24-HOUR PRODUCTIVE

The Instructions

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The George Foreman Method of Building a Team

What's the secret to making sure that you avoid some of the problems in the past that you may have heard, or some of the horror stories that people talk about online when they talk about outsourcing jobs gone wrong?

Maybe you might have heard that they weren't doing the right job or the quality wasn't up to scratch, or maybe you've even thought it would just be quicker to do it yourself. All of these problems of the past can be eradicated when you start to hire 'A' players.

I'm going to show you the process that we use to find diamonds in the rough. We have what we call the *George Foreman Method*. It's a seven-step process that you can follow to find these diamonds in the rough, these 'A' players. It's a little bit of a joke here in the office why we call it the George Foreman Method. You see, we like to give our applicants and potential team members a grilling. We want to make sure we hire slowly and that we get the right people. That's really what it is all about.

Once you get this right, it's almost going to be a shift in your mind where you start to realize why you failed in the past when doing outsourcing. People get into problems because they're not using a process like this. They're not treating online marketing like a real business.

7 Steps

Here's the seven-step overview, the framework that I'm going to take you through:

1. Write the job ad

2. Advertise the job

3. Use a questionnaire

4. Set a simple task

5. Pre-screen

6. Interview

7. Trial or Hire
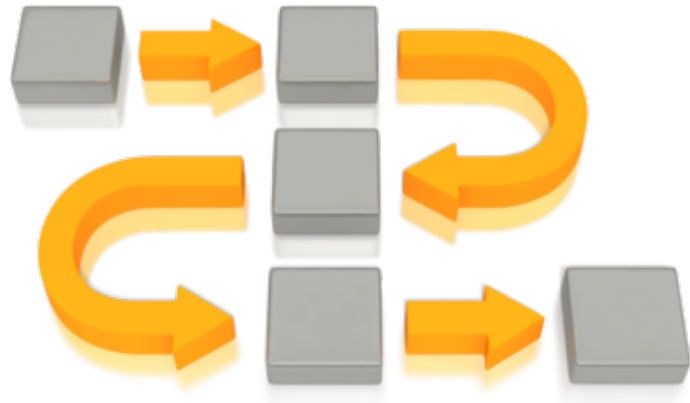
It's really quite simple when you break it down like this. You need to make sure that you get clear on what you're wanting and you write an excellent job ad. From there, you advertise it in the right areas, and I'm going to show you where those are. You then funnel all of the different applicants through a questionnaire which helps to filter them down just so you get the best candidates. From there, you give them a simple task. Then, you need to have a way to prescreen them.

Imagine a filtering process where we start with a whole lot of candidates and potential people. Each step of the way, we're just filtering further and further, and further, until we just find those diamonds in the rough. After the prescreening, that's when we shift into the interview. Then from the interview, we take them down to the trial. That's the seven-step process. Let's dive in and show you what it's all about.

1. Write the Ad

Step 1 is all about making sure that you get crystal clear on what it is that you want. You want to make sure that you bullet-point out all of the different tasks that need to be done. What are the different things that need to happen in your business? How about you bullet-point some of those out? Where are the bottlenecks? Where is your time getting chewed up with repetitive tasks or tasks that you don't necessarily enjoy?

Focus in on the areas where you're strong and things that you're good at. Maybe you enjoy the marketing, or maybe you enjoy creating the product. Those are the types of things you want to spend your time on. You want to make sure you bullet-point out all of the things that this new team member is going to do. Once you've got them bullet-pointed, start thinking about how that's going to look in a regular week. What's a workweek going to look like? If someone came on board, what would they do first? Plan out that whole week.

You want to know this upfront. Again, this is something where people go wrong. They hear this idea of outsourcing that they can hire people in places like the Philippines or India for $2 and $3 per hour. They think that they can just hire someone, and then find them stuff to do. That's going about it the wrong way. Think about what needs to be done first, and then make sure that you find the right people.

Also think about some of those skills and attributes that you want your 'A' player to exhibit. We have some values in our business. Very early on, we sat down with our team members and we brainstormed out what it means to be a team member. What qualities do we exhibit? We've got very high integrity. We want to make sure we're ethical. We want a high standard of work that comes out. We don't settle for second best.

We only work with people who are passionate. We want people who love what they do. They love online marketing, and they just eat this stuff for breakfast. We also want to make sure they're hungry and constantly looking to improve themselves, and grow themselves, and go through different courses. We want people to be flexible.

Because the internet is ever-changing, there's always something new that's popping up. We want to make sure that we evolve and change with that – never static. We also have mutual respect for not only our team members but our clients as well.

Those are our seven qualities: integrity, ethical, quality, passionate, continuous improvement, flexible, and having mutual respect. Think about what attributes and characteristics would be important to you and your business. Because once you have that in place, you'll know what it is that you are looking for, and it's going to make writing your job description that much easier.

