

# **The New World of Work**

**an e.book by Aron Solomon, JD**

**all rights reserved, 2011, Aron N. Solomon, JD**

## Prologue

### Who Should Read This Book?

This book is designed to help those who want to navigate the new world order (wow - that sounds significantly more ominous than I had intended) of work.

I've been a teacher of some sort my entire life. In a formal sense, I was a teacher, coach, senior administrator and head of school in boarding schools. The part I most loved was the role of mentor. I still stay in touch with many of my students and when we meet or chat they always want a piece of advice. So, I see this book as a way to bring together many of those pieces of advice into something coherent that might apply to a range of people, young and not so young.

The world has changed. The days are long over when people would leave school or university, get started in a career and stay in that job for life. The new world economy means no job for life, no job security and, as many pundits have opined, the advent of jobs that have never been seen before. This means a greater need for a much higher level of qualifications, and significantly steeper competition for each job in the marketplace. The workplace has a rapidly growing level of uncertainty, and a speed of change in the work place that is truly phenomenal.

This book provides a fresh look at the changes that have occurred with work. It comes from the perspective that the changes have been positive and constructive for individuals, opening up the work environment dramatically. The new work place provides a broad and deep range of exciting opportunities that never existed for those who are able to be open to this new reality and embrace change. Some of these options include:

- A greater job variety;
- The freedom to explore new, creative options;
- The ability to follow your passions and pursue these as a career;
- A much greater chance to travel for work, and to more more exotic destinations;
- The ease of setting up a global team;
- New jobs that have been created that never even existed just a few years ago;
- Far greater range of possibilities for women;
- A re-examination of "retirement" – after all, why retire if you're having fun?

The way technology and society have changed so dramatically over the past twenty years means that the world really can be your oyster (or you shellfish of choice). Those in the know can take advantage of this and find a career that they love, founded in their true passions.

The evolution of technology has paved the way for a great variety of adaptations in the ways that people can work, offering compelling new options for those who are willing and able to step outside of the box and embrace them. This requires the casting aside of some of the more traditional approaches, and a willingness to accept new ideas.

This book is suited to anybody who is struggling to get a handle on the emerging new world of work, or trying to find their way through the difficult field of career management in an environment that still has some traditional boundaries and ideas about “the way things should be” relating to work and careers. It may be of particular use to the following groups, but is certainly not limited to these audiences:

- University students;
- Recent university graduates who are having difficulty finding jobs;
- Graduates of Masters and Doctoral programs who are having difficulty finding jobs;
- Workers who are just a few years into their careers and are looking for change or more fun in their work;
- Mid-career workers who have been laid off;
- Older workers who thought they had retired but are again forced to work due to economic conditions;
- Those who simply want to find a new way in life;
- Those who want to set up their own business.

This book should be used as a starting point for exploring all the new possibilities that technological and societal changes have afforded us, as they relate to the work place. It can be used as a stepping stone to finding a new career, or for opening one’s mind to the opportunities that may exist. It can be used as a brainstorming device, for prompting new ideas.

The book may also be used as a no-nonsense guide for those who wish to change their lives and move into a new job or career - one that they can be really passionate about. It provides an explanation of the ways in which work has changed, and practical advice about where to start in carving out a new job or career. It explains how the Internet can be used to find opportunities that have never existed, and how organizations are changing to adopt these new possibilities and ways of working.

The book also gives straightforward advice for those who want to start a new business in a field that they love. It gives structured information about how to start working toward building up a global team in an inexpensive manner, and how to focus on your core competencies for a greater chance of success with any new venture. As you will see in the final section of this book, I give you all of the tools you need to hire other to increase your productivity. I have been outsourcing pieces

of my professional and even (on a small scale) personal lives for years. It works and I will take a deep dive into showing you how.

Certainly, this book is not exhaustive and should not be considered as such. It is not a book aimed at the people I work with every day - those who I might describe as technology wizards. It is aimed at an audience of readers who understand something about technology and are open to learning much more about how and in what context available technologies might fit into their lives. The speed of change dictates that in a year or two an even greater array of options (many of which revolve around technology) will be available to those with open minds who are able to step away from the traditional expectations of society and how they govern the world of work. Those who are savvy will keep on top of the changes and succeed in growing and developing the career of their desire.

Enjoy the read and good luck!

## Chapter One

### The Realities of Today's Economy - How We Arrived Here

*"The times they are a-changin'."* Robert Allen Zimmerman, a.k.a. Bob Dylan (1964)

#### Introduction

Never were the words of Bob Dylan more appropriate than in early 2011.

While Dylan's observations were focused on the key issues of his times - racism, social change and poverty - the times are a-changin' today for different reasons, and the pace of change has become faster than ever before. It is hard to think back and even imagine the work environment as it was 20 years ago, let alone the 46 years that have passed since Dylan's revelation. The rate and pace of change in this time has been phenomenal and, arguably, unprecedented.

Organizations have two options: keep up with the pace of change or fail. The forces of this change have been technology and social drivers. The rules of technology and the societal changes have been profound and broad, completely transforming the way we view our world and interact within it.

#### Technology

Think back for a moment to what your relationship was with technology say 30 years ago. There were very few computers in homes, not many more in offices, email was a rarified thing for the technologically elite, there was no Internet for the layperson, no instant messenger, no voice over IP, practically no mobile phones, no fax, no scanner, no digital photography. Looking back another 10 years beyond and you'd find homes in many cases without telephones or a color television set. It's important here not be stuck in a North American mind set - try to imagine Eastern Europe even 20 years ago.

Now think back to your relationship with technology 15 years ago. I graduated from law school in 1995. No one at my school used email. We used our own computers (I had a MacIntosh desktop) or one of the five computers in the lab. We submitted papers created on typewriters. I had no mobile phone and didn't know anyone who did. I didn't use the Internet until January 2006. I remember it clearly - I was loading an image of the Province of Quebec and it seemed to load pixel by pixel, leaving me to think "Nah - this Internet thing will never catch on."

Wow. Was I wrong. Technology has had a phenomenal influence on the changes that have occurred in society relating to the concept of work and how we actually go about doing our work. Communication frontiers have been almost completely

broken down. They have not been entirely eroded, as cultural issues between people, organizations and nations can still lead to problems if differences are not understood, but for the large part - at least in relation to ease of communication - many barriers have disappeared. The baseline developments that have brought significant change to the ways in which it is possible to do business are:

### **Computers**

Computers have been around for several decades but have only become a daily part of our work life since the mid-1990s. Computers allow us to create and save large volumes of documents in a standardized manner which allows others to be able to share them, use them, open them and edit them. Think back to any attempt to do this with a typewritten document. The introduction of computers also made the office a quieter place, as we were able to say goodbye to the clunking of said typewriter on any number of desks.

### **Software Programs**

Much as people continually whine about software programs produced by Microsoft, such as the all-too-familiar Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access, these really have revolutionized the way that people work in and out of the office. These systems have made word processing and the creation of spreadsheets to deal with numbers really so easy that we just take it for granted (we do, in fact, take it so much for granted that software terms have made their way into our lexicon). Add to this the ability to create customized presentations and databases, and work really has become much more advanced and, some would argue, intuitive on many levels.

### **Laptops and Netbooks**

Laptops and netbooks allow us to make our offices portable. With these we can work from anywhere. Netbooks are especially useful for travel because they are so small and lightweight. While it is easy to argue that netbooks were “very 2009” from a North American perspective, there are parts of the world where they are very much in vogue and the inherent portability has become a game-changer. Given that I frequently work in Asia, I was able to witness the boom of netbooks several years before they hit US soil. It’s a remarkably thing to see the adoption of a brand new technology and to understand how it changes habits.

### **Email**

Before email, we lived in the age of the typed memo. Memoranda were typed up and sent to others around the business, often in envelopes marked “Internal”. Your memo might not necessarily arrive at its destination for several hours, maybe not until the next day, maybe not for several days. Email and its progeny has meant that “memos” can be sent and received instantaneously, wherever in the world the sender and recipient are located. As long as there is Internet, email is possible. It is also possible to attach files to emails, which prevents the inefficient need for printing a document and posting or faxing it. These days, the employees of most businesses around the globe have email to help them carry out their work.

## **Internet**

The development of Internet, then broadband and later Wireless Internet or WiFi have arguably had the greatest effect on the changes on the way that businesses now run.

The evolution of the Internet has allowed for so many related innovations, including email, instant messenger and voice over IP. In addition to these basic things, the Internet brings us so much more value. Research has become so much easier now that the Internet can be used for almost any fact-finding task. Of course, care needs to be taken about the information found, and sources verified, but all in all so much time is saved, which has a massive economic benefit in terms of productivity.

A huge amount of business is transacted over the Internet. It is now possible for companies all over the world to create their own website and sell their goods online through their own shop. Think, for a second, about how huge this is. While it's no longer novel for us to imagine buying a pair of sneakers or a t-shirt over the Internet, what about the idea of buying crafts direct from a village near Lahore, Pakistan, or caramel biscuits from the preeminent baker in The Hague? It's a total game-changer.

There is a whole new world created by Internet marketing and search engine optimization, through which companies can ensure that their website is found early in searches, since most of us don't bother to look beyond the first three or four results most times. This has created no end of work for designers, developers network specialists, as well as writers and editors, as websites are designed and then re-designed to rebrand or just for a more contemporary look and feel. In the world of Internet marketing, the times are a-changin' almost daily.

The Internet has also created a plethora of jobs that no one knew would exist 15 years ago. For example, there are jobs that are for those who manage websites, such as the role of webmaster or community manager. There are web developers and designers. There are a great number of marketing jobs that consist in some form or another of online marketing. The obvious kind of marketing online job is online marketing manager (or assistant), but there are also other opportunities out there for those who stay ahead of the game. For example, there is the job of social media marketer (please forgive my somewhat antiquated use of titles, but I'm appealing to a global audience here and not everyone in the world is in tune with whatever terms are the most bleeding edge in Silicon Valley and NYC) whose role is to draw the world's attention to a company's products and services using websites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and others that are still to come. There are also lots of different writing jobs, particularly those relating to search engine optimization - trying to get websites to appear higher in a search

engine results page by manipulating keywords and phrases into the text. The field of design has also made a significant impact on the types of jobs available and sorts of design that a person can do on and for the Internet.

Some Internet sites are worth a special mention as they have had such a phenomenal impact on business as we know it:

**Google** – this company has developed a search engine that has eclipsed the impact all of its predecessors combined. Today a person might be more likely to say “Google it” as “do an Internet search”. Google is, for better and/or worse, continually shaping the way we use the Internet and the information that we access it through its complicated algorithms for search.

**Facebook** – this site and others in the same genre (LinkedIn, Twitter) allow us to get in touch, get back in touch with or make contacts with new people. They facilitate networking online, allowing us to leverage thousands of contacts if we know how to work the system well.

**Amazon** – this website (and all of its progeny, such as Zappos) shows us how online shopping can be done at its best and easiest. Many people are just as likely to go on Amazon to find a book as to go to the local bookstore. In remote areas, you’d be shocked at how many people acquire more than 80 percent of their goods through orders initiated on the Internet. It is simply easier and more effective that seeking to acquire in person.

**eBay** – this company and others like it introduced us to the concept of online auctions, which have in turn transformed the way that some people do business. There are companies that use the services of this company to facilitate their own selling business, and there are websites which have taken this concept and applied it to outsourcing work. More on that later but I have been using eBay since 1995, when it was little more than a message board. Watching eBay’s evolution into, in some very essential ways, a market basket of goods for the world, has been amazing.

### **Instant Messenger**

Somewhat of a precursor to voice over IP, instant messenger was a huge technological breakthrough. It allows people to type messages that get sent in real time to another person’s account, and they, in turn, can respond in real time. This meant that the costs of doing business internationally could be significantly reduced because there was no need to make really expensive phone calls. Of course it was not the same as being able to talk to someone and hear their voice, but it was certainly a lot cheaper than doing so. Instant messenger remains very popular, and can be done using the tools of many different companies: AOL, Yahoo, Google, MSN, Skype and others.

## **Voice Over IP**

This innovation has meant that people can call each other from any place in the world where a service such as Skype has been downloaded and the person can talk to another very cheaply. It can be used to call landlines significantly more cheaply than using another landline to do so in many cases. One of the most significant breakthroughs of such services is the newly-created ability to call from one account to another for free. This has made accessible to a wide audience, for the first time in history, the international long-distance call. This has an enormous potential impact on how people do business around the world and how they are able to interact in their personal lives.

In addition, one of the most exciting breakthroughs in this area is the ability to be able to use a webcam or video with your voice call. This allows people in to talk and see each other in real time, no matter where in the world they physically are. It allows for international business to have more personal touch without the great expense of an in-person visit.

I can't overemphasize the important of Skype in the world of business today. This thesis was proven in late December, 2010, when Skype went down for approximately two days. The amount of lost global productivity and income was estimated in the tens of billions. For US \$13 per month, Skype also offers many people around the world the possibility of unlimited calling to landlines and mobile phones in many nations. Again, here is a true game-changer.

## **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones were first introduced in the 1980s. In the beginning, people who had them were ridiculed (I love the scene in the cult comedy classic film, "Night at the Roxbury," where the lead character pulls out a mobile phone the size of a large masonry brick), but by the late 1990s almost everyone in North America had a mobile. These communication devices allow people to talk with one another while on the move, and these days you can do so much more with your phone than just talk. Your phone has become your "mobile device" with the ability to find locations for you nearby at the click of a button, using GPS technology.

Today, even in poor nations, there is truly massive use of mobile phones. As someone who frequently travels to China on business, I can attest to the fact that China Mobile has made both the devices themselves and the phone calling plans economically accessible to billions of people. It's an amazing thing to see.

## **Fax Machines**

Perhaps the machine that I personally hate more than any other in the universe, fax machines are, thankfully, used a lot less these days. Still, they have a place in the world of business. Fax machines are used to photocopy a document and enable it to be printed out on the recipient's end. Before email and the Internet, faxes played

a significant part in changing the way that we work. Even today, in many parts of the world, sending a fax is the rule rather than the exception.

### **Scanners**

These allow paper documents/photographs etc. to be copied and then saved to a place on your computer. Again, while less useful than in recent years, one huge business offshoot of the traditional scanner is “document management,” where your old paper documents are scanned and organized for you and accessible through many computers.

### **Digital Photography**

This innovation allows photographs to be taken and downloaded directly to your computer. Many more photographs can be taken than in the past, because you can see the photos before you print them, and you can easily delete them. They can even be deleted from your camera, making space for yet more photos. This saves businesses the cost of having bad photos (i.e. any photo I’ve ever taken pre-iPhone) printed out, and it reduces waste considerably.

So, what do all of these innovations mean for the way that we work?

Well, today you might live in Los Angeles and be on the Internet chatting via instant messenger with a friend who lives in Tokyo, while simultaneously talking to a client in Rome on Skype (and using video to get a better sense of the person on the other end of the telephone), while also sending in documents off to your office in Buenos Aires. All of this would have been impossible even 20 years ago. Twenty years ago you’d have had to make two separate calls to your Japanese friend and Italian client at great expense, and later headed off to the post office or fax machine to get your documents off to Argentina. You may have had to create your documents with a typewriter, stopping to make corrections and fix the ribbon every so often. Everything just took so much longer and was infinitely more labor-intensive. The speed of change has been remarkable, and its pace is not slowing down. In our lifetimes we can expect to see much more of the same.

### **Mobility**

The development of mobile phones and the Internet have afforded us with no end of mobility in how we might choose to transact business. As the size of mobile phones has reduced from giant brick contraptions down to small, handy pocket sized gadgets, the amount of information that we can keep on them has grown exponentially.

Mobile phones allow us to do business on the move. These days we can get our mobile phones in sync with the office and also our laptops, allowing us to do business from pretty much anywhere. Salespeople can log into online systems that allow them to upload their contacts to their mobile device and upload leads into the

system that another person is using on the other side of the country. That person can take the information uploaded and close the deal in the local vicinity.

There is no need to carry around hefty documents. Instead, the laptop or a memory stick will do just fine. The document can be stored either on the laptop or the stick and downloaded and printed at the destination, rather than lugging it to the other side of the world (which I used to do and was decidedly un-fun).

There are now endless computer software packages that allow us to share documents. Truly evolutionary developments such as SharePoint and Google Docs, to name just a few, allow people to all be able to access and update documents at the same time. Such easy access to information across an organization allows for much simpler ways of working - fewer mistakes are made through a person not having a document, as the document can simply be shared with that person or anyone else who may later need to become a party to the work.

## **Outsourcing**

Outsourcing is huge, so I have devoted considerable space devoted to it later in this e.book.

For now it is worth mentioning that technology has allowed companies to outsource almost any type of work imaginable, without ever having to meet the individual who performs the tasks face to face, or necessarily even having to talk to them on the telephone. Your help desk can be managed in Mumbai, and your computer programmers may be based in Moscow. Your designer might be in Sao Paulo. The world is your oyster and, as they say, “baby, you ain’t seen nothin’ yet.”

In addition, you can find clients online. As bizarre as this sounds in principle, you can find plenty of work and never, ever have to meet your clients. You may never even speak to them on the telephone. You can develop a successful career without even having to think about going to an office, sitting in traffic jams, or dealing with an employer on a daily basis.

More on this in chapters four and five.

## **The 24-Hour Society**

Another key change that all of these technical developments have led to is the concept of the 24-Hour Society. In many businesses, service is expected 24/7/365. That is because while there is downtime in one part of the world, another continent is awake and can be producing output for you.

This ties in later to a more detailed analysis of outsourcing, but its importance by itself can’t be underestimated. It almost blows my mind to imagine that we are

indeed living in a world where people are so professionally interconnected that there is never a moment when someone can't be working productively on a project. Over the past seven years, I have travelled close to two million miles on business, so I have been involved in all facets of this equation. It's a truly awe-inspiring thing to work as a key part of a highly-functional global team that measures work and progress in 24/7/365 increments as opposed to 40-hour workweeks in one zone of the world.

## **Transportation**

Another major development, also technological in nature, is modern transportation. The developments that have occurred in transport over the past fifty years have really shaped the ways that we live our lives today.

Fifty years ago, the ownership of a family car had only just become common and only in the wealthiest of nations. Nowadays, families frequently have two cars - one for each adult who lives in the home. If the parents have children of driving age living at home (in some parts of the US, as young as 15), there may be more than two cars for the family. People expect to be able to move around far more easily than before, and the expectation is usually (apart from in large, very congested cities where public transport is excellent) that each person will own his or her own car. This makes travel around countries and from country to country significantly easier than it ever was in the past, opening up greater options for travel and doing business.

Cars are just part of the story. Advances in air transportation have made travel to other parts of the world significantly easier and cheaper. International flights started becoming accessible in price to the public in the late 1950s, and since then, prices have dropped so that many people can afford to travel and see the world. The days of having to take a cruise ship or other such vessel to get to Australia are long gone. These days, with passenger flights, you can travel from almost anywhere to almost anywhere. It's not quite door to door, but it isn't that far off either. This opens up the whole world to the person who can afford an air ticket which, in 2011, is a remarkably large percentage of the world's population as compared with even 15 years earlier.

