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Tuffin' It Out: Virtually Solving Your Problems

News

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Investing in professional services can actually help you move forward more efficiently. One means of doing this is by hiring a virtual assistant (VA). While you focus on your strengths, the VA can take care of unwanted tasks that fall outside of your areas of expertise.

"Define what you can let go of," recommends Kathy Spears, marketing and financial manager of Ken Spears Construction in DeKalb, Ill. In this economy, you may have downsized your staff and executed work out to others. To decrease stress and increase the number of opportunities for your remodeling company, figure out what elements you can delegate. "[Ask yourself,] what do you do really well? What can you not hand off? Look for someone who can do what you can give up," Spears says.

For Ben Thompson, GCP, general manager of Thompson Remodeling Inc., in Grand Rapids, Mich., unwelcome obligations included following up on details. He hired VA, Yoana Pedroso to help with these. They work together on projects. For instance, Thompson provides Pedroso with content for an electronic newsletter. Pedroso creates templates and fills them in with the material. Pedroso also updates Thompson Remodeling's Web site, <http://www.thompsonremodeling.com>, with information about both the company and Thompson's radio show, "The Thompson Remodeling Home Improvement Show," which is broadcasted on Newsradio WOOD 1300 AM on Saturday mornings. For instance, Thompson recently mentioned a high-tech toolbox on his show. He then e-mailed a description to Pedroso, and she posted the toolbox description on his Web site. Thompson also utilizes LinkedIn, an online networking site, but will eventually pass maintenance of his account to Pedroso.

Pedroso also serves as a sounding board for Thompson's ideas, and is able to help him execute them. Recently, they have been working on radius mailings that target homes in a particular geographic area.

Since Thompson began working with Pedroso in September, she has helped him stay organized. "I was looking for someone who has expertise and is incredibly efficient," Thompson says. Pedroso, founder of Advantage Virtual Support continues to work with Thompson to pinpoint the areas of his business which need more attention. While some business owners would prefer that VAs interview them and then write up content for them as ghost writers, Thompson enjoys writing and proofreading. Pedroso's work allows Thompson to pursue these professional interests.

"Having a VA is all about making sure things happen based on the owner's plan," Thompson says.

Thompson notes that, for another business owner, uninvited chores could fall into other areas. The purpose of hiring a VA is to help you with what you need.

Spears' VA, Deanne Splear, founder of AdminiSource, helps him with marketing efforts, handling client meetings and organizing a holiday open house by ensuring that details, such as sending out