

EPISODE 1574**[INTRODUCTION]**

Whitney Sewell (WS): This is your daily Real Estate Syndication Show and I'm your host, Whitney Sewell. Today we have packed a few different shows together that we call Highlights to help you to get the most bang for your time and educating you on the topics that you want to learn from. We would love to hear from you. I am grateful that you are with us today. Have a blessed day.

[INTERVIEW]

WS: I have had so many questions about how we use VA's and I've talked a little bit about that before or on a couple of different shows and interviewed other people about how they have used VA's and how they've been successful doing that and I wanted to cover that myself and answer all these questions.

I've been taking notes of questions that people have – they've texted me, I get numerous text about how we do this, how do we hire somebody, when is it time to hire a VA, how many hours should they work, how do we communicate with them, what kind of job description, you know, I've had people ask me, "Can you send me the job description you used?" and I've done that.

We're going to talk about that a little bit today, what the description should look like, how much you should expect to pay for different tasks and depending on lots of different things. So anyway, I hope you enjoy today's show. I hope you are thinking about hiring a VA, if you haven't already. Hopefully you have and hopefully I can help you improve that process or at least get started and so we're going to get right into it. You know who I am and if not, you know, go to Life Bridge Capital and you can read all about me and deals that we've done and what we're all about as far as Life Bridge Capital and our big mission behind helping fund children's adoptions and doing that through the syndication business. I hope you are aware of that and we're going to get right into it.

When is it time to hire a VA? Or some people call them EA's, executive assistant or virtual assistant and when is it time? I would ask you, how busy are you? Do you get done at the end of the day and think, "I can't get it all done, can't do it, or how am I going to," – or you're thinking, "How am I going to improve this part of my business or that part? When am I going to have time to work on those things?"

I would say, "Well, you need a VA." Probably needed one a long time ago and I would say, throughout your day, write down the things that you find that somebody else could do. Just as

you're doing tasks, there are so many things that other people could be doing for you or somebody else that's qualified.

There's probably many tasks that someone else could do a lot better than you that you're trying to get done every day. They'll have a specific skill possibly that they can complete a task a lot faster than you and make it a lot better and so that's something I want you to be thinking about throughout your day, what are you working on, what are you doing that you could hand off to somebody else? Write those things down, at least be thinking about that throughout your day.

Another one, how do I know what task to give them? How do I know what they can do? Well, you can find VAs to do almost anything that can be done on a computer. They're working from all over the world. You can hire people in the country or internationally as well and they can be anywhere, if it can be done on the computer then they could be doing this task for you, for the most part. I'm sure there's certain sensitive things that can't be done or hired out that you as the executive or CEO or what have you, the owner probably need to have eyes on or to handle personally. But there's many tasks that you can start to hand off to somebody else.

I've seen a post this past week where people are even handing off doing their laundry or hiring people to go get their groceries and that's not a virtual assistant, but it's still hiring out tasks. I hadn't even thought about those things until I read this post. Still hiring out things to get time back. That's what's so important to us is getting that time back and handing these things off so we can spend our time on the most valuable tasks. Or either the most valuable things that are so important to us like spending time with our family or kids. That's why this VA is going to help you so much and help you to be more organized.

How long should it take for them to complete a task? I wanted to go back to how do I know what tasks to give them and I said that so many things that you can hand off other than sensitive things and you're going to figure that out as you go through the day and even as you grow in your business, you're going to find other things. How long should it take them to do those tasks?

Well, most tasks are going to have a variety of time amounts that it's going to take, but you have to decide what the priority tasks are. You know, how long should they spend on something and how good does something need to be? We have certain specific tasks that are top priority and these need to be done the best that we can possibly do them. My VA's know that okay, these are very important, these need to get done right away, these are top priority, anytime we see this task, or something like this — they know, something we're always improving.

You know, there's a new task that comes along as your business grows and as you're going through your daily routines, there are different tasks that come up and that's how you get better and that's how your VAs get better as well. But there are new things that they have to learn and there are new things you're going to make sure that they know how to do.

You have to decide how long should the spend on this task? Is this something that as long as it's getting done, it's going to push us forward? Is it going to make a difference that, you know, on a scale from one to 10 that it's a 10 every time or if it's a seven over time, we're still going to get just as far? There are specific things that are okay not to be a 10 every time. It's not worth me paying that assistant to make it a 10.

Something that's behind the scenes maybe only something that I'm going to see or what have you, things like that. Obviously, if it's things that we're putting out then I need them to be a 10 every time. Whatever that may be. Our visual is opened for other people to see. You know, you have to lay that out, what are the priorities for them to work on and you have to make that very clear for them or else, you know, it's not going to work. You're going to be very frustrated.

So as you're making that list like we talked about lay out the priorities, you know, maybe number them one to 10 or if there's a 10 tasks, put them in number or in priority order so it can help you to start thinking about what are the top few things that I could start to offload to somebody?

