

— SAVING THE DAY — THE VIRTUAL WAY!



**How Working with a Full-Time Virtual Assistant will
Save You Time, Make You More Productive and
Boost Your Success in Life and Business!**

— by Chris C. Ducker —

SAVING THE DAY, THE VIRTUAL WAY!

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Make You More Productive and Boost Your Success in Life and Business!**

NOW INCLUDES AWESOME ADDITIONAL, FREE, CONTENT!

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VirtualBusinessLifestyle.com



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UPDATE: DECEMBER, 2010

Be sure to read to the end of this eBook for additional free, updated, content.

As of December 21st, 2010, this eBook has been downloaded exactly 3,751 times. We believe its safe to say that its been passed on to at least two people, for every one person that's downloaded it. So, that would mean over 11,000 people have read it since it went live exactly one year ago - thats awesome.

Thanks, guys!

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INTRODUCTION

Superheroes come in many different shapes, sizes and forms. Some are family members that help you get over a problem or life changing event. Some are mentors that give you the tools to go out and carve a name for yourself and become successful, and some are just ordinary people that happen to be in the right place at the right time.

What if your superhero is out there somewhere and you haven't stumbled across them yet? What would they help you with, what tools would they give you to become successful, and the big question: would they even need to be in any particular place, at any given time...?

As busy business owners and entrepreneurs forge their own skills to become more successful and financially dependent individuals, it's the support of good staff, fundamentally, that will either allow them to grow quickly and profitably, or not.

All around the world there are millions of business owners handling tasks, right now, that they shouldn't, or don't want to be doing. Almost all of these tasks are administrative related. You know what I mean... Emailing; typing up proposals; handling voicemail; setting appointments; updating their company blog; managing



HR, handling accounts and invoicing, etc., etc. Oh, and THEN they have to speak with clients, make sales, continue marketing the company and generally keeping it all together.

After all is said and done, if they have a few hours a week to spend with their family, and I mean real QUALITY time, then they are lucky!

I often meet people for the first time, tell them what I do, and they automatically ask “So, what’s a Virtual Assistant, then...?”. My answer is always the same, “They are just like a Personal Assistant, only they can’t pick up your dry cleaning, or make you cups of coffee at various intervals throughout the day...!” – although some of the VAs I know would give it a shot, I’m sure! (I wonder if Fedex will ever start handling hot beverages...?!)

Throughout the pages of this eBook I don’t necessarily want to try and convince you to hire a Virtual Assistant (or VA, as they are more commonly referred to). You’ll come to that conclusion all on your own, I am sure. However, what I do want to do is tell you more about how VAs work, what they are capable of, and above all, the benefits that you can encounter should you feel the urge to go ahead and take the entrepreneurial plunge into the Virtual Assistant world!



A quick note, although there are probably a certain number of domestically based (in your country, wherever that may be!) VAs working relatively close to you, for the sake of promoting business growth and entrepreneurship (and the obvious financial reasons) in general, this eBook focuses on the concepts and plan of working with an offshore, full-time Virtual Assistant – and predominantly one based in the Philippines, because of their superior English communication skills.

Okay, so let's kick-off everything with a look into the Life of an Entrepreneur. I hope you enjoy the content, and find it useful, in whatever way, shape or form.

Chris C. Ducker

Cebu City, Philippines

November 20th, 2009



CHAPTER 1 - ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE LIFE OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

For most entrepreneurs, their lifestyles are filled with very demanding and time-consuming

There comes a time in every entrepreneur's life when too much of anything causes the loss of almost everything. Precious times with friends are missed. Important family get-togethers are frequently rescheduled. Holiday trips are postponed. Creative and strategic projects are left unmanaged. Shopping and fine dining events are frequently turned down. The list goes on and on.

Even having a reasonable amount of time for relaxation and self-rejuvenation become impossible! Small to medium-sized business owners and entrepreneurs who are guilty of all these boring excuses find themselves scratching for a spare few minutes here and there. And because of this they rush projects, they're not focused on any one thing and ultimately productivity is the one thing that is sacrificed more than anything else.

A recent report from the Survey of Business Owners showed that most business owners categorize their primary function as 'managing the day-to-day operation' of



their business (which is mostly admin-related work). But, hang on – they are the OWNERS of the company, right?!! Why are they performing administrative tasks every day when they should be focused on marketing, sales and making sure that the business grows steadily over time...? If you fall within this group of busy entrepreneurs, relax, you're not alone.

Building a business, regardless of the industry or country that it is in, kills much of your time and it seems as if every day you follow the same schedule. You know the one I mean – Wake up, go straight to the office, WORK, WORK, WORK... Wake up, go straight to the office, and you guessed it, WORK, WORK, WORK... the repetition continues endlessly.

For most entrepreneurs, their lifestyles are filled with very demanding and time-consuming workloads, based in environments where resources are extremely limited (unless you have a massive amount of cash to invest into your start-up), time is always insufficient, and the much needed freedom to do more is denied.

They are almost always trapped in this horrible world of struggle to complete their daily workload and grow their companies into the profitable powerhouses that they most certainly want for them to become. This workload almost always included tasks that range from human resources management (regardless of the number of people



working for you), accounting, managerial, customer service, sales and marketing, administrative tasks and a lot more.

