



# Who is Taking Care of Who?

*AKA the 'Stop Settling Manifesto'*

Taking a Stand on Creating  
the Best Virtual Support Team  
for You and Your Business.

BY TINA FORSYTH

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

I get annoyed when business owners can't find the help – the right virtual support team - that they need to support them and their growing business.

It goes without saying that no great thing is accomplished alone right? We all know that any thriving business needs to have a strong support team in place. That is business 101 so I'm not going to harp on the importance of outsourcing and "hiring a team" - you guys get that already.

And yet many of the entrepreneurs that I talk to struggle in this area – everything from outright nightmare stories (people stealing money, running off with lists or just disappearing never to be heard from again) to just plain settling for the help that "isn't quite what I need but I don't know how/where to find the help that I really do need so I'll make do with what I have now."

**It's actually the second scenario that scares me more... the settling.**

Nightmare scenarios are pretty straightforward in that they have to be dealt with when they happen. Your virtual assistant has disappeared off the face of the earth and taken all of your information with her... you have no clue how to access your website, how to login to your shopping cart or even how to contact your own clients. When this kind of stuff happens it is a really big eek, and you are forced to deal with it or your business could literally sink. (TIP: Having a good online system in place to track that info would prevent this btw – makes sure you ALWAYS know how to access your stuff.)

I was talking to a business owner the other day who shared with me:

"I know my VA isn't the right one for me, but she'll do for now. She's a really great gal, just not the one for me."

No, what scares me more is what I know a number of you are dealing with right now... you have a team in place – a virtual assistant or two, web designer, marketing support, maybe some associate coaches – and the team isn't truly serving you to the fullest extent possible. And you know it... BUT

**IT'S ACTUALLY THE  
SECOND SCENARIO  
THAT SCARES  
ME MORE... THE  
SETTLING.**

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

you don't know what to do about it, how to fix it or even how it could/should be different and so you ignore it and let things be "good enough."

**Good enough could be the death of your business...  
ESPECIALLY when it comes to hiring your virtual team.**

**This is an issue that is near and dear to my heart and I'll tell you why**

My experience has given me the unique perspective of being able to see both sides of the coin – I've been the virtual support professional working for my clients AND have also been the business owner hiring my own team (and helping other business owners to hire theirs too.)

Since starting my business in 1999 I have:

- Worked as an Online Business Manager for various 6 and 7-figure businesses
- Coached hundreds of entrepreneurs – coaches, consultants, authors, speakers, trainers and the like - in building their own online based business.
- Co-authored Pink Spoon Marketing and Money, Meaning & Beyond, both with Andrea J. Lee
- Co-founded the Multiple Streams Team in 2005, a full service agency that matched business owners with virtual assistance.
- Co-founded the Hot Skills VA Training program in 2007 providing cutting edge training to virtual assistants in the skills that business owners need.
- Wrote and released the book *Becoming an Online Business Manager: Playing a Bigger Game with your Clients and Yourself* in 2008.
- Founded the International Association of Online Business Managers and the Online Business Manager Training & Certification program in 2009.

**GOOD ENOUGH  
COULD BE THE  
DEATH OF YOUR  
BUSINESS...  
ESPECIALLY  
WHEN IT COMES  
TO HIRING YOUR  
VIRTUAL TEAM.**

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

- Created the THRIVE Hiring System™ as a simple tool for entrepreneurs to find the virtual support they need to create a thriving and sustainable business (coming summer 2010.)

My love – my mission if you will – is two fold:

1. **I love training people to become Online Business Managers**, so that they can break free from the box of being “just an assistant” and step up to playing a bigger role for their clients. One that allows them the opportunity to learn and grow (which is what most support professionals crave) while also contributing to the growth of their client’s business.
2. **I love helping entrepreneurs find their best virtual support team** to help them and their business thrive – be it an Online Business Manager, virtual assistant or any of the other players that contribute to the growth of their business.

**There is nothing I love more in the world than when I see an entrepreneur connect with the right team member for them** – and everyone is happy and thriving. When this happens I know that I’ve made an impact (which is what we all really want to do right?)

### Throwing spaghetti at the wall and hoping it will stick

With the changes in my own business over the past 2 years I’ve essentially gone from being the support person, to being the entrepreneur who is hiring her own support team. I hired my awesome VA Marki last year and hired my OBM Tiffany in January – plus I have a whole bunch of really great folks who help me with project based stuff like graphic design, web design, creating videos and such.

