

FINDING FREEDOM WITH A VA



Keep Your Day Running Smoothly With A VA

Does your daily to-do list keep getting larger instead of smaller? Do small day-to-day tasks prevent you from completing more important projects? Are you constantly frustrated, overwhelmed and stressed out trying to manage it all? If so, you should consider hiring a virtual assistant to handle some of these small, but necessary, daily tasks. Not only will you have more time to devote to bigger projects, you'll also have some time during the day for yourself. With all this extra time, you could go to the gym, meet a friend for lunch, daydream, or even take a well-deserved nap for that matter.

Calendar and Email Management

Rather than spend valuable time during the day checking your calendar and email, why not let your virtual assistant do this for you? Give your VA access to your business calendar so they can update personal and business appointments, schedule meetings and mark important dates like your anniversary or your mum's birthday.

When changes to your daily or weekly schedule occur, your VA can simply send you an email or text message alert which you can respond to as necessary. If you're on-the-go all day long, whether meeting with clients, travelling for business, or you need some quiet time to focus on a particular project, your VA can update your calendar so you have the time you need.

Realistically, this could easily save you 30 minutes or more each day, depending on your schedule of course.

The same applies to email messages. Your assistant can check your email throughout the day and alert you of any pressing issues or messages that require immediate attention. Your assistant can also organize messages into appropriate folders, delete spam or marketing messages to keep your inbox sparkling clean and clutter-free.

If you want your VA to respond to certain clients or colleagues, you can instruct them in doing so. Spending a few minutes here and there to provide instructions concerning email management could save you up to an hour or two per day depending on how much email you receive. This is time you can spend solving problems, building your business or attending to personal matters.

Dictation and Transcription

Another way to save time during the day is to dictate letters, email and other written communications (blog posts, Web content, reports, etc.) and then have your virtual assistant transcribe these for you. If you speak much faster than you type, why not dictate the information periodically and then send all the .mp3 files via a Google Drive folder to your assistant so they can type it all out?

By dictating the information you want written down, you can spare yourself countless hours of staring at a blank computer screen hoping for the right words. For example, you can dictate new ideas and concepts whenever or wherever inspiration strikes ñ while having a morning walk, possibly on weekends, while on holiday or even right after returning home from a client meeting. This information will then be returned neatly typed and ready for sorting or sending.

As you can see, a virtual assistant can save you an incredible amount of time during the workweek by completing those small tasks that you just don't have the time for or interest in finishing anymore.

2. Become More Efficient with A VA

Remaining competitive in your business means spending more time focusing on the important aspects such as attracting new clients, keeping regular clients happy, developing new products and services and keeping tabs on your competition.

Since there are only so many hours in any given day, outsourcing regular tasks such as bookkeeping, social media, travel arrangements and bill collecting to virtual assistants can help you remain focused on the other, more important aspects of your business, all while ensuring your business runs smoothly and becomes more profitable as it grows.

Hiring virtual staff is an economical way to save on employee overhead costs, particularly as virtual assistants must provide their own office equipment, office space and address their own taxes too.

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Virtual Bookkeeper

A virtual bookkeeper can manage your books so you know your profits and losses on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, or on a year-to-year basis. Virtual bookkeepers can also help manage payroll, fill out and submit tax forms, create a filing system for business documents and even manage invoices and bill payments.

To use a virtual bookkeeper effectively though, you may have to share sensitive passwords and other business details so your bookkeeper can access specific information. Make sure you clearly outline the types of bookkeeping you need so your assistant can confidently complete each task. Furthermore, as your business grows, it's important to keep in mind that your bookkeeping requirements may change.

Virtual Travel Assistant

A virtual travel assistant can help you plan a truly effortless business trip. By conducting online research, your VA can find you the best deals on airfare, hotels and rental cars. Your assistant can also book these services for you. This means that you won't have to spend time comparing rates, looking at reviews, calculating location information or even booking anything. You can simply say where and approximately when you'd like to go, mention your accommodation and vehicle preferences - and before you know it, everything will be arranged and you'll be on your way!

