

VIRTUAL ASSISTANCE

HOW TO GET STARTED AS A
VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

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LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

“Virtual Assistance – How to get started as a Virtual Assistant” - is an informational e-booklet to educate and enlighten new and seasoned administrative assistants on how to get started in this new and exciting field of Virtual Assistance. This e-booklet answers those common questions that newly interested ones usually have. I have been asked many questions about how I got started, and as always I have enjoyed answering those questions and sharing my own personal experiences and excitement about this industry. I thought it would be helpful to share some of those frequently asked questions with others through this question and answer e-booklet.

Log on to www.mopoeassociates.com and you will also find other helpful resources and virtual assistant and home based business training to help you throughout your business journey.

Kind regards,

Monica L. Poe, MVA, GVA
President/Founder and Certified Master Virtual Assistant



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MY STORY

I fell in love with the administrative field during high school. I was working for a non-profit organization part-time as a receptionist while attending school, when it was brought to my attention that there was a need in the community for a non-traditional secretary. Students, teachers, co-workers and even people walking along the street continually asked me to type resumes, letters, and other correspondence. Before long, I was known as the on the side secretary. This wonderful experience led me to start my own home-based secretarial service at the age of seventeen. I continued running the service part-time until I was offered a full-time position with a large corporation. At that time, I discontinued the service, but I still completed small projects here and there for individuals and small businesses. Over the years as I worked full-time for other organizations, I noticed that small to mid-size companies with full-time secretaries also had a need for a non-traditional secretary. There were special projects or year-end projects that needed to be done and periodically I was approached to do them. So I would take the projects home, finish the assignments with my home computer and was paid for my services. As I worked for other organizations, I continued to research secretarial services on the internet out of curiosity when I stumbled on the term Virtual Assistant.

In late 2005 the company that I had been working with for eight years closed its doors. At the same time I lost my job, I found out I had a retinal detachment and needed immediate eye surgery to prevent blindness. After recovering from eye surgery I told my husband that I wanted to start my secretarial service again and become a Virtual Assistant. He already knew I had been researching it for years and knew I was ready. He supported me wholeheartedly. So I took a training program to get me started and here I am, doing what I love to do.

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VIRTUAL ASSISTANCE:

Over the past few years, the virtual assistance industry has exploded throughout the world with recent headlines in newspapers, news broadcast and even popping up at small business organizations across the country. With more demands for flexibility, more and more individuals are letting go of the corporate environment and opting to be home based business owners.

What is a Virtual Assistant (VA)?

Corporate and other business sector assistants, once known as administrative assistants or secretaries, have now evolved into the Virtual Assistant. A Virtual Assistant or (VA) is an independent entrepreneur, highly skilled in the administrative profession. A Virtual Assistant provides administrative and business support services from our own (usually home offices) for busy and overwhelmed professionals. We use today's technology such as the telephone, email, fax, and the internet to communicate and complete assignments with our clients'.

What are the benefits of being a Virtual Assistant?

One of the benefits of being a Virtual Assistant is the flexibility that it provides. You have the flexibility to be able to determine your daily schedule and adjust it daily if needed, as well as the flexibility to determine your income or salary. Your Virtual Assistance business can be tailored to fit your specific family needs. This is especially good if you have small children or have ailing parents or spouses you need to take care of.

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What types of industries do Virtual Assistants support?

Virtual Assistants support a wide variety of industries such as the legal, real estate, music, medical, financial, media, food, wedding and many other industries are popping up everyday.

What types of services does a Virtual Assistant perform?

VA's do mostly the same tasks as a traditional administrative assistant or secretary. Tasks such as word processing, answering telephones and making calls, website design and maintenance, database management, research, bookkeeping, scheduling appointments and events, resume design, billing, email management, reminder services and a whole lot more with a 100% focus. The only difference is that we do not have to be sitting in a client's office to perform the services. We don't even have to be in the same state or country. There are no geographical limitations.

What are the benefits of a small business partnering with a Virtual Assistant?

VA's are beneficial to small business owners in many ways. The VA is an independent contractor self-managing work provided by the client. The client pays no benefits or payroll taxes because the VA is not an employee. The client only pays for the time that he/she uses which can be more cost effective and keeps overhead costs down. Virtual Assistants free up needed time so the client can focus and concentrate on what is most important to them. We also understand that every client's needs are different. Therefore, we are flexible and the client benefits from our flexibility. In addition the client receives a partner. We are small business owners ourselves and understand the business arena.

