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Articles: Management Tip

Employ a Virtual Helper

Author: Kimberly Stansell ([more by this author](#))

Source: Bootstrapper's Success Secrets ([details](#)) - July 31, 2000

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A tight labor market and work style choices have forced small-office professionals to seek other ways to grow with few or no workers. Some opt to simply drop less profitable accounts or use office automation to cope with unfilled positions. Others are growing with the help of virtual assistants (VAs). A VA works closely with individuals and small businesses without needing to be physically present. If you need relief from administrative tasks, then a VA may be for you.

Virtual assistants offer a broad range of administrative support. VAs handle duties like accounting, human resources, concierge services, collections, sales and marketing, travel planning, research, and more. They are independent contractors who handle clients' needs via e-mail, fax, and phone, working from their own offices.

Virtual assistants are affordable and convenient. VAs charge \$35 to \$75 an hour. You pay only for the time they actually spend working for you, and you don't incur any other employment costs. They typically expect you to commit to at least 12 hours of their services per month. Most VAs will offer the first hour or two at no charge so that you two can test the relationship.

Virtual assistants have a vested interest in your business. A VA can literally become a partner in your success. The more a VA learns about your business, the more that person can help you.

Case in point: A consultant became overwhelmed while writing her first book. Her work was so backed up that she wasn't even returning client calls. A colleague suggested that she consider working with a virtual assistant. The consultant posted a query online and received nearly 20 responses. She hired a VA to revamp her Web site content, help launch a newsletter, and keep track of her author interviews.

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For more information on finding a virtual assistant, contact the International Virtual Assistants Association (www.ivaa.org) or AssistU (www.assistu.com).

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