"This 30-day Virtual Business Startup System will keep you on task as you begin to develop your own virtual business. Each lesson is packed with excellent ideas, thorough task checklists, business templates, and practical exercises."

Beverly Pederson, Virtual Instructor for The Virtual Assistant Certificate Program at Red Deer College, Alberta, Canada

virtual Business 101

If you are a person who disfavors lengthy reading and writing - be rest assured - this entire virtual business startup system was designed with SIMPLICITY and PRACTICALITY in mind! An easy balance between short reading passages, writing exercises, helpful tips, templates and checklists. This easy to follow system will keep you both visually and intellectually stimulated on your exciting journey to entrepreneurship with your own successful virtual business.

... Tawnya Sutherland, Founder of www.VANetworking.com
Virtual Business Startup System
(VBSS)

By Tawnya Sutherland

The internationally acclaimed *Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS)* created specifically for successful and aspiring Virtual Assistants and Virtual Associates.
Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS)
By Tawnya Sutherland

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What Others Have To Say About The VBSS:

The VBSS is packed full of valuable information to help Virtual Assistants get started and those already in business succeed even more. Each section is formatted for easy reading making it enjoyable to read, yet detailed enough to cover all the topics thoroughly. The addition of the other VA books in the kit, and how they are referenced in the book to provide the reader with precise information on the topic, is unique and adds to the overall quality and enjoyment. Plus, the SEO section alone makes it a must have as the information provided will help gain more clients and more traffic to your site. I highly recommend it!

Diana Ennen, Author
Virtual Word Publishing ~ www.virtualwordpublishing.com

The VBSS is a comprehensive step-by-step process to build the foundation of a Virtual Assistant business. Whether you are a new VA or you are just finishing up your business training, this system will bring focus to pulling all the pieces together. It’s set up in such a way that you won’t miss anything, all the details are covered. Invest in the success of your business by investing in the VBSS. It’s a decision you won’t regret!

Mary-Lou Ashton, President
Virtual Assistant Training Program ~ www.vatp.ca

I have to commend Tawnya on her revised Virtual Business Startup System as it provides aspiring Virtual Assistants and Online Professionals with a very easy to follow, step-by-step playbook on building a thriving VA business here in 2009. At VAclassroom, I often hear new people say that they are interested in starting a Virtual Business, but are not really sure how to get started. It is great knowing that I can refer these individuals to a 30-day business start-up program that is practical and easy to implement and will help them to move their new career in the right direction!

Craig Cannings, President
VAclassroom ~www.VAclassroom.com

This workbook is a 'must have' publication for anyone entering the virtual assisting industry. It’s stocked with excellent thought-provoking exercises, insightful and useful information and is well worth the investment. One of the best industry-related workbooks I’ve read!

Sharon Williams, MVA, PREVA
The 24 Hour Secretary - www.the24hoursecretary.com

This 30-day Virtual Business Startup System will keep you on task as you begin to develop your own virtual business. Each lesson is packed with excellent ideas, thorough task checklists, business templates, and practical exercises.

Beverly Pederson, Virtual Instructor
The Virtual Assistant Certificate Program
Red Deer College, Alberta, Canada ~ www.virtualassist.ca
The 30 Day Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS) was a welcome addition to my list of business resources to recommend for women. Especially women looking for something they can do to earn a living from home. After studying the VBSS, I was truly amazed at the vast amount of information and help tools included. The VBSS Workbook should be a required tool for anyone wanting to start any virtual business online. Tawnya has painstakingly taken the time and made the effort to make sure that "anyone", and I mean anyone, can master this field using her workbook as a guideline and resource tool. When you want to learn a new trade, go directly to the masters of that craft. Tawnya is truly a master!

Rebecca Game, President
Digital Women ~ www.digital-women.com

This is a wonderful reference for all new VAs. It takes you step by step through the entire process of setting up a Virtual Assistant business; from deciding on your business entity to setting up your office and everything in between, this manual guides you through every process.

Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA
Docu-Type ~ Virtual Assistance & Web Services

A MUST have for anyone who is interested in starting a Virtual Assistant business. The most comprehensive start up workbook I've read to date. Great ideas, even for an established VA. I highly recommend this workbook!

Michelle Jamison, President, MJVA

The Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS) is an incredible resource for those wishing to start and/or grow their Virtual Assistant business. It's like having an expert come to your office every day and walk you through the steps to creating a successful business. Tawnya has done all the leg work for you saving you countless hours doing research and finding resources. It is well worth the investment and you absolutely can't go wrong with a guarantee like this.

Elayne Whitfield, CCVA, MVA
Executive Assistance

Remember, no question is ever stupid, stupidity comes from not asking when you have the opportunity to do so.

~ Tawnya Sutherland, Founder of The Original Virtual Assistant Networking Forum since 2003 (www.VAnetworking.com)
About the Author

Tawnya Sutherland lives on the scenic shores of the Pacific Ocean near Vancouver, Canada and is a mother of 3 teenage children working from her home-based office as an Internet Marketing Business Strategist.

