

## Partnering in Your Business Success - Virtual Assistants



Written by Sue Kramer

When we decided to become business owners, our reasons were plentiful: a passion to do something we love, more control over our family's future, more time spent with our families, less time spent being a road warrior, the opportunity to choose who we work with, the list was and is endless.

We've come home and began to live our dream. What many of us perhaps did not realize is that having your name on the door also means you are the Marketing Director, CFO, delivery person, CIO, you name it. I don't know about you, but in the corporate world someone else was in charge of Marketing, Sales, Accounting and IT. If this is also true about you, we are not alone.

These days I speak with hundreds of business owners and I hear the same thing: those extra titles can be quite daunting. Sometimes they wonder if they made the right choice but then they catch themselves. Do we miss working for someone else? No way! Do we miss being on planes, trains, and automobiles and missing ½ of our children's lives? No way! We now have the opportunity to control our own destiny and make those important soccer games and ballet recitals.

If you relate to the above all too well, check into the successful business owner's best kept secret: a Virtual Assistant. Partnering with a VA may well save your sanity and allow more time for the reasons you started your business in the first place. The benefits are extensive bringing enormous cost and time savings. Typically VAs came from corporate America and like you, they retired or were retired. Virtual Assistants or VAs for short, are independent contractors who provide professional **administrative, creative, and technical services**. Since VAs are themselves small business owners, they understand what it takes to run a successful business.

A VA is a great fit for companies who do not require an onsite person. A VA based in California may have clients in Chicago, Asia, New York, etc. Yes, you guessed it; the Virtual Assistance industry is global. It is a cutting-edge industry backed by associations like the **International Virtual Assistants Association**. VAs bring senior level skills to the table and serve multiple clients. Whether you need a great Executive Assistant, Copywriter, Designer, Meeting and Event Coordinator, Programmer, Web Developer, or a myriad of other skills, a VA has you covered. Many VAs have a network and are a one-stop shop. If your particular VA does not have the skills needed for a particular project, they will connect you to another VA who can manage that task.

VAs are highly proactive, confidential, and take growing your business as seriously as you do. They are your partner without the enormous expense of a salary/benefits package. VAs are a great fit as they work on an as-needed or part-time basis. Unlike permanent employees or temporary help, you pay only for the time spent on your project (no personal time spent on the telephone, chatting at the water cooler, etc.). They are professionals with their own well-equipped professional offices thus do not require your office space or equipment. Project assignments are transmitted via the web, overnight carriers, local couriers, etc. Your VA listens to your goals and dreams and is committed to get you to the finish line. VAs serve multiple clients thus scheduling is key. Many VAs prefer to build long-term relationships with their clients whether they work with them a few times a year or month.

If all of the above sounds great you may be wondering "What is this sanity-saving assistance going to cost me?" The hourly national (USA) average of a VA is \$25 - \$75. Individual VA rates fluctuate depending on location, skill level, if you require a specialty (web design, programming, design of marketing collateral), etc. Remember, you are only charged for the time your VA or VA team spends on your project - no taxes and no benefits. When considering the VA option think about the following: how little or much do you value your time currently, do you enjoy wearing all those

hats, would you like to save on payroll taxes and benefits, and what is more time spent with current and potential clients worth?

Sue Kramer is president and founder of **Peace of Mind Virtual Assistance**, a company she started in 2003. POMVA provides professional virtual assistance to exceptional professionals. Sue has more than 20 years experience in executive assistance, project coordination, and purchasing in myriad industries. Ms. Kramer also serves on the **International Virtual Assistants Association's** board of directors as the Director of Marketing and PR.

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