



ORGANIZING TIPS

Organizing Tips Submitted by Experienced Virtual Assistants

Compiled for you by the
Info Specialists at
Trombly Communications

Visit us on the web at:
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► **Your office can and will run much smoother if it is truly organized.** There is no need to feel inadequate because you are unorganized. We are not born with organizational skills, we need to learn these skills. Sometimes simply consistently applying these skills is the hardest part.

► **Enter the dynamic world of Virtual Assistants (VA's).** A Virtual Assistant is a highly skilled administrative professional working as an independent business owner from his or her own private office. These experienced professionals have the office skills necessary to assist business owners and individuals with a variety of tasks.



► **In order to stay at the top of their game, a VA must be organized.** They are experts in their field. The **Info Specialists at Trombly Communications** have tapped these experts for their organizing tips and we now share them with you. Now you can benefit from their vast experience. Find out what really works from the experts!

► **We suggest you take your time in reading through these tips so that you can absorb as much as possible.** We recommend you keep this e-book in a handy spot to refer to often. Try implementing a new tip each day, or each week, whatever works for you. If you find these tips helpful pass them along to others.

► **We have gathered organizing tips that have worked and are working for today's experienced Virtual Assistants.** You will discover many helpful hints here because these are some of the organizing tips that are tried and true from the professionals themselves. We would like to hear from you as well. Did these tips make a difference for you and/or your office? Tell us your story.

Please send your comments to us at info@tromblycommunications.com.

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Trombly Communications
dedicates this e-book to a
very special mentor:

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Thank you Janice!

A special thank you for
motivational life coaching by:

Kathy Wilson Anderson, CPC
Under One Roof
www.under-one-roof.net

Thank you Kathy!

Organizing Tips Submitted by Experienced Virtual Assistants

Note: Each tip provided is printed in this e-book as it was received. Please keep in mind that because Virtual Assistants are virtually from all corners of the world, they do write, and sometimes spell differently than you may be accustomed to. **All tips are owned and copy written by each author. Please contact each individual for reprint permission.**

- Interruptions, such as the dreaded telemarketing calls, can be brought down in size. Sure, you could let your answering machine take all the calls but then you would be taking away from the personal touch that your business normally projects to your clients. Not to mention you might lose potential clients when they don't want to talk to an answering machine or leave a message.
- The next plausible answer would be to subscribe to a Call Display service from your local phone company. Now, sometimes a phone number that is displayed may look familiar but when you pick up the phone you soon realize that it's not who you thought it was. But, more often than not, having Call Display saves you the trouble of even picking up the phone when you see a number of someone you just don't have time to talk to. You just look at the display and then make the decision if you want to pick up or not. That takes no time at all.
- Other personal interruptions, such as your kids running into your office and asking you to bring up a web site they just saw listed on the Family Channel, or your spouse wanting to share some local gossip, don't have to break your concentration. These interruptions can be controlled. Be sure that when you are in the middle of anything of importance, that your family understands that you will be with them shortly and that usually what they need is not earth-shattering and can wait a few minutes.
- Another interruption that can be controlled (or at least minimized) is the time you spend going through all the unwanted email that shows up. It's actually a never ending step that has to be done but it is worse when you don't do it. Most email programs and services give you the option of putting certain email addresses on a blocked list or have any mail that comes in from a certain address moved automatically to the Trash folder. By going directly there, you don't spend the time looking to see if the email is anything of interest.
- At times there may be interruptions from your daily routine that can't be avoided, such as meetings or a trip to the business supply store. For these types of interruptions, try to schedule them for the same day... kill two (or more) birds with one stone. If you need to visit a client's office, be sure to have a list ready of supplies you need to pick up at the office supply store or other errands you may need to run that are in the same area.

Submitted by:

Janice D. Byer, MVA
Docu~Type ~ Virtual Assistance & Web Design
<http://www.docutype.net>

