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## 5 THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU HIRE A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT:

### Understanding What a Virtual Assistant Can Do

I hear the term "Virtual Assistant" more and more in business. Did you know that you could possibly hire someone from another continent that works while you sleep and maybe for \$8 - \$12 Dollars. Most of the VA's I work with have degrees and one an MBA in Business Admin. I pay her a pautry \$15.00 per hour and what a bargain that is.

With the growth of virtual assistants has also been a change in what it means to be a virtual assistant. The leaders and founders of this particular entrepreneurial job have made distinctions between what it means to be a virtual assistant, and what it doesn't mean. When you are explaining your business to others, you want to make sure to keep this standard.

Being a virtual assistant is becoming a distinct definition of a specific home owned business. It is expected that the standards will be upheld of a virtual assistant for all others who are working in this profession. This means that a virtual assistant is someone who provides a variety of services to businesses and individuals following the standard that has become formalized in the past decade.

The first angle that is taken towards approaching what a virtual assistant is includes the idea of being virtual. If you are not working out of your home, or remotely, then you are not considered a virtual assistant. Instead, it is considered to be a temporary job or a telecommuting job. One of the standards for being a virtual assistant is having the freedom to work where you want.

The second part to being a virtual assistant is the distinction that is made in the job description. Most virtual assistants will cringe at the idea of being called a secretary or freelance worker. Technically, a freelance worker is one who only does the job for extra income. At the same time, a secretary is one who doesn't do the work continuously with only one client. A virtual assistant is provided in order to create a substantial and long term relationship with a business.

Here are 5 things you should consider in a Virtual Assistant?

1. Professionalism. Does the VA answer her or his emails, voicemails and other correspondence in a timely and professional manner? It is important if this person is to work for you has the right skills to not keep you or a deadline waiting. Make sure you give a covert task to her or him to pass that shows commitment to deadlines.
2. Project Management. Juggling tasks nowadays is vital. We now tap out feet in front of the microwave so things need to get done. If a person cannot work with a few projects on the go you might want to move on. I guarantee you will only find out that they have a project management problem when you lose "the big deal".
3. Availability. Many of these people work for several people at the same time. It is not uncommon for you as an employer to be in a funnel system for the VA. You slowly move down the funnel as they take on better contracts from new virtual employers. Be aware that you and your project will get dropped at the most time you least need it. You also need to be lining up new VA's. Try to split your work between 2 or more VA's to combat this problem.
4. Test. Give the VA a mini project before going ahead with a contract. I also give a minimum of 2 tasks that cost no more than \$30 - \$40 to complete. I need them done correctly and to my total satisfaction before I even consider this person. It is simple to hire one of the first few people to come along but please shortlist at least 10 and give the tasks to 2 of the 10 you shortlisted. Obviously make sure these tasks are something you actually want doe, dont waste any money.
5. Get References. Can the VA give you a list of people whom you can contact who will tell you about working with her or him?

The main distinction that most virtual assistants will work towards creating is the idea of being in a relationship with a business, and making this their business. This goes beyond the Expectations of any temporary work or telecommuting job. It also means that the services a virtual assistant can provide will go outside of job descriptions that are made in the office. By understanding the standards for being a virtual assistant, you can best approach this in your own relationships with businesses.

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