

# THE VA BUSINESS



WHAT EVERY BUSINESS OWNER SHOULD  
KNOW ABOUT DOING BUSINESS,  
FROM VIRTUALLY ANYWHERE



V I R T U A L  
A S S I S T A N T  
*Live!*

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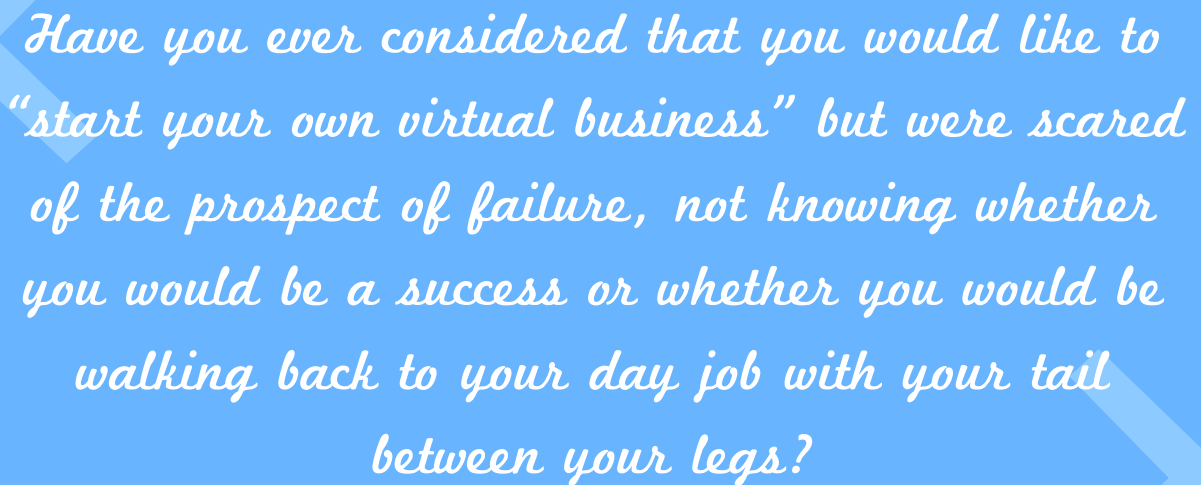
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# INTRODUCTION



*Have you ever considered that you would like to “start your own virtual business” but were scared of the prospect of failure, not knowing whether you would be a success or whether you would be walking back to your day job with your tail between your legs?*

Obviously your job is your “bread and butter,” not to be taken lightly; you would need to replace your income from your job with income from your business, and that is easier said than done. To some people this is so far outside their comfort zone that they would never even think twice about it, but others find the prospect fascinating and wonder, deep down inside, whether they do indeed have the ambition and ability to make it work.

We could all do with a crystal ball. We would love somebody to give us a definite yes or no before we begin putting our bread and butter on the line, so we can look to the future with positivity and hope.

I don't say that I have, or had at any time a crystal ball, but I nevertheless took a very long and very hard look at the entire situation and came up with a virtual strategy - a formula if you will, for working online.

This eBook will help guide you through the basic essentials; start to finish for operating a “Virtually Anywhere Business” - Covering Remote Working, Virtual Assistants, Online Marketing and Business Success. Whilst every section will require far more in-depth explanation to be able to create a business around it, this ebook will give you a taste of living within a virtually anywhere business, the foundation of how it works, and what's involved.

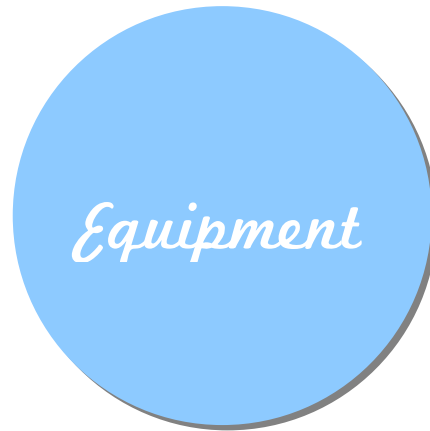


# CHAPTER 1

## REMOTE WORKING



*Working online is “built” of 4 things, these things are:*



*Literally, that's all you need to succeed as a client or a VA.*

*So let's look at these in more detail.*

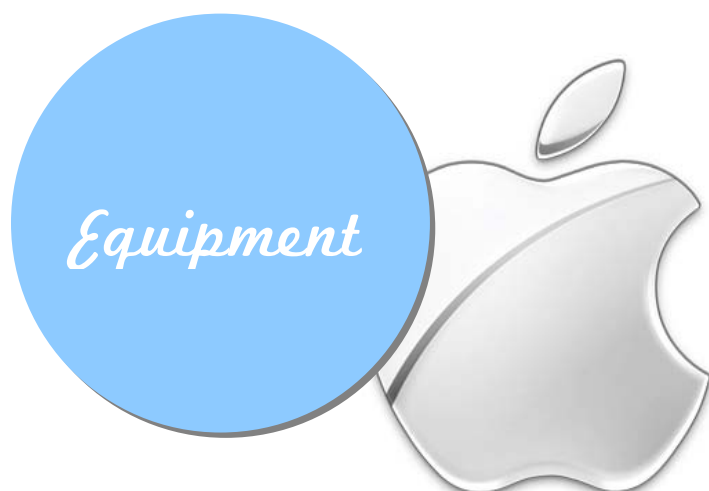


### *The Internet*



There is absolutely no way you can work online without the Internet, so you need to make sure that you have a main Internet connection and also back up plans. Generally a good broadband connection set up in your home and then some sort of additional service is a good idea, for example, a laptop with a wi-fi connector so you can locate a wi-fi connection and work remotely. Many hotels, cafes and bars will have wi-fi available, and in places like Starbucks and McDonalds this generally now comes free as standard.

Another option is an iPad with a 3G connection, I highly recommend this for VA's, it can seriously be a big help. You can also go into satellite connections which are powered generally by a USB stick which you plug in to your laptop, but they are generally quite expensive (the usage fees).



I touched on equipment a little in the previous section, and of course some sort of computer is going to be essential. I would also recommend that you get a headset for VoIP Calls. This will basically allow you to use the Internet to make phone calls to either other computers, landlines or mobile phones.

With regard to equipment, you need to invest wisely, these are your primary tools that you will need in your business when working online, and it's going to cause frustration if your equipment is not reliable and efficient. It will also be a huge hassle if it breaks or decides not to play nice. I have switched all of my computer equipment and mobile devices over to Apple ([www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)) - there is no comparison to the quality and reliability of their hardware and operating system to any other competitor. Wherever you can, buy Apple.



To be able to work and collaborate online, there are a handful of different software applications which I would consider essential.



SKYPE



DROPBOX



EMAIL

(Google Mail is the best  
I have found online)

Of course there are many more available and many of us who work online use a variety of different applications, but those are the “Core 3” you will need to get started, and will cover a majority of situations working online.



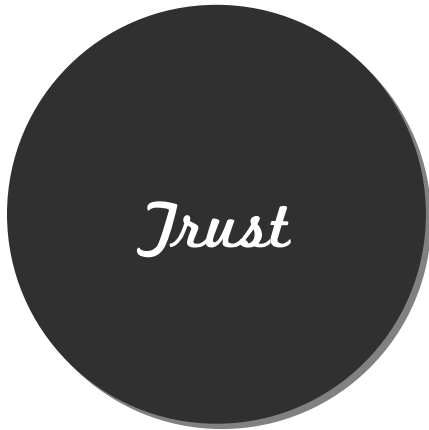
Skype is for online communications. You can use Skype to make free Skype-to-Skype calls, use online chats, and you can also video conference, file share and have an inbound landline - making it a very versatile and affordable communication solution.



Dropbox is for file storage and sharing - I highly recommend when working online you consider storing your files and folders here too.



Email, specifically Google mail, is excellent for having the ability to access email from anywhere. I have found that no matter what you intend to do online, if it involves work, and virtual collaboration, the best options are online-based. Cloud computing is most definitely, in my opinion, the future of virtual business.



If you're a client of a VA or you are looking to outsource or team build, then it's essential you trust your VA. If you cannot let go and place your trust in a professional online VA company, then you probably won't get very far...

Now this is not to say that all VA's are trustworthy, but it's down to you to ensure that you find someone who is a good fit for your business, because going it alone, trying to do everything yourself, and not having the professional support you need, will slow you down, burn you out, and that won't be good for moral - to say the least.



# CHAPTER 2

## VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS





*Collaboration is a “2 way street,”*

*you have the person hiring*

*(referred to as the client)*

*and the person being hired*

*(let’s refer to them as the virtual assistant).*

*Seems simple enough right, well, in essence it is, but Virtual assistance is like an onion, it has many layers.*

As far as I know this is the first of its kind, where we run through virtual assistance from both perspectives - the client's and the VA's. There are several quotations in this section from a list of credit sources at the end of this book.

