HOW OUTSOURCESCHOOL'S FOUNDERS
SCALED & SOLD FREEEUP
USING VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

OutsourceSchool

Connor Gillivan
(CMO)

Nathan Hirsch
(CEO)

Leadership
Team

Lead Developer
(CTO)

Legal &
Accounting

Accountant

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper
#1

Support
Team

Fellow entrepreneurs,

Thank you for downloading our new case study! We are Nathan and Connor and we're super excited to welcome you to the OutsourceSchool community!!

For the past 10 years, we've been building and scaling businesses together by tapping into remote virtual assistants from the Philippines.

With our first eCommerce business, we scaled our total sales to $25 million over 5 years with a remote team. But we had tons of frustrations with turnover and it took too much time to find reliable people from the big platforms like Upwork and Fiverr.

So, we started FreeeUp, a marketplace focused on making hiring online simpler through pre-vetting and outstanding client support. In 4 years, we scaled FreeeUp to 45 internal virtual assistants and $10 million+ revenue per year all from an initial $5,000 investment. In 2019, FreeeUp was acquired by The HOTH.

In this case study, you'll find the exact hiring steps we took as we scaled FreeeUp and the key objectives we were focused on each year of growing.

We hope you enjoy the resource and we look forward to meeting you soon. Be sure to check out OutsourceSchool.com for more information about upcoming courses and content.

All our best,
Nathan Hirsch & Connor Gillivan

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

"These guys have really taken things to the next level with their playbooks, hiring practices, SOPs, and their willingness to share their knowledge gained through trial and error in building not one, but two 7 figure businesses. The information is easily consumable and most importantly actionable. If you had troubles building a team or you want to skip the pitfalls and mistakes that others have already traversed in their own journeys, you can't go wrong working with Nathan, Connor, and their team at Outsource School."

Christopher Grant

"Outsource School has created hundreds of hours of productivity and momentum with absolutely AMAZING VAs that have become like family. OS has been an absolutely game changer and has shortened the learning curve to SOPs to ZERO. We added multiple 5 figures month ONE implementing them."

Cody Jefferson

"We signed up and were able to hire two rockstar VAs within just a couple of weeks of watching and implementing what we learned. It's super helpful and very easy to implement for success. Plus Nathan and Connor personally answered all of my questions about finding and hiring VAs and creating the right systems and processes for success. I highly recommend their training and their membership site."

Dean Levy
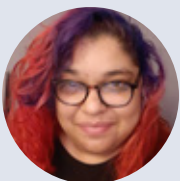
"I thought I wasn't a "successful enough" business to start building a team. After some coaching around that mindset, I found Outsource School and it transformed my business. I started with my first hire 3 months ago, and in that time, I've built up a team of 5, including myself. This has revolutionized my mindset around my business and I've 1.5x my business revenue since going all in on hiring a team.
This is BEYOND worth the investment."