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- When you record your voice-mail message, request that the caller let's you know when would be the best time to return their call. That way, you are more likely to reach that person, so cutting down on that inevitable 'telephone tag' syndrome.
 - Set aside a certain amount of time each day for dealing with paperwork. Choose an hour or so when there will be few distractions - e.g. in the early morning before your family/partner/the dog gets up, or before everyone comes home for the day. During this time, use an answering machine or your voice-mail system to screen calls.
 - Filing - put loose papers in clearly labeled files (e.g. 'Urgent', 'Current Projects', 'To Read', etc.) or colour-coded ones (e.g. green for legal matters, red for invoices, etc.). Anything that can't be designated to a particular file should be put into a miscellaneous file, but aim to throw out any unnecessary or non-crucial paperwork.
 - *Always find a home for paperwork - a cluttered desk = a cluttered mind = a cluttered working environment = making mistakes/overlooking important tasks. After evaluating each item of paperwork, categorise it and immediately file it.
 - Even if you are feeling overwhelmed and swamped in paperwork, just keep sorting and categorizing. Devoting so much of your valuable time will mean that your desk WILL be cleared - and once that is achieved, aim to keep it that way (see * above).
 - Use storage boxes to archive dated files or paperwork pertaining to past clients.
 - Time matters - use your computer's desktop clock to help you set aside some time to tackle important tasks. For example, if you have been putting off doing your accounts, decide to devote 15 or 30 minutes, to work on them - and keep checking the clock to make sure you don't get carried away and go beyond the allotted time. Better still, find a software program that allows you to set an alarm to alert you to start/stop projects.
 - Make sure you defragment your computer (on a PC, go to Programs, click on Accessories, then System Tools, then Disk Defragmenter) on a daily basis. That way, not only will your computer work more efficiently, it should help speed up things, too.

Submitted by:

Tracey Dooley

Freelance journalist, copy/sub-editor, proofreader and founder/proprietor of MediaMinister - saving YOU costly mistakes!

<http://www.MediaMinister.ontheweb.com>

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- If you use a Desk Diary, consider getting a large one (A4 size) - a week to a double page view. Rule a line down the centre of each page. Use the left hand side for listing appointments against the times and use the right-hand side for listing Things to Do. I used to use a To Do list sheet but found it was wasted paper and I had to find storage for it, in case I needed to look up something. It was far better to have it in the diary against the correct date!
 - Also consider using a Financial Year Diary instead of a Calendar Year Diary as your diary could then be filed with your bookkeeping for that financial year.
 - If limited for desk/office space, consider using your modem for faxing out and receiving, rather than a stand alone fax machine. You could consider an all-in-one printer/scanner/fax - however, if one component breaks down you end up with all three out of commission whilst being repaired.
 - Own your own domain? Consider getting your mailhost to forward ALL email to you care of your domain, rather than just a select few. Whilst it means you will receive more spam, it also means if someone misspells your name@..... you will still get the email.
 - If you spend a lot of time on the phone and still need to get your work done, get a headpiece for your phone so you can continue typing/working whilst carrying on a conversation. However, if the call is important, consider that the other person could hear if you are typing and it may appear that you are not concentrating on what they are saying - so you do need to choose carefully who you can do this with.
 - Handling jobs for multiple clients? Ensure you log or enter every job as it's done, or at the end of the day. If you use a bookkeeping program, build the invoice on a daily basis, rather than writing one up at the end of the month. You'll have a more accurate invoice for your client!
 - When backing up your files, do not forget to back up your contacts list and your emails - they are equally important, and necessary!

Submitted by:

Kathie M. Thomas, AFAIOP, MVA, ASO
"A Clayton's Secretary"®
<http://www.asecretary.com.au>

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- When you find you are running low on an item in your supply cabinet make note of it in your daily planner so that you have a list ready the next time you are shopping for supplies.
 - Tear off the label or box top of a supply package you want to purchase again and take it with you shopping.

Sharon Trombly
<http://www.tromblycommunications.com>

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- I use notebooks to control my client clutter. Each of my clients has a 3-ring binder. Within each binder there are dividers segregated by important information or topics such as: Projects, Profile Information, etc.
 - I also include in each binder a spiral notebook that I make all the notes from our weekly meetings or phone conversations. Then at-a-glance or at a pick-up, I have all of the information needed for this client and if I have any questions about our meeting, the notes are right there in the spiral notebook.
 - I also keep a small photo album next to my computer monitor to place any notes or scraps of paper in. The photo album has clear plastic pages and I just insert pieces into it and have it at hand at all times and I don't lose anything. I go back weekly and purge the album for any out-of-date or useless information. You can also use photo albums for recipes that you use most often. You can insert the recipe into the clear plastic page and then it can be easy to clean off spatters etc. This can also be done with a presentation notebook, the kind with the clear plastic on the outside for easy cleaning. Then just use plastic sheet protectors to protect the recipes.

Submitted by:

Kim McDaniels, CPVA
ClutterCutt Services
<http://www.ClutterCutt.com>

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- Treat your e-mail as you would any other filing system. Create folders for your clients and set up message rules for each. Each time you receive an email from a client it goes directly to their folder. Also any responses to clients place in the appropriate folder.
 - You should also set up folders for Must Read, File, Awaiting Response and Response Required. This way you aren't cluttering up your inbox and you know what action must be taken on each.