A great way to write your job description is just using a lot of the information that you've already bullet-pointed out, the types of jobs that need to be done. It's going to help create that job description. Once you do that, if you think about that upfront, it makes it so much easier to write the job ad that's going to hook the right person. So, all in Stage 1 is about getting clear on what you want, and then writing a job ad to make sure that you attract them into your business.

You really want to understand your target market. Understand the person that you're trying to attract – something that is going to grab their attention and stand out from the crowd. On a lot of the different job boards and places where you can advertise, there are just the same ads, looking exactly the same as everybody else. But you're different, and this is how you attract 'A' players. 'A' players are looking for something different. They're looking for something where they can make a difference.

The way that we do that, it's almost like we write our job ads as though they're a sales letter. We have a headline that hooks them and grabs their attention. And then we like to use a subhead to draw them in to the copy. We like to tell them a story as well about where we are and what it is that we are looking for a team member to help step into our business and move us through to the next level.

So, you write this sales letter that speaks to the person that you want. It's personal and you make it real. We include photos of our office. Sometimes I get a photo and I say, "You'll be sitting here." That's if it's someone in the office. If it's not in this office and it's a virtual employee, then we show them different team members and say, "Here's the different team members that you're going to be working with." We have videos that introduce them to who we are. That's the type of thing that makes your business stand out from the rest.

2. Advertise the Job

Stage 2 is all about taking that job ad and then putting it in the right place. We want to make sure we get that message in front of as many people as possible. We want a lot of people to see this so there's an opportunity for us to get in front of the 'A' players. We use mainly a website called JobStreet.com. JobStreet.com is just like SEEK.com.au if you're in Australia. Or if you're over in the US, it's like Monster.com.

It's one of those job boards, only it focuses in on some of the emerging economies that we like out in Southeast Asia like the Philippines and Malaysia. That's why we use that website, because a lot of people jump on that website. We run the ad on that site, and then we move it through the rest of our stages.

Another great website you can check out is BestJobs.ph. A lot of entrepreneurs and online marketers are starting to talk about hiring from the Philippines. The Philippines is great because the people over there are just magnificent people. They've got a great work ethic. They're good, honest, hardworking people who love to do a job, a great job, and they have excellent command of the English language. They really speak it fluently and can write it really well. That's why a lot of people are heading over to the Philippines, not to mention that you get great bang for your buck as well. You can hire some great team members for $4 and $5 an hour, and you're paying them some great money over there. For them, it's a great opportunity.

If you want to go to a website that makes the process a little bit easier and they might be able to help out with some of the screening, go to RemoteStaff.com.au. If you're just getting started and maybe not want to bring someone on full-time (you just want to get someone to do some out-tasking or some one-off jobs), you can check out websites like oDesk.com or Freelancer.ph. It's a great way to get started and try and get a little bit more comfortable with outsourcing.

3. Questionnaire

The next stage in the process is moving them through to a questionnaire. This is a fantastic step for saving you time and making it easy to find those diamonds in the rough. What you are getting right now in this George Foreman process is very much evolved, and we've really run it through the ringer. We used to actually have this Stage 3 further down in the process. We used to be like most businesses – we'd get people to send in their cover letters and resumes straight from our job ad.

People would see the job ad, and then we'd get them to send it in. But overtime, we've evolved this process. It actually came out from discussion that we had with Ben Stickland of Market Samurai. We ran a small workshop where we had some of the Market Samurai team. They've built an amazing team, and it shows in everything that they do – the quality of the videos, the software itself, the customer support. They really just pride themselves. And the way they've done that is by building a team of 'A' players.

They do this questionnaire a little bit earlier on in the process. They send people from their job ad, through to a SurveyMonkey questionnaire where they ask applicants 10 question that take them about 15 to 20 minutes to answer. This reduces the amount of work that they have to do, flipping through resumes and cover letters.

The types of questions that we ask are pretty basic questions too. We ask them things like: How many hours would you like to ideally work in a week? What days are you unavailable to work? What's the reason for your applying to this position? What hourly rate would you expect to be paid? Now, that's a great question because there is no point in interviewing someone if they think that they're worth $20 an hour yet you've only got a budget for hiring someone for $5 an hour.

Almost instantaneously, we reduce the number of applicants that come through our process just by having this stage. Not only that, the people who do respond, it makes it very easy to filter. So, the questionnaire is a great step.

4. Set a Simple Task

Think about it this way: we've written a job ad after getting clear on what we want; we've advertised that job position; and now we've funneled all the people who've seen the job ad through to a questionnaire, and we've filtered it down to try to find the people that are right. From there, we take them over to a very simple task. All the people who actually fill out the questionnaire, who meet our criteria, we ask them to do a simple task.

