

FIVE REASONS TO START YOUR OWN VIRTUAL ASSISTANT BUSINESS RIGHT NOW

by Chela Hardy | AskChela



READY TO WORK FROM HOME?

Use your admin skillset to create a business you'll love!

So you're past the point of wondering if being a Virtual Assistant is a legitimate career option. You've done all the research. You can clearly define what a Virtual Assistant is. You now know for a fact that it is indeed a thriving industry (more on that later) that only continues to grow by leaps and bounds even in—and perhaps especially because of—challenging economic times.

And yet you still have not started your business. Why is that? What more do you need to know? Here are five reminders as to why you should do it right now:

You want to work from home and you want a flexible schedule

There are many different reasons why folks wish to work from home. Perhaps a health condition makes getting out of the house on a schedule difficult. Perhaps a lengthy commute is the issue. Maybe you're raising young ones, or caring for an elderly one. Whatever the reason, a career as a Virtual Assistant allows

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you to work from home during the hours—and at the pace—that works best for your particular situation.

As an independent contractor, you decide what your schedule will be, and you build your business around your availability. Let's say, for instance, that you have only morning hours to devote to your business. For some clients, these are their busiest hours, and your availability during that time might be just what they need. You can pursue clients whose needs fit that requirement.

Let's say your day is filled with running up and down the road, transporting various family members to this appointment or that one. You might seek out clients whose work is more project-based and doesn't require you to be available during their core hours of business.

Or maybe you work a part- or full-time job and you want to supplement your income. It is very possible, again, that you can find clients who don't depend on you to be available to them at their beck and call. There are some Virtual Assistants who run successful businesses by working only after the kids have gone off to bed for the night. You may be able to do the same.

The economy—need we say more?

Starting your own business is a risky venture in any economy. But with the uncertainty of this particular economy—not always knowing from one day to the next whether you'll still have a job to go to the following day—starting a business might just be the one way to ensure you have an income. Some of the most profitable companies in history began from just such a situation.

And let's be real—as an employee, you may never be paid the money you're worth. As a Virtual Assistant, you set your own rates based on your particular skill set (according to the **Virtual Assistant Networking Association**, average rates for virtual administrative support can range anywhere from \$25 to \$100 an hour depending on the services you offer). Rates that, based on the virtual assistance business model, may be considerably higher than you'll ever be paid as an employee. Rates that could actually make it possible for you to work fewer hours (if that's your desire) and make more money than you would as an employee.

Add to all that the fact that, since you're working from home, you're saving money on gas (not to mention wear and tear to your car), clothing (you can wear jeans and a t-shirt all day everyday...or even your pajamas, if that's your thing), and food (you can make a hot breakfast every morning if you'd like...and leftovers from last night's dinner can be even tastier as lunch the next day).

Quite frankly, being self-employed as a VA rocks! Seriously. Working at your own pace, most likely doing something you truly love, choosing the people you wish to work with: a feeling like no other. Being your own boss: priceless.

Small businesses need you

The backbone of any successful company of any size is its administrative support team. The entrepreneur who thinks he or she can go it completely alone will never experience the same growth as the entrepreneur who understands the need to hand off certain tasks that will allow them to focus on delivering the type of topnotch service to their clients that will result in repeat business and referrals—all of which grows their business.

If a small business owner doesn't understand that, they will certainly understand this: every hour they spend on administrative tasks related to the growth or maintenance of their business takes away from time they could be spending on billable work. A consultant, for instance, who bills clients \$150 an hour for his expertise is costing himself that same \$150 an hour when he works on tasks that could be outsourced to a Virtual Assistant. Five hours doing his own



administrative work, for example, would essentially cost him \$750—money he can't bill to any of his clients. If he were to instead hire a Virtual Assistant at the rate of, say, \$40 per hour, that same administrative work would cost him only \$200. Even after paying the VA for the work completed during those five hours, that consultant walks away with the \$550 he made working on billable client projects in those hours.

It's a win-win situation. The savvy entrepreneur will see that. And these are the people you want to pursue as clients.

There's enough work for everyone

It's true—the phenomenon of virtual assistance is finally catching on, and you may wonder just where your business will fit in among all the other companies out there. But there's not as much competition as you may think, when you consider that within the industry, there are several niche markets your company can serve. Do you have an accounting skill set? You may decide to specialize in offering bookkeeping or accounting services to small companies. Is social media your game? Most small business owners have received the message that they need to market and promote their services on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, et cetera—they just don't know how to do it. They simply may not want to do it. And they'd be willing to pay someone with your expertise a reasonable fee to manage their presence on those sites. Have you mastered the art of building a WordPress blog or website? You can't even imagine how many people need your help! Or maybe you've been certified to provide services specific to authors or speakers. One or two such busy professionals could be the only clients you need to run a successful virtual assistance business.

Do you see the point? Take a good long look at your skill set, compare it to what seem to be the needs of the business market, and you may just have found your own niche.

Virtual assistance is a thriving industry

In the beginning, when the VA industry was just getting its legs, administrative professionals trying to build a practice were pretty much on their own. These days,

virtual assistance is usually on every Top Ten List of homebased businesses, and the industry is thriving. Do a search on the term “virtual assistance” or “virtual assistant” and, in addition to finding other VA firms, you'll also find an abundance of organizations created to provide networking, training, referrals, and social media spaces specific to administrative professionals interested in building their businesses and gaining new clients.

The point is this: the timing is right, your skills are in demand, the work and resources are there, and you're not alone. So why not take advantage of all that's available to you and start your Virtual Assistant business today!