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Why Fly Solo? Delegate Work to a Virtual Assistant

Posted by [MARLA TABAKA](#) at 10:00 AM

One of the toughest issues that solopreneurs face is in scaling their business. How do you grow when it's just you doing the work? I help my clients to get past the word "solo" and learn to delegate. Yes, delegate. But to whom? For business owners who wish to remain in one-person -business model, it's a surprise for them to discover that they don't have to do it all alone AND they don't have to hire an employee either.

I reached out to the International Virtual Assistant's Association, better known as IVAA, for a few pointers on finding and hiring a virtual assistant. According to IVAA, VA's are independent entrepreneurs who provide administrative, creative and/or technical services. Utilizing the internet and other technology, a professional VA assists clients in his/her area of expertise from his/her own office on a contractual basis. In other words, they take the work that you don't like to do, or don't have the time to do off your hands and voila! - You get to focus on growing your business.

Lauren Hidden is the Acting Marketing Director at IVAA and she offers these helpful insights:

Q – Lauren, what types of jobs can a VA take off my desk?

A –Think about what is holding you back from making the most profit from your time. Things like mass mailings, scheduling appointments, research for your articles or blog. Start with the simple items and try a VA out with a small project or a few hours worth of work.

Q – What if my business doesn't necessitate a lot of "administrative" work, can a VA still be useful to me?

A –Many VA's do traditional administrative work, but many provide specialty and creative services; writing, graphic design, programming, bookkeeping, and website design are a few examples. VA's don't just do "secretarial" work.

Q - Let's talk about the hiring process. How do I know if it's a good fit?

A –To maximize the chances of finding the right VA, make sure you ask for references. Also be certain that the VA has the skill set you require for your own particular needs; someone who can grow with you and your company. Call them and converse – ask for samples of work. Also ask about their preferred method of communication; phone, email, instant messaging. Make sure they communicate the way you like to. You might find it frustrating if you put in a phone call to your VA and it gets returned via email because that's what they prefer. Also, some VAs will work by project or on an as-needed basis, others will only work on a guaranteed monthly retainer. The best VA will be a mutual fit.

Q – Lauren, you talked about types of services that VA's offer, are there also certain specialty niches in VA's work?

A – Absolutely. Some examples would include working for realtors, coaches, professional speakers and authors, professional associations, and even musicians. There is now an emerging group of "green" VA's too!

Q – What are some of the biggest concerns that potential employers might voice about hiring a virtual assistant.

A – Mostly, entrepreneurs are fearful about delegating. They're accustomed to doing everything themselves and feel uncertain about what to delegate. We advise that they start small and take it from there.

Some people are worried about trusting the billing practices of someone who isn't physically in their presence. But people are becoming accustomed to working virtually now and trust is building. There's also a code of ethics that is a condition of membership in IVAA. We even offer the [EthicsCheck](#) certification which was designed to mitigate this mistrust.

Q – What resources are available to help an entrepreneur to find the VA who is right for them?

A – There is an Request for Proposal form at the IVVA website. You just fill in the details and members will respond to your request.

Remember, your virtual assistant wants to grow with you. If you're concerned about finding the money to afford a VA, start small. A couple of hours a week will buy you time to market your business and soon you will find yourself utilizing your VA more often AND affording their services more easily.