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# THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

ABOUT YOUR FILIPINO VIRTUAL ASSISTANT,  
BUT ARE TOO AFRAID TO ASK!

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# INTRODUCTION



First up, thanks for joining the ever-growing tribe of entrepreneurs that have signed-up at ChrisDucker.com. It's amazing just how fast this incredible network of business owners is growing - I couldn't be any happier!

If there is one thing that I've come to realize over the last ten years of being involved with the outsourcing industry, it's that working with virtual assistants from the Philippines doesn't come without its challenges.

I always say that one of the biggest myths of outsourcing is that a lot of people think that it's a magic pill that you can pop and – BHAM! – everything will be perfect from day one. Let's face it, in reality (you know, real life!), that doesn't happen and it doesn't happen in the 'virtual' world of working either.

I've lived in the Philippines for 13-years, consulted for a number of large companies, as well as started a sold a few of my own. I've also trained thousands of outsourced Filipino workers over the years, and continue to do so.

When it comes to hiring Filipinos, you have to keep in mind certain things, such as the fact that English is not their first language, and that they very rarely leave the country – and when they do it's normally not to the western part of the world, opting to stay closer to home (for obvious visa reasons), visiting countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand instead.

The biggest stumbling block that we've come across at Virtual Staff Finder (my VA match-making company), is business owners outside of the Philippines, working with Filipinos and their obvious lack of knowledge of Filipino people, their traits, traditions and personalities in general.

So, I thought I'd try and help out a little here and put together a whole bunch of tips on this subject for you.

I've held nothing back in putting together the information and tried to take it to the next level, from a western person's mindset, too.

I certainly hope you enjoy the eBook and if, at the end of it, you still have any questions, please don't hesitate reach out.

To your outsourcing success!

Regards,

Chris

Cebu City, Philippines – January 2013

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW #1 – FILIPINOS ARE SHY

Most Filipinos tend to be shy, reserved or conservative – especially when talking about monetary matters. Society sometimes views a person who is more concerned with monetary gains above anything else as offensive, thus the term “mukhang-pera”, loose translation would be “gold-digger”.

This is the reason why having a clear understanding about your job offer and expected of them is essential before they actually start working.

Sometimes, if you do not ask if something is okay for them, they tend to just go along with it because they are too timid to talk about it. Having really clear, open communication and trust is essential to avoiding conflict that may arise from this situation.

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW #2 – FILIPINOS DON'T LIKE CONFRONTATION

Filipinos are very pleasant and easy-going. In the Filipino society confrontations are avoided as a Filipino value called “pakikisama” is promoted.

This means that instead of telling you directly about certain issues they are facing, they tend to beat around the bush, or give you subtle hints that they are not happy about something.

Sometimes, you have to probe and really ask specific questions to really be able to know what your Filipino virtual assistant is feeling or thinking about when it comes to a certain situation.



## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW #3 – FILIPINOS ARE SENSITIVE

Filipinos are very emotional people.

Sometimes, even slight changes in your tone of voice can make them think that you are upset, or mad about something.

Take note of the words you use, or using caps in your emails – especially when certain issues arise, they are easily hurt and affected by it and often carry it with them for sometime.

This can hinder productivity, obviously.

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW #4 – FILIPINOS ARE VERY POLITE AND COURTEOUS

Filipinos are eager to please (especially their bosses!) and naturally polite.

They usually have a term for a superior, or someone that they look up to. So don't be offended if they call you "sir" or "ma'am" all the time.

This is their way of showing their respect.

I never like being called 'sir'. I jest about it regularly saying that because I haven't been knighted by the Queen of England, it doesn't make sense! As such, all my staff opt to call me either 'boss', or Chris.

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW #5 – FILIPINOS ARE VERY TRADITIONAL

Filipinos are very conventional overall. They celebrate holidays and traditional Filipino festivities – especially Catholics (the country predominantly follows this religion).

Fiestas, Holy Week and other local holidays can be expected every year.

Make sure you make an arrangement with them about yearly holidays and events.

In fact, I sometimes suggest that VA's follow the local holidays of their bosses. Not, the local holidays in the Philippines.

For the most part this will be no problem with your VA's based in the Philippines – with very clear exceptions surrounding local Catholic holidays – these are usually very important to Professional Virtual Assistant's here, and their families, and should be respected.

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW #6 – FILIPINOS ARE MOTIVATED BY INCENTIVES AND BONUSES

Gifts, such as gadgets, weekend trips, gift vouchers and what not, are always secondary to cash.