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit in its report “Understanding Growth Priorities of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses”, SMEs are challenged to reach out to new customers, to attract and retain talented employees, and to have access to cash flow. In addition, they must also ensure that information is available and secure while maintaining costs to a minimum. With the ever-increasing demands that give you ear-splitting headaches, the very same small business pioneers are finding it harder and harder to keep pace in an extremely competitive international market. Nowadays, entrepreneurs, practically turned into captives of their own business demands, need real and life-changing intervention from the outside. They need someone who can set them free.



CHAPTER 2 - MEET YOUR NEW SUPERHERO – THE VIRTUAL ASSISTANT!

I know the
importance of
having staff that
you can count on
to make your life
easier and more

The good news for every busy entrepreneur out there is that over the last ten or so years, Virtual Assistants (VAs) have come to the rescue! You may not believe it, but real-life superheroes are just around the corner to set business executives free from bondage brought about by their hectic, sometimes downright manic, schedules and lifestyles.

VAs may not have the speed of *Flash*, the agility of *Spiderman*, or the strength of *Superman*, but they do have what it takes to let you do what you truly want to do, empowering your work day to create more productivity and ultimately become more successful. They give you the freedom unlike any other ‘help’ you will ever encounter!

The Virtual Assistant industry started out as a simple extension to the corporate environment, mostly for the odd task here and there that business owners and department heads needed completed fast. Five hours of work here, two of three



separate tasks there, and so on. However, today the VA industry is a whole different ball game.

Nowadays, there are two types of Virtual assistants out there saving the day for busy business owners. Firstly, there are the independent VAs, who provide professional assistance from their homes. The second type of VA is the type that works for you from a corporate premises. There are Pro's and Con's to both set-up's, which we'll discuss a little later.

However, both work in different geographic locations to the people that they are hired by, sometimes even on the other side of the world, and both make use of advanced technology to deliver technical, administrative, or even personal support services – some VAs have even been known to remind their virtual bosses of their wedding anniversary (and even order the flowers!). So, it isn't much of a shock that, even in this globally competitive and fast-changing world, it helps to have reliable, steady administrative support, which is available for you whenever you need it - even without having to shine a giant spotlight with a cut-out of a bat into the night sky!

Are we using the term 'superhero' too effortlessly here? No, I don't think so. As a busy business owner myself, I know the importance of having staff that you can count on to make your life easier and more productive, as well as more enjoyable and memorable.



VAs are indeed modern superheroes whose skills, work accuracy, and business ethics have become the solutions to the ever growing problems being encountered by millions of entrepreneurs and their corporate entities worldwide. Yes, it's a fact that most business professionals who intend to hire the services rendered by VAs may not see them face-to-face regularly, sometimes at all, but VAs can do what regular employees can do, a lot of the time, even better, and when it comes to outsourced VAs, always for a smaller paycheck!

Above anything else, VAs give entrepreneurs the freedom to do more! The assistance they provide is invaluable in terms of unloading and easing the everyday demands of the following stressful areas:

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The *American Small Business Association* says that the majority of business owners spend up to 40% of their day handling administrative tasks. For sure, SMEs cannot afford to perform all these tedious and energy-draining administrative tasks – not if they are to grow the company, anyway! They need assistance in order to ensure the accuracy of reports and the precision in the delivery of products and services. The following are just some of the many administrative works that VAs can best do for entrepreneurs, however the list is basically endless:



- **Book Keeping**
- **Word and Excel Processing**
- **E-mail Handling & Filtering**
- **Data Entry and Analyzing**
- **Meeting & Calendar Management**
- **Business Document Preparation**
- **Billing and/or Accounting**
- **Create and Send Contracts, Letters, etc.**
- **Procedure Documentation**
- **Report Creation & Layout**
- **Mailing List & Database Management**

INBOUND CUSTOMER SERVICE & SUPPORT

The growing importance of providing excellent customer service these days is proven to better retain and attract customers, thus increasing the productivity of sales. Instead of using voice mail, and then having to make time to get back to everyone, entrepreneurs can enhance their approach to incoming customer queries by outsourcing the task to VAs who are highly skilled in taking on these calls and dealing with valuable clients. VAs can competently handle these inbound customer service tasks, and many more:



- **Customer Support Services**
- **E-mail & Chat Support**
- **Phone & Online Support**
- **Technical Support**
- **Troubleshooting for Products & Services**
- **Concierge Services**
- **Cross-Selling & Up-Selling**
- **Catalogue Order Taking**
- **Transcription Services**
- **Lead to Sales Conversion**

OUTBOUND TELEMARKETING

You can expand your business and achieve higher sales using the phone without actually lifting a finger! Your Virtual Assistant, who should ideally be well trained and experienced, can handle efficient telemarketing using tried and tested methods. Outbound telemarketing services are creating such a huge buzz nowadays and if you're not 'in it', you won't be able to 'win it'. Fact of the matter is, that if you aren't engaging in some type of telemarketing campaign, your competitor most definitely is. The following activities are potential avenues for business growth that entrepreneurs should seriously consider, all surrounding the use of the telephone:



