

## **Outsourcing Sweetie May 2008 Call Transcripts “The Changes Outsourcing Can Bring”**

**Alice Seba:** Hi there everyone. It’s Alice Seba from OutsourcingSweetie.com, and I have Vera Raposo on the line with us. Vera is a member at Outsourcing Sweetie, plus she’s the owner of Scrappers Talk Radio and SmallBusinessBranding.com.

A little while ago, Vera has been a member of our Platinum membership, and she very excitedly emailed me this over a month ago and said how great being able to have a team ready and waiting and working for her has been for her business—getting things done and also earning more money.

I want to talk to Vera about that today. And not just from the perspective that Outsourcing Sweetie is so great, but just the practice of outsourcing and the benefits it can bring no matter who you actually have on your team and who you’re working with.

So, welcome Vera, and thanks for joining us.

**Vera Raposo:** Thanks, Alice, for having me. I’m pretty excited to share my experience, how it’s been, and what I’m looking for towards the future, too.

**Alice Seba:** Well, why don’t we start by letting us know, prior to coming to Outsourcing Sweetie I know you did some outsourcing, what was your experience like prior to that? Give us a little picture of how things were going.

**Vera Raposo:** Well, prior to doing any work with Outsourcing Sweetie I was hiring the odd person, but you have to keep in mind that I wasn’t originally anything I did online as a real business, because I had a real business, quote, a traditional store. So, I personally wasn’t treating it well. So, when I wasn’t treating it well, how could I expect anyone I’m hiring to take me seriously and treat it well as well?

I would hire someone and say, “Are you able to do this and that for me?” Sometimes the one person I found that I really enjoyed working with it was like, “I can probably get that done for you in two weeks from now.” And I’m going, “I need something done now.”

Also, I found that I hired the odd person here or there. Then someone wasn’t getting back to me for a week. Then again I wasn’t treating it like a real business that it was. And what else can you expect really?

**Alice Seba:** That makes sense. If your person who does a good job, but was putting you down the line, was probably doing so because she had regular clients that she was working with and obviously needed to take care of their needs. So when you're sporadic stuff was coming in, then it unfortunately got put lower on the priority. And yeah, when you start working with someone on a more regular basis then they're going to put you up higher.

What you talked about people not getting back to you. Yeah, there's a lot of people out there working and they're just overloaded and you've really got to find the right person. And that's a very good point. Taking your business and taking it more seriously and treating it that way so that others can also treat your business the same way.

**Vera Raposo:** Right. And the biggest part in what I've been doing now is planning. And I wasn't doing any planning whatsoever. I was just saying, "I need this done." And then I'd send an email off and say, "Can you get this done?" Like you said, it was totally sporadic. And I don't blame someone for putting me off, because I wasn't respecting the business, and I wasn't treating it the way it needed to be treated.

**Alice Seba:** Tell us a bit more, if you can how you plan. When do you do it? I mean different things that you planned in different intervals. Do you have kind of a schedule for your planning now?

**Vera Raposo:** For sure. Usually by the middle of the month I'm already planning for the next month. And a lot of that came by because I knew I had to come with the money each month for the program. And then if I have to pay that monthly, then I better get something in place and written down, and planned out. There's no sense in just doing anything off the top. I had to treat this seriously, because this was definitely an investment.

**Alice Seba:** Absolutely. And I agree with you in that. I think that's part of working well with somebody. And also making sure things get done in your business. Feeling that commitment, you need to assign these things. Doing it ahead you just really know where your business is going. There's just so many benefits to doing it. So, I'm glad to see that's definitely something that you've been working on.

**Vera Raposo:** Yes. And even now, I'm at the point where I just feel like I've managed to get a lot of different things off my plate. And now I feel like I'm actually focused on moving forward.

**Alice Seba:** Very important.

**Vera Raposo:** Yes.

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**Alice Seba:** So, we've touched on this a little bit, but successful outsourcing is definitely a two way street. We can blame our contractors all we want. But, a lot of issues that come up are because of our own communication and planning issues. So, we have discussed a little bit. Maybe you could say a little bit more from your perspective, what outsourcing habits have you personally changed for the better since starting a platinum membership with us?

**Vera Raposo:** Well, I take a look at everything that needs to be done. You've got all the different sections in there. So, I've got virtual assistants, I've got graphics and all of that. So, I plan everything out and write everything down that I need to get done, that I think, in that month. Then I in my notebook I put each heading down and I put the tasks that need to be done by each of those sections. Then I just load it up into the system.

Now, I still feel like I'm just getting my wings in this, because I know I can be so much more efficient than what I've been. So, once I get a little more into a system, I think that will be better for me. But, for now, definitely writing everything down and getting it to each person that it goes to. And then realizing, what I've realized is the one major difference that, and just listening to the different audios that you've had inside the membership, is that you can't just put it up and expect it to be done whenever they get to it. You have to set a date.