The opportunity to travel overseas is now available to most people at some point in their lives. There are many people, such as me, who travel regularly throughout their lives and live in multiple cities. There is an entire industry based on international travel, from travel guidebooks that can give advice on how to go, when to go and where to go, to mobile applications that can give you on the ground information when you get there about where to eat and where to stay for the night. The Internet provides endless information about destinations based on reviews from people who went there and either loved or hated it. All of this facilitates travel for many. Places that never seemed to be a destination in the past have now

opened up and have become a lot more accessible for all. Bali, for example, used to be a highly exotic destination for the very few ultra-rich. Today, most anyone in the world can travel round-trip to Bali for well under US \$2,500, which is a truly remarkable price point.

Travel has fundamentally changed the ways in which we are able to do business. It allows for three main developments. First, the opportunity to travel widely broadens our minds. Travel provides ideas to businesspeople and entrepreneurs that would not have occurred to them if they had stayed in their own little town, working in the same job from 9 to 5 from Monday to Friday for 40 years until they reached retirement age. Being static tends to hold people back from ideas, where moving around introduces new ways of doing things, new perspectives on life. Entrepreneurs think to themselves, "Well, if that works there, it might also work well back home!" and they set up new businesses based on what they learn on their travels.

The second development that travel brings to business is that cheap international or even national transportation makes it much easier to do business with people in different places. Instead of having to rely on the telephone to do sales, we can get on a plane and meet potential clients face to face. We can fly to Indonesia and meet those people who supply our raw materials to us for our products. We can travel to Spain to learn more about what the Spanish arm of the business is doing. We can gain a much broader understanding generally of how business operates in the world, and get ideas for how to better run our own businesses.

Finally, travel has become so easy that it has allowed us to become more accustomed to the idea that we may be able to live anywhere we desire. When we travel to a place where the sun shines every day, we wonder what we are doing living in a place where it is cold, dark and rainy for 200 days of the 365 of each year (or, in my own case, vice-versa, as I'm one of those very odd people who crave winter and other highly challenging weather). We see the expats living in these exotic climates, and making it work on a variety of levels and we realize we could be doing that - that could be (and should be) us! Factor in the technological changes that have occurred that allow us to work from anywhere our heart desires and suddenly, with a suitable level of initiative, we can learn to do our thing from anywhere from Toronto to Timbuktu.

Back in the day it would have been much harder to fly to China, India, Australia or Argentina and think of setting up a new life there. It would have been a huge expedition. Once you had arrived, it would have been really challenging to keep in touch with what was going on at home. As recently as 1994, US Peace Corps volunteers were relying on telegrams (can you imagine?) as a means of communicating with one another across the country in Guatemala. Getting a letter home was close to impossible. Making a telephone call to another country was prohibitively expensive and highly unreliable.

Even deciding to undertake such an adventure at all would have taken that much longer to do. After all, you couldn't just look up the visa requirements for your new home country on the Internet. And you would not have been able to scan documents and email them to the embassy. Instead you would have needed to make telephone calls and visits to the embassy to find out the requirements, and either mail the required documents or take them there in person. Flights were not bought online, but rather, you would have gone to a travel agency that would have helped you to figure out how to get to your new destination. Any research that you did on your new home would not have been via the means of online forums, blogs or community-based Web 2.0 travel websites. Instead it would have been from guidebooks, if any existed, or at your good ol' public library.

## **Social Changes**

In addition to the technological changes that have taken place, society has also changed fundamentally over the past few decades. When your parents and grandparents began work, aside from the way that the work being performed has changed almost unrecognizably, attitudes, expectations and values have also morphed.

Back in the 1950s, 60s, 70s and even 80s, when you started a career path, it was generally assumed that you would stick with it for the rest of your life. You may have been planning for that day since you were barely out of diapers. All the time people would ask you, "What do you want to be when you grow up." You might choose your path as a child and work toward it through school and then university, having it impact all of your study decisions and choices, from an early age.

After university (if you were lucky enough to go in the first place - in the 1950s and 1960s, this was rarely a possibility for working class kids or those from the lower middle class) you would find a steady job with prospects for progression. You would get "on track" and work your way slowly up through the pyramid structure of your chosen firm. Your career path would be mapped out from day one. First you'd be an assistant, then a team leader, then a supervisor, then a director and that was that. Of course it varied significantly from field to field, but the same general rules applied. You were (no matter where you lived) that nation's version of the Japanese "salaryman."

You'd work in your first position for a few years. Once you became good at it, and more importantly when you'd been there longer than anyone else in the team, you'd be eligible for a promotion. Rinse and repeat. You'd be loyal to the company and the company would take care of you in return. You'd probably stay at the same place for your entire life. And this would happen until you reached the top of the tree. Then, eventually, you'd reach retirement age, get your gold watch, have a goodbye party with a glass of cheap champagne and a few party sandwiches and

be out the door. After that you'd sit around in your slippers, maybe read the paper, take the dog for a walk, and probably drop dead from boredom.

Unless, of course, you were a woman, in which case the glass ceiling would repeatedly smack you on the top of the head and you would earn quite a lot less than your male counterparts. If you earned any money at all. After all, women were expected to stay at home and keep house. You'd be at home cleaning the house, getting a hot dinner on the table for when your husband got home. And you'd raise the children. It was fully expected that you'd stay at home with your children to help them grow up until they flew from the nest at age 16 or 18.

If you were a woman with ideas about having a job, you might enter the workplace for a few years before having a family. However, if you got pregnant during your career at any point, there was a good chance that you'd be fired as a matter of course. Then you might never again go back to work. There were no laws then against this kind of activity, in a world of "men's work" and "women's" work.

All of this was okay. You'd been conditioned for it. At school while the boys wore the pants and did the wood work and metal work classes, you'd be in your gabardine skirt, socks pulled up to the knees, in the "domestic science" lab. This place was a giant kitchen, learning how to cook and clean for your husband-to-be. Often you'd already learned these things from your mother anyway, while your father was outside with your brother, teaching him how to tinker with the car. During your domestic science classes you'd also learn how to use a sewing machine, so that you could maybe make or at least mend your future husband's clothes. Your very first lesson was usually how to make the apron that you'd later wear for the cookery classes that were coming soon.

If you were going to enter the work force at all, you might get trained as a typist and go and work in the typing pool, or you could learn how to be a nanny and take care of the Richie Riches of the world. There were clear and set expectations about the kinds of jobs you might expect to get. The lucky ladies got to be teachers or nurses, a real profession. You would never consider working as a construction worker or a firefighter. That was man's work. And any guy who had aspirations to be a nurse was probably a "bit funny," "not a real man," and to be avoided at all costs. Women and men knew their place and stuck to it, for the most part.

All of this seems laughable today. Tell my 12-year-old daughter that she'll have to stay at home for the rest of her life and raise kids and in you'll get a snort back at best, a nasty argument at worst. Tell that same kid that she can expect to work in one company for the the entirety of her work life and she'll be horrified.

The world has changed. The sexual revolution was one major part of this. Women now have equal rights in the workplace, at least in many parts of the world. Women take the subjects they choose at school, and while there are still some archaic

perceptions of men's and women's work, these have changed dramatically. Women can expect to have a career, just as men do. Wages are much closer to equal for a particular job role, regardless of gender. Although there are studies that show that women still generally earn a somewhat less than men, times have changed and things have improved. Since the dark ages of the 1950s and 1960s, women simply have more accessible role models. There have been women heads of state in several countries around the world. At a much lower level, women don't usually get fired if they get pregnant - this is generally considered to be very bad practice and, in many (but not all) nations, against the law. Women still take time out to have children, but careers are more set up for this. Legally, women have to be allowed to resume their old job after a period of maternity leave, and these days, two income households are common across the developed world and much of the developing world as well.

Simply put, the psychological contract between employers and employees has mutated beyond recognition. A series of deep economic recessions have led businesses to cut back and become more lean and efficient in order to survive. The concept of keeping a person in the workplace because he'd always been there simply died. Inefficient companies went out of business, and those that learned to change with the times were often able to grow and become more profitable. To make this happen, the loyalty that the traditional company had (at least on its face) for its employees had to change - firms needed to smarten up and make the hard choices that would lead to efficiencies.

The result was that career paths through the company began to change. A trend emerged toward flatter organizations, meaning that the number of layers of jobs on the way up to the top were much fewer. Competition emerged for these coveted roles that were much harder to get than had been the case before. You no longer automatically got the promotion if you'd been there the longest and knew the most. Instead you'd interview and compete against others who may have been there only for the equivalent of a cup of coffee. And they might get the job ahead of you if they were thought to be better for the role.

What this meant for the employee was that there was no longer the idea of a job for life, especially for those who wanted a career with real challenges and room for growth within the organization. In the flat organizations that emerged, there were less management opportunities, so to progress you might have to look at moving to another company. And it was then that the idea of moving from company to company for making a career path developed, as did the idea of a fungible loyalty. As people were being laid off for efficiency's sake, they started to realize that they too did need to be loyal to an employer who was no longer loyal to them. If another job existed elsewhere that offered the opportunity to progress quicker or at a better trajectory, they should totally go for it. Today, no employer expects an employee to stay in a job for life and no employee expects that being hired means a contract

with a lifetime term. Even in Japan. The level of variety that you can expect to have in your career as compared with the expectations of even 20 years ago is massive.

Retirement is also viewed differently these days, which I think is a great thing (though many others disagree). Instead of shuffling around in your slippers, you might actually not retire at all. Ever. After all (and this is a very key point), why would you retire if you truly and profoundly enjoy what you are doing? If you have fun in your pursuits, why not just keep on doing them until the end? Another emerging model is reducing days worked rather than retiring, freeing up time for other activities, as well as the work which is so much enjoyed. Of course, this works much better in nations that have socialized medicine, as in the US, part-time work usually means a loss of health care coverage.

The lay of the land is that you also face more competition today in the traditional workplace than you did in the past. Forty years ago, far fewer people went to university. In many cases it was not expected that those from the working classes went to university. Instead they'd leave school (often at a tender age) and go to work in order to start bringing in some money to support the family. These days, competition is immense and intense. It is the general expectation that you will go to university if you want to succeed. That means that a bachelor's degree has much less significance than it did in the past. Jobs that used to just require a bachelor's degree now require a master's degree or some other higher level of qualification just to get to enter your field. That's a scary thought.

While the competition side of things might be a negative, the fact that it is generally accepted that you will have access to go out and get a degree is excellent, at least in theory. The idea (in its most favorable application) is that your level of educational attainment will be higher than that of your parents, which should mean that you have a lot more opportunities than people used to have.

The range of jobs open has also increased significantly in the past twenty years. With a job in computing twenty or thirty years ago, you would have been in the vast minority. Such jobs also were polarized, only located in some very specific locations. However, these days careers in technology are common and widespread. You can do programming from just about anywhere. Programming is not just related to "traditional" websites. There are also jobs emerging to develop products for new devices that are coming onto the market and evolving and changing, such as iPad and others. It seems that every second person I meet is developing an iPad or iPhone app for something or another.

Another field that has sprung up in the last twenty years or so is the customer service industry. Customer service has become big business as everyone races to compete in this area to add greater value to their customers than their competitors. Additionally, the growth of the 24/7/365 economy has also generated growth in this important field of work. These are jobs that your parents and grandparents could

never even known would have existed, and yet here, just a generation later, these jobs may form the backbone of your career.

Jobs that have the potential to be a lot of fun have emerged as the order of the day. The changes in technology and the development of Web 2.0 along with community based websites that use people's comments as content to drive the site forward. This type of website also creates new, previously unimagined kinds of work. For example, there now exists the role of social media marketing manager, or assistant. This is a role where the post holder gets to effectively "play around" (said only half-jokingly) on Facebook, Twitter and other similar websites all day long. It's a bit more complex than that, but still, it probably could not have been predicted five years ago that social networking would have led to such sorts of jobs.

Other jobs have evolved fairly dramatically as well. Traditional print journalism in particular has significantly changed. As newspapers have declined in readership and circulation, blogs and related sites have taken off. Those who before would have looked to newspapers and magazines for work now might just as feasibly approach blogs, or even create their own monetized blog for work.

Technical changes are providing new types of work for people all of the time and the speed of change is only on the increase. Individuals with some vision who can who get ahead of technological changes and who learn new technologies quickly can position themselves for these new types of jobs that arise.

## **Generations X and Y**

All of this has led to big differences between generations, particularly between those that came before, such as the Baby Boomers, and Generations X and Y. Generations are huge, spanning a decade or two in size. While it seems foolish to generalize wildly about an entire generation in just a few words, some important conclusions and similarities can be drawn. The most recent generations were born into and grew up in a world that was very different than before. These factors have led to a new world view. First, let's be clear who we are talking about here.

Generation X commonly refers to people who were born during the 1960s and 1970s. Some definitions include those born in the early 1980s, but generally you will not fall into Generation X if you were born after 1982.

Generation Y comprises those who were born after Generation X. As of the current time, no precise dates have been set to box in those who make up Generation Y. Usually these folks were born through the 1980s and up to around 1995, though some definitions like to take it as far back as the mid 1970s. Many of these people were born to baby boomers, making this generation also known as the "Millennial Generation" or the "Echo Boomers". We might refer to this group for now as the "Under 30s".

Those born in Generation X and Generation Y want different things from the Baby Boomer generation and those even before. Globalization has led to this group becoming significantly more diverse. They aren't going to suddenly wake up and want a steady job for life with a reliable and regular income. They tend to want different (somewhat nontraditional) things from life. People began to grow up in a world that was more plentiful, at least in the more developed nations. In fact, generally speaking, these definitions should be applied to the developed world, as in poorer countries, the figures for youth are significantly higher and there are many other differences. Generational differences vary there to those in the developed nations.

The group as a whole is very large. It takes in everyone from the age of about 10 up to the age of 45 or so. Some of the differences between the X and Y generations, compared to their predecessors are:

- Generations X and Y tend to come from smaller families than in the past. They enjoy being the center of attention, or at least one of just two or three centers of attention, rather than coming from families of 10 or more children.
- Generations X and Y are used to a lot of activity going on all at the same time. They will use the Internet while watching the TV (as I do) or listening to the radio. They are more used to multi-tasking than those born as part of the baby boomer generation.
- Generations X and Y respect those who deserve it. The old-fashioned idea of respecting your elders just because they are older does not really sit well with them.

Generation X and Y are also different:

Generation X places a high value on the importance of feedback and input. Work-life balance is key to them - more on that later. Those in Generation X grew up with punk and alternative rock and grunge music. They tend not to embrace and enjoy rigid rules.

Generation Y places a great deal of importance on fun. They like to be challenged. They always want to be learning (maybe this is why we have seen the growth of the "learning organization" as a concept in recent years). Corporate social responsibility, and being involved with companies who have a social conscience) is something that makes those from Generation Y happy. Generation Y do not feel loyalty to companies for the sake of it, or because they were given a job there. If the job is dull, repetitive and does not challenge them enough, they'll be out the door. Generation Y craves stimulation.

At work, Generations X and Y want some of the same things. They are interested in personal and professional growth, and having fun. They also want some sort of balance between work and life. Generally, they will not be interested in a job that has a slow career progression path that involves working for 100 hours per week to get to the level of partner within a company. Of course, some do want this, really I'm making generalizations, and people vary from place to place, industry to industry.

This doesn't mean that Generations X and Y do not want a career - they do. But the sort of career that they want varies from what their parents or grandparents wanted. They're looking for different things from the workplace and from the experience that is work.

What it comes down to in a lot of ways is experiences. Generations X and Y are looking for new experiences and variety. They do not place job security as their top priority but instead crave work that is fun, stress-free and relatively social. They are generally conscious of environmental issues and corporate ethics and want to be a part of organizations that meet those standards - if not, they don't want to be part of the organization. They don't particularly want to work in a place that "screws the little guy." Their lifestyle is as important to them as their work. Balance between the two is fundamental to them.

Generation X and Y want to work in a place that values not just return on investment, revenues and profits but also pays attention to the people who work there. They want their input to be valued. They certainly want the chance to be able to give their input. They want to have voices that are heard.

These generations value rules that are in place for a reason. Leaders who focus on power to generate respect will gain a lot less respect than those who do a good job, listen to them and value their thoughts and suggestions. Those organizations that do not value feedback will lose employees from these generations. They know they have other options and don't have to sit waiting for positive or constructive feedback that never comes. Instead they can just move on to somewhere else, a company that does find this important, or they can set up shop alone given the right industry and skill set.

Generations X and Y place a very high value on training and development. They don't want to be a part of organizations that do not value the importance of continual learning. If they cannot get this in their workplace they will move on to somewhere that does value it or go it alone. Unfortunately, despite the fact that training and development have been proven to raise productivity by 18% and profitability by 19%, these are, counterintuitively, the first areas to be cut during any kind of economic downturn or reduction in profitability. This is because the benefits tend to be more intangible and harder to quantify on the organizational level.

What all of this leads to is that most individuals from Generation X and Y are harder to retain. Organizations need to focus on variety, the giving of responsibility at earlier stages and a greater understanding of how decisions are made and some participation in this process where possible. In addition, savvy companies are catching on that if employees leave to do other things, whether that is another job or studying for more qualifications, they may come back at some point. Fostering an approach of cutting people off when they leave is not in the best interests of the business.

A development that has really come into vogue in the past 10 years is the increased focus on professional networking. Networking has truly become a part of daily life, which was not always the case. Think for a minute about the growth of Facebook. Initially targeted only at Harvard students (you needed a harvard.edu email address to use it), the website rapidly rolled out first to other universities in the USA and was then extended to an open, global audience. The website has been in existence since 2004, and passed the 500 million user mark in 2010. As Time magazine's managing editor, Richard Stengel said when discussing the award of Time magazine's coveted 2010 Person of the Year Award to Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg, "that's one in 10 people on the planet". There are a reported 1.7 billion interactions on Facebook every minute, and a million new users sign up every day.

The new generations, X and Y use Facebook and other websites like it daily, if not hourly. Such sites open them up to new ideas and possibilities for ways of working that may not have been apparent before. These technologies put them in touch with so many more people than they may have kept in touch with previously. These sites quite literally open up a world of opportunity that is both personal and professional.

### **A desire to "be happy"**

The overarching theme of all of the social changes that have taken place is that there is a desire among people to be happy with what they do in life. People have begun to realize that there is more to life than the high-powered double-breasted suits and money-making of the 1980s, and that how we spend our time is of fundamental importance.

The changes that have occurred have also partly been driven by the idea that materialistic, selfish lifestyles have an impact both on ourselves and on others around the world. For example, in the 1980s, people didn't really know or care too much where our clothes were made, but we now know that some companies use "sweat shop" factories in Indonesia and other parts of the developing world to turn out designer gear so that we can look good in these popularly-accepted brands. This is seen by most as being damaging because the lifestyles that they generate for those living in the countries where such factories exist is not thought to be sustainable, and it is exploitative.