Submitted by:

Tammy Pope
Cyberteries
<http://www.cyberteries.com>

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- Keep CDs you use most often in binders so they store easy on your desk or on your bookshelf.
 - Store software licensing information and serial numbers in the same CD binder.

Sharon Trombly
<http://www.tromblycommunications.com>

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- Create subfolders on your computer to organize your business documents: contract templates, marketing materials, frequently used forms, business proposals, and individual client folders. I also create subfolders under marketing materials for brochures, flyers, presentations, my web site, and my business cards. This makes it much easier to locate specific documents that I am looking for, and I can get information to a client quickly.

Submitted by:

Shelly Williams, CPS
Admin-Partner | Virtual Assistance. Real Solutions.
<http://www.admin-partner.com>

- We collect so many business cards. If you write the date, place, function, and maybe what you talked about on the back of the card, it will be much easier to remember the individual.

Submitted by:

Petra M. Jakobskrueger
creative partner - Your Professional Outsourced Assistant
<http://www.creativepartner.com>

- First, no matter what I'm getting in order, I need to start with a clear desk, or else I can't work. Next, in order to not be overwhelmed by the size of some tasks, I don't look at the whole job and think, "This is too big of a job - I'll NEVER finish!" I take things one manageable task at a time, finish that, and take another small task, and so on until the entire project is complete. THEN I look at the whole job and think, "Wow, I'm good!"

Submitted by:

Dorothy Monigan
My eBusiness Solutions
<http://www.myebusinesssolutions.net>

- If you work from home, give your friendly neighbors a signal like closing your blinds on a certain window means: "Please do not disturb me right now". Open the blinds up when you can handle the interruptions.

Sharon Trombly
<http://www.tromblycommunications.com>

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- Experts estimate that office workers spend 20 to 30 percent of their time just looking for information. Make your research time more effective by keeping file drawers lean and mean. Since overcrowded files add up to lost time and frustration for staff, streamline files by keeping guides simple and files well identified. When folders become too thick with paperwork, break them down into smaller files.
 - Converting paper files to electronic files is a great way to save time and money. Not only will you reduce storage needs, but electronic files are easier to search. Both of these benefits add up to a savings of time and money.
 - Extra things and activities waste energy, time, and space. If you're not using it (or haven't used it for as long as you can remember), get rid of it!

One way to enhance your education, improve your job skills and update your computer knowledge is on-line training courses. They provide the convenience of working at your own pace, on your own computer and at your own home. With the everyday pressures of worklife combined with family life, it is sometimes difficult to take training courses outside the home. On-line training courses give you the opportunity to learn with more flexibility. Once you have completed your courses, submit a copy of your certificate to your personnel department so your employee file will be updated showing your new skills. There are numerous on-line courses available to meet your many needs.

Submitted by:

Cindy Fahrback
Forte Office Services
<http://www.forteoffice.com>

Give great thought and research to your business name! Or else you may end up with someone else's name and when you join a www group or are vying for the same audience things can get awfully messy. Take it from me, I started as Type Away Secretarial Services then had to change pronto due to conflicting names with a girl in New Jersey. This cost both time and money and stress. Be thorough and don't take any short cuts.

Submitted by:

Julie Witkowski - Your B2B Assistant
B2B Assist - Administrative, Typing & Secretarial Services
<http://www.b2b-assist.com>

- Purchase a paper-holding stand for under your printer and you will save time hunting for paper.

Sharon Trombly
<http://www.tromblycommunications.com>

Microsoft Outlook Tips:

- Make folders for each client and create a rule to store their emails there automatically upon receipt.
- I flag emails that have information I may wish to refer to later (especially in my folder that contains discussion group emails!). I change the words "Follow up" to the reason I am saving the message. For example, I think I might want to add transcription to my services at some time so on any email that discusses the transcription equipment that someone is recommending, I flag the email and change "Follow up" to "Transcription". I altered the view to include the 'Follow Up Flag' field in the display. That displays the reason I marked the email for later reference. I can just sort the folder based on the Follow Up Flag and easily find an email I marked.

General Tips:

- I have an Excel spreadsheet called Tips. It includes tips by software product and version (Word, Outlook, Windows98, WindowsXP, etc.). Each software product is in a different worksheet. These tips may be a cool item I found out about the product but don't need to use right now or maybe it's something I found out as a result of a support call from a client. If one client called about it, probably another will so I make a note for later referral.

