

Online Filipino Specialists (Virtual Assistant): Quick Start Guide



By John Jonas

You don't want a "Virtual Assistant". You want someone great at moving processes forward in your business. You want an OFS - **Online Filipino Specialist**.

While hiring full-time Filipino workers isn't rocket science, it's definitely different from hiring a contract or freelance worker.

The main characteristic you need to be aware of is TRUST. You need to help the person you hire trust you. --I KNOW-- This sounds backward. You're thinking..."How can I trust them?" You'll quickly see that getting them to trust you is more important than your fear of not trusting them.

Here's a quick list of things you should know to make your experience much better.



1. You can find really skilled people

I have 35+ full-time OFS working for me. Super talented programmers, designers, writers. People doing SEO, lead generation, customer support. I have a friend who hired an investment banking analyst, another who hired an accounting auditor, and another a short-sale lead generation specialist.

Yes, there are really talented people, and they're not that hard to find. When you post a job you'll immediately see who is qualified and who isn't.

2. Tax implications

I'm not an accountant, so you shouldn't take my advice, but compliance is super easy. You just get them to sign a W-8BEN, [deduct their wages as "subcontractors"](#)...and that's it. There's no 1099, there's no withholding, there's no reporting.

3. Hiring should take you 1-2 hours...total

Most people think hiring an OFS is complicated. You don't have to do a bunch of video interviews (you actually shouldn't!), you don't have to sort through hundreds of resumes, and it shouldn't take you a bunch of hours to hire. If you do a good job post and follow a good interview process, the whole thing should take 2 hours max. See the end of this guide for how I do this.

4. Trusting them with sensitive information

Trusting someone isn't something that should be taken lightly. However, the Philippines has a culture of honesty with foreigners. Plus, digital theft punishments are harsh in the Philippines. They don't want to steal from you, they just want a stable job and paycheck. You'll notice their honesty in your interviews. If you feel a red flag, steer clear of that person. [More on trust.](#)

5. Work with the timezone, not against it

The Philippines is 14 hours ahead of me. It's amazing. I assign work then I go to sleep. When I wake up, the work is done! Rather than having someone work on your time (which you CAN do), you'll find that your work day overlaps with theirs either in your morning or your afternoon.

You get some time for live communication, then most work is done asynchronous. It helps you focus on important tasks, rather than focusing on what they're doing.

Working the night shift is hard. If needed, find someone who is already used to it.

6. Salary

[Full-time wages range from \\$400-\\$2000/month USD](#). On the low end you have unskilled beginner people. Data entry or non-thinking monotonous work. On the high end you have super experienced programmers, designers, funnel builders, media buyers or just about anything that can be done online. Negotiate salary. We don't take a cut.

7. You hired a human, not a robot.

Unlike a contract worker, you actually need to take care of a full/part time employee. They're human. Most people just think they're robots. They'll do mundane, monotonous, repetitive tasks, but they probably won't like it. Try not to create a dead-end job.

Ask them about their work. Ask them how they like what they're doing. Ask them about their family. Make sure they know you care about them (if you don't...learn to care about them).

8. Hire part-time or full-time

Yes, you can hire someone on a contract basis.

Yes, you can hire someone hourly.

You'll be better off hiring someone part-time or full-time, and paying a salary.

Contract work is always temporary. Hourly work is associated with temporary work in the Philippines. Both of these things mean 100% guaranteed turnover. Most (but not all) Filipino workers will respond better to a salary.

9. Filipinos are very conscientious.

- They feel like they're not good enough for you.
- They're worried they won't perform perfectly.
- They're VERY non-confrontational.

Because of these cultural traits (which almost EVERY SINGLE Filipino you'll ever encounter will have), if a Filipino doesn't know how to do something, they won't tell you and they'll likely quit their job without explaining why. Keep this in mind as you work with them. If they stop communicating with you it's a sign they're unsure about something, NOT a sign they don't want the job. Ask them "What are you stuck on?" ← This question will solve 95% of disappearing issues.



10. Where To Hire

If you haven't already hired someone, [OnlineJobs.ph](#) is a great place to start. The best way is to create a job post and also contact jobseekers directly by using the "search resume" feature. Keep the emails and job posts short and easy to read.

11. You MUST train them

Because of #9 above, you must train the workers you hire (unless it's a technical position like programming or design or FB ads), or they'll disappear. They don't want to disappoint you.