So I’m now on the “other side” if you will, and am experiencing first-hand what it means to have great support in your business (or not.) Based on my experience of working with clients as their OBM for many years, and now being the entrepreneur hiring my own team I have the unique perspective of being able to stand in the middle and see what is going on. Now that I’ve expanded my services to help entrepreneurs find their Online Business Managers and other team members I’ve also been talking directly to many of you and hearing your stories – the great, the ick and the dreaded good enough.

Here is a common scenario I see when it comes to hiring:

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

*The entrepreneur has a business and knows that they need some stuff done (like setting up a website and shopping cart) so they ask around and find out that they need to “go and hire a virtual assistant.” Great! But where to find one? So their friend says “I know so and so works with Suzy, why not contact her?” So you call Suzy up, have a great conversation and hire her on the spot... and then nothing happens. I’ve hired Suzy, why isn’t my business now skyrocketing? She must suck... I need to find someone else. So you fire Suzy and post your opportunity at a VA directory site and get 20 responses. Eek! Now how do you sort through the one that could actually work here? You setup calls with a few of them and Harriet says she can take care of those things for you. She comes on board and blasts out of the gate getting stuff done left right and center. She gets your website setup and everything is hunky dory for a few months... but then things start to slow down and she’s not doing much for you anymore. What’s up? Even though you like Harriet you aren’t sure what else to give her to do. She is so helpful always asking “how can I help?” but you just don’t know what to give her and so things start to fizzle...once again you are left wondering “I thought Harriet was perfect here, but now she seems to not be working out.” And so you start looking for someone else again...*

**THIS IS WHAT I CALL THROWING SPAGETTI AT THE WALL AND HOPING SOMEONE WILL STICK APPROACH TO HIRING - AND I SEE IT WAY TOO OFTEN.**

And so on, and so on...

**This is what I call a throwing spaghetti at the wall and hoping someone will stick approach to hiring – and I see it WAY too often.** Some people do get lucky with this approach and end up with the right person, however more often than not they end up with the wrong person for what they actually need help with.

**The thing is that nine times out of ten it’s not about the person you hired, it’s about you.** Because you weren’t clear on your needs before hiring you simply ended up hiring the wrong person. Or you

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

hired the right person but didn't know what to do with them. Maybe you hired someone for all the wrong reasons (ie: liking them as a person vs. what they can do for your business.)

It's not to say that there aren't some duds out there because there are. **However as a business owner I believe WE need to take complete responsibility for our team and therefore the success of our business.** No more blaming someone else when things fall apart – we need to make a decision to own it and fix it ourselves.

**UNFORTUNATELY  
WE DON'T HAVE AN  
HR DEPARTMENT  
TO TAKE CARE OF  
THIS STUFF FOR  
US, AND SO THE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
FALLS ON OUR  
PLATE.**

*I was talking to a colleague of mine who has had her share of team headaches over the years. Now this is a woman who has created a truly thriving business that hit 7 figures last year and is poised to multiply that this year and beyond. She is successful, and yet within all this success her team was bringing her and her business down. And this had been happening for years, including nightmare stories from her past (stolen lists) to her current team that was borderline “good enough” to the point where it is starting to get nasty. (Funny thing about good enough is that it doesn't stay good for long... things either get better or they fall apart.) Now this entrepreneur is a pretty enlightened gal, and she could see how her own behavior was allowing some of the problems to continue.*

*She made the decision to face the issue head on, talked to her team about how she hasn't been the best leader she could be and how things are going to change. And a funny thing started to happen... the people that were a fit and truly wanted to support her thriving business stepped up. And those who weren't ready for that simply fell away so she could hire the right people instead.*

Now I get that many entrepreneurs don't know how to hire – we know we need a team to support the growth of our business, but we have no clue who to hire, where to find them and how to work with them once they are hired. **Unfortunately we don't have an HR department to take care of this stuff for us, and so the responsibility falls on our plate...** and we default to throwing spaghetti at the wall and crossing our fingers that someone will stick!

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

We are so afraid of hiring – afraid of not finding the right person, afraid of hiring the wrong person, afraid of wasting a bunch of money and then having to hire all over again – that we just jump at the first person who pops up and say “Thank goodness! I’ll just hire this person then I don’t have to deal with this anymore.”

**We hire from a place of wanting relief, of being afraid and not quite sure how to deal with this whole building a team thing... and when you hire on that kind of weak foundation it’s almost a guarantee that things will fall apart.**

It’s time for us to step up and take responsibility for two things:

1. Getting super clear on our needs so that we can find and hire the right virtual support professionals for our team (and put down the spaghetti ;)
2. and ensuring that we create a strong and thriving working relationship with everyone on the team.