Submitted by:

Judi Jones
InfoHarbor
<http://www.infoharbor.biz>

- Use your computer to keep track of everything. Organize files in My Documents and create sub-folders for Word Documents, Excel Documents, etc. and then change the default save file locations in the applications.
- Back up DAILY. It only takes a few minutes to back up a project that took you hours to do. Always keep a supply of blank disks or CD's for backups.
- Keep a calculator near your work area.
- Use a daily planner to schedule appointments, meetings, etc. and carry it with you at all times.
- Eliminate paper reminders such as post-it notes. Use a computer generated "reminder" program to remind you of meetings, appointments, etc.
- Keep only important documents in your files and throw out "things you might need or read later".

Tips by: Doreen Hartley, virtual Business Support continued on next page...

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- Reply to emails as soon as you receive them, then delete or move them to another folder.
 - Use a signature on your emails to save you time and so the person reading it can immediately get in touch with you.
 - Prioritize items and stay focused.
 - Be efficient, get the current job done and then move on to the next.

Submitted by:

Doreen Hartley
virtual Business Support
<http://www.vBusinessSupport.com>

- In order to keep multiple client's work separate, I have a wall of cubby holes (formerly a closet organizer) that I label with each client's name and project. When I'm done working on a specific project, I put everything related to it in its own cubby. This keeps my desk clean and I can find everything I need to work on the project the next time.
- I use removable file folder labels to label each cubby so that when a project is finished I can place a new label on the cubby for the next project.
- Another tip...I do Internet research on a regular basis for some of my clients. I have a folder for each client in my "Favorites" so I can go right to their folder and find the web sites related to their projects.

Submitted by:

Rose Clime
Creative Business Solutions
of Southern California
<http://www.creativebussolutions.com>

- Use the time you spend waiting on "hold" to tidy your desk or sort through your inbox.
- Make the commitment to be a scrap-paper free office. Put notes directly into your computer.

Sharon Trombly
<http://www.tromblycommunications.com>

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- My first tip pertains to the bookkeeping side of things. I find that most clients just throw their receipts into a box and say here, record them. Well I've tried to put a stop to that. I make my clients write on the receipts and provide me with as much information as possible. I have also made them purchase a desktop file system with a hanging folder for each month's receipts and invoices. This helps keep everything in one place and teaches them to be more aware of their spending and by writing on the actual receipt they're not scratching their head a month later when I ask them what they bought.
 - Also another idea I came up with is to clean up their filing system and I create a written list of all their files as per their system. This is a great reference list for them. When they have to file something or need to find a specific folder they look on the typed list to see if the folder exists and it also prevents them from creating duplicate folders.

Submitted by:

Francesca Frate, Your Virtual Assistant
AdminConcepts
<http://www.adminconcepts.net>

- Got a large mailing to do? Want to avoid having to lick all those envelopes in order to seal them? Use a glue stick. It doesn't dry out like your tongue does, and it doesn't disintegrate like those sponge tipped water applicators do.

Submitted by:

Donna Caissie
ExtraOrdinary Assistance
<http://www.extra-assist.com>

- Have a To-Do List. Each day (or week if you're not so busy to start) write down what you need to get accomplished the next day (or that week). This can be a handwritten list, or put into Tasks in Outlook. Every time a client contacts you with a job, it goes into the To-Do list with a priority ranking (based on when they need it back).

Submitted by:

Lyn Prowse-Bishop, MVA
& Certified EthicsChecked VA
Executive Stress Office Support
<http://www.execstress.com>

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- First, list every task that you have to perform (i.e.; as a student, organization/club member, employee, friend, etc. -- not brushing your teeth and bathing)
 - Second, prioritize them (1 being the highest), not according to deadlines, but rather as essential tasks in pursuing your overall goals (i.e.; graduate with a 3.0, get two job offers, etc.).
 - Third, do first things first in the order that you listed. That's it.
 - Fourth, go to bed at a reasonable hour and set the alarm to wake up at a reasonable hour (6:30 is good for me). But don't do like my husband does and shut the alarm off and go back to sleep. I've gotten so used to getting up at 6:30, I don't even need the alarm, I automatically wake up at that time.
 - Invest in Yourself -develop to your fullest potential.
 - Achieve The Achievable -Selling is a skill and skills are developed over time.
 - Learn New Techniques -If your clients aren't responding to your current sales approaches, then it may be time to learn something new.

Submitted by:

Sharon Silk, VA
Administrative Support
<http://www.office-pass.com>

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- Always, always represent yourself in a professional manner, i.e.; a separate business line at home answered only by yourself (not the kids), a clear message on the answering service stating your company name, and professional-looking website and business cards.
 - Organization is key, when you're organized you feel more in control and are able to think clearly.

