

Packages!

It's been a VERY VERY hot topic in the Virtual Assistant world recently and there has been much conversation and much confusion on the whole process.

I totally get how you're feeling. If you have always charged yourself out at an hourly rate then how do you suddenly change to packages? At the end of the day there are a few things you need to take into consideration as you embark on this journey and hopefully this mini guide combined with the included video will help you out!

The first thing I MUST say is that packaging doesn't have to be hard but it also isn't necessarily easy. It is highly dependant on you, your business, your skills AND how much you want it. It means a change in the way things have previously been done and change can sometimes be hard and scary (highly subjective to you as an individual).

Firstly lets go through a few basics and clarify a few key words to make sure we're all on the same page!

Hourly Rates: You complete work for an hour and you get paid for an hour. The simplest pricing structure that most Virtual Assistants use in their business. The faster you get the less money you make.

Retainers: Pre-selling clients blocks of hours (often at a discounted rate as an incentive) on a regular or non regular basis. This pricing style is similar to hourly rates as you still need to complete the number of hours of work the client has purchased. The faster you get the less money you make.

This style is the MOST confused one when we discuss packages. People often think they are selling their clients packages but what they are actually selling are retainers. I talk about it more here:

<http://www.donnabrown.com.au/packages-vs-retainers-in-your-virtual-assistant-business/>

Projects: A once of task (of any size) that has a certain number of results that needs to be achieved that you set a single price for. E.g.: Organise this book launch which includes x,y,z for \$500. The key to this style is that it's a SINGLE project. You need to sell it over and over again to have any good cash flow and each time likely to new people as not many clients need the same project completed more than once (or its rare, such as once a year). The faster you get the more money you make.

Packages: A regular recurring group of tasks that is completed based on the end result not how long you take to complete them. This is often weekly or monthly. There is no time tracking or reporting. The client wants to see the regular end result NOT how long it takes you. The quicker you work, the more money you make. The BEST for cash flow in your business.

Below are the 5 points that's are key to understanding before you embark on the packaging journey and applying it to your business. Remember every business is different and everyone has different skills so don't compare yourself to anyone else. Simply work on being the best you can be and if you need help ASK.

Step 1: Square Blocks Don't Fit In Round Holes

What do I mean here? Well basically what ever you have been doing so far in your business likely cannot be pushed into the packaging model without a tweak.

Don't try and cram it in and make someone buy it...it will need to be changed and tweaked in order to work in this new model.

This is usually the HARDEST part to grasp. When you get over this hurdle the other steps make more sense and are far easier. The reason why its so hard is that so many of you reading this have been doing the same thing for so many years it can be difficult to look at things from a different light (which is why many opt for mentoring on this topic).

Step 2: Not All Services Can Be Packaged

Transcription is the BEST example of a typical VA service that cannot (or is extremely difficult to package). This will make more sense as you read on but mostly the reason is because it's not a recurring service that has a group of tasks that can be systemised. Systems are INTERGRAL to packages and form a part of the process of leveraging your business to become six figures or a 100KVA.

Even if you're entire business is based on transcription, keep reading – don't be disheartened, nothing is set in stone 😊

Step 3: Repetition Is The Key

The SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND TODAY IS THAT REPETITION/RECURRING IS THE KEY TO PACKAGES!

In order for packages to work in the 100KVA model you need to be offering a service that can occur over and over and over again for the same client. For example:

- Email newsletters can be sent every week.
- Facebook Posts can occur daily
- Vlogs Can be edited Weekly
- Webinars can be run monthly
- Travel may occur monthly

So if you are currently only delivering adhoc work (eg lots of 10min jobs here and there) you will not be able to package this up UNLESS they are the same 10min jobs over and over again which you can combine on a recurring time schedule. If they are completely unrelated to each other then you will not be able to package them up.

If your clients ONLY want this kind of work completed then they are not the kind of clients that purchase packages (unless of course you educate them on the cool offering you have coming soon – they may simply be unaware!)

Packages need to have some kind of regular results...in my experience the frequency is usually weekly or monthly....anything outside of that (for example maybe you have a client that needs a service done twice a year) would be more of a project rather than a package. The frequency will depend on your service and the clients needs but for the most part it is usually no less than once a month.

So what do you do if you have a client that likes a package you designed BUT also need adhoc work (and you don't want to loose them).

Well what I usually say to my mentoring clients is create a package that works for them AND include 2 hours of

ad hoc work per week. Make sure the price includes these two hours and that it's not allowed to be rolled over or part refunded. It's part of the package and is one of their benefits.

For all new clients they MUST buy a package to get the extra bonus on top. I usually say if you are going to be serious about this journey, don't take on any more hourly rate ad hoc clients – moving forward they must be on packages.

Remember I would rather you have 10 clients buying you at \$500 per month where each one only uses 4 hours of your time, than 30 clients that are buying you at \$500 per month where each uses 12 hours of your time. It's pretty obvious to me which is the smarter path 😊

Step 4: Don't Make People Feel Like A Number

The problem with packages is that most people (not just VAs, but any service provider) will add them to their website and try and push clients into buying one of 3 options. They feel pressured to try and pick one that fits their business and sometimes feel like just another number and not get that personal service that is usually so synonymous with getting a Virtual Assistant.

So instead let's make sure we make our potential customers feel safe, special and valued. This boosts trust and your sales conversion BIG TIME. If you haven't watched the video included in this resource I highly recommend that you go back and watch it from about 5:45 where I go into more details verbally about this step.

I talk about how you would discuss your packages in real life in such a way that potential clients are feeling like they get a custom or personal service AND most importantly that they are not just another number. Even though the package is likely to be very similar or exactly the same as all your other clients, it's important to make them feel valued.

At the end of the day, you actually don't even need to put your packages on your site. You can talk about the awesome value you bring and encourage people to have a conversation with you to see if you are a fit for each other. One thing I will say is my personal opinion, NOT to include prices on your site. I know that many VAs are against this as they think they will get time wasters annoying them who could never afford their services BUT I personally would rather have a conversation with these people, then let them make a decision based on your price.

If they make a decision based on price they never get to talk to you and see how awesome you are. We want them to buy you on VALUE not how much you cost. What are you bringing to their world?

Step 5: Add FREE Value

When you design your packages make them to appear of GREAT value by adding in extras that don't cost a thing OR much time on your part. It could be a simple report, an ebook, a training guide you have written etc.

Also if you are able to systemise the service to make it as FAST as possible for you to deliver (without affecting the results) then it's a big win for you where you can concentrate on other ways you can help your clients biz grow. I give a great example of this in the video around 9:18 mark so check it out if you haven't already.

I will leave you with one piece of advice that I ask you keep in your mind all the time.

Packages work well in VA businesses where the VA is proactive (and not reactive). Don't wait for clients to give you work. Don't wait for them to come to you with a problem.

Find solutions and better practices for your clients ALL THE TIME. Show them packages that will benefit their business and alleviate their pain.

Clients may come to you with an idea of what they need BUT they may not be aware of something missing in their business unless you show them!

If you have any questions or need help soot me an email at queen@donnabrown.com.au

Cheers

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donna" followed by a smiley face emoji (😊).