

## Clarify Your Needs to Receive Invaluable Support

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A while back, I provided a consultation to a small litigation firm looking for paralegal support. I give them kudos for knowing they need support and for already identifying the type of support best suited to their needs. However, it quickly became clear during the consultation that, while they knew they wanted and needed someone highly qualified in their particular area of law, they hadn't yet considered what tasks to outsource.

Sometimes it's hard to break things down with specificity, especially if you've been working in your field for a while. As a specialist, the work you do becomes familiar and the intricate details of each step soon blend together into a more generalized overview; they become second-nature to you. At this point, it can become difficult to break them back down into the individual steps you once spent so much time mastering. In order to delegate, though, it's imperative you do so, either yourself, through existing staff, or with the assistance of your paralegal support provider.

Why? To begin with, chances are you have to find a freelance paralegal or paralegal support service. Just as you do, paralegal support services have specialties. For example, some freelance paralegals may provide litigation support from intake to settlement, others may specialize in research, others may specialize in drafting, others may specialize in document organization and production, and still others may specialize in trial preparation. Before you can find the right service provider, you must have a clear understanding of your needs and goals in partnering with a paralegal support service.

Second, if you don't have a clear idea of what you need help with or the direction you want to take with the support you receive, chances are you won't be satisfied. Plainly put, if you don't know what you want, neither does your paralegal. Your paralegal support service can work with you to help you identify your needs and the solutions best suited to your firm's situation, but your provider won't know you need assistance identifying tasks for delegation unless you say so. Let your freelance paralegal know. Request a meeting. He or she can work with you to help you identify additional pain points that need to be addressed and develop solutions to address those needs.

To ensure you get the support you need, it's vital that your firm has a clear understanding of its needs and goals as much as possible before it retains a paralegal support service or freelance paralegal; then, utilize your provider's knowledge and expertise to help you further define tasks for delegation.

So how did my consultation end? After some conversation, we were able to identify specific tasks they would want performed. I'm sure there are other tasks they will want to delegate, but we were able to come up with enough specifics to allow me to find a paralegal support service for them that matched their needs. Now, their provider can help them nail down the details.

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First posted September 24, 2012, at <http://www.paralegalsupport101.com/2012/09/clarifying-your-needs/>