Submitted by:

Tana Woodward, VA
Virtual Office Services
<http://www.virtualofficeservices.ca>

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- Create identification labels for all your software manuals and help books so you can get them back if you loan them out to others.

Sharon Trombly
<http://www.tromblycommunications.com>

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- Write down what needs to be done. Prioritise the items. Start #1 straight away. Don't start #2 until #1 is completed....and so on.
 - Set a time every day to clear your desk.
 - Handle each piece of paper once,
 - Ask yourself, "Do I need or want this?"
 - If so, put into a file, even a "temporary" action file. Ask yourself, "Will the world come to an end if I throw it away?" Ask yourself, "Would it help someone else if I pass it on?"
 - Act on each decision immediately.

Submitted by:

Terence M Kierans, Principal
Cyberspace Virtual Services
<http://www.virtualservices.com.au>

- I thought I would share one of the things I have found that keeps me sane. It is a program called Notesbrowser. This program is a great way to keep track of information. It can be download for free at www.notesbrowser.com. I am adapting it to keep track of all the useful information I get from the lists I subscribe to. It allows me to set up categories (20 of them), and has 6 pages per category. This can mean a lot of notes! :o) So far I have set up categories for Excel, Word, Marketing, Adobe Acrobat, Web Page Designs, Outlook, Client Relations, and others. I have also set up a category per client to keep info I find that relates to their business.

All in all, this is a great program for note keeping.

Submitted by:

Sheryl Michilli, GVA
Kaisana Administrative Support
<http://www.kaisana.net>

- Keep a master copy binder for all your contracts, agreements and advertising materials.

Sharon Trombly
<http://www.tromblycommunications.com>

Organization is essential to developing an efficient plan and obtaining successful results when working with a Virtual Assistant. Whether you are working on a one-time project or building a long-term relationship, the following steps are key:

- Communicate.
- State your Ultimate Goal.
- Brainstorm the steps involved in implementing and maintaining the goal.
- Evaluate the time and cost involved in utilizing those tools, methods, services and networks.
- Determine which ones will best fit your financial, time, and skill levels.
- Design a system to monitor your results and allow ample time to reorganize if necessary.
- Record it all for future reference.
- ACT!

Submitted by:

Michelle Thornton, CRESS
Michelle Thornton & Associates
<http://www.TheRealEstateVA.com>

- I just purchased a Franklin Covey Planner (FranklinCovey.com). My business is getting busier and I needed to organize every bit of my time each day. Between my business and my personal life, it was getting away from me. This has truly helped me to better my time. I will graduate next to a Palm but for now, I love this.

Submitted by:

Leah Beth Mills
Mills Business Support Services
<http://www.mbss.biz>

- Save time. When someone gives you a business card, staple it directly to your rolodex or address book instead of re-writing all the info.

Submitted by:

Connie Whiting
Your Invisible Assistant
<http://www.yourinvisibleassistant.com>

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- Make a list on paper of the things you want to do the next day so that when you wake up, you don't have to spend time figuring things out and can get a running start to the day.
 - Spend a little time in the morning meditating, exercising, reading something uplifting when everything is quiet to nourish yourself before you get started on your day.
 - Go to bed early so that you are alert and ready to think clearly and tackle the list of tasks the next day. This can help you avoid wasting precious time.

Submitted by:

Michele B. Wong
Reliable Cyber Solutions, LLC
A Virtual Assistance Company
<http://www.reliablecyber.com>

- **JOINING AN ONLINE GROUP / COMMUNITY:** The BEST Resource I have found as a Virtual Assistant is an online community group that helps other VAs with questions regarding work, problems and solutions, links that "do" come in handy, and most importantly, this group gives you a REAL sense of commitment and loyalty to other VAs. I usually receive 1-2 postings of all the messages in the group daily. As a new VA, I take notes on the information I need, or may need in the future, keeping an organized data sheet. I know this information will save me someday. The link to join the group is listed below:

VirtualBizGroup@yahoogroups.com

Submitted by:

Martine R. Lewis
Virtual Administrative Support
<http://www.vamaster.com>

- Try to make business phone calls early in the day that way if you leave a message for someone they might get a chance to call you back later the same day.
- If you find yourself too busy to keep up with all your correspondence, delegate work to a VA.