Krystal Jazmin Martinez-Leoon

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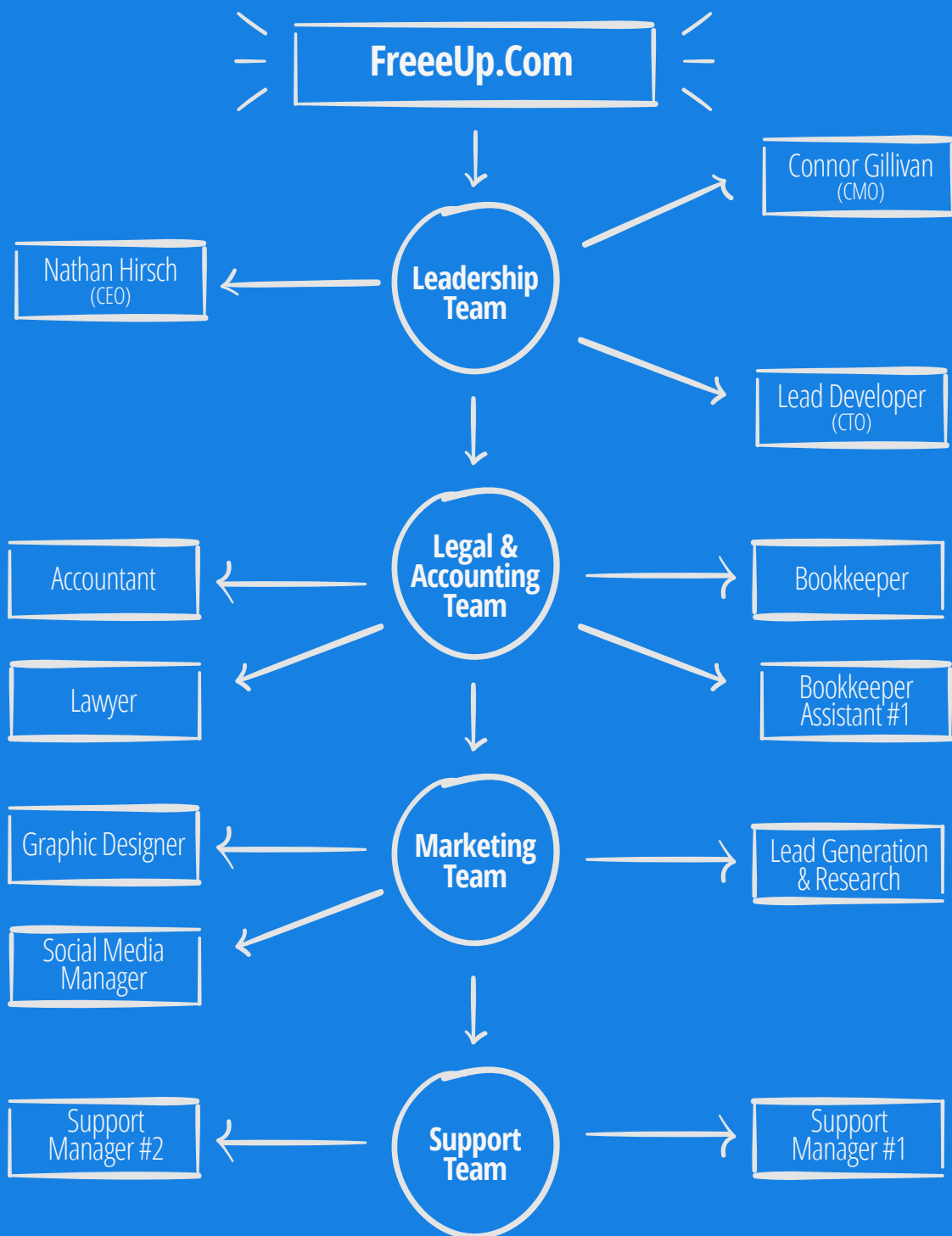
2016: BUILDING THE CORE TEAM

At the start of 2016, FreeeUp was just an idea barely off the ground. But we knew that if we were going to build it into the marketplace that we were envisioning, it was going to require key people to help us get there. We already had our core team together of the two of us and our CTO/lead developer. In the first 6 months of 2016, we did a lot of the work between the three of us...building new processes, setting up the business model, getting the first version of the software off the ground, and handling everything legally. As you may know, starting a business requires a certain period of set up. We find it best to do most of the set up yourself so that you know the foundation of the business from the get go. The only other people that we hired and got involved in those first 6 months were our lawyer and accountant.

Once we had the foundation set up and understand the core teams that would be running the growth and operations of the business, we started talking about who our first hires would be. As bootstrappers, we weren't going to hire anyone until the company was making enough money to afford the expenses and we were getting very close to that point. We made it our first goal to hire key people for the two main teams that needed it the most: Accounting and Success. The Accounting team was critical because FreeeUp was a business that relied on on-time payments each and every week. We needed someone that knew our books inside and out. Likewise, the Success team was important to hire for because it was the lifeblood of getting new freelancers into the network for the clients we were attracting. Those were our first core hires and both of them went on to work with us through to the sale of FreeeUp in 2019.

As the year moved along, we started seeing needs for other virtual assistants that could support our core team. In our marketing efforts, we needed a professional logo that we could start branding the company with so we found a reliable graphic design virtual assistant. We had created social media processes and we needed someone to execute them so we found a social media VA. And finally, we were seeing success with email sales outreach to our ideal customers so we brought in a virtual assistant to help collect and reach out to leads. As we saw volume increase towards the end of the year, we also brought in a Bookkeeping Assistant, a Success Team Assistant, and two lead Support Managers.