Tawnya began her own administrative support Virtual Assistant business from her home-based office in June 1997 but has since focused in on her talents providing Internet Marketing services helping her clients turn clicks into cash through Mediamage Business Solutions (www.mediamage.com). Tawnya is a Certified Internet Marketing Business Strategist and Multimedia Usability Specialist graduating in 2002 from the University of British Columbia.

A long-time active member of the VA community, Sutherland founded VAnetworking (www.VAnetworking.com), the largest online global social network for successful and aspiring Virtual Assistants. Tawnya is also the creator of the internationally acclaimed Virtual Business Startup System, namely VBSS—which provides all the information, tools, and resources for a VA to build a viable virtual business in just 30 days. She is a frequent speaker at many business-based conferences throughout North America regarding subjects on Virtual Assistants and Internet Marketing.

A true entrepreneur, Tawnya also owns, operates, and markets her family's other companies including an airport (www.KingGeorgeAviation.com).

Tawnya’s newest venture in the VA industry is The VAinsider Club (www.VAinsiders.com) which informs, educates and motivates virtual achievers globally to be successful online.

Acknowledgements

To my kids Connor, Ryan and Danielle, thank you for loving and respecting me as your mother because if I didn’t have you in my life, my motives to succeed may not have been so fierce and tenacious.

To my parents, thank you for showing me where my passions lie again. Without your support and guidance I may have wandered aimlessly throughout life instead of doing what I do best, helping others.

To VAs across this globe, thanks for trusting in me to ask the questions that you needed answers about your business. If it wasn’t for your inquisitive natures, the VBSS never would have been a reality!

About this Book

This book was written because I am a do-it-yourselfer. I am a self-learner who re-educates herself daily by reading everything I can get my hands on from articles and websites on the net to books and newsletters delivered to my doorstep. This got me to thinking what would I do if I was starting my virtual business all over again, where would I begin? Thinking back to my beginning days as a new entrepreneur, I remember my low-budget and hectic schedule with small children in my home. I could not afford
the high cost of online courses to become a VA nor could I attend to a strict timeline for education. Being a secretary for many years meant, I had the skill set and I really just needed a helping hand into the virtual world. I needed the forms, templates, marketing materials, guidance and direction to get my VA business up and running. In fact, I needed this all in one box ready, at my fingertips available to put my business into action on my own time schedule. Hence, the **VBSS ... so let's get started!**

**What is a VA?**

(Often referred to as a Virtual Assistant or Virtual Associate)

"A Virtual Assistant (VA) A Virtual Assistant (VA) is a highly-skilled, independent professional who remotely provides administrative, technical and/or creative business support services.

*Source: (www.VAnetworking.com) The Virtual Assistant Social Network

(Freely use our definition on your website without acknowledgment. An exchange link as stated in above *Source is greatly appreciated but not required).

We've also put together a series of Top 10s (just like David Letterman) of questions related to virtual assistance. You may use these articles on your websites, in newsletters or on your blogs, just please leave our credit by-line intact at the end of each article as per the instructions on the website. Please visit the following webpage to use: (www.VAnetworking.com/VA-top-ten).

All references to the acronym VA used throughout this workbook will represent the phrases *Virtual Assistant* or *Virtual Associate* with Virtual Assistant being primarily used for easier consistency and reading fluency.

---

We hope you have enjoyed the 43 page sampler of the Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS). Feel free to share this copy with your friends.

**ORDER TODAY** the full 157 page version of the Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS) online at:

[www.VirtualAssistantinaBox.com](http://www.VirtualAssistantinaBox.com)
Ethics of a VA

1. We promote the Virtual Assistance industry with the utmost professionalism and give of our knowledge freely to new and existing VAs and the general public.

2. As Virtual Assistants, we will maintain the highest ethics and honesty in all dealings with clients, colleagues and the general public.

3. We will seek to deal with colleagues, suppliers and employees in a fair and equitable manner, and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct to bring credit to the Virtual Assistant profession.

4. As highly ethical Virtual Assistants, we only take on projects that are within our abilities. If a project is not within our ability, the client will be notified immediately and we will provide recommendations for other highly skilled Virtual Assistants.

5. Client information will be held in the strictest of confidence and will not be shared with others or used for personal gain.

6. We highly value each client relationship and will not place one client above another.

7. We will make a commitment to possess and increase the required knowledge, skills and training to be proficient and relevant in the provision of services.

8. We are honest about our intentions and never misrepresent our skills, peers, or our profession as a whole, whether to networks or to prospects, clients, and the community at large (virtual or otherwise).