There has also been an increased growth in awareness relating to the sustainability of our interactions with our Earth on the environment. Being happy for some means making sure that what we do is environmentally friendly and will keep our planet going for future generations to enjoy. Consumers have become pickier in most countries about what they will buy and how it was made. In some ways, the USA has lagged behind on this, but they are starting to catch up. Fears for and of the ice caps and global warming have led to widespread “green consumerism.” This, in turn, has created jobs that never existed in the past, and there are extensive opportunities to be had for those who can identify a niche to fill.

People don't want to spend 40, 50, 60 or more hours a week in an office following a career path for the sole reason that it will keep their families happy or because this is what is expected of them. They want to follow their hearts as well as their heads and do what they know will make them happy instead. That usually is anything but a sentence of 40 years sitting in an office, doing the same job, or a job that is fundamentally the same but has increasing levels of responsibility throughout their career.

Doing what makes people happy may still involve becoming a doctor, lawyer, trader or other similar career, but it might equally be setting up their own business from a beach cabin in Thailand, India, the Philippines or some other exotic clime and, in so doing, developing a work life balance that matches their interests. It might involve working but also volunteering with villagers in Africa or South America. They may travel and work along the way, generating a strong network of contacts from around the world at the same time.

On the subject of work life balance, people have learned that there is no sense in working yourself into the ground and then dying of a heart attack or cancer at 55. The phrase “dying at your desk,” is now part of an accepted vocabulary - that fact in itself should scare you. Instead we want to enjoy life for what it is at this moment. Changes in technology have helped to facilitate people being able to work in a different way - perhaps job sharing or telecommuting - options that would have been impossible before the advent and widespread use of the personal computer in the office environment.

The development of technology and the Internet and the parallel changes in society mean that so many more options have opened up to people than ever before. You don't have to follow a path defined for you by your parents achievements or status at your birth. There is so much more out there, and the opportunities continue to grow daily.

## Chapter Two

### Why Traditional Ways of Finding a Job Have Permanently Changed

Traditionally, when applying for a job, you'd have looked in the newspaper or magazines for job vacancies, prepared a resume which showed the different tasks that you have done (and, by implication, could do) and displayed your qualifications. You'd have mailed (like "real" mail, with an envelope and stamp - the full deal) that off to the hiring manager and waited. Then you'd have one interview, perhaps two, and you'd have been either rejected or hired into the role. If hired for a job, you probably would have been hired as a full-time permanent employee.

All of this has changed.

A great deal of the change has been driven by the advent of the Internet, but the speed of change in organizations has also had a significant impact. Here's why it has all happened, and how to work smarter to get that job.

#### The Role of the Internet

The introduction of the Internet has brought about an infinite number of changes to the process of finding a job. The most significant changes relating to finding a job have actually been created by the Internet. All of these are covered in more depth in this chapter, but in summary, the main changes are:

- *You can find a job on the Internet on job websites;*
- *You can find jobs on the Internet on company web pages;*
- *You can use the Internet to network to find a job much more easily;*
- *You can find massive amounts of information on the Internet about how to apply for a job;*
- *You can find freelance work on the Internet;*
- *You can use the Internet to submit your resume to job websites;*
- *You have to consider the principles of search engine optimization when applying for a job;*
- *The Internet has made it is easier and cheaper to apply for a job;*
- *You can use the Internet (Skype and its progeny) for interviews;*

- *You can use the Internet to do research on the company that you are applying to.*

### **1. You can find a job on the Internet on job websites:**

One of the best ways that the Internet has changed job searching is that it is much easier to find vacant positions through searching online.

Open jobs can be found by simply typing in a search for the job title in a search engine. This will usually return job advertisements for vacant positions.

Alternatively, it is possible to visit any of the countless job websites out there, type in your job title, filter the search based on desired salary, location and many other different criteria of your choice, and find jobs waiting to be filled. Some of the big names in this industry include: [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com) and [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com).

While it may take time to carry out searches and identify suitable jobs using search engines and job websites, it is substantially quicker and cheaper than going to all of the local job agencies, presenting yourself and your resume and having interviews with them in addition to purchasing all of the newspapers and magazines where jobs might potentially be found in your field on the relevant days each week.

Those who have been really effective at finding great jobs online generally understand though that, like any other sort of job hunt, Internet-based job searches take effort and persistence. You have to do research into where potential employers might post jobs and keep on top of those websites every day. You have to send a good, tailored application to the company as soon as you see the job. That's because with everyone else also being able to find these jobs online, there's a huge amount of competition out there. You'll have more chance of your resume being looked at and getting an interview, if your resume is one of the first ten or fifteen that arrives in an employer's inbox, than if it is one of the first five hundred. Find ways to differentiate your inquiry/application from the volume of others.

### **2. You can find jobs on the Internet on company web pages:**

Another great way that finding jobs has changed is that you can find out if companies are actually hiring by simply going to their website and checking out their jobs and careers pages.

This is actually pretty huge. Back in the day, as they say, you'd have spent some considerable time identifying companies that you might want to work for, researching to see if they had the kind of work that you were interested in doing, finding out their contact details in the telephone directory (only if it was a local phone directory or if you had access to a library with hard copy phone directories

from other cities, which was rare), and then sending them your application through the post. Unless you'd heard something from an employee working there or someone else in the know, you'd have been sending these applications in the dark, unaware of whether or not such companies actually had any jobs available or not.

Being able to go to a company's website, check out the kinds of work that they actually offer, see if they have jobs available at the current time, find out what skills and experience they are looking for in applicants for particular roles, and know whether or not they take speculative applications cuts down considerably on time spent focusing on companies that may not even be interested in what you have to offer or may not have vacancies. This allows you more time to focus on the companies that might be interested.

And, of course, if you can find a company's website, it means that you can also probably find out how they prefer to receive applications, and where to email or send them to, cutting down on that rather large element of chance that always existed in the past.

### ***3. You can use the Internet to network to find a job much more easily:***

These days, networking has become fundamentally important as a tool to find a job. As the old saying goes:

*"It's not what you know, it's who you know."*

Never has this been more true than today and the Internet helps to facilitate this process. Great networking for finding a job requires building up a body of very high-quality contacts that can help you to find a job. It is a two-way process, and requires some give, not just take. If you are supportive and helpful, you will find good contacts that are willing to help you in return.

Places where excellent contacts can be found include:

- The workplace or former workplaces;
- Professional organizations;
- Contacts from work or previous jobs (such as clients, vendors etc);
- Alumni from your school or university;
- Family;
- Friends;
- Those who enjoy the same hobbies as you.

You might look at this list and think, "My family can't help me find a job... they don't have the first idea about what I'm looking for." Indeed that may be true, but they may have contacts who do, and that's the point. The idea is to make contacts through anyone and everyone that is relevant to your search to enable you to find a

job. Finding appropriate people to help is the most important thing, and doing some research into who may be best able to help is essential.

How the Internet has changed the playing field is that networking is extremely easy these days to do online. This is known as “social networking” and it has been popularized by websites such as LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)), Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)). While the latter two sites may seem as if they are really just for socializing and playing games, posting statuses and generally having fun (or wasting time, depending on your orientation here), they are actually excellent networking tools. There are also other such sites, depending on your career field. There are networks that target writers, as an example.

## **LinkedIn**

Professionally speaking, LinkedIn is perhaps the best website to use for finding business contacts that might be able to help you to find a job. The website is specifically designed with business in mind, rather than just finding friends, and people tend to be much more “linked in” with former colleagues and employers than just friends.

LinkedIn allows you to view the contacts of others (called “connections”) and ask to be connected if there is someone they are connected to who might be able to help you. Aside from this, it is possible to post your resume on the website and get recommendations from former colleagues. This can make you very attractive to employers who scan the site for possible applicants. LinkedIn also has other opportunities for making contacts, through groups. You can join groups that are specific to your field and get the latest news emailed to you from your groups. Some of the information may be useful and some not. Unfortunately, some people use such groups for borderline spam marketing their own products or services, which may or may not be relevant to you or your group. Groups can be a good way to find leads about jobs that might be coming up, or to just make good contacts in your industry or area of work.

Finally, LinkedIn also has a jobs section that employers can post their jobs to, so it is possible to scan these for opportunities as well.

## **Facebook**

These days most people are familiar with what Facebook is and what Facebook does, given that as of December, 2010, one in every ten people worldwide was a member. One in TEN.

Facebook makes it possible to reconnect with friends from the past or connect with those from the present. The word “friends” should be used sparingly. After all, you’ll find people who you went to kindergarten with sending you friend requests even though you haven’t seen them in ages. However reluctant you might be, it is still worth being in touch, as you never know when they might be able to help you or generate an extremely useful contact.

Other helpful Facebook functionality includes the company pages that exist. Basically, any company can make its own page and create postings about what it is up to, their new innovations, company news and more. If you choose to “like” the pages of companies that you are interested in working for, you can use this both for research purposes to find out more about them, plus they may post that they are looking for employees, so you can find out about jobs and make contacts this way.

## **Twitter**

Twitter has grown enormously in popularity over the past year or so. It is immensely useful as a professional tool though you need to be artful about how you do so. When Twitter first came out, many companies jumped on the bandwagon and created a page for themselves. They began to “tweet” and amassed followers. A tweet is a short paragraph (limited to 140 characters) where a person or company can make a comment or observation about anything they choose to. You follow people and they follow you. The people that you follow may not be the same as your followers.

Following companies on Twitter is useful in the same way that “liking” a company Facebook page is on that website. Following companies ensures that their tweets appear in your newsfeed, so, again, you can see what they are up to and keep up to date with trends and the issues that they appear to be facing as evidenced by their tweets.

Twitter can also be used for finding and making contacts. One innovative young woman used Twitter to set up a local female soccer team in her area simply by finding people through Twitter. This demonstrates what can be done by effectively harnessing the power of Twitter.

Some of these websites may not appear to be particularly obvious ways to find jobs at first sight, but people have found jobs through the use of all three, and others. Definitely social networking has its part to play in this new work environment.

#### ***4. You can find massive amounts of information on the Internet about how to apply for a job:***

The Internet is home to tons of information. There is more information online than you might possibly ever want about just about everything, including things you'd never need to know a thing about. This absolutely holds true regarding information about how to apply for jobs.

Searches online can give you endless information (some of it useful, some of it not) about how to apply for a job. Where before you might have had to go to a career office, a job counselor or a local library to get hold of some of this information, now you can pull it up yourself by typing in a few words and clicking on a button in a search engine. This makes finding useful information about how to apply for a job much more efficient and streamlined. It also means that there may be more competition with applications, since if you are able to easily find this information, everyone else can too.

You can find information on how to write a resume, how to write a resume for a very specific job, how to write a cover letter, when it is appropriate to write and send a thank you letter, how to find websites to apply to your field of work, what types of questions might be asked in interviews, the types of responses to give to interview questions, and a great deal more. As with anything that you find online, some of the information will be more useful than the rest.

#### ***5. You can find freelance work on the Internet:***

Covered in significantly more depth in Chapter 4, these days it is relatively easy to find freelance work by means of the Internet.

Over the past 10 or so years, and particularly during the past 7, a number of websites have sprung up that allow you to find contract work for small (or larger) projects online. Some of these websites include: Elance, Guru, Freelancer, oDesk and vWorker. There are a great many more besides these.

The basic premise of such websites is that you set up a profile detailing your skills and experience, and then trawl through the open jobs that are listed and apply for them by bidding for the work. As with any job, you have to explain why you'll be the best person for the project, and usually provide evidence of this, most often through submitting work samples for potential clients to review.

Most of these websites have different levels of membership. Some you can just submit bids for without paying to be a member, while others can submit bids you usually have to be a paid member to stand a decent chance of getting any work. Once you've done the work, the client will pay you (often out of an escrow account

that has been established) and leave you feedback. With a few different comments and ratings from clients, it becomes significantly easier to find work on such sites, provided of course that your feedback is good. Newer members often find that they have to bid lower or be significantly more convincing to win that first job, because there's no real evidence before that, other than your word, to suggest that you can actually do the job. In such instances, it may be a good idea to provide samples of earlier work, if possible.

You'd think that such websites would be somewhat exploitative, with clients trying to weasel out of paying providers, or trying to find the absolute cheapest way possible to get something done without regard to quality. It is true that some clients are simply looking for really inexpensive work to be done for them, and the occasional one or two will not pay. You'd also think that there would be people out there who are imposters, with no qualifications, setting themselves up on these websites and lying their way into work for which they are not qualified. Yet the reality is that these sites have developed significantly over the past five years or so and are well set up to protect both buyer and provider. Clients do not have to pay until they are happy with the job, and providers do not have to start the work until the money is deposited in an escrow account so that they can do the work safe in the knowledge that the client can actually afford to pay for it (nothing destroys trust more quickly than a job well done and unpaid). As regards low payment for hard work, providers do not have to bid for work at a price at which they are not prepared to work. While some call this global arbitrage and mean it in a very negative way, this is actually among the greatest examples of a global free market in action.

Such websites have revolutionized the ways in which people work, with outsourcing possible to people all over the world, who possess all kinds of skills, such as web design, programming, writing, editing, accountancy, legal work, HR, finance, marketing, sales, broadcasting, engineering and a wide range of administrative functions. This makes it possible to outsource almost anything in a business to someone who is an expert in that area. That in itself is pretty amazing. It also makes it possible for those with an entrepreneurial spirit to build a global team cost-effectively, with individuals working in a variety of countries around the world to get a project completed. More on both of these concepts in later chapters.

## **6. *You can submit your resume to job websites:***

Job websites that have the functionality for you to search for jobs also often allow you to upload your resume or supplementary materials. What this means is that in addition to prospective employees being able to search for jobs on websites, employers can also search for applicants on those same job sites.

Uploading your resume to reputable job search websites allows for employers to more easily and quickly identify you as a match. In the past, such work was carried out by headhunters who found out about you through word of mouth or from

recommendations from colleagues that they had contacted before you about open positions. This work is still carried out by headhunters, but it is also now performed by companies themselves, and is much faster and streamlined as it can be done online.

### **7. You have to consider the principles of search engine optimization when applying for a job:**

The development of the Internet led to the subsequent development of search engines. In turn this led to search engine optimization. Search engine optimization, or SEO, has had a huge impact on how you can find a job. SEO has meant that we have had to fundamentally change the way that we write our resumes. But what is search engine optimization, and why does it/should it affect the writing of a resume?

Search engine optimization is basically an ongoing process of improving web pages to make sure that they appear higher up in online searches performed. Google runs this show to a significant degree as it is, by far, the search engine *de rigueur*. However, think for a minute about your use of Google, Yahoo, or other similar search engines. You type in a word or a few words, hit search and then some results appear. You might look at the first two or three or you may scroll down and look at one of the other results that appear on the first page if the first few don't seem to be relevant. Ask yourself how often you click through to the second page of the seventh page of the search results? The answer is probably rarely, if ever, unless you are doing some pretty in-depth research. Search engine optimization is the task of making sure that a website appears at least on the first page of a set of results for keywords or phrases, but ideally that it is displayed in the first five results, which is no easy task.

A whole industry of Internet marketing has been built up around SEO and that industry itself is worth billions. Search engines keep their algorithms secret, but there is a lot of second guessing about what they are doing, and how one might best make sure that his or her page moves up in the rankings. It is thought to be based on a number of different factors that change from time to time - it is a truly moveable feast that people need to think about and keep up to date on continually for success with websites on the Internet. Google and their kin rate websites based on factors such as types of keywords and keyword phrases included on the website, how much credibility that website has (based on the quality of the content, the number of internal links within the website itself, and links that are incoming from other websites - after all, the argument goes, if another website links to yours, it must make it more valid).

All of this does not just affect search engines that are obviously search engines, such as Google, Yahoo and the rest. A whole industry has built up around this, and it affects a lot of the tasks that you do daily on the Internet. It has an impact on

searches carried out on other websites where you are not searching for content, but instead, perhaps, for purchases. Take for example, Amazon. Amazon has its own algorithms that are set up for what it displays when you search for a book. Their system is based on a number of factors, but these are thought to include product rating by consumers, as well as appearance of keywords in book descriptions. It is also, of course, based on book sales. Savvy book marketers are aware of this and make sure that they carefully work in the likely keywords and phrases that a person might feasibly type into the Amazon search box in their book description. They will also be proactive about getting positive reviews for their books, knowing that this will impact their appearance in the Amazon search results and rankings, which will ultimately have an impact on their sales. They'll give books away for free to reviewers who will promise in return to post reviews on Amazon. The less scrupulous will write their own reviews using fake IDs, or even write reviews trashing the books of their competitors, to ensure that their products have a better chance of being found and sold.

How is all of this relevant to applying for jobs? Well, the very same principle is applied with job websites. When you post your resume on a job website, employers can search for it on that site. If your resume doesn't include keywords and phrases relevant to the position for which you have been searching, then the chances of your resume being found by a potential employer are slim. So, the way that you word your resume needs to be different than in the past to ensure that you can be found online by prospective employers.

The most important thing that you have to do with your resume to make sure that it can be found is to include appropriate keyword phrases within it. This will increase the chances of your resume being found by the right people. How this is done is to review the job advertisements that are placed for different jobs in your field and pick out words and phrases that are commonly used.

To illustrate how you can make sure that your resume can be found, let's take the example of a person applying for a management role at a company. Normally, you'd apply for a role as a manager of a specific business area (finance, operations, marketing) in a particular type of industry. You'd first look at the job advertisements for the types of work that you are interested in, and you might find that the following keywords and phrases come up the vast majority of the job advertisements that you review:

- Managing teams
- Performance Management
- Team Leadership
- Budget Management
- Project Management
- Improving process efficiency
- MBA

With this information, you can then work these phrases into your resume. It is recommended that you work them in a few times in order for your resume to actually show up in SEO. You have to be careful about how you do this because while everyone is doing it you can't have it seem to be obvious that this is what you are doing. The same holds true of every job in every field.

There are different ways that you can work keywords and phrases into resumes. One is to integrate these into the bullet points that elaborate upon your achievements in different areas and roles. Another is to have a section that lists key skills and you can put the keyword phrases there. You could include an objective or a profile at the top of the resume and work some of the phrases into there also. In addition, you might be able to use some titles for keyword phrases, for example, in a functional resume titles such as:

***Team Leadership Experience***

under which you would list bullet points that demonstrate your abilities as an excellent team leader.

or

***Project Management Experience***

under which you would detail out how you are the best project manager to be found in your field.

And so on and so forth.

Writing resumes for the web is not just about search engine optimization either. In Steve Krug's book, "Don't Make Me Think," one concept discussed quite heavily is that of the Internet user is generally just scanning pages for what they want to find rather than reading these pages in depth. Internet users will give just a few seconds or even less to an Internet page before clicking away to something else if they don't immediately find what they want to find. This means that layouts of resumes for online use have to be different than in the past.

Resumes also need to be scannable. A scannable page is one that is easy to glance at very quickly and see if the information being sought is on the page. This means that titles should be obvious and that subtitles should be included and should also stand out. It also means that big blocks of text become counterintuitive. No one will look at big chunks of text and read them. If it is too much effort, the searcher will simply click away and look for what they want in a better-delivered format elsewhere. This means that resumes have to be structured so that there are no off-putting large blocks of text and that there is lots of white space. Fonts should also be kept simple.

