



Papa Rock Stars Podcast

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[Episode 094] Hiring an Assistant for your Paparazzi Accessories Business

As business owners, we want our business to continue to build and grow and thrive, but there comes a point where even the best of us need to ask for help. Let's talk about how to hire an assistant and what you might need to know after you do in today's episode.

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<http://PapaRockStars.com/hiring>

Training:

About 18 months ago I reached the point where I was physically and mentally exhausted and I knew I couldn't continue to build my business on my own any longer. I needed help. But I had NO CLUE how to look for, find, hire, or pay an assistant properly. So today, I will walk you through the entire process I went through so whether you are needing to hire someone to help you now or just want this information for the future, it will be here for you.

Finding the right person to hire

Like I mentioned a moment ago, I was completely CLUELESS when it came to doing any of this, and super nervous. I mean, I would be turning over part of my business, almost like one of my children, to someone. I knew I needed to have someone I could trust to help me work my business and someone who would be reliable.

The first person I tried to hire was a teenager from our church. She sounded excited but never showed up to get trained or to start working. So next, I posted on a local yard sale page in our area full of Mamas. No response. So a week or so later, I posted another post with a few more details and that afternoon 2 of my friends texted saying they were interested in the job.

I was thrilled because I knew both ladies, we were already friends and I trusted them both. So remember, you might need to ask a few times if someone would want to help you before you will get a response. Second, be specific about the tasks you want to hire them for. Do you need them to help organize? File items? Help with shipping? Maybe you want them behind the scenes on your live shows to help there. Include that when you are posting online or asking for help. Also, how many hours a week are you needing them to help? Is this a part time gig? As needed? Full time? That helps people know if it is something that will fit into their lives or not.

Also, talk to your friends. You might have a friend or neighbor who is looking for some extra money on the side and has a few hours a week to help you with your biz.

I found my person, now what?

Now that you have found the person you are wanting to hire, now what?? I recommend starting with a trial period for both you and your new assistant. That way, you can get a feel for each other in a working environment and see if working together will be a good fit. Then at the end of the trail period, you can have a discussion about what is working and what still needs help. And, if for some reason things aren't working out, then you will know sooner rather than later.

Next, depending on what you want to do and how you need them to help you will be how you move forward. For my assistants, they have their own set of tasks they take care of but when and how they take care of these responsibilities is up to them. That means they fall under the category of independent contractors. If you set the hours of your assistant (when) and decide what they will work on while they are at work, this is considered an employee.

Its important to know the difference, because then you will know what forms you will need for taxes and for their paychecks. I don't know much about the employee side of things, so I would recommend talking to your licensed tax professional for more details about that. For an independent contracted assistant, they will need to fill out a W9 form. You will use this information later on when you are filing taxes. Also, be sure to discuss their wage. It is important that you (and they) know how much they will be getting paid, how you want them to clock in, when a pay period ends and when they should expect a check.

I run my pay periods every 2 weeks and usually cut checks in a day or 2 after the pay period ends. My assistants fill out a time sheet online (thanks google sheets) so that it is constantly available to both of us and backed up online. Each assistant also has their own time sheet so we aren't sharing information.

I started my assistants out at about 2-3 hours a week and they were able to get their tasks done easily in that time frame. As my business has continued to grow, they now put in 5-10 hours each to do the same tasks and we've even added in a few things they didn't start out doing, but now fits more naturally into their responsibilities. It's been fun to grow together and to look back over where we were when I first hired them vs. now.

When should I hire an assistant?

This is a question that is going to look different for everyone. I will say that I wish I had hired someone a long time before I actually did. I was working and burning myself out trying to keep up with my orders, customers, sending out jewelry, and coaching and leading my team. Keep track of how much jewelry you are selling and see if there is profit enough to have someone help you, even if it is just a few hours a day.

It took me a little while to realize that if I had someone helping me with something like checking orders and putting them away in our drawers, that I would then be available to invoice for orders or respond to someone who was interesting in joining the team, or go live for another hour, or do another party. While they were working, I could actually EARN MORE. I had grown my business as much as I could on my own and to continue to grow, I had to ask for help.