### *What is a virtual assistant?*

This may seem a little off topic, but first, let's discuss what a doctor is, a doctor is someone who cures or heals sick or hurt people. That's very much a “nutshell” description, and if we look at the nutshell description of what a virtual assistant is, then we can say that a virtual assistant is anyone who assists another person online providing services to help them in their life or business.

Now, we all understand that the world is full of many different types of doctor, they range from consultants, surgeons, general practitioners. Then, we can drill down into specifics - there are cardiologists, radiographers, gynaecologists etc... Many vary in price, level of skill and location and you can pretty much find doctors everywhere.



## CHAPTER 2 – VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

This is very similar to the construction of the virtual assistant industry. We have many different and varied types of virtual assistant and they all can have their place and their purpose in any business depending of the level of support required, and the budget which you're able to afford. Anyone can get a broken leg, but not everyone can go and have their broken leg fixed in a Harley street clinic in central London, those who can afford it will, and those who can't will need to seek alternative care. Either way the broken leg will get fixed, but the experience you get in the Harley street clinic will be very different from the local hospital.



The VA industry is now catering to a global market, there is a bigger picture and a brighter future for business owners because of it. So let's break the industry down into the types of VA you can utilise.



### *Which “type” of virtual assistant is right for you?*

As a regular columnist in Chris Ducker’s “Virtual Business Lifestyle,” one of my posts was about “When Is A Virtual Assistant Not A Virtual Assistant?” It will explain a bit about the types of VA which are working within the industry now.

<http://www.virtualbusinesslifestyle.com/2011/03/when-is-a-virtual-assistant-not-a-virtual-assistant/>

Most entrepreneurs, especially those pursuing an online business venture, will at some point consider investigating how hiring a Virtual Assistant - or even many Virtual Assistants, could benefit them and their business.

## CHAPTER 2 – VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

For those of you who are new to this concept and still trying to learn what a "virtual assistant" actually is, you will undoubtedly find a lot of different options available for you to choose from, and not every virtual assistant option maybe right for you, so here is a quick "VA 101" which I have put together for you which is based on the wide variety of Virtual Assistants I have come across in my own career.

If you find a VA online, they could be one or many of the types of VA listed below, for example, you may find a solo-VA working offshore, or an online business manager who is also a consultant and has a multi-VA team. The absolute best combination I have found is to work with a variety of different VA's and use a combination of the possibilities out there for different areas of your business, especially if you are looking to utilise outsourcing for all of your staffing requirements. Once you have worked out what you need, you can then choose your Virtual Assistant or combination of Virtual Assistants wisely, based on how you would like them to fit into your business. Once you have the combination right, that's when your business can really reap the benefits of this awesome industry.

In a nutshell, independent virtual assistants are generally business owners just like you, and they assist all kinds of individuals online with their businesses. I have listed the most common 'types' of virtual assistant below, but each one is essentially a virtual assistant in some way, shape or form.



### *Solo VA's*

This I believe is where the industry began many years ago, traditional PA's and administrative assistants found a way of working from home and servicing a client base over the Internet, thus allowing them to step out of their role in the workplace and into a virtual role. Solo VA's have since come a long way, and they have branched out from the more general services such as diary management, call answering, customer support, transcription etc... into offering online marketing services, and in some cases creative and technical support. They generally work alone, servicing a small client base, which allows for a MORE INTIMATE ONE-ON-ONE SERVICE WITH THEIR CLIENT. Solo VA's can be excellent multi-taskers. The downside of a solo VA is that if they truly are solo, then the times when they are away from their work, you may need to seek an alternative until they return. In some cases the VA may have a plan in place for handling work while they are away and you will need to ask them about this directly.

## CHAPTER 2 – VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

### *Multi-VA Teams*

These are usually teams of VA's who collaborate online for a single VA company. They will either be groups of VA's with similar skills, or different skills depending on the company hiring them. Almost always the multi-VA team is made up of freelance independent business owners and they can either work full-time, part-time or on an adhoc basis for the main VA who developed the team. Most multi-VA teams will have a

primary VA, the one who developed the team, and more often than not, they will be the primary point of contact for clients at all times, and may still also provide services themselves. The good thing about multi-VA companies is that **THEY OFTEN HAVE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO “STEP IN” DURING HOLIDAYS**, so there is no disruption to any ongoing services.



### *Offshore VA's*



Offshore VA's have come to be known as the VA's who work in countries with a lower cost of living, generally "offshore" from the western world. Two very popular countries where offshore VA's can be found are the Philippines and India. Whilst of course many of them do not speak native English, you can find offshore VA's who speak excellent English, and they are able to communicate with you very well. Particularly, VA's who have come from call centre environments are often able to speak conversational English surprisingly well.

The benefits of offshore VA's mean THAT ENTREPRENEURS AND START-UPS CAN COST-EFFECTIVELY GET THE SUPPORT THEY NEED WITHIN THEIR BUSINESSES, and for anyone on a shoestring budget, this is an ideal solution, because rates tend to be lower to match the economic climate where the VA lives.

### *Online Business Managers*

Online business managers have likely taken on the role solely as a manager, and generally won't be the ones performing the VA services anymore. In many cases, they have a multi-VA team themselves who they will utilise in order to provide a wide range of services for a larger number of clients. Online business managers often started out as virtual assistants and they moved into hiring a multi VA team - they should be VERY EXPERIENCED IN WORKING ONLINE, AND HAVE EXCELLENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS for those looking to carry out larger scale projects and business expansion, which they need more of a right hand kind of support for. This solution is ideal if you have a variety of tasks you need doing and don't want to spend time on training and quality control. A skilled online business manager can do this for you, perfectly.



## CHAPTER 2 – VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

### *Virtual Consultants*

Virtual consultants will likely have had a great deal of experience as a virtual assistant, and over time, they developed more of an "expert" status after handling a multitude of tasks and clients. Some online consultants will remain solo, while others may have multi-VA teams with them. THE CONSULTANT WILL WANT TO WORK WITH YOU MORE AS A PARTNER AND ADVISOR, and they will often charge clients based on their experience and ability, rather than on a skill or service set. You will need to talk with the individual, sometimes in great depth, to find out how they are able to assist you with your business.





## CHAPTER 2 – VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

### *Virtual Intermediaries*

Virtual intermediaries are companies which are set up to introduce you, the client, to a suitable virtual assistant. THEY WILL GENERALLY HAVE A SIGNIFICANT DATABASE OF INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONALS, for which they will take down information from you on exactly what you're looking for, and then they will carefully consider your requirements and find a suitable match. The great thing about these introducers is that it cuts out all the leg work for you; they'll generally screen the VA's beforehand to meet a minimum standard, and keep profile and rates information on file. If they don't have someone suitable within their database, they will set to work in finding a match for you using their resources. Chris is the founder of the brilliant service "Virtual Staff Finder," which can help you find pre-qualified offshore solo-VA's, for almost any requirements.

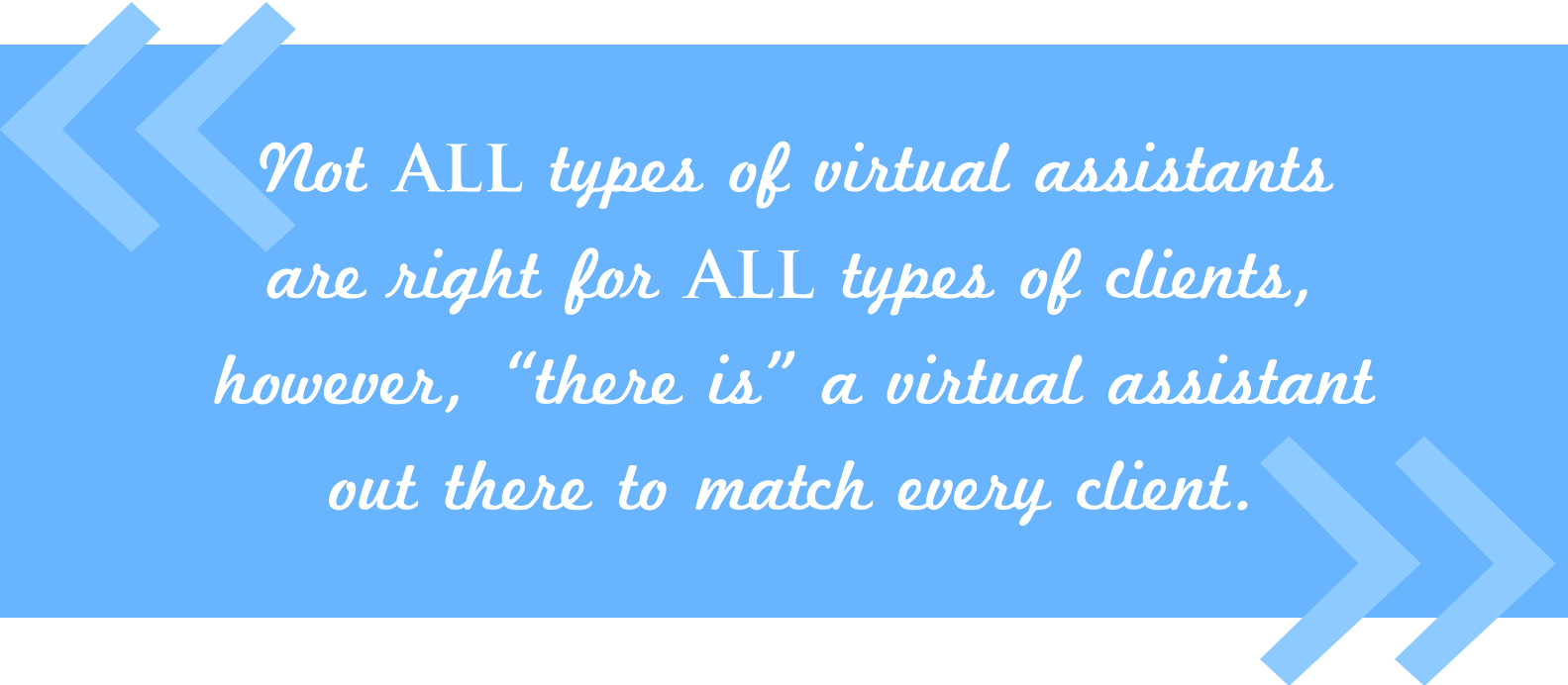
Whatever it is you're searching for, there is a virtual assistant out there for you.