- **B2B Appointment Setting**
- **Up-Selling and Cross-Selling**
- **Cold Calling Lead Generation**
- **Surveys & Market Research**
- **Recruiting & Prospecting**
- **Voice Mail Broadcasting**
- **Direct Mail Follow-up**
- **After-Sales Customer Support**
- **Database Cleansing**

ONLINE MARKETING & PROMOTION

The most powerful tool that small to medium-sized business owners can utilize in today's global market place is the Internet. A recent online Virtual Assistant Survey concluded that 80.1% of VAs engage in some type of online marketing for their virtual bosses. With a competent VA in place, entrepreneurs can market their businesses and globally expand them like never before in the history of doing business – all thanks to the World Wide Web. Some of the online marketing services that can be outsourced to VAs are:

- **Online Research**
- **Copywriting**
- **Copyediting & Proof Reading**



- **Web Design & Development**
- **Social Networking**
- **Blog Maintenance**
- **On-Site Optimization**
- **Off-Site Optimization**
- **Link Building Development**
- **Pay-Per-Click Advertising Management**
- **Press Release & Article Submission and Distribution**

Based on the lists above, and given the versatility and the capability of VAs to work without boundaries, there is no denying that entrepreneurs can be saved from their hectic lifestyles and start focusing on the parts of their business that ‘bring in the bacon’, so to speak!

All of the services (administrative tasks, inbound customer service, outbound telemarketing, and online marketing) presented above can be outsourced to VAs in order to meet maximum business and personal productivity.



CHAPTER 3 - THE BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH A FULL TIME VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

And the owner of
ANY business is
ALWAYS the best
sales guy on the

As we saw in the last chapter, Virtual Assistants can make any business a lot more powerful, covering pretty much all the bases. The fact of the matter is that whenever I speak with business owners and entrepreneurs in regards to them looking at hiring a full-time VA, there is usually a set list of questions that people have on their minds that they want answered. Working activities to one side, the sheer power of getting involved in working with a VA can be seen in the massive list of benefits. Again, a list that it not complete, or limited in any way - instead based mainly on the individual demands and needs of the virtual boss working with his virtual assistant. Let's break a few of them down, one by one.

SAVED TIME: Virtual Assistants save entrepreneurs' precious time. They relieve business professionals from all the mundane, time-consuming, and boring tasks. This means that they have more time to concentrate on more important, money-making tasks.



SAVED MONEY: VAs save their virtual bosses money. As an employer of an outsourced staff member, you're spared from overhead costs such as office space, buying equipment, managing your staff member, extremely high local wages, as well as paying government contributions, taxes, vacation leave, sick leave, HMO, dental and other types of insurance – the list, literally goes on and on.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE: VAs are tech-savvy. Plus, if you get involved with one that works from a corporate set-up (instead of a home-based set-up), they will also be trained on the latest software and management systems, CRMs, etc. In addition, VAs are essential internet buffs. They understand the internet and various web application far better than most busy business owners – this means you get the best of your more ‘corporate’ world, as well as your VAs ‘virtual’ world, too!

INCREASE IN BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES: Because your VA is handling the core administrative, marketing and customer service duties for your company, you have the opportunity to focus more on what you should be focusing on, as the head honcho, and that’s the growth of your business! With a VA on board you’ll be able to make more time to meet with existing and prospective clients, or spend more time with them on the golf course, pitching that newest product line, or service upgrade. Bottom line, you’ll be selling more. And the owner of ANY business is ALWAYS the best sales guy on the team!



MARKETING EXPERTISE: Virtual Assistants can be an excellent addition to your marketing set-up. They utilize online marketing tools and maintain them for better business standing and overall growth in the local and international sectors. They are also very capable of building networks, both online and offline, to sustain the upward arrow that all businesses are looking for on their financial statements come year-end.

INCREASE IN SALES: As well being able to handle admin related tasks, there are a lot of VAs available out there that can help find new prospective clients, as well as owning the ability to be able to help retain loyal customers – as we discussed earlier under the telemarketing and customer service banners.

SOLID, DEPENDABLE CUSTOMER SERVICE: There is nothing worse than your customer either getting a voicemail set-up during office hours, or not receiving a callback from your company in a timely fashion. Quality full-time VAs add that personal and/or humanistic approach to customer relations. They keep things harmonized and they can also spice up your customer service and retention through active telemarketing campaigns. All the time NOT sounding like a robot, as voicemails sometimes do. High caliber customer service (or the lack of it) is the beginning (or the end) of all small to medium-sized companies potential growth.

ADDITIONAL ACCURACY: Your VA will become excellent at proof reading your business proposals and reports. They'll even proof read (or even write!) your email



communication for you, too. Business owners do not have to undergo the tedious task of double-checking the details of the proposals and reports that they, or another member of their staff has produced. Concerned at the thought you having someone in another country check on these highly important details for you? Try them out. Plain and simple!