### **8. *The Internet has made it is easier and cheaper to apply for a job:***

For all of the reasons detailed above, it is far cheaper and easier to apply for jobs than ever before. Thirty years ago, your application would have been handwritten or typed using a manual typewriter, a process that would have taken a long time to get right. Applications then needed to be printed and sent to prospective employers in hard copy via mail or courier.

Now, instead of purchasing hundreds of envelopes, printer cartridges, printer paper and stamps for creating the job applications while at the same time having to purchase literally piles of newspapers and magazines each week, in many cases it is now possible to find jobs online. This means that one copy of your resume - or several, if you are applying to a variety of different positions - can be tailored for each job by simply making a few tweaks, and then emailed off to respective employers. This is a process that takes a few minutes, compared to when several hours.

### **9. *You can use the Internet (Skype and its progeny) for interviews:***

Voice over IP has created the possibility for interviews to be much more easily carried out over the in a more effective manner (and cheaper) than ever before. In terms of finances, this is also significantly more cost-effective for employers who have chosen to innovate in their hiring processes with this technology. Instead of paying for you to travel across the country for an interview, possibly having to put you up in a hotel for several nights and pay for your other expenses, a call can be made to you via Skype, saving in person interviews for the second or third round, if at all.

If you have Skype and your potential employer does too (really, who doesn't today?) then one of you can call the other, you can both use video, and you can carry out your interview. This allows for not just the saving of costs in-country, but also international interviewing to be carried out in an effective manner compared to the options that were available in the past.

This way, instead of trying to gauge if you'd be a good fit or not over the telephone, companies can see you and get some idea of your body language and behaviour using video. This saves everyone time in the end, since it saves you having to travel to an employer's site of work to have a face to face interview, a process that could take a couple of days, depending on the distance.

Not all employers have caught on to how useful Skype could be for interviewing yet, but when they do, you can be sure that this will be a commonly used technique for interviewing potential candidates at least in the first rounds of the process.

***10. You can use the Internet to do research on the company that you are applying to:***

Companies expect you to know about them when you apply, certainly by the time you get to interview stage. Again, in the past, this would have been a laborious process that probably would have involved a trip or two to your local library. It may have also required a subscription to a relevant trade magazine or two. It might have necessitated calls to a few friends who may or may not have known something about the company in question. It was a task that would have taken considerable time.

Today, all of this can be done online. A quick search on the Internet and you can have the facts and figures that you need at your fingertips. While you might have to trawl through some unhelpful information to find what you're looking for, at the very least, companies have their own website from which you can glean the necessary information with which to walk into an interview with a reasonable degree of education about the company.

**How and why the Internet is not always to your advantage**

While traditional methods of finding a job have changed forever, and while most of these changes have been positive, there are also some negatives that you should consider.

For starters, the fact that so much more information is available online is wonderful in many ways and makes applying for a job much easier. But the fact that you have all of that information available to you at the touch of a button means much of the rest of the world does as well. This can lead to stiffer competition than you might have faced in the past. Where before it took quite a lot of effort (and sometimes expense) to make a job application, now it is relatively easy to send off your resume and cover letter without too much effort, so more people follow that process. That means that your application has to be that much more impressive to be able to have a shot at getting an interview.

The second challenge is that the job search process can now be somewhat overwhelming. There are a great many websites on which you can find jobs and it can be hard to see the forest from the trees. You can find jobs where you can work as just about anything, almost anywhere in the world. While this opens up opportunities that may not have existed before, or that you'd have never even have thought of before, it can actually be somewhat of an overload. Narrowing down your options when so much is available out there can be hard, especially for those in Generation Y who generally find it a bit harder to commit to something than did than Baby Boomers.

Thirdly, and of critical importance, the fact that you can find so much more out about employers online also has an inverse in that employers can also find out lots of information about you. Employers can type your name into a Google search, just as you can with their name, and they can find anything about you that is available online. If you are reckless with your online persona, this can mean pictures of you out partying at a club, drunken nights at university running around close to naked, downing multiple Jell-O shots, or otherwise behaving badly. Employers are already searching for you online when you apply for jobs, so this is something that you need to take very seriously. Of course, what you do in your own time is pretty much your own business, but if employers can see this online, it affects your prospects.

The most common way for this information about you to be found online by employers is through Facebook. One way that you can deal with this is to ensure that your privacy settings in Facebook prevent your profile from being searched and found in Google and other search engines. Safer still, you can select a setting that stops you from even being searched in Facebook by anyone. Yes, employers do that too. Of course, this will impact on genuine contacts trying to get in touch with you as well. Otherwise, you can just limit what anyone aside from close friends can see through the liberal use of functionality such as “limited profile” and other privacy options. Other methods include untangling yourself in photographs that may not paint a particularly positive picture of your potential in the workplace but that can be very difficult, time-consuming, and it relies upon the good nature of those who have taken and posted said pictures of you.

Sometimes information from years ago might be on Facebook or related sites. One young woman had a stint in modeling, and the pictures were on the Internet. There were pictures of her in a wedding dress and a firefighter outfit. When her potential employer searched her name online, this was what came up first. Of course, this wasn't too terrible, but when they kept searching and saw the nude photos, that was a deal-breaker. She contacted the company with the pictures and had them removed from their website to prevent this happening again.

As a general rule, it is useful for you to do an Internet search on your own name every once in a while, to ensure there's nothing untoward about you lurking around out there somewhere on the Internet. I like to use a superb website at [www.addictomatic.com](http://www.addictomatic.com) for this. Alternatively, you can use tools such as Google Alerts, to be informed about when something new relating to your name has been added to the Internet. Then, if it is inappropriate, you can take steps to have it removed (which is never an easy process).

### **What employers are looking for has changed**

The Internet is not the only change that has forever changed how jobs are found. The changing nature of the workplace and the ever-increasing speed of change in

business has meant that employers focus much more carefully on getting it right first time with their new hires than ever before.

In most organizations, great flexibility is essential in securing a job. If you come across as being the kind of person who will do your job and nothing greater than what is listed in the job description, then you'll probably be removed from the list of potential candidates pretty quickly. In many cases, even more important than the actual ability and experience is a demonstrated willingness to be flexible, help out, and grow and change with the team. If you're the kind of person who is resistant to change, you probably need to revisit that approach, as change drives business in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Problem-solving and initiative have also become more important than ever before. Managers don't want staff that will just bring a problem to them. They want driven people to be able to bring a problem with a solution to them, or even better, a couple of different solutions to choose from.

These days, employers will also be looking for people who are web-savvy and can handle learning new programs quickly and easily. This wasn't as important in the past, when most people either didn't have computers, or, once they did, the programs tended to be quite basic, no computer pun intended (Basic is a computer language). Employers don't want people who can't adapt to and learn new things.

Qualifications and experience have also become more important than before. Where in the past a master's degree would have really made you stand out from the crowd, these days such degrees are far more commonplace. You have to have the desired qualifications to be able to compete for the role, but you also have to have the experience to be able to back up all your certifications and you have to be able to demonstrate this effectively.

## **How Resumes Have Changed**

Aside from the fact that resumes need to be search engine optimized to be effective at securing you an interview, they also now need to be written differently and to focus on different things than in the past.

If you were writing a resume fifteen years ago, you'd have listed out the job roles that you performed and under each you would have detailed all of the different tasks that you performed at those companies. This would have demonstrated your experience and showed you to be highly suitable for the role for which you were applying.

Resumes are now based on achievements. What does this mean for your resume? Well, everyone knows that if you were working in a finance role that you probably kept budgets up to date and did forecasting. In the past you'd have probably

included on your resume something like this in one of your bullet points under “job position”:

- *Created the quarterly budget for the company, and generated forecasts.*

These days, no employer is interested in this. Everyone applying for the job that has any chance of getting it did this in their last job. This is listing a responsibility or a task that you did - it does not tell an employer a great deal about what you are capable of in the work place. More importantly, it does not set you apart from the crowd.

What employers want to know about is where you added value to the company. Where you saved the company money, or made processes more efficient, or did something on your own initiative that had a really great outcome for them. They don't want to know about your tasks and responsibilities. They want to know about your achievements.

So, instead of just telling a hiring manager that you were responsible for filing or for managing people, instead tell her:

- *Implemented new procedure for filing, reducing times taken for finding documents by 20%.*

or:

- *Instigated cost reduction in the team, reducing costs by 30% through restructuring of department, with no corresponding reduction in level of service provided to the business.*

or, to go back to the first example:

- *Developed efficient online method for creation of quarterly budgets, saving business leaders 10 hours per month in production of figures.*

These sorts of bullets say a lot more about what you are capable of and how you really have a lot more to offer to this business than the next person, as measured against a resume that is simply task-focused.

Of course, your achievements will not be the same as this, but this demonstrates what must be done to get that interview. Some of these achievements will be difficult to quantify, but being able to place a tangible value on things will help you stand out.

## **Presenting other life experience in applications**

All of the above still might not be enough to secure you that highly-coveted job interview. Other life experience is also taken into account in job applications - this is a trend that continues to grow in importance over time. This is particularly important for recent graduates who have little to offer in the way of actual workplace experience but also has some relevance to more senior applicants for a variety of jobs as well. Other life experience can help you to differentiate yourself from candidates who also have all the prerequisite experience (both required and desired) and qualifications. These areas of other life experience are important for tipping you over the edge and landing a job.

Areas of other life experience that might be included in job applications include:

### ***Volunteering***

Volunteering to learn new skills or simply give something back to the community is regarded very highly by many employers. Often, something you did while volunteering might not be a skill that the employer is actually looking for but when they see it on your resume it tips you over the edge. This is because organizations are becoming more flexible and fluid to be able to survive and if they realize that you can offer something that can help them out in an area that they had not considered, this will be very much in your favour.

### ***Study abroad***

Study abroad does not have to be limited just to recent college graduates who got to spend a year or semester in Spain, Chile or some other exotic clime, to learn a language, live in a homestay and understand another culture. It is also possible for other, more experienced candidates, to be able to do this and include it on their resume. After all, language schools exist all over the world and offer classes that last from just a week to several months. The ability to communicate in another language is always of benefit in the workplace. Additionally, the ability to go somewhere else and take classes, even if just for a couple of weeks, shows a certain level of resilience that other candidates may not be able to demonstrate.

### ***Internships***

Internships are more commonly a feature of a resume of a recent graduate. Recent graduates who can demonstrate that they have some work experience through internships (if nothing else), stand a better chance of getting an interview than those who can't.

## **How interviews have changed**

Previously when you had an interview for a job, you probably would have had just one. It might have been with just your future line manager, or perhaps with that person and an HR representative (or “personnel” as it used to be known). Perhaps there might have been a panel of four or five people interviewing you for the job.

In the current job market, employers have become much more aware how expensive the hiring process is. They also understand how important it is to find the best person for the job and train them for the role, rather than having to repeat the process again in a few months time when the wrong person is hired. The wrong people make organizations ineffective and can cost a company a lot of money. It is not easy to get bad hires out of organizations as there are so many laws protecting the worker from being ousted unfairly. This makes it extremely hard for employers to get rid of people who really don't work in the way that they should be.

All of this has led to a trend of employers paying much more attention to the process of hiring new people for their teams. Instead of having one interview with your line manager, you're likely to have two or three interviews. Instead of just doing a straight interview you'll be likely to be asked to do tasks, such as aptitude tests, tests to show that you are able to organize and prioritize work effectively. You may also be asked to undertake psychometric testing, or even prepare presentations or documents for discussion.

## **Getting hired**

Traditionally, once you had been hired for a job, it would probably have been a full-time permanent position with a clearly-defined benefits package.

This, too, has changed. Again, partly due to the fact that organizations have a hard time getting rid of their bad apples, but also in part because they need to be able to change their mode of operation so frequently to keep ahead of the competition, your first contract with a new company is not likely to be permanent, full-time. This allows employers to be able to try you out before committing to you long term. Expect short-term contracts at the beginning, and to move onto a permanent contract later once you've proved your worth to the firm, and once they know that they definitely have a longer term spot for you to fill at the company.

## **Keeping up with the speed of change**

Those who think that this is the end all of the changes in finding work are sorely mistaken. With the Internet continuing to evolve so rapidly, no one can foresee what will come next or how these changes might affect how employers decide to carry out recruitment in the future.

Who knows - in years to come you might be expected to present a short video about yourself rather than creating a resume, in order to get an interview for a job. This is already beginning to happen. Any number of possibilities might affect how employers decide to go about recruiting to get the right candidates for their jobs.

In the future, successful candidates will be those who are able to keep up with the speed of change and trends in recruitment. This is critically important. They'll be able to adapt what they are doing with their job applications and be creative about finding new ways of creating and delivering applications to employers to place themselves ahead of their competitors. Successful applicants will be those who do not resist change, but instead swim ahead of the flow to present themselves in new and innovative ways.

## Chapter Three

### How to find your passions in life then pursue them as your work

The way that the economy has changed means that anybody can create their own job.

Really.

Think to yourself:

*If I could do anything that I wanted to, what would I do?*

You may come up with all sorts of things that you like doing. Maybe you like mountain climbing, or being with dogs, or eating (who doesn't like eating?) Whatever it is, why not focus in on creating a work life doing things that you love to do?

If you like being with dogs, why would you spend 10 or more hours per day doing something you that you despise, when you could be spending that same time working with dogs? Life is short, and now more than ever before, people can create the changes that they want in their lives. If you find something you really love, why would you even retire? Instead, why not spend the time formerly known as retirement enjoying your life by doing what it is that you love also.

To achieve this, it is necessary to be able to think outside the box, determine what it is you really love and then develop a plan to achieve doing that for your career and life.

Here's a little story from my own life:

After working as a teacher and coach (which I loved) I went to law school and became a lawyer (both of which I hated). No one had ever asked me if I wanted to be a lawyer - that was the expectation set for me. So I left a good job that I liked, went to law school, worked toward being a lawyer and started to work in the law. I was unhappy and didn't even really realize how much so, but it didn't matter because I was meeting expectations set for me by my mother and many others.

My story is all too common in life. Families want "the best" for you and they make assumptions about what those things are going to be. Normally these are based on their own prejudices and what they want too. That's just human nature. However, the days of having to do what I did are long gone. These days, you can do whatever you want for a living because it is very easy to create your own business, build a global team and get started.

## Self-assessment

Ahead of deciding what to do in terms of a new direction or starting your own business, it is useful to analyze yourself as objectively as possible. If you really know who you are and assess your abilities in the most realistic and objective manner possible (and if you really and deeply consider what it is you want to do) you will find it easier to plot your course of action.

It can be a huge challenge to look at yourself objectively, but this is necessary as it impacts what you can achieve and how successful you will be at it. Your personality needs to be really well-aligned with the job that you select for yourself.

## Development areas

It has been studied that most people usually have what is known as a “blind spot” or multiple blind spots. These are snippets of information that you do not know about yourself but others may be aware of about you. These may be either positive or negative aspects of who you are. More frequently than not, they are areas that we need to work on and improve.

According to the concept of the Johari Window, there are four sets of information about us that we should gain awareness of:

**Arena:** That which is known to you and known to others about you, and that you don't mind others knowing about you.

**Façade:** That which you know about yourself and others are not aware of about you. This is information that you intentionally keep secret from others.

**Unknown:** Information about you that is unknown to you and to others.

**Blind Spot:** Information that others know about you, but you do not realize about yourself. This may also be information that you do not accept about yourself, though others know it to be true.

The blind spot is a huge danger zone. As you don't know about it, you can't easily fix it. Finding out what your blind spots are will help you to tackle some of your development areas and better understand your capabilities. You can ask others to help you to determine what these blind spots are for you. Ask people in your life who you know can be honest and see what they think. If you want, you can do this anonymously and have them complete a short online questionnaire about you - you can easily set one up on any number of websites and tell them it's for a career assessment. You will be surprised at what you learn about yourself!

## **Competencies**

Learning about yourself is not just a process of examining the more negative aspects of your personality, it is also about developing a better understanding of your skills and competencies. If you know what you are really good at, you can better match this to opportunities that might suit you.

Competencies fall into three main areas: Skills, Knowledge and Attributes. These are characteristics that you have picked up and applied in all different situations in your life. You might have developed knowledge in any one of your previous jobs, or in an educational setting - either studying for qualifications or in professional development at a job - or perhaps while undertaking hobbies and leisure pursuits. Skills are, fundamentally, your areas abilities where you might have a competitive or comparative advantage over others.

## **Achievements**

It's important to periodically review your achievements. Redoing your resume is always a great way to assess what you have achieved to date, as it helps you to consider areas of strength and development that you might have forgotten about. Don't just look at your achievements and think that this is the base of experience that you will automatically use to develop your career. Instead, you need to consider which of these you most enjoyed achieving and which made you the most proud. This will help to give you authentic clues about what you might want to do next.

Thinking about why you were proud of something is a particularly key step to take. The why piece is really key. Perhaps you achieved something very quickly that normally takes people a lot longer, or maybe you overcame significant adversity and setbacks to achieve something. However, enjoyment is also critical. If you didn't enjoy achieving a particular goal, then focusing on that or something that will encompass that type of work will be a mistake. Seems obvious, but this is the way many people - sadly - spend their lives.

Knowing what you have achieved also helps you to sell yourself. Even if you decide to go it alone instead of down a traditional employment path, you will want people to pay you as clients or customers to do something. You'll need to be able to persuade them that you can do the job by being able to provide the evidence to back up your claims.

Done thoroughly, an exercise to examine your achievements will help to build up your confidence for what you have done so far, and what you are capable of doing in the future.

## Factors Influencing Motivation

Your motivation is another aspect that you must consider. People often think that others are responsible for motivating them, but in reality most motivation comes from within. Other people may have an impact on your motivation, but how motivated you are will depend on how effective you are at motivating yourself. Understanding your desire and energy and what drives you will help you to achieve what you want in life.

Money is often thought to be a motivator, and for some people it is more than for others. Surprisingly, many studies have shown that money is not the main driver that gets people out of bed in the morning. Much more frequently, people are motivated by the opportunity to learn new things or build a new product or service that they may have envisioned for years. People are motivated by a desire for achievement or recognition of what they have achieved. Knowing what motivates you is an essential step in deciding what to do with your life. If you choose something that doesn't motivate you, chances are that you'll not stick with it for very long and, if you do, you won't have the drive to truly excel.

What are your most important motivators? When you really felt good about doing something and you had lots of energy for it, why was that? There are a great many influences on motivation:

- Becoming an expert
- Gaining respect
- Recognition
- Achievement
- Being challenged at work
- Having a variety of different things to do
- Being busy
- Being around others who are motivated or who have positive energy
- Learning
- Personal development
- Personal level of fitness
- Personal level of health
- Money
- Ability to acquire – car, house, clothes, vacation, electronics and more.
- Continual change

You should not feel tied to this list as there are a lot more motivators, and every person is different. This list should just be the beginning point for discovering your motivators. When you have your own personal list of motivating factors you will have a better idea of the types of activities that you might want to do to earn your living.

Do not just focus exclusively on the positives. There will be other factors that negatively impact on your motivation, and it is also necessary to keep these in mind. It is frustrating to start something new only to find that it won't work for you because you find that some aspect of it is really detrimental to your levels of motivation.