# *What Clients and VA's really need from their relationships.*

The interesting thing about what a client and VA really needs, is that it really all depends on the client, the VA and their businesses.

I recently decided to ask a large group of people, clients and virtual assistants what a “Virtual Assistant” meant to them. This gave me some great insight into people's general perspective, and the results of this experiment proved one thing.



*Not ALL types of virtual assistants are right for ALL types of clients, however, “there is” a virtual assistant out there to match every client.*



*This is what the clients came back needing:*

- They need their VA to meet and exceed **EXPECTATIONS**
- They need their VA to come in on their **BUDGET**
- They need specific **SKILL** requirements
- They need specific **LANGUAGE** requirements
- They need **PRO-ACTIVE** partners
- They need **RE-ACTIVE** assistants
- They need **RELIABILITY**
- They need sound **ADVICE**
- They need someone who has **THE SKILLS THAT THEY DON'T**
- They need someone they can **TRUST**
- They are seeking **LONG TERM RELATIONSHIPS** with the right VA

*This is what the VA's came back needing:*

- They need to be **PAID WHAT THEIR SKILLS ARE WORTH** - whatever that rate may be
- They need to be **PAID ON TIME**
- They need to be **TREATED WITH THE RESPECT** of a business owner and not an employee
- They need someone who can **CLEARLY COMMUNICATE** with them
- They need clients to **RESPECT THEIR TIME** and how long things will take
- They need clients to be **OPEN TO THEIR SUGGESTIONS** and guidance

*Beyond all of this, clients need VA's and VA's need clients, otherwise there is no industry.*

As business owners, whether you're a client or a VA, we must never lose sight of the fact that we all need each other.

*Virtual Assistance from a client's perspective.*

*Let's go through a few of the "key responses" from the Q and A which the clients came back with.*

### *What does the term “Virtual Assistant” mean to clients?*

- ◆ *“Simply put, to me the term means an assistant who is physically not in our office.”*
- ◆ *“Easy! It allows me to plan a 6 month schedule, pass it on to my VA which in turn then allows me the time to expand in other directions, knowing that the tasks will be carried out in my absence in a professional way.”*

### *Clients recognise a VA’s Skill & Flexibility:*

- ◆ *“Both organizations have skilled teams located in the UK that provide everything I lack.”*
- ◆ *“I am confident my Virtual Assistant will take me to the next level as we began our promotional effort using article marketing and I have no concerns about the quality of writing that the world will see.”*
- ◆ *“I like the idea that I can pay for just the services I require.”*

*Clients recognise a VA's ability, and not always their location:*

- ◆ *“Everyone is abroad to me, but seriously I have tried the Philippines, India and the UK and like everything in life you have to feel comfortable with who you work with so it does become a case of 'The proof is in the pudding.’”*



*Clients recognise that VA's ALWAYS deliver:*

- ◆ *“Why a VA as opposed to an employee is mainly because A. They don't get sick. B. Don't take time off and do not require holiday pay, loadings, super, etc. (All of those things happen to a VA but as a client we never know so it does not interfere.”*

### *Clients like to “ease in” gently when starting to work with a new VA:*

- ◆ *“Tasks grow as you become confident with the VA you are working with, start with something you have done yourself so you have a measure then take it from there.”*

### *Clients appreciate care and attention:*

- ◆ *“As a VA what they don't know they find out, no one knows everything but I think what is important to me is that they answer my questions how ever menial they may seem.”*

### *Clients go by first impressions:*

- ◆ *“A picture is worth a thousand words! Without doubt an impressive website is a good beginning but it must be user friendly and have a 'contact us' sounds silly but you would be surprised those that don't, a contact us that replies within 24 hours.”*



*Virtual Assistance from a VA's perspective.*



### *What does the term “Virtual Assistant” mean to a VA?*

- ◆ *“The term “Virtual Assistant” for me means, Someone assisting a Client remotely regarding their business needs.”*
- ◆ *“For me, a Virtual Assistant is someone who takes pride in her own work which in turn delivers outstanding work for her clients. One of my tag lines is the 'joy of delegation'. A good VA will give you the room and space to create new, profitable ideas. She's the one taking care of all the technical details while you focus on activities that generate revenue.”*
- ◆ *“The term Virtual Assistant to me, means a home based worker providing administrative support to someone who wants a cost effective alternative to hiring a full time member of staff. It means as a VA that my work is always varied, interesting and rarely mundane.”*
- ◆ *“Someone who does the work they love and have done in the brick and mortar world from a remote or virtual location.”*
- ◆ *“Virtual Assistance is an eco-friendly way of procuring resources to support businesses, for a range of reasons. 1) for individual projects where the skills required are transitory 2) where full time resources are not required 3) where the business owner is mobile and/or required to travel often 4) where the*

## CHAPTER 2 – VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

*business does not want the cost and bother of an employed, office based worker. All of our work is carried out over the internet by utilising state of the art virtual systems. Business owners can access their data and records from any location and on any computer that has internet access.”*

- ◆ *“The term Virtual Assistant means anyone providing a professional service through the Internet to individuals or businesses that need those particular services. Whether you do all the work yourself or have a team in place to help implement, you are virtually providing assistance to support your clients.”*
- ◆ *“It means having the freedom to conduct business in my own manner. We have all worked in jobs in which we thought “If I was running things...” well now I am and I’m loving it. Working as a Virtual Assistant gives me the flexibility that I need while allowing me to work.”*



### *Why do VA's become VA's?*

◆ *“My old boss would often comment to me, saying 'I reckon we could do this stuff from home!' We figured that both of us could work remotely and just catch up for a couple of hours each week so he could sign off on the projects I was working on.”*

◆ *“I always wanted to start my own business so I started to do some research online and came across the Virtual Assistant industry and I knew that's what I wanted to do. I wanted the flexibility of owning my own business while still being there for my family.”*