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How much income can a Virtual Assistant make?

The earning potential depends on how many hours the VA works and how much the VA can charge for their skills and services. Most Virtual Assistants charge a rate from \$35.00 an hour on up to \$85.00 an hour or even higher depending on their skills and expertise. Other factors such as self-employment taxes, business expenses etc., all factor into the hourly rate. Salaries per year also vary, depending on whether the VA works part-time or full-time.

What are the pros and cons of being a Virtual Assistant?

As with any business, there are always pros and cons. Take a look at the few pros and cons of being a Virtual Assistant listed below:

Pros

1. If you are working from home, you are closer to your family.
2. You are able to manage your own time and schedule.
3. You save time and money you would normally have to spend on gas and/or clothing.

Cons

1. Feelings of isolation.
2. It takes time to build a profitable business.
3. Sometimes paperwork can overtake your home.

What training do I need to become a Virtual Assistant?

Certification or training is not a prerequisite to becoming a Virtual Assistant, but training and continuing education has its benefits just the same as it does with any other field. The training and education not only benefits the VA but also the clients' that the VA services. Most administrative professionals entering

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into the Virtual Assistance industry have long-term experience and skills in the administrative field and they continue their education as they go along.

What equipment do I need to get started?

You can start out with some basic equipment. At first assess your needs and then you can upgrade as you go along. The first thing you will need is a computer with a high-speed internet connection, a telephone, calculator, printer and fax, time management and word processing software such as Microsoft Office. You will also need to have a functional website which details your products or services.

How long does it take to get your business setup?

Depending on how much information you already have with your niche, you could be set up in as little as three to four months. I advise taking the necessary time needed to research your area of expertise, educate yourself and make sure your processes are prepared well in advance of your launch date. It takes time to build a business. Do not look for instant success or you will be disappointed.

How does Virtual Assistance fall in place with our recent economy?

Let's face it, our economy is horrible and it's going to get worse before it gets better. In the wake of our economy some VA's have noticed an increase in business due to the fact that many people are being let go or downsized from their jobs. Myself included. There has been an incline in new business start-ups and even companies hiring short-term workers to manage overhead costs to survive in our economy. I know first hand how it feels to lose what you thought was a secure job. My personal passion is helping ones and their families to start over.

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Ok I'm ready, what's next?

You need to start with yourself. Assess all of your skills, your education and training and lay it all out on the table. This will help you see where you have gaps or need additional training for you to succeed. It will also help you with serving your clients' in your particular niche area. Also spend some time doing some internet research on other Virtual Assistants. This will help you see what other VA's are offering and may give you ideas with your business as well. Don't be afraid to give a VA a call. Most Virtual Assistants are happy to answer any questions you may have about the virtual assistance industry. Also, join a VA or another organizational group. Groups like the ones listed below have many resources to help you along your business journey. They also have community forums where you can communicate and network with other VA's.

International Virtual Assistants Association

www.ivaa.org

International Association of Administrative Professionals

www.iaap-hq.org

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CONCLUSION

There is a lot to learn and a lot of questions to be asked when starting any business. Hopefully, this ebook has answered some of those questions you may have regarding your interest in Virtual Assistance. If you are contemplating about starting your own virtual assistance practice or just have other general questions, please feel free to give us a call. We will be more than happy to assist you in any way we can.

Take a look at our website www.mopoeassociates.com for virtual assistant coaching, training, and other virtual assistance and business resources.

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NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Feel free to contact us with any questions about the Virtual Assistant Industry. We would be more than happy to assist you.

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In addition to offering time and money saving administrative and business support, we also offer virtual assistant coaching, online training programs, public speaking programs and sales/marketing training and products to assist small to midsize, start-up/early stage and home based businesses with the day-to-day challenges of starting and running a small business. Check out our website periodically for scheduled programs and classes on various subjects.

If this information was helpful to you, please let us know by dropping us an email at info@mopoeassociates.com and put **Virtual Assistance 2 (IE Booklet)** in the subject line. As always, we welcome your comments.

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