People report the following as having a significant negative impact on their motivation include:

- Lack of recognition
- Inadequate compensation for your work
- Not enough money at home
- Stalled progress at work
- Situations in which respect is not shown
- No sense of achievement
- No hope
- Can't see the path of possibilities
- Excessive input of effort for a comparatively low gain
- Not being appreciated
- Not being recognized
- No room for learning
- No one is listening
- Goals that do not push you to achieve tangible outcomes
- Frustration with the status quo
- Being surrounded by negative people or those with energy levels much lower than your own

This is just a list to get you started. Focus on times during your life when you felt unable to achieve outcomes, or when you felt highly frustrated and impatient. These factors may be things you experienced at home, at work, at school or while pursuing your leisure activities. All of these factors that work against your motivation will furnish you with important information about what you probably don't really want to do.

## **Aspirations**

An aspiration is a strong desire, longing, or aim. Everyone has aspirations even though we are often not in touch with them.

Aspirations form a key part of what you should do with your life. You should be pursuing your aspirations rather than focusing on something that does not interest you. Sometimes these are realistic and other times not. For example, maybe you want to be the president of your country but you are already 60 years old and have never been involved in politics. This may still be an aspiration that can be worked toward, but it will be much harder than if you'd started on this path

at age 25 or 30. Perhaps you have always wanted to be an astronaut. This is a great aspiration, but it needs to be backed up by qualifications and a certain level of physical fitness. Starting out on the road to become an astronaut at age 45 might be close to impossible.

Listing out your aspirations and looking at what might be feasible from that list can help you really identify something as a life goal that you will also really enjoy doing. From your list of aspirations, you can create a short list of options and start thinking about how you could, in practical terms, go about achieving these.

## **Other Life Goals**

When determining options from a list of aspirations, you should also think about other life goals that you have. After all, your career is just one aspect, not the entirety, of your life. You may also have plans relating to family, buying a home, living overseas, travelling, and the pursuit of particular leisure activities. Compatibility between these different areas of your life is important as the goal here is balance.

Let's take an example. If one of your aspirations is to go to Africa and build a school for remote villagers - a task that may take two years to achieve - you need to think about how your partner might fit with that goal, and also how you will support yourself for the time period that it will take to fulfill your aspiration.

## **Developing a Plan of Action**

Having worked your way through discovering your motivators, personality, competencies, achievements, aspirations and options, you will likely have noticed that there are gaps between your current position and where you want to be. You'll need to create your own personal development plan so that you can fill those gaps and be ready for your next step in life.

Gaps to be filled may be knowledge based or may require you to build up certain skills or abilities. Doing some research into your new chosen field can also help you to identify other gaps. For example, if you are going to start running your own business, you may want to learn a little about how to run a project or how to prepare accounts. Alternatively, you can find others who will be willing to do this at fair price for you – more on that in the upcoming chapters. Even if you go this route, you need to understand this area so you're not taken advantage of.

If you want to fill gaps that you have, you don't always have to spend a lot of money to do so. Here are some suggestions for how gaps in skills, competencies and experience can be filled:

## ***Finding a Mentor***

A mentor is a person who is more experienced than you and whose perspective you value. There are often advantages in finding a mentor who is in the same field as you, but not always. This person can advise you on making your decisions and helping you to develop skills, experience, and confidence. They may also have good ideas that you have not considered.

## ***Finding Demo Software Online***

Perhaps a gap that you have identified is a lack of knowledge of a particular computer program. Often a great way to get some experience with a particular form of software is to find a trial version available online. Most packages can be viewed this way before purchase. Find a demo or trial version, download it and practice working with it. Then, if it works for you, buy it.

## ***Volunteering***

Volunteering can be an excellent way to furnish yourself with skills and experience. It can also be very good for trying out something that you are not 100 percent sure that you want to do, though it may be an aspiration for you. You can build up skills and experience through volunteering and find out a bit more about the aspects of a particular job or task that you enjoy. If an appropriate organization does not exist in your local area, it may be possible to find volunteer work on the Internet. The idea of the virtual volunteer is a new and very interesting concept.

## ***Research***

The Internet gives us the opportunity to be able to research just about anything. If you have a knowledge gap, this can surely be filled by doing some online searches if they are done well. Don't forget about that old-fashioned traditional resource - your local library. They probably have books, CDs and DVDs available on the subject matter that interests you. There are also online forums and message boards covering all kinds of subjects where you can ask questions from others who are more experienced than you. There, you can immerse yourself to gain a better understanding of a particular area.

## ***Webinars/Podcasts***

In addition to regular websites that provide information on how to do something, there are also webinars and podcasts that are available online, usually for free. These may provide a useful source of information to be able to fill knowledge or skill gaps.

## **Classes**

Classes may cost something, and may take some time to complete, but depending on the subject matter and your level of motivation, they can often be completed in an intensive manner. You can find many types of classes available online or you can visit your local college and see about evening or weekend classes. Online, you can often take classes that are self-paced, which is a huge advantage if time is a concern. There is a certain freedom in learning at your own speed, moving as quickly or as slowly as your free time permits.

## **Market Research**

If your aspiration involves starting your own business, you'll want to do some market research into your planned area of endeavour. You'll have to determine if there is actually a need out there for what you want to do because if there isn't, what you have is a hobby, not a business.

Types of questions that you might want to ask yourself while researching are:

- Where will I find clients or customers?
- Do I need to focus on a particular area for my target market?
- What are these clients or customers like?
- How old are my clients?
- What is their ethnicity, gender and disposable income?
- When do these clients or customers most need my service or product?
- Where and how do they make their decisions to purchase?
- How much are they willing to pay?
- Will I have to start at a low price to get people to try out my products or services initially?
- Who is the competition?
- How can I make my product or service different/better than the competing options?
- How can I otherwise make my products or services attractive to potential clients and customers?
- How can I spread awareness of my products and services to my potential client base?
- Which customers or clients are likely to be the most lucrative for my new business and why?

With this information you will be able to better prepare a plan for going about setting up your business, and for seeing how realistic it is (and, as alluded to a bit earlier, if you will actually be able to support yourself by doing this.)

## **Marketing Strategies/Plans**

Having researched all of the information and detail above, you can prepare a plan that will help you to be able to market yourself most effectively to your target customers or clients. You'll have to develop what is known as a USP (Unique Selling Point) that makes you different from the competition. This will demonstrate how and why your product or service stands out from the rest and has an added value that your competitors are lacking. It's all about the comparative and competitive advantage.

You will need to determine how you can best persuade clients and customers that you are the best person to provide them with this specific product or service through your skills, abilities, competencies, experience, knowledge, and personality.

## **Work-Life Balance**

Whatever it is that you decide to do, you'll want to ensure that your work life balance is organized in a way that is most appropriate to achieving other goals in your life, not just those relating to work. Anita Roddick, a very famous entrepreneur who started her own highly successful business (The Body Shop) once said:

*"If you can create an honourable livelihood, where you take your skills and use them and you earn a living from it, it gives you a sense of freedom and allows you to balance your life the way you want."*

This is important to bear in mind in today's altered (that was a very charitable description of the chaos that is the current world condition) economy. No matter how much you enjoy your professional pursuits, dealing with customers is something that you will want to switch off from sometimes. Today, the balancing of your life in the way that you want has become considerably harder to achieve than it had in the past, before BlackBerries and an infinite number of mobile phones. These tools and the Internet have led to a 24/7/365 society, within which people are always expected to be available to do business. It is hard to be disconnected at any time, and it has become a challenge to take even the most brief time out.

Balancing the ever-growing requirements of a career with the other elements of your life has become an issue that most people have to contend with daily. With families that have two parents working, who live in the suburbs to enjoy the space of a larger house but who then have to make long commutes to work, all of this can be a serious challenge. It can impact significantly on a person's ability to be able to balance anything and everything and ensure that there is sufficient time for rest and relaxation in life.

Work-life balance is not easily quantifiable because it varies from person to person and also has a different look and feel at different stages of life. However, common

to all definitions of work-life balance is the element of balance between time spent working and time spent on other activities. Work life balance does not necessarily mean trying to attain a 50/50 split between life spent at or on work and life spent at or on home. It has more to do with each person finding a level of balance with which he or she feels happy.

Consider for a moment the old expression: *“Work to live. Don’t live to work.”* This really sums up what you are trying to achieve through work life-balance. It also encapsulates the idea of trying to find something that you are happy doing to make a living, rather than working on something that you do not enjoy for 10 or 12 hours a day. If you can work on things you really enjoy, this is perfect, but you will still need to be able to take time out now and again to do other things, such as take a holiday, spend time with friends or family, do other hobbies and take classes to learn new skills.

Questions to consider are:

- Do you find enjoyment in each day?
- Do you look forward to each new day?
- Is your work satisfying and rewarding?
- Do you partake in hobbies outside of work and family time?
- Do you take time to relax?
- Do you have enough time to do everything that you want to?
- Do you get to spend time with those who are important to you in your life?

Any life change that you make must be organized such that the answers to the questions above are “yes”. If you think there’s a chance that you’ll be answering “no” to any of these questions in the longer term, then your chosen path will likely not be a good fit for you.

Consider this:

Imagine if you woke up in 10 years time and wondered where the last 10 years of your life went?

Life is short. You do not want to spend any time at all, or certainly only minimal time not enjoying it. Whatever you decide to do needs to be something that you will spend your time enjoying, and also allows you sufficient work life balance.

## **Saying No**

If you are going to go forth into this amazing world and do your own thing, saying no will be essential to the success of this process. Thinking back to the example of my law career at the start of this chapter, we can examine the decisions that I made and determine that if I had said no to his family, today I might be doing something

that makes me happy, rather than only being able to enjoy happiness in my limited spare time. I'm obviously joking - things that are meant to work out well often do. But why take a more arduous path than you need to? There, is, in my mind little to commend being a martyr.

Deciding to go it alone and either freelance or set up your own business will often be a decision that family and friends will not support. This is based on their own preconceived ideas about how life should be run and about what is "good" for you. If you are not able to assert yourself effectively, you'll get sucked back into the system and perhaps into a life that you are unhappy with.

Saying no certainly isn't easy, and some level of assertiveness will be needed to get relevant points across and heard. When approaching such conversations, it is useful to be clear in your mind about the outcome that you want to achieve from the start. If you do not have clarity on this, the conversation could lead to you being railroaded down a route that will not be constructive for you or, for that matter, for anyone else. Think about what your body language is doing during such conversations as well. Sometimes your body language can give away insecurities or doubts that you might have, by coming across as being defensive - crossed arms or legs are one example. Such behaviour will allow the other person to see that you have doubts or are defensive and will show your weaknesses to them. Be open and direct and make sure your conversation stays on a level that is positive and constructive.

## **Options to Consider**

Changing your employment may not just be about setting up on your own. It might be about looking at the way that you work and finding new approaches that are better aligned with the sort of life that you want to lead. Something that creates an appropriate life balance for you is ideal. You certainly do not want to jump from something bad to something that is even worse for you. Creating your own business allows you to develop your life more in the way that you want it to be than most other options, because it allows you to be your own boss and to select your own hours (not fewer hours, but a greater sense of choice of when you work and when you don't). However, it could also mean many years of hard work to get the thing off the ground, and if this is in a field that you are not absolutely certain about, this might be a mistake for you.

As discussed in some depth in chapter one, the workplace is changing. This has provided for many more different options for working than ever existed in the past. There are thousands of opportunities these days for working from home, using cyberspace as a means by which to find work. You can find work in accounting, as a virtual assistant, in data entry, doing customer service work, in public relations and so much more. For those who are generally happy in their job but prefer to find

better ways of working to free up more time, some options to think about are below. While not all organizations will facilitate these, it is worth asking:

**Flexible work location** – this is where you think about working in another location than in the office. This may be at home or elsewhere. This is not suitable for all jobs, but sometimes may be workable on a part time basis, e.g. you work from home two or three days a week and you go into the office to work for the rest of the week. Certainly in the past five years, great strides have been made here.

**Flexible hours** – usually easier to accommodate than other options is talking to your employer about either an earlier or later start, to provide you with a better use of your time during the day and potentially more free time.

**Part time work** – this is when you work half time, or three-quarters time but do not do the same full time hours as everyone else at the work place. Of course, this also means a cut in salary, and it is not possible for employers to organize for some jobs, but it can be a good option for those who want to dip their toes into trying something else, while still retaining some proportion of their income.

**Job share** – it is possible that your full time job could be shared between two people, allowing you to cut back to part time. This provides the same benefits as above, but it can sometimes be hard to share certain jobs between people.

**Compressed workweek** – this is when you work different hours (longer) on some days of the week, to enable more time off at another point in the week. For example, if your company's work week is 40 hours, instead of spreading this across all five days of the week, you might suggest to your employer that you work 10 hours per day Monday through Thursday and that you then have Fridays off work each week. This is absolutely becoming more widely accepted.

**Banking hours worked** – in some circumstances, employers might allow you to work flexible hours, building up extra hours over time and taking them at a time to suit both you and your organization.

**School hours work** – for those with children, talking to your organization about the possibility of just working during the times when children are at school may be a good option.

You may also investigate other ways that your company might consider helping you out. Some companies allow their employees to take sabbaticals. If you can take a sabbatical, this might allow you the time that you need to explore options that may exist for following up on your aspirations and giving them a try, with the security in place that you have a job to go back to in case things don't work out.

## **Goal Setting**

Whatever you decide that you are going to progress with, goal setting is going to play an essential role in helping you to get there. Effective goal setting is something that not everyone is good at.

Before setting any goals, you will need to first think about the following important questions:

- Where am I now?
- Where do I want to be?
- How will I get there?
- How will I know when I get there? (this one is remarkably important)

These four little questions can be applied to all goals. They can take you through the goal setting process to help you to add structure to your goals.

## **SMART Goals**

One of the best methods for setting goals is known as the SMART technique. SMART is an acronym that stands for:

**S**PECIFIC  
**M**EASURABLE  
**A**CHIEVABLE  
**R**EALISTIC  
**T**IME FRAME

Those who make their goals follow these standards, that is, those who make goals specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and with a time frame will have a much better chance of actually achieving goals than those who set lofty goals that are unachievable.

Looking at an example is the best way to demonstrate how SMART goals are prepared. So, for example, Mary wants to rent a different apartment. She sets herself a goal that is:

### **Rent an apartment**

The goal “rent an apartment” really says very little about what is to be achieved, or how Mary will know if she is successful or not. Once Mary starts approaching rental agencies she’ll find that there are a whole host of different decisions that she will have to make in relation to her goal. For one thing, she will have a budget that she has to stick within. For another, she’ll need to decide what area of the city she wants to live in and whether she needs to be close to public transport or not. She

also has to consider the number of rooms that the apartment has and whether the apartment is furnished or not. If she doesn't have any furniture, renting an unfurnished place might be pretty costly, as she'll have to buy all the furniture as well.

Mary would benefit from making her goal SMART, to enable her to work toward a goal that is clearer and thus easier to achieve. She might rework her goal to read as follows:

**Rent a one bedroom apartment on the top floor of a new building in the Riverside area of town, which is within ten minutes of a bus stop, for no more than \$1300, within a time frame of three months.**

In breaking this goal down into its component parts, Mary has created a goal that is possible to measure effectively and determine success or otherwise:

**Specific:** the apartment must be in the Riverside part of town, it must cost \$1300 or less, it should only have one bedroom and it should be within 10 minutes of a bus stop.

**Measurable:** the apartment must be rented within three months and must cost no more than \$1300 per month.

**Achievable:** Mary has several weekends and most of her evenings free over the next couple of months, and she has built in some time in case there are administrative hold ups or references that she needs to track down to be able to move in.

**Realistic:** Mary has done her budget and knows that she can afford \$1300 per month on rent, so the apartment falls within budget. She also has enough time to find the place within the time frame that she has determined.

**Time frame:** there is a set time frame of three months before Mary has to be out of her current place. Mary has allowed sufficient time to find herself a new place and has also added in some contingency time so that she does not feel stressed about the move.

Through this clear example, it becomes easy to understand why people fail to achieve their goals when they do not make them SMART. With ill-conceived goals, it is not possible to measure if those goals have been achieved, and if goals are unrealistic, this can lead to stress and a desire to give up. Conversely, SMART objectives can help us to get to where we want to be.

Goals must be motivating and positive. A goal that is worded in a negative way will not be an easy one to work toward and to achieve.

For example, if you write:

***Stop getting my Spanish verbs all mixed up***

This has a negative energy about it. Instead it is more motivational to read an objective that is worded more positively, like so:

***Work on my Spanish skills and move from “beginner” level to “intermediate”***

When the goals are clearly defined, you will have to decide if they are all possible to achieve. Some of them could conflict with each another. For example, two goals for a woman that are like this will clearly conflict:

***Start a family within the next year***

***Begin rafting business, leading trips as a guide down the rivers in the next 12 months***

Either starting the family will have to be delayed or the actual leading of the rafting trips may be better assigned to someone else (who won't risk their health leading exciting rafting trips on dangerous rivers while six months pregnant.)

The lesson here is that goals must be prioritized and organized effectively. Perhaps the baby is the most important thing right now. Alternatively, it may be more important to get the rafting tours up and running first and put off the baby until such a time when the business is established and you can afford to pay someone else to lead the trips.

The practical aspects of goal setting and following your dreams such as the example listed above must be weighed up and thought through. You may also have to consider the wants and needs of your partner or children when creating your goals and chasing your aspirations. Putting yourself first is important, but if you have financial or family commitments, there may be compromises that need to be made for you to be able to progress toward your goals.

Setting goals that are out of reach will not motivate you to try harder, or push you more. This will lead to frustration and disappointment, and perhaps even giving up. For example, don't set a goal that has the expectation that you will be able to complete an MBA program in a year if it's a two-year program. Think about how much time that you have to really work toward your goals in earnest and factor that into the equation. Additionally, goals that are not entirely controllable by you are going to lead to a lack of achievement also. Some of what happens in life is out of your control, so bear such factors in mind.

That said, goals should stretch you and your limits. If there is no element of stretch you may not be motivated to work toward them as they may feel “too easy”. Common reasons for setting goals that are easy to achieve like this are related to confidence issues and insecurity as well as a fear of failure. A well-set goal will be just out of reach, but achievable with some effort exerted, so that you are pushing yourself to achieve it.

With aspirations, motivators, competencies, skill and knowledge under your belt and with goals set up, you will be able to move into working in an area that will provide you with greater satisfaction than you may ever have dreamed possible.

## **Chapter Four**

### **How it is easy to build a global team in a cost-effective way**

The Internet has afforded us the opportunity to build a global team in a highly cost-effective manner. It is possible to do this from just about anywhere in the world. There are two aspects to this: one is providing the technical requirements that make this possible, and the other is access to the people who will do the work.

#### **Getting the Tools**

Before you get started setting up your global team, you'll want to get your own house in order first. This includes making sure that you have all of the appropriate tools to be able to do the task at hand and review the work of others. At a minimum, the items that are listed below are recommended.

