



I am often asked "How do you become a Virtual Assistant?" This question actually has 2 meanings. The first is a general interest in the role of a VA, the second is "I would like a nice easy job and do a bit of typing from home, how do I get started?"

I launched Virtually Organised in January 2002 having been made redundant twice within 6 months, although redundancy was not new to me as I had been made redundant twice before and it was starting to become a hobby!! In July 2001 I left my role as Office Manager in one of Richard Bransons small businesses within the Virgin Corporation and then in December 2001 as OM in a small venture financed by Vodafone.

I had heard of the virtual PA (through my work at Virgin) and decided to research the possibilities. After hours of trawling the internet and coming across several support organisations including a coaching course for such a profession and having the backing of my family, I decided to give it a go and see what happened.

That was 3½ years ago and after a shaky start and that daunting business of finding the first clients, and then actually going out and talking about yourself and your business – I survived and Women in Business played a large part in that success.

I joined the East Kent group in November 2002 and a year later I was the co-ordinator for the group, a role which I never thought I would never be able to fulfil, however I have had great support from the members. The greatest challenge for me is speaking to the group at our meetings, but through the support and friendship this group brings it has increased my confidence.

So what type of work does a Virtual Assistant do and how does it all work? My clients vary and my work varies which is one advantage of not being employed as PA/Office Manager for a business.

I work for a really wide range of businesses including a Life Coach, a coaching organisation, a chauffeur service, CD Copying service, holiday cottage rents, on-line

magazine, public relations company, architect to name but a few. Most of which either work from home or have a small office in a business centre. Tasks carried out include; invoicing, credit control, bookkeeping, VAT returns, mailshots, diary management, organising meetings, administering delegates for conferences/workshops, managing an excel spreadsheet for an on-line directory, dealing with general enquiries, copytyping, troubleshooting, being a 3rd party and acting as liaison officer, research, booking travel the list is endless and it's all carried out from my own office using fax, e-mail and the telephone.

For each client I have an e-mail address and throughout all communication with their contacts I am their PA/Assistant whatever giving the image of a larger business – they never realise I am not working in that clients office as their permanent member of staff. A couple of clients use a virtual reception so to some I am based in Central London as they call a London number to speak to me. It's even better when they call to ask directions to the office as I know the area well and used to actually work in the building whilst at Virgin.

Some clients I work for everyday, others once a week, once a month or just on an ad-hoc basis when they need an extra pair of hands to help with a project.

The definition of a Virtual Assistant being a "little job where I can do a bit of typing" is as far from the truth as you can get.

After much hard work, dedication and perseverance Virtually Organised is now a successful thriving business, so much so, that this year will be my last as co-ordinator of this group – a role which has proved to be a great stepping stone in launching my business.

Tracy White
Virtually Organised
www.virtuallyorganised.com
01795 535430