For you, maybe you need to hire a babysitter so you can go live one extra night a week. Or maybe you have someone make you dinner once a week, or maybe you have someone who helps you package and ship orders. Or invoice. Decide what tasks you could step back from and still have the work/home balance you want. Then find someone to help you.

Tax stuff

Let me start out by saying - taxes give me a headache. I would rather do pretty much anything else. BUT, it is important that you do them, so let's talk about what you need to know about taxes and your 1099 assistants. I am going to put a disclaimer here. I am NOT a tax professional. This info is what I was told by my tax professional and verified online. Please consult your tax professional to ensure that you are recording and reporting your information accurately.

So I got my assistants paid month to month and I thought everything was easy-peasy, but then came January 1st. Turns out, that if a non-employee makes more than \$600 in a calendar year, you need to report their earnings to the IRS and they get a 1099-misc from you.

WHAT!?!

I can't tell you HOW confused I was by this!! Seriously. The IRS website is just a big jumble of information. And I got so much conflicting information online. But, here is what I finally discovered.

Your non-employees (independent contractors) need to get 1099-MISC forms and you will also need a Form 1096 to submit each of the 1099-misc's officially to the IRS.

Also, you need to BUY tax forms. You can order them online from Amazon or a number of other retailers. You can also purchase these forms from many office supply stores. The smallest packet I could find was 20 of the 1099 forms and 3 Form 1096's. And then, I made a discovery - you can actually take care of MOST of what you need to online (yes please!)

Office Max has a service that you can find here <https://efiletaxforms.efile1.com/> where you can electronically fill out and file your tax documents for your employees! Pricing depends on how many forms you have to file and how many employees you have. Also, if you want to

print, mail, and file electronically or not. But the highest cost was \$4.50 per person (and the forms at the store were \$26.99).

I was able to fill out the information I needed to in minutes and they were off in a flash to the IRS.

Important info to remember: 1099-misc for non-employees are supposed to be mailed out by January 30th of each year, and even if you e-file, the IRS still needs to approve your forms before they are mailed out to your people, so the sooner you file them, the better. The approval of my forms took 2.5 weeks, so when January 1st rolls around, the sooner you get these filled, the better!

Firing an Assistant

Let me also say that if your assistant isn't performing well, try to have a conversation with them before it gets to the point where you need to let them go. Do they need more training? Do they need a different resource or step by step process card? Do they not understand what they need to be doing or do they need help to find a quicker way to accomplish the work? Talk this out with them .

Chances are if you are frustrated, they are too. Establish an environment where they feel comfortable talking to you if they have an issue or concern or if they just don't understand how to do something. And communicate clear expectations and standards with them. If they are going to be working with your customers directly or with more sensitive parts of your business, you can also have them sign a non-compete and or a NDA agreement. This is just another way to protect your customers and your business.

Firing an assistant might be the worst part of having help. I was never in a position before where someone's paycheck relied on me. And to be real, this part totally stinks. What I can say is to be direct and get to the point. If you think someone should be let go, let them go. Dragging your feet in the hopes that a situation will get better doesn't help them and the situation NEVER gets better.

I hear the phrase "hire slow and fire fast" a lot in podcasts and trainings I listen to, meaning, take time to get to know someone and see if they will be a good fit BEFORE you hire them, but don't drag your feet when letting them go. No one wants to be the one to let someone go and no one wants to get let go, but not everyone is a good fit and it's like ripping of a band aid. Better get it done quick and move on.

I mean, that's easy enough to say, but earlier this year, I had to let one of my assistants go. I won't go into the details of why, but I will say I cried for about a week, called my parents, my brother, talked to my hubby, cried some more, tried to look for another solution and then ultimately had to put on my big girl panties and just get it done. It was awful, but when it was done - I felt so much better - like a weight had been lifted. So I get that it totally stinks but just do it. You'll thank me later.

BUT be PROFESSIONAL. You don't want something coming back to bite you later on. Even if they stole from you, mistreated your customers, sent packages to the wrong people, mis-filled jewelry and made an utter mess...you have to represent yourself and your business with dignity and pride. Don't badger them or call names. I think this is why a lot of people use the canned "It's just not working out" or "I've decided to let you go". Be clear, stay unemotional (especially if you are hurt or angry!) and whatever you do, be professional.