

What A Virtual Assistant Is and Is Not

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January 2, 2009 (PowerHomeBiz) - Deary, ID -- What does it cost employers to have an in-house administrative assistant versus a virtual assistant? In the office setting, productive use of time can be lost by socializing, experiencing down-time, training, or being away from the office. Employers pay for overhead and all the downtime in the office. Using the services of a virtual assistant who works outside of the office would not add to those costs.

By using a virtual assistant, employers do not pay for unproductive time. Two hours a day are spent socializing or participating in any other non-productive time equals 10 hours a day which computes to 520 hours a year in wasted time being paid by a business using an in house administrative assistant. By using a virtual assistant, employers do not pay for this unproductive time because virtual assistants charge by the hour for time worked or by the job. The employer is not paying for chats or other downtime.

An expert can type and format a letter, workbook, or brochure, enter accounting data, prepare invoices, receive payments, and process payroll in much less time than an untrained employee. An in-house assistant may need training to work on advanced-expert levels without constant supervision. When this occurs, often times the training is provided by other in-office personnel, which means two people being non-productive.

Virtual Assistants, on the other hand, either already have or will provide their own technical training, on their own time, and at their own expense. Virtual assistants, as successful business owners, are trained and skilled in the services they offer and often have a variety of skills.

Virtual Assistants are partners, not employees. Companies do not pay them a weekly paycheck. There are no benefits, vacations, sick days, holidays, employee taxes, or overhead costs for the business to bear. Negotiated contracts outline what the work is to be and the fees for that work including the time-frame in which it is to be completed. Normally these contracts are long term and cover many responsibilities. If a client is not happy with a particular virtual assistant, the contract is terminated according to its terms. Virtual assistants are professionals wanting to help their clients succeed by providing expertise. What better savings for a business than contracting the services of a dedicated expert? We are business owners and take pride in partnering with other business owners.

Finding someone to help you in your business is not an easy task. Sure, you could use the help, but what kind of help exactly? Do you need a coach to help you in moving forward with your business goals? Is a business manager what you want, someone to advise you in your business and help you makes important decisions? Or, do you prefer to start with someone who can save you time by taking over those administrative tasks that just take you too long to do?

If you decide you want to delegate those administrative tasks to someone else so you can spend your time more effectively and efficiently on other business activities, then a Virtual Assistant is what you need.

The Virtual Assistant (VA) industry is growing rapidly in all parts of the world with each VA offering a variety of services and specializing in a number of areas. But, many people do not know what a Virtual Assistant really is or how one would fit into a private business?

A Virtual Assistant is defined as an independent contractor who offers administrative support via his/her own home office. Having a Virtual Assistant join your team can provide many benefits while eliminating the need to hire an employee. For example, VA's have their own equipment, software, and space, all of which you would not have to supply.

Because Virtual Assistants offer such a wide range of expertise and skills, they are often able to assist in numerous roles. However, it is important to understand what a Virtual Assistant really IS, and what a Virtual Assistant IS NOT.

A Virtual Assistant is someone who:

- is an independent business owner
- assists you with various administrative tasks
- can help you boost your profits
- offers expertise in areas that are not the focus of your business · provides feedback/becomes a sounding board as your relationship grows
- Genuinely interested in the success of your business
- is someone you communicate with regularly and share your business strategy and goals with so they can provide you with the support you need

A Virtual Assistant is NOT:

- a business coach
- a business manager
- a decision maker
- an expert in every area that you may require assistance in
- a person responsible for establishing business goals and strategies for your business

Some Virtual Assistants offer expertise in web design while others know more about bookkeeping/accounting, and still others are more involved with e-commerce and internet marketing. There are even some virtual Assistants who simply provide traditional administrative support such as word processing, scheduling appointments, and making travel arrangements. What you can expect is that, if your VA does not have the answer, he/she can research, connect with other VA's, and provide you with as much information as possible.

Most VA's have a genuine interest in helping their clients succeed and in building a successful relationship with their clients. As the relationship with your VA strengthens, you may find yourself wondering how you ever ran your business without him/her.

Take the time to share your business goals and strategies with your VA, and over time, it will be obvious how valuable your VA is as part of your business team.

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