

# INDEPENDENT VOICES

## From the Independent Teacher Associate Editor

Did you build your own car? Did you buy a car kit, assemble it, drop in an engine, upholster the seats, and add the fluids? My guess is that you bought the car already built, built by a long line of experts who had done this thousands of times before -- although with the amazing voice teachers I've met, I'm willing to believe a few of you have built your own cars.

The theory of building a car is that when people work together they accomplish more, and at a higher level, than the person working alone. This explains why companies and organizations get more done and grow faster than individual efforts. In my experience, colleges do this for adjunct faculty; the college finds the students, handles billing, communication with students and parents, performance scheduling, performance opportunities, and often provides collaborative pianists and a goals rubric.



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And for the independent teacher, the internet makes nearly every task we do, aside from working with students, outsourceable with a few clicks. Not only do you not need to make your own car to get to your studio, you can have someone else process student scheduling and billing, create rehearsal tracks, answer student emails, put away music, and a dozen other things you used to do on your own.

Which leads to the key question; as an independent voice teacher, who can outsource nearly everything in your business, is it wise to do anything other than teach, perform, and study voice?

When you choose the value of your time, you also choose what you're going to outsource and what you are going to do yourself.

I can think of three reasons why you would choose something as part of your work — worst is first.

1. Because you are the cheapest available worker; you can't find anything more profitable or beneficial to do.
2. Because people will notice when you do it; it will improve the value of your students' lessons if you are hands-on in this one thing. Consider, however, Wolfgang Puck. Wolfgang Puck doesn't cook for 99% of his customers, and he doesn't create the recipes for his frozen dinners, because his customers can't tell if he does. All we know is that he gives his name and face to his brand, and guides the direction of his company.
3. Because you love it. Because the work matters to you, and this task, right now, is the best version of the work you can find.

Every time you hire yourself to do something (vacuum the carpet, invoice a student, update your website), you've just decided not to do something else instead. And yes, I see the irony; I've chosen to write this article for no pay. But that's because it fits Reason 3. The first step is to list everything you do. The second step is to decide if it would be better for you and your students if somebody else did many of those things. For me, I'm going to keep filing the music. But I am outsourcing vacuuming, invoicing, and the creation of rehearsal tracks. Do the Work You Love - Outsource the Rest.

Best wishes for a fantastic autumn and winter in your studio,  
Sincerely,  
Nancy Bos