They will often try to figure things out (they really want to make you happy), but if they don't know how to do something or fear you're not going to be happy with their work, they won't "confront" you about it. That's just how it is in the Philippines.

Providing training makes them feel safe. It builds trust. It creates rock star workers. Use a screen capture tool to create training (see #14).



12. Pay them using EasyPay

[EasyPay](#) is the best way for workers to receive money from you.

There are no extra fees, it offers the best conversion rates and instant transfers are available for registered users.

13. Provide LOTS of feedback

- It will help you get better work from them.
- It will make your experience MUCH better and help you keep your employees forever.
- Make sure to provide POSITIVE feedback before you give negative feedback. ANY positive feedback you can give goes a long way.

14. Use Snagit to give feedback.

Every time I've ever asked my Filipino team what they like about me, their first answer is that I give lots of video feedback. There are lots of software options, I use [Snagit](#).



15. Require them to send you an email every day.

A daily email report helps:

1. Keep them accountable.
2. Keep the relationship under control.
3. Keeps projects moving forward.
4. Prevents you from micromanaging.

16. Your expectations

Up front, they (typically) won't be as productive as a U.S.-based employee (sometimes you'll find someone who is MORE productive).

They're scared and worried about making mistakes and disappointing you. Give it time. Give good feedback. Nurture the working relationship. It will pay off 100 times in the long run. Rarely does the first task go perfectly.

17. They're not a project manager.

Don't even try to hire a project manager to manage a team right up front. I've never seen it work. It's not that you can't have someone doing project management, you can. It's that usually they need to trust you first.



18. Pay them on time

Their livelihood depends on it. Once a week at first, then bi-monthly or monthly after you've established trust. If you pay them late, they may not eat for a few days.

19. Don't pre-pay for work

Filipinos are honest. However, don't pre-pay for work (or send them a laptop) until you know you can trust them. If someone asks for money up front or tells you their laptop broke, it's a scam.

20. Time tracking

Time tracking is not necessarily a good thing. I don't use a time tracking system to monitor what my workers are doing. I don't like it, and neither do Filipino workers. Time tracking/screen recording software is a morale killer. I rely on my daily email to gauge their productivity, and it works great.

(If you insist on using a time tracking/screen recording program, many employers use [TimeProof](#), available through OnlineJobs.ph. There are plenty of options out there--just Google "time tracking solutions," and you'll find all sorts of options.)



21. Who to hire first?

You know you're ready to hire someone if you have something in your business you could teach someone else to do.

Employers have a higher success rate if the first person they hire is to do something you already know how to do. You know the skills to look for. You know how to train them. You know what feedback to give. You easily build their trust in you as a boss. **You get something off your plate!**

After you've succeeded with outsourcing something you know how to do (and gotten something off your plate), it's way more reasonable to outsource something you don't know how to do.



22. 13th Month

In December you need to pay them a bonus of [1 month's salary at the beginning of the month](#).

This is pro-rated if they didn't work for you the entire year, and you still pay it even if they don't work for you anymore.

23. Employment Policies

Unless you've agreed on something different, tell them:

- They're expected to work 40 hours/week (or 20 or 10 or whatever you agreed on).
- They're expected to send an email every day telling what they worked on (even if they didn't accomplish anything).
- If they're full-time, they're expected to have only 1 job, working for you.
- They can take off whatever personal time they need, just don't take advantage of it and let you know in advance.

- You're here to help them if they get stuck on something. Please ask.
- You expect this to be a long-term working relationship. It's a permanent job.

24. This can be really, really good

My team of Filipinos have literally made me millions of dollars over the years, DIRECTLY from their work. They didn't write this guide (I did), but they formatted it, provided the graphics, marketed it, set up the delivery system, and will answer your questions when you have them.

If you plan on them being a long-term employee, and invest time into training them and providing feedback, they'll do amazing work.

If you treat them like a temporary contract worker (someone you don't care about, and who doesn't care about you or your business), you probably won't have a good experience and should go elsewhere to hire people.

GET STARTED!

This comes from my experience in hiring Filipino workers since 2005. It's been fantastic for my business, my family, and my lifestyle. The most common thing I hear from people is "I just wish I had done this sooner!" Jump in now!

If you have any questions, please ask: john@onlinejobs.ph

You can also find me at <http://www.JohnJonas.com>

LEARN MORE:

I'll walk you through how I find an OFS (Online Filipino Specialist) fast and guarantee you find someone great the first time at <https://www.OneVAAway.com>. It's fast and easy.