So, a lot of times I've been putting a date on things. "Can you get this done by the 20<sup>th</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup>?" And that's when I expect to get it. If they say, "Is the 18<sup>th</sup> okay?" Yeah, that sounds great. So, at least I have a date that I can go by, and I can plan for that and have that material ready to get to the next person who can load it to my site or something like that.

**Alice Seba:** Yes, because sometimes there's more steps that need to be done. One might write the content, but you have someone else putting it up. So, giving yourself and the people you work with enough time to get that done. Because running them ragged and asking them to do everything at the last minute that's going to cause a problem. I think sometimes people don't try to do that, but they just can't. Sorry I didn't mean to cut you off.

**Vera Raposo:** And I think that's what I was doing before too. I would do things and I would expect it done the next day like magic or something. You know? And I realize now that that's totally disrespecting the person that is doing the work for me as well.

And on the same hand, now with future people, I feel like I expect a certain level of work and quality. Whereas before I think I was just taking things and going, "Okay, that's good," and not expecting things. If someone was late with something then, like, say they were two weeks late or something crazy overboard. I would be like, "Oh, don't worry about it." Well, now I am going

to worry about, because I need that done by this specific time, so that I can do the other stuff that I need to do. So, I do expect more of any future assistants as well.

**Alice Seba:** So, what types of things are you outsourcing each month? That's the thing that people always say, "I don't know what to do? What do I outsource?"

**Vera Raposo:** Well, at first I was like that, too. I was like, "What do I put down?" And I just started writing down, like you said when I had a call with you. You said, "Just write everything down that needs done and gone from there."

**Alice Seba:** Or that you do, right. Not even just what you need done. That's what a lot of people think. They forget to look at their own day. They're busy thinking, "What can someone else do?" instead of looking at everything that gets done in their business and seeing: "Why am I doing this? Someone else can definitely be doing this for me so that I have more time for everything else."

**Vera Raposo:** And I do my best to outsource absolutely everything that I need done. And I still create a little section, because I have a few steps actually. And it's probably overboard. But, I write everything out in my book first. Then I put it into an excel file on my computer. Then I load it also into Outsourcing Sweetie.

The reason I have it on the Excel file is so that I can just keep adding things to it, and I keep adding to the notebook too. I don't know why I keep both. Maybe it's just the way it works for me. But, I've been outsourcing content. If I need some really good quality content I feel very secure in getting quality work too. Whereas before I'd be like, "Am I sure I'm getting what I need?" So, I've been outsourcing content.

A big, big part of the membership for me has been all the technical work that has been done for me. A lot of it I would have been sitting there scratching my head for a long time. It's just a huge weight off my shoulders to know that someone knows if something technical comes up for one of my sites that they can handle it for me.

**Alice Seba:** That is a huge relief to me, too. Anyone who is trying WordPress and things are so popular now. I really don't know how anybody does it without, unless you have the technical skills. And most of us don't. I don't know how. I can make my way around the backend there a little bit, but not really. If something goes wrong with the database I'm just completely lost and I'm glad to have someone there.

**Vera Raposo:** Or upgrading it.

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**Alice Seba:** Yes. The upgrades and things like that, too. You see people all the time, “I just upgraded my WordPress, and my blog is missing. It’s just completely gone. What did I do?” I’m like, “I don’t know. I have no idea what you did.” I wouldn’t even try it myself, because that’s why we have skilled people to help us with certain things. So we don’t have to worry about those little details.

**Vera Raposo:** That’s been really great too, because if there is an emergency type thing too, that usually gets rectified pretty quickly. Versus me trying to sit there and trying to figure it out on my own with the hosting company.

I’ve had recently some site errors on my site. We’ve figured out that it was two crazy people on MySpace sending a whole bunch of traffic over and using a bunch of bandwidth or something. So, we ended up blocking those from coming over to me. See, I’m not technical so I don’t even know how it all works, but it got done. So, I’m happy with that.

There’s always something more that I can write down and get outsourced and finished. I feel right now, that I’m probably sixty or more steps ahead than I would have been without it.

**Alice Seba:** Well, that’s great. And I was supposed to go on my blog today and mention that I’m going to be interviewing you and a couple of people gave you some, “Way to go, Vera!” and things like that. But, the main thing I said is that you’re making more money because of this. We don’t need to repeat this, but I’m sure that’s the question that people are wondering. How is it making her more money? Whether you did those things yourself or got someone else to do it, how does it translate to more money?