The key to year 1 of hiring and scaling FreeeUp was only hiring when the need came up. We pinched pennies when we could and handled the processes on our own until we couldn't any longer and sales made sense to hire someone else. It's key when hiring and growing your business from the ground up to make sure that each and every hire has a real purpose and that they are adding significant value to the business. Below, you'll see our hiring for 2016 broken down into an org chart. This is where our team ended up at the end of 2016.

YEAR 1: ORGANIZATION CHART - KEY HIRES

FreeeUp.Com

Leadership Team

Nathan Hirsch (CEO)

Connor Gillivan (CMO)

Lead Developer (CTO)

Legal & Accounting Team

Accountant

Lawyer

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Assistant #1

Marketing Team

Graphic Designer

Social Media Manager

Lead Generation & Research

Support Team

Support Manager #2

Support Manager #1

YEAR 1: KEY OBJECTIVES

Build a completely remote organization > set up communication channels, company culture, etc.

Get the **core team hired for the core operations** of the business

Get the brand built with a logo, website, social media, etc.

Make sure **support is 1000% amazing**

5

2017: EXPANDING THE TEAM INTO MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT

n 2017, we were focused on continuing to scale the business and we were starting to see some real traction from the marketing strategies that we had put into place.

2017 was a big year for building the team as we focused on expanding marketing activities, improving the software, and upholding a high level of customer support.

As you'll see in the expanded hiring chart below, our hires varied between bolstering up the Bookkeeping, Success, and Support teams while also expanding the team within marketing and development.
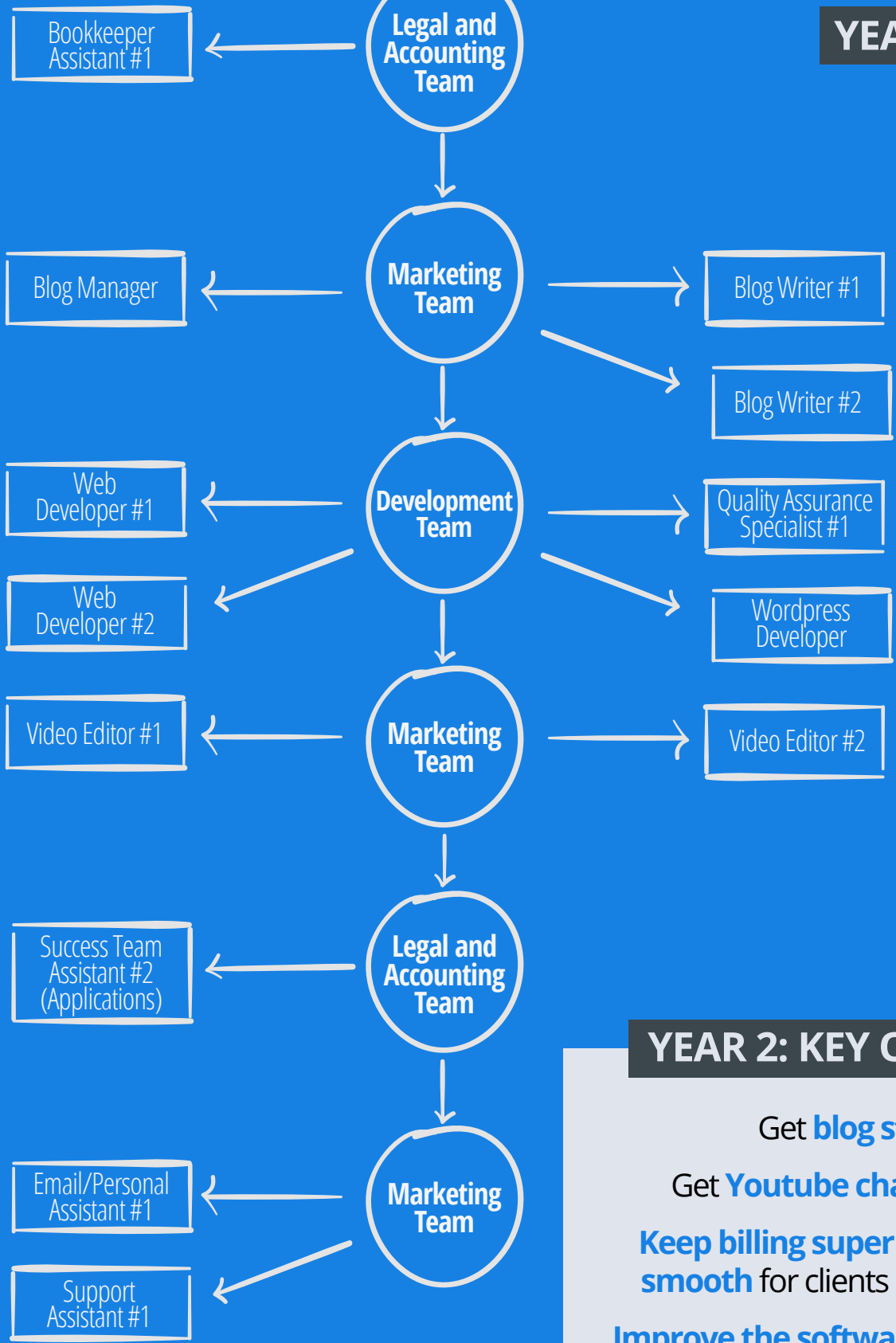
In marketing, a big effort of ours was getting the FreeeUp blog off the ground. Once we had the processes for how we wanted to run it, we hired a Blog Manager to take full responsibility and then started hiring out writing VAs to help produce the content.

