

A New **Twist** on an Old Job.....

Virtual Assistance



What is a Virtual Assistant?



Virtual Assistants are independent contractors who perform a wide range of administrative and business services. By utilizing today's technology we are able to provide administrative support to businesses all over the world.

Virtual Assistants are **MORE** than just secretaries. We partner with our clients, learning their business and providing the professional support that everyone needs in order to succeed.

VA's communicate with their clients via email, telephone, fax and CD transfer. Distance is never an issue. VA's provide a variety of skills from document preparation to bookkeeping to strategic planning; skills to meet the needs of all business professionals.

Top 5 Benefits of Being a VA

- 1) **Freedom** – You choose when you work, how much you work and who you want to work for!
- 2) **Meet Amazing People** – You will meet people from all over North America, people you would never have had the opportunity to meet if you did not work virtually.
- 3) **Self Employed** – As a VA you are now owner of your very own business; what a great feeling!
- 4) **Diversity** – You will be working with so many different clients and will be doing so many different things!
- 5) **Self Growth** – Having your own business gives you the opportunity to seize your future and gives you the ability to grow and develop as a person.

Top 5 Benefits of Hiring a VA

- 1) **Physical Space** – No need for clients to provide physical workspace.
- 2) **More Time** – Clients will have more time to focus on important issues such a growing their business with a VA handling all the administration tasks.
- 3) **Payroll** – Clients will never have to worry about payroll, taxes or benefits.
- 4) **Partner** – By hiring a Virtual Assistant, clients not only receive top-notch skills but a partner with whom to brainstorm ideas.
- 5) **Peace of Mind** – Clients will have peace of mind knowing that the details are being handled by a professional.

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As a VA you are now a business owner!!

As a Virtual Assistant, you are now self – employed – which creates a unique set of responsibilities. VA's are an independent contractors, which means clients are not responsible for items such as taxes, benefits and payroll; you must handle all aspects of this part of your business.



Before making the decision to start a career in the profession of Virtual Assisting:

1. Research the profession

Find out as much as possible about the VA profession to see if it is a match for you. Do internet research on Virtual Assistants and VA Associations to familiarize yourself with the concept of working virtually.

2. Assess your skills

Do you have the appropriate skills to be a VA? How long have you been an administrative professional? Are you comfortable with computers and software programs? Do you have good communication skills?

3. Do you have the appropriate tools

Do you have a computer at home? Software Programs? Printer? Fax? Do you have the technology to effectively start working from home?

4. Do you have the space

Do you have a home office or can easily create one, without disrupting your lifestyle? Do you have a place that is free of interruptions and will you have the ability to concentrate and work efficiently?

5. Do you have the financial reserves

Are you in a financial position to be able to focus on starting a business? Do you want to work part time or full time at this, what will your finances allow you to do? Are you prepared for a smaller income at first? Are you a one or two income family?

6. Legal company structure – Sole Proprietorship or Incorporating

How will you create your business, sole proprietorship or corporation? What are the advantages and disadvantages of both?

7. Company Identity

What is the name of your company? How do you vision your company?

8. Registering Your business

Visit your local government office to find out how to register your business and company name. Find out as much as you can about starting a business in your area.

9. Most importantly...find a mentor!

Start a mentoring relationship with someone who has already been where you are. Someone to guide you, give advice and start you on the right path.

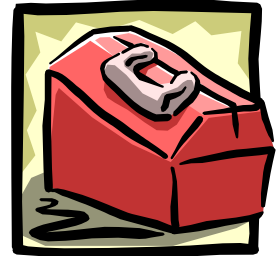
Top 10 Services VA's Provide



- 1** **Word Processing** - Letters & Memos, Papers & Essays, Resumes, Forms, Manuals, Minutes of meetings, workshop handouts, conference materials, etc.
- 2** **Desktop Publishing** - Create Company Image, Brochures, Newsletters or Articles, Flyers, Letterhead, Creative Handouts
- 3** **Data Processing** - Tables and Charts, Client Lists, Inventory Lists, Spreadsheets, Statistical Reports, Data Management
- 4** **Bookkeeping** - Not an essential service, but a profitable one for any VA who can offer bookkeeping. Payroll, Track expenses, Pay bills, Invoicing, Accounts receivable/Payable
- 5** **Internet Research** - Market Research, Data research, Address searches, Directories
- 6** **Presentation Preparation** - Preparation of handouts, Overheads or PowerPoint slide shows.
- 7** **Editing and Proofing** – Proofread and edit documents, websites, correspondence
- 8** **Strategic Support** – Strategic planning, brainstorming
- 9** **Email/ Voice mail** – Check voice mail, check emails, prioritize email
- 10** **Event Planning / Travel Arrangements** – conference preparations, conference materials, handouts, hotel liaison, hotel bookings, airline bookings, conference registrations

Tools of the Trade

One of the greatest benefits of being a Virtual Assistant is that it allows you the opportunity to work from home. However, to become a successful VA you must be equipped to handle your client's virtually.



The Home Office: Productivity at home...Can it really be done?

- Where you operate your business in your home will be the determining factor of its success.
- Setting up an effective work area requires a lot of thought.
- Your home office should permit you to fulfill all your work-related duties without disrupting your lifestyle.
- It would be helpful if your work area was somewhat isolated from "high-traffic" areas within your home and your space should be quiet and free of interruptions to encourage productivity.
- It's important to set boundaries with family and friends and establish some ground rules regarding interruptions while working.