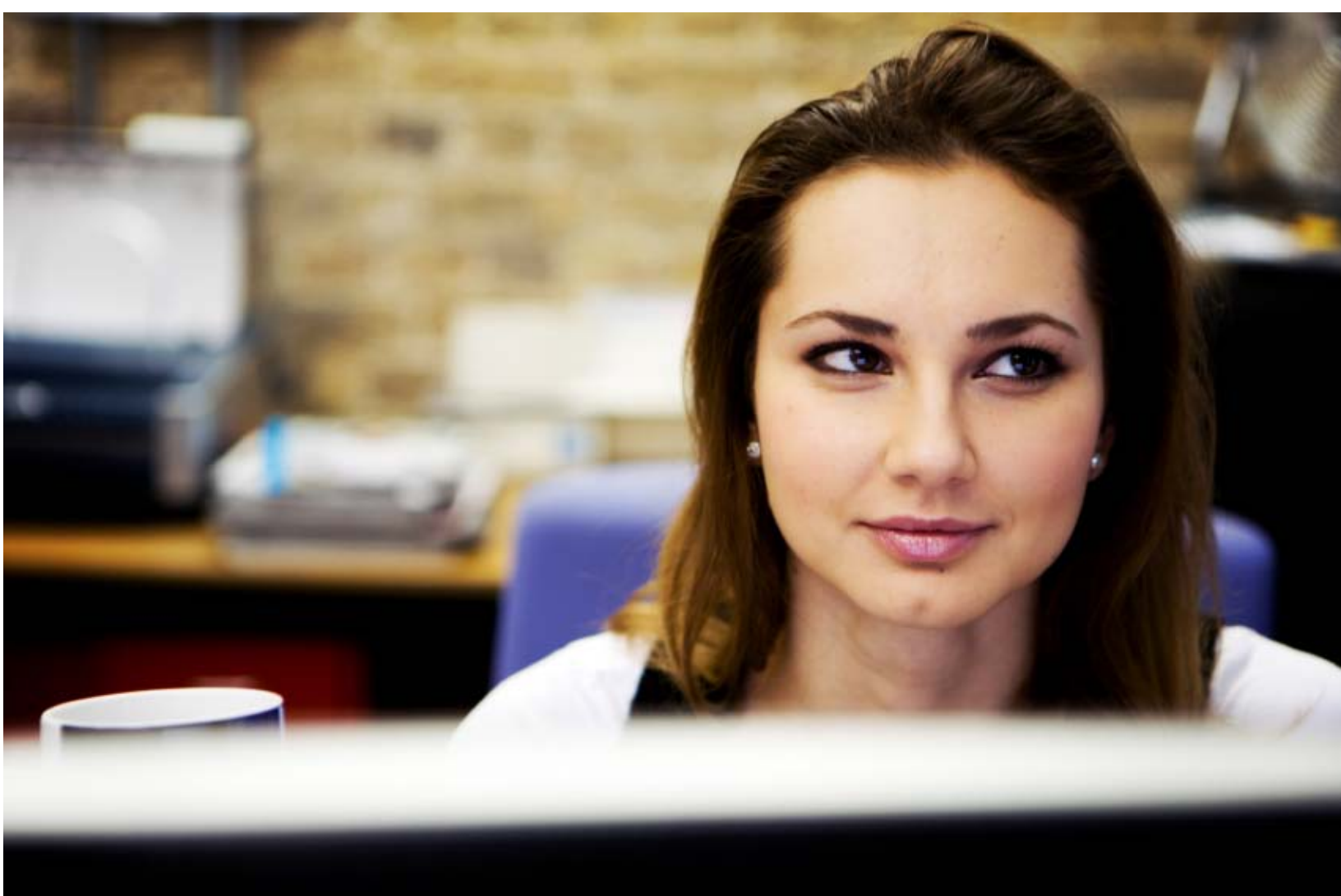
◆ *“I love helping others achieve their goals by offering them my expertise. I love working from home and the freedom that a virtual business has to offer.”*

*Excellent VA's are selective with who they work with.*

- ◆ *“I love working with people who are able to delegate and not micro manage. Clients obviously need to trust their VA and without the face to face meetings that “normal” jobs take for granted, that trust has to be really earned by us. Clients who are willing to take the plunge and are open to a different way of working are great!”*
- ◆ *“My preferred client is someone who can clearly communicate their business goals. Someone who understands what a VA is and does, and is looking for a long term working relationship with their VA. A good client will understand the time it take to complete tasks and appreciate what skills are required to complete those tasks.”*
- ◆ *“They have to be friendly and cooperative, and their industry has to appeal to me. For example, I couldn't work for a cigarette company because I don't believe in their product!”*
- ◆ *“Initially I would look for ambition, drive, integrity, focus and fun. I would also require a minimum standard of communication skills, as well as an understanding of timing and planning.”*

### *Why virtual assistants “Love” the industry.*

- ◆ *“Support and sense of community. I haven't seen rivalry between VAs; no matter who I approach or speak to, everyone is open and willing to share their knowledge about their chosen field of expertise.”*
- ◆ *“I really like being able to pick and choose whom I work for.”*



## CHAPTER 2 – VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

- ◆ *“Virtual working is relatively new and it carries the enthusiasm and camaraderie of new, exciting, entrepreneurship. Participants in virtual industries are helping each other in a wave of optimism and excitement. Researching and sharing new and better technology and re-writing the process manuals.”*
- ◆ *“I like being in charge of how little or how much I work and really having a totally flexible schedule. It ROCKS!”*
- ◆ *“I love being my own boss! Working from home by myself at the moment means I have no overheads. There are some days when I miss working in a busy office environment but each day is different and brings new challenges and I can’t honestly say that about my old job!”*
- ◆ *“I love working from any location! I can write in coffee shops, at my moms, my boyfriends job, etc. I just LOVE that!”*
- ◆ *“What I love most about being a VA is the ability to live or be anywhere in the world and still run a professional, profitable paperless business.”*

# *The Core Business Models of the VA Industry.*

With all the many and varied types of VA out there, generally each VA will have a core business model. There are 3 significant business models that a VA can use depending on their level of experience and skill. The business model may change and evolve over time into one of the other models, but overall these are the main 3 which currently exist in the industry.





### *The Innovator Model*

Innovators are generally experienced and highly skilled individuals within the VA industry. They can create a virtual assistant company either as a solo VA or with an in-house team, or by hiring additional subcontractors. The innovator model is designed around the person rather than the skill set, and the innovator will be excellent at developing lucrative business relationships, marketing, planning, and all of the ideas and creativity that is required to drive a small to medium business forward. The innovator will often use this business model to work within an online business manager role and/or consultancy role. They make great partners for small to medium business owners.

### *The Supporter Model*

This model is designed around individuals with particular skill sets that they want to use in the role of supporting business owners, they may have one skill or several skills that they specialise in, depending on their background. Those skills can range from things such as transcription or editing, through to graphic design or website development. Supporters will be able to efficiently work within their skill sets, making them an excellent asset to an innovator model, or to a business owner looking to develop their own team of sub-contractors with specific skills.

### *The Supplier Model*

To build a business using the supplier model, you don't necessarily need to have the VA skills, but you do need to have management and leadership skills, and be very good at doing business. Many suppliers will often employ VA's rather than use sub-contractors or business owners and then they provide virtual assistant services with the employees of the company. This model will often be used for larger organisations such as call centre environments, the supplier model is often based on much larger volumes of VA's than the innovator model will be able accommodate, and because of this, the VA's which work within this business model are ideal for larger corporations which need more manpower.

These “3 Business Models” are essential to the industry; they cater for the requirements of every business owner, and will continue to do so for years to come. On a global scale, business owners are becoming more aware of the benefits of working with virtual assistants, and because of this, it makes this one of the most awesome industries to join from a business perspective, and for this reason, I predict that entrepreneurs will begin taking the industry far more seriously.

# CHAPTER 3

## ONLINE MARKETING



## CHAPTER 3 – ONLINE MARKETING

Social media has well and truly arrived and as smart-phone technology helps to ensure that more and more people discover the Internet and interact on a regular basis, people are going to be spending even more time online. Internet marketing is truly a growth industry and has held up especially well during this most recent recession. You need to claim your fair share of this and should take a good look at your web presence and planned initiatives.

I have outlined a number of areas for your consideration. Don't be overwhelmed by all the potential and remember that you can find plenty of help as you venture into each of these areas to assist you with boosting your chances of securing success online.



# Facebook

What can you say about Facebook? This must be a staple of any online marketer's mix. The platform has really “taken the world by storm” and definitely piqued the interest of the general public, essentially eclipsing the embarrassed and much-more-established MySpace in popularity.

*It took “less than nine months” for Facebook to reach 100 million users and it is said that if it represented a country, it would be the fourth most populated in the world! In short order, a Facebook presence must be created for your Internet marketing campaign...*

To really get the most out of Facebook, create a company fan page. We are all familiar with the typical layout of our personal page, but a company devoted presence can be established, so that you can start building social interaction with existing clients and prospects. This is a great way to link your blog and to integrate with Twitter and other social media initiatives. You should be active in many different social media accounts for best effect. Facebook allows you to create event pages within your account and once you are established you can invite your friends, clients and prospects to “real life” events, such as a special sale at your store for example, or to webcasts or other multimedia ideas that you may have to promote your wares.

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background.

Getting the most out of Facebook is not a “set it and forget it” deal and you will need to ensure that your presence is adequately managed. Just as a blog is not very effective unless you update it, you will not keep the interest of prospects and fans unless you keep up with your Facebook presence regularly, ideally on a daily basis.

# Twitter

Did you know that according to our friends at [econsultancy.com](http://econsultancy.com), social network interaction and blog reading represent the fourth most popular online activities, beating out personal e-mail. As much as 10% of all the time spent on the Internet is spent on social media sites! Search engine giant Bing recently published its top 10 world trends for the year and social media heavyweight newbie Twitter came in second place overall. This just goes to show the sheer level of interest in social media and in this case, the new boy on the block - Twitter. Just as it's important for you to "be" on Facebook, you must maintain a proactive presence on Twitter as well.



twitter

Twitter has been widely referred to as a micro-blog and has really found its own niche. As you know, this medium allows you to send short status messages, and it has really caught on within the business world. It is possible to notify clients about special deals, to handle customer relationship matters and to exhibit a sense of visibility that was previously unheard-of.

