



Outsourcing Checklist

As your company grows, it's a good idea to consider the benefits of outsourcing specific business functions. But trusting a part of your business to another company can be tough. Follow these eight steps when evaluating your outsourcing options to find the best possible fit for you and your team.

- **Identify your stakeholders.** It is important to understand who has a vested interest in the business process being outsourced: employees, clients, partners, and shareholders. Communicate early and solicit feedback throughout the process to ensure you're involving your subject matter experts and getting buy-in from the beginning.
- **Define your goals.** Start by speaking with those most familiar with the process. Find out what works and what doesn't work with the current process. Create a set of measurable outcomes you expect from outsourcing.
- **Sharpen your pencil.** Be sure you know as much about your prospective vendors as possible. The majority of your initial research can be conducted online.
 - Read the company website, including mission, values, history, team members, awards, etc.
 - Conduct a search via Google and click news to see recent media coverage of the company.
 - Check the Better Business Bureau rating and details of any complaints lodged.
 - Call three of the vendor's customers and hear firsthand how their service measures up.
- **Beware of mudslingers.** A company vying for your business wouldn't be very effective if they didn't communicate what makes them different and better than their competitors. However, there's a line between pointing out the differences and trash-talking the competition.
- **Don't be led off course.** To ensure your needs are met at the conclusion of this journey, set the course of each interaction with potential vendors. They will spend a lot of time on their competencies, which may not align with your goals. Steer them back to the features/services that are most important to you.
- **Select the best fit.** Make sure you award your business to the vendor that has earned it. Choose the one that displays true investment in your success and has taken the time to understand your industry, your company, your internal and external clients and your goals.
- **Make room for onboarding.** The project doesn't end after you've selected a vendor. Many companies underestimate the resources needed in the first weeks of outsourcing a business function. Make sure you set aside the appropriate amount of time to get the process up and running.
- **Perform a postmortem.** To gauge the effectiveness of the new process, look back at your defined goals and how you are measuring against those goals. Often you'll find areas that can be improved and communicating openly with your new vendor about the changes you'd like to see is paramount.

By following these eight simple steps to selecting an outsourcing partner, you should find that you've met most of the goals you set early in the process and the outsourced function is running with much more efficiency and less expense than when you began.

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