##### **1. Computer**

You'll need to get your computer set up so that it can do the jobs that you need it to be able to do. You might need different software programs than in the past. You'll at least need to get any programs installed that you might feasibly need to do the work or to review the work of others. This might include anything from basic and fairly standard software such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and other Microsoft or equivalent programs, through to design programs such as Quark, Dreamweaver, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign and others. What you will want to get depends on the type of business that you are in.

Make sure that your computer is of a high enough specification that it will be able to handle the volumes and sizes of files that you will be using and saving on it. Disk space and memory are both important aspects of your computer that you will need to consider.

##### **2. External Hard Drive**

If you've never worked for yourself before you may not have ever paid much attention to backing up a computer and now you will have to. Backing up your files is essential. Even if you've finished with a project, you may want to hang onto the work to demonstrate you have experience in this area to a future client. If something goes wrong with your computer and your files are only stored there, then you may lose all of your valuable work. Having a second place of storage is known as a planned "redundancy". If one part of your business stops working, you simply start using the other part instead. External hard drives provide an excellent and cheap way to back up your business files. Some of the larger, more expensive ones

tend to sell for around \$150, though they can be found much more cheaply for those who do not need a lot of space.

### **3. Internet**

Obviously, to run a global team, you'll need to have Internet installed. If you have a router for WiFi, you will be able to work from anywhere in your building.

When selecting an Internet package, don't just go for the most basic option out there. After all, you'll basically be relying on the Internet to run your business, so you'll need your online access to be very good. Look at the different options available on the market and go for one that you think will allow you to do things like download big files quickly. Choosing a service with a lower bandwidth might be cheaper in the short term, but it will cost longer in the end, as you'll waste valuable time waiting for files to download. Time is money.

Look at the terms offered by Internet providers in your area. One particular service may look cost-effective, until you have it installed and you realize that's because the company has quite a lot of downtime. Do some investigation of the different Internet providers available to learn a bit more about their ability to provide you with the sort of solid, reliable service that you need.

### **4. Skype**

Skype will be absolutely critical in enabling you to talk with clients in different parts of the world at a very affordable rate. You will also need it for talking with your employees, as they are based in different parts of the world. The service is free to download. You can use it for calling to landline numbers (at a cost that is usually relatively cheap depending on the country called), or it can be used to call from Skype account to Skype account, which is free. You have to set up a balance on your account, which is usually small (around \$10 USD). This will enable you to call clients cheaply, and if you insist that your employees get Skype too, your employees for free. For the ridiculously small sum of around \$12 USD, you can have unlimited world Skype, allowing you to call landlines and mobiles in a ton of different countries. It's by far the best deal out there.

A useful addition to your Skype account is a webcam. Most computers these days will have them built in - if not, you can buy them for as little as \$30. This allows you to use video with your Skype account, so that the person on the other end of the line can see you, and you them, provided they also have a webcam. For doing interviews with new employees who live overseas, this can be a really great way of getting a better idea about the person than just listening to them over the telephone. More visual clues and body language can be picked up by using the video element.

In addition to Skype you might want to install other tools that may work well with this. One example is getting hold of a recording service that enables you to record the calls that you carry out using Skype. This type of service can be very useful as a way of capturing client requirements, or discussions held between you and your employees. I like Call Recorder, which is built for Skype and integrates seamlessly.

## **5. PayPal**

Another thing you'll have to figure out is how you are going to pay your employees. For staff in many countries of the world, PayPal can be very effective ([www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com)). This website serves as a way of sending money to other people online. You can hook it up to your bank account and credit card, and send money to people to pay for goods and services. PayPal can also be used for receiving payments from others. You can transfer money from PayPal into your bank account, or you can also use PayPal to take money from your account to be able to send to others.

## **6. Large File Sharing systems**

To facilitate your global team, occasionally you'll probably want to send large files around from time to time. Those files might be large documents, or graphic design work, or files to download to get websites up and running, or other. You'll need to make sure that you have a file sharing system that enables you to transfer large files to the other side of the world quickly, if need be. There are a number of different websites that do this. Some of these include:

<http://www.rapidshare.com/>

<http://www.sendspace.com/>

<http://www.sprend.se>

## **How to Find Your Team**

Once you've got all the technical set up ready to go, you will want to find workers for your global team. This is really much easier than you might ever have imagined.

There are a number of different websites set up that help you to find people located anywhere in the world that can work on all kinds of different aspects of work that you might have that needs doing. Four of these services stand out from the crowd as being important and these are detailed here. The four are: Elance, Guru, Freelancer and oDesk.

### **1. Elance**

Elance describes itself as the place "where the world's top talent works online". The company can be found at [www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com). Elance basically helps employers

(known as “buyers”) find people who can work on projects, and people who are looking for work (known as “providers”) to find projects with employers. As of January 2011, Elance had facilitated \$335 million of work to be delivered to clients. That’s one heck of a fine business model.

Elance makes its money by charging professionals to be members of different categories of the website, such as “Web Development”, “Sales and Marketing”, “Writing and Translation” and “Administrative Support”. As a member of one or more of these categories, providers get a set number of bids that they are allowed to make each month on projects. Each time they make a bid, they lose a number of their points, depending on the general price bracket of the bid (providers have to pay more points for projects that may bring them more than \$1000, than for those that are less than \$500 for example).

The other way that Elance brings in revenues, is by charging the providers a commission for jobs that they get selected to perform for clients. On Elance, it is possible to find the following sorts of professional help:

- Web and Programming
- Design and Multimedia
- Administrative Support
- Sales and Marketing
- Finance and Management
- Legal
- Engineering and Manufacturing

As of January 2011, Elance was boasting a “ready, willing and qualified workforce of over 318,000 professionals”. This is critically important as someone who may hire some of those professionals to understand who those people are and what their motivations are for using Elance to find work.

First up, it’s worth pointing out that not all of those 318,000 professionals are active all of the time and just sitting there waiting to take on work for you. Some use the website for a period of time (perhaps between more traditional jobs) and then move on to something new. Others may use it to freelance and supplement their income by doing one or two smallish projects each month, and others still may use the website as a full time source of income, finding new jobs each day. Others use the website to find one or two part time long term clients, and then don’t use it a lot after that. Some people use it for a little while and either don’t find any work through it or don’t like what they find, then move on.

In a survey of its freelancers carried out in 2010, Elance found that freelancers vary in age between 25 and 54 years. More women than men freelance and most are highly educated. Half of the respondents said that they freelance as the only source

of income and 30% said they do other work too. The professionals on the website come from all over the world.

Eance found some other fascinating snippets of information during this survey, highly relevant to the theme of this book:

- *70% of freelancers surveyed are happier working independently than when they were full-time employees.*
- *60% would prefer to remain a freelancer than take a full-time job.*
- *Less than 5% said they were working as a freelancer until they could find a full time job.*
- *More than 50% said they began freelancing to be their own boss and work on projects that they love.*
- *80% said the ability to have control over their own schedule was one of the best bits about independent working.*

All of this information tells you more about the kinds of people you'd be hiring if you use a site like Eance. Many of them will, perhaps, be a lot like you - people who prefer to go it alone and to not just fit into a set stable career path to keep others happy. The largest proportion of those using Eance seem to be from Generations X and Y, exploring the opportunities that the world can bring them aside from the traditional route mapped out.

Because the website operates using a bidding system, prices tend to be lower than they might elsewhere. Once a person sees that another has placed a bid on your project, they may place their own bid and undercut the original bidder. Unless you set up your jobs as "open bidding" generally the only price that a bidder can see is the top price bid and the bottom price placed on the work. In addition to this, because you have professionals from all over the world, you have people on the website who are able to do the job for cheaper than someone might be able to in your home country.

When you place a job on Eance (which it is free to do, unless you go for a "feature job"), you will start getting bids more or less immediately unless your requirements are extremely obscure. You'll need to review the bids that you receive and decide if the person is right for the job. You'll usually have to pay a \$10 account activation fee, but that's normally where charges to employers end.

Of course, just because a bid is cheap doesn't mean it is the best bid. Each bid should be evaluated on its own merits. A bid that is not the cheapest may offer more experience and a much higher chance of you ending up with the actual

product or service that you need. Bids should be checked out carefully. As with hiring for any job, you should check out the person's background. Each provider on Elance has a profile that should tell you something about them and their abilities. Clearly they can write what they like about themselves, but the best source of information are the ratings that other people have given them for jobs that they have done in the past through Elance.

Elance ratings tell you if a person is:

- Professional
- Has the relevant expertise
- Works to schedule
- Gives a good price
- Is responsive
- Provides work of a good quality




Most buyers will also leave short comments about what they thought of working with the provider.

You'll see that on their profile page that there is also information about the percentage of repeat customers that they have had. This is also useful as customers who go back for more were clearly satisfied. Any repeat custom over around 20% is likely to be very good. There is no obligation to select a provider if none of them turn out to be suitable, and as with any other kind of job, you can interview potential workers before hiring them.

Elance protects both buyer and provider with its Escrow system. Here, when you select a provider for a job and they accept, you have to deposit the funds for the job into the system. If the provider does not deliver, you do not have to pay. If you do not pay when the provider has delivered, the provider is protected, because they can request that Elance release the funds.

## 2. Guru

Guru is a website very similar to Elance in its mode of operation. It is another excellent source of finding your global work force. To give you an idea of their global spread, Guru recently published their top freelancer locations on their website, which were:

Rating	Flag	Location	Number of Freelancers
1		United States	179,742
2		India	50,087
3		United Kingdom	8,577

4		Canada	7,495
5		Pakistan	5,833
6		Philippines	3,480
7		Australia	2,789
8		Romania	1,966
9		Indonesia	1,895
10		Bangladesh	1,840
11		Russian Federation	1,831
12		Uruguay	1,704

This should really help to give you a sense of the internationality of it all. The countries listed span five continents, and Guru has more than one million registered users, making it a more popular site than Elance, and the most popular site of its kind in the world (it says, though other websites claim more users). Guru also has more categories of work, and you can find the following kinds of workers on this website:

#### **TECHNOLOGY**

Websites &  
Ecommerce  
Programming &  
Databases  
Engineering & CAD  
Networking &  
Telephone Systems  
ERP & CRM

#### **CREATIVE ARTS**

Graphic Design &  
Multimedia  
Writing, Editing &  
Translation  
Illustration & Art  
Photography &  
Videography  
Fashion & Interior  
Designs  
Broadcasting

#### **BUSINESS**

Admin Support  
Marketing &  
Communications  
Sales & Telemarketing  
Business Consulting  
Legal  
Finance & Accounting

While different than Elance, Guru is similar in all of the most basic ways: freelancers can apply for jobs for free (as with Elance) but stand little chance of getting a job until they sign up for some level of membership. Similarly to Elance, Guru workers are ranked, so that it is possible for those purchasing services to see how well the worker is rated on the website. And again, the website uses Escrow to protect the money of both the employers and their employees. Some useful facts about Guru worth knowing:

- *More than 8,000 jobs are posted monthly on the website*
- *There are more than 50 industries represented on the website*
- *Individuals work in more than 4,800 global metropolitan locations*
- *More than 220 skill-based service categories are offered.*

These facts give you some idea of the scale of the website and how widespread the idea of finding work online actually is. This is not just a “funny Internet thing” that a few freelancers are doing. It is being done by millions of people around the world at any one time.

Perhaps one of the most interesting facts of all about Guru is that it was founded in 1997. That tells you something about how long people have been freelancing using the Internet. This is not a new idea, far from it, as it is more than 13 years old. If you decide to use this method for finding your global workforce, you can rest assured that you are not pioneering some really new groundbreaking idea which may fail. Actually, others did that long before you, and found it to be successful, and so kept doing it. You’ll be using a tried and tested system that hundreds and thousands of other people have used before you, to iron out the kinks.

### **3. Freelancer**

Freelancer.com says it has an even bigger base of freelancers and employers than Guru. It says:

*“We connect over 2,087,105 employers and freelancers globally from over 234 countries and regions.”*

Freelancer.com used to be called GetAFreelancer. The site says that it is the world’s largest online marketplace for work. Based in Australia, the website has something of a “cheap” reputation to it with professionals. Freelancer.com confirms this with its claim that:

*“The average job is under US\$200, making outsourcing for the first time extremely cost effective for small businesses.”*

And this is true, there is less risk associated with small ticket purchases such as this. In fact, on Freelancer.com, you can find people that will do jobs that are priced as low as \$30, in contrast to Elance, where jobs must be worth at least \$50 to be allowed onto the platform. While this is great in some respects, do not forget that cheap does not always equate to good. It is usually better to pay someone a fair price to do a job, than to go for the cheapest offer out there (which may be from a person who is completely inexperienced). Job categories on Freelancer.com are:

- Software
- Writing
- Data Entry
- Design
- Engineering
- Sales and Marketing
- Accounting and Legal Services

Freelancer.com has been around since 2004 and has quickly risen to become one of the most important communities out there in terms of online freelance marketplaces. Freelancer.com boasts the following statistics since February 2004:

- Number of posted projects: 904,565
- Number of verified users: 2,087,116
- Money spent by users: US \$79,086,500 US

Over a regular 24 hour period, the following statistics are quoted:

- Number of posted projects: 1,102
- Number of verified users: 1,888

Freelancer offers the same sort of way of working as Guru and Elance to employers and employees. It tends to have a reputation with those in the know as being better for finding website and programming work than writing work. Pay for the latter tends to be very low on Freelancer.com.

#### **4. oDesk**

oDesk is yet another online marketplace for freelancers to find employment. They focus a lot more on the idea of online teams, and pay is usually hourly. oDesk tends to go for the bigger ticket jobs, claiming that the average job size is \$5,000. Indeed they claim that US \$65,000,000 worth of jobs have been posted on the website to date.

In addition to the same sorts of jobs that these other sites include, oDesk also focuses on some additional elements, such as the role of “customer service representatives” and “virtual assistants”. The other sites have jobs for virtual assistants but do not focus as much on this area.

oDesk claims that it has doubled each year in size since its onset in 2004. It also states that:

*“oDesk is where companies are building their entire organizations online and is the primary source of income for thousands of contractors. oDesk is truly changing how the world works.”*

oDesk provides the same sorts of protections for both employer and employee as the other websites in the same business. The one significant difference of oDesk over some of the other websites out there is that it requires its users to be signed into the website whenever they are doing any work for a client. The system will then make screenshots at random during the course of the work being carried out, and these are submitted to employers. The employee has the right to reject a screenshot, but this may mean that the employer does not have to pay for any time represented by the screenshot. What this does is guarantees to the employer in best way that it possibly can, that the employee is working on their project for the duration.

What does all of this mean for your business? Well, it means that your whole team might be remote. You could have your website programmers based in Macedonia, your writers in the Philippines and Australia, your designer in Santiago, your lawyer in Mumbai and your sales team anywhere in the world you believe that your product has a chance to sell. You may also have translators located in any country where you sell your services.

### **Why Use Online Job Marketplaces?**

All of this is well and good, but why would you want to set up a global team? Would it not be easier just to hire people in the town of operation, deal with them face to face and not have to deal with all this online stuff?

There are a number of reasons why you might want to do this, but some of the most important are:

#### **Cost**

One of the biggest advantages of using these job posting and bidding websites is the fact that the cost will usually be much cheaper than finding a person to do the job in your own backyard. Probably an expat American, British or Canadian professional person living in a developing country will be able to do a cheaper job than someone living in any of those first world countries and with the living expenses that residing in those countries entails. Alternatively, you may be able to find someone who does not speak English as a first language, but who can do the job much more cheaply, so much so that you can also afford to get their content edited by a native English speaker and STILL have it all done for a cheaper price than if you'd done it in your local town or region.

## **Talent**

It is possible that the talent to do the job that you need to get completed for your project is not available in your town of operation. Using an online job marketplace such as those detailed above, provides you with the possibility of finding talent that may not exist already in your local area. Or maybe that talent exists, but it is either too expensive or not available at the time that you need it, because it is in short supply.

## **Bureaucracy**

Using websites such as those detailed above cuts down on the levels of bureaucracy that you might otherwise face, if for example you decided to hire a developer from India or a translator from Bolivia. It means your money can be sent to them and they can receive it easily and cheaply - no need for expensive money wiring services such as Western Union and MoneyGram to be relied on. It also cuts down on you having to provide all kinds of benefits to employees because you don't have any employees on the books in your home country. Of course, this doesn't mean you shouldn't treat your employees well. People deserve respect wherever they are working and whatever they are doing for you.

## **Time**

Instead of having to think too much about where you will find the time to go out and find people to do the jobs that you need doing that you are not an expert in, you can simply post a job online and wait for people to come to you. This saves considerable time in figuring out where to best post jobs and how to find suitable candidates.

## **Flexibility**

Flexibility is afforded to you by the way of not having long contracts with employees. This in fact is one of the main advantages. You can try out an employee by having them do a small, inexpensive task to start. If it works out well, you can then try them with something else. Over time, if they prove to be reliable, you can build up a solid working relationship with the person. If it doesn't work out from the outset, you can simply say goodbye right away without having lost out too much. Many of the people I have hired over the years from Elance, I started off with a \$50 set of simple tasks and worked up from there.

You can also use these websites to scale your business up and down as you see fit. With contractors such as these, you can set realistic expectations about how much work there might be, and they will decide whether that's something that they want or not.

The best part of all this? Your office could be located in a beach town in Thailand, Peru, Indonesia, or from wherever else you so choose to do your business, provided that your company is able to be mobile. It's an unimagined freedom if done well.

## The Challenges

Of course, as with any business, there will be challenges to overcome with your global team. One of the biggest ones, if not handled carefully is cultural issues.

When working with people who even speak the same language, cultural issues and misunderstandings can occur. For example, British English and American English are very different in some aspects. The word “quite” in US English means “very” where in British English it means “somewhat” or “fairly”. Imagine an American woman telling her British boyfriend that she is “quite pleased to see him,” after he’d been away for a month. This might make him feel a little disappointed, as he’d been hoping that she’d be very pleased to see him. The same difficulties exist in all languages spoken across different countries. For example, the expression used for “to take a bus” that is used in some countries where Spanish is spoken means to do something quite obscene with a bus in other Spanish-speaking nations.

This is before even starting with the complications relating to people speaking different languages altogether, or without considering other aspects of culture, such as etiquette and expectations of how people should behave in business. For example, if you give a Japanese person just a vague idea of what to do, he or she will get on with it without further instruction. He or she will not expect any feedback at the end, instead that worker will be ready to move without further ado onto the next task.

If you try to do that with someone from Europe you may not get the same results. The European worker may need more information about requirements, and will certainly want to know whether or not he or she has done a good job at the end of the project. However, the European worker will be far more likely to input thoughts into a decision making process, and will generally be more open to providing ideas and suggestions and telling you when they think you are doing something wrong. While this would be entirely acceptable in the United Kingdom, in the United States business culture it may be considered to be a form of insubordination, as the boss’s word tends to be more final than in the UK. And this significant difference exists between two cultures that many would consider to be “close”.

While these are generalizations and, of course, not every European, American or Japanese person is the same way, there are certain expectations of behaviour in the workplace that are based on cultural factors, that you may not be aware of. The easiest to deal with issues relating to culture are those that are out there in the open that are easy to spot. Sometimes cultural differences will not be apparent at all initially, and it may be only after working with someone for some time that differences become clearer. These differences may well explain some of the communication issues you thought you’d been having with a contractor that you hired. Suddenly the penny will drop and you’ll realize where the issues are coming

from. But what can be done to prevent these sorts of issues from arising in the first place, and what measures can you take, since you won't be sitting in the room next door to your employees?