## CHAPTER 3 – ONLINE MARKETING

A Twitter presence for your online initiative should be more than just a straightforward account. Those who are serious about this medium create a targeted background design rather than the generic offering, set up their profiles and links correctly and really consider how to build followers. It is possible to accurately target followers (using keyword research and other tools) who have a vested interest in your particular niche. Once again, as with Facebook, management and maintenance of your Twitter account will take a concerted effort. You should allocate time, ideally again on a daily basis, to create meaningful messages, a.k.a. tweets, and interact with others through direct messages. Note that the vast majority of members, corporate or otherwise, do not meaningfully interact through this medium and are certainly missing out. You should aim to be one of the educated few, who really take advantage of what this fantastic medium has to offer.





# *Blogging*

In the world of Internet marketing, the entire arena has changed quite significantly over the last couple of years. Since the effective arrival of “web 2.0” and the social media revolution, marketing online has become much more of a subtle and thoughtful approach. Great emphasis is now placed on establishing your operation and your name, so that you are viewed as expert and authoritative. When you interact through social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter, do be careful as you go about it - and rarely, if ever, approach prospects with a hard sell. It’s highly recommended that you maintain a blog in addition to your main sales site. You can certainly link them and you can even create a subdomain to actually host your blog, but you should maintain an element of separation.

Consider your core operation. You need to educate prospects about your product or service, whatever it may be. You may know how great your offerings are and may be convinced that they represent a great bargain for people out there in the real world. However, you need to convince others and this is where you must establish yourself and your organisation as experts. Create and maintain a well-designed, professionally presented blog. You can use a content management system or platform such as Wordpress, the leader in this field, as you establish your presence.

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Ideally, your Facebook and Twitter programs should interact with your blog, as you create awareness and show your expertise. Your blog should always be educational and informative as this, once again, helps to build up your credibility.

There are a number of initiatives available to help you establish your blog. For example, you can syndicate the content, so that your blog posts appear within a number of other blogs around the net, each of which is looking for great content and features targeted to your particular niche. This can be very powerful.



### *Commenting*

One fundamental thought you need to bear in mind is that people are always looking for social proof before they buy online. This is why you should integrate testimonials within your main sales site as prominently as possible. Sites such as Amazon.com have done this quite well because they fully focus on social proof. You can read any number of items of feedback related to every single item that they sell. They even show you “what others bought” to give you an additional “feel-good” bonus. When it comes to your blog, try and establish an interactive relationship with your readers. Initiate a blog commenting program, to get a thread started and don't be afraid to allow an element of controversy, so long as it's reasonable and non-harmful, of course. The more visitors see how dynamic your blog is, the more likely they are to sign up for your RSS feed, to bookmark your pages and to visit more often.



# *Social Bookmarking*

Bookmarking sites abound on the Internet. These are essentially social networks by themselves and are populated by people who are like-minded and have a definite interest in the niche or subject matter in focus. Some bookmarking sites are rather generic, while others are very focused, for example technology. It's a good idea to investigate the best bookmarking sites for your niche and to join. As we have said before, regular maintenance and involvement is most beneficial. Your bookmarking accounts should be personalised, with photographs, biographies and you should aim to establish a friend network within.

While it is certainly possible to bookmark your own sites and your blog postings, for example, if you can get others to do so as well this is more powerful. There are now some clubs emerging where membership opens your content to bookmarking by the other members. Through a reciprocal arrangement and for best effect, you would bookmark the other members' content. Alternatively, you can opt for services that will bookmark your content for you. Bookmarking can be very powerful, especially if you have something unusual, unique or emotive to promote. Your content has a chance of going viral and creating a wave of traffic to your sites.

# *Article Marketing*

The Internet is all about good content. We know that Bill Gates coined the term “content is king,” and it’s as true today if not truer than it was when he originally said it. Essentially every web page contains written content, primarily in the form of articles, detailing what the page is all about. You may find that you have a tremendous amount of competition in your niche and your chance to set your operation apart from all the rest lies in the creation of great content. Article writing is a skill that’s in high demand these days and is sure to increase. You simply cannot get away with poorly constructed content and this is as important as a well designed and optimised website. If visitors do not like what they are reading or do not immediately perceive value, they will quickly click away to someplace else.



Through article writing you definitely establish your credibility and give people a reason to buy from you. Your articles and content should be well structured and thought out and should always aim to educate, inform or entertain. As we have said before, times have changed and those who think that they can put any old content on their site and “stuff” their main keywords as often as possible to try and gain search engine ranking are sorely mistaken. The search engine algorithms are now very intuitive and have been programmed to decipher the content of your articles. They are essentially using a process known as latent semantic indexing to see whether your content contains secondary or related keywords. In this way they will be able to determine if content is purposeful and relates to the primary subject, due to the existence (or otherwise) of words and phrases that typically complement the prime words.

Many people are not happy about writing, nor do they have the adequate skills or the time to devote to this area. In this case, they are better off employing the services of a professional article writer, skilled in LSI, web content composition and optimisation. For any Internet marketing campaign, article composition is one of the most important tasks ahead.

*Keep Writing!*

Articles can be used in a variety of ways. They can form the content on your website, detailing uses for your products or services, or they can be used to compile newsletters, which are sent out to your e-mail lists. Remember that for best effect you should establish an ongoing e-mail membership program. Setup a means of capturing names and e-mail addresses through a squeeze page on your website. Always offer the prospect something tangible in return for their contact details and suggest that you can send them great information related to this particular niche on a regular basis. Once again though, remember that content is king and your e-mail newsletters should contain great educational information, not a hard sell! When you select a professional content writer, remember that you will need regular posts for your blog as well....

### *Spread The Word, Literally.*

While articles are essential in order to populate your websites and books with directly related content, article marketing represents a whole new sphere. Essentially you can use your great content to spread the word about your existence by distributing specially created variants of each article to authority sites, article directories and relevant blogs. There is a constant thirst for great information and don't forget that the majority of people use search engines such as Google and Bing to look for answers to their queries. By distributing your articles in a concerted fashion, searchers will be able to find them within the article directories, leading to additional traffic back to your sites.

The articles themselves, when they are distributed, will contain what is known as a “resource box,” which contains a little bit about you and your organisation together with an anchor link text, designed with optimisation in mind, but which links back to your related website or blog.

Article marketing is a long-term prospect. It has been proven time and time again to be one of the most effective means of not only generating traffic, but also building solid back-links pointing to your site. Many of the article directories have an established rank in the eyes of the search engines and each site that publishes one of your articles represents a back-link for you. The more back links that you acquire, especially from highly ranked sites, the better in terms of your overall search engine positioning.

One of the most powerful benefits of article marketing is that it helps to establish your author name and your site as experts in your niche. The more good information that you have circulating around the net, related and pointing to your sites, the better.

*Always remember that it's all about “building credibility” in a very competitive world.*



# *Online Marketing Summary*

We have touched on a few ways to help promote your presence online and to really make sure that you're getting the most out of your Internet marketing campaigns. There are a couple of underlying trends throughout. Firstly, you need to ensure that you establish your level of expertise. You need to become the “go to guys” in your niche. Secondly, especially as regards social media initiatives, be subtle about the way that you approach your presence. You need to make people aware of who you are and what you do and through careful interaction, once again establish your reputation.




For best effect, it's advisable to link all your strategies toward the common goal. Link your Facebook and Twitter accounts to your blog updates, promote good comment interaction, syndicate your material, and always make sure that it's bookmarked. You have to create top quality content on a regular basis, and you should ensure that it's marketed and distributed to further enhance your reach.



*Make your move - look to "take action."*

*Understand that you might have the best looking website around, but nothing will happen unless you're interactive.*



# CHAPTER 4

## BUSINESS SUCCESS



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There are 3 distinct and yet vital components to my business success formula. If you're able to meet all 3, I am confident you could and should take the plunge, and become your own boss. If there is even a single component missing, you may need to stay put, to start embracing the cubicle and get ready to dry clean your musical tie for the office Christmas party.

The formula for knowing whether you are going to make it or break it is simple, it's a combination but like a cocktail, if one element is missing it's just not going to taste the same.

You can't go into this book half-heartedly, you have to take it very seriously; if you do, you will get your answer by the end. Read carefully and be prepared to do your utmost to take care of your future as a successful business owner.



# *The Formula*

There are three distinct and vital components which comprise “The Formula.” They are:

*Purpose*

*Passion*

*People*

*As you read through this,  
consider your own feelings throughout  
and be totally honest with yourself.*



Whenever we start a business we always need a purpose, we have a voice inside our head saying, "I have to get out of this rut, change my life, quit my job, travel the world, pay off my debt. My mind is made up; I am going to do it."

Now let's be honest. There are varying degrees to these statements. People everywhere are saying, "I am going to lose the extra stone," but 3 years later they are still saying it. This is half-hearted, excuses come into the mix, and those excuses turn into brick walls. You have got to attach more substance to this, as you will never get anywhere without a genuine purpose.

What if you wanted to lose that stone, and you only allowed yourself to have 3 outfits in your current size, you vowed never to buy another stitch of clothing unless it was a size smaller, for example. Eventually, if you stuck to it, you would get bored of your clothes; they would wear thin from over washing and fall apart, so what would you do then? If the only option is to lose weight so you can buy a new outfit, then you would do it, after all it's better than walking around naked, right?