On the development front, we were ready to make more features for our clients so we brought on two part-time Web Developers and a part-time Quality Assurance Specialist to help. They worked closely with our CTO to get set up and running in the right direction.

We wouldn't have been able to grow the software like we did in 2017 without those key hires and it set the stage for us to improve the software over the next 2 years.

FreeeUp.Com

Legal and Accounting Team
→ Bookkeeper Assistant #1

Marketing Team
→ Blog Manager
→ Blog Writer #1
→ Blog Writer #2

Development Team
→ Web Developer #1
→ Web Developer #2
→ Quality Assurance Specialist #1
→ Wordpress Developer

Marketing Team
→ Video Editor #1
→ Video Editor #2

Legal and Accounting Team
→ Success Team Assistant #2 (Applications)

Marketing Team
→ Email/Personal Assistant #1
→ Support Assistant #1

YEAR 2: KEY OBJECTIVES

Get **blog started**

Get **Youtube channel** started

Keep billing super organized and smooth for clients and freelancers

Improve the software for both clients and freelancers

Continue to hire for Success and Support based off volume

2018: SCALING THE SUPPORT TEAM

2018 was one of our biggest jumps in sales going from $4.5 million per year to $9 million+ per year.

With fast growth came the need for a larger Support Team to cater to the thousands of clients that were signing up and starting to use FreeeUp.
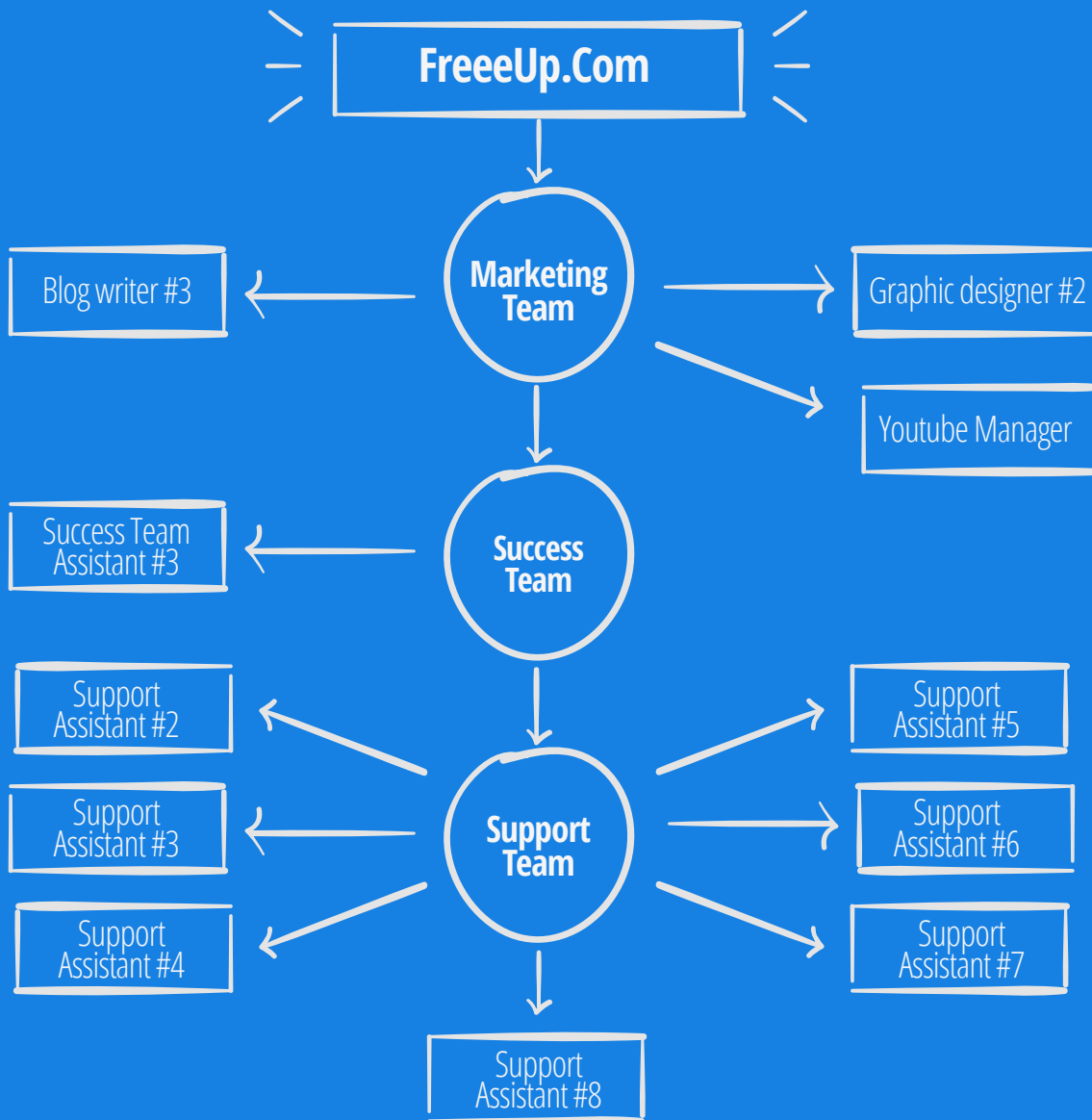
As we scaled the Support team, it was around this time that we implemented levels of leaders into the Support team. There were our two Support Managers that handled the rest of the team and with them, we added a couple of Support Assistant Managers to further organize the team. This was a huge step to ensure that the team continued to function properly and efficiently as we scaled.

Outside of the Support team, the other teams were looking strong. We had a solid foundation from the first 2 years of hiring so there were only a few other roles to fill outside of the Support team as we scaled in 2018.

As you may know, scaling a business has its unique stages that you go through as an entrepreneur. The startup phase. Proving the market. The initial growth stage. And then the hyper growth stage.

Not every company can get to hyper growth and a lot of it has to do with how they decide to hire and delegate work in the first few stages. Your business may be ready to take off, but if all of the work is still dependent upon you, the business isn't going to be able to support the growth and you'll be held back by your own limitations.