Communication will be absolutely paramount to getting any issues out into the open. In particular, it will be important for you to be extremely clear about your expectations. What you might think is clear, might not be clear to the other person, and this will become apparent.

One area where this may become a problem if not handled correctly at the beginning is with regard to delivery of work. If you are based in Australia, and your workers are in Argentina, there will be a huge time difference between you. While some would see this as a negative in that it will be highly challenging to work together in real time, this could actually work out really well in so many ways. After all, you can send a project to your Argentine workers late in the evening in your time zone, and find it sitting in your inbox the very next morning. That is because while you've been sleeping, they've been keeping their normal business hours and working to get the project turned around for you during their daytime hours. When this sort of thing tends not to work is when you say that you want the project completed by 16<sup>th</sup>. This isn't a clear deadline. Do you mean the 16<sup>th</sup> in the morning your time? That will be the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup> to them. Or maybe you mean the 16<sup>th</sup> in the evening your time? That will be 16<sup>th</sup> in the morning for them. This simple example demonstrates the sorts of problems that you might come across with your multinational team located across the globe.

When working with your global team, be very aware that their understanding of what you are saying may not be the same as yours. And this is especially true where English is the main language being used, but it is the second or even third language for one of your workers. You don't want to patronize people, but you do need to make sure that everyone is on the same page all of the time.

One way to go about this is to discuss things with them on Skype, using video. That way you can to some degree observe and gauge their reactions to what you are saying. When you've told them something that you think is important, have them repeat it back to you in their own words. Again, this doesn't have to be done in a way that is rude, you could simply ask them at the end of the meeting to repeat back the actions, so that both of you are clear on what needs to be done and by when. You might also follow this up with something put in writing. Some cultures are more comfortable with a written go ahead before starting a piece of work.

With regard to job requirements, it is particularly important that these are clear from the beginning. Especially with relationships formed on Elance and other online job marketplaces, you'll find that employers that have been burned before will be very specific about what they are looking for and what they are prepared to pay for it. If you want a task to be done in a certain way, then you will need to specify that. Don't

leave anything to guesswork. This is true of any job carried out anywhere at anytime, and it doesn't really matter that you're using online forums to do all of this, but the important difference is that with online working it is that much harder to be able to show a person how you want them to do something. In most cases you will have to find other ways to demonstrate what needs doing. So you'll need to be crystal clear upfront of what you are looking for. The table below includes some examples:

<b>Job Communication that is not clear</b>	<b>Job Communication that is clear</b>
I would like a company website developed.	I would like a company website developed that has five pages (Home, About Us, What We Do, Contact Us and Free Stuff). It should be quick to load and branded in our corporate colors.
Editing needed for an eBook, within two days.	Editing needed in APA style for 50 page eBook, within two days. This is a job for native English applicants only.
Virtual assistant needed for helping out busy entrepreneur with emails and other tasks.	Virtual assistant needed for two hours per day to help out busy entrepreneur with emails, making appointments and formatting documents.
10 articles needed for website on technological subject.	10 articles of 500 words needed for website on mobile devices. Titles to be provided. Search engine optimization is necessary and keywords will be given. Key words must appear 7 times throughout the articles.

While the above may seem laughably obvious, a quick trawl through one of the online job marketplaces will immediately tell you that your peers have not yet learned this. If you are clear in advance about what is required, you'll be much more likely to be satisfied with the job that you receive in the end. There'll be less room for misunderstandings and much less wasted time, as there will be a better chance of the job getting done right first time and less time spent on rewriting or reworking stuff.

In the end, it's up to you how you do it, but communication and cultural issues will likely be the biggest challenges you will face with your global team. You'll have to find ways of handling this that are appropriate and enable the job to get done on time and to budget.

## **Becoming a Great Project Manager**

A key to running a global team is becoming a really great project manager. There are all kinds of fancy courses that you can take into becoming a qualified project manager, but if you learn some simple basics then you can get everything running smoothly in your global team.

One of the most important principles of project management is to decide on your absolute cut off date of when you need a project completed, and work backward from that in terms of tasks that must be achieved. Actually, what is even better is to decide on your cutoff date, then decide on a date that is a few days or a week before that, and make that your project end date. Then you have a few days or a week of cushion to play with in case of any unforeseen delays being introduced into a project.

Break out your project into the component parts. Look at the tasks that need doing and estimate a time for each. If you want good estimates, it is better to ask those who will actually be doing the work how long it will take to accomplish. Again, with each task it is better to err on the side of caution and have days to spare, rather than working completely to the wire on every task. You may want to add in some time for reworking of tasks, and the length of time added in will in many cases depend on the type of work that is being done. For example, the rewrite of a one page 500 word article will take a lot less time than recoding a section of a website that does not have the functionality working in the way that it should.

Having defined the tasks that need doing and how long they will take, you also need to factor in other information relating to time into the project. For example, maybe your designer is going to be on a two week holiday in the middle of the project. You'll need to make sure that you have all of this information ready before you start putting the project timelines together.

Another essential aspect of timings to add into the equation is how long it will take you to review the work that has been done. You'll need to include yourself into the project plan as a resource, and be sure that you will have time to review things properly, to keep the project moving along like a well-oiled machine. This is a part of project planning that so many managers of global teams forget to schedule into their projects. Look at when different pieces of work will be coming in and make efforts to ensure that you yourself will not become a bottleneck to the project.

Once you have all information about time available to you, you will need to start examining dependencies. For example, the writing cannot be edited until the writing has been done. So the editing task must come after the writing. You'll find that some tasks can be done in parallel to others, and some have cannot be started on until others are completed.

Then your project plan can be put together. You can see all the tasks and the dependencies. These should be clearly marked in the plan. You don't need to buy really good project management software program to be able to manage all this. If you want project management software you can find open source products on the Internet that can be downloaded, or alternatively you can just use a simple spreadsheet in the beginning.

Managing each task will involve setting milestones for each. For example, if you are having a complicated piece of development work done, you might want to have the developer send you what they have done each week to look at. You can agree on timings of deliveries of different parts of functionality with your developer and set up a payment plan to match. The same is true of almost any other kind of work.

After the project plan is set up, the individuals are hired, they are clear about the tasks that need to be done, the main job is keeping on top of everyone and making sure that they are delivering what they said they would and when they said they would do it. This can be a full-time job in itself depending on the complexity of the project, so do not under estimate the amount of time that this might take. If you suspect something may be slipping, you'll need to step in quickly to see what can be done to rectify the situation.

### **Set up a business and let it run itself**

The smart can set up their global team and to some degree let it run itself. To read how to do this, it is worth checking out the book "The 4 Hour Work Week" by Timothy Ferriss. The book covers how to work smarter by hiring people through websites such as Elance and others to do the graft for you. Ferriss managed to achieve this, ditching his \$40,000 per year, 80 hour a week job, for a lifestyle that now pays \$40,000 per month, for which he works just four hours per week. Of course, this may not be a model that is achievable for everyone, but it is a rather nice goal to aspire to, with your global team.

Take this example: You set up a website. First you establish a niche that is not well-covered on the Internet today, something that people are searching for information on. You look at the kinds of keywords and phrases that people are doing searches on in Google, and you decide that a well thought out website would serve this niche very well.

In the beginning you spend quite a bit of time on it, making sure that the content looks good and is right. If you don't know much about websites and design, you might hire a website designer and a programmer to help you get things set up for you in the beginning. If you're smart, you'll make sure that the website is built in such a way that it is easily updatable, by you, or by others that you hire to keep it updated. If you're smarter still, you realize that you can find templates and systems on the Internet already to do this for you.

Once you have your website set up, you make sure that the site has enough useful content for your target audience. You either write some articles yourself or hire a writer to do a (possibly) better job of this for you. Then you post the articles onto your website. If you've picked the niche right, you can sell advertising on your website, bringing in cash for you every day.

After that, it's just a case of keeping everything ticking along. There is minimal work to do once the website is built and up and running. There are some tasks that you either need to do or contract out to others to do relatively cheaply. Such tasks might include:

- *Getting links from other websites to yours, to demonstrate the validity of your website in Google and other search engines.*
- *Creating more content for your website so that Google and other search engines can see that your website is being kept up to date, again giving it some credibility.*
- *Selling more advertising for your website.*
- *Creating blog pieces about your subject matter for your blog that is related to your website. These can also link to your website, again giving you more credibility.*
- *Promoting your website using social media marketing, that is, using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to generate interest in your website. This might also include promoting your website in other forums or otherwise creating an interest in your website via appropriate websites and communities.*
- *Even better, you might allow your audience to help update your website for you, by providing them the means to add content when they have new information about your topic, or to write reviews and comments.*

Of course, all of these sorts of tasks can be contracted out very cheaply. You could find a virtual assistant to do much of this for you, providing them access to the information that they need, pointing them in the right direction, setting them clear goals and targets to work toward and setting them to work. You may be able to hire someone to do this for you as economically as just \$5 per hour.

This is just one example of how you can effectively use global teams to run your business for you, with the chance of high success. There are many more out there. The entrepreneurial spirit will be able to identify opportunities and figure these out

## Chapter Five

### **How so much can be outsourced today: Get help for the pieces of your business that you don't understand**

Outsourcing work is becoming increasingly common, especially in more recent times, in an economy that has been weakened by recession in many countries. However, there are currently not good figures available about exactly how much of the labour force in different countries freelance full time. Figures vary fairly widely, and are really just estimates. Some figures, such as that by the Freelancer Union in the USA, claims that the figures are as high as 30%, for those who are self employed. Whatever the figures though, if you start outsourcing your work, you will not be alone in what you are doing. Entrepreneur magazine recently reported on a Human Capital Institute survey carried out, which found that 90% of companies outsource at least some of their work. Some even outsource almost everything, focusing just on their core competencies and not on anything that they have not been trained to do, or do not have experience in. The same survey found that the proportion of work that is outsourced by companies has risen from six percent in 1990 to 27 percent just two decades later in 2010. In addition, Website Magazine reported that Elance had posted 375,000 jobs during a time when employment was not rising for on-site employees. The skills reported to be in the highest demand were technological and marketing. These were described as being “virtually recession proof”.

A report in The Economist reported that the IDC says that there were 12 million freelancers in the USA (as of the end of 2009), and that by the year 2015, this will have risen to 14 million. The Economist put this down to a bad job market and more desire for flexible working among people. They also cite technology as a critical factor in achieving these figures. The Economist also quoted figures from a senior executive at eBay, who had predicted that while the number of such workers in the world might only be one or two percent by 2020, that within five years from that date, the spread of such types of working would be phenomenal. Reasons given for this were the flexibility that the younger generations want in their careers - the ability to be able to perform a number of different kinds of roles during their careers.

All this figures lead us to conclude one thing, which is that the freelance economy is on the increase. This is encapsulated by a quote from the Entrepreneur magazine which argues that the use of outsourcing:

*“Is no longer considered a temporary fix to a short term need. Instead it is a feature of organizational structure.”*

It is clear that the use of freelancers or independent contractors is going to be at least for some organizations, the way of the future. Those organizations may well be the ones that manage to survive and thrive the longest, due to their ability to be

nimble and dynamic when required, steering away from the high fixed expenses model of times gone by. Management gurus have long since argued that this would be the way in which business would be transformed, with Charles Handy discussing outsourcing as a part of his “Shamrock” organizational model, back in the late 1980s. The idea is not a new one, but it is only now that the model is starting to pick up momentum—partly due to technological change, and also due to the fact that society has fundamentally changed.

## **The Human Cloud and Moving to a Model of Collaboration**

Much talk refers to the word “crowdsourcing” and “the cloud”. The terms relating to the cloud have more commonly been applied to technology in recent years. The idea is that there is a method of computing now known as “cloud computing”. In this model, computers are nodes and can be used to perform tasks, or switched off as required by the business at any particular time.

Michael Fauscette applies the concept of the “cloud” that has been used for some time to discuss the way that technology is moving, to the human spectrum. It is illustrated how people are “nodes” and are connected by all different new devices and web developments such as Web 2.0 tools. All of this allows workers to have more flexibility about the hours they work, where they work from and more, while employers can hire some excellent talent through utilizing freelance resource. This can best be used for project-based work, argues Fauscette. It has been shown how work from the very technical through to the very menial can be outsourced to good effect. In particular, Fauscette discusses Amazon’s Mechanical Turk which can be used to find people to do very repetitive tasks. The company LiveOps is another that hires people to carry out more basic operational tasks.

Fauscette describes the human cloud as:

**Having an extremely flexible model** – can be direct employees or contract, project or task based, paid by task or by the hour or by salary or on the basis of performance, based in a location to suit the employer or freelancer.

**Using mobile technology** – for staying connected across a variety of different business networks.

**Using Web 2.0 technology** – for collaboration and encouraging engagement in what is being done.

**Having great agility and elasticity** – it can be scaled up and down as and when required.

CIO website takes this idea further. This publication states that the Elance president and CEO said:

*“Cloud workers probably represent nearly \$1 billion per year in earnings in the US.”*

The same report compares the turning on and off of people in the same way that cloud computing turns on and off computers. The benefits of this for the workers are that they do not get:

*“...locked into roles that become irrelevant”.*

The Examiner stated that:

*“Crowdsourcing service providers estimate that in 2011, the only contract market will double itself over 2010.”*

There is no doubt that “crowdsourcing” and the “human cloud” are becoming the ways in which the world of work is moving. These methods of working require significant levels of collaboration that have not been observed in the work place before, particularly when workers are located in different parts of the country, or, worse, on different continents.

The Examiner wrote a report on the best ways for collaboration to take place. It is thought by some that the future organization will be very different than one where everyone works in the office full time. Instead, the combination of technologies including mobile applications, social media, cloud computing and project management will ensure that things do not work following current models.

Conferences have been held to discuss the same topic, discussing the transformation of the work place. It is thought that the way that companies will best survive in the future is through online collaboration. This is because this reduces costs - the costs of developing and working with collaborative systems are thought to be cheaper in the longer run than the costs of sticking with full time office-based employees. Further, the Examiner reported on an Incites Research survey which found that there was a more general shift away from the traditional work environment model which is full time/on-location. The survey found that 62% of respondents already spend 40% of their time away from the office. It seems that the transformation of the work place for companies that are already in existence may already be underway.

Changing companies that already exist in this full time/on-location way is more challenging than setting up a company like this from scratch. In an existing company, people are used to the full time/on-site model, and when outsourcing starts it makes them nervous and afraid for their jobs. In addition, existing companies have to change to new ways of working - new systems, new processes and new mindsets to make this happen. It involves changing company culture entirely in some cases. However, in new organizations, such an offsite/flexible work

force can be built up from day one, and this will be the mode of operation that everyone is used to, and so there is no resistance to change, because no change required to get there. It simply is from day one, “the way things work around here”.

Managing such teams remotely can be harder. Some conversations are just that much easier to have face to face. It is easier to gauge someone’s reaction when they are in the same room as you and you can get a sense of how they feel not just by what they say but also by what they do - their body language, tone of voice, posture and more. However, Skype and tools like it make this much easier to manage, especially used with the video functionality, which allows you to see someone while you are talking with them.

Some large companies are already beginning to embrace collaborative working with global teams using the new technologies. The Examiner reported that at the NetWork 2010 conference, Accenture discussed their particular case study. A company that employees more than 200,000 people who serve clients in more than 120 countries around the world, Accenture has started to cut costs and operate more efficiently by adopting new business processes and collaborative technologies and by creating more of a virtual working environment. Accenture reported a cut of back office costs of approximately 50 percent. Social collaborative tools to enable such business have helped companies like Accenture to facilitate this. Central Desktop is one such example, as it allows file and process sharing and management of project teams through one system. Google Docs, a more simplified software allowing document sharing has also helped.

Internal blogs are another good way to encourage “internal” company collaboration across frontiers. They allow other people to learn from experiences of people working on the other side of the world if need be. It is thought, says the Examiner, that people will begin to find that the current style of organization does not have the most effective methods of collaboration.

Small business computing reported that 87% of companies that had hired freelance talent had found it to be a way by which to “enhance competitiveness and profitability”. Advantages reported were reduction in need for office space, computers and phone lines. In addition, it was reported in the same survey that 82% of employers liked using freelance resource for the ability to staff up and down quickly. The survey was carried out from people using Elance to purchase services from freelancers, so the results were skewed, since these are people who had already used such services and were used to the concept and comfortable, at least to some degree with outsourcing some types of work. The survey also demonstrated that there were some staunch loyalists to the idea of full time/on-location office work, since 24% of those surveyed still prefer to hire people in person.

It is worth remembering that sometimes things do go wrong, and this is where dispute services come into play. The Wall Street Journal reported on one case where a business owner made a complaint against some freelancers who had been hired through Elance to develop a large web-based project. In this particular case, the freelancers regularly missed the prescribed deadlines and there were some significant cultural differences between buyer and provider which made it challenging for the problem to be resolved between the two. Elance managed to ensure that the client got a refund for payments that had been made, and many of the freelancer websites out there on the Internet, including both Elance and oDesk report that such disputes between client and freelancer are rare.

## **Trends in Outsourcing**

Elance released figures in late 2010, reported in Website Magazine, which gave some useful information about developments in outsourcing. The types of outsourcing that were shown to be growing in 2010 were:

Mobile Development – a 98% increase in jobs in this area of development was noted during 2010. This was thought to be set to continue in 2011, as tablets such as iPad and smart phones become even more important.

Search Engine Optimization – creating content that was search engine optimized was found to be extremely important during 2010, though there was a trend toward quality over quantity identified on this website.

Viral Marketing Techniques – 2010 saw an increase in different kinds of marketing, particularly social media marketing. It was thought that this would be set to continue in 2011.

USA Today reported that some figures show that in the US the number of freelancers in the work force is as high as 10 percent (a rise of two percent against figures from five years ago). It states that other studies show the figures to be even higher - for example, the Aberdeen Group believes that the figure is currently more like 20 percent and set to grow to 25% in 2010. USA Today put these rises partly down to the Internet, and the fact that companies now sell their products and services online all over the world.

USA Today stated that sometimes such contract work can lead to lower pay, but that in the case of skilled people, such as software developers, business executives and engineers, it can actually provide them with a larger income. The types of work carried out on a freelance basis were found to vary from office workers through to lawyers, drug researchers and engineers. What this shows is that not everything, but almost everything can be outsourced.

