. But it means you get to hang on to the work that you really enjoy doing. So such a good point. That is all sorry, I just wanted to give that some air space, because I think maybe that's something that's not talked about or thought about enough.

13:35

Yeah, I mean, it was a real boon for me when I started bringing people onto projects, because there were people who love doing the things that I just didn't want to do anymore, you know, and it was so nice to be able to have them do it. And they were happy to do it. And I was happy to have them do it. And it was just it was kind of a win win. So yeah, can be a great thing. So how much training and prep should I prepare for as I start these partnerships? That is a really good question. And I think again, you know, it's different, it's a different story. The Outsourcing Things like SEO and admin is different than what you might have to do partnering with someone who is your colleague slash equal. So I think for the the outsourcing you know, that's not your discipline, you know, the, the, you know, the, the more the

SEO, the admin, the web work, whatever that's going to be, I think that the the really key thing there is to have a really clear sense of what you need, like literally what do you want the person to do, because I find that a lot of times the tasks can be pretty wide ranging that you do as a business owner and not every, you know, person that you're going to get as an assistant can do all of the tasks. So you almost need like a list of what you want done and a hierarchy of importance to be off your plate. And you know, and then see, you know, see who you can find that matches that best and then also Have No, you know what things are going to matter to you most like, for me, it's, you know, its reliability deadlines. You know, someone's sort of attitude about getting the work done. And those aren't always things that you can know, until you actually work with someone. And so the other thing that I think is, is good to be mindful with is always having test periods. So that you know, you keep expectations in check, so that you're not, you know, quote, unquote, stuck with somebody where you've made a commitment, and then you're like, oh, shit, I shouldn't have done tested this at first. It's not a fit in there. So it's, I think that's one thing, I think, in terms of training and prep for like taking on other copywriters in this case, or anybody else who would be a colleague to share the work, I think the thing to think about for yourself is like, what would you like to offload? Like, what do you love? What are your typical projects look like? Can you break them into their component parts and see where you know what you'd love to offload? And think about, you know, I think I think the who is the really important piece, like who do you know, you know, that, that would like to do that part of it that, you know, that meets whatever your criteria are, like mind for reliability, and attitude, and all those things. And that's it, both of them are your new, you're looking for different things. Again, though, I would, you know, I would do do tests with people and see, see how the fit is there's so many things that happen when you're when you're actually working that when you know, when it's not all like assumption and surmise that that gives you a lot of information. And so I you know, I think one of the things, one of the things to prep for is that you're going to have to, you're gonna have to like move around a little bit to find a fit, but it's well worth it. And it's, you know, in the field that we're in, it's not usually that hard. There's a lot of great people out there who are very, very happy to, you know, to do that to do work in that capacity. So, it's, it's easy to find and tricky to match. So that's my two cents for the moment, I think.

17:08

So yes, I second all of those points. And I would also add that one thing to be really cognizant of when you're thinking about, you know, okay, how am I going to train or prepare or help this person fulfill the role that I'm hiring them for? Is how happy are you with your current processes, because if you really liked them, they're working really well, you feel like it's a well oiled machine that you want to bring someone else into, then I feel as though, you know, the training, and I guess, the onboarding into your business and way of working, will be a bit more instructional. Whereas, if you feel as though your processes could be optimized, you know, they aren't that well organized, for example, is it worth looking for someone who you are willing and able to give over a lot more ownership of that particular process to, you know, in which case is it less about, you know, training them up in your way of working, as opposed to working together to find the best fit. So I think, you know, the first scenario I spoke about there, you know, I think that does involve you being ready with, you know, project, workflow documents, and that sort of thing, and, you know, assets that they might need to use, or, you know, tools that they may want to use, or need to use in order to be of value for you in the work that you're doing. Whereas the second scenario, I think, is more about working together to find the best way

forward. So knowing that, rather than spending a lot more time in the preparatory phase of things, and getting, you know, all those tools and bits and pieces set up, you're going to be spending more time in the first project or two, sort of Finding your Feet together and nailing down what that process of working together should look like and what tools you should use to make the communication feel really easy, etc, etc. Any thoughts on that? Amy?

19:14

Yeah, I, I think your comment about about processes is really well taken and you know, on both sides of this equation, and I remember you talking about in a previous episode, you know, hiring someone to help you with processes, I think before you even took anyone on, which I thought was That's correct, isn't it?

19:34

Yes, I've never actually so I've never actually had anyone in my business apart from a VA. So the processes was, I did hire someone to help with my processes, in order for me to better utilize my VA. So I've never hired someone to work with me on projects. But I still think that that process piece would be really important because sometimes when it's just you doing the work, you know, it's so easy to lose track of what the steps actually are. Ah, you know, and what is important about those steps? Why are you doing them? Because I think that's the stuff you're gonna be able to communicate and translate really easily so that someone else, you know, if you're satisfied with how those are going, someone else can jump on board and sort of hit the ground running. So yeah, I think processes are pretty important.

20:18

They're super important. I mean, I think I was kind of making the point that you went to the trouble of sorting that out before even having a VA so that you could, because, like, if you don't do that, then you're teaching somebody else. I mean, I was in that situation, I'm not having processes and teaching somebody are bad processes. And yeah, I mean, that was a big, like, start over from square one when we realized and it was it was a heavy lift. To Yeah, so. Yes, yes, yes. Yes. Yes. to that. I think we're in agreement here about about processes and what makes what makes good sense when you're when you're trying to outsource and sort of grow your business. And I just want to say, I think it's really cool. When we get a question like this, like, it's it, you have the you get the feeling behind it, that's, you know, good things are happening for someone and you know, that's, that's where their wheels are turning. So always, it's always satisfying. Yes,

21:16

absolutely. Well, I think that we have answered this question and hopefully given some good points for this person to go away and think about, and also some good points for you listening to if you're in a similar situation of, you know, feeling like it might be time to get some extra hands on deck in your own

business. If this episode has been helpful, we would love it if you left us a review that will help us reach more business owners like you. And of course, if you have a question, we would also love to tackle that on a future episode. So if you do head on over to [business badass.co/podcast](https://businessbadass.co/podcast) and submit your question there.

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Thanks for listening. Catch you next time.

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