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                    FreeeUp.Com
                         |
                         v
    Blog writer #3 <-- Marketing --> Graphic designer #2
                       Team
                         |         --> Youtube Manager
                         v
 Success Team      <-- Success
 Assistant #3          Team
                         |
                         v
 Support           Support Team      Support
 Assistant #2    <--            -->  Assistant #5
 Support                             Support
 Assistant #3    <--            -->  Assistant #6
 Support                             Support
 Assistant #4    <--            -->  Assistant #7
                         |
                         v
                     Support
                   Assistant #8
```

YEAR 3: KEY OBJECTIVES

Continue **scaling fast**

Utilize the team we had hired as much as possible before hiring more for each of the teams

Ramp up support to handle the fast growth of clients and freelancers

2019: HIRING TO KEEP UP WITH GROWTH

2019 sang a similar story to 2018 as sales and clients continued to increase.

We were continuing to grow fast, we had the core team we needed in place, and we continued to hire based off the needs of our teams. Again, volume very much determined hiring in 2019 just as it did in 2018.

As you'll see below, we made hires across the foundational teams to support them as they saw increased applications, increased client sign ups, and increased need for marketing purposes.
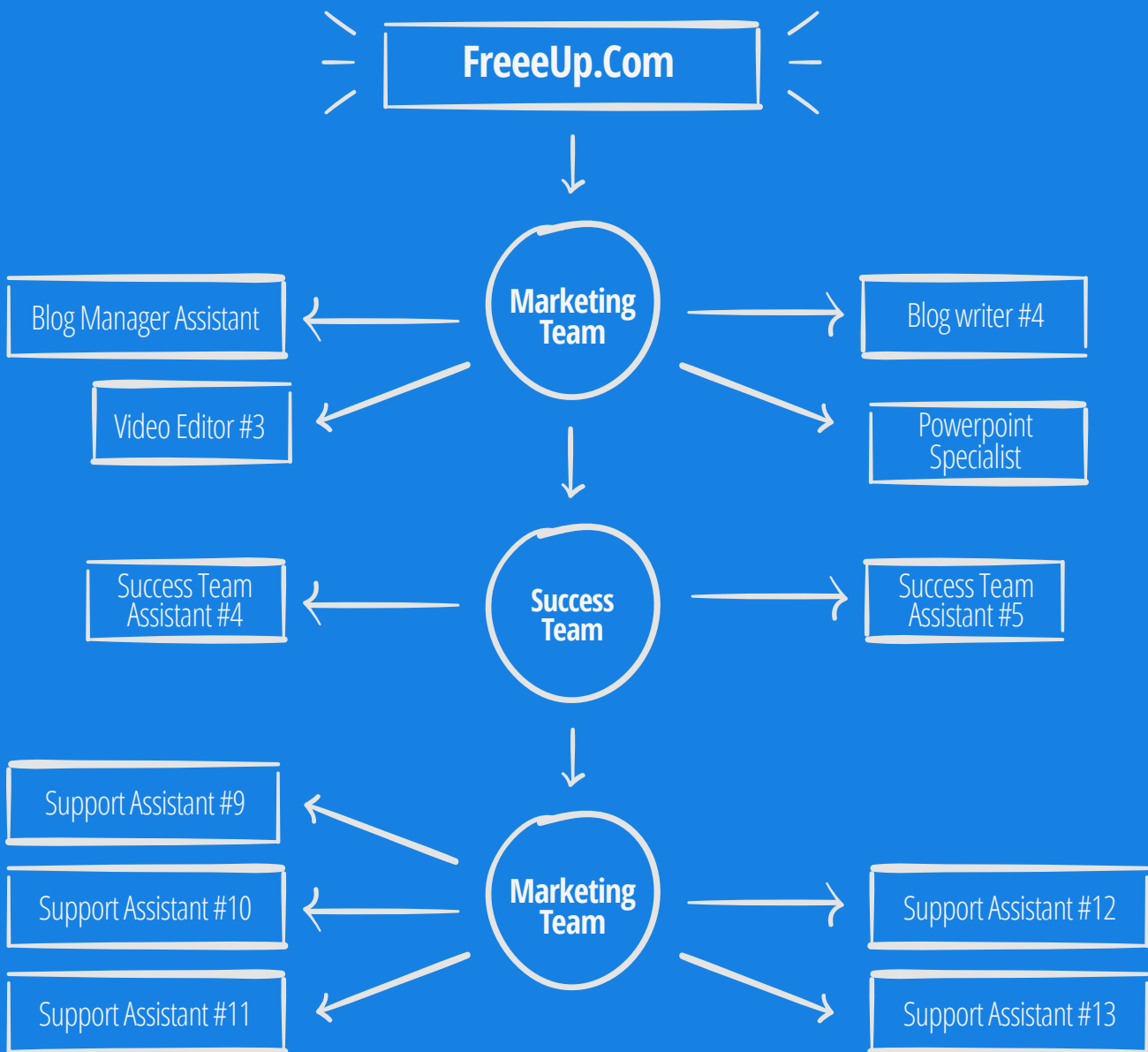
The big focus of 2019 was making sure that the company culture stayed in tact as we reached 45+ virtual assistants on the internal team.

We made improvements to our weekly meetings to further bolster camaraderie, we upheld our practice of holding quarterly 1 on 1s with each individual on the team, and we promoted new VAs into leadership positions so they too could carry the culture forward within each team.

When you reach a certain size with your team, it's critical to revisit your culture and make sure that it's still ringing true to how you created it in the first place.

Making culture a responsibility of your key people and being a good example of the culture are two ways to ensure that it doesn't disappear as you hire more and more people.

YEAR 4: KEY HIRES

FreeeUp.Com

Marketing Team

Blog Manager Assistant

Video Editor #3

Blog writer #4

Powerpoint Specialist

Success Team

Success Team Assistant #4

Success Team Assistant #5

Marketing Team

Support Assistant #9

Support Assistant #10

Support Assistant #11

Support Assistant #12

Support Assistant #13

YEAR 4: KEY OBJECTIVES

Continue to scale quickly and hire as needed for the core teams

Keep support at high level even with increased clients and freelancers

Push blog content forward

Take **repetitive tasks off leader's plates**

SELLING FREEEUP TO THE HOTH

When we were approached by The HOTH to sell the business in 2019, we were at first surprised, but then interested to see what would come of the initial discussions. We were determined to only sell to someone if it made 100% sense. Meaning that (1) the buyer knew the space and would be able to take FreeeUp to the next level. (2) The buyer would be committed to taking care of the team we had built. We really didn't want to consider any offers unless those two key pieces were met with absolute satisfaction.

