



Start a Virtual Assistant Business: A Step by Step Plan

PLANNING

- Services-Determine your Niche.** Take a realistic inventory of your skills and determine what services you want to offer. Brainstorm your skills, what you like to do most, and what you have the most experience in to determine your niche and unique selling proposition.
- Market Research.** Research the Virtual Assistant industry and learn as much as you can about the business. Read books on the industry and look at other VA's websites. You can get a feel for what services are popular and what other VAs are charging.
- Determine Your Policies.** What hours do you want to work? Full-time or part-time? When and how do you want clients to contact you? What contracts do you want to use: hourly, project, retainer or each?
- Create a Business Plan.** This does not have to be complicated or difficult but is an important step in planning your new business. Your plan will outline your start-up costs and potential earnings so that you have a sound financial plan to start your business. You will also have clearly defined goals to stay on track.
- Set up your Home Office.** Make sure you have the necessary equipment to run your business effectively.

Must haves:

- Good computer with high speed internet connection
- Ability to send and receive faxes
- Reliable email service
- Printer
- Phone number dedicated just for your business – 2nd line or virtual phone#
- Filing System
- Room or area dedicated as your Home Office

LEGALITIES

- Determine your business structure: sole proprietor, corporation or LLC
- Pick a name for your business then do trade name and domain name research to make sure it is available.
- Set-up a bank account for your business.
- Choose an accounting software and set up your accounts
- Research licenses and/or permits that may be required to run a home based business in your area.
- Register your business with the state government and IRS for tax accounting
- Decide on what insurance you will need.
- Business liability insurance
- Health Insurance
- Errors & Omissions (E&O) insurance
- Design your legal business contracts: per project, retainer, client assessment, web design etc.

MARKETING

- Create your website. Have one designed for you or look into the affordable options for creating a professional looking website. Be sure you clearly state your services, policies and contact information.
- Design promotional materials. Business cards, brochures, letterhead and Welcome Kit.
- Online promotion: find potential clients through press releases, article marketing and social networking sites
- Offline promotion: Find business networking events, chamber of commerce, trade shows and visit local businesses. Start networking.

This checklist should help guide you along the way to starting your new Virtual Assistant Business. If you need any more help on any of these steps, you can find more free information at <http://www.VirtualAssistantsGuide.com>.

Good luck with your new business!
Joy Cunningham