Basic 'To Do' List for Preparing to Launch a Virtual Assistance Practice

Not sure where to get started?

This list is by no means exhaustive, but will give you a good starting point for getting organized toward a successful virtual assistance practice. For best results, print it out and use the fields provided for brainstorming and note taking. Remember, you will also find support, encouragement, and answers at the free **Virtual Assistant Forums** online community.

__**List your skills, qualified experience, talents and strengths – put a star next to the things you truly *enjoy* doing. Put an X next to anything you really don't enjoy.**

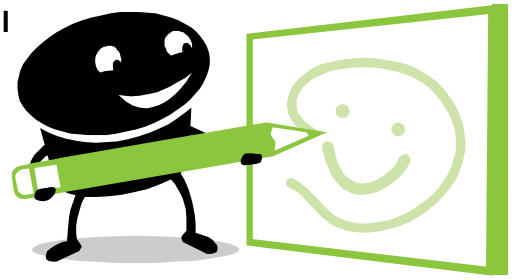
__ **Using the list above as a guideline, brainstorm another list of possible services – things you can accomplish for clients virtually, from home. Remember, you're working to establish yourself as a business owner, YOU get to decide what services you will offer.**

If you need more help or wish to discuss this topic with other VAs, visit the Determining Your Services section of Virtual Assistant Forums.

--> The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** includes worksheets and a chapter specifically to help you narrow down the services you want to offer through your virtual assistance practice.

__ **Spend some time envisioning the types of clients you want to have. What kinds of people do you enjoy working with? Describe your ideal client, his or her needs, their communication style, their personality traits.**

Be as specific as you like. Know that not every client will be a good match for you or your practice, but by spending time envisioning your ideal client you begin to fine-tune your own expectations as a business owner and service provider.



To discuss further, visit the Client Relations section of Virtual Assistant Forums.

--→ The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** includes worksheets and a chapter specifically to help you determine not only the type of client you wish to work with (your ideal client), but which niche/industry you'll be most successful serving (your target market).

__ **Write at least an informal business plan with a few goals to reach at the 3, 6, 9 and 12 month marks. Keep this in a notebook where you will have room to edit, expand, add new ideas, etc.**

Your business plan should be an organic entity that accommodates for change in your practice and policies as you learn and experience more as a business owner.

Visit the Business Planning section at Virtual Assistant Forums to discuss with other virtual assistants.

--→ The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** includes a chapter on business planning as well as a COMPLETE formal business plan template!

__ **Research virtual assistant industry and various other related service-industry rates, your local business market, and take into consideration any other factors that will impact how much you will charge your clients.**

Remember, your rates should be based on your skill level, services and specialties, operating costs, and experience, not necessarily on your location or how much other VAs are charging.

More information is available in the Rates and Billing section of Virtual Assistant Forums.

--→ The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** includes a chapter discussing how to set your rates as well as how to raise your rates once you've been in business for a while.

__ **Consider your need for business policies for things such as:**

- How you will invoice (how often, on what terms, with what format)?
- What types of payment you will accept
- How you and your clients will communicate
- When you will be available to your clients

The list of possibilities is endless. Many of your business policies will develop as your business develops, however - the basics should be outlined *before* you find your first client so that you are presenting your practice and your own expectations in a clear and confident manner. Start your notes here but transfer the info to your business plan notebook as needed.

Get feedback and ideas from fellow virtual assistants in the Policies and Procedures section of Virtual Assistant Forums.

--→ The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** includes worksheets and a chapter specifically designed to walk you through determining which policies will be most important to your own virtual assistance practice.

__ **Determine a business name and start thinking about branding (logo? tagline? color/design? website theme? etc.) Note a few ideas and keywords here, brainstorm possible names using a few words that mean something to you or describe your business, services, or philosophy. Use a thesaurus to come up with new words to play with.**

Once you come up with a few options, check to make sure no one else in the industry is using a name you've chosen or are thinking about. You will also find the Branding Your Business section at Virtual Assistant Forums helpful.

--→ The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** includes a chapter with exercises and worksheets to help you work through the branding process of your new business.

__ **Research, select, and file a business entity with your state (will you file an LLC, sole proprietorship, S-Corporation, etc?)**

Find and note the contact info, URL for any downloadable forms, and fee information for filing via your Secretary of State.

Be sure you understand any city or state tax requirements for small businesses.

Plenty of additional information on this topic can be found in the General Legal Issues section of Virtual Assistant Forums.

--→ The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** includes a chapter discussing the various business entities as well as information about and links directly to each of the Secretary of State websites (for U.S. VAs).

__ **Research your banking options and set up a business bank account. Make notes here on which banks offer the lowest fees, best interest rates, and any perks, etc.**

--→ The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** includes a chapter on the importance of setting up your business bank account as well as which services and features to look for in a bank account.