What task are they going to do? It really depends on the position they're going for. If they're going for an article writing position, you want to give them an article-writing job. If you are getting someone who needs to be a little bit more tech savvy, maybe you get them to install a WordPress blog. If you are looking to find someone to help you out with your customer support, maybe get them to answer a hypothetical question or to set up a spreadsheet that helps you to analyze some opportunities.

It needs to relate back to your business. It needs to relate back to the types of jobs that you're going to get them to do when that person comes on board. Just give them a little task. What you want to look for is you want to make sure they follow instructions well. You want to see the speed of execution. How quickly do they get back to you? How quickly do they do the work? What is their skill level at? What's their attention to detail?

You want them to demonstrate those values and attributes you defined very early on, so you can start to see why it's so important to get clear on what you want early on because through each stage of the process, we want to make sure it's congruent. That everything they do needs to match back to what it is that you're looking for. Think about it this way: if someone can't do a simple task now, then they're not going to be an 'A' player. That's why Stage 4, giving them a simple task, is such a great way to find the right people.

5. Prescreen

Now, of the people who actually go through and complete the task, you'll have a few people drop off. In fact, along every stage, every step in this seven-step process, you're going to get less and less people making it through to the next stage – and that's a good thing. At this stage, we prescreen. Think about everything that has happened up to this point. This is where you want to step in and prescreen your candidates.

We get them to send through their resume and their cover letter. At this point, we want to make sure that they speak excellent English. Not so much speak it actually, but that they've got good written English and excellent attention to detail. For me, and maybe that's just me, that's one of the qualities I look for. I want to make sure that someone is so particular with what it is that they do that everything is formatted nicely and well-written. That they demonstrate that they've got some great experience and skills that match the job role.

6. Interviewing

At this point in time, you might have two or three people. Usually, three people is the sweet spot to me to move them through to the next stage, which is the interview. We've just filtered it right down, and we're getting down to the cream of the crop. You've listed some questions from the prescreening, and you've got it down to maybe three people. I then schedule an interview with them.

If it's someone locally, we get them to come into the office. But if it's a virtual team member, then we want to do it over Skype. I like to ask them to have a webcam as well. That shows that they've got a good-quality internet connection which is very important. It also means they're a little bit tech savvy.

If they can hook up a webcam and get their Skype running, at least we know they're comfortable with technology. That's a great start. Then we move into the interviewing process. We lock them in for a time. You want to have at least three people coming through for the interview. The reason you want at least three, even if you think there is one star person who just stands out from the rest, you want to get the contrast of different people. You'll find if you have three separate people going through the interview process, it will make it abundantly clear if someone really stands out.

I like to have a tandem interview -- two people doing the interview. It's usually myself and another team member, another 'A' player. The biggest thing that I want to make sure is to ask them questions about their past. I go through their work history and have the candidate retell what jobs that they went through. What did they enjoy? What didn't they enjoy? Why did they move from this position to a new position? I also use some of the questions we built into the prescreening stage.

What you'll find at this point in time is 'A' players love to talk about their past, whereas 'B' players don't like to. 'B' and 'C' players want to avoid what happened in the past. Whereas, 'A' players love to recount their successes, what they've done, and how they got to where they are. That's another little indicator if you're dealing with an 'A' player. What we like to look for here is find these repeating patterns. As the person goes through and retells their story, oftentimes the same reoccurring themes pop up.

If someone says that at the first job they worked at, the boss was an absolute nightmare, and that they had the same type of boss at their next job and the next job after that, and you start to see these reoccurring themes throughout their work history, it gives you a great indication that maybe it's them that is the problem. It's not that their boss is always on their back, it might be that they're not delivering and they're bringing the same problem to every situation, and they are the problem. You'll start to see these patterns emerge, and that's what you want to look out for.

I also want to get an idea of how they best learn. I ask them things like: Do you like videos? Do you like one-on-one, working directly with someone? Do you like to read a step-by-step process? I want to know what their greatest strengths are, and what their greatest weaknesses are. I get them to talk about a time where they excelled with customer service. No matter what team member comes on board, we always get them to go through our customer service training. I want them to understand that the client is the lifeblood of our business and how important customer service is. That's the interviewing process.

7. Trial or Hire

At this point and time, if you've interviewed three people, you're really getting down to one or two people that stand out from the crowd. That's when we move into the final stage. I like to give them a trial. I tell them that they're coming in for a three-month trial, and it's a trial as much for them as it is for us.

I want them to not only feel comfortable in doing the position and in working with the team, but also that they're someone who meets all of our values. That they've got high integrity, that they deliver on their promises, and that they've got excellent attention to detail. So, in that three-month period, if for any reason they find the job isn't right for them or we find the job isn't right for them, we can part as friends and leave with the best of intentions, knowing that we just weren't right for each other.

