

Hi everyone. Ernie Svenson, here and welcome to this episode of *Law Firm Autopilot*. In this episode we're going to be talking about delegation, which is the last part of the operations pillar in the Law Firm Autopilot Success Blueprint.

We've talked about systems and we've talked about automation, now let's talk about getting other people to help handle your workload.

In the popular book, *The 4-Hour Workweek* by Tim Ferriss, he says that the key to productivity is elimination, automation and delegation. In other words, some stuff is not worth doing; other stuff can be put on autopilot; and most of the rest can be delegated.

Consider this, you should only be doing the things that, number one; require a law license, two; that you enjoy doing.

But to take advantage of delegation, you need to cultivate a delegation mindset. How do you do that?

Well, you do it by asking some key questions. Identify your three highest payoff activities.

What is it that only you can do? Where is it that you add the most value? And what is really important, as opposed to being merely urgent.

Figure those things out and figure out who you can delegate that work to, stuff that isn't important, that you don't need to do.

Who do you delegate to? Well, it's probably not the same person you would have delegated to 20 years ago or even five years ago and that's because the way of the old school on-site secretary is becoming a thing of the past.

Now it's time to think about using something called an Executive Virtual Assistant. Now, remember, time is scarce and you are wasting your talents if you're spending time on low payoff activities.

This is true even if you're a solo lawyer, or especially if you're a solo lawyer. If you find that the billing, the emailing, scheduling, having things transcribed, whatever it is, is eating away at the time that you could be using to grow your law firm, then it's time for you to get a virtual assistant.

A good rule of thumb is: if you can teach someone to do a task then you shouldn't be spending your time doing it.

People ask, well, what is it that I could delegate? And the answer is, there's a lot of things you can delegate.

If you have a newsletter (and you should) there's a production process to that newsletter and it's pretty pedestrian. And you should not be doing it; that's something you could delegate.

If you have a website and you have a blog and if you do have a website you should have a blog, those posts need to be edited, they need to be uploaded to your blog software, WordPress, or whatever. You need to find images for the pictures. You need to schedule the posting. And you might even want to have people write the post for you. You'd need to find people to do the ghost writing and then manage those people.

All of that it's something that you could delegate to one person or to a group of people.

What about follow up calls to clients where an actual person has to call? That's definitely something that can be delegated.

What about creating templates and styles within your word processing documents? Those are the kind of things that somebody who's really good at that can do very quickly and do a much better job of than you can, or probably even than the people that are working for you in your firm, if you have people working for you, in the firm.

If you have office policies or you have systems process, all of those things you could assign to a virtual assistant. Like, how do we send a fax if you had to send a fax or how do we deposit money in the bank account?

Everything you're doing in your firm, you could create the policies and the systems but that would take up a lot of valuable time. You could assign that to a virtual assistant to do, or to somebody that you delegate to.

What about follow up calls to clerks of court or government agencies or any kind of follow up calls? Those can all be delegated as can be the organization of your digital files. And especially because these days they're in the cloud. You can get people to organize these files for you anywhere that you would give them access to those files.

Then the question starts to become "well, okay, I know I want to delegate and I see there's a lot of things that I could delegate and probably should delegate, but why do I want to use a virtual assistant?" Why wouldn't you want to just have a regular employee do this kind of thing?

The answer is, maybe you do want to have that—if you have a lot of work, and you need to have somebody that you predominantly control. Then by all means hire a conventional full time employee.

But if you stop and think about it in many cases, it might not make sense.

Remember that hiring a conventional employee usually involves covering or subsidizing expenses like payroll taxes, health-care, dental insurance, vision-care, vacation-pay and so forth.

With a conventional assistant, you'll need to provide them with the usual office supplies, a computer, a printer, a scanner, a phone and so on.

What if you need to hire somebody part time, then it becomes even harder, right? Mostly, because most conventional employees work 40 hours a week and you need

them sometimes to work longer when you face a workload crisis, well, then you look at it over time.

Some people say, okay, great It might work to have a virtual assistant. I can see the benefit in that. But then they start thinking, “well, how would I keep track of that person? Because they're not around me all the time, I can't really tell if they're doing the work that I want them to do.”

Now, this is the 9-to-5 mindset: *the person is there, they must be doing something*. But the reality is, they're not always doing something and they're not always productive.

The real question is, are they getting the work done in the way that you want. And if not, then you correct it. But the point is, **you focus on results** and not on how much time they're spending in the office.

Now, the reality of this is, you want to find a good VA but while there are lots of places **online you can find a virtual assistant to do virtually anything**. The reality is, you're not going to work well with just anyone. We know this from non-virtual assistant world.

You have to find the right person and you've got to do this now online. The same problem that would exist with finding a regular employee is going to apply here.

Finding a good candidate is tough, unless you're experienced in hiring and staffing. If not, you're not going to want, we'll have to learn how to do this on the job and most of all it's painful when you end up hiring the wrong candidate.

It's easier if you can find a company that acts as an intermediary. In other words, like an HR department, if you will. Because what they'll do is they'll select the top candidates, then they'll train them to work virtually (or make sure that they are trained). Then you can work with them to have them pair you up with somebody whose personality and work habits are compatible with yours.

There are some companies out there that have been around for a long time and those are the ones that I recommend you start contacting. One of those companies is called BELAY which used to be known as EA Help (as in *Executive Assistant Help*). I've been using a VA from BELAY for a while now and I have glowing praise for BELAY, and for the person that they paired me up to work with.

Remember that when you work with a VA staffing company like BELAY, it's easy to switch to a new VA if you find that the one you're assigned wasn't optimal when working well with them for whatever reason. It's easy to switch over, just tell the company look, it's not working out, could you pair me up or somebody else.

Which is not the case if you have a traditional employee. Because now you have to fire that person and find somebody new. And that's a big disruption for you and not something that makes you feel good.

Then once people think, “okay, maybe I could have a virtual assistant, I could see that I could get this more easily through a company, but I'm a lawyer and I have privacy concerns. And I'm concerned about security.”

Obviously **lawyers have to be concerned about working with somebody who's not predominantly under their control**. And there are questions about privacy, security—especially having client data compromised.

But these concerns have been addressed by the top level VA staffing companies and there's no reason why a lawyer can't use a VA just like many other professions that have to deal with sensitive data do.

We'll be talking about this issue and upcoming podcast and we'll be delving deeper as well into what it's like to work with the VA. That's kind of the overview of what delegation is and delegation with a virtual assistant.

To summarize, to take advantage of delegation, you need to cultivate a delegation mindset. That means you have to remember that a lot of stuffs not worth doing, a lot of stuff can be put on autopilot and the rest can be delegated.

You should only be doing things that (1) require law license and (2) you actually enjoy doing. Everything else should be delegated.

That's it for this episode of *Law Firm Autopilot* and at this point, we have completed our review of the three pillars of success for the Law Firm Autopilot Blueprint.

In future episodes will be digging deeper into various topics and we'll be interviewing some interesting lawyers and some consultants. The future episodes will be a little longer but that's going to be fun and interesting.

I look forward to seeing you the next time and until then, I wish the best for you and your law practice.