



Top Ten Tips for Working with a Virtual Assistant

As an entrepreneur you may have decided the time has come to delegate tasks that 1) you are not skilled at; or 2) you don't have time for. If you've never hired a helper before you may be stymied about how to find the right person. These ten key points will help ensure that the assistant shares your passion and vision! (I'll use "she/her" as most administrative assistants are female.)

1. Have a clear plan for what tasks you need assistance with – don't expect the applicant to intuit this! If you know you want help scheduling clients, write that down. If you want someone to handle office administration like bookkeeping, filing, or handling calls, write that down. If need an editor/proofreader, write that down.
2. Know how much time you want to invest in a helper. Determine if you want help daily or weekly, four hours or forty.
3. How much of an assistant can you afford? Keep in mind that there will be a great savings in time and money when you outsource. You'll find that because you're working more efficiently on tasks that are your true purpose, your income will increase and the assistant will, in essence, pay for herself!
4. What kind of computer skills does she have? At a minimum, she should be excellent at email programs like Outlook, Microsoft Word and Excel. A plus, depending on the nature of your work, would be graphics programs, PowerPoint or Access, and email marketing services like MailChimp or Constant Contact.
5. What other business skills does she have? Do they meet your needs? For example, as an author assistant, I'm an excellent proofreader and editor. If you are, for example, a holistic healthcare worker, your assistant ideally would have a grasp of integrative and holistic healing methods.
6. Establish a working schedule. If she is a freelance Virtual Assistant, your applicant may already have a full schedule. Be sure that your needs fit into that schedule, and that she can meet your deadlines. Ask about her average turnaround time on projects.
7. Remember that any assistant you hire is not an employee. The plus side of this is that you won't have an employee's overhead like taxes and Workers Comp; the down side is that she has multiple clients to serve, so it's important to be respectful of her time.
8. Establish a clear communication schedule. How often do you need to check in with each other by email? By phone? How often do you need a phone or Skype meeting?
9. Does the applicant "get" you? Does she understand your client base? Does she share your passion? If you work in fitness, she should understand that industry. If you work in beauty and wellness, she should share that passion.



10. Does she have appropriate business partnership forms, like a Confidentiality Agreement, Client Agreement or contract? Just as in any other professional relationship, you must have a written contract of some sort, to define each other's rights, responsibilities and requirements. Be sure the contract includes tasks to be completed, turnaround times, costs and invoicing process.

You can get quite a bit of information online about hiring as an entrepreneur. A fabulous resource to finding out about Virtual Assistants, and to "shop" for one, is www.VirtualAssistantForums.com. No matter where you find her, following the guide I have provided should lead to a smooth business relationship, increased efficiency, and increased income!

Holly Matson

www.LightseedsbyHolly.com