9. We will not knowingly be a part of any illegal or unethical activity.

*Source: (www.VAnetworking.com) The Virtual Assistant Social Network
This is where the road on this journey begins to get harder to travel but keep walking through it step by step with these thoughts to smile about:

**ALBERT EINSTEIN** was four years old before he could speak and seven before he could read.

**THOMAS EDISON** was told by his teachers that he was too stupid to learn anything.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,** was told by a teacher that he would never be able to speak with enough emotion to inspire people to take action.

**MICHAEL JORDAN** was "cut" from the high school basketball team at the beginning of his junior year.
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## CONTRIBUTORS TO THE VBSS

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DAY 1 – Welcome To The VBSS!

You are about to embark on a 30-day journey that will steer you to your dream: Your own Virtual Assistant / Associate business. By devoting a modest portion of your day to each lesson, you will channel your passion for virtual assistance to launch a fully operational VA business. Simple and manageable steps enclosed in 30 comprehensive lessons will soon help you transform a hazy vision into a vivid reality.

Keep your binoculars handy throughout this 30-day voyage. Pull them out each day to keep an image of your goal in close proximity. Enclosed in this Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS) are the tools you will need to stretch that arm a little further and touch that oh-so-vivid vision.

The sails are up, the forecast is bright, and a warm breeze is promising a smooth, swift journey. Gear up with ambition, check your commitment, and prepare to set sail!

Task 1: The VBSS Checklist

Take a moment to ensure all the following contents are included in your Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS):

- The VBSS Workbook by Tawnya Sutherland
- The VBSS Template CD-ROM #1 which includes over 130+ business and website templates, tutorials, charts, articles, coupons and VA legalese documents
- 3 more CDs full of resources plus a bonus VIP CD
- Website Package consisting of 1 year of hosting, $100 value for Website Design Services, Free Domain Name Registration, $50 value for Search Engine Submissions through Mediamage Business Solutions
- Special Access to The VBSS Private Networking Forum Area at (www.vanetworking.com/forum) Email us to receive login.
- Certificate for 1 free coaching session by Tawnya Sutherland
- Exclusive access to all current Premier Partner Discounts plus bonus coupons
- “VBSS Commitment” contract
- Various coupons and discounts from sponsors
- The VBSS also includes extra bonuses as seen on our website including but not limited to a 1 year VAinsider Club Membership (www.VAinsiders.com). An exclusive mastermind group of virtual entrepreneurs who are on an inside track and taking their businesses to that next level of virtual success.
Should any of the following contents be missing from your system, please contact Mediamage Business Solutions at 604-542-9664.

**Task 2: The VBSS Commitment**

Complete the “VBSS Commitment” contract included in your system. Sign it and have it witnessed by your spouse, parent, best friend or one of your children. Your loved ones will infuse you with large doses of support and encouragement along this entrepreneurial path. Hang your contract above your workstation for all to see.

This is imperative to do so don’t forget to do this. This one action alone will be the crucial step forward within your mind to encourage you to taking the baby steps needed to succeed with your virtual business.

**Task 3: The VBSS Workbook Instructions**

Each lesson requires some daily reading and writing. Simple but practical exercises will help you reaffirm the who, what, when, where, and why of starting a virtual business.

If you are a person who disfavors lengthy reading and writing – be rest assured – this entire workbook was designed with simplicity and practicality in mind! An easy balance between short reading passages, writing exercises, helpful tips, templates and checklists will keep you both visually and intellectually stimulated on your journey to entrepreneurship.

Let’s take a quick look at the **guiding icons** used throughout this workbook:

**VA Tip**

This section will include helpful virtual business startup tips you can easily implement.

**R & R**

Thought you had time for some R & R? Think again! As the soon-to-be owner of a new business, you must allot some time in your schedule for “reading and reflection.” Find a comfortable, quiet reading spot (your new office, perhaps), and contemplate the business aspects covered in your reading passages.

The books I have included in this system have been chosen with care, and attention to practicality and ease of reading. These also happen to be the best VA business book on the market!

Set aside a portion of your day to complete the assigned readings. If you are really ambitious and can devote the extra time, work through the books cover to cover. I recommend reading them in order, checking each off as you complete it:
Many of the world's most successful figures were dreamers. Deeply reflect on what you read, then revisit your business dream. See your dream materialize before your eyes.

**Templates**
Throughout this workbook, references by the icon to the left will be made to a template name located on your template CD-ROM as follows:

**Located on CD-ROM:** Directory/filename

For example: If I was referencing the press release tutorial example you should work on as your next task, it would look like this:

**Located on CD-ROM:** Tutorials/Press Release Tutorial.pdf

The templates have been designed in Word 2002, Excel 2002, PowerPoint 2002, Adobe Illustrator 10, Photoshop 7, Dreamweaver MX and Adobe Reader/Acrobat 5 formats to make them more universal between versions users most likely will have on hand.

There are also .PDF versions of all of the documents found on this CD-ROM in the off-hand chance you do not have the required program to open one of them on your computer. Download this universal Adobe Reader at ([www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html)).