MORE PRODUCTIVITY: Having that assistant superhero in your corner is absolutely paramount to you getting more done. And not just the golf games and the sales and marketing. But, the planning, the strategizing, the plans of growth and acquisitions – the type of tasks that REAL entrepreneurs LIVE for. Saving a little time and money is one thing – but, having the ability to be able to really concentrate on the growth and health plan for your company and its people is invaluable, to say the least.



CHAPTER 4 - HOW TO FIND YOUR OWN SUPERHERO VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

There is no doubt that Outsourcing has become a global business trend these days. In fact, the global outsourcing market is projected to reach US\$373 billion in total revenue by the end of 2009, growing 14.4 percent over 2008, with India, China, and the Philippines as the top three revenue generators.

When it comes to finding your VA, as I mentioned earlier on, you generally have two options. You can either hire an independent virtual assistant from a site like Freelancer.com, for example, or if you prefer to have someone do all the interviewing, reference checking, hiring and training for you, you can work directly with an outsourcing company that offers virtual assistant services.

As I mentioned, there are Pro's and Con's to both of these set-up's. So, here they are:

FREELANCER VIRTUAL ASSISTANT ROUTE

Pro's – Cheaper option; good staff can be found after some solid searching.



Con's – Technical issues regularly; they are not dedicated to you (their freelancing, right!? So, accept the fact that you'll be sharing their time with their other clients); no real control over working hours; can take quite a bit of searching to find a good candidate; time consuming to train them; they are not supervised; tasks are rarely completed on time (because they are working on a lot of tasks for several people); sometimes tasks are even outsourced to third-parties of your VA struggles on something - meaning you have NO IDEA who's working on them; no back-up plan in place if they are sick, etc. Frankly speaking, the list does go on a little longer.

COMPANY MANAGED VIRTUAL ASSISTANT ROUTE

Pro's – 100% dedicated to you, and you alone; almost zero-downtime due to more professional infrastructure; staff are managed and motivated by experienced individuals; tasks are 'targeted' and completed on time almost all the time; you can call on management if you need help; already gone through background checks; already signed confidentiality contracts with employer; already trained and ready to go; back-up options are almost always in place (this depends on the company you're working with, obviously); many, many more...

Con's – More expensive than the freelancer set-up; sometimes you might need to sign a long-term contract (not with my company, I'd like to add!).



Let's face it, the success of any business relies on the efforts of the people working

As you can see, the freelancer route, although the cheaper option, does cause some issues - especially if you're a stickler for professionalism. However, for some start-up entrepreneurs cost will be a primary motivator, and they will no doubt be more than happy to handle the inevitable headaches that come along with working with a freelancer that is 9/10 working from either home, or an internet café (sometimes a combo of the two). But, if you're okay doing that, based on the fact that you'll be paying less for their services, then go for it.

When I set up the virtual assistant side of Live2Care, my outsourcing company (I promise this is not going to turn into a all-out plug!), I used freelancers myself, to test the waters. And honestly speaking, it took me just three quick months to realize that if I wanted any type of control over what people were working on and when things were going to be completed, etc., I was going to have to hire full-time staff myself. And this decision didn't even include the technical difficulties I experienced within that testing period, nor the professionalism side of things, too.

So, for the rest of this chapter, I'd like to focus more on the company based virtual assistant, if that's okay with you guys. It has proven to be the best option, for long-term growth and although, yes, a little more expensive, it is the option that I personally would go with - even if I didn't own an outsourcing company that provides full-time virtual assistants!



Choosing an outsourcing partner who means real business in executing quality services is tough. I'm not going to go into too much detail on this subject here, as I included a whole chapter on it in my other eBook entitled "*Business Growth and the Outsourcing Lifestyle*".

You can get it for free by emailing me directly at my personal address:
chris@virtualbusinesslifestyle.com.

But, bottom line, they should have a proven track record and be able to provide you with references, if you request them. If a company can't, or won't, do that one simple thing, then move on to the next candidate.

Let's face it, the success of any business relies on the efforts of the people working behind it. Businesses that maximize outsourcing services from reputable companies will also find it important to know that their VAs are also concerned for their clients' success as much they are for their own. Working with the right virtual superheroes isn't too hard, especially amongst company-based virtual assistants.

Fostering a proper working relationship with an outsourcing partner can make for a business boom. A stable outsourcing company will help you expand a network of customers that is sufficient enough to attain that much needed return on investment.



If the company is really well put together, they will also be able to offer other services, too, on top of the virtual assistant package you choose.

Trusted business process outsourcing companies ensure that the VAs they assign to work with clients have passed training and development courses, as well as having strict confidentiality agreements in place through their Human Resources department.

To play devil's advocate for a brief second, in case you're are not happy with the work of the virtual assistants assigned to you by your outsourcing partner, you can always address such concerns to them and they will normally be in a position to have another VA available for you within a short space of time.

This makes hiring virtual assistants from successful BPO companies more reliable, contingency-conscious, results-driven and over all, practical.



CHAPTER 5 - HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR VIRTUAL ASSISTANT TO MAXIMIZE PRODUCTIVITY

Most companies and individuals who have been working with virtual assistants with great success have one thing in common: they are pleased to have somebody else handle their time-consuming, repetitive, mundane, administrative tasks that get in the way of spending quality time with their family, or focusing more on important business issues, such as planning and strategizing for growth.

