

5

**STEPS TO
LANDING THE
PERFECT VA**

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5 Steps to Landing the Perfect VA

Introduction

Congratulations! You are now part of a growing trend among businesses owners who have decided to enhance their business and life by seeking out the services of a Virtual Assistant. This workbook was designed to introduce you to the virtual assistant industry and help you decide which VA is right for you and your business. Each of the steps below includes some questions to ask yourself in order to better understand what you are looking for in a Virtual Assistant company.

I attend a lot of networking events and spend hours on the phone with potential clients. During these meetings it became very clear that people don't have a clear understanding of my business, what type of services I offered, or how my business could benefit their company. The people who did understand the industry often didn't know what types of questions to ask in order to determine if I was the right choice for their business.

Before we get started, take a few minutes to head over to my website and bookmark it for future reference: www.mondaymorningva.com. Are you ready to go? Great! Let's get started!

What is a Virtual Assistant?

A virtual assistant (or VA) is an independent business owner who offers off-site administrative and/or specialized technical services to other businesses. VA's work from their own home offices and use their own equipment. Services are provided by electronic means such as email, the internet, phone, fax, FTP, etc.

Services offered will differ from company to company but often include things such as managing phone calls and emails, social media assistance, schedule maintenance, invoicing, website design, bookkeeping, and more. Because of this, it is very important to exercise due diligence before you hire a virtual assistant to ensure they are capable of handling the tasks within your business.

If you're still confused about the services that a VA could offer, try thinking about this: a virtual assistant does any task that is required to be done within your business but that doesn't end with a payment from a client.

How do I choose the right Virtual Assistant?

Step 1 – The right frame of mind

Let's say that you are an interior designer. From a business standpoint, there are two things that you do in your business. The first is working on your business. This includes things like designing and maintaining your website, returning emails or phone calls, drumming up business by implementing a marketing plan, invoicing clients and entering figures into your bookkeeping software, etc.

The second thing you do is working in your business. That encompasses everything that you do with your special talent: meeting with your clients to get the specifics about their ideas, designing projects, and maybe even going into stores to find the perfect fabric or painting for a client. It's what generates revenue in your company. It's your bread and butter.

What you should be asking:

Why are you not outsourcing these tasks? What's holding you back?

What types of things do you hate doing in your business?

Step 2 - Research

The best place to start looking for the perfect VA is to ask your peers for their recommendations. If you don't know anyone who is currently using a virtual assistant, then it's time to start pounding the pavement so to speak. If you perform a Google search for virtual assistant, you'll come up with a laundry list of companies to choose from.

This may be a really good time to take stock of what you are looking for in a virtual assistant. This isn't as hard as it sounds. Just note some of the traits you would look for if you were hiring someone to work in your business. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Experience with certain software
- Knowledgeable in social media
- Someone who is detail orientated

- Someone who is great at following up

The goal is to find someone who is not only compatible with you, but also someone that you can build a lasting business relationship with. Looking at the website and learning about how the virtual assistant handles their business will be good indicators on how they will handle their business with you. Since your VA will be an extension of your company, it's important to get this step right.

What you should be asking:

What skills do you want your VA to possess?

What are your expectations?

Step 3 - The consultation

Most VA's will offer a complimentary consultation to prospective clients. This meeting is generally used to give potential clients an overview of the company, give information about company policies, and to outline the ways in which they can help your business.

You'll want to use this time to not only explain your needs, but also as another tool to determine if the VA is a good fit for you and your business. You'll want to ensure that the VA is explaining their process clearly to you so that you have a good understanding of how your project will be handled. It's very important that by the end of the consultation, you feel confident that the VA has the experience and drive necessary to work on your assignments.

If your gut is telling you that something is not quite right, there is no harm in moving on to the next company. Remember, this person is going to be an extension of you and your company.

What you should be asking:

Did the VA show genuine interest in your business?

Did they ask questions? Did they seem to understand your needs?

Did you feel like you could trust the VA? Why or why not?

Step 4 - What's this going to cost?

This is a very hard question to answer. The services of a VA can range anywhere from \$20.00 to over \$75.00 per hour and is largely dependent on things such as the amount of years in business, level of expertise, and scope of work. You should expect though that a general VA will cost somewhere between \$25 and \$40 per hour.