Sharon Trombly
<http://www.tromblycommunications.com>

Working from home makes it very difficult to stay focused: particularly if you have a sink full of dirty dishes, the washing's piling up, you haven't ironed in three weeks, and the floor looks like it belongs in a Bedouin tent! There are a couple of things you can do, to give yourself permission to work:

- Know that the house doesn't need to be sterile in order for it to be a home. My favourite quote: "A neat kitchen is the product of an idle mind"!
- Get dressed! That's right, out of those PJs and into something "work like". Do your hair, put on make up if you want. Whatever it takes to get you in the frame of mind for work.
- If you have the luxury of a separate room in the house for your office, shut the door. Hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign on it if you have to - and have children old enough who can read! (Note: this will probably not keep your husband out though, particularly if he's trying to work out whether he uses "a scouring pad on the china or the pans?" !) If you don't have a separate room in the house, buy a screen - you can get some really stylish dressing screens from home-maker stores - and put that up to screen your workspace. Make sure everyone knows that when mummy's in her office, that means she's not really here unless it's a life or death situation, and then think twice before poking your head around the door - or the screen! (That goes for dad too!!)
- If your children are old enough, add a chore or two to their weekly list - get them to do the dishes, for instance. And even kids as young as 10 can switch on a washing machine. It won't kill dad to hang out the washing from time to time either.
- If you don't have kids, they've left home, or yours are too young, think about any of those teenagers around the neighbourhood (or even College/Uni age students) who need some extra money. A teenager can push a vacuum around just as easily as you can.
- And just think, if you spend quality time working, your practice will become so successful that you'll be able to afford a professional cleaner once a week, or fortnight, and that ironing lady you've been dreaming of!!
- Email: the great time waster! If you belong to a number of VA organisations with associated discussions lists, you can receive nearly 200 emails a day!! This can take up a HUGE chunk of your time!
- Set up folders in Outlook - one for each organisation - and then a Rule so that any email coming from those discussion lists is automatically redirected into the folders. This keeps your In Box free of clutter and you can go to the organisation folders whenever you have time to plow through the emails.

Tips by: Lyn Prowse-Bishop, MVA, Executive Stress Office Support continued on next page...

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- Do the same for clients: set up a client folder and a Rule redirecting mail from them into their appropriate folder. That way when you check your mail, you can see immediately whether anything has come from your client. (Make sure you check the box that asks you if you want to place a short cut for the newly-created folder on your Outlook Shortcuts Bar.)
 - Secondly - only start your email program at a certain time of the day. So for example, if you start working at 8 a.m., get a good hour in before you check your email. This works best for dial up connections, but if you are always-on, only start the email program when you're ready to get your mail.
 - And remember, just because your incoming mail alert goes off doesn't mean you have to check it right there and then! It's not going anywhere, is it? If you're in the middle of something, finish it. Then check the In Box. If they wanted your IMMEDIATE attention, they'd have phoned!

Submitted by:

Lyn Prowse-Bishop, MVA
& Certified EthicsChecked VA
Executive Stress Office Support
<http://www.execstress.com>

- Every Monday in the Business Section of the local newspaper, they list all of the new businesses in the area that have obviously applied for business licenses. I am compiling a database so that I can market those businesses. They are mostly new businesses and may not be in a position to hire a full-time staff.

Submitted by:

Renee DiNicola, Your Virtual Office Assistant
Secretarial and Office Support "Only When You Need It!"
<http://www.yourofficeassistant.net>

- I work on one project at a time until it is finished, then I go to the next one.

Submitted by:

Beverly Drucker Virtual Research Service
Genealogy, Historical, Newspaper,
Information, People, Services, Companies and Products
<http://www.bdvirtualresearch.bizland.com>

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- **Don't Procrastinate** Always address any task that can be done immediately first. Follow-up on tasks as needed on the day you specified. Get ahead of tasks when time permits and reward yourself for your diligence.
 - **Organize Your Office** Keep all frequently used items within arms reach. Make your workspace work for you. You shouldn't have to work for space. Create a simple filing system (tickler) that you will use. File continuously. Don't stockpile stacks of paper.
 - **Plan Your Day** Use a daily planner to check off each task as they are accomplished. Plan your tomorrow today and always stick to the plan. Schedule blocks of time for specific tasks. Plan a "clean-up" day
 - **Reduce Paper** Keep a trash container handy. Throw away envelopes and junk mail immediately. Limit unnecessary subscriptions. Remove your name from mailing lists* Use e-mail and online resources as much as possible. Print only as needed.
 - **Get Support** Don't be afraid to ask for assistance. We all can use some at times. Incorporate family and friends into your daily business tasks. Utilize experienced outside support services such as Virtual Assistants.

*Assistance Tip: Did you know you that you can get your personal contact information removed from marketing lists through the Direct Marketing Association and by contacting each credit-reporting bureau in writing?