Equipped with exemplary credentials, extensive professional experience and a wide array of skill sets to handle pretty much any task imaginable, virtual assistants are becoming a force to reckon with. What makes them special is that they work for you as a virtual unknown and you may never even get to see them face-to-face at all. Yet they perform the tasks you have set out for them, as competently as any of your physical office personnel would.



You have the responsibility of establishing a clear set of guidelines on how you want the job to be

If you haven't started working with a VA yet, and are perhaps still thinking about getting a virtual assistant for the first time, then waste no more time and start thinking about how you are going to spend the precious time that a virtual assistant can free up for you.

Finding your right virtual assistant is one thing. Getting them to do the job the way you want them to do is another matter. Working remotely, the way you interact with your new best friend is by utilizing the wonders of technology, such as email, the telephone, via Skype or if you prefer, instant messaging and web conferencing. Here are some tips to be able to work well with your virtual assistant to achieve tons more time and become more productive overall, as a professional:

SET CLEAR GUIDELINES – You have the responsibility of establishing a clear set of guidelines on how you want the job to be done. To avoid any confusion or misunderstanding, you have to clearly define the tasks that you want your virtual assistant to accomplish. Especially when you have complex tasks. Do your best to provide instructions in great detail.

DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING – Do not make the mistake of assuming the virtual assistant knows exactly what to do to on any given task, regardless of experience. Perfect example, one of my clients likes all of his emails, letters, reports, you name it,



written in Arial font size nine. If he hadnt of told his VA that right at the beginning, she probably would have made a mistake on this subject matter straight away!

INVEST A LITTLE TIME – Obviously when you first start out together you'll have to spend a little more time going over things together, but that investment of time will make things easier in the long run, for sure.

SET SOLID, BUT REASONABLE TIMELINES FOR TASKS – You should also set reasonable time lines for your tasks. Since you are fundamentally paying your virtual assistant by the hour, you should have a fairly good idea of how long your tasks should take to finish. Communicate these instructions clearly and the terms should be understood by the virtual assistant before he or she starts working. For big or lengthy projects, it is advisable for you to set milestones to ensure that the project is right on schedule.

BUILD TRUST – This kind of remote setup between you and your virtual assistant requires a good working relationship that is based on trust. You may still have some doubts about outsourcing the administrative tasks of your business to a virtual stranger, but if you want virtual assistants to deliver according to your expectations, you have to give them your full trust. As time goes on, your virtual assistant will devote their full attention to provide the support that you need. In the process, they will get to know you better and understand how your business works, allowing them



to put more value in the relationship. This is very much the same kind of set-up, as if you were in the same office together.

GIVE PRAISE WHEN IT'S DUE – You can also perform one simple act that makes a lot of difference in your working relationship with your virtual assistant. Give them the credit they deserve. Give positive feedback as a way for you to 'virtually' pat them in the back for a job well done. Human beings have this need to be recognized for their worth and your encouragement will spur them on to continue to give their very best.

Follow these tips and you will get a lot more than your money's worth, I can assure you!

Remember, working with a virtual assistant will give you more time. It will make you more productive, and it will allow you to become more successful. The most important thing is that you so, one way or another, start getting involved when it comes to outsourcing and working with the right staff for the right roles.

Jump on board, and you'll see what I'm talking about.



ADDITIONAL FREE CONTENT!

The content on the following pages has been added to the original version of this eBook, which was released in November of 2009.

The reason for adding to the original is not because it is now out of date, or was somehow incomplete, but instead because a lot of great content has been created throughout the course of 2010 for www.virtualbusinesslifestyle.com and I wanted to be sure that everyone had the chance to check it out, in case they had not ventured too deep into the blogs archives.

I hope you enjoy it, and be sure to visit the original posts on the blog to check out the full versions, along with video clips, how to audio files, as well as the popular archives of the VBL Podcast, too.



THE TOP 3 SUREFIRE WAYS TO DELEGATE TO YOUR VIRTUAL EMPLOYEES

Have you ever delegated to your virtual team but been frustrated with the finished result? It just wasn't what you were expecting, and you didn't feel that your VA really understood what you were trying to get at. Well, you're not alone, **this happens to a majority of entrepreneurs starting out in virtual delegation**, and can often lead to them giving up entirely and going back to the old reliable — themselves!

I am going to share with you now the “**Top 3 Surefire Ways**” to delegate effectively, quickly and easily to your virtual team so you can get your tasks and projects back right – first time, every time.



#1 Video Screen Capture – Visual Delegation

Head over to <http://www.techsmith.com/jing/> and download Jing. Jing is a FREE application that you download onto your MAC or PC, which will allow you to take really short screen capture video's like [this one](#).

You can then write down the lists of tasks you have for your virtual assistant, open up Jing and create FREE short video tutorials that visually explain what you would like done. This is great when you need to delegate any creative work, or website updates. They can be up to 5 minutes long, and when finished, you simply upload them directly to Screencast and send your VA the link to the video — it's as simple as that.