**Vera Raposo:** The biggest thing for me is that when I first started I was like, “This is hefty, this monthly fee.” And as silly as it sounds I was thinking, “Am I going to be able to do this?” And I fully went in with the intention that maybe I would stay a month or two tops just to get the feel on how I’m really supposed to do it, so that I could do it on my own later.

That was my intention, because I didn’t think I could afford to do that every single month. And when I think about it now, what it did was free up everything that was on my plate that was cluttering my mind. I was freed up to make decisions in my business that I never would have even thought of or have gone for, or even developed if I didn’t have all that support behind me.

So, I really feel like it totally de-cluttered my mind. And now I really feel like I’m on my way. It’s the most exciting place to be. Well, I think, you know, I don’t even know what I told you in

that email. You probably have it on the blog, but the income has been so incredible because of everything—even everything that I’ve been doing in my scrapbook business as well.

Even today, I’m so excited because I’m de-cluttered. I was able to pursue someone that is very interested in what I’m doing at Scrappers Talk Radio. I was able to pursue them and say, “I need a founding sponsor. You’re excited about what I’m doing; I’m excited about what you’re doing. You’re going to be in all the press releases. You’re going to be mentioned in all the shows. You’re going to be on the main page.” And they’re very excited about it.

Now, if I wasn’t de-cluttered in my mind, I wouldn’t have thought to pursue someone. I feel like it’s gave me a lot more confidence as well, because I’m treating my business the way it should be treated.

**Alice Seba:** That’s a very good point. And I think the confidence I can see as well. But, also that you get so bogged in details and those little details, you know some little things can make a huge difference. But, generally speaking all the details that you get bogged down in are the small stuff that aren’t going to do a whole lot of huge difference. However, I can totally see that you have this idea on your list, I should contact this person, I should do this, but it always gets pushed down.

**Vera Raposo:** Yes, because you’re answering all your email or something. I mean, one email to respond to, and that’s one thing I haven’t outsourced completely yet, is my email. One email or something that’s happened with one of my sites could take me 20 minutes. Well, that twenty minutes takes me away from developing and growing everything further.

It’s just huge. I think people need to really see what outsourcing is all about and not just dictating a task or two each month here or there. I think by planning out and spending the money, this is the “X” amount I’m going to put into this every single month. Just sign it out and do it. It’s the best way to go.

**Alice Seba:** I think we mentioned two calls or recordings ago for Outsourcing Sweetie; I talked about re-evaluating what’s happening. Are you taking time to evaluate? Because we can outsource all we want and give all these tasks to people, but sometimes it ends up being busy work, just like with our own stuff that we do.

We can start doing all these things that we have kind of tricked ourselves into thinking are important for our business, but when we re-evaluate it. Are you doing the same with your outsourcing? Making sure that it’s productive and making changes when you need to?

**Vera Raposo:** I've done a bit of that. I'll be very honest. I don't feel like I've done the best I can possibly do to evaluate and prove everything that's happening and the money that is being spent here and there. So, I really think that's something that I need to focus on. So, I don't want to say that I'm evaluating all the time. Although, in kind of a micro way I am evaluating my list almost every single day to see what can I adjust, or what can I do, or what's important for everything.

**Alice Seba:** And you've only been doing that steadily for a few months, so you also need to give something time to see if it's working. And I think that's going to come as well. And as you do that, that doesn't mean that you won't, I mean, right now you're using a certain of time, and if you evaluate and say, "Okay, maybe we shouldn't be doing this." There's always something else to replace it. So, it's not like you're not going to get as much help or not need as much help. You're going to find better places to get that help and keep your business growing.

**Vera Raposo:** And I think a big turn around for me as well is getting that notebook and just writing it all down in the notebook—away from the computer and any distractions. That's a huge, huge part of it for me. I just write down everything that needs to be done and I highlight where I need to highlight, and just really think. Just have a cup of coffee, relax, and think about what I need done. Instead of going, "Well, I've got this tab open for email, I've got that tab open for OS, and I've got this tab." There's just too many other things that can distract me away from not just, I don't mean that I would be on my notebook and then distracted by the computer. I mean that when I'm away from the computer and I have my notebook open, it gives me time to really think. Think about what the future holds and what I really need.

**Alice Seba:** Right. Your mail's not going. Your Twitter's not talking. You're not thinking, "I could go over and check this while I'm doing this." It's true. And there's something, I think, about writing it with your own hand too that really cements those things into your head.

**Vera Raposo:** Yes.

**Alice Seba:** That's exactly how I do my planning. I have three main notebooks that are for slightly specific things and I'm always planning content, planning stuff to outsource and things like that. It all gets done on paper.

