



To Get The Best Results From Your Virtual Assistant!!

How Does This Work?

If the concept of working with someone "virtually" is new to you, this is probably your first question. You will be amazed how technology brings you and your Virtual Professional (VP) together no matter what your geographical location. Here are the basics:

Communication - Communication is the key to a successful implementation of this business relationship. You will choose the method and frequency that best serves your needs. This may be by phone, e-mail, or instant messaging (IM). You may require contact on a daily, weekly or simply on an as-needed basis. No matter what method or frequency, the flow of information must be consistent to enable your VP to support you effectively.

Availability - It's important to be clear in this area when choosing a VA. Availability in this context means when your VA is available to take your phone call, answer your e-mail or your IM. This will differ with each VP's practice. Some are available by appointment only. This means s/he may not be by the phone, return your e-mail instantly, or be there to answer your IM. Some VPs are available throughout standard business hours. Be clear on what your expectations are *BEFORE* you begin working with your VP. **Modus operandi:** Most VPs are working with multiple clients. Therefore, you should not expect instant availability every time you call.

Turnaround Time and Deadlines - Because VPs are running a business, just like you, s/he will determine how to best manage the work load *and* when tasks can be completed. Most VPs require 48 hours to complete task requests and of course the type of task will influence turnaround requirements. Of course, there will be times when you need immediate assistance. Most VPs are flexible with this, as long as it is not abused. If you find yourself continually operating in "crisis" mode, your VP will work with you to improve your time management.

Electronic File Sharing - You may want to share a large volume of files and keep the files synchronized in real time. A secure and convenient solution is a shared workspace on the Internet. There are several vendors offering secure sites for this use. Ask your VA what she recommends. For lesser volumes, sending files back and forth via e-mail is convenient.

Sharing Paper Documents - Thanks to the growth of speedy and convenient courier services, what you have in your hands today can literally be in your VA's hands tomorrow. Of course, you may also fax documents or scan your document and send it as an attachment in an e-mail.

Remote Computer Operation - Using Internet based software such as GOTOmyPC or PC Anywhere allows your VA to work at your computer, no matter where s/he is physically located. These programs offer top notch security. This is a great option if you have special software or need help troubleshooting a computer problem.

Phone, Voice Mail or E-mail Support - By simply sharing the access information to your voice mail or e-mail with your VA, s/he is able to assist you in managing them. It may be desirable to create a special email account for that purpose. S/he will access it at times you both agree on and handle tasks per your request. If you want all phone calls handled by your VA, there are several options, including using programs such as www.freedomvoice.com, call forwarding or setting up an additional line in your VA's office. The cost of call forwarding and setting up an additional line should be researched. For costs incurred by your VA, a mutually agreeable allotment of the expense will need to be discussed.

Time Tracking - Most VA's track the time it takes to perform tasks for each client using computer software. Typically, it is reported to each client in conjunction with invoicing. Submitting a time report does not in any way indicate you have the right to manage a VP's time. They are for your records only and the VP remains self managed.

Billing - You will either have the option to Pay As You Go or pay by Retainer. If you are on a Retainer Program, you will pre-pay for a set number of hours. Virtual-Executive.com does not allow you to carry over unused hours, so it may be best to field-test the service before selecting a retainer program. The Pay As You Go program is billed at the end of each calendar month with so many days in which to pay the Invoice.