#2 MP3 – Audio Delegation

MP3 is fantastic for delegating your daily administrative tasks, just use the same principle as the screen capture and make a list of tasks that you would like your VA to do. This works great at the end of the work day, as you can simply make your list, and create an audio file link [like this one](#):

It's important to always start your audio's off with a date and time for reference. Once you have reeled off all of the tasks you would like your VA to do the following day,



simply send them the audio file on an email before you leave the office. This is a really simple yet effective way to delegate – FAST!

#3 Templates – Written Delegation

If you would like to delegate via text, then you can still make this just as productive by using a delegation template. This is a standard layout which you use to delegate a task or project to your VA, as you can simply fill in the gaps each time you would like to make a new request – just like this one:

REF:

Try to apply a reference to the tasks – especially if you have a large team, or a lot of tasks to complete.

Task Summary:

This will be a short description for the task you are assigning.

Assigned To:

The name of your team member who will be doing the task.

Priority:

Low / High / Normal



Start Date:

When you would like the task started by.

Due Date:

When you would like the task completed by.

Full Description:

A description of what you would like them to do.

Applicable Links:

Add any applicable links relevant to your request, such as websites or email addresses.

Require Notification:

Yes/No – Tell your VA whether you require notification when the task has been completed.

Find a template that works for you, and create different ones for different tasks and projects. If you have a lot of tasks which are similar, keep records of the templates so you can quickly pull the ones out that you need on a regular basis for even easier delegation!



By adopting any or all of these super-fast ways to delegate, you can be sure that your virtual team will consistently have a much clearer understanding of what you need done, when you need it done by, and the standard you need it done to.



WORK WITH VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS TO CONCEIVE, MARKET AND SELL YOUR 4HWW MUSE!

Ever since since Tim Ferriss wrote and published *The 4 Hour Work-Week*, there has been hundreds of thousands of entrepreneurial lifestyle fanatics looking to creating what Tim calls, their ‘muse’. Some have succeeded, some have failed – terribly. I wanted to write this quick post to be able to point out some simple things you can utilize virtual assistants for, when kick-starting your muse creation empire!

It doesn’t really matter what kind of muse you’re creating for yourself to be able to create passive income streams and capture that 4 Hour Work-Week dream. It can be an eBook, it can be an eCourse, it can be a software download, it can be a membership site—it seriously doesn’t matter. The most important thing is that you’re making the move; you’re taking the step to be able to become more of a passive income generating entrepreneur. Will it lead you to a 4 Hour Work-Week lifestyle?



Maybe. Maybe it won't. But the most important thing is that you're taking that first step to be able to try and create your muse, get it up online and get people spending money on it.

So when it comes to utilizing virtual staff to be able to create that muse and get it out there, there are a number of different ways you can utilize the support they bring to the online business-building table.

Get Them to Work Hard, While You Work Smart

The first thing to do straight off the bat is competition research and keyword analysis. And a virtual assistant can do that for you very, very effectively. I have people working for me full-time here in the facility, checking this stuff out for me, as I write this post – but, you can do it with anybody anywhere in the world.

Once that research is done and you've figured you want to give it a go, it's time to register your domain name. If you struggle on this, brainstorm with the people around you to come up with ideas for that all-important domain name. I have credited my wife, Ercille, on many occasions and in many interviews to naming the blog you're reading right now! Obviously, you're going to want to make sure it's related to the product that you're going to be creating and selling in some way shape or form.

Your domain name registration and coming up with ideas can also be done with, or by your virtual assistant as well. Once that goes into effect you've got to develop your online portal, or your blog. You can do that yourself but it's going to take a long, long



time to customize, for instance a Wordpress theme. I tried it myself on my first blog or two. I did achieve it, but it took forever (especially as I am a bit of a perfectionist!) and I'm just too busy for that kind of stuff nowadays.

Get Them To Do The 'Techy' Stuff

Get anybody with PHP and/or Wordpress knowledge and experience and it's a slam dunk all the way. Virtual assistants are perfect for this type of stuff – plus, if you don't want to hire a full-time developer, just pay them for the project itself.

Graphic design. Now this is obviously not just for your online side of things, but offline, too. Like laying out and designing an eBook, or producing a video, 3D graphics that you are going to be using in the video side of the product that you might be putting out, etc. You can also look at hiring a virtual staff member to be able to handle the editing of your videos as well – both for the short and long-term.

Get Them to Network For You

Something else that you can really utilize virtual staff for is networking. Networking online through Twitter and Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace—although it's not talked about nowadays – that sort of stuff is perfect for a virtual assistant, because a lot of it can be put on autopilot. It is, however, very time consuming, so don't waste your time on Twitter all day long!



Bottom line here is that as long as you've given your virtual assistant good directions, they can do almost all of your online networking for you, saving you a boatload of time, so you can focus on other money-making tasks!

One of the other big things you can use virtual assistants for to great, great effect – and this is something I'm a big fan of – is online research. Get them to research the living daylights out of any kind of business model that you might be thinking about pursuing, someone you might want to JV with, or a website you want to review, etc.



TEAMS OF VIRTUAL STAFF ARE ON THE RISE - READY TO JOIN IN...?

