

Tips for Starting Your Virtual Assistant Business

Cora Belle Marburger, GVA is a veteran of an estimated 2,000 virtual assistants worldwide.

Basic requirements for building successful virtual assistant practice are:

- Extensive administrative work experience
- Solid business plans
- Constant hard work
- Yearly administrative and technical training
- Good marketing strategy
- An office setup which includes a phone, a computer, Internet connection, a website, a fax machine, and a printer/scanner.

The virtual assistant industry has become very popular because it helps entrepreneurs to achieve a work/life balance in a 24-hour day. Many virtual assistants work between 14 and 18 hours a day during the startup phase. Even after establishing solid practices, one-third of these business owners admit to working nontraditional hours, including weekends and holidays.

Business trends **forecast** an increase in service demands, startup costs are minimal and the profit potential is good. According a survey by the Virtual Business Alliance, a global consortium of virtual assistant trade organizations, the average full-time virtual assistant working in the United States grossed \$39,452 in income last year.

Virtual assistants are independent entrepreneurs, with diverse backgrounds and skills, who work remotely and use up-to-date technology to deliver virtual services to clients globally. Most VA's work from their home offices and receive their project instructions by phone, fax, e-mail, instant messages, and even by postal mail. Many virtual assistants offer secretarial services and specialize in such areas as IT support, marketing, graphic and Web Design.

Clients are most likely to hire virtual assistants to save money-virtual assistants pay for their own equipment, taxes, training, healthcare and insurance-or because they need help with a temporary project. Industries most often hiring virtual assistants include the real estate, coaching, financial services, accounting and legal.

Tips for starting your virtual assistant business:

- Determine the time and energy you have to commit to your virtual assistant business to you work part time or full time.
- Prepare a business plan (Know your budgetary constraints-projected expenses) and review it often to manage growth and change.
- Check out office your equipment, software and work space to make sure that your office works efficiently.
- Wrap up all legal and financial aspects of your startup business before acquiring your first client.
- Determine your business niche and what type of services you want to offer, based on your work experience.
Determine the need for your services in your local area by conducting an industry research.
- Determine the type clients you are seeking (private detectives, lawyers, personal trainers, public speakers, road warriors, etc.), where are they located, and how to access them.
- Develop your marketing plan and prepare to market your business services 24/7.
Prepare your business cards, brochures, and post card ads. Hand them out to places your visit like the doctor's office, dental office, specialty stores, office supply stores, and other places of business.
- Publicize your virtual business in the Web Yellow Pages, Web Chamber of Commerce, and have your business url linked to other virtual websites.
- Design your business website or have a virtual assistant who specializes in web design build your website.
- Highly consider joining a professional virtual assistant organizations, administrative and women associations, networking and support groups. You will have the opportunity to network and build camaraderie with people with different types of businesses.'

Virtual Assistant Industry Resources:

Worldwide Organizations

- [Clayton's Secretary](#)
- [Canadian Virtual Assistant Network](#)
- [International Association of Virtual Office Assistants \(IAVOA\)](#)
- [International Virtual Assistants Association \(IVAA\)](#)
- [International Association of Virtual Assistants](#)

Networking and Support Groups

- [Virtual Assistant Networking Forum \(VANF\)](#)
- [Virtual Business Group](#)
- [Virtual-Professionals.com](#)
- [Real Estate Virtual Assistant \(REVA\) Network](#)
- [Work-the-Web](#)

Free Worldwide Directories

- [Elite Office Support](#)
- [VA4U](#)

Certification Programs

- [AssistU](#)
- [IVAA](#)

- VA Certification

Trade Publications

- Virtual Tidbits
- Virtual Assistant Tips
- Admin Prof

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The Right VA at the Right Time!