Virtual travel assistants can also assist you with updating your passport or help you apply for a travel visa to a specific country and / or region. Your VA can even make dinner reservations, get you theatre tickets and provide you with a list of interesting local attractions that you can take clients to while you're in town.

Virtual Collection Assistant

If you send and receive lots of invoices, consider hiring a virtual collection assistant to manage this very important task. Your assistant can send out invoices for products and services, collect payments from customers and pay bills for products and services used to run your business.

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In addition, an experienced VA can create an online filing system to manage bills and payments. Your collection assistant may also perform bookkeeping duties or work with your virtual bookkeeper to make sure all the numbers match up, consistently.

By outsourcing bookkeeping, travel, and bill collection tasks, you'll be able to relax a little more often knowing that your business can run effectively, even when you're not around. Also, you won't have to worry about making last minute travel arrangements as your virtual travel assistant can easily find and book the appropriate flights, hotels and vehicles at any time ñ even when you're already on a business trip!

What would it feel like to stay abreast of your competitor's moves, have your travel arrangements addressed whenever necessary and ensure your books and bill collection are taken care of too? Exactly, like a dream come true and that's why you want to take a few minutes to read this post!

3. Tips For Choosing A Stellar VA

Before hiring a virtual assistant, it's important to learn more about who they are and how they work. Beyond a phone or Skype interview, here are four tips for selecting a stellar VA so you can streamline your business operations without delay.

Review Websites

Review a potential assistant's website before scheduling an interview. Make sure each page contains proper grammar and punctuation. If you see lots of spelling errors or sentence structure that doesn't make sense, cross that person off your list and keep looking. Actively look for information about the person's personal, business and educational background. Get a sense of the person by reviewing their 'About Me' page and whatever else you find.

Professionalism (Or Lack Thereof)

Before, during, and after the interview, consider how professional the VA is and how well they responded to your initial engagements. If the VA takes too long to respond or ignores questions you have about work experience or specific skills, you may want to move on to someone else.



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Keep in mind that how a VA handles you and your requirements is indicative of how they’ll handle your customers or clients. For the most part, your assistant is a representative of you and your business. If they make a bad impression or appear unprofessional, so will you.

Experience and Skills

Find out exactly how a VA can improve your business. Ask specific questions about their work history and skills. Enquire about systems and software they’ve used so you can best ensure you’re selecting someone with the appropriate experience ñ this saves valuable time in training your assistant down the line.

Depending on the type of assistant you need, enquire about their specific skills in more depth, such as website management, content creation, social media management, transcription, online research, data collection, or bookkeeping perhaps. Ideally, it’s helpful to select an assistant with a set of skills that meets most or all of your needs, right off the bat.

Always ask for references, essentially so you can actively consider some sort of verifiable social proof - whether in the form of comprehensive testimonials or praise, before making a final hiring decision. These references can at least to some degree verify if the assistant is being honest about their experience and skills. References can also give you an idea of what it’s like to work with this person and how professional they are with their clients, and possibly customers as well.

Availability

Asking about their availability is very important because virtual assistants can live and work from anywhere in the world. For example, if you need someone who can give a timely response to customer questions or client requests, a local VA (someone in your time zone or close to it) is essential. If you’re looking for someone to manage your books periodically or assist with anything that needs to be done on a daily basis - like social media for example, your VA doesn’t necessarily need to live in the same or similar time zone at all.

Determine if you need a full-time or part-time assistant. Some virtual assistants have multiple clients so the time they can work for you may be limited. Choose someone who can work easily with your schedule.

In most cases, you’ll know who to hire after conducting a few interviews. If you feel a special connection to a person, or if your personalities mesh, then you should follow your instincts. Finding the best VA for your business is entirely possible, especially if you’re clear about what you’re looking for from the start.