When you initially look at the cost of a VA, you may hesitate since it seems to be at such a higher rate than a typical in house assistant. You should remember though that there will be increased savings by not having any overhead such as office equipment, office space, utilities, and benefits.

There are some VA's who charge an almost obnoxiously low rate, but they often have a hard time building a sustainable business. The last thing you want to do is invest in a company who may not be around in the next 6 months.

What you should be asking:

What is your budget?

How many hours per week/month would you like your VA to work?

How would you liked to be billed? What payment methods do you prefer?

Step 5 - What should I outsource?

This is a question that is asked very often. The upcoming pages are designed for you to work through your regular work day while noting tasks that must be done that:

- You don't enjoy doing
- You don't know how to do (or do really well)
- You don't have time to complete
- Keeps you in your office when you should be "out there" generating revenue

MONDAY

Project, Task, or Assignment	Time spent on task	I don't do this well

TUESDAY

Project, Task, or Assignment	Time spent on task	I don't do this well

WEDNESDAY

Project, Task, or Assignment	Time spent on task	I don't do this well

THURSDAY

Project, Task, or Assignment	Time spent on task	I don't do this well

FRIDAY

Project, Task, or Assignment	Time spent on task	I don't do this well

WEEK-END

Project, Task, or Assignment	Time spent on task	I don't do this well

Add up the amount of hours you've entered in the tables above to give you an idea of how many hours each week you may need an assistant, and it also should give you a better idea of what sorts of tasks you can outsource to your VA.

What you should be asking:

Other than what is currently listed, what other tasks are performed in your business?

What projects would you like to undertake, but you simply don't know how to do them?

Conclusion

Searching for a virtual assistant doesn't have to be a daunting task if you know what you are looking for and understand what kinds of questions you should be asking.

The following pages have plenty of note-taking space for you to interview your potential assistants and keep a list of things you want to ask during your consultation. I've also included my much sought after resource list that offers up some useful websites + software for entrepreneurs. I've mixed in some copy writers + business coaches that I admire for balance.

Resources

Questions to ask your VA

The following questions are some things you may want to ask your potential VA before signing on the dotted line.

1. How long have you been in business?
2. Do you have any experience in my industry?
3. What are your rates?
4. Can you provide me with references?
5. How often will I be billed?
6. Do you round up your time, or is it "time on task"?
7. How do you track your time within my project?
8. What is your back-up plan in case you are sick, or cannot complete a task on time?
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

Resource List

Writers

www.litmusstudio.com/: Emma comes very highly recommended by my clients.

www.mannmadecopy.com: Jamie is funny and professional and I love her work.

Coaches + Entrepreneurial Strategists

www.whitehottruth.com: Danielle works with the best and provides a unique insight to your business.

www.dyanavalentine.com

www.creativewellnessworks.com

Software + Websites

www.shoeboxed.com – track expenses and receipts

www.carbonite.com – back up your computer files

www.echosign.com – sign contracts online

www.efax.com – online faxing including a free version

www.drop.io – online drop box for files or call in a message

www.sendthisfile.com – send large files quickly

www.mailchimp.com – newsletters and auto responder

www.a.com – allow clients to book their own appointments online.

www.intervals.com – online project management system, invoicing and time tracking.

www.gcast.com – podcasting software

www.teamviewer.com – remote login to another computer

www.ejunkie.com – affiliate program + online selling

www.surveymonkey.com – online surveys

www.jott.com – convert voice messages into email

Social Media

www.biznik.com – business networking + articles

www.twaiter.com – schedule tweets

www.ping.fm – social media aggregator

Article Submission

www.articlealley.com

www.articlesbase.com

Press Release Submission

www.pr.com

www.prlog.org

Monday Morning VA + Dawn Martinello

“The entrepreneur is not really interested in doing the work; he is interested in creating the way the company operates. In that regard, the entrepreneur is an inventor. He or she loves to invent, but does not love to manufacture or sell or distribute what he or she invents.” – Michael Gerber

Monday Morning VA is owned and operated by Dawn Martinello who resides in Harrow, ON Canada with her husband Tom and 2 year old son Spencer. Dawn has worked in various fields such as Direct Sales, Customs Brokerage, Retail Management, Freelance Writing, and Virtual Assistance. Each job and every industry formed who she is today: strong, detail orientated, organized, and a strong problem solver.