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Purpose comes in many forms - we can call them goals, ambitions, targets, resolutions, but the fact is, that purpose is what will allow us to achieve our desires, because the option of not reaching them has been diminished by the outcome of failure. One has to outweigh the other. You have to replace your existing target with a more attractive one.



### *How To Find Your Purpose.*

Let's say for example you wanted to start a business. Why? Money, freedom, time, you have a reason, but the reason is not purpose. Let's say for example that you hate your boss and your job and that you want to quit. Saying it is one thing, but doing it is another matter entirely, so you have to set a purpose and stick to it. Give yourself one year. In that year you have to find a business opportunity for yourself, and start working in your own time during the evenings, mornings, weekends, late at night etc... To get

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that business off the ground, add a note on your calendar one year to the day from now, that says you're going to resign. Physically write out your resignation letter, date the letter for one year from the day, and then you have made a very important psychological decision that you are going to be unemployed as of that date.

What would you do? You don't want to be without an income and you certainly don't want to default on your bills or mortgage, so do something about it! A year is plenty of time to build a business up enough to replace your monthly salary, so just do it, find a way to get yourself out of the hole you may find yourself in a year's time if you take no action. If there's no consequence to not achieving your goals - then you may find yourself in that same job, "year-in-and-year-out" complaining about the same boss.

You see, almost all of us revert to our "comfort zone." This zone may be both a physical place and also an intangible area where we feel safe, secure and somewhat insulated from all of those nasty things that are going on around us in the real world. The comfort zone can be very difficult to break out of. For many of us, "breaking out" can be quite a painful experience, after all. Is a comfort zone the best place to be for us as we go through our lives? The honest answer to that is no, it's not necessarily the best place at all. It can be quite difficult to break out of that comfort zone though, so this is why you need that specific purpose. Have a very clear and specific reason for wanting to make the change.



### *How I Found My Purpose.*

Let me give you an example of my personal situation. I will explain to you, step-by-step, how I found the motivation to do something and how I actually went about doing it in the “real world.”

*In February 2005, when I was 23, I was pretty fed up with several things, such as the daily commute to the city, the huge council tax bill, the ridiculously large mortgage that I would most likely be paying into my retirement and the sheer predictability of everything in my life. Does this sound familiar to you?*

*When I took a look at my problems, I could see the only way out would be to start working for myself, but I was in no position to do that with my cost of living each month. I decided that in order to start a business I would need to get rid of my mortgage and drastically alter my living expenses. Now this isn't so easy in the UK as costs of living are high and you really need a steady job. So my only option was to dramatically reduce my living costs. This is when I decided I would have to take drastic action and actually move in order to do this.*



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*So the turn of events which follow are the steps I took to quit my job in order to experience financial freedom, and this all happened in under 3 months. As they say in the adverts, your results may differ, but this will still give you a good idea of what can happen.*

### MONTH 1:

*The year before I had taken a holiday for 2 weeks to Egypt. I was amazed at how cheap everything was! I knew a couple of people there from my holiday, and it was very economical to travel there at the time as flights were next to nothing. I decided that Egypt would be a good place to go. Here you can find cheap rent, very affordable living costs and a great climate (I love the sun). I was able to very easily obtain a visa just by landing and heading to the visa office. You can buy a one year visa, it's as "cheap as chips" and (importantly for business connectivity) most places near the centre of town in Luxor had good internet access. There are internet cafes everywhere and if you decide to go somewhere like Cairo, then the lifestyle there is pretty far advanced, and you can have all the luxuries you would normally expect and relish in the western world.*

*So in February 2005 I put my house up for sale, and gave a month's notice at my job with a view to making it to Egypt as soon as possible.*

### MONTH 2:

*In March 2005 I sold or gave away every item of furniture and the things that I was not able to take with me to my new destination. Now, this was quite easy for me. Once I made the decision to leave, letting go of my possessions was just another part of the process, but I can really appreciate now how difficult letting go of “things” can be. Nevertheless you have to really question just how valuable they are, in reality. Are they essential to your existence? More often than not, the answer will be no. Be honest with yourself with all those items of electrical equipment, clothes and ornaments. – Ask yourself, “Are these things necessary for my existence and inner happiness?” If you're honest, you will see that the answer is – largely, no.*



*I also purchased my tickets to Egypt and set about closing up my accounts and sorting out loose ends. I had arranged temporary accommodation from a friend I met on holiday, in an apartment close to the centre of Luxor and actually that's where I ended up living for 2 years. The monthly rent was just 500LE which is £50 – the price, in some shops, for a pair of shoes these days.*

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### MONTH 3:

*In April 2005 I flew to Egypt. By this time I was lucky as I had a buyer for my house, and the sale was going through. The sale actually closed in May, when I was already living my new life in Egypt.*

*I made sure I had a good, light notebook style laptop and an internet connection where I was going so I was able to start researching the best possible options for business opportunities right away. Of course, I was also able to stay in touch with friends and family. Now, at the time I had no idea what a Virtual Assistant was or that my time spent researching was going to result in the formation of Virtual Miss Friday.*

*My basic costs of living each month totalled around £100, which was the equivalent of about \$200 at the time, so I pretty much lived like a queen, and did whatever I wanted. Yes, it's totally nuts... but it allowed me to study and research and enjoy my surroundings. It was one of the most memorable and liberating periods of my life, in all honesty*

*Looking back, everyone thought I was crazy, but now I consider it one of the most sober and sensible decisions I ever made in my life. Sometimes you have to act without thinking about it too much, or you will likely talk yourself out of it. If it feels right to you, then it's most likely the right thing to do.*

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*So this is the important moral to take away from the story about my emigration to Egypt. If deep down inside you believe that this is the right thing to do, don't second-guess it too much. Make it your purpose in life. Be honest with yourself, is there a spark deep down inside of you that is trying to tell you something, if only you would listen? That "spark" is the instinct, your gut-feeling.*



*If you follow your instincts,  
you will "find your purpose."*



Once you have your purpose, the only way to really go about "getting there" is to find your passion.

Love... amour... one of the most intense feelings and emotions. It can make us do crazy things, drive us mad, make us the happiest we have ever been or conversely the saddest. Most people will do anything and everything for the one they love; they will make sacrifices, step out of their comfort zone, go the extra mile, you name it...

Remember Cathy and Heathcliff, Sonny and Cher, Romeo and Juliet...? Well, how about you and your business?

Love is a powerful emotion, and when it's combined with your business it is indeed a potent mix! Whatever you choose to do, it's important that you have a passion for it, as you have got to be able to sustain your business for the long-term. You can't get bored of it, and must be willing to do anything and everything to see it succeed, so finding a good match is essential to the longevity and wellbeing of the relationship that you are going to

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develop and foster within your business. Draw all those analogies between a loving, personal relationship and the one that you are going to have to nurture with your business!

The most common causes of a breakdown in a relationship can also be the most common causes of failure in business terms. So let's look at some of the reasons behind a breakup?



### *An Affair*

You have to remain faithful and committed to your business. Drifting off on a tangent and diverting your attention will only delay the onset of success - or worse, stop it altogether. Take time to fully understand and then own the level of commitment that you will need. Be careful not to dilute your abilities and the chances of success by considering or taking on different projects. You will need to be single-minded and fully committed.

### *Clash Of Personality*

You have to get along with your business, so if you hate the great outdoors, don't open a camping shop no matter how much money you could make, or what a good idea it sounds like at the time. What really "rings your bell" or "floats your boat?" Please don't be tempted to go with an idea that you believe could make you the most money, if it doesn't match up with your ideals, beliefs, passions or loves. Isn't it like getting married to somebody for their money? You know that it will not work over the long term! Trying to get on with somebody when your personalities clash is very difficult and an uphill struggle - you don't need that kind of scenario in your business.



### *Long Distance*

If you want to travel and you have a business which is tied to one place you could end up resenting it, and begin to rue your lack of freedom. The location of your business is important in the long term. I personally wanted to travel and not be tied to one place, so I chose the Internet as my place of business. Consequently, I wouldn't be tied to a physical location – I would become what is now known as a "digital nomad."

### *Lack Of Trust*

You need to start a business based on something you know about already or are willing to spend time learning. When you are trying to sell a product or service that you know nothing about, people will see through the lie. Gaining trust is essential to success. Your quality of work and your work ethic are vitally important. Remember once again, that if you have chosen a subject that truly interests you and motivates you in the ultimate analysis, the passion will be able to help you to master it and will also come across in the way that you market it and sell your product or service. Build your platform carefully and conscientiously and people will trust you. Try to wing it and you'll be in for a rocky ride.

### *Stagnancy*

Relationships can often go stale, because they become mundane. If there is very little change, then the daily grind teamed with the same routine, can become somewhat tedious. We can easily lose sight of the reason why we are in the relationship in the first place. Whatever you choose, make sure that you won't get bored and remember that passion is passion; whether you love train spotting or deep sea diving, you have to love it for life. If you find that you are excited to do something, or that a specific activity or function inspires you to get out of bed in the morning, this is where your heart lies.