If you're nervous about hiring a VA, well, maybe give them the least important things at first. Just to kind of get your feet wet with using an assistant. But if it's time is what you're worried about then find the things that are taking up the most of your time and find a way to hand that to a VA.

How many hours do you hire them for? One of the best things about a VA is that you can hire them for one hour a week or two hours a week. You don't have to start with 40 hours a week. You don't have to hire somebody full time and that's the amazing thing about using something like Upwork or Fiverr, those platforms is that you do not have to hire somebody full-time. You don't have to pay them benefits or things like that.

You can actually hire them through Upwork, you know, where Upwork's taking out the taxes and doing those things where you're really hiring Upwork. But you're building that relationship with this individual. So, start with one hour a week if you're nervous about starting this process. But make sure that they can grow with you. Make sure that they have some time to give you outside of that one hour a week because I guarantee you, very quickly, you're going to fill up that hour, you're going to want another hour, and then another hour and another hour and

before you know it, you're going to need a couple of days a week of their time and it's going to keep growing.

[INTERVIEW]

WS: Our guest is Liam Martin. Thanks for being on the show, Liam.

Liam Martin (LM): Thanks for having me.

WS: It's a pleasure to have you on the show. Just today, I had questions about using virtual assistants and what that should look like and how I would hire somebody. I've used virtual assistants for a long time. I know the listeners are also thinking about using virtual assistants, also known as remote workers, and are looking to grow and scale their business. So we've got an expert on the show today in this topic. So I'm really looking forward to this.

But Liam is a serial entrepreneur who runs Time Doctor and staff.com, one of the most popular time-tracking and productivity software platforms in use by top brands today. He's also a co-organizer of the world's largest remote work conference called Running Remote. He is an avid proponent for remote work and has been published in Forbes, Inc. Mashable, TechCrunch, Fast Company, Wired, The Wall Street Journal, The Next Web, Huffington Post, VentureBeat, and many other publications, specifically targeting the expansion of remote work.

So, Liam, thank you again for your time being on the show. I'm really looking forward to this, because I know some of the listeners – I get questions all the time, I mean, personally, just about how I've used virtual assistance and how we've structured that, how we've hired people. So I'm really looking forward to getting your take. But give them a little bit more about your background, your focus on this remote work.

LM: Sure. So, actually, virtual assistants for me have really run my life and have optimized my life in a way that I never really – It's kind of something that I take for granted now. But then when I talk to people that don't have virtual assistants, I don't know how they function, to be honest with you.

So as an example, this meeting was basically set up by Vaishali who is in India, who reached out to you and basically got me on your show. All of those things are processed out and systematized. I was just in [inaudible 00:02:28] about three days ago for a conference called Vested Summit. My assistant booked all the flights. I actually had a somewhat disastrous change of plans, and she ended up within an hour reorganizing my flights, talking to lounges, setting up hotel rooms for me, all this kind of stuff. This all happens to me automatically, and it all happens to my phone.

So a lot of the time, as an example, about three weeks ago, I was in San Diego. I had missed my flight, because I was an idiot. At about 11:00 PM, I turned my phone off of silent mode. Within two minutes, I got a phone call from my assistant saying, "Are you at LAX right now, because it looks to me like your phone is in San Diego?" I said, "I'm in San Diego. Why would I be in LAX?" She said, "Because you're supposed to be getting on a plane to LAX. You were supposed to go from San Diego to LAX at 8:30 to 10:30." It's like, "Oh, crap! Okay." Then she's like, "Listen. Don't worry about it. I booked you a hotel room, and you're leaving at 5:00 AM the next day."

It's just like those types of things that just sort of – that sync that you get in. I've been working with my virtual assistant for over 10 years. So I have a really good sync, and we know where we're going to go and what we're going to do. She kind of knows. I kind of lovingly call her my mother, and that's just one of those things that you can get when you have a virtual assistant, which is just seamless travel, seamless sync of communication. For anyone that's in the real estate game, I mean, that's just so critical when you're going to be doing that real estate deal or meeting with a client or anything like this. It's just, it completely – It probably arguably adds probably a 30% increase to my overall productivity per day. So I can get 30% more things done per day, just by adding a virtual assistant.

WS: Just the stress level going down as well. Just like all of that stuff was taken care of for you. You didn't have to like grab your laptop or your phone and get all of this stuff out and trying to figure out changing your flights, your hotel. It was just all done for you.

LM: Yeah. I mean, I've had other instances like I was staying at a somewhat dodgy hotel in San Francisco, and I ended up finding bedbugs in my room that my assistant had booked. We have all of these processes and procedures like I will not fly before 10:00 AM, and if it's longer than seven hours, I will pay for a business upgrade. We have all these if-then statements that build into how she books all my travel. But I had found bedbugs and I called her up and I said, "Hey! I think we got to get out of this room," and she flipped out. Within 10 minutes, someone had been called up to my room from the concierge and said, "Well, you've been upgraded to the presidential suite."