Monday Morning VA was opened on February 9, 2009 and the client base is getting larger every week. As a multi-VA firm, MMVA brings specialists under one house to provide a “one-stop shopping experience” for clients.

Services

Our service list includes general administration, human resources, data entry, bookkeeping, Wordpress design, social network set-up + maintenance, article submission, Amazon store set-up, meeting + event planning, desktop publishing, Real Estate assistance, marketing, concierge services, and so much more!

Philanthropy

1% of all client revenue is currently donated to the Windsor & Essex County Cancer Centre Foundation in Windsor Ontario. In the future, proceeds from things such as eBook sales and our Amazon store will also be donated to this very worthy cause.

Referrals

You are rewarded by referring people to Monday Morning VA. For every new client that pays and uses for our services, you will be rewarded with 1 hour of free service. You do not have to be a current client in order to refer people and reap the rewards!

Media Mentions

- Erica Valdez tells our entrepreneurial story in her feature of [momprenuers](#).
- Start Up Nation turned to me for tips on [why now is THE best time to hire a VA](#)
- Jennifer at Outright Blog asked for advice on [how to delegate to a Virtual Assistant \(VA\)](#).
- WHY Magazine –W.H.Y asked us for our best [work at home tips on productivity](#).
- [How to best become an Entrepreneur](#) – Toilet Paper Entrepreneur
- Web Worker Daily asked us for to provide a [Virtual Assistant job description](#).

Acknowledgements

Since we would be nothing without our clients, we love to give them a little free PR whenever possible. Our full client roster includes strategists, internet marketers, media trainers, coaches, photographers, and just about everything in between.

white hot truth

with Danielle LaPorte

...BECAUSE SELF REALIZATION ROCKS.



Dawn is one of the best professional decisions I've ever made. She gets the job done, and with ease, speed, and somehow, she makes me feel like I'm her only client when I know she's booked solid. My clients rave about her. The scores of colleagues I've sent to her rave about her. Look, I'm raving about her. From Twitter to plug-ins to telecom, Dawn knows the latest on social media and systems and gadgets that keep my business humming, and, she's got a crew of experts that make for my own mini staff...far far away in my own home town county.

Dawn has that rare quality that every entrepreneur hopes for in a support person: she preemptively knows what I need, and she just takes care of it. What a relief. And a pleasure. I checked out dozens of Va companies in my search. Virtual Assistants are an emerging phenomenon in the current workforce. Some will fall by the wayside. Some will grow sustainable businesses by giving old fashioned good service via leading edge technologies. Monday Morning VA is an example what it takes to grow fast and grow strong.

- Danielle LaPorte, White Hot Truth



It seems that the only way to get things done in my fast-paced, content driven business is to duplicate myself. I am in constant need of help. The problem is that I have had trouble finding the right fit. It seems that while most people want a job, few want to work. As I discovered virtual assistants, I found them "helpful." For the most part, they did what I asked - simple tasks, as long as the instructions were explicit.

After just one meeting with Dawn Martinello I was blown away. She took the time to listen as I told her about my business. She asked all the right questions. She is genuinely interested in what I am doing and where I am headed. Since that time she has been an integral part of my business. She has been helping me solve problems and has been helping me to connect with valuable resources. Honestly, I see her more as a "Virtual Partner" than a "Virtual Assistant."

- Dr. Russ L'HommeDieu, DPT of the Betterness Institute



I recently hired Dawn as my Virtual Assistant. In my experience, Dawn is professional, timely, organized, and answers every request with "Yes, I can do that!" Her "yes can" approach is a winning attitude and I trust we will create a mutually dynamic, results oriented working relationship together. I value Dawn's communication – the regular emails, the knowing that she is "out there" creates this sense that we are truly working together. I believe in Dawn's enthusiasm for learning, for growing her own business, and for wanting to help me grow mine – these elements are at the heart of my choice to contract with Dawn and her company for VA services.

- Lynda Monk, MSW, RSW of Creative Wellness

Our roster also includes these fabulous clients:



Rebecca Walker