

Transition

From Working for Someone Else to Being a Self-Employed Virtual Assistant

Making the transition from employee to running a self employed business is a difficult one. As well as learning a host of new skills, you may feel you have to change your whole approach to the way you work. Among a gamut of other tasks, there is a considerable expense of equipping a home office with all the necessary computer and office equipment to function efficiently. If you have whatever computer equipment and any computer software you need to get started, you can always get more equipment as you can afford it.

The other part of this transition is the mental and physical transition to working alone in your own home office, possibly for the first time without the safety net of a corporate environment, which is often the hardest adaptation of all. On a positive note, you'll find that you are more productive because there are fewer distractions from other staff stopping to talk to you, and you only have to answer the phone for your own business and no other staff.

Virtual assistants handle the logistics of these transitions in completely different ways, mostly dictated by their own significant personal circumstances. If yours is the only income in your household, it's unlikely you will not be able to quit your full time job completely and launch into a fully independent self-employed virtual assistant immediately. As we all discover, clients don't materialize out of thin air or overnight. It takes persistence, patience and a bit of luck to even find your first client.

The key is to find your niche, decide on what type of clientele you want to focus your business, what is the mission, goals and objectives of your business, and what are you going to do to promote your business. The best approach is to gradually work into your virtual assistant practice by starting on a part-time basis while you still have a full time job in a corporation. Once you win clients, you can plan a date as to when you want your virtual assistant business to be your main source of full-time employment and provider of a steady income.

Many virtual assistants have branched out into the virtual assistant world from other related businesses such as training and design. Some virtual assistants have helped their husband's run his small business and have an advantage in that they are used to various ups and downs in self employment. Other virtual assistants started out by working for temp agencies where freedom from long term full time employment and the option to choose what hours they worked was ideal. This type of flexibility opened the door for them to work towards their own goal of operating their own self sustaining, thriving business.

Some virtual assistants are mothers of school-aged children and some start their business based on highly developed administrative and computer skills from a previous career and want offer the opportunity for other business to benefit from their expertise. No matter what their reason for being a virtual assistant, the opportunity of working flexible hours from a home-based office makes it less stressful for these administrative professionals to juggle a career and family commitments.

Working alone takes a little getting used to at first, especially if you're accustomed to working in a large company. Working in your own home-office can seem like the loneliest place in the world. This is when the value of support organizations becomes a valued resource.

By joining a virtual assistant organization, new virtual assistants will learn that they aren't the only ones who are just starting out and trying to get used to working alone in their own home office. Support from these organizations provides a treasure of resources to help newcomers learn how they can develop skills to help them achieve their own business success and earn a sustainable income. Learning from others who are successful can be a tremendous inspiration. No matter how long you have worked as a virtual assistant, there is always something to learn to help you develop your business and enhance your professional virtual assistant skills so that your business will grow.

At the beginning it may seem to take forever to many any income. Many virtual assistants find it takes at least a year before they break even or make a profit. It may be a struggle to pay the bills from your business. There are no shortcuts and you will have to work hard for every single client.

Perseverance, patience, determination and a professional attitude will help you succeed. This is when you take charge of your life. You make the decisions about your hours of work, the clients you accept and even the place you work – do you work solely from your own home office or can you be flexible enough to work a few hours per week at your client's office location. You choose the hours you work based on the deadlines for your clients. Sometimes you will have to work into the evening hours and early hours of the morning, and sometimes on weekends but after completing those long drawn out assignments, you can choose to take a day off. You are in control of what you do.

Once you've made the transition and have a few clients, it is important to remember the mission, goals and objectives of your business in order to stay focused. Remember that as much as you want to earn an income from being a virtual assistant, the most important aspect of your business is customer service and satisfaction. Having a website and going to networking meetings are excellent ways to promote your business but the best advertising by far is word of mouth. Providing your services in a professional, reliable, cost efficient and timely manner to your clients will lead them to refer their colleagues, business associates and other acquaintances to contact you.