This is YOUR business and both you and those around you need to take it seriously.

Outfitting your office.....Investing in your future success

In order to start your business on the right track it's important that you equip your office appropriately. Keep in mind when purchasing items that this is an investment towards your company; however, do not go too extravagant...be practical about your purchases. Only purchase those items that will enhance the productivity and effectiveness of your practice. We have included a few suggestions to help guide you in the right direction.

- **A Desk** – You will need plenty of room for all your projects...the larger the desk the better. VA's are truly the epitome of multi-tasking.
- **A Comfy Chair** – The more comfortable you are the more productive you will be...invest in the best chair you can afford.
- **A Computer System** – We have no particular recommendations in terms of which is the best computer system to purchase, keep in mind your business relies heavily on the smooth operation of your equipment. We suggest you buy the best computer your budget permits.

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A few tips to consider when purchasing your system or upgrades to your present system:

1. Hard Drive – 40 GB or higher
2. RAM – 512 MB or higher
3. Processor- 800 Mhz or higher
4. High Speed Internet (highly recommended)
5. Monitor – High resolution, 15” or larger
6. CD-Rom/DVD-Rom – 40X or higher
7. Keyboard
8. Quality Mouse
9. Speakers
10. CD writer, ZIP drive, or Tape Back Up
11. High-quality colour printer – Inkjet or laser

Operating System

- We highly recommend Windows 2000, XP and Vista which are based on NT technology.

Computer Software

- When purchasing software consider what the majority of your clients will be using...this will allow for compatibility with those you will be assisting.

Recommended Software:

1. Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook, Publisher)
2. Internet Explorer
3. Anti-Virus Software
4. Adobe Acrobat 7.0 or higher
5. Win Zip

Telephone System

- Your telephone system does not need to be state of the art, but must be dependable. If possible and budget allows, install two phone lines in your office, one as a business phone the other as a dedicated fax line or internet line (if you choose not to order cable internet).



Voice mail

- Voicemail is a must and we'd like to request you consider purchasing a head set for "hands free" phone conversations. Head sets can be purchased at a reasonable price and will eliminate neck and shoulder strain while talking and typing.

Fax Machines

- You do not need to purchase a top of the line fax machine since majority of your communication is done via phone, email and email attachments. Online faxing is also available



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Are You Ready To Be A VA?

It takes a certain kind of person to start and maintain a home-based business, take this quiz and see if you're ready to be a VA?

Answer yes or no honestly, to the questions below!

	Yes	No
1. I want to be in control of how much money I make, and how much time I work.	yes	no
2. I want independence, to be my own boss and to answer to myself (and to my clients).	yes	no
3. I am self motivated.	yes	no
4. I am good at making decisions	yes	no
5. I want to create things	yes	no
6. When you have a good idea or notice an opportunity, do you seize it?	yes	no
7. Are you confident in your administrative skills and would be comfortable marketing them?	yes	no
8. Do you like change?	yes	no
9. Do you like to constantly improve things?	yes	no
10. Do you have a base of contact and potential future clients who might require your services?	yes	no
11. Do you have or will you acquire a mentor?	yes	no
12. Do you have trustworthy contacts in the legal and accounting profession?	yes	no
13. Do you have the moral support of your family or significant other?	yes	no
14. Do you work well by yourself with no supervision	yes	no
15. Do you have good strong emotional health?	yes	no
16. Are you disciplined? Do you finish what you start?	yes	no
17. Are you organized enough to manage your tasks and prioritize your time?	yes	no
18. Do you have the financial reserves to help with the creation of your practice?	yes	no
19. Do you have a home office or quiet, uninterrupted space to work?	yes	no
20. Do you have the appropriate computer equipment and software or do you have the money to purchase this?	yes	no
21. Do you like to learn new things?	yes	no
22. Do you listen well and are able to take direction with minimal instructions?	yes	no
23. Are you comfortable asking questions?	yes	no
24. Are you prepared to remain current in your skills and with technology?		

SCORING: Every yes is worth 1 point; every "No" is worth 0 points. The more points you have the more ready you are to become a Virtual Assistant!

RESOURCES

Organizations

The Canadian Virtual Assistant Network

Dedicated to supporting Canadian Virtual Assistants and bringing further awareness to the profession in Canada.

<http://www.canadianva.net>

Virtual Assistant Networking Association

Networking organization for aspiring and successful Virtual Assistants to share, learn, and succeed!

<http://www.vanetworking.com/>

The International Virtual Assistants Association

IVAA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the professional education and development of members of the Virtual Assistance profession, and to educating the public on the role and function of the Virtual Assistant.

www.ivaa.org

VA 4 Hire

Referral site for listing as a VA and finding a VA

<http://www.va4hire.com/>

Alliance of UK Virtual Assistants

Committed to increasing awareness of virtual assistance in the UK, offers a free directory of UK Virtual Assistants

<http://www.allianceofukvirtualassistants.org.uk>

Training

The Virtual Assistant Training Program – Canadian

<http://www.vatp.ca>

Red Deer College, Virtual Assistant Certificate Program - Canadian

<http://rdc.ab.ca>

Assist U - USA

<http://www.assistu.com>

Mentoring

The Virtual Assistant Training Program

<http://www.vatp.ca>

The Canadian Virtual Assistant Network

www.canadianva.net