You will find these templates wonderfully easy-to-use tools to record various aspects of your business planning. You can manipulate, modify, and personalize any of them as needed to suit your business needs.

I put this workbook in a binder format so that you could add other sheets and documents to it related to your VA business start up. Plus any updates or additions I may have from time to time can be emailed to you and inserted easily. I have also left large white margins throughout *The VBSS Workbook* for a very good reason since this will give you an area to hand write notes that you can easily reference whenever you wish.

Overtime, this *workbook* will become your **VA bible** in **running your Virtual Assistant business**. Keep it in a handy spot on your office desk so you can easily reference it whenever you have a question about your VA business that needs answering or when you have NEW business notes to add to it!
Task Checklist
I did it! After each lesson, a summary checklist will help you review the day’s major accomplishments. With each checkmark, you will be drawing nearer to your destination.

This work book was authored and built by a Virtual Assistant, Tawnya Sutherland, who has now become more of a Virtual Associate which would be like a coach or consultant. Both Virtual Assistants and Virtual Associates will find value to *The Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS)*.

Day 1: Task Checklist
- Completed Step 1 and checked that all contents of my system were included
- Signed and displayed my VBSS Commitment contract to the business
- Read instructions on how to use this workbook

We hope you are enjoying this 45 page sampler of the Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS). Feel free to share this copy with your friends.

ORDER TODAY the full 155 page version of the Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS) online at:

www.VirtualAssistantinaBox.com
DAY 2 – WHY GO INTO BUSINESS?

“Work is love made visible. If you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work, sit at the gate of the temple and take alms from those who work with joy.”

Khalil Gibran

Recent polls show that only 39% of employed Americans are completely satisfied with their jobs. Many of the remaining 61% don’t exchange their jobs to become charity-cases, as this 19th Century poet suggests, but toil away year after year in disgruntlement. Bad pay, poor benefits, an unyielding boss, a toxic work environment, a job with no growth potential, no incentives, no future security, “no way!” you’ve most likely said.

In the past two decades, self-employment has become a viable, desirable option for a growing number of dissatisfied workers. Whether you were forcibly terminated from your last job because of downsizing, or the thought of running hamster-like on a wheel for years to come is simply too bleak and unbearable, you have made a life-altering decision – to be your own boss.

Yesterday, you conducted a systems check, determined that all things were in order, and prepared to raise the anchor. You know where you are heading, but have you considered why you’ve set out on this particular course? Identifying your reasons for becoming self-employed will help you assess whether running your own business will fulfill your particular needs, and whether you are capable of meeting its demands.

Will Self-Employment Fulfill Your Needs?

Let’s be realistic. Unhappiness and discontentment has probably triggered your endeavor to start a business. Your new venture should not lead you down another path of corporate dismay; it should begin with promise, excitement, commitment, and – most importantly – pleasure.

This lesson will help you take some preliminary proactive steps to increasing your chances of becoming successfully and happily self-employed. It will help you reflect on your motivation for starting a business, caution you against its common pitfalls, and urge you to embrace its countless rewards.
Exercise 1: What’s Your Motivation?
What motivated you to start your own business? Take a moment to mull over this question. Sit quietly or take a leisurely stroll to reflect. Think of how you arrived at the decision to be self-employed. What factors prompted you to say, “I am going to work for myself!”

You may wish to generate a list of reasons, or check the points which relate to you from the following list:

- I don’t enjoy what I’m doing
- I am not making enough money
- I hate being away from my family for so many hours
- My work environment does not suit me
- Commuting is a nightmare and I would like to eliminate
- My job does not allow me to reach my potential

Other:
_______________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

The reasons for self-employment are numerous and varied. Other reasons include the desire:

- To be your own boss
- To avoid the politics, red tape, and bureaucracy of a large company
- To actively and directly participate in all aspects of a business
- To win, achieve, and accomplish
- To fill a need in the community
- For work that is fun, exciting, and immediately rewarding
- For recognition and distinction

All prospective entrepreneurs have their own unique set of motivations that may include all or some of the reasons mentioned above. Many also admit that the challenge of starting and running a business is one of the most appealing features of the endeavor.
Exercise 2: Is Self-employment Right for You?
Write a brief sentence below each statement relevant to you personally; then explain how self-employment will resolve that problem. For example:

I don’t enjoy what I’m doing  
Self-employment will allow me to work in a field I love.

I am not making enough money  
Self-employment will make me financially independent.

I hate being away from my family for so many hours  
Self-employment will allow me to work the hours that suit me.  
Self-employment will give me the flexibility to work from home.

My work environment does not suit me  
Self-employment will allow me to design my own business climate.

Commuting is a nightmare I would like to eliminate  
Self-employment will allow me to work in the city or area of my choice, and give me the flexibility to work from home.

My job does not allow me to reach my potential  
Self-employment will allow me to exercise creative freedom. I can choose industries that need and appreciate the knowledge, skills, and services I have to offer.