**Vera Raposo:** And I really feel like I'm just getting into the groove of it. Just starting to feel like I'm on my way, you know? And I'm already the income that's coming in because I've been so clear headed and been so aggressive with everything that I'm doing now, I'm just feeling so blessed. And I really am. I'm very excited for everything that's going to be happening.

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**Alice Seba:** So, the Outsourcing Sweetie Platinum Membership includes 5 hour of virtual assistance, 3 hours of graphic and or web design, 10 pages or basically pieces of written content, 2 hours of programming, and then also 2 hours of proofreading and research. Now, in all that is there, do you have trouble, I mean probably at the beginning you mentioned you had a little trouble, thinking, “What am I going to give them?” But, do you have trouble filling in that space?

**Vera Raposo:** No, not at all. Everything that I come up with is complete; the space is filled up.

**Alice Seba:** And then some, sometimes.

**Vera Raposo:** And then some, yes. So, sometimes I have to pay a little extra and get things done that I need to get done that month, or I just put it onto my next page for next month. The only thing I can find is the research part. I’ve been just having a little bit of difficulty with the research part and what to research this month.

**Alice Seba:** I think a lot of people are having trouble with that. But, that can be something as simple as having the people look at competitor’s websites and things like that. There’s just so many things that they could be out there looking at. And maybe just looking at what you do in a week to find out information, to get ideas, even getting ideas for the content. If you’re going, “I don’t really feel like figuring out what I should write about.” Then you could have someone do some of that research for you.

For the proofreading, and proofreading is a nice thing, because it always makes sure you get all the mistakes. It’s another tool that forces you to plan. Because if you’re going to have your emails proofread, for example, you have to do them ahead of schedule. You’ve got to be planning ahead. And then having that proofread can be a lifesaver sometimes when you make goofy errors that you don’t notice yourself.

**Vera Raposo:** Right. I have to say too, it’s more than just getting tasks done when it comes to your team in there. The best thing for me is I have peace of mind that someone is not going to just disappear away. And if someone does, you cover it for me. I don’t have to sit and train people.

**Alice Seba:** You yell at me.

**Vera Raposo:** And I yell at you, “Alice!”

**Alice Seba:** Yeah, exactly. It's our responsibility. We have had a tiny bit of turn around in one of our departments, but we've got new people.

**Vera Raposo:** That was rectified very quickly.

**Alice Seba:** Exactly.

**Vera Raposo:** I just wanted to mention too, that not only am I able to rely on those people, but I don't have to train them. And I just feel like they've got my back. They're always there for me, whatever I need. So, it's great.

**Alice Seba:** I'm glad to hear that. For anyone who's listening, if they want to see the details of that platinum membership it's at [Http://www.outsourcingsweetie.com/platinum.html](http://www.outsourcingsweetie.com/platinum.html) and it shows you everything that is included.

One thing Vera mentioned was that if she goes over, our team is still available for you if you need extra virtual assistance and things like that. They're available to work for you and to make sure that you get everything that you need done.

I wanted to thank you very much, Vera, for chatting with me. And is there any last little thought or anything you'd like to share with everybody, or tips that you've learned along the way?

**Vera Raposo:** No. I think I've pretty much shared everything. I'm just, like I said, excited to start slimming and just building the income. It's very exciting. I'm thinking of my online business, it really is a real business. Just to get that whole, I don't know why I had that in my mind that it's going to be so much easier because it was on the Internet versus having to physically be in a business. I don't know what that thought was there, but I'm just glad that idea is wiped out of my mind. I'm just focusing on the future and really learning how to serve my market better and just be on top of things.

**Alice Seba:** Great. That is great to hear. And I'm glad to see you making big strides. When did you join, December or January?

**Vera Raposo:** When you first started. It was December.

**Alice Seba:** I thought it was December. Here we are just six months later and you're seeing the benefits of it. I think sometimes when people get started too, you're just learning. You're learning how to outsource; you're learning how to get things done. Sometimes it just takes a bit

of time to finally get into that routine and the planning and everything else that is involved. So, good for you.

**Vera Raposo:** Thank you. Just one more thing?

**Alice Seba:** Absolutely.

**Vera Raposo:** I'm so excited talking about the income. My income goals have always been what we used to bring in as a traditional business. So, my income goals have always been that. I think before that really overwhelmed me, because I was making only X amount each month. And now that X amount I'm making in the first two days of every month. It's just incredible. So, everyone is getting happier at my house, which is lovely.

Alice Seba: Well, exactly. Freedom from the brick and mortar store is a good thing—something that you guys have been working towards for a long time.

**Vera Raposo:** It's a lot of work, but its well worth it in the end.

**Alice Seba:** Thanks again, Vera.

**Vera Raposo:** Thank you, Alice.

**Alice Seba:** Bye-bye.

**Vera Raposo:** Bye.