I let them know upfront that in that three-month period, it's going to be a bit of a trial. And within that period, I like to make things as easy as I can for them. I don't try to give them complex tasks because I know that if they can't get the small stuff right, then they won't be able to get the big stuff right. So, I make it as easy for them upfront as I can.

I even get them to do quite a lot of training. We've got our own custom training that we have developed over the years. But if you're just starting out, maybe you get them to go through something like The Challenge, Ed Dale's training program. That's a great way to get someone started with internet marketing, and they'll learn all the important components. Maybe ask them to go through this training program one or two hours out of every day. That's a great way for them to get skilled up while you give them these other tasks that you outlined in Step 1.

The other little tip that I'd like to share with you on how to make sure that you manage your team members when they come on is getting them to submit 'End of Day' emails. At the end of every shift, I like my team members to post through a message that says what they did for the day, some of the issues they encountered, and some of the questions that they have. It's a three-step thing. But you'll get the feeling if it's just harder than it needs to be or if they are not the right 'A' player. Remember 'A' players just get it, 'A' players make things easier for you.

There you have it. That's the George Foreman Method. It's the same process we use. Once you start to implement this in your business, you'll see why so many people fail when outsourcing. They don't go through this process, and it means they get subpar people to join their team, which ultimately ends up costing them more time and effort.

Real-World Example

In fact, here's a real, live example of what it all looks like when it's tied in together. Firstly, when we are looking for a star team member to join our team, I wanted someone who could help with office admin-type tasks. I was looking someone who could help with customer service and make sure that they invoiced clients. I got really clear on what I wanted upfront. I placed the ad, and I drove all of the interested traffic through to a questionnaire.

We had 95 people fill out that questionnaire, which for me is actually the highest number of people that we've ever had fill out a questionnaire. This means we wrote a really good job ad and maybe just the way the economy is right now. We've got a lot of good-quality people looking for jobs. So, we had lots of people fill out the questionnaire, but we managed to filter it down to 29 people of the 95 that filled it out.

We used those different screening criteria like asking about their wage expectations and the different services they've used. We can even just filter out from people who didn't fill out the questionnaire completely, or maybe their English wasn't quite up to scratch and they didn't have very good attention to detail. We filtered it out to 29.

Once we filtered it down, we then sent out a simple task to those 29 people. Believe it or not, a lot of people even after they've filled out the survey or the questionnaire, they might not take that next step. We only had 10 people who filled out the task and went through to that next stage. We sent it out to all of the people, those 29, but 10 people actually got back to us and completed the job satisfactorily.

Now, we said to them, "Hey, you've done a great job. We're still having trouble picking out who was going to join our team because we've had such a great response. Can you go ahead and send through your cover letter and resume?" Of those people, we had six people send through their cover letter and resume.

We looked through those, and filtered it down to four people. Of those four people, we interviewed them. We went through our smart interviewing process, and we did a tandem interview with another 'A' player, and then we chose down to one person.

There were actually two star candidates, and we ended up selecting Sally. Sally joined our team and she has just worked out to be a really great performer. She's added so much to our team. She's been with us for almost three years now. She is super solid. She was a quick learner and she is an 'A' player. She's helping our business grow like never before. I want you to experience this same level of success in your business.

Summary

The fact is, I couldn't do what I do without my team. They just make things possible. They enable my business to grow really quickly.

In fact, I was at a workshop up in Queensland where Ed Dale was talking. Some of the Market Samurai guys were there too. At Ed's presentation, he was talking about a lot of people just get stuck in the implementation and how they are the bottlenecks within their business. It was quite funny actually and very flattering. Ed had said that most people get stuck there unless you are a freak like David Jenyns. He said it almost endearingly because he knows that I just implement, I'm a massive implementer. But the fact is, my secret weapon is not that I'm an implementer, it's that my team helps me to implement; and that's what it is.

So, you need that same secret sauce in your business, and you need to treat your team well. Like I said, this is not about finding the cheapest labor and exploiting people. This is about building an outsourcing team and outsourcing ethically where you treat your team as gold. If you treat them well, everything else falls into place.

I went to see Richard Branson speak. He was speaking here in Melbourne. One of the things that he talked about was how important his team was. I know a lot of people talk about this idea of the customer is number one. He said, yes, the customer is number one, but team members are also equal number as well. Because if you put them first and treat them well, the flow-on effect is they'll also treat your customers well. It's part and parcel of treating them well and hiring great people. So if you don't take my advice or if you don't take Ed Dale's advice, the very least make sure you take Richard Branson's advice – one of the most successful entrepreneurs of all time, and take these strategies and start to apply them in your business.