Submitted by:

Yvonne Thompson
Assistance For You
Virtual Business Assistant
<http://www.Assistance-For-You.com>

-
- Keeping your receipts organized is very important. It will help during tax season, if you are audited or if you are doing some research on past expenses. For my clients with a small number of receipts, I two-hole punch 12 letter-sized envelopes at the sealed end, put a "month" label on each envelope and put the envelopes in a data binder. Every month the client puts her receipts in the appropriate envelope. The receipts are neatly stored and easily accessible.

Submitted by:

Teresa Thomas, Virtual Assistant
<http://www.teresathomasva>

As a special bonus for VAs, we have included the following:

Developing Sales Personality for Virtual Assistants by Vasant Davé

Can you develop your personality to be more successful in selling your services? The answer is a resounding 'Yes'. You can evolve your sales personality by forming seven habits. Let us discuss them one by one.

1. Form phrasing habits that make your manners pleasant

Many a sales person habitually uses technical terms that the prospect does not understand. By showing off one's specialized knowledge, virtually donning the graduation cap, the sales person makes the prospect feel inadequate. You can avoid being unpleasant by making frequent use of words "As you say" and "As you know". With your face-saving manners, you can signal to the prospect that you hold him in high esteem.

Be pleasant.

2. Form eye contact habits that signal sincerity

A person doesn't always mean what he/she speaks. Your prospect gets the message about your sincerity by the manner in which you make or avoid eye contact. While talking, if you tend to look at his forehead or at his throat, thus avoiding meeting his eye, the prospect would know that you yourself do not believe in what you are speaking. How can you expect him to believe you? But then, to convince sincerity, you have to be sincere. Your words should be coming out of your heart. At the back of your mind there has to be

- the desire to help, and
- the belief that you can help.

Remove that mask -- the mask of eye evasiveness.

3. Form courtesy habits that signal respect

In olden days there were kings who held and wielded a lot of power, and their courtiers respected them. Your prospect is the King Customer who also holds and wields great power, the power to give you an order. Be like his courtier. Respect him. You are not respecting your King Customer if you

- are late for appointment
- sit without invitation
- appropriate space on his table for keeping your material
- fail to appreciate what he is talking about
- are carelessly groomed
- develop a fast familiarity
- listen as if what he is talking is babble of a baby

If you carry any of these habits, make a conscious effort to remove them.

Have respect for the crown.

Developing Sales Personality for Virtual Assistants by: Vasant Davé, ABOVAC continued...

4. Develop voice that signals friendliness

When you face your prospect do not attempt to show artificial friendliness. Even if you manage it on your face, your voice will give you away. Go to your prospect with these 3 messages at the back of your mind:

- I come with cheerful good news
- I bring you benefits
- I come as a friend

Cultivate your voice and your facial expressions will take care of themselves.

Let your voice be like a warm handshake.

5. Form composure habits which communicate confidence

Anxiety affects your composure negatively. It projects a deadly image of the lack of assurance.

A number of reflex actions can unveil your anxiety. They are:

- fidgeting with or snapping fingers
- playing with trivial like pen or key chain
- bending clips
- biting nails
- rocking on chair
- stomping feet

Remove undesirable habits which could cost you your order.

Communicate confidence.

6. Form animation habits that signal enthusiasm

Although too much anxiety as mentioned above is undesirable, a little anxiety is an asset if contained deep inside. It signals enthusiasm. While speaking to your prospect, do not keep your hands immobile like a statue. Use them to express. Do not sit in your chair helplessly. Sit up. Do not lean back. Lean forward. Do not talk in a monotonous voice. Inflect it. A voice without inflection is a voice inflated.

Signal enthusiasm.

7. Form promise-keeping habits which signal reliability

Your relationship with your prospect is a lasting one. It does not cease after he places the order on you. Convey to your client your reliability and the reliability of all that you represent -- your service, your contract, and your organization. This you can do by promptly contacting the client for any clarity and keeping him informed of the progress. The quality of after-sales service can make or mar your image as a reliable sales person. It can influence further orders and recommendation to other prospects.

Keep your promise.

Developing Sales Personality for Virtual Assistants by: [Vasant Davé, ABOVAC continued...](#)

Summary:

Hence, the 7 habits that will develop your sales personality are:

- Pleasant manners
- Sincerity
- Courtesy
- Friendliness
- Confidence
- Enthusiasm
- Reliability

Remember, before buying your services, your prospect buys you.

Vasant Davé, ABOVAC: Asian Back Office for the Virtual Assistance Companies

<http://www.abovac.biz/index.html>

Cheaper Isn't Always Better by Janice D. Byer, MVA - <http://www.docutype.net>

Business owners spend a lot of time making decisions. Each decision will have a different outcome for their company.

