

## Paralegal Support Services: 5 Tips for Getting Started

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You've thought long and hard, considered the pros and cons, and are ready to take the leap. You may have even found a service you're interested in retaining. Now, how do you take that first step to move forward and get started? The freelance paralegal or paralegal support service you've chosen should be able to help you with that, but here are a few ideas to kick-start the process.

1. Sit down together (okay, phone conference or Skype together) and identify your needs and expectations.
2. Determine the method in which you will utilize your paralegal service (on-call, temporary, project based, or regular-ongoing assistance, etc.).
3. Determine the types of tasks you'll be delegating (research, drafting, transactional work, complete casework, everything).
4. Determine who will be responsible for providing what. Will you be supplying a company email address and/or phone number to your paralegal for use in client and vendor communications? Will your freelance paralegal provide the collaboration tools necessary to securely send and receive work product?
5. Outline parameters of the business relationship. Will it be flat-rate or hourly? Is the work open-ended? Do you need to establish limitations or check-in points before moving to the next step or level on any given matter?

If retaining support services is a big step for you, don't be afraid to start small (with specific tasks), delegating more as you become comfortable with each other's abilities and the overall business relationship. On the other hand, if you're already comfortable with the structure and the service or paralegal you've chosen, feel free to jump in and hand off everything you need to; your paralegal's ready. It's what he or she does. As long as expectations and parameters have been identified and articulated, you'll be on your way to a powerfully beneficial partnership.

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