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### *Hassle*

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. These are lyrics from a song from way back, but they have some truth to them. You need to work at your business and when times are tough and you feel like giving up, don't. Most businesses will fail in the first year, why? People give up too easily, which translates into the sad reality that they were not passionate enough about what they were doing to start with. Divorce and break-ups are common, but what is rare these days is to find a marriage that has lasted decades - until death do you part - and you had better believe that such a lifetime commitment didn't come without having to work at it through the tough times.



### *The Unexpected*

This is a true story, it's kind of a metaphor, so I thought I would throw it in here.

*When I was at school many years ago, I used to watch this boy from a distance. He was at the time out of my league, or so I thought, so I spent day in and day out wondering what I could do to myself to catch his attention. I would change my hair, my makeup, my clothes, hang around with people I didn't like very much even, just because he knew them - yes I was a bit of a "sad do," but hey, I was 13, what can I say... One day, out of the blue we were at the school disco and he happened to send his friend over to ask if I would dance with him! Well, I was so scared I almost said no, but then realised that was insane after the effort I had gone to, to try and make contact with him, so we danced together to a cheesy slow song. He warned me beforehand not to get any funny ideas and he wasn't going to kiss me or anything, so I played it cool and told him that I would like to see him try...*

*Anyway, 14 years later the oddest thing happened, I found him on Facebook from an old school friend's profile. When I looked at his Facebook account it had loads of pictures in it, of him, with another guy and that guy turned out to be his boyfriend...*

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Feelings for another person can yield unexpected results - and guess what; feelings for your business can too. Not everything always goes according to plan, and no matter how much you want something, you have to accept that it may not work out the way you had hoped, but eventually, something will - I am happily married now, by the way! :-)

Things may not always be what they seem and while you must always keep an open mind in business, don't continue to pursue lost leads. If something isn't working out, move on and turn your attentions to potentially better outcomes. This means, that in the world of entrepreneurialism, you can indeed come across false starts. Many of the most successful multimillionaires today started from square one and came across just this type of stumbling block. If it happens, or you suspect that you may indeed be "barking up the wrong tree," re-purpose!

### *Love It!*

Before you start your business, fall in love with the idea of it. Just like we can all imagine the qualities we seek in our perfect partner, what qualities and attributes are you looking for in your perfect business venture? Finding the right match can provide wonderful long term rewards and growth. Remember to always treat your business association like a real marriage. The implications for failure can be considerable in either case, but the rewards for success can be truly magnificent as well.



*Once you have your passion,  
you need to “start” finding people.*

No matter what business you're in, people are essential to the success of it. When I was a start-up, I had never truly considered the role people would play; after all there was just me and an idea, there was no concept - or realisation, of a bigger picture.

Over the course of your business you're going to need all sorts of people to both contribute to its well-being and to engage with you.

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These can include:

- ◆ Customers
- ◆ Clients
- ◆ Staff/Team Members
- ◆ Mentors/Coaches
- ◆ Partners
- ◆ Accountants
- ◆ Lawyers
- ◆ Associations, Societies And Organisations
- ◆ Supporters
- ◆ Fans, Followers And Friends
- ◆ Guests
- ◆ Readers
- ◆ Viewers
- ◆ Subscribers
- ◆ Commenters



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Am I making my point? You will need to develop people skills in order to have your own successful business. All those fancy degrees, certificates, training courses and exams will only get you so far. One of the most essential skills that any entrepreneur can have is the ability to communicate well with people - or at least have a spokesperson who can do it for them!

A classic symptom of a failing business is not enough activity. I have observed business owners spend inordinate amounts of time fiddling with their websites, their business card design, wondering whether they have the right placement for pictures in their marketing material and wondering why, when everything looks so immaculate and amazing, people are not breaking the door down to buy their product or service. Well, therein lies the problem; people are not breaking the door down because there are no people yet!

There is never any substitute for interaction in business, especially in the online world where so much dynamic business activity happens.

*Whatever you want to achieve in your  
business - you need people.*

If you're opening an ice-cream store you need people who like ice-cream. If you're a singer you need people who like your voice. However, these people must also want to part with a portion of their bank balance for your ice-cream or your CD.



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Draw people in, and make them come to you. By you, I mean “you,” not your logo or your company, but you!



If you are just starting out on your journey, you will always need to consider your “brand.” To me, a brand is a unique identifier which is imprinted on the memory of the people who come into contact with you.

Thanks to Social Media, branding, in my opinion, has become less complicated than it was a few years ago. It used to be all about your colours, your logo, the form and function of your website, and to a degree it still is. These are all very essential elements of a brand, but for me anyway, these aren’t the most important factors anymore when building a brand – certainly not in the Virtual Assistant Industry anyway, which is my arena.

*So what is important?*

*YOU!*

The least complicated and most unique way to build your brand is to sell yourself, first and foremost, before your business. Your business, especially one which involves provision of support services, is very people oriented. The people oriented business always focuses on just that - people - and so your strong personality must be at the core of it. It's important to project your persona.

Just think about it... Let's take Virtual Assistance as an example. If you're a Virtual Assistant anyone can visit 50 virtual assistant websites, and not really see anything that jumps out and says, "Look at me, I am the VA you need!" Most likely, a lot of those websites will be offering similar services, they will feature different colours and different stock images of people sitting in offices looking at computers, or perhaps they will have on them the trusty "client handshake" picture. It's fine, it looks professional, but it's a little dated and impersonal - if you have one of those websites, it's like having a chilli without the "chilli powder."

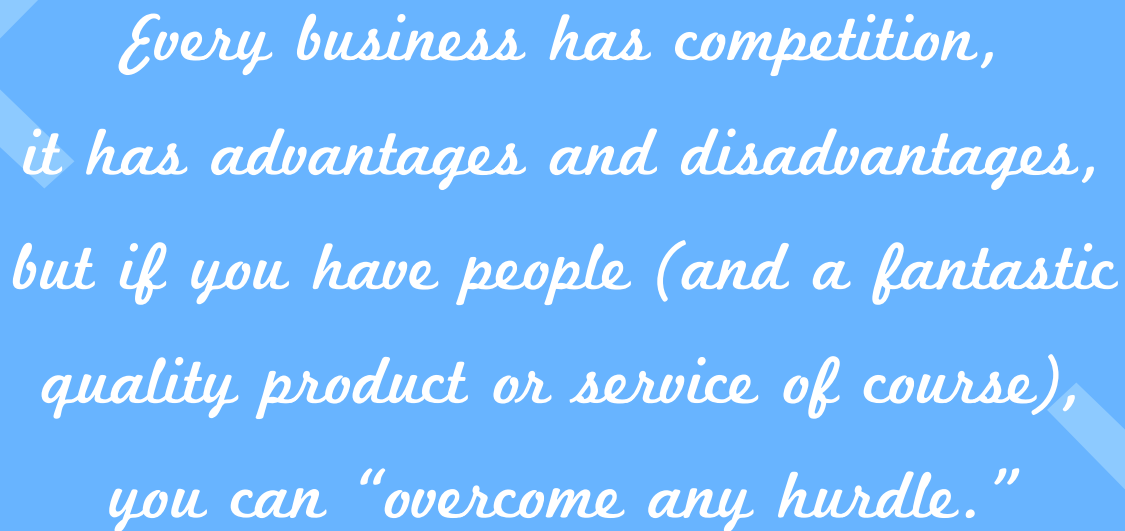
## CHAPTER 4 – BUSINESS SUCCESS

You are a real person, you are alive and YOU alone can be the “hook” when someone lands on your website, or finds you through social media. But we have to be a little bit careful here, because the most important part of you being the brand is in making sure that people really are seeing “the real you,” and not the staged you. By this I mean, don’t try to impress potential clients with anything that is too false or a little bit robotic. If you know you can do an excellent job, and you know you have a unique selling point, whether this be a particular skill set, or competitive rate, tell people via video, social media and audio, but make a point of telling them as if you were talking to a real human being - and not a camera, or a microphone.



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Reality is what really sells — honesty, sincerity and human interaction with other people. It's very difficult to capture the real you in a virtual environment, but with services such as YouTube and Vimeo, we are a lot closer than we were before, and if you want to get ahead in the race, start using these channels of communication, and be yourself! You're not at a job interview or trying to impress your boss anymore - you are telling your visitors that it's their lucky day - because they've finally found you!



*Every business has competition,  
it has advantages and disadvantages,  
but if you have people (and a fantastic  
quality product or service of course),  
you can “overcome any hurdle.”*

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Purpose, passion and people are the beginnings of a fruitful and prosperous enterprise. They are the 3 most important qualities for success in my opinion. If you have been struggling with your business, ask yourself if you truly have what it takes to make it work.



Once you have all of these three elements, then whatever journey you set off on, whatever destination you continue to travel to, and whatever path you take, the inevitable end result will be the desired one...