When it came down to selling the business to The HOTH, it was really all about the team of 45+ VAs that we had been able to bring together over the past 4 years. They were the ones that ran the daily operations and growth for the business while we stayed focused on strategy and higher level marketing efforts. Without the team, the business would not have made it to where it ended up. Below are 5 key lessons that really helped us to sell the business with a 100% remote team.

Key Lessons That Allowed Us to Sell the Company with a Remote Team

1. ORGANIZATION → you need to set up communication channels, weekly meetings, quarterly 1 on 1s, bonus policies, raise policies, repercussions for mistakes, levels of leaders, etc. just as you would if you were running a team in a physical office.

2. DELEGATION → you need to set up a leadership team that supports you as the founders so that the business is not 100% dependent upon you. Going further, those leaders should have assistant leaders under them that manage the newest team members.

3. SCALE → You need to prove that you can scale sales and profits with a remote team. A potential buyer wants to see that you're growing quickly and if they come in, they can take over the team and keep things rolling.

4. FINANCIALS → you need to have your financials in order from the very get go...hence why a bookkeeper is one of the first hires that we made. If your books are a mess, your business has a lot of work to do to get to a point where it's sellable. Our VAs helped us keep our books 100% clean and organized.

5. DOCUMENTATION → you need to have organized processes and systems that make the entire business function...both operations and growth. Again, the business should not be depending upon you and your cofounders. The VA team should function 100% on their own with the processes and systems created. You are just the cherry on top that keeps things going in the right direction.

In the Cracking the VA Code 1.0 course, we'll dive deeper into all of these core lessons and outline our unique IOTM System (interviewing, onboarding, training, and managing). You'll not only learn exactly how we hire and grow with a team of virtual assistants, but you'll get the playbook for how you can do it yourself as you go through the course.

INTRODUCING OUTSOURCE SCHOOL

Are you sick of hiring the wrong people?

Do you lack an effective hiring system?

Do you dream of passing off tasks to reliable virtual assistants and freelancers?

Could you scale faster with a better team?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, Outsource School can help you make it a reality.

With Outsource School, you'll learn to...

1) Hire rock star virtual assistants quickly
2) Eliminate costly turnover and time sucking issues
3) Save time creating SOPs
4) Scale your business faster with a virtual team

We've taken everything that we learned while scaling and selling FreeUp and have put it directly into all of the Outsource School trainings.

Click here to get a 14 day sneak peek of Outsource School

Click here to enroll for $97 per month or $997 per year

Click here to see what current members are saying