Filipinos prefer cash because even basic things like bills and home repairs are not usually included in their monthly budget and only when they get extra financial stimulation can they afford to have these taken care of.

So, if you're wanting to really motivate your Filipino workers, simply flash the cash, as we say in the western world!

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW #7 – FILIPINOS ARE HARD WORKING AND EASY TO PLEASE

A little motivation and encouragement go a long way with your VA.

Filipinos are very appreciative if you give positive feedback on their work, especially if they have been working particularly hard on finishing an important project for you.

In fact, this goes far beyond simply 'motivating' your employees. This is about mutual respect, admiration and having a relationship that will allow you to build a team around your first few outsourced workers, so that you can continue to run, support and grow your company.

It takes literally seconds to give someone a (virtual) pat on the back, or high-five. But, let me tell you from personal experience, that sign of gratitude can last for a long time. Seriously.

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW #8 – MOST FILIPINO VA'S ARE THE BREADWINNER OF THE FAMILY

Most Filipino workers have families to support. Whether it's their own, or putting other siblings through school, you will always find them looking after several dependents.

Because of this, paying them fairly and on time is very important. I talk about this a little more in an incredibly short, but important video. I suggest you watch it now, if you haven't already done so.

Most of the time, the money they will be receiving is already allocated to be spent on something, or another.

So, if you fail to deliver what you promise, this could lead to a lot of unexpected trouble and can even cause your VA to lose their trust in you – looking elsewhere for another, more understanding boss.

Be sure to always understand that Filipino VA's will be extremely loyal to you, as their boss. They simply want to be taken care of and looked after, so that they in turn can take care of, and look after their responsibilities.

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW #9 – MOST FILIPINOS LIVE WITH AN EXTENDED FAMILY

Knowing about a Filipino home setting is important, in terms of working with your Filipino VA. This can help you understand your VA even more, so be sure to show interest and ask questions.

Most Filipinos still live with their parents even if they have kids, or families of their own. So you can expect a household full of kids, cousins and other times aunts and uncles. This is normal in a Filipino home environment.

This is usually okay, as long as it does not affect their productivity.

As we always point out to home-based virtual assistants that we help find jobs through Virtual Staff Finder, that they must be sure to not only have a proper workstation and dependable internet connection, but also that they have a designated place to work in the house – if not an entire room, then at least a small area for their computer and sufficient desk space for them to be able to be organized and perform their tasks properly and professionally.

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW #10 – FILIPINOS ARE VERY CONSCIENTIOUS WORKERS

A very common trait of Filipinos is “utang na loob” or “debt of gratitude”.

When you give them something that they didn’t expect, or more than what you promised them, they usually view this as a notion that they “owe you one”. This can be a very good motivation for your Home-based Virtual Staff.

If they are performing more than expected, it wouldn’t hurt to give them incentives for a job well done.

I recently wrote a post on my Virtual Business Lifestyle blog which has become very popular with virtual bosses and VA’s alike, about motivating your VA’s using different perks – you should check it out when you have time, and be sure to read the comments, too.



# CONCLUSION

Boom! That was easy, wasn't it...?!!

Hope you enjoyed the content, and remember - the different topics that we've discussed in this eBook may not necessarily be true for all Filipino VA's.

Each person is unique, and the younger 'less traditional' Filipinos (commonly referred to as 'Generation Y') are certainly pushing the boundaries and expectations on the more traditional way of life, for Filipino people.

However, these are traits I've personally observed when working with Filipinos, and those that have also done likewise, in general. It's all about having a good grasp of their culture - doing so can help you understand them more and ultimately help the two of you (or more of you!) work better together, and with long-term in mind.

I hope this quick-fire guide has been useful for you and I'd be happy to answer any additional questions you may have - just drop me an email, or send me a tweet.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



[OutsourceToThePhilippines.com](http://OutsourceToThePhilippines.com)

The OTTP Website has even more additional information on working with Filipino virtual assistants, building virtual teams of employees and other helpful tips and tactics for utilizing outsourcing in your business.

It's the perfect companion to this eBook, and also houses a ton of video tips, podcast sessions and almost 100 written blog posts, jam-packed full of information.

Visit Site

[VirtualStaffFinder.com](http://VirtualStaffFinder.com)

One of my companies, the number one match-making service for helping busy entrepreneurs find the right virtual employees to help run, support and grow their businesses.

This service has grown from strength to strength since it's inception in 2010, and continues to lead the way. Used by internet marketing super-stars and 'old school' business owners alike, it's your one stop shop for finding dependable, experienced VA's in the Philippines.

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