R & R
How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business – p. 17-20
Read more to see if you are cut out to be a VA and work from home.
Exercise 3: Determining Your Business Goals

Identify your particular reasons for starting your own business and then brainstorm how you will achieve these desired goals. What characteristics will you need to achieve this?

For example:

**Motivation for Self-employment:**
To fill a need in the community.

**How Self-employment will resolve this problem:**
Self-employment will allow me to reach out to the community and offer the services they need with passion, honesty and integrity.

**How I will achieve this goal:**
I will customize and market my services to community organizations. I will participate in numerous community functions and endeavor to be a board-member of community organizations. This will help me understand the community’s needs.

**My characteristics:**
I am community-oriented, interested in humanitarian causes, patient, out-going, and a “people-person.”

Compose your own statements below:

**Motivation for Self-employment:**

**How Self-employment will resolve this problem:**

**How I will achieve this goal:**

**My characteristics:**
Exercise 4: Assessing Goal Practicability

When composing how you will achieve these goals, did your strategy seem realistic or achievable? Do you foresee major obstacles to reaching these goals? If so, what are they?

It is crucial that you have a strategy for avoiding or removing these obstacles. Do not ignore them – they will surely obstruct your path to success later on. Take proactive steps to clear your road to successful self-employment – pick up and throw away the big rocks, kick the pebbles, and sweep away the fine dust. Nothing should hold you back from reaching your dreams!

You have identified the reasons why you have decided to become an entrepreneur, and determined that these goals are achievable. **Do you have what it takes to run a business? Your answer is YES!**

You may wish to type up and cut out the statements for each one and tack it on a visible part of your office. Whenever you have doubts, they will remind you of why you chose self-employment.

Whichever goals you have set... the characteristic you will need is time-management, our next lesson.

**R & R**

*How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business* – p. 21-24
Learn more about making the decision to run a VA business.

**Day 2: Task Checklist**

- Completed the day’s exercises
- Affirmed my commitment to self-employment
Notes:
DAY 6 – Selecting a Business Structure

The structure you choose for your business can have both favorable results and unfavorable ramifications. Whether you select sole proprietorship, partnership, incorporation, cooperative, or trading trust, you must consider how the following factors will affect you and your business:

- personal responsibility for debts and other liabilities
- taxation
- ability to attract capital
- cost of establishment
- ability of owners to dissolve business and recover share
- ability to conduct business nationwide
- distinguishing the business, products and services from competitors

This lesson will focus on the three main types of business structures you can choose for your business: sole proprietorship, partnership or corporation.

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## Exercise 1: Pros/Cons of Business Structures

Take a look at the advantages and disadvantages of each business structure below. Give serious consideration to each of these – they may impact you significantly once you have registered your business and are operating legally.

### Advantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sole Proprietorship</th>
<th>Partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low startup costs</td>
<td>Unlimited liability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatest freedom from regulations</td>
<td>Unlimited liability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA is in direct control of decision making</td>
<td>Divided authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal working capital is required</td>
<td>Difficulty raising additional capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible tax advantage to VA</td>
<td>Hard to find suitable partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All profits to VA</td>
<td>Possible development of conflict between partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incorporation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited liability</td>
<td>Closely regulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible tax advantage</td>
<td>Charter restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased credibility</td>
<td>Extensive record keeping required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership is transferable</td>
<td>Double taxation of dividends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous existence</td>
<td>Shareholders may be held legally responsible in certain circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate legal entity</td>
<td>Personal guarantees undermine limited liability advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Note on Partnerships

A small piece of advice, I strongly caution you against registering your business as a partnership, unless it is the only way you can afford to open up a business. Partnerships divided 50/50 have a low success rate. Consider current divorce statistics. Consider that two people who supposedly love one another very frequently dissolve the union on unpleasant terms. Consider also that the legalities in partnerships are time consuming.

If you do decide on a partnership, a partnership agreement in writing stating everything from who makes certain decisions, to who signs the pay checks, must be legally in place.

R & R

How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business – p. 25-26
Read the above pages to further research the benefits of each business entity.

Exercise 2: Choosing Your Business Structure

From your research to date, what type of business entity will you start up and why?

________________________________________________________________________________________
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Day 6: Task Checklist

☑ Completed the day’s readings
☐ Explored the advantages and disadvantages of different business structures
☐ Decided on my business structure
DAY 11 - Brochures, Flyers, Postcards and Door Hangers

Your printed marketing material plays a key role in attracting new customers, maintaining current ones, and reinforcing your business’ image. As with first impressions, potential clients will “size you up” in the first few seconds based on the appearance of your brochures, flyers, and other marketing pieces. Your promotional material speaks on your company’s behalf – let it say that you are a savvy professional.

Make sure your promotional material:
- Sparks interest by grabbing the reader’s attention.
- States the features and benefits of your services.
- Conveys a consistent and professional image of your business.
- Prompts a call to action or motivates a person to contact you.