This was all through her, because she basically got on the phone and said, "We were booking it through, I believe, Expedia, and we book hundreds of nights per quarter through the company on Expedia." They saw that we were like a complete – A triple platinum or whatever the heck you want to call it user." She just said like, "I am going to give you a one-star review if you don't move my client completely out of this place immediately and move them up to the presidential suite." Not only that, she had all of my clothes dry-cleaned by another service that showed up

maybe an hour later, because she was terrified that I would basically be bringing bedbugs back to my own house.

So that's the kind of advantage that you can get when you just have a virtual assistant that not only has the ability to be able to make those decisions and is empowered to be able to make those decisions but also someone that just has that level of sync with you.

WS: Okay. So 10 years. Is that common? I wanted to ask you if somebody will have the same virtual assistant or remote worker for that long.

LM: Well, I don't know. I know, for me, that's something that I really like. I would say that the longer that you can be with someone that you really like, you should stick with them. Now, actually, my virtual assistant, there's a terminology in the remote workspace called 'digital nomadism', which is someone that has no set address and travels the world. These people basically work from their laptops. So this is my virtual assistant now. So I think she's in Kyoto in Japan right now. I don't know where she's going to go next. But she constantly travels the world. But she always knows, "Here's my sync time with Liam. This is when he needs to get on this flight or he needs to do this meeting." She just is always ahead of the curve and always understands where I'm going to be next. Sometimes, she knows before I know.

WS: That's the great thing if she knows before you know. So I know the listeners are – the common questions. There are a few common questions and maybe some not so common that I'd love to get into. One thing is just hiring somebody that's remote. I get the fear questions all the time. "Well, how do I hire them? I've never even met them in person." Then I'd love to get into the tasks that we can give them and the expectations of their work and some other things. But initially, just give us some pointers on hiring somebody remotely. How do we find that person that we can trust to be that assistant?

LM: So there are a couple of platforms that you can work from as a starting point. Upwork is the biggest one in the industry. That was a merger of oDesk and Elance, which used to be the two largest space basically, project work companies in the space. You'll find a lot of virtual assistants on that platform. However, Upwork takes between 10 to 30% of an employee's salary. So that's how they make money. So you can basically go into their platform. You can find all these fantastic people. But then you pay 10 to 30% of that employee's salary to Upwork. Basically, Upwork is the middleman inside of that process.

On the reverse side is Toptal. Toptal is one of the top kind of like almost remote headhunting agencies in the world, and they will actually just charge you a fee upfront to be able to find somebody fantastic. So if you want find a virtual assistant or a developer, anyone else, you can

go to Toptal. They will tell you how much it will cost to be able to find a virtual assistant, as an example. Then they're going to go through that process.

I personally really like two platforms that have – We do about 90% of our high-rank through these two platforms now, which is RemoteOK and We Work Remotely. So these are both job boards specifically for remote workers, and they already know, “Hey! This is working remotely.” Usually, they'll have experience working remotely beforehand, so it's very easy to be able to get up and going with somebody. Now, in terms of virtual assistant-like areas to be able to hire, the Philippines is probably the best place right now. It's an exact 12-hour flip from Eastern Standard Time. So if you're in New York, as an example, your virtual assistant would be a 12-hour flip. If you can get them to work night shift, then they're going to be on all of that time with you.

WS: Take me through that hiring process a little bit though. Let's say we find some people and then just the interview. Interviewing somebody that's in another country, obviously we can't meet them. Maybe some questions also that you would suggest we ask.

LM: So Zoom and Skype. I have a perspective of always do a call on video, because you can see what's happening with that person. If you're going to be hiring someone in the Philippines, as example, or India or any other developing country, do they have a stable Internet connection? If you go to speedtest.net. You have them go to speedtest.net, they run a speed test, and then they submit that URL to you. Then you'll actually be able to know what their Internet connection speeds are, which is very useful.

Generally, if they don't have five down and five up, they have below that amount, I would not generally work with them, because they can't hold a stable Zoom call, as an example. Then I would just ask them questions like, “Have you done any type of VA work before? Can you tell me about those previous experiences?” If they don't have any experience, that doesn't necessarily mean you shouldn't hire them. But generally, I look for people that have very good attention to detail. So my assistant, as an example, she has all of these operational processes on what actions she should take based off of the feedback that I've provided in the past, and she basically came up with that documentation on her own. That's what I mean by attention to detail.

I also – One other factor that I look at generally whenever I'm hiring anyone is I have a perspective of, “Don't ask me what to do, tell me what you did.” That generally is applicable to everyone that I work with, but particularly people that are on a 12-hour time zone difference between me and them, because a lot of the time they're going to be working without me actually directly interacting with them. It's super important that they just make their own independent decisions without my input.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[OUTRO]

Whitney Sewell: Thank you for being with us again today. I hope that you have learned a lot from the show. Don't forget to like and subscribe. I hope you're telling your friends about Real Estate Syndication Show and how they can also build wealth in real estate. You can also go to LifeBridgeCapital.com and start investing today.

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