

# Inexpensive Ways of Outsourcing to Increase Your Selling Time

By Kip Gregory

As I was wrapping up a presentation recently one of the attendees, Alan (an advisor with a regional brokerage firm), raised his hand.

"I love your ideas on identifying groups and sites that cater to the kind of clients I'm interested in. Reading what they read, being where they gather, plugging into their passions... it all makes sense. But I'm a one-man band. I share a single sales assistant with two other guys so she certainly doesn't have the time to do what you're talking about. And frankly, I don't think it's my role. My job is to bring in the business. So, how do you recommend a guy like me get what you're talking about done?"

Acknowledging the challenge of figuring out exactly how to work smarter, I encouraged Alan to step outside his rainmaker role and put on his business owner's hat. Simply put, he had a research need. *How do you address those?* One way is to outsource the task... to an intern (through [MonsterTRAK](#) or [Experience's](#) eRecruiting), a virtual assistant (using [AssistU](#)), a returning-to-work parent (by posting on [Craigslist](#) or in your local paper), or a freelancer (at [Elance](#)). (I talk about most of those approaches in Chapter 6 of [Winning Clients in a Wired World](#) -- "Get the Help You Need to Succeed".)

Another "outside the box" solution is to **tap the expertise of the reference desk librarians at your local public libraries**. Jot down the kinds of group(s) you want to learn more about and what you'd like to learn... and then visit the library or call for help.

Librarians are among the best researchers and information professionals out there but one thing they're not is mind readers. Help

them help you by framing your questions the right way. The more specifically you can describe what you're looking for, the better. Here are some examples:

- Can you help me identify what associations and publications cater to people in the \_\_\_\_\_ industry?
- Where do people in that industry meet, when do those meetings occur, are there any coming up locally in the next month, quarter, year?
- What pressing issues are companies and people in the \_\_\_\_\_ industry currently facing?
- What (and whom) do people in the audience I'm interested in read to keep up with new developments on \_\_\_\_\_?
- Which web sites and publications are most popular among people who like to \_\_\_\_\_ in their free time?
- I'm looking for current articles on \_\_\_\_\_ and/or what web sites and publications do people go to when they want to learn more about that subject (a hobby, activity/event, travel destination, charity, medical condition, particular life event... whatever helps you better understand those you're researching)?

They'll take your question and (courtesy of taxpayer support) dig into a reservoir of resources that would cost you or I a fortune to subscribe to individually: periodical and other databases that can provide a wealth of information on virtually any topic -- tools like Hoovers, Lexis Nexis, Gale Group's Business and Company Resource Center, and others.

Now here's the \$10,000 secret: many of those same tools are available to you right from your computer for the mere price of a borrower's card, which is free in most cases.

If you find that your local library doesn't offer a wide enough range of the online tools you want, for \$100 a year you can register as a patron of the [New York Public Library](#) or the [Toronto Public Library](#), two of the preeminent library systems in North America. (In Toronto, you'll have

to register in person.)

*OK Kip, I'm sold. Where can I find a list of libraries in my area?*

The fastest way is to Google your city or town and the phrase "**public library**" (be sure to include the quotes to indicate it's an exact phrase). If that doesn't bring them up, visit [PublicLibraries.com](http://PublicLibraries.com) and [The WWW Library Directory](http://TheWWWLibraryDirectory.com). Both offer comprehensive guides with links to library sites organized by state (PublicLibraries.com) or country and state (WWW Library). PublicLibraries.com includes the address and phone number of each branch right on the page (not just a link to its site)... which is a real timesaver.

Systemizing, delegating, and outsourcing are huge issues for advisors. Doing them well takes effort. It requires thought. And then it requires **action**. Approaches like what I've suggested are smart, inexpensive ways to work around resource constraints. The problem is they're overlooked by 99% of the people who could benefit from them most. And that's one trend you don't want to follow.