R & R
How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business – p. 63-64
A Virtual Assistant’s Guide to Marketing – p. 60-66
Read the above pages to give you additional support in designing your brochure and flyers.

Exercise 1: Mock Brochure/Flyer Design
Use the templates provided in this system to design a mock brochure or flyer for your business.

Located on CD-ROM: Templates/Brochure.doc
Located on CD-ROM: Templates/Fax Flyer.doc
Located on CD-ROM: Templates/Real Estate Flyer.doc

You will find that the templates will eliminate the procrastination and much of the guess work associated with starting an advertising campaign.

Postcards
For first-time mailings a two-sided postcard is an excellent companion or substitute for your brochure. Postcards are a quick read, to-the-point, and easy to pin to a bulletin board once your potential client has read it.

Treat your postcard like a business card with a little additional space. Still, use the room you have wisely. Use a riveting graphic, a provocative statement or question, your contact information, and make a portion of the card a valuable coupon.
Something about SAVING money always grabs attention! A headline and graphic that appeals to the overworked, overwhelmed businessperson will entice the user to turn the card over and read the back. This is where you may strategically include:

1. A short list of benefits to hiring a Virtual Assistant
2. Your service list
3. A discount coupon or % off for NEW clients
4. A call to action
5. Your contact information

Think of your postcard as an oversized and embellished business card that is convenient to mail or hand out.

Additionally, you may take the same graphic and information from the postcard for a door hanger. Distribute these within your local neighborhood.

**Exercise 2: Designing Your Postcard & Door Hanger**

Located on CD-ROM: Templates/Post Card.doc  
Located on CD-ROM: Templates/Doorknob Front.psd  
Located on CD-ROM: Templates/Doorknob Back.psd

Dedicate the remainder of the day to designing your own postcard and/or door hanger using the above templates as resources.

**Day 11: Task Checklist**

- Designed my brochure and flyer  
- Designed my postcard and/or door hanger

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DAY 20 - Legalizing Your Business

Your company will need to follow all legal requirements for operating a new business. Contact your local municipality via phone or seek information online through municipal websites. Most cities have automated business registration procedures online.

Depending on your country of residence, legalizing your business will entail:

- Business name searches
- Business registration
- Municipality permits or licenses
- Registration of business for sales tax purposes

Most municipalities have a basic business start up system with the appropriate forms and procedures for registering your business. Obtain this package and submit the necessary forms and fees.

Exercise 1: Business Startup
After contacting your municipality, what steps must you take to start up your business? Check off each step as you complete it.

☐ ____________________________________________
☐ ____________________________________________
☐ ____________________________________________
☐ ____________________________________________
☐ ____________________________________________

Exercise 2: Do I Need Insurance?
Business insurance is usually an optional choice for anyone setting up a business. Speak to a local insurance agent regarding any business insurance that is highly recommended in your line of work. Although many types of business insurance may be optional, give serious consideration to each one. Remember that if you have set up your business structure as a sole proprietorship, personal liability is very high.
Consider the following questions:

- What will you do if a client is hurt at your home office?
- What if your client’s business has a business loss because of a service you provided them?
- Will your vehicle be insured if you get in an accident while doing business?
- What happens if you have a house fire and lose your office or your client’s data?
- What if harm is inadvertently caused by something you wrote and/or published for a client?
- What if someone steals your laptop with all your work on it?
- What if you get sick and can’t work?
- Is the key person or partner in your business insured in case they die?
- Do you have insurance for your employees?

Weigh your risks and decide whether insurance is something you should consider. It is always better to be safe than sorry.

Are you going to get business insurance?  
- Yes  
- No

If yes, set up your insurance policy today.  
- Done

VAnetworking has put together an excellent business coverage solution available to United States only at this time. Learn more at: http://www.vanetworking.com/protection-plan

**Making Everything Legal**

It can’t be stressed more as we near the end of this book that you need to have all your ducks in row as you never know what legal problem you will encounter in your business.

Always get clients to sign work agreements or contracts before you start any work for them. They can be simple or long winded but it is important for you and your client to know up front all the details of the project you are doing for them in writing.

A signed, seal and delivered contract solves a ton of conflicts from even arising in the first place since you just have to read the contract to see who is right or wrong. They detail many simple questions like timeline, price,
delivery method, how many drafts will be typed or maybe assurance to your client that all information about their business will be kept confidential.

A few contract samples have been provided as templates on the Template CD-ROM to edit and use to fit your scenario. Remember these are only samples to base your contract on and once you have edited them to suit your business, take them to a lawyer or professional to have them look over before you use them as each geographical location has their own laws.

There is always a loop hole in any contract if you have a good enough lawyer but not having even a basic contract in place is a large loop hole!