From 'which business supply store to shop in' to 'how are you going to get all of the office tasks accomplished', choices are always needed and being made. For each decision there are contributing factors and one of the biggest is how much things cost. This is an important factor, but it shouldn't be our top priority.... quality should!

Small businesses usually have small budgets so sometimes we try to cut corners to obtain a needed product or service. Often, these choices to save a little money can have adverse effects.

Buying a cheaper type of paper and then finding that it jams in your printer is an easily rectified decision. For just a few more dollars you can buy a box of higher grade paper and you learn the lesson that cheaper isn't always better.

Other 'unfortunate' decisions can have a longer lasting and more damaging effect. These lessons sometimes have to be learned but why not avoid all the hassle and extra costs by choosing to take quality over saving a few bucks right from the start?

For instance, when choosing a virtual assistance company to help you with your administrative tasks, the wrong choice can dramatically affect your business. If you decide to get the cheapest 'help' around, you may be getting exactly what you pay for. In the long run you won't be saving any money...you will be paying out more to have errors fixed by a more experienced assistant. And the mistakes could possibly be seen by your clients or customers...which isn't good! Again, cheaper isn't always better...!

This doesn't mean that you won't find a virtual administrative assistant that fits your budget, but don't go for the cheapest just because it's....cheaper. You may be paying for it in the future. Saving money is fine on certain things, but don't skimp on the important stuff. Do research on any product or service you are considering for your company. Find out from others who have used the product or service whether they were happy with it. Was it worth the money they paid or did they get exactly what they paid for?

To be the most prepared for your day, start the night before. Before you close up shop for the night, make a list of all the things you need to do the next day and then put them in order with 10 being the most important. Several items can have a rating of 8, for example if you need to send off an invoice, send out a marketing packet to a client who has been waiting for it, and get a quote from a subcontractor. Then, the next morning, you will be ready for the day. You will already have a list of things to do that are prioritized and waiting to be accomplished. This helps to keep you organized in 2 ways. First, you keep a running list of those things that need to be done, even if you don't finish them on the first day they make it to the list. You can always go back over old lists to see what was never checked off. Second, you know that as long as you get the items in the top 5 completed, you were extremely successful that day!

Submitted by:

Renaë Bolton
Founder
Virtual Business Group
<http://www.virtualbizgroup.com>

Attention: ALL Virtual Office Workers

Submit Your Helpful Office Tips

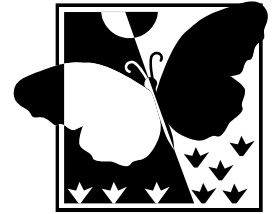
Send us your tips for the upcoming e-book: **More Helpful Tips from Virtual Office Workers**. Send tips via email to: tips@tromblycommunications.com. Your tips will be published as received, so be sure to proofread your work. Please include your name, business name and website address.

Send us your:

- Office organization tips
- Marketing tips that have worked well for you
- Time saving tips
- Websites you find extra helpful
- Freebies on the web
- Website creation tips
- How to start a business on a shoestring tips
- Any tips you wish to submit that would help an office worker

Thank you

Trombly Communications appreciates you taking the time to read this e-book:



Organizing Tips Submitted by Experienced Virtual Assistants

We hope that you have discovered a few organizing tips that you can implement in your own office. Please feel free to share this e-book with others so that they may also benefit from these helpful tips.

It is our hope that these organizing and time management tips will assist you with your office management tasks and help reduce the work-related stress a cluttered and unorganized office is sure to bring about.

Thank you to the Experienced Virtual Assistants

We would like to extend a big thank you to all the experienced Virtual Assistants that took the time to contribute their tips to this e-book. We certainly appreciate you sharing the ideas and work strategies that work for you. Be happy knowing that you have participated in a project that will be quite helpful to others by providing this valuable information.

Submit Your Tips

Send us your tips for the upcoming e-book: **More Helpful Tips from Virtual Office Workers**. Send tips via email to: tips@tromblycommunications.com. Your tips will be published as received, so be sure to proofread your work. Please include your name, business name and website address.

Your Feedback is Requested

We would like to hear from our readers. Please let us know if you found these tips helpful. Have you become an efficient office organizer? Have any of these tips made improvements in your office? You can send your comments via email to: feedback@tromblycommunications.com.

Wishing you business success,

Sharon Trombly

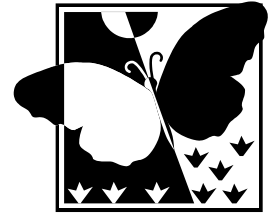
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