It seems as if there are more and more companies 'going global' and merging / reorganizing than ever before right now. A lot of this hustle includes getting virtual staff involved, sometimes for the first time ever in the history of the company. A lot of the staff that will work for companies that are now taking a more virtual approach to doing business may never actually meet face-to-face, or at least not on a regular schedule - unless its via the web.

One question that I'm starting to get asked more and more regularly at the moment is can these virtual staff / teams perform to the same standard of their more 'local' counterparts. You know, the more bog-standard office set-up - conference rooms, water cooler, etc..!

One thing that I've found in talking with several businesses and entrepreneurs that are already engaging a virtual business set-up in some way, is that they all have one common, and quite surprising point to throw into the mix. They believe that their



virtual staff actually have a better collection of skills, both individually and collectively, as a 'group', so to speak.

The thing is, based on my experience, there is usually one pretty big hurdle for people to get used to when working with a virtual business set-up. And that's the fact that several staff members (sometimes key players in the organization) are spaced out across several location and time zones – sometimes even countries! So, you would think that this could, potentially, cause issues when it comes to the gelling of virtual staff teams. Obviously this is not the case, otherwise more and more companies would not be looking towards a virtual set-up.

I believe that there are three key areas when it comes to building a cohesive virtual team.

Firstly, the virtual staff themselves must work together. When I say 'together' here's what I mean... The fact is that your virtual staff are splattered out a little, and can sometimes feel a little lonely and isolated even. You have to make sure that there are projects for them to work on, to be able to 'come together' and help and support one another.

Secondly, communication is absolutely paramount. Everyone should know exactly what each of them has to do – this goes beyond what their 'role' within the team is. It's about what they need to do to keep things moving, individually and as part of a team set-up.



And lastly, everyone in the virtual team should be able to take advantage, if that's the right term to use, of each others strengths and individual natures in the way that they work, as well as their skill-sets.

Although you might think that the owners of these virtual companies should focus on technology and such like, I believe that the real focus should be on the growth of their virtual staff – all aiming towards the team aspect of making the business bigger, growing and working together.

As someone who has several people working for me in various locations around the world, I honestly, whole-heartedly believe this is the true 'feather in my cap' in terms of getting done what I need done, utilizing the awesome skills of my own, personal virtual team.



HOW MUCH DO I PAY MY HOME-BASED OVERSEAS VIRTUAL ASSISTANT...?

Over the last month or so, since I launched the Virtual Staff Finder service I have received a ton of questions in regards to working with virtual assistants, training them, looking after them, and paying them. In fact, the one that I have probably received the most questions on is how much to pay different types of virtual assistants and other virtual employees.

So, I wanted to put up this quick post to give everybody a few guidelines.

Please bear in mind these salary guidelines are for home-based VA's. Working from their homes, for you directly. If you don't want to work with virtual staff directly, nor train them, motivate them or even speak to them - then I suggest looking into a more professional outsourcing set-up.



Different Types of Virtual Assistants

So, here you go a guideline on the four main types of VA's, what you can expect them to be able to do, task wise, and what you should be looking to pay them for both full time and part-time positions.

Hope this clears a few things up for everyone.

VA SKILL SETS	DESCRIPTION
General VA	General administrative tasks like email filtering, transcription, research, data entry, blog management, calendar management, flight bookings, social media management [e.g. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.]
Article / Content Writers	Expertise in Article / Content writing, directory submission, article spinning and article marketing, video blog posting and transcription.
SEO Specialist	Keyword research, niche market analysis, on-page optimization, off-page optimization (link building), blog management, benchmarking, online personal and corporate branding.
Web Development/ Maintenance/ Programming	Set up and maintenance of Wordpress blogs, software updates and plugins, creation of websites, creation of niche sites, custom programming, design graphics and web page layout concepts.



Salary Guidelines

General Virtual Assistant – Full-time, \$350-\$500 a month

Article / Content Writers - Full-time, \$400-\$550 a month

SEO Specialist – Full-time, \$450-\$550 a month

Web Developer, etc. – Full-time, \$550-\$750 a month

Please note: These prices are for good quality, experienced, professional virtual staff members - not people with minimal experience. I see no point in hiring these people as you will have to spend way too much time training them on things they should know already.

And remember, these are just guidelines. For example, two years ago, you could get a full-time General VA to work for you for just \$250. But, times change, and the home based outsourcing world is changing, too.



TOOLS TO HELP YOU BUILD A LOCATION INDEPENDENT LIFESTYLE...!

Utilizing technology, particularly the technology available to us online and for free, is paramount for any wannabe location independent entrepreneur. There are a multitude of services and online tools out there to help you become more mobile and start to embrace your very own Virtual Business Lifestyle.

This post was originally attached to an episode of the VBL Podcast. You can download the entire episode for free by [clicking here](#).

Instead of listing all of them down here, I thought it would be best to let you in on the five main tools I use personally, in order to remain as virtual as possible and work in a seamless way when I am traveling, or simply 'out of the office'.



