

How to Get the Most out of Your Virtual Assistant

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Making the decision to hire a virtual assistant, or indeed committing to any additional expense, is not something a small business owner will or should do lightly. As a small business owner myself, I know that, even with all the grand plans and bright ideas, money is always a big consideration.

And so it should be. If we don't manage our business finances correctly, then chances are we may not have a business in a year's time. So any expenditure should be considered carefully.

There are of course costs involved in hiring a virtual assistant; nobody is going to work for free (and honestly would you trust anyone who did?!). However, working with a virtual assistant can represent either expenditure, or a way to make your business more profitable.

So here are my top 5 tips on how to ensure that you get the most out of your virtual assistant.

Top Tip 1: Take the time to explain your business to your virtual assistant. A virtual assistant is not just a secretary or personal assistant – chances are they are a small business owner too. This means they also have a good understanding of your needs. And the more they know about your business, its products, services and processes etc, the better they will be able to support you in running it.

Top Tip 2: Many virtual assistants simply offer a job-by-job or hour-by-hour service. This is great if you have a lot of work that is production oriented, such as audio transcription. This kind of work needs no real understanding of your business - just fast and accurate typing. However, if you really want to get the most out of your virtual assistant, you will want to consider handing over a lot more than just audio transcriptions and look for a virtual assistant that promotes their offering as a partnership service. As in Top Tip 1, teach them about your business, let them take some of the responsibility and burden of working IN your business off you. This leaves you free to concentrate on working ON your business - getting more sales, increasing your revenue, growing your business, being more successful.

Top Tip 3: Look at ways that you can get your virtual assistant to help create revenue for your business. Not as a sales person or service, but, for example, find a virtual assistant who offers creative writing and editing services. Get your creative virtual assistant to write articles, (such as this one!), for you. All you need to do is brief them on a topic and they will do the rest. You can then submit this article to the many article sites that are out there or get your virtual assistant to do it for you. If you write an article, in the right way and submit it to the right places online, then you will generate more visitors to your website: each one a potential client. And when they visit your website, invite them to sign-up for your free newsletter - which your virtual assistant also writes and distributes for you! Now you have opted-in, interested, potential clients to develop your relationship with so that they become actual clients.

Top Tip 4: Following on from Top Tip 3, you can get your virtual assistant involved with securing additional revenue streams for you. For example, if you are a business coach or consultant and you hold teleclasses, get your virtual assistant to transcribe the class and produce a workbook based upon it, and add to it the other information tools. And there you go - you have an instant product kit that you can sell to your customers online, again and again and again. You can even go one step further and get your virtual assistant to administer the bookings for the class, manage email volumes and help you to research, prepare and format your class. All you need to do is review what is produced, provide feedback and final decisions and voila: you have a fully booked teleclass, ready to be presented by you, with additional, follow-on products ready to offer your customers; all extra sources of revenue for your business.

Top Tip 5: To get the most out of your virtual assistant, you really need them to care and participate fully in the growth and success of your business. With this in mind, ensure that you develop and maintain a good relationship with your virtual assistant. And by good, I mean a friendly, honest, communicative and professional relationship filled with mutual respect. Honesty in your communication is crucial. If your virtual assistant hasn't done something quite the way you like it to be done, then you need to communicate this: candidly and respectfully. By the same token, any professional virtual assistant worth his or her salt, will welcome that honest feedback, take it on board and incorporate it into their knowledge of you and your business - helping you to get the most out of their service. Having a good relationship with your virtual assistant will ensure that you are both working for the same goal - the growth and success of your business - in the same way.

So these are my top tips for getting the most out of your virtual assistant. From working with my own clients, I know that creating a true partnership with them, in the ways outlined here, really ensures that they get a return on their investment. For them, working with a VA represents an opportunity, both to increase their business revenue and to build a business they love!

This article was written by Alex Greer, Virtual Assistant and Efficiency Whiz, Founder of Just Too Busy. Web: justtoobusy.co.uk Email: alex@justtoobusy.co.uk Tel: 01932 219069.

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About the Author and her Virtual Assistant Practice

Just Too Busy was founded and is run by Alexandra Greer. Alex has an extensive skill set, gained through running her own newspaper business for the last five years, previous marketing and communications roles and now with running Just Too Busy.

Alex earned her Media & Communications degree in 1996 and supplemented her time at college and university by taking on a variety of secretarial, administration and personal assistant temporary contracts. This formed the basis of her application knowledge, such as the Microsoft Office suite and other administration and office skills.

An accomplished PC and Mac user, Alex's IT interest goes beyond just using the applications, into providing software training as well as basic PC, peripheral and network support.

Alex is also an organisational whiz, with expert prioritisation, efficient practices & processes and time management skills. This experience was gained in the most part by running her own local newspaper and having to juggle adverts, stories, news and contributors on a daily basis.

"My skill set has been developed over the years and is constantly being added to, owing to my fundamental interest in learning new things and also from the point of view of being able to offer my clients a comprehensive service."

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