Exercise 3: Completing Your Legalese Documents
You will come across many legal documents within the running of your Virtual Assistant business. I have provided a few I currently use with Mediamage Business Solutions. Feel free to edit and use however you wish to suit your business plan. The information in these legalese documents is general in nature and not intended as a substitute for professional, legal or financial advice so please use accordingly.

Located on CD-ROM: Legalese Samples/

R & R
How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business – p. 56
Contracts are the insurance policies of the business world.

Day 20: Task Checklist
- Wrote the steps to business startup
- Decided on the types of business insurance I need
- Completed the day’s readings
- Completed my legal documents
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DAY 30 - Maintaining the Momentum

At Last! You have completed your thirty day journey. Or have you? This end is really a beginning. This beginning promises professional success, financial stability, and personal accomplishment.

Savor this day – for it is all yours. It is the day you have completed a rigorous journey of reflection and commitment. It is the day you begin implementing a dream long in development.

Throughout the last thirty days, the dream has become less hazy... clearer and sharper until today when visibility has become perfect. Your virtual assistance business is a reality. Congratulate yourself on your passion and drive to get to your destination. The future holds many promises for your business, and with this system, your footing will be sure, confident, and geared for business success!

And by chance if you ever get down or discouraged remember that if I can do it, anyone can and here is my story...

Excerpt from Michael J Russer’s NEW book, The Obsolete Employee, How Businesses Succeed Without Employees – And Love it!

And for some, becoming a Virtual Assistant means a way to bootstrap from just scraping by to thriving...

It Just Keeps Getting Better and Better!

Each year my children would ask, “Is Santa going to bring presents this year?” And each year I would faithfully answer, “Only if you believe.” Sometimes, believing that good things will happen is all you have.

After experiencing a cross-country trek to accommodate my husband’s new job and to refresh a troubled marriage, surviving a corporate work story that ripped the rug out from under me, and grabbing any job I could find (including mowing the neighbors’ lawns), I gave new meaning to the expression “overcoming obstacles.” My story is a decathlon of perseverance and survival!

We moved far from our Toronto home; in fact, as far away as the Canadian countryside would allow – 5,000 miles from the east to the west coast, Leaving family and friends behind was wrenching; saying goodbye to my parents was like cutting off a limb.

The marriage failed after just one year in our new surroundings. I was at a low ebb, trying to remain positive for the children and provide for them, at any cost. It’s what any parent would do. I went to school and became a
Certified Internet Marketing Specialist, taking advantage of every opportunity to find any sort of administrative work that I could do at home, preferable, to be there for the kids.

I worked part-time as an on-call secretary for the local school board. I worked for neighbors, looking over their business books. I had a bunch of small, part-time jobs that I’d run to at irregular times. It paid the rent. When I finally landed a solid job with a computer sales and service company, I was grateful for the stability it offered and, of course, for the steady income. Then, suddenly, that changed, too. One day, the president of the company just picked himself up and walked out the door and away from the business forever, leaving us all without paychecks.

I couldn’t afford to crumble. I became the “Jackie of All Trades,” pulling the business together as best as I could, while remember an unusual term I saw on the Internet – Virtual Assistant. People with this funny sounding job title were able to make lucrative incomes using very specific skills and do it from the comfort of their homes.

Administrative support and Web design were my specialties. I decided to give the virtual world a spin. Luckily, the customers left behind in the corporate debacle I had just witnessed, followed me and soon became my first clients.

The best example of how my job as a Virtual Assistant has changed my life will culminate in a grand vacation in January. I have booked a family cruise to the Caribbean! It will be our first real trip together. For me, it is a milestone. A dream come true!

My advice to anyone who is contemplating the benefits of becoming a Virtual Assistant is, JUST DO IT! Yes, it’s scary at first, but take control of your own life! When you look back, you’ll be pleasantly surprised and gratified.

I know just how that will feel when I’m sitting on a tropical beach, sipping a tall island drink and tapping the keys of my laptop, in time to the sound of crystal clear waves creeping to shore...and back again.

Tawnya Sutherland
VA Poster Child

Tawnya’s added note: Since this was written for Michael's book, I bought a $700,000 home in beautiful Whiterock, British Columbia right beside the Pacific Ocean. Life is good!
VBSS Success Stories to Inspire You

The VBSS changed my life. Powerful statement, right?

All I ever wanted was to be a wife and mother. I have always known that I wanted to be the primary caregiver for my children. When I was pregnant with my first child in 2005, I knew that like most families, one income was not enough to support us. When our daughter was born I knew for a fact I could never leave her in someone else’s care. I started researching ways that I could make money from home. I thought with my background in admin, and a lifelong dream to own my own business I should be able to come up with something.

One day I was watching the Dr. Phil show and a couple of ladies from “Moms Town” were guests. Their book was advertised at the end of the show and I bought it. When I went to visit their website, there was a banner ad for the Virtual Assistant Start up System (now called the Virtual Business Start up System). I read through all of the information and I knew that this is what I was going to do. I had never heard of the term “Virtual Assistant” before, but I knew I could do it. I discussed the purchase with my husband and we decided to go for it.