### **TIP: There are two questions you need to answer before you hire:**

1. **Where are you at in your business?** – there are 3 key stages to business growth as it applies to hiring the right virtual team. Depending on where you are at in your business you will need to hire different team members for each stage. If you try to run a 7-figure growing business with a start up team there will be issues.
2. **Where are you headed?** – you need to know what you actually want to accomplish in the next year or so BEFORE you hire. What revenue streams are you creating? What projects are you working on? What kind of marketing will you be doing? When you are clear on where you are headed you can find the right people to support you.

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

### Are you an Ostrich or a Control Freak?

There is a lovely little recipe for successfully working with your team:

**Entrepreneur provides the WHAT**

**Team provides the HOW**

**Combine ingredients to create a thriving business.**

When it comes to working with your team you need to be able to clearly provide the WHAT to them – what is the vision, what is going on in the business, what is coming up, what you want to see accomplished (or don't want to see at all.)

**Once your team members are clear on the WHAT, then they can take care of the HOW and actually get stuff done for you and your business.** It's just that simple!

When entrepreneurs struggle with their team they generally fall into one of two categories:

#### The Ostrich

**An Ostrich will hire a team member (or two) and then promptly put their head into the sand and hope that their team will “get the job done.”** They don't want to have to deal with their team at all and have the unrealistic expectation that the people on their team will be able to do their job with little or no input from them as the business owner.

**When you are an ostrich you are essentially expecting your team to be able to read your mind and know what it is that needs to be done.** You may not think of it this way but I can assure you this is how your team is feeling – and it is HIGHLY frustrating for them as they are left to fend for themselves and try to decipher what is really going on and what needs to be done. They either go with what they think is right and potentially end up doing the wrong thing (which is a huge waste of time and money!) or they get

**ONCE YOUR TEAM  
MEMBERS ARE  
CLEAR ON THE  
WHAT, THEN  
THEY CAN TAKE  
CARE OF THE HOW**

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

stuck in non-action because they don't know what to do (so nothing gets done and you get pissed off.)

**In my experience an Ostrich is generally stuck themselves – they aren't sure WHAT they are doing in their own business and hence are unable to actually provide that information to their team. Some business owners get so stuck in trying to figure out what to do that they may be unconsciously trying to abdicate the success of their business to their team.** “I'll just hire a virtual assistant and they'll tell me what to do and be able to get my business going for me, phew!” Sorry to say it doesn't work that way, and you could end up wasting oodles of money, time and heartache if you try to hire from this perspective.

**What to do?** Hire a coach or a mentor to help you define what you want to create in your business and THEN hire the team to help you accomplish that.

**SOME BUSINESS OWNERS GET SO STUCK IN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO THAT THEY MAY BE UNCONSCIOUSLY TRYING TO ABDICATE THE SUCCESS OF THEIR BUSINESS TO THEIR TEAM.**

**SIDENOTE:** As your business grows there will come a point in time where the day-to-day management of the team will start to distract you from doing the things you need to do in order to grow your business. This is a natural part of growth and is when you want to hire someone like an Online Business Manager to work with the rest of the team directly and take the day-to-day off your plate. This generally happens when you reach the 6-figure mark in revenue and are ready to really amp up your growth.

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

### The Control Freak

**A control freak will hire a team member and then they will either a) not give them anything to do or b) give them stuff to do but tell them exactly how to do it and watch them like a hawk at every step.** They have a very specific way that they want things done and know it's the best way to do it... and anyone else who tries to step in will never be able to do as good a job as them.

**When you are a control freak you know that you need to hire a team to support you, but you really struggle with being able to let go of things and trust that they will get done.** In a lot of cases control freaks have been the only one doing stuff in their business to date, and so when they bring on a team they find it hard to give them something to do and to let them do it in their own way. As a virtual support professional this can be exhausting – trying to get the business owners to let go of things so that you can take care of them and then having them hang over your shoulder at every step. It is extremely demotivating for the team member and will often lead to resentment and anger.

**I have control freak tendencies so this is one that I know intimately for myself.** There is a fear that if we aren't on top of everything and ensuring things are done exactly the right way it will all fall apart – this is a trust issue. I've also found that control freaks will bury themselves in the “how” details in order to avoid doing something else in their business – focusing on marketing, sales, strategy and other growth activities. I know from experience it's much easier to default to the how stuff than it is to step up into doing the stuff we aren't comfortable with yet (marketing, sales and such). The HOW is safe and easy, the rest can be hard and scary.

**What to do?** Work with a coach or mentor to get super clear on the stuff that you need to do as the entrepreneur and learn to release everything else to your team to take care of.

