



So you want to be a VA?

Becoming a VA is serious business. Because it is just that – a business. If you're not sure that you want the stress and the responsibility of owning your own business then becoming a Virtual Assistant is probably not for you.

To be a successful VA you **need** the following:

- ✓ An idea of what your practice is able to offer
- ✓ Competent experience and knowledge in your area of expertise
- ✓ A plan or a strategy to make your business successful
- ✓ The financial resources to support you and your business during its start-up phase
- ✓ A complete and honest assessment of yourself. Do you have what it takes to succeed?
 - Drive, energy and ambition
 - The ability to think originally, creatively, critically and analytically
 - The ability to deal with all kinds of different personalities. You are emotionally stable, social, considerate optimistic and tactful
- ✓ Superior verbal and written skills. You must be able to communicate effectively with everyone from your banker to the potential referral or client in the line-up at the grocery store.
- ✓ All encompassing knowledge of your service.

If you're still reading then maybe you have what it takes to operate a successful practice as a Virtual Assistant.

To start you must research: The VA industry, your geographical area, the internet, the legal issues, insurance etc. Here are some resources that I have discovered along the way – hopefully they will shorten the time you need to spend on your own research:

VA Education and Accreditation

<http://www.assistu.com>

<http://www.VirtualAssistanceU.com> A Virtual learning campus dedicated to establishing "leading edge" virtual assistant practices through dynamic curriculum, small classes and diversified participant experience levels. Virtual classroom settings, linking real people around the world.

<http://www.work-the-web.com/vacos.htm> This page lists all kinds of VA Certification programs as well as information on training programs and other organizations supporting the VA industry.

<http://www.vacertification.com> An independent evaluation authority for the Virtual Assistant industry

VA Associations

<http://www.cvasuccess.com> Canadian Association of Virtual Assistants

<http://www.ivaa.org> International Virtual Assistants Association

<http://www.iavoa.com> (IAVOA) - The purpose of IAVOA is to promote the use of Virtual Assistants worldwide. This site is a must for any VA, whether new to the industry or a veteran

VA Resources

<http://www.avirtualsoption.com> an organization for virtual assistants who want to network and find support in starting, running and growing their businesses!

<http://www.avirtualsoption.net> Discount Web Hosting service

<http://www.avirtualsoption.org> A Virtual Solution has a professional administrative staff of over two hundred Virtual Assistants available to support your administrative work load.

<http://www.gate.net/~gregnn/diana.html> Home of the best book to buy if you are interested in starting or building your word processing business: *Words From Home - How to Start and Operate a Home-Based Word Processing Business*

<http://www.adminassist.ca> Helping Virtual Assistants do their job!

Visit the Virtual Assistant Conference website at:

<http://www.vaconference.com>

VA Communities:

<http://www.virtualassistants.com> A work-at-home jobs site and telecommuting resource

<http://www.communityzero.com/varc>

<http://www.communityzero.com/vop-resource>.

Prepared by [Elayne Whitfield](#) of [Executive Assistance](#) – Virtual Assistance and Website Design/Hosting

Local Networking

<http://www.wingscanada.com> WINGS (Women in Networking Growing Strong)

<http://www.bnicanada.com> Business Network International "Givers Gain"

<http://occ.on.ca> Chamber of Commerce

Online Networking Groups

CVA Success:

CVA Success™ was founded on March 18, 2002. The goal of this group is to support fellow Canadian Virtual Assistants with meetings, workshops, and events Canada-Wide to be held in each Province where VAs are located. It is the goal of CVA Success to provide Virtual Assistants, based in Canada, a place to hang out... chat with others...learn from others... and work together to make the industry and all VAs the next best thing to cell phones.

Subscribe: cvasuccess-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

CEW:

Canadian Entrepreneurial Women is a discussion group for Canadian women in business, women entrepreneurs in Canada, or women in Canada who might want to start a business. We have members coast-to-coast, and the list is used to share resources, ask questions and network with one another.

Subscribe: CEW-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Ontario Women:

Sub-group of CEW - Canadian Entrepreneurial Women is a discussion group for Canadian women in business, women entrepreneurs in Canada, or women in Canada who might want to start a business. The list is used to share resources, ask questions and network with one another. This list is specifically for Members of CEW from Ontario who meet in Toronto for face-to-face networking. (I moderate this list)

Subscribe: Ontario_Women-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Digital Women:

Digital Women was created for women in business, businesswomen and all women around the globe looking for a place to gather free resources, free business tips, free sales and marketing tips, home business ideas, and a place where business women could gather together. We are an international online community for women in business around the globe.

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And Finally...

- ✓ Do a search of virtual assistants and word processors in the major search engines. Each one can provide you ideas on how to make this kind of business successful.
- ✓ Be sure you have decided on an appropriate company name. Then put together a corporate identity (business card, letterhead, brochure etc.)
- ✓ **Network, network, network!** Every opportunity you get, present your 'one minute' presentation of who you are and what you do or give your literature to someone. Even if they may never need your services, they may know someone who does, or someone who knows someone who does. Attend your local networking meetings.
- ✓ Join business associations in your area.
- ✓ Sign up for online newsletters; they can be a wealth of information. [Start with Virtual Tidbits by Janice Byer of Docu-Type Virtual Assistance and Web Design](#). There are so many out there these days that are loaded with great ideas and tips.
- ✓ Pick up business magazines whenever you get a chance. These, too, are loaded with helpful information.
- ✓ Take a small business course; continually upgrade your skills either locally or online at one of the 'virtual' universities.

So, while it is certainly not easy and you will encounter some setbacks along the way and there will be days when you wonder what the heck you were thinking, there are so many benefits and the experience of owning your own business; being your own boss is so incredibly rewarding. I wish you all the best on your journey to becoming a VA – if that is what you truly want.