Datamation reporting on the same Elance survey and a similar oDesk report listed some other interesting trends. For example, in the period from November 2009 to November 2010 it was found that:

- Demand for Android skills grew by 680%.
- Demand for Facebook related services grew by 343%
- Demand for social media related services rose by 323%
- Twitter skill demands grew by 193%
- Wordpress skill demands grew by 182%

It also added that in the Elance report, some skill demands were on the decrease:

- Demand for BlackBerry developers decreased by 19%
- Demand for DHTML decreased by 13%
- Demand for Amazon Web Services dropped by 6%
- Direct marketing demand fell by 10%
- Telemarketing needs fell by 6%

Datamation also reported on another prediction made by the oDesk report, which stated that it was predicted that:

*“More than 500,000 employers (25% of those in the Fortune 500) will tap cloud-based workforces for the first time in the next year.”*

In particular, virtual assistants are common place these days. These are not so much used for the pieces of your business that you don't understand as for doing the work that you prefer not to waste your precious time doing, the more administrative duties. You can find good virtual assistants on Elance, Guru and the other freelancing job websites, or they even have websites of their own specifically designed just so that you can find someone who specializes in this kind of work. Forbes recommends hiring more than one virtual assistant so as to not overload each one. Virtual assistants are commonly used for work such as answering emails, making appointments and creating documentation. However, if you find a good virtual assistant you can have them do other work as well - some can take care of social media marketing using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other websites, meanwhile others are trained in web design or accountancy.

### **Diversity of Outsourced Work**

Continuing along the same theme, a report published in The Economist magazine stated that many different types of jobs can be carried out online, giving examples of:

- The composition of a rap song to help teach English to Chinese students.
- A design for a luxury hotel in Barbados.

The Wall Street Journal reported on some other interesting and different kinds of work that were being performed online, citing the following examples:

- A virtual assistant working as a home-based concierge for VIPdesk, including helping a customer to find help looking for Bigfoot. (yes - THE Bigfoot)
- A radiologist who started working from home for a website called Virtual Radiologic performing tasks such as reading X-rays and other images from hospitals.

The New York Times reported that the following types of services were being performed by outsourced services to companies:

- Payroll
- Accounting
- Human Resources
- Marketing
- Customer Service
- Data Entry
- Social Media Marketing

And

*“Virtually any knowledge process that can be performed remotely.”*

The New York Times article encapsulates one of the main benefits of such ways of working, which is that organizations can focus on what they are good at—their core mission, rather than doing work that they are not skilled at, and wasting time learning how to perform such tasks. It is argued that it is better for businesses to focus on what they are good at, and outsourcing the rest to others, who in turn are good at those tasks. This leads to a leaner organization, cost efficiencies and generally a greater level of operating efficiency.

The Economist pointed out an interesting trend that has emerged lately, which is that such freelancing websites are no longer just being used for programming, writing and virtual assistant sorts of work, but instead the remit is spreading. Bigger-ticket jobs and work that is higher paying is starting to move onto such websites.

## **Benefits of Outsourcing**

There are a great many benefits of hiring workers online to do work for you or outsourcing work in other ways. The main argument is that of the cost-efficiency of doing so. Entrepreneur magazine demonstrated that a person costing a company

\$20 per hour working on site in the office actually costs \$32.46 per hour because there are other ancillary costs that need to be paid for office workers. These are:

Salary \$20.38 per hour  
Benefits and taxes \$6.70 per hour  
Office space \$3.91 per hour  
Technology \$1.47 per hour

Total cost = \$32.46 per hour

This is compared to hourly prices found on freelance job websites that range from \$5 to \$30 per hour, without all of the additional “hidden” costs described above. Undoubtedly, if you find the right freelancers then costs will be saved.

Another benefit of outsourcing compared against using staff in-house, is that freelancers need to keep you happy. You are their client, and provided that you have been clear with them about what you want up front, then they need to deliver to your specifications. Within your company, your team often won't work in that way. They won't look at you as if you are a customer. This means that freelance work can be of a higher standard, if the right freelancers are selected.

Outsourcing work also allows companies to find and hire talent able to do the sorts of work that are not core competencies for those companies. This means that instead of finding out how to develop for an app for a mobile device, or learning to do accountancy so that you can turn in your books once a year are no longer the types of issues that you have to concern yourself with. Instead you can focus on doing what you do best, and leave the rest to the experts in their fields. It provides opportunities for rapidly scaling the work force up and down in the case of shifts in demand. The hiring of outsourcers also allows businesses to keep up to date on changes in technology without having to go through the pain of learning about such changes themselves.

## **Environmental Benefits of Using Freelance Workers**

Other benefits of using the human cloud include that of reducing our carbon footprint. This is because there is no traveling to and from work by either cars or public transport, and such workers take up no office space, so less office space to heat and light up. The Examiner reported that figures given by Elance stated that freelancers earned \$100 million in 2010. This was estimated to be the equivalent of 5 million hours of off-site work if the same people had been performing this work in the office. The Examiner takes from this that:

- There are \$3 million of savings per year in real estate
- There is a reduction of 2.8 million vehicle miles

- There is a reduction of 138,000 gallons of gas
- There is a lowering of 1,300 tons of greenhouse gases

All of this means that hiring of freelancers is a more sustainable and environmentally friendly way of doing business. In today's economy of green consumers who are becoming much more interested in the principles of sustainable living, this cannot be a bad thing, and will only serve to reinforce the freelance revolution that is already long underway.

### **Drawbacks of Outsourcing**

Outsourcing is not without its drawbacks. One of the main issues is the sharing of company secrets with outsiders. This might be in the form of intellectual property or information relating to clients. Some level of trust needs to be established between outsourcing company and freelancers to be able to best facilitate this sort of working relationship. One way to deal with this issue is getting your freelancers to sign "NDAs" or non-disclosure agreements. These documents basically state that the freelancer cannot share any information about what they are working on for you with anyone else, which gives you some degree of security in this area. A challenge of course, is how would you go after someone in India, the Philippines, Argentina or elsewhere if they broke the agreement? For one thing, such contracts may not be legally binding outside of your own country, and for another thing, how would you track these people down? And at what expense? Again, finding the right freelancers, those you can trust to do a great job and keep your secrets safe is important.

Another drawback is that people who are working outside of the company arguably care less about the company. They have more than one client, usually anyway. Each job is frequently just thought of as being another job. That said selecting the right freelancers can reduce the risk associated with this problem. Spending time finding the right people will save time and headaches in the longer term. Also, managing them effectively can reduce problems. On most of the freelancer job websites it is possible to set up formal milestones along the way to make sure that a project is progressing effectively and as it should be.

Additionally, building up outsourcing as a mode of operation has associated work that needs to be done. It is not just as simple as hiring someone and being done with it. There are processes and procedures that need to be established relating to working with freelancers. People who work freelance should not need micro managing, but there needs to be some level of information given to them so that they understand your company and the way that you work, and how what they are doing will fit into the bigger picture for your company.

Yet another risk is that you might find bad freelancers, which could result in wasting time and energy, and delaying projects. This can be avoided by careful

management of outsourced work. Also, it is very easy to say goodbye to a freelancer who doesn't work out well. It is as simple as not working with that person again. This sharply contrasts with hiring someone who doesn't work out well in the office - such people are very hard to get rid of in most countries around the world.

## **How to Decide What to Outsource**

Mint.com gives some great tips of how to decide what to outsource to freelancers. It recommends keeping track of all activities that you perform over a period of a couple of weeks or so. This website recommends that you list the tasks that you carry out into four categories:

- Priorities
- Obligations
- Desirable but unnecessary tasks
- Time wasting tasks

Sometimes, argues Mint.com, there will be reasons that you do not outsource certain tasks. Perhaps someone else is not able to do a job as well as you can. Mint.com gives the example of sport - you do this because you want to keep fit and you can't give this task to someone else to do (though there are definitely days I'd like to outsource my run). Other things, such as dealing with some types of email, you really do not need to do for yourself. Mint.com argues that you should look at each activity and ask yourself if someone else can do it for you "adequately". Some of these tasks do not have to be done in a way that is perfect, and adequately is good enough. If someone else can do some of your tasks adequately, then you should delegate those tasks to them. Delegation must be done carefully, so that the person can do a reasonable job of the required tasks. All of this leaves you time to work on your core competencies rather than focusing time on answering mindless emails and other tasks that people could be doing for you.

There is a rule that was created by an Italian economist named Pareto - the rule is called the Pareto Principle or Pareto's Law. Pareto's Law is also the 80/20 rule. You need to think about it as it applies to your business, because it directly influences the above. Once you've created your calendar of the tasks that you do, you probably will find that Pareto's Law applies - that is, that you are spending 80 percent of your time working on tasks that bring in around 20 percent of your revenues and only 20 percent on those tasks that bring in 80 percent of your revenues. This is what you want to change by doing the activity above to make sure that you are spending time on the optimum tasks for the progress and success of your business.

In Small Business Trends magazine, one professional business owner reported having cut back on time spent on doing mundane tasks from four hours per day to just 30 minutes a day by using virtual assistants to do tasks as varied as answering

emails and writing up blog posts for his company blog. Over the course of a week, cutting back on three and a half hours per day is a major accomplishment and saves this business man a lot of time to spend doing the tasks that he is good at and which will make the company money. Another business owner in the same report suggested that he was saving anywhere from \$100,000 to \$200,000 per year by using freelancers to complete tasks for the company, rather than hiring on site staff to do the work.

The magazine Inc. highlights a problem with identifying good freelancers which can be a challenge, which is that if you do not know that much about the task at hand then you may struggle to identify the right people for the job. This may apply to jobs that require a technical element such as software programming in addition to more complex business tasks such as accountancy, marketing or business plans. Again, using good methods of working with freelancers will tend to get around this problem. If you check out their profile up front before hiring them, you can see what they are capable of doing and only hire those that you are fairly sure can do the task. Additionally, setting shorter milestones with chunks of work delivered along the way can help you to see that progress is being made. Milestones also help to stagger out the payments, so that for a big job freelancers are not waiting for a long time for payments. Finally, being clear about the requirements up front and making sure that your needs are clearly documented will also help to avoid problems. If you are vague about what you want, then you will surely not be delivered anything that is close to what you had hoped for. Making a list of requirements and either posting it as part of the job description, or sharing it with short listed candidates (if you are concerned about privacy) is a way to be sure that you will get what you want from a particular project.

Some studies have found that smaller businesses are more inclined to hire people from freelance websites to do project work for them. Small Business Trends reported that four of 100 workers are brought in as independent contractors in small businesses. In addition this rate is on the increase. The magazine reported on the Harris Poll which found that:

- *67% of adults would happily outsource a wide variety of tasks they dread.*
- *55% believe a Virtual Assistant would allow them to focus on more important (income producing) tasks.*
- *34% believe that outsourcing to a Virtual Assistant would allow them to improve their job performance.*

The Harris Poll surveyed 1005 professional adults to gather these opinions. Small Business Trends says that when you add to the points above that in-office employees can create all kinds of issues such as personality problems, learning issues, training challenges in addition to the fixed expenses that it costs to have

them in the office, and more and more people are turning to freelancers or independent contractors for work.

## **Recommended Ways of Working with Freelancers**

Relationships with outsourced partners can be more difficult to manage than dealing with people who are sat in the same office as you, with whom you can communicate face to face. There are a great many examples of where companies have outsourced work for the first time to a freelancer where the situation has not worked out well. This is usually due to expectations not being clearly set on both sides of the freelance relationship. Clients are often very unclear about what they want from a freelanced project, and sometimes freelancers rely too much on assumptions and guess work in these cases, which does not always work out well.

There are a number of steps that can be taken to ensure that freelance relationships run smoother, right from day one of the work being outsourced to a third party. To get the best out of your outsourcing relationship with freelancers around the world, some tips for managing the relationship better are:

**Detail projects out fully** – when creating a project make sure that you cover all aspects of it, so that freelancers can give you a good estimate of how long it will take them and how much it will cost you for them to carry out the work. Don't assume anything is included that has not been specifically stated in the project description. Brainstorm all of your ideas out about the project in advance, and then structure those into a clear project description, once you have all of your ideas out on paper. Freelancers cannot guess what you want. They will be more adept at getting information from you about what you need because they are used to doing this through their experience with other clients, but guess work will not lead to well completed projects that meet your requirements.

**Request work samples** – for most kinds of work it is possible to ask for work samples, so that you can best review if a person is suitable for the job at hand. Those who can't provide samples of similar kinds of work may not be the freelancers to go for. There are some exceptions to this. For example, if you want a freelancer to write a business plan for you, most of these will be held under non-disclosure agreements, so requesting to see a full business plan may be asking them to break their contracts with others.

**Don't steal the ideas of freelancers** - one thing to bear in mind when selecting freelancers is a way by which some employers unethically handle freelancers by taking their ideas for free and not hiring them for work. The Wall Street Journal outlined this issue very well in 2010. Sometimes employers ask potential freelancers for lots of information about a project and then steal their ideas. You may find that freelancers are cagey with you about providing too much information about how they will carry out a project because they may have had their fingers

burned in the past in this way. Instead of asking them for too many specifics about their ideas upfront, focus on asking them about their approach to a particular project – what steps they would take to get it underway, how they would work with you to get the information they need from you to be able to do the job, would they break the project down into different stages, and so on.

**Hire carefully** – just because the person hired isn't going to be sitting in your office all day every day, doesn't mean that you should not take care to hire the right people. You're looking for people who can really do what they say they can do, and not a charlatan masquerading as something they are not to try to build up experience in a particular field. The best way to judge this is to look at the evidence provided – the reviews given by other former clients of the freelancer. In some cases you might also want to think about holding an interview, especially if the job is going to be drawn out, or if the freelancer will be handling particularly sensitive information.

**Start small and build it up** – if you are looking for a freelancer who will hopefully work with you on a longer term basis, it is best to just give them a small project at first to see how they get along, rather than going for gold at the outset. If the freelancer repeatedly delivers what they say they will in the timescales that they estimated, then you can start thinking more about long term working relationships with that person.

**Use milestones to track projects** – with larger projects, break them down into bite sized chunks to be delivered at regular intervals. This prevents against great disappointment at the end of a project when a freelancer delivers what they thought you wanted and it turns out to not be what you were looking for at all. Milestones also allow you to manage (stagger) payments for work.

**Think carefully about costs** – using freelancers can be a really great way to get jobs done for a very reasonable price. However, it is important to listen to what the job marketplaces are saying. If you select a rate of “\$5 per hour” for a project and no one is bidding on your project, there is a very good reason for that. It is either that the job is worth more than that, so you may have to raise your budget for it a little. Or alternatively, your project description may have made the job sound more involved than you intend it to be. You can push prices with freelancers a bit, but if you push a freelancer too far you may find yourself in trouble. Either the freelancer will simply say no to the task, or they will agree to the job at a low price because they need the money and not do a quality job of it, because the price is too low. Bear in mind that people working with sites like Guru, Elance and oDesk don't have health insurance, retirement contributions and paid time off, so while you want to get a good price, it is important not to push people so far that they are uncomfortable doing a task. In addition it is necessary to understand that such sites charge commission fees for work of approximately eight percent, depending on the site, and most freelancers will pass this cost on to you, or share it with you. You

won't realize this – it will just be tacked onto the price that you are paying for the work.

**Don't automatically go for the cheapest freelancer out there** – selecting somebody just because they are cheap is not the way to go with the hiring of freelancers. It is common sense really, but the cheapest freelancer might not be the one who is going to do the best job for you. Instead, focus on value for money aspect of the decision making process. Do try to get to the bottom of why someone is quoting a particularly cheap price before selecting them for the job. It may well be that they did not completely understand the requirements of the project, if they are quoting way beneath all of the other freelancers out there.

**Look at tests** – on many of the freelancer websites out there on the Internet, people have to complete tests to demonstrate that they have the skills that they say they do. This can be particularly useful if you want to hire someone who is new to a particular website and if they do not have feedback available from other clients (because they have not had other clients). Don't place all of your concern onto the tests though - some tests are not necessarily that representative of someone's ability to perform a task.

**Don't micro manage** – one of the best things about working with a freelancer is that hopefully they won't need direction every step of the way. So don't give it to them. If they have questions, they will ask. Be sure to give them all of the pertinent information at the beginning of the project, and then try to relax. Make sure that expectations are clear at the outset - if you want a daily update, that is OK, but let the freelancer know that, so that they can factor it into the work that they have to do that day.

**Lean on the customer relationship side** – for a freelancer, you are the customer. If they're not doing a good quality job, feel free to lean on this a little, pushing them to do better. If they do a great job, be sure to leave them good feedback, so that they can use this to get more work with other clients.

**Say good bye when it's not working** – if a freelancer really doesn't get what you are looking for and/or misses deadlines and keeps putting prices up, you don't have to keep hiring them for new projects in the future. Such freelancers will come up with a lot of excuses as to why they are not delivering work on time. It is usually fairly easy to recognize when a working relationship with a freelancer is not working out. It will happen from time to time that you will come across such freelancers. Instead, say good bye and move onto a new freelancer instead.

**Keep on the right side of the law** – there will be legal requirements of you when hiring freelancers to do work for you, even if they are based in other countries around the world. Find out what the legal requirements are, and be sure to pay any

taxes due, so as not to fall foul of the law. These legal requirements will be different, depending on where your business is based.

**Call in dispute mediation as needed** – if things go really badly wrong with a freelancer and cannot be fixed despite trying to talk and work things out, then call in dispute mediation. Most of these websites have it, if you've hired through one of those, and that's what they're there for. Dispute mediation will help you and the freelancer to come to some agreement for the way forward in a particular situation. Sometimes this may mean that you need to cut your losses a little bit.

**Don't Change the Scope (or if you do, offer to pay for changes)** – once a project gets underway, you may start to realize that what you were looking for was a little bit more extensive than the details that you posted in the project description. In this instance, it is not OK to simply ask the freelancer to deliver more for the same money, so that the project meets your new requirements. It may seem obvious, but it happens all of the time. To avoid the risk of disputes and bad working relationships, instead recognize when you are asking for more than you had initially required. Ask the freelancer if they are interested in working on the extended project with you, and if so, agree a new fee and fund the project. If not, post another project that covers the extended workload.

**Pay on Time** – one of the biggest risks of freelancing, from a freelancer's perspective, is the potential of not being paid by a client for work delivered. In addition, because freelancers tend to work on smaller short-term based projects, they may be relying on your income to pay their rent or other bills. If you are slow to pay, this will worry the freelancer, especially because through some of these freelancing websites, they have little recourse if you do not pay. Once the work has been completed to the specifications required, be a good client and release the money that is held on time.

**Leave Fair Feedback** – if a freelancer does a good job, then leave them correspondingly good feedback. If you mark down a freelancer even just slightly on a rating, then this does impact their ability to find other work. If you were happy with their work, then demonstrate this with your rating. A rating of 4 out of 5 may seem to you like a really great rating, but this illustrates a job not well done to other employers out there.

Following all of these tips will help you to get the most out of your freelancer relationships and grow your business in a manner that is sustainable with contractor relationships. It will allow you to focus on the work that you really want to be doing, and off load the rest to people who are experts in it.

## **Epilogue**

### **So Now What?**

First, thanks for reading my ebook. I hoped you enjoyed it and found at least parts of it to be useful.

I think that for most people in the intended audience, there are things here for you to go back to and to further consider. It's a question of how you want to structure and live your life, what you want your work existence to look like.

Fitzgerald wrote, "There are no second acts in American lives," but this is absolutely untrue today. You have the opportunity to reinvent and redefine yourself. And if you do so and it doesn't work, do it again.

I hope that this book provided you a start along this path.

Aron Solomon  
Hong Kong,  
January 2011