**So which one are you?**

These are the two extremes of the pendulum, and chances are that you will find yourself somewhere along the spectrum. Heck, you might even find yourself doing a bit of both – swinging from one extreme to the other depending on the day. (That sounds mighty exhausting!)

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

Ideally you want to work with your team from that middle place –being involved enough to provide clarity & direction (the **WHAT**) while also leaving your team free to do their job in their own way (the **HOW**). It can be a bit of a journey to get to this space and stay there, however it is the best place to be if you want the support of a team that can truly help you and your business thrive.

**TIP:** Daniel Pink's latest book *Drive* is an awesome resource for understanding what motivates people to do great work, and how people need to be given space in order to do so. So time for us control freaks to back off a bit, LOL. We discuss this in detail in the **THRIVE Hiring System™**.

### Are you being taken care of?

At the end of the day this is all that matters when it comes to knowing whether or not you have the right team for you and your business:

#### **Is your team taking care of you, or are you taking care of them?**

The answer to this is usually a gut feeling – I know that you already know the answer whether you want to admit it or not! This is the key to having a team that will truly help you and your business thrive vs. a team that is just “good enough.”

I want to set a very high standard for you in that **everyone** on your team should make you feel like you are being taken care of.

One of the entrepreneurs that I helped recently in finding some new team members shared with me that for the first time ever in her business she has “a team that actually cares as much about my business as I do.”

**Imagine the power of that for a moment... having someone actually CARE about your business as much as you do.**

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

I'm a firm believer that the right folks on your virtual support team should give you a feeling of confidence that they understand what you want and are making it happen. You should feel that they are on your side and that your business is a priority for them. You should feel that they love what they do and really enjoy supporting the success of you and your business. They should be demonstrating – in every little thing that they do – that they CARE.

IMAGINE THE POWER  
OF THAT FOR A  
MOMENT... HAVING  
SOMEONE ACTUALLY  
CARE ABOUT YOUR  
BUSINESS AS MUCH AS  
YOU DO.

**It is up to you to ensure that you create such a team. I want this for you... nay, I demand it of you!** Otherwise as your business continues to grow it will literally suck the life out of you. Whether you are a control freak trying to do it all on your own or an ostrich with your head in the sand – team issues could literally mean the life or death of your business (and sanity!)

I was talking to an entrepreneur a few weeks back about the various team woes she has had over the years. This is a woman with a highly successful multi 6-figure business and she literally said to me “If I have to deal with one more team issue I’m just going to shut down my business.” This breaks my heart, and brings tears to my eyes.

**You see I KNOW that there are so many awesome virtual support professionals out there just chomping at the bit to work with you and create a thriving business.** I know these people, and have worked with, trained and collaborated with literally hundreds of them over the years. Online Business Managers, virtual assistants, web designers, graphic designers, blog designers, social media specialists, copywriters, marketing specialists, writers, editors, event managers, bookkeepers, PR specialists, affiliate managers, launch managers, video production specialists... the list goes on.

And what these guys love to do is to provide you with the support you need to create the business of your dreams... that is what they enjoy and what gives them fulfillment. **In other words, all the stuff you don't know how to do or hate to do... these guys love! How cool is that?**

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

**I remember when I used to work as a corporate recruiter years ago... I went into every placement with the belief that the perfect person for the job was out there.** It was just a matter of finding them and connecting them with the opportunity. **The same thing applies to us as entrepreneurs – our ideal team is out there, we just need to get clear, get connected and away we go.**

There is no longer any excuse to settle – and if you truly want to create a thriving business you need to take the bull by the horns and get this team thing figured out once and for all.

Don't let good enough be good enough anymore. Or I'll have to come over there and bop you on the head. ;)

Tina

## WHO IS TAKING CARE OF WHO?

### Comments & Questions? Bring 'em on!

Join the discussion at [www.OnlineBusinessManager.com/Manifesto](http://www.OnlineBusinessManager.com/Manifesto). I'd love to hear anything that this manifesto has stirred up for you – any questions, ideas, eeks, tears, cheers or boos.

Feel free to email me direct if you prefer – my email addy is tina [at] onlinebusinessmanager.com.

I'm on a mission to make sure that you get the right virtual support team to create a thriving business (and have a few things brewing to make this happen.) Anything you have to share helps - so bring it on! ;-)



Get a free  
copy of  
my hiring  
checklist!

*Post your comments at  
[www.OnlineBusinessManager.com/Manifesto](http://www.OnlineBusinessManager.com/Manifesto)  
and i'll send you  
a copy of my very own  
hiring checklist  
(the one i use for my biz)*