__ **Make sure you have all of the necessary office equipment you will need.**

Bare minimum: a reliable, high speed internet connection, a viable up-to-date computer, office software, any programs or hardware that are relative to your skill set and tasks you will be completing.

List the hardware, software, and office furniture you already have with notes on anything you might need to upgrade.

To discuss what other virtual assistants maintain in their home offices, visit the Work at Home Resources section of Virtual Assistant Forums.

--> The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** includes a chapter on setting up your home office. It also includes a worksheet to help you make the most of the space and equipment you have available right now, at home!

__ **Draft your contract(s) and/or letters of agreement. Ensure they make all of your business policies crystal clear.**

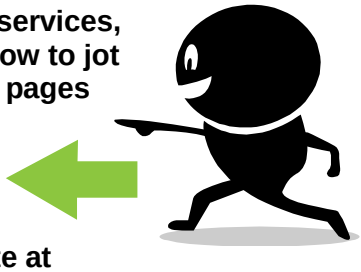
Read carefully through your contracts to ensure you fully understand what they say and how they impact you and your clients.

You will find additional information and resources in the Virtual Assistant Contracts section of Virtual Assistant Forums.

--> The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** comes not only with an entire chapter on the importance of contracts and what goes into a contract it ALSO includes numerous editable contract documents you can update to reflect your own business brand and policies.

__ **Create a business website (Or, hire a professional to create one for you). Your website should communicate professionalism and answer the Who, What, Where, When and Why of your business.**

At a bare minimum you should provide information on your rates, services, contact information and 'About Me' information. Use the space below to jot down ideas for your website. Brainstorm content for each of these pages below.



You'll find additional information and discussions on registering a domain, hosting a website, web development and design as well as a place for receiving constructive critiquing of your finished site at Virtual Assistant Forums in the Your Virtual Assistant Business Website section.

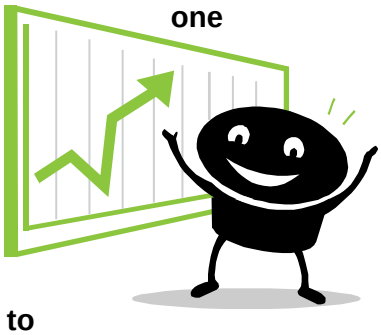
--> The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** devotes an entire chapter to selecting a domain name, choosing a hosting company, and getting started with your virtual assistant business website.

__ **Create and order your business cards, or print them yourself. Consider how you will utilize the space on a business card. What title will you give yourself? What about the back of the card?**

Find resources and information in the Business Cards section of Virtual Assistant Forums.

__ Develop your networking and marketing plan. Research various options to start getting your name out there!

Plan on marketing your virtual assistance practice for a minimum of one hour every day. Diversify your marketing efforts and keep notes on what works and what doesn't. Don't expect immediate results from any one direction and don't let yourself get complacent about marketing.

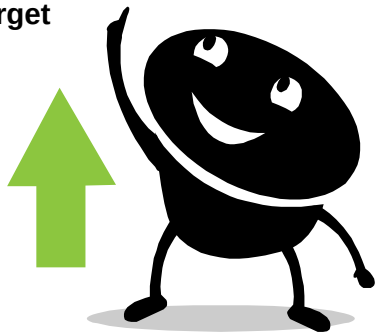


Considering your niche market, what methods do you think would best reach and impact your ideal clients?

For discussion, information and resources on numerous topics related to marketing and networking visit the Marketing Your Virtual Assistant Business section of Virtual Assistant Forums.

--→ The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** discusses how to develop and implement your marketing and networking plan as well as touches on various ideas to help you get started with it all including online networking options as well as local networking events.

__Join and participate in online communities like Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Virtual Assistant Forums, and Virtual Assistantville. All of these sites offer important ways for you to connect and interact with potential clients in your target market.



Use these resources to help get your business name out there while establishing yourself as a professional service provider and an expert in your field.

Keep notes below on which sites you've joined and how often you will utilize them as a part of your marketing agenda.

--→ The **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook** discusses how to develop and implement your marketing and networking plan as well as touches on various ideas to help you get started with it all including online networking options as well as local networking events.

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Congratulations on taking the first, important steps to establishing yourself as a professional virtual assistant.
Here's to your success!

When you're ready to tackle the real work of starting your own successful virtual assistant business, take a look at our best-selling **Become a Virtual Assistant eBook**. **130 information-PACKED pages + 35 free sample contracts, business documents and worksheets – all for just $39!** It's the best, and most affordable investment you can make in your future business! **http://www.virtualassistantforums.com/ebook**

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