*You can change your life, today, by exploring **The Virtually Anywhere Business!***

# CREDITS

Thank you to the amazing business owners who are either virtual assistants or who work with virtual assistants for contributing to this book - whose contributions can be found within the quotes in the “Virtual Assistant” section.

## *Amanda Alexander*



Founded in 2003, Coaching Mums is a company devoted to teaching and supporting working mothers around the world how to break out of pressure-cooked, guilt ridden vicious circles. Coaching Mums enables working mums to create career and business success on their own terms, ditch the guilt, cope with the pressures of modern life, manage their time better, enjoy their family, feel good about themselves as a mother and as a woman in their own right.. and have a lot more fun!

Amanda Alexander, Founder and Director of Coaching Mums is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) with the International Coach Federation (ICF).

Amanda is professionally trained as a Coach by Coachu, the largest and one of the finest and most respected coach training schools in the world. She is an advanced coach training programme graduate from Coachu, having passed their rigorous Coachu Certified Graduate certification.

<http://coachingmums.com>

## *Douglas C. Mason*

My company publishes Challenge! Integrated Projects and two Challenge! Keyboarding Drills for high school and community college students. We want to update our web presence in order to attract colleges in the USA. Our flagship publication is Legal Keys Keyboarding Drills & Terminology used by many colleges across Canada (but is for Canadian colleges only).

[www.tuskerinternational.com](http://www.tuskerinternational.com)

## *Kat Csengo*



I founded Paperclip Fox in summer 2009 while working full-time in a senior administrative position in London, UK. I have since moved to Berlin, Germany and my business is going strong with clients from the US, Portugal and Germany. My focus is on getting my clients organized and keep them inspired to do their great work. I help them with online marketing, implement systems to increase their productivity and always keep their goals in sight. I organize them via the 37 Signals suite, an online collaboration platform, and I bring ideas to the table for changes, improvements or inspiration.

<http://www.paperclipfox.com>



## *Nichole Davidson*

I am a work at home mom of 4, soon to be 5. My business not only offers a full range of VA skills, I also offer medical and general transcription.

## *Geraldine Farinha-Ferreira*

Geraldine is planning her entry into the virtual assistant industry.

## *Maxine Jack*



I run Business Assist. My background is entrepreneurial. In 1998 I established a recruitment consultancy that grew into a recruitment services group turning over in excess of £23 million, employing over 30 people directly and over 200 consultants on client sites. I am now setting up a VA company that offers a wide range of services from basic admin and office services to business planning consultancy, project support /management and resource management consultancy. Our target market is mainly small and medium businesses that are growing.

[www.businessassistuk.co.uk](http://www.businessassistuk.co.uk)

## *Gráinne Foley*



At Live-Hire, we assist the discriminating business owner in finding the most qualified Virtual Assistant per their exacting specifications, thus allowing them to grow their business while still having the time to enjoy their life! We provide Virtual Assistants for individual projects, part-time work or full-time, ongoing business support.

<http://www.live-hire.com>

## *Douglas Grahame*



My day job is as a Marine Archaeologist spending most of my life on the water or under it searching for historical shipwrecks. Most of my crew smoked and they had all tried many methods to quit, to cut a long story short I flew a guy out from England to put them through his quit program. I was so impressed with the outcome that I did a deal with him to put the whole program on a DVD which I put on the Internet for sale. I believed in the product so much.

<http://www.stopsmokingquitforever.com>

## *Marion Jackson*



Originally from the UK, Marion Jackson is an accomplished Executive Assistant, who has identified a gap in the local New Zealand market for flexible office support. With 26 years relevant corporate experience, Marion's employment history spans two years in the Retirement Industry; two years in Infrastructure Maintenance; four years in the Prestige Motor Vehicle Industry and four years in the Commercial Real Estate Industry. She also spent 14 years in the Travel Industry, most of which was taking care of Corporate Travel arrangements. On top of all that, Marion has an undeniable passion for Interior Design, having completed a Diploma of Professional Interior Design in 2009. Marion now works from her home in Auckland and is the owner and operator of My Virtual Assistant.

[www.myvirtualassistant.co.nz](http://www.myvirtualassistant.co.nz)

## *W. Carson Lapp*

As a former very unhealthy man in my late fifties, suffering with several health problems, including my heart, I received a wake up call when my doctor handed me a small bottle of Nitro saying, always keep this with you, you will experience a major event someday and it will save your life until you get help.

This prompted a major change in my life regarding diet, excess weight and the use of natural products. As I approach my 90 th. birthday in exceptionally good health, active, energetic and prescription free, I am ready to share my 30 years of health information.

At age eighty eight I developed a free health resource web site providing information that makes it possible for anyone to achieve good health and longevity.

<http://www.nh-hr.com/>

### *Genesis Reonico*

Genesis has been a Virtual Assistant for 2 years

### *Thea Robinson*



I am a highly organised, creative and proactive problem solver. As a television production manager for the last 14 years I have managed staff and film crews, sourced locations, dealt with many a tight deadline and odd request - even finding a dog who could run on a treadmill! With my varied experience, calm nature and excellent administration skills I know I can make a difference to your business.

<http://www.gladstoneva.co.uk>

## *Wilma B. Schuler*

I do virtual ghost writing for 2 VA companies and their clients. I enjoy writing and I'm good at it and can work as little or as much as I like.

## *Fanta Jikole*



I have a vested interest in helping Adventurous Business Owners navigate their way through the wilderness of the world-wide-web, onto growing their businesses online and obtaining the treasures of online business success.

Whether your business is online or offline, small or large; my goal is to guide you in the best ways to explore the vast surpluses of online marketing and business support to gain visibility, connect with your clients or customers, and increase your revenue.

Your Virtual Guide On The Journey To Online Business Success Is Here...

[www.fantatikole.com](http://www.fantatikole.com)

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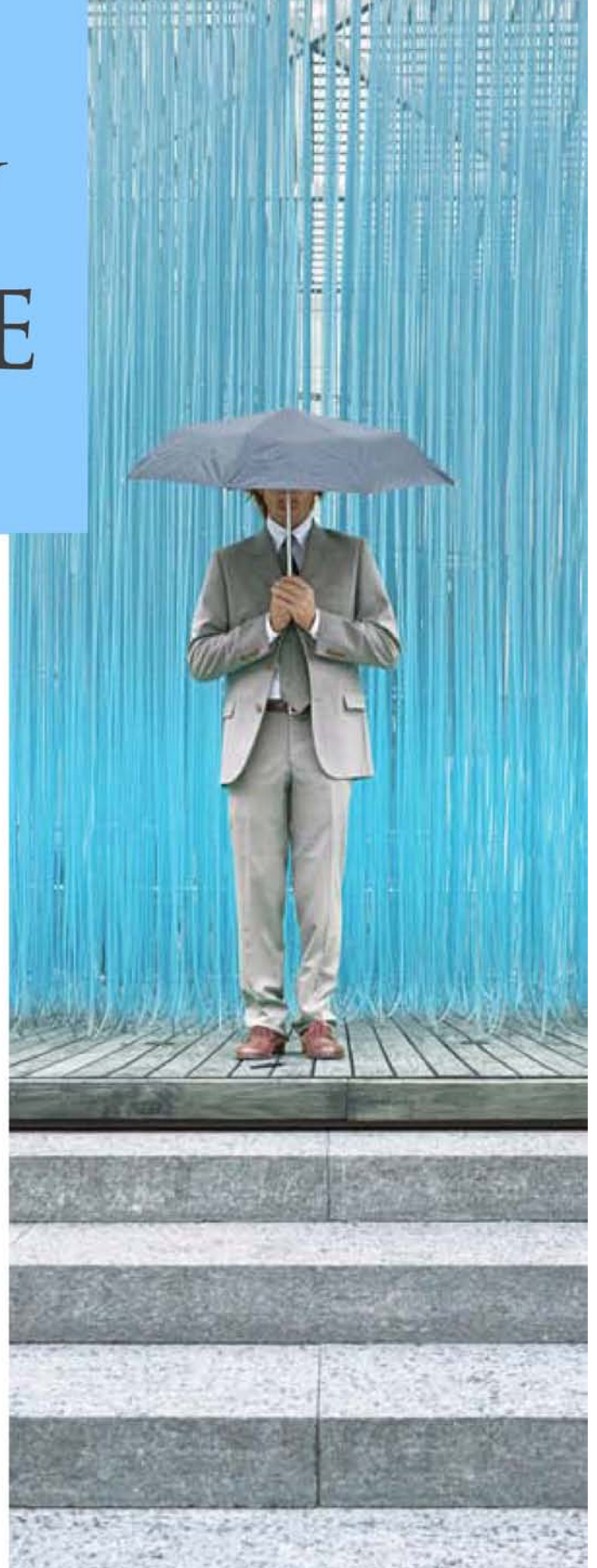
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<http://www.VirtualAssistant-Live.com/The-VA-Series>