Amongst other things, in this post, I mention:

Gmail & Google Calendar – The absolute necessity when it comes to cloud computing. All my email addresses (I have 5 different) go through my one Gmail account, and I can read and reply to them, along with making changes to my calendar (and sharing my calendar with my assistant and wife), from anywhere in the world, on any computer in the world.

Dropbox.com – A great free resource to share files throughout a number of different devices, real-time, and with a number of different people. You get 2GB for free and can increase that to 8GB by inviting friends! I use it with my wife for personal stuff, like photos when I'm traveling, with my PA for anything we might be working on together, and even my Marketing Team for collaborating on campaigns we might be working on.

Blackberry / iPhone, or other Smartphones – Essential for email on the go. Not strictly an online tool, but, let's face it, no modern-day, savvy entrepreneur can be without one of these. I'm currently using Blackberry, but can't wait for the iPhone4 to hit the Philippines in a couple of months!

Skype - Call other Skype users for free anywhere in the world (and even landlines and mobiles at great international rates) from any computer / device where it's installed. You can also SMS, too. Plus, the 'chat' function is great for communicating when

overseas in real-time, but at an affordable (free!) rate. I haven't made an international phone call without using Skype for a long, long time – seriously.

GoToMyPC - Nowadays, you don't even need to have your computer with you to be able to access it fully. Simply install this nifty piece of software on your regular PC or Mac, leave it at home / in the office (switched on) and then login at GoToMyPC.com whenever you want to get onto your computer, from anywhere in the world. You can literally use it in exactly the same way you would if you were sitting at it yourself!

As a closing remark, you'll see in one of my past posts, where I show you my mobile office, for when I'm on the road (Note: I no longer use a PC – I switched to a MacBook Pro a couple of months ago), you don't need to bring a lot with you to continue to work when traveling, in a seamless way.

I've even had people ask if they can come up to my office, when I've been working at a beach resort – now THAT's being a virtual entrepreneur!



SOME SUGGESTED, RELATED RESOURCES FOR YOU

A lot of the content from this eBook (especially the updated stuff towards the end), is available in its full, unedited format, complete with applicable videos, podcasts and interviews at my blog Virtual Business Lifestyle. Just [click here](#) to visit the site directly.



Finding virtual assistants just got a whole lot easier! My Virtual Staff Finder service is now available to help save massive amounts of time when searching for quality VAs. Join the scores of entrepreneurs that have already utilized the service by [clicking here](#).



And finally, should you be needing a more professional outsourcing set-up, simply [click here](#) to visit my company's corporate site for more information. Note: The services we provide here are aimed towards medium to large-sized companies.



THE VIRTUAL BUSINESS LIFESTYLE PODCAST!

One of the most enjoyable projects that I worked on in 2010 was the creation and launch of the Virtual Business Lifestyle Podcast.

Filled to the rafters with awesome interviews with some of the most successful online entrepreneurs, the podcast is perfect to listen to whilst driving, working out, or simply 'studying' up on how to become a successful virtual entrepreneur!



The screenshot shows the iTunes U interface for the 'Virtual Business Lifestyle' podcast. The breadcrumb trail is 'Podcasts > Business > Management & Marketing > Chris C. Ducker'. The podcast cover art features a palm tree and the text 'Chris C. Ducker's VIRTUAL BUSINESS LIFESTYLE'. Below the cover is a 'Subscribe Free' button and the category 'Management & Marketing' with the language 'English'. The 'Podcast Description' states: 'The Virtual Business Lifestyle is a highly process-driven, automated lifestyle, where becoming mobile, utilizing and creating passive income lead to you a life you'll love to live!'. A table of episodes is displayed below:

	Name	Time	Released	Description
1.	VBL016: Making the World Your O...	31:42	23 11 10	Mobile entrepreneurship is on t... i
2.	VBL015 – Building Your Entrepren...	29:13	9 11 10	Welcome to another edition of t... i
3.	VBL014 – Popping Up all Over the...		27 9 10	(http://www.virtualbusinesslifest... i
4.	VBL013 – Dominating Viral Market...	33:00	19 9 10	(http://www.virtualbusinesslifest... i
5.	VBL012 – eBootcamp's and Domi...	36:42	12 9 10	Corey Perlman is a cool guy. H... i

The response to the VBL Podcast has been amazing!

It is currently Ranked #1 for search terms 'lifestyle design' and 'virtual business'. I absolutely suggest you check it out by [click here](#), NOW!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris C. Ducker is a 20-year sales, marketing and branding veteran, originally from London, England and an entrepreneur at heart. Throughout his extensive career, he has worked at virtually every level of the corporate ladder and won several awards along the way.

A member of the International Association of Outsourcing Professionals (IAOP), Chris has trained close to 10,000 professionals on the subject of telemarketing, as well as worked with some of the world's largest corporations as a consultant in regards to their PR, product and service branding and sales strategies.



Nowadays, through spearheading the Live2Sell Group of Companies, of which he is Founder and CEO, he is more focused on practicing the life that he preaches on a daily basis. One of convenience, productivity, health, wealth and one which allows him to spend more time doing the things that count the most, as well being with the ones that matter the most.

You can connect directly with Chris, via Twitter at [@chriscducker](https://twitter.com/chriscducker)