

The Admin Genie

Genius admin solutions when you need it

The WWW. of hiring a VA - Why's, When's & What's of Hiring a Virtual Assistant

What is a VA?

A **virtual assistant** (usually abbreviated to **VA** or also a **virtual office assistant**) is generally self-employed and provides professional administrative, technical or creative assistance to clients remotely from home.

Why hire a VA?

A Virtual Assistant is an associate that can take care of all those administrative tasks that distract you. They will do an excellent job because this is their business, their livelihood. They want you to keep coming back to them and tell others about the superior service you receive.

- Creates more time so you can concentrate on growing your business and being able to spend time ON your business instead of IN your business.
- You don't have the costs and stress of having a permanent employee – PAYE, NIC, SSP, holiday pay, maternity pay, pension scheme etc.
- No need to find office space, buy office equipment and you could even reduce the price you pay for support services.
- They have skills you may not have and don't have the time to learn, so therefore they can complete tasks in half the time.
- No recruitment fees and no employee training fees.
- Your project remains on schedule without having to pay overtime costs.
- You don't have the worry about having enough work to keep them going. They work around your schedule and provide a service when you need it.

When is the right time to hire a VA?

There is no right time or wrong time, it's all about personal choice. However, if you are nodding as you read the following, then it is probably time to consider a VA.

- ✓ You need free up some time so you can concentrate on your business.
- ✓ You have too much work for your current resources but not enough work to warrant getting another member of permanently staff.
- ✓ You physically don't have the room to accommodate another person but you need the extra resource.
- ✓ When you're not around you need a contact person to keep things ticking over.
- ✓ You've missed deadlines because your diary or admin hasn't been managed.
- ✓ Your working evenings or weekends just to keep up with those routine admin tasks.

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- ✓ You have a routine task that you put off and don't like doing because it takes you away from the more productive and creative tasks.
- ✓ You're missing out on exciting projects because you're too tied up with the day-to-day running of your business.

What can out-sourcing to a VA do for you?

When starting a company or trying to grow a company there is never enough time in the day to do everything. If used correctly, virtual assistants may be the answer you've been looking for.

1. **Bookkeeping:** Smaller businesses share their bookkeeping systems with virtual assistants as keeping tabs on receipts and bills is one of the easiest things to hand over to a virtual assistant. They can follow up on tasks such as chasing unpaid invoices or taking care of any outstanding invoices. They can also liaise direct with your accountant saving you time and unnecessary accountancy fees.
2. **Database entries:** Keeping your database current is a chore for any business so why not give all those new business cards you picked up at the last networking event to your virtual assistant to enter. You could also ask them to update any existing contact information at the same time.
3. **Data presentations:** Get your raw data turned into clear and branded PowerPoint presentation or a Word document report.
4. **Online Research:** Farm out your internet research to a virtual assistant. It could be finding information on corporate websites, compiling lists of potential marketing targets, exploring new products or even vetting potential employees or business contacts.
5. **Social tasks:** Don't waste your precious time on the social chores like holiday card writing, sending thank you notes or asking for testimonials. Virtual assistants can handle these increasingly common tasks.
6. **Managing email:** To keep you from wasting time in your email inbox, a virtual assistant will filter your most important emails and respond to the rest on your behalf, whilst deleting those spam/junk email that manage to get through. Email management can be done remotely, but you need to provide guidance on how to pick out key emails and ask the virtual assistant to copy you before sending out any responses to reduce the risk of errors.
7. **Chasing business:** Prioritising potential business opportunities can be challenging, but a virtual assistant can help with the process. Virtual assistants can research the Web to produce potential lead lists for mail shots or calls.
8. **Industry knowledge preparation:** With limited time to keep up with industry news, some small businesses have turned to a virtual assistant to keep tabs on the most important happenings. Executives then use the industry information to update their Twitter feed, blogs or bring up interesting developments in conversation with customers and prospects.
9. **Social Media:** In today's world social media has become a vital tool to spread the word about your company. However, with time restraints and the growing number of platforms this is almost a full time job. Not to mention the hours sitting staring at your screen trying to think what to tweet, update about. A virtual assistant can blog and update on your behalf.
10. **Travel Research:** Virtual assistants are a great resource for finding hotels, booking airfares and mapping out trip itineraries both for business and pleasure. The virtual assistant takes advantage of the growing number of travel research tools and review sites on the Web.

A good outsourcing company will understand your expectations, and communicate with you all the way so you don't feel like you're losing control. It's important to have trust and give clear instruction to your Virtual Assistant. It may be a little extra work at the start but once your VA is established you'll wonder how you ever managed without them.