I dove in head first. I used the workbook that came with the VBSS, faithfully. The books that were included were my constant companions. I started my business very quickly and I did everything the right way. That Start Up kit motivated me to be successful. I bought the kit in February of 2006. I started my business on June 1, 2006 and had a full roster of clients by November of that year.

I am now the mother of a 21 month old little girl and I’m pregnant with her little brother or sister. I am making better money than I ever did working for someone else and I have not dreaded a Monday morning in over a year now.

The VBSS changed my life. I am living my dream. I’m a wife and a mother and on top of that, I am a business owner. I love this gig.

Thank you Tawnya.

Jaime Lee Mann, Cornwall, PE, Canada
Mann Made Time
As I write this, my napping three-year-old son is nestled in my lap. Most moms do not have the luxury of being at home with their children while still pursuing their future. I am a very fortunate woman.

For many years, I dreamt of having my own business. I longed to be at the reins and in charge of my own destiny. I was tired of working for the sake of paying my bills and was sick of not seeing my hard work pay off. I wanted the chance to let my creativity blossom.

It was not until my maternity leave that I began to explore how I could work from home. During my first ultrasound, it was determined that my son, Avery, had bilateral clubfeet. Avery would require intense treatment for the first six months of his life. I knew there was no going back to the "nine to five" world. My boy needed me!

About the time Avery’s treatment ended, I came across the Virtual Assistant Networking Association. As I read posts on the VA networking forum, I became intrigued and saw the potential of making a living from home.

I needed to work fast as my maternity leave was now half over. All of my research pointed to starting a VA practice. Not feeling I could do it without support, I looked into government programs and signed up to take part in a Self Employment Program.

The first stage of the program was an intensive three-week session that many people do not complete. A few weeks prior to the start of the program, Tawnya Sutherland introduced the Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS). Having been a member of VA networking Forum now for six months, I was very familiar with Tawnya and was eager to learn from her.

Days before I entered the first stage of the Self Employment Program my VBSS system arrived. Entering the SE Program, I had a leg up on my classmates as I had a guide at my side. As I worked my way through stage one of the SE Program, I constantly referenced my VBSS system. Here I was entering a newly emerging profession that most people had never heard of yet I had all of the answers readily available! Although hard work, the SE Program, and its facilitators played a role in my success, I know that my outcome would have been very different had I not had the VBSS system at my side.

After successful completion of the first stage, I continued forward in pursuit of being accepted into the one-year program. Although I presented a strong case and the program coordinators were impressed with my proposed business I was denied acceptance. In short, I was employable and I not accepted into the full program.
I was crushed! All of my plans had centered on being in the program, which included ongoing business training as well as an allowance for living expenses for the first year of operation. What would I do know? Put Avery in daycare and get a dead-end job?

No way! I had all of the VAs at VAnetworking.com behind me and I had my VBSS system! The system comes with a gift certificate for $50 towards training at Red Deer College so the first thing I did was enroll in a class. Next, I utilized the exercises in the system to decide on my business name and register it. Then with the help of the System, I secured my domain name and created my logo from a template in the System, this saved me hundreds of dollars.

Looking back now, I see that this detour was the best thing that could have happened for my family and my business. The VBSS system has directed me to select the best training, enabled me to align myself with the right people, and provided me with the very best reference material available.

The result is that Avery has remained at home with me and I now successfully run not one but two businesses from my home. I love where my professional life is heading and I am thrilled with my VA practice and eagerly building my new business with Watkins. I still regularly reference my VBSS System and am excited to see where the tools in the system will lead both of my businesses.

Tiffeny Russell
Above & Beyond Virtual Assisting

Day 30: Task Checklist
☐ Congratulated myself (!)
Notes:

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Contributors To The VBSS

Many Virtual Assistants contributed to make the Virtual Business Startup System (VBSS) such an informative and useful tool for Virtual Assistants to help increase the success of their businesses effectively and efficiently. From general advice, proofreading the workbook, designing templates, providing templates and helping with my technical difficulties putting together this system, the follow contributors are greatly appreciated. If you ever need to outsource overflow work or require other services you don’t provide, I would highly recommend any of the businesses below:

Special thanks to Samah for making my words come to life!

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Technical, Instructional, and Marketing Writing Services

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VAnetworking.com Sister Sites:

www.VirtualAssistantShop.com – Products themed towards Virtual Assistants and work from home business entrepreneurs

www.VAtalkShow.com – The VA Talk Show... Where VAs Talk the Walk. Make sure you tune in and listen!
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as a participating member of our forum at the Virtual Assistant Networking Association:

http://www.VAnetworking.com

For Successful and Aspiring “IN THE KNOW” Virtual Assistants & Achievers Globally ... The “HOTTEST, FRIENDLIEST, Informative, Educational